

Sawbones Episode 95: The Seasick-Proof Saloon

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Intro (Clint McElroy):

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

[theme song Medicines by The Taxpayers plays]

Justin:

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

Sydnee:

And I'm Sydnee McElroy and we've really just gotta get through this quickly.

Justin:

Just gotta pound this out.

Sydnee:

Because I am really excited.

Justin:

We, listen, we're on vacation this week, uh, headed to the beach. Uh-

Sydnee:

We're not even supposed to be here doing this.

Justin:

No.

Sydnee:

This is like work.

Justin:

This is like basically-

Sydnee:

And I'm on vacation.

Justin:

We're on basically on vacation right now. That's how devoted we are to you, the people. I can't wait to get out there and just start carving waves on my wakeboard that I learned how to ride in secret lessons that I've been taking for the past three months so I can impress you in a grand gesture that's sure to bowl you over.

Sydnee:

Uh, I, I'm speechless. I-

Justin:

You will be.

Sydnee:

You can't, well, mainly because where did you learn to wakeboard in Huntington?

Justin:

Beech Fork?

Sydnee:

On the lake?

Justin:

I went to Beech Fork Lake and they, yeah, and they told me-

Sydnee:

And you, you were wakeboarding. Don't you have to, I don't know, I'm not a wakeboarder but don't you have to have waves?

Justin:

Yeah. Well, the ship makes them. The pontoon boats, you cruise behind the pontoon boats-

Sydnee:

Oh, oh, okay.

Justin:

... and carve the, carve the, uh, foam, carve the foam, as they say.

Sydnee:

And you ride the waves of carp that fill-

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

Beech Fork Lake.

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

Beech Fork Lake is 50% water and 50% carp.

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

And the, the balance may be shifting to carp at this point.

Justin:

Yeah. You gotta keep the carp in check.

Sydnee:

[laughs]

Justin:

They, they, they actually have people they pay to fish at, constantly 24 hours a day, lest the carp overpower.

Sydnee:

Just get the carp out, get the car, carp are gross.

Justin:

But the only bad thing I've been having said is that that does lead to a little bit of nausea, uh, from the waves and the choppiness of the ocean and the sea. Motion sickness.

Sydnee:

Or, or, or the choppiness of Beech Fork Lake.

Justin:

Or the choppiness of Beech Fork Lake as it may be.

Sydnee:

Well, Justin-

Justin:

I'm sorry. I was lying about that because I don't get seasick, but like, I'm trying to get us in here.

Sydnee:

Well, you're, no, it was a good job. I have no problem with it.

Justin:

It was okay, right? Okay.

Sydnee:

I was following you.

Justin:

All right. We're on the same page.

Sydnee:

Yeah.

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

Now, I know.

Justin:

So, yes, I am getting seasick.

Sydnee:

Well, Justin.

Justin:

Yeah, Syd.

Sydnee:

Statistically, it is likely that you would get seasick. At least a little bit. Do you know that only 10% of the population likely is completely impervious to motion sickness?

Justin:

Are you telling me that I am both impervious to poison ivy and motion sickness.

Sydnee:

See, I don't believe that you are completely impervious to motion sickness because the point that they make when, when they cite this statistic, is that, yes, there are those of us, me, for instance, who, I can't read in the car, I can't even really ride in the back seat of the car for very long, without getting kind of queasy.

Justin:

You're really... Yeah. You're not the worst I've seen-

Sydnee:

No, I'm not the worst.

Justin:

I've actually seen, seen worse.

Sydnee:

Yeah. I can ride roller-coasters.

Justin:

Our beloved sister, Teresa, has a problem. Has a, has a rough time.

Sydnee:

Yes.

Justin:

Like we, when we drive up, uh, the hill, uh, to go to [inaudible 00:03:44] that's, that's a rough one. She-

Sydnee:

That's rough for anybody.

Justin:

... she takes it harder. Yeah. That's, that's hard for anybody.

Sydnee:

And Charlie has motion sickness we learned.

Justin:

Yeah. Yeah. Found that out the hard way.

Sydnee:

But 90% of the population, if you put 'em in severe enough circumstances is gonna, is gonna have motion sickness.

Justin:

Sure.

Sydnee:

Apparently, um, and seasickness is what I'd first like to focus on. 'Cause you would not believe how many different things we've tried for the different like flavors of motion sickness over time.

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

You know, whether you're talking about like on the ocean or in space or in cars, uh, we've done lots of research and there's lots to talk about. So I thought since we are going to the beach, I will just focus on the seasickness aspect of motion sickness for now.

Justin:

Okay. and it's not special-

Sydnee:

No.

Justin:

... in and of itself. It's ba- it's, seasickness is motion sickness.

Sydnee:

Absolutely. It's all the same thing. We've just, you know, kind of tried different things depending on where-

Justin:

Seasickness is actually the sweetest kind of motion sickness, if you think about it. Because-

Sydnee:

Why?

Justin:

... Well, think about it. Seasickness by definition. It is, "Here's the place for you to put that? Oh, you're getting sick. We've got you covered."

Sydnee:

Oh, that's a good point.

Justin:

You know what I mean? Like, like space?

Sydnee:

You can hurl right there.

Justin:

Yeah. Like, like, you get in the car, "Oh, I'm driving with this now. This is my situation I'm living with. Get it in space. Oh, I'm just gonna float with this. Excellent. Excellent. This should be a really sweet trip to the moon."

Sydnee:

[laughs]

Justin:

That's bad. But if you get seasick, it's like, "Oh, I'll just put this over here. No problem. I have a, I have a place to put this."

Sydnee:

If you're gonna spew-

Justin:

Spew into this ocean. Exactly. Exactly.

Sydnee:

There you go. Okay. I got it. Well, I wanna thank, uh, two people have recommended this. Chad and Jamie, thank you. I believe Jamie is a sufferer as well. So hopefully this will help. Probably not. Uh, so people have been having seasickness for, as you can imagine a really long time-

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

... because people have been sailing and traveling and, you know, using our, our, our earth is mostly water and we've been traveling on it for quite a while.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

Um, I like, I prefer, uh, mal de mere.

Justin:

Mal de mere-

Sydnee:

I think that's a-

Justin:

... sickness of the sea.

Sydnee:

Yeah. That's a fancier name for seasickness.

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

I think that's prettier. And it's really just puking is what we're talking about. So I think it's nice-

Justin:

Well, might as well gussy it up, right?

Sydnee:

Um, all seasickness really is, so I think it's, let's talk about, and motion sickness in general, what we're really, what we're really talking about is a, like a confusion of input.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

So our, we take in a lot of different sensory input and it's stuff that we know about like hearing and spelling and tasting and all that. Um, but there's also, there's our visual input, of course, but there's like our sense of position in space-

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

... where we, where we feel our body is. Um, there's our, there's our balance sensors, you know, our inner ear that helps keep us balanced.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

Um, and when you get confusing input from those different sensory, you know, ways of, of absorbing material, when you get confusing, conflicting input, uh, then you get sick. So for instance-

Justin:

It, it's a really cra- it's like a really crazy reaction for your body. Like, "Hey, wait a minute. Is it, are we floating? Are we still, I just don't-blaaaagh!"

Sydnee:

That's exactly it.

Justin:

[laughs]. Okay.

Sydnee:

That's exa- I can't handle this confusing situation. I'm gonna throw up.
[laughs]

Justin:

[laughs] It's really, it's a, it's a fun reaction.

Sydnee:

Um, it's, a, s- I mean, if you think about it, like if you're standing on a ship that's kind of bouncing up and down. So you've got like the visual input of like either you're staring at the horizon, which is moving in a certain direction or even worse, maybe you've gone below deck and now everything's fixed.

Justin:

Oh, yeah.

Sydnee:

So the stuff around you isn't moving, but your body can sense that you're moving up and down-

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

... and at the same time, your, your whole balance system is trying to move your legs around in subtle little ways to keep you standing still. And all that input is conflicting.

Justin:

Mmh...

Sydnee:

And so you, you puke. And the same thing can happen if you're sitting in the back of a car and trying to look at different things or, or in an airplane.

Justin:

You know, it's interesting, this motion sickness has been a real hot topic in video games, which is the field I work in and because of virtual reality. 'Cause you're getting a lot of, uh, people trying to solve for how do you keep people from, from getting nauseous because of this exact issue. The, the physical sensations that your body, uh, is receiving are very different from

what you're seeing on the screen. One of the interesting things I've, I've heard is that, uh, there was one developer that had some success with making, um, the scale just completely different from what we would normally experience-

Sydnee:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Justin:

... because you don't have the, the, that sort of like uncanny valley between what you, what your real life is like and you can't, your brain can't process it into something that it recognizes as the real world. So it's not trying to, you know-

Sydnee:

So it's not conflicting.

Justin:

It's not conflicting, right. It's just, it, it's that far from-

Sydnee:

It's just totally separate.

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

That's interesting. That, and be, and that would be helpful for me because I cannot do that virtual reality stuff.

Justin:

You, no, you did, you've done some stuff. They actually-

Sydnee:

Some of it.

Justin:

... they have ratings of comfort actually. Uh, uh, the, we should talk about this as a separate topic. This is not a germane to seasickness, but they have levels of comfort where, where, where there are slower moving things that don't, you know, jostle your perspective around as much.

Sydnee:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Justin:

They're comfortable for everybody, as it says, and then, or most. It probably says most c- and then, you know, there's some that are comfortable for few, which are very fast and unpleasant. So-

Sydnee:

And I think, I think those, I c- I can't handle.

Justin:

I would not recommend it. No.

Sydnee:

Um, and this is largely an inner ear issue. And as Justin knows, um, I, I am fascinated by the inner ear.

Justin:

Yes.

Sydnee:

The, the inner ear is one of the most, uh, amazingly constructed. It's just, it's perfect. It's beautiful and it's perfect and it's complex. The way that we sense our position in space, there are all these little canals and they've got these little piles of crystals and there's shifting in the crystals and it's, it's amazing. And I could go on and on, but that'll be another show someday.

Justin:

Uh-huh [affirmative].

Sydnee:

Anyway, it's the inner ear and the inner ear is fascinating. If you ever wanna just be amazed by the universe, read about the inner ear and look at some pictures someday. Um, but seasickness it's been written about, uh, in ancient history because people have been coping with it for so long. Uh, Hippocrates wrote very simply, "Sailing on the sea proves that motion disturbs the body." I figure he was probably seasick when he wrote that.
[laughs]

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

And he was like, "This is it. This is the best I got." 'Cause he usually kind of expounded on things a little further. [laughs]

Justin:

I j- yeah, I've just gotta write something to take my mind off this.

Sydnee:

I don't know. This is bad. The, the word for nausea is actually from the Greek word naus for ship.

Justin:

Oh, ah, nice.

Sydnee:

So there you go. So we, [laughs] we've connected nausea with being on boats for a long time. Uh, Cicero wrote that he would rather be killed in battle than have seasickness.

Justin:

[laughs] That's really, he really hated it.

Sydnee:

Which I can- I mean, I think being nauseous is for me, that's the worst. I'd rather hurt anywhere than be nauseous.

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

Personally. Um, as far back in, in ancient China and ancient Indian medicine, uh, they've been suggesting ginger for seasickness, which is actually a really great idea.

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

Does work.

Justin:

Yeah. You see, uh, there's lots of that kind of thing. Like, um, anti-nausea ginger gum.

Sydnee:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Justin:

I've seen at Rite Aid that sort of stuff.

Sydnee:

And there, there's, there is some evidence for using ginger. So that's a, that's a real thing that we've known for a really long time. Of course, as you're gonna see that didn't stop us from doing all kinds of other crazy things to fix seasickness. But, but we knew about ginger a long time ago. Um, it's played a role as I, I mean, I comment on this a lot, 'cause I like when I see medicine and history and you know, it all interacts.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

It, it plays a course, in the course of human events, it plays a role. Um, when the English defeated the Spanish Armada in 1588, which I guess was a big surprise victory, they were not, I don't know who was predicting, who was gonna win. [laughs]

Justin:

[crosstalk 00:11:17] odds.

Sydnee:

I don't know like what articles were being written about, who's gonna win this upcoming battle between-

Justin:

Probably hindsight.

Sydnee:

Yes. [laughs]

Justin:

Like I would think. Yeah.

Sydnee:

But uh, the, the English defeated the Spanish Armada and there were a lot of things that played into this. This is not the only thing, but one of the factors was that the Spanish admiral, who was the duke of Medina, Sidonia, who had, he was very, I guess, well-respected and revered, but he hadn't spent a lot of time at sea, which you'd think like the, the admiral would've, but whatever.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

Um, he got really seasick during the battle and that was one factor that contributed to the Spanish-

Justin:

Huh...

Sydnee:

... loss. So thought that was interesting.

Justin:

That is interesting.

Sydnee:

There are a lot of famous people who like to write a lot about how sick they got on boats. [laughs] Why you wanna write about that? Again, I don't know. Um, Admiral Nelson, who I imagine if we were British, that would instantly mean something to us.

Justin:

Yeah. I'm not, I'm not aware of an Admiral Nelson-

Sydnee:

He was-

Justin:

... but I'm not, I'm not very well steeped in that sort of thing.

Sydnee:

Me neither, me neither military history in general and certainly not British military history. Um, but he was a, a hero of the British Navy and, and very famous. And I think that there are probably people listening who are going, "How do you not know who that is?"

Justin:

Sure.

Sydnee:

Uh, but he never got over his seasickness despite spending many, many years, I think since the age of 12 on a boat.

Justin:

You'd think you'd just acclimate it at a certain point?

Sydnee:

Some people don't, some people never do.

Justin:

Wow...

Sydnee:

Darwin wrote of, of his horrible seasickness. Uh, Lawrence of Arabia never got over his seasickness.

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

Um, there's one old English proverb that references seasickness. And it says that "the only cure for seasickness is to sit on the shady side of an old brick church in the country."

Justin:

[laughs] I mean, yeah, [inaudible 00:12:54] sure. Yeah.

Sydnee:

Sure. I think that's supposed to be a joke. I think that's like an old timey joke.

Justin:

Oh, oh, does that would pass f- okay. Pretty funny.

Sydnee:

I think that's okay.

Justin:

That's an okay joke.

Sydnee:

That's an okay j- for an old English [laughs] proverb. That's a fairly, that's good. Um, that probably would fix your seasickness.

Justin:

Sure. Yeah.

Sydnee:

Now as far as our attempts to fix it, well, the first question is why does it happen? And for most of history, the prevailing theory as to why we got seasickness or any kind of motion sickness is that it had to do with our stomach and our intestines kind of shifting around.

Justin:

I mean, it feels like that. Like when you go over a, uh, like when you're driving-

Sydnee:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Justin:

... somewhere hilly and you go over a big hill, like that drop in your stomach? Like you-

Sydnee:

Yes, exactly. And we used to call that a tummy tickler.

Justin:

A tu- a what?

Sydnee:

Well, it was a tummy tickler, but tummy tickler's funnier. So we used to say like-

Justin:

Tummly?

Sydnee:

There were certain roads that we used to ask to drive on when we were little. 'Cause they'd say they have tummlly ticklers.

Justin:

Oh, that's sweet.

Sydnee:

You go over the hill really fast. And it-

Justin:

It's cute.

Sydnee:

But it does kind of feel like your stomach's flopping around.

Justin:

Sure.

Sydnee:

So I can see why people thought that. Of course, that isn't what h- what's happening. Um, so there were some-

Justin:

Here comes old spoil sport to tell you what's actually happening.

Sydnee:

[laughs] Sorry. I don't. Isn't it much more disturbing to think that your organs are shifting around?

Justin:

Yeah, I guess so.

Sydnee:

Uh...

Justin:

I like them, I like them where they are. They seem to be doing okay.

Sydnee:

Yeah. Yeah. Do you want 'em to stay?

Justin:

I don't need them migrating.

Sydnee:

They're there for a reason.

Justin:

Yeah. They don't need to go tour.

Sydnee:

So there were, uh, solutions that were invented to, uh, keep your organs in place. Okay. Um, one in particular in the 19th century was a Canadian company, made an anti-motion sickness belt, which was like this, it was kinda like a girdle that you wore like this real tight-

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

... thing. And that was basically the idea. Was like, "Just wear this. It'll keep your stomach and your intestines from shifting around and you're gonna be fine."

Justin:

That would work. [laughs]

Sydnee:

There were actually some people who suggested, you know, what make, what might make 'em work better is if we wired it to like a battery and then you could cattle prod style, give yourself a shock if you started to get nauseous. And I don't know if that would like tame your organs, like, "Get back there, stomach. Come on, duodenum fall into line!" [laughs]

Justin:

[laughs]

Sydnee:

So I don't, I don't know that people actually did that, but that was, that was a suggestion.

Justin:

No. It's an option.

Sydnee:

Um, the Hamburg American steamship company came up with a, a more elaborate plan. Uh, they created a vibrating anti-seasickness deck chair.

Justin:

That doesn't make sense.

Sydnee:

I don't know why that would make you feel better.

Justin:

I wonder though, if you could make a chair that would sort of be like, um, sort of like one of those suspend, like a chair that was suspended somehow where it didn't, you didn't feel like the motion of the waves. You know what I mean? Like it was like, not like one of those weird seventies hanging chairs, but similar idea, you know what I mean?

Sydnee:

That was the best segue you have ever come up with. Do you know what I am about to talk about?

Justin:

No, I just-

Sydnee:

That, that was amazing.

Justin:

Really?

Sydnee:

Yes.

Justin:

Wow. I feel really good. Thanks, Syd.

Sydnee:

That exact, that exact thought led to our next, uh, anti-seasickness creation.

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

Um, the idea of suspending something so that it wouldn't move so much. And this is, I, as I've stumbled upon this story, I'm very excited to share this with you. So I'm gonna tell you about the Bessemer Saloon.

Justin:

[laughs] All right.

Sydnee:

Okay. Henry Bessemer was born in England in 1813, uh, to a very wealthy family and his father was an inventor. And so he decided to carry on in the family tradition and also be an inventor. And he was, he was successful with this. He was good at it. He invented a way to mass produce steel, which is pretty important. He was the first one to kind of figure out how to take lead and turn it into a pencil.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

Which is pretty cool.

Justin:

Unsafe, but cool.

Sydnee:

But, uh, but during his, his travels and his inventing and selling products and that kind of thing, he had a lot of trips back and forth across the English channel. And he, as 90% of the population does, suffered from seasickness. Uh, so he was very sick on every trip, back and forth across the channel. And he thought there has to be a better way.

Justin:

There has to be a better way.

Sydnee:

As many people have thought on *Shark Tank* and *Dragon's Den*.

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

[laughs] There has to be a better way. So he started thinking, you know, because he was an engineer, you know, the way that a compass works is that it's kind of suspended-

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

... on a ship. So it doesn't move the way that everything else does. Right?

Justin:

Right, right.

Sydnee:

Exactly like you're talking about with the, with your imaginary deck chair that you just made.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And patented if anybody's listening, don't even try it.

Sydnee:

[laughs] You need to come up with a clever name.

Justin:

Okay. I'll work on that.

Sydnee:

And you can't steal the Bessemer Saloon.

Justin:

I, that was my number one for me.

Sydnee:

[laughs]

Justin:

I'll revert to number two. As soon as I come up with a number two.

Sydnee:

So he thought if a compass stays still, no matter how much the ship is moving, why not a whole room of the ship? Why not a whole cabin that could be suspended similarly to a compass that you could stay in on the ship.

Justin:

What about the lazy buoy? [laughs]

Sydnee:

[laughs] I get, I, I get it-

Justin:

Lazy buoy.

Sydnee:

I don't know what that has anything to do with-

Justin:

Buoys. You know?

Sydnee:

Well, yeah.

Justin:

Lazy boy, chair.

Sydnee:

I don't know that that really-

Justin:

Lazy buoy.

Sydnee:

It doesn't say anti motion sickness to me.

Justin:

I'll keep working on it.

Sydnee:

Yeah.

Justin:

Work on that.

Sydnee:

Okay. So, so he, he wants to make a room that's suspended, sort of like a compass that you won't get sick in.

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

So he builds a model of it in his, basically in his backyard in London.

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

Which would be, can you imagine, like hearing that, like the neighbors and coming over, like, "What are you, what, what are you making? What is?"

Justin:

"It's an anti-seasickness chair."

Sydnee:

This is just my anti-seasickness chamber.

Justin:

But we're in-

Sydnee:

Not a chair. A whole room.

Justin:

It's a room where you go to not be seasick?

Sydnee:

Yes.

Justin:

Oh my God.

Sydnee:

He's building a whole room. So he, he built this cabin that was supported by gimbals. Do you know what gimbals are, Justin?

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

What are they?

Justin:

Well, sorry. Uh, boy, uh, it's hard to explain to a layman.

Sydnee:

You don't even wanna give it a shot?

Justin:

You know, gimbals, they're like, um, they're like, uh, like a mechanism that's typically consists of rings pivoted at right angles for keeping instruments such as compass or chronometer horizontal or a moving vessel or aircraft. So sort of, that's a, that's the best I can do sort of on short notice for a layman.

Sydnee:

Right. I'm gonna give you that one.

Justin:

Thanks.

Sydnee:

Okay. So he built this cabin supported by gimbals that was not attached to, that basically what would be the outside walls of the ship, right?

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

So that it would be kind of free floating. Um, and he did some tests in his backyard to see if this would work. I have no idea how he did these tests. How do you, how do you simulate the ocean in your backyard-

Justin:

You just fill up the kiddie pool, I guess.

Sydnee:

And put the whole room in it?

Justin:

Put the whole room in it.

Sydnee:

No, he, it was the whole room.

Justin:

I know. I, I have nothing!

Sydnee:

I don't know. I don't know how he did it. But whatever he did, he was pleased with the results. And he said, "You know what? I got a lot of money. I've got this invention, I'm gonna put it in a, in a ship and we're gonna see how it works." So he had one of his cabins installed in a steamer ship. Um, he had a ship designer, help him put it together and he made it very fancy. So first of all, it was huge. It was 70 foot in length, 30 feet wide. And as it was the Victorian area, era, it was very Victorian chic. It had gilt mirrors on the walls, leather seats. It had potted plants everywhere. It was a very big, fancy floating compass room in a ship.

Justin:

How'd it, well, how'd it go?

Sydnee:

Well, I'm gonna tell you that, but before I do, why don't you follow me to the billing department?

Justin:

Let's go.

[ad break]

Justin:

All right. We're out in the ocean, we're in a special room to not puke in. The happy go, not pukey. Uh, if you, if you, if you know your *Tiny Tunes*.

Sydnee:

[laughs]

Justin:

Uh, and, uh, what, how does it it, how does it fare?

Sydnee:

Okay. So the ship set out on its maiden voyage, I, I believe it was the SS Bessemer. And it had the Bessemer Saloon, was the room-

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

... in it. In 1875, early 1875. And there was a, it was a private, uh, voyage, so to speak. They invited a very high class clientele of investors and basically rich people to come and enjoy this room. And they left over, headed across the channel for France to the port of Colay. And initially things were going pretty well.

Justin:

Yeah?

Sydnee:

The, I mean, I don't know how well the room was working for a seasickness, but everybody was enjoying it. They were having a good time. Everything was okay. Um, however, as the ship slowed to enter the port, uh, to, to come to the harbor, it, they created a problem. So as the ship slowed down, the room didn't necessarily slow down so much. So if you can picture that there's this ship that's going slower and inside is this giant 70 foot by 30 foot room. That's just swinging around.

Justin:

Swinging back and forth. Yeah. Right.

Sydnee:

Which made the ship very difficult to pilot.

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

The result was that as it came into the port, it literally crashed into the port-

Justin:

[laughs]

Sydnee:

... taking out part of the pier. We can laugh because everybody was okay. Reportedly, I don't, there was nothing-

Justin:

I was laughing before I knew. Sorry, everybody. I'm glad it all panned out for you.

Sydnee:

[laughs]

Justin:

Hatchi matchi. Who's nauseous now? The guy who owns the pier, I guess. He doesn't feel so good.

Sydnee:

So you would think.

Justin:

[laughs] Can you imagine being that captain. Just like, "Oh, those rich idiots, those rich idiots I'm gonna crash. Ah, this stinks. I've never crashed before now these, these rich dummy, dummies are gonna plow up here. I'm sorry, everybody. I'm sorry. I have a floating can of rich people inside of my boat. I'm sorry."

Sydnee:

[laughs] So you'd think that with this, with this, I think we can call this a failure.

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

I think we can call that a f- a failure of the-

Justin:

I mean, they weren't nauseous. Did that work?

Sydnee:

No, I mean-

Justin:

I mean, did that part work?

Sydnee:

They were probably, yeah. I mean, they weren't nauseous as far as we know-

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

... but that really wasn't written about much as you can imagine.

Justin:

Well, that's not gonna be your headline.

Sydnee:

No. Um, so you'd think that Henry would say, "Well, that was a good, good try, but we'll move on to another invention. We'll try something else." Um, but no, he was not deterred by this. He rushed back to England and, and kind of, um, haphazardly had the ship repaired, um, because of obviously there was damage sustained and decided to try it again.

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

Uh-

Justin:

Excellent.

Sydnee:

Pretty quickly also. I mean, this was just a couple months later. Um, which at that time, I think, like getting a ship repaired and doing all that, that would've been a big deal. Um, but just a couple months later, he has his ship pretty much hastily repaired, he's got the cabin in place and he decides, "Okay, so the issue is that it was swinging back and forth. So what I'll do is I'll lock it in place."

Justin:

Uh, that was actually, I was sitting here thinking that. Like, oh, what they should do, what if there's a way they could lock it in place?

Sydnee:

But here's the problem. Like, doesn't that kind of defeat the purpose?

Justin:

Well, couldn't you lock it in place at the end? Like, oh, we're pulling in.

Sydnee:

I don't know if they could have, but they didn't. They locked it in place before they left. So-

Justin:

Well, that seems to defeat the purpose.

Sydnee:

Uh, that's what I think. Now this was a public voyage, I guess at this point, they couldn't round up enough rich people who were willing to go.

Justin:

No. Full rich people won, shame on you.

Sydnee:

So they, they just invited anybody. Um, and they set out again from Dover to the port of Colay, uh, same trip. And again, initially they're doing well now. I don't know how much it helped with seasickness at this point, 'cause now it's just a room that's kind of separate, but locked in place, who knows? Uh, but again, we don't really know if that worked or not, because as it slowed down to the port, uh, just the structural integrity of the ship became a problem.

Justin:

Excellent.

Sydnee:

With this extra room that was suspended. Um, even with it not moving so much. And, and maybe because the ship had not been repaired completely, who knows? For whatever reason, and they had gotten by this time a veteran ship captain who they knew was not gonna let this thing wreck. He was gonna do his best to make sure that he didn't crash. And, and let me add, there are crowds of French people gathered-

Justin:

Oh, no. Oh, no.

Sydnee:

... around to watch this ship come to port because of what happened a few months ago. They're all out there. Like, "Can you believe this Bessemer guy's coming back. Let's come watch." So the ship as they come into port, it slows down. It begins to pitch and roll.

Justin:

Excellent.

Sydnee:

Violently, back and forth.

Justin:

Oh no...

Sydnee:

The captain tries his best to keep it straight. However, once again-

Justin:

Oh, no. [laughs]

Sydnee:

It comes crashing into the pier taking out most of the supporting pillars and completely destabilizing the whole thing.

Justin:

I can't believe, why would you go, okay, let's do a roleplay real quick. Sydnee, what you doing this afternoon?

Sydnee:

Uh-

Justin:

Not much?

Sydnee:

No, not, not much. I'm not real busy.

Justin:

Do you wanna come down with me to the pier to watch a ship land?

Sydnee:

Uh-

Justin:

It's uh, you may have heard about it. It had uh, it's first voyage a few months ago. Do you wanna come down to the pier with me and watch a ship land?

Sydnee:

Well, uh, uh, sure, I guess. I mean, I don't know which ship is this now?

Justin:

It's the one that crashed into the pier a few months ago.

Sydnee:

Do, do you want me- ... you want me to come stand on the pier?

Justin:

Let's go down to the pier...

Sydnee:

And watch the ship that crashed into the pier.

Justin:

It's the same pier and the same ship and we're just gonna like roll the dice. Yeah.

Sydnee:

You know, I'm good. I'm good.

Justin:

Yeah. I figured it for you.

Sydnee:

I've got some other things.

Justin:

In retrospect, I'm good too.

Sydnee:

Yeah. I've got a baby and just I'm busy.

Justin:

So did he try again?

Sydnee:

No. A, after the second crash-

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

... uh, that was enough to scare off any investors-

Justin:

Sure. You gotta know when-

Sydnee:

... that he might have.

Justin:

... know when to hold 'em, know when to leave your boat to rot in the ocean.

Sydnee:

Which is basically what he did. He, he did take it back to England, I guess. I don't know, like he was tired of the french people making [laughs] fun of him. Which, you know, they, they had to have been at that point.

Justin:

Ah, brutal.

Sydnee:

Like, "Come on, you English nerd, what are you doing?" So he took his, he took his ship back to the port and left it there to rust with the Bessemer Saloon inside. Um, and pretty much abandoned the idea altogether. However, the Saloon did not die here.

Justin:

Oh, right? Oh, yeah?

Sydnee:

It never saw the sea again, but, uh, a few years later, Edward James Reed, who had been one of the initial investors, saw that the ship was about to, they were about to break it up, get rid of it, you know, get rid of all the pieces. And he said, "Hey, why don't, I will pay to have this whole cabin moved to my home. 'Cause I think it's kind of cool." So he had his, the whole cabin move to his home in Kent, the Hextable House and he turned it into a billiard room.

Justin:

Oh, excellent. Okay. Great.

Sydnee:

Which if you see pictures of it, it looks really cool. 'Cause it looks like a ship's cabin. Um, so he had that in his house and then later his house became the Swanley Agricultural College and the cabin was used as a lecture hall for a while-

Justin:

Hm...

Sydnee:

... which is super cool. But, uh, sadly it met its end not at the sea, as you would've expected, but um, it was destroyed in World War II.

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

So, but cool idea.

Justin:

Yeah. Nice try.

Sydnee:

Now we got better. Um, speaking of World War II, at that point, we got a lot better with the idea of how can we prevent motion sickness because it became an issue for a lot of our, a lot of our fighting men and women.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

Um, and so there was a lot of research into like how, how can we do something to prevent motion sickness? And in, in 1947 we just kind of noticed that antihistamines actually helped-

Justin:

Huh...

Sydnee:

... to prevent motion sickness and we were using them for other things. But we noticed that too. And so then that kind of became the treatment and the, and the medicine people took, which is still true today. Um, there was this theory for a while that, and this was popular in the military, that you could just get people into good enough shape and they wouldn't be susceptible.

Justin:

Yeah. I think you see that in media a lot that there's a connection between like the city slicker out on the ocean for the first time-

Sydnee:

Yes.

Justin:

... and, and he's, he gets sick all over his nice white dress slacks.

Sydnee:

[laughs] But the, but the hardened like-

Justin:

Sure.

Sydnee:

Sea weary-

Justin:

Captain Ron is unfazed.

Sydnee:

No, he never, he never gets... And, and-

Justin:

Man, I'm gonna watch *Captain Ron* this week.

Sydnee:

Yes we are.

Justin:

There's no better movie to watch at the beach. Woof!

Sydnee:

However-

Justin:

Stoked.

Sydnee:

... Captain Ron would be no less likely to get seasick than, uh, Martin Short.
[laughs]

Justin:

[laughs]

Sydnee:

Um...

Justin:

I mean, okay, if you're talking about their characters in the film-

Sydnee:

[laughs]

Justin:

... you are perhaps right. If you're talking about in life, if Kurt Russell or Martin Short is gonna get seasick, I'm gonna put my money on Martin Short every single time.

Sydnee:

See? That's the, that, see, that's the myth though.

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

Because that's what people thought. They thought like the little guys, the scrawny guys, the puny guys, the guys who aren't in good shape, they're going to get seasick. Um, and we always kind of assume this until in 1990 there was a Canadian experiment where they actually said, "Let's find out if that's true." So they took a bunch, I believe this was military personnel who were in pretty, who were not in great shape. They thought were kind of like puny, weak guys, for whatever reason they weren't in good shape. And so they put them in a, uh, precision angular mover.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

Which basically is this machine where you're in pitch darkness and they just kind of spin you around and upside down and throw you all over the place until you puke. Which sounds awful.

Justin:

It sounds like the, yeah, that sounds like really bad.

Sydnee:

So they did that, timed how long it took 'em to puke. And then they put them through a rigorous training and exercise program and they got really fit and reduce their body fat and got real, you know, got real small and then got real big.

Justin:

Got tiny and then got huge.

Sydnee:

Exactly. [laughs] Um, and then they put them back in the, the precision angular mover and... they did worse than they did the first time around.

Justin:

Oh man.

Sydnee:

So, and this is not to say that don't get in good shape because then you're gonna get motion sickness-

Justin:

'Cause you're more vulnerable.

Sydnee:

But I think it debunked the myth that like, all you have to do is exercise enough to get rid of your motion sickness.

Justin:

What, uh, what can you do, Syd? What are some things that, real quick, what are some things that actually work?

Sydnee:

So some things that actually work and most of us probably know this, are, are antihistamines like, uh, Dramamine is a very popular thing that people can take. Uh, meclizine, scopolamine, which comes in a handy little patch, which some people will wear. Um, I think that's part of the military like package for that kind of thing too. Uh, phenergan which just kind of helps with nausea. Ginger really can help. There is some evidence to back that up. So these are all things, of course, talk to your doctor about before you just take them. If you're-

Justin:

As always.

Sydnee:

If you're concerned or if you have medical conditions. Um, stay above deck can help. I read these things from a sailor. Stay above deck. Don't eat a lot before a full stomach is more likely to, to get nauseous. Don't drink booze, which is like that defeats the purpose of being on a boat, but-

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

Whatever. Watch the horizon, kind of stare at, uh, you know, the horizon to help orient yourself and stay midship. It moves less. Um, there are those sea bands that have the, you know, the acupuncture at your wrist.

Justin:

Yeah. It seems like a, um, seems made up.

Sydnee:

Well, I, I will say I tried them when I was pregnant and I, I did not find them very helpful myself. Um, there's conflicting, I, there's never really been good evidence to show that they work, but there are people who anecdotally swear by them and I will say this, they can't hurt you, it's a wrist band with a pressure point at your wrist. So if you'll wanna try 'em, they're usually cheap. They're safe. I say, give them a go. Eh... even if it's placebo, if it works, it works so.

Justin:

Excellent. Well, Sydnee thank you, uh, for, for covering that topic and thank you to you for listening at home. We hope you're, uh, uh, gonna treat yourself to a little vacation time this week. I'm sure you've earned it. Um, thank you to the Maximum Fun Network for having us on their, uh, their, their family of podcasts. Uh, this week I'm gonna recc- my special recommendation is *One Bad Mother*. Uh, which is a show about being a mom. You were on it, Syd.

Sydnee:

Yes. It's a great show, it's a ton of fun and I have a really cute shirt from their show too-

Justin:

That's true-

Sydnee:

... that I enjoy.

Justin:

That's true. It's a good shirt. Yeah. By the way, there's a lot of, uh, uh, Max Fun merch you can find at maxfunstore.com there, uh, two *Sawbones* shirts, one of which was designed by Sydnee's sister Teylor. That I'm wearing right this second, actually, I just realized.

Sydnee:

So go get it, 'cause it's awesome.

Justin:

Go get it, Sidney, you had, uh, a few other things.

Sydnee:

I wanna thank a couple of people who were nice enough to send us some presents, which we love and appreciate. Thank you, Deanna, for, uh, an adorable little t-shirt for our daughter, Charlie. Uh, that proclaims her a self-rescuing princess, which, of course she is. Um, we wanna congratulate John and Julie who got married in May and sent us some adorable pictures of that. And also thank you from, to whoever in Edinburgh sent us a really cool Cadbury tea towel. You didn't include your name. So I can't thank you by name, but if you tweet at us or email us or something, then I will thank you by name.

Justin:

We have been remiss in thanking people. By the way, PO Box 54, Huntington West Virginia, 25706 is the address if you wanna send us, uh, stuff. Uh, thank you to James and Hannah for the draft and the onesies. Thanks for, uh, the ring sling to Jan. Thanks for the, uh, book of remedies from Nick. Thanks to Kevin and Jessica Starr for the, uh, monster cereals. Uh, there was a, uh, Syd, the, the, um, the candy, remember the chocolate that we got?

Sydnee:

Oh my gosh. All the different kinds of chocolate.

Justin:

They were so good. I had like the... Oh man, this is gonna irritate me if I don't remember.

Sydnee:

Macadamia nuts and the, uh, um, corn nuts with the chocolate around? Oh, those are- jalapeno corn nuts.

Justin:

Sydnee's gonna run and check which brand of chocolate that was because I really appreciate, uh, that. Um, thank you to, uh, Dina and Danny for all the cool stuff from, uh, uh, Mardi Gras, I'm just going, I'm just like opening random things. Oh, Sydnee's gonna be so mad. I found the note from Brian at Fruition Chocolate. Uh, tastefruition.com is their, uh, address. They sent us some chocolate. It's very nice of them. I think that's everything.

Sydnee:

[out of breath] Fruition Chocolate!

Justin:

Yeah. Wait.

Sydnee:

[out of breath] Thank you, Fruition Chocolate.

Justin:

I found a card from them in, in the stacks, so-

Sydnee:

Are you kidding me?

Justin:

[laughs] That's gonna do it. For us on *Sawbones*, until next Wednesday, I'm Justin McElroy.

Sydnee:

I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Justin:

As always, don't drill a hole in your head. [laughs]

[theme music plays out]

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