

## **Sawbones 117: Christmas is Trying to Kill You**

Published December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2015

[Listen on mcelroy.family](http://mcelroy.family)

**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 are worth it!

[audience cheers]

[theme music plays]

**Justin:**

All right. Thank you, daddy. Hello, everybody. Welcome to Sawbones, a marital tour of misguided medicine.

[audience cheers]

**Justin:**

I am your co-host, uh, Justin McElroy.

**Sydnee:**

I'm Sydnee McElroy.

[audience cheers]

**Justin:**

Is it because..., ah, you're waiting until we've both introduced ourselves and then applauding for us both. How kind. Uh, that's what I'm gonna tell myself.

**Sydnee:**

No, no, [laughs] they just like me better.

[audience cheers]

**Justin:**

[laughs] Well, Syd, it's Christmas time again. And I, myself would very much like to live until Christmas.

**Sydnee:**

[laughs] Me too. Is that, are, were you worried—

**Justin:**

It's, if you—

**Sydnee:**

... about that?

**Justin:**

Well, I—

**Sydnee:**

I wish you had told me.

**Justin:**

... sort of always am, but like, Candenights especially gets me like, super worried about it. Because of all the days in Candenights, Christmas is like the top three of the days. It's in the top three for sure. Um, but, uh—

**Sydnee:**

Okay.

**Justin:**

... I just really want to live to it.

**Sydnee:**

And, and you think there's specific things about Christmas or Candenights or this time of year that—

**Justin:**

One is the excitement—

**Sydnee:**

... you're gonna die, or—

**Justin:**

One is the excitement. I don't know how, uh—

**Sydnee:**

... that you're just gonna keel over from the excitement?

**Justin:**

Yeah. A lot of bad movies have led me to believe that like, getting excited is the leading cause of heart attacks or fi— or if the movie was made in the '50s, uh, if your daughter enters into an interracial couple, that seems to be a big one. Uh, but those are the two leading causes of heart attacks. Um, I'm assuming number two in the '50s is like smoking all the time forever. Like constantly.

**Sydnee:**

Okay. I'll, I'll give you the third. The, the other two, just no comment, but that one, yeah. I mean that, sure.

**Justin:**

But I guess I'm not really that in any more danger at, uh, Christmas time than I am at any other time.

**Sydnee:**

Well, uh, I don't know that that's exactly true. I mean, there are definitely things that I think of as like, this time of year, like staples of the season that maybe you wanna stay away from that maybe that might pose a little, a little extra threat.

**Justin:**

Sydnee, are—are you saying Christmas is trying to kill me?

**Sydnee:**

I'm not saying it's trying to, I'm saying it might inadvertently kill you.

**Justin:**

Give me an example because like, I'm super stressed now.

**Sydnee:**

Well like, um, mistletoe—

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

... for example.

**Justin:**

That, no one actually has that or knows where to get it, but we all know that you kiss underneath it. That's what I know about mistletoe. Has anyone ever seen mistletoe for sale? Come on, help me out. I'm trying to do a thing.

**Sydnee:**

Did you bring it? [laughs] Are you trying to get lucky?

**Justin:**

Ohh!

**Sydnee:**

You have it.

**Justin:**

I love it.

**Sydnee:**

Do you have it scattered around the room?

**Justin:**

Hey—

**Sydnee:**

That's cute.

**Justin:**

... did you see what's up there? Mistletoe. It's 30 years old 'cause no one sold it for three decades, but all the kisses aren't used up.

**Sydnee:**

[laughs] Do you know anything about mistletoe? Like why, why do we kiss under it?

**Justin:**

I literally just gave you everything.

**Sydnee:**

Okay. [laughs] So mistletoe, romantically enough is a parasitic species. Um, it's actually a collection—

**Justin:**

Sounds about right. [laughs]

**Sydnee:**

It's actually a collection of several different plants that we kind of call mistletoe. Um, but generally it's like an evergreen plant. It's like viney and there are leaves and there are berries and they actually kind of grow into like, the branches of other trees and suck all the nutrients out of the trees.

**Justin:**

Hmm.

**Sydnee:**

They're like parasites.

**Justin:**

Got it.

**Sydnee:**

So that, so you can see, [laughs] how they were so well connected to, you know, love and romance.

**Justin:**

Love. Yeah. It makes perfect sense.

**Sydnee:**

Um, they're really important for ecosystems. So like, don't get rid of all of them.

**Justin:**

Unless I need a lot of—

**Sydnee:**

And that's my ecological message for the day. [laughs] Don't get rid of all the mistletoe.

**Justin:**

[laughs] Don't like—

**Sydnee:**

Everybody's trying to.

**Justin:**

Do you mean like burn them? Don't like, "Ah, mistletoe! Get it!"

**Sydnee:**

Maybe.

**Justin:**

Colony collapse. I heard about that—

**Sydnee:**

Out of anger, like you hung it up at your holiday party and nobody kissed you and at the end you were like...

**Justin:**

Now we need it.

**Sydnee:**

You're gonna pay.

**Justin:**

Think twice before you put it in the garbage disposal.

**Sydnee:**

[laughs] Um, the use of mistletoe though, as medicine, because it has been used as medicine—

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:**

... dates back to the time of the Druids.

**Justin:**

The poison?

**Sydnee:**

What?

**Justin:**

Wait, you said it's, is, is it, is it poisonous?

[audience laughs]

**Sydnee:**

[laughs] Well, how did you know that?

**Justin:**

Well, I know a lot, I mean, I know lots of things about it. I know you can't buy it 'cause it's poison.

**Sydnee:**

Uh-huh. No. Well, okay. We'll get to that. [laughs]

**Justin:**

Okay. Sorry.

**Sydnee:**

Let's talk about why it was medicine first.

**Justin:**

Got it.

**Sydnee:**

So it was noted by the Druids that it would grow even in the dead of winter. So even when everything almost was dead and there was frost everywhere, you would see mistletoe growing. And so it was thought to be something connected to like, vitality and maybe fertility. And so maybe it was a good idea to eat it. Or to—

**Justin:**

Do you think that's how we got the—

**Sydnee:**

... take it in some way so that you could have more kids.

**Justin:**

You think that's how we got like the yuletide connection? 'Cause it was like, it grew really well in cold times.

**Sydnee:**

Well, yeah, I think that, yeah, I think that makes sense.

**Justin:**

Crushed it.

**Sydnee:**

Yeah. I think so. Okay.

**Justin:**

Not just a hat rack, folks.

**Sydnee:**

Um, the, they also give it to animals to like, make your animals have more animal babies, [laughs] or animal kids.

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

Um, the Greeks also thought that it was a good medicine, uh, Hippocrates recommended using it for a lot of different things from like, problems with your spleen.

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:**

Which you know, when you have them, right? You know when your spleen's acting up, everybody does. Uh, to menstrual cramps, which are so much harder to figure out than spleen problems.

**Justin:**

How would I know I'm having a spleen issue?

**Sydnee:**

Well, I mean you wouldn't but... [laughs]

**Justin:**

Oh, okay. Got it.

**Sydnee:**

They used to blame a lot of—

**Justin:**

I'm with you now.

**Sydnee:**

... they used to blame a lot of stuff on, on their spleens.



**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

That used to be a common thing like, "Oh, it's just your spleen acting up. That's why you're so grouchy." [laughs] "Eat some mistletoe."

**Justin:**

Eat some mistletoe, that'll help.

**Sydnee:**

You'll be fine. Uh, you know, who else was a big proponent of mistletoe?

**Justin:**

Who?

**Sydnee:**

Somebody who I like to think I've made a little bit of a celebrity...

**Justin:**

Who?

**Sydnee:**

Pliny the Elder. [laughs]

[audience cheers]

**Justin:**

Oh. That fool? That fool always shows up.

**Sydnee:**

Every time Pliny the Elder gets cheers when we say his name, it makes me happy.

**Justin:**

Yeah.

**Sydnee:**

Some, I'm like this dude from back in history, like somewhere like, I mean he is dead, but some, [laughs] somewhere in his grave, we're all cheering for him. And it's like, yes.

**Justin:**

I did it.

**Sydnee:**

I've lived on.

**Justin:**

I got on a podcast.

**Sydnee:**

Through Sydnee.

**Justin:**

Also, what's a podcast? I told my dad I'd get on a podcast. And he was like, "What's that, Pliny?" Pliny the, [laughs] "I, Pliny the Elder Elder am wondering what a podcast is." And Pliny the Elder was like, "I don't know fool, but I'm gonna get on there. And I'm gonna make it legal to dance here, wherever we are at." Greece? Rome. Where was it illegal to dance?

**Sydnee:**

Footloose? [laughs]

**Justin:**

Footloose. That's right. That's right. I got Footloose and Grease mixed up because they both have kind of a—

**Sydnee:**

Connect Footloose to Grease now, as fast as you can. Six, you've got six moves. [laughs] Is that what, how that game was?

**Justin:**

Do they both have a character named Danny Zuko? Well, I guess there's that.

**Sydnee:**

So, [laughs] Pliny thought that it was good for epilepsy, for ulcers and also to treat poisoning, which is really strange as we'll cover soon. Um, but he also wrote... the reason that we think the Druids used it for medicine as I earlier, the reason I think that, is because of what Pliny wrote about it. So he had, he wrote this big description of the way it was used in what was called the Druids ritual of oak and mistletoe. And this is actually where a lot

of people kind of get their perceptions of what Druids were like, like with trees and everything.

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

Uh, because he wrote, [laughs] this big description of this ritual where on the sixth day of the moon, you hail in the moon and, and that means the, they have a word that means healing all things, and you prepare a ritual sacrifice and you have a tree with mistletoe and you're gonna kill two white bulls. And then, um, you're gonna—

**Justin:**

What?

**Sydnee:**

Yeah. You're gonna kill some bulls and then you're gonna take the mistletoe and you boil it and you drink this drink and then everybody's gonna get pregnant. And it's a great ritual. [laughs] I'm assuming you have to do something else after that. Like you're, [laughs] you're gonna kill the, [laughs] kill the bulls you drink the mistletoe drink, and we won't talk about the next part. This is a family show, but then there are babies.

**Justin:**

Okay. Got it.

**Sydnee:**

Get it? Uh, but that's probably where we, and, and that's the only place that this like ritual is really well described and that's probably where we all get that weird perception of like the Druids, like all like trees, kill bulls, you know, chanting.

**Justin:**

Stonehenge.

**Sydnee:**

[laughs]

**Justin:**

Were the Druids Stonehenge?

**Sydnee:**

I don't think so. [laughs]

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

Maybe, I don't know.

**Justin:**

Hey, were the Druids Stonehenge?

**Audience Member:**

Yeah.

**Justin:**

All right.

**Sydnee:**

Sure.

**Justin:**

Cool. I see a thumbs up back there.

**Sydnee:**

Yes, the Druids were Stonehenge. But I, I think that's where that perception, it's from Pliny.

**Justin:**

Oh.

**Sydnee:**

And as we all know, Pliny only sort of knew what he was ever talking about.

**Justin:**

Ever. Like, yeah. At best he was 20% accurate.

**Sydnee:**

[laughs] In the middle ages, it was sort of used as a medicine in the sense that you would hang it from like your ceiling to ward off evil spirits. So that's medicinal?

**Justin:**

Okay. Yeah. Yeah. I'll grant you that. Sure. Why not?

**Sydnee:**

But you could hang it around your door to scare off witches.

**Justin:**

Or vampire, like, like garlic with vampires. That kind of thing?

**Sydnee:**

I didn't say vampires, witches. This is very specific.

**Justin:**

Okay. Got it.

**Sydnee:**

Okay? Just witches. Um, it was also thought that it would stop fire, but I'm thinking that if something's on fire and you throw a mistletoe on it, it's not gonna stop it.

**Justin:**

That's the, okay, wait, hold on.

**Sydnee:**

Right?

**Justin:**

Stop. Wait, no stop. That's when you could—like once, like right? You try that once. It's like, "No, this, we cracked this one. It does not help with fire."

**Sydnee:**

That fire got bigger.

**Justin:**

That fire got bigger because there's things that burn in it. What were we thinking? Why did we listen to Greg?

**Sydnee:**

Uh, its use as something for kissing purposes, [laughs] kissing purposes. Um, probably actually dates back to its connection to the Greek festival of Saturnalia, because it was a symbol of fertility, we've already established

this. Um, so it could be used for like, marriage rights and then it was also just associated with romance and, and love and that kind of thing.

Um, there were even like enemies could make truces over or underneath some mistletoe. So you would find mistletoe tree and then you could like shake hands with your enemy and then you were cool.

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

So, or kiss them I guess.

**Justin:**

Or kiss them. Yeah.

**Sydnee:**

If you secretly love them. Oh, that's so dramatic. You secretly loved them all along and then you shake hands and you're like, ah...

**Justin:**

I love this.

**Sydnee:**

I loved you all the time.

**Justin:**

It's like the Cutting Edge. Right? You thought they were fighting the whole time. And then she was like, "Toe pick." And he, then he—

**Sydnee:**

Is that what that was about?

**Justin:**

... but then they got together at the end. Yeah. It's the one movie where the two people don't really like each other at the beginning. And then later on, they fall in love.

**Sydnee:**

I wish they would explore that trope more.

**Justin:**

Where do they come up with this stuff? Hollywood.

**Sydnee:**

So in Victorian times, it, you know, mistletoe had become an established tradition. And you, the way that it works is that if you saw a woman standing underneath the mistletoe, so I guess if you were a Victorian man, you would like, hang it up everywhere like traps, um, you, [laughs] you saw a woman standing underneath it, you were allowed to kiss her and she can't refuse or else it's bad luck, which is creepy—

**Justin:**

Yikes.

**Sydnee:**

... like pretty creepy.

**Justin:**

A little. Yeah.

**Sydnee:**

What, [laughs] what goes along with that is that, you know, there are berries on mistletoe, right? The little white berries. And what you would do is every time somebody got kissed under it, it like used up a little bit of the mistletoe, so you would pluck off a berry. And then once all the berries are gone, there's no more kissing power.

**Justin:**

Oh, kissing power is exhausted?

**Sydnee:**

So you're done. So no more.

**Justin:**

I'm glad there's a scientific basis behind it that they, you have kiss fuel that you expend.

**Sydnee:**

From the mistletoe berries. Now, the thing that we've already alluded to, uh, is that the sad thing about mistletoe is that it, it is poisonous.

**Justin:**

Oh man.

**Sydnee:**

It is definitely poisonous. There are a couple different varieties that are poisonous. The most common has a toxin called Phoratoxin, which can cause, I would say some pretty unromantic things like drowsiness, diarrhea, uh, blurred vision, puking, uh, weakness and seizures, which is crazy. 'Cause as I mentioned, it's been used to treat seizures for a really long time. So...

**Justin:**

So not well?

**Sydnee:**

Not a good idea. All parts of it are dangerous. Not just the berries, like the le—so like if you really have a hankering to eat a mistletoe leaf, which I don't, like, they're kind of pointy.

**Justin:**

Okay. But like berries, you think that they might want to eat those?

**Sydnee:**

Mayb—I don't know, they're berries.

**Justin:**

Yeah. That's true. Berries are delicious. I can see getting hungry enough and not getting any mooches and thinking like, "Man, I'm gonna eat you, you useless, you stupid plant. I'm just gonna eat you. You're not good for anything."

**Sydnee:**

What's crazy is that—

**Justin:**

It's the worst holiday party of my life. Now it's gonna end with seizures. What have I done?

[audience laughs]

**Sydnee:**

[laughs] Despite the fact that it is definitely poisonous, it's still, um, kind of a staple in, in some like alternative medicines. Uh, you can use mistletoe like injections. You can take it as an oral preparation or there are like shots of mistletoe that you can be prescribed. Especially in Europe, they do this for,



uh, everything from like headaches to, again, infertility, that theme is still there. Um, high blood pressure, arthritis, for seizures. Again, I, I don't know. Um, there are even some places where it has been used for cancer.

**Justin:**

Wow. Uh, uh, effectively or? No, no, no, no.

**Sydnee:**

No. Um— [laughs]

**Justin:**

No, no, no.

**Sydnee:**

Now, there are, okay. Let, well, I'll cut it, I'll cut it a little 'cause usually we get really, we get really upset about this. I'm gonna cut it a little bit of slack because there have been some studies done in labs that show that like mistletoe really does kill cancer cells in labs. But in people, we haven't really seen such great results. So I don't know that I would be rushing off to get a mistletoe injection.

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

So—

**Justin:**

Perfect.

**Sydnee:**

... so, but it, but we've been investigating it since the '60s, so we are really hot to use mistletoe as medicine. I don't know. I don't know why.

**Justin:**

Um, well we, is it expensive?

**Sydnee:**

I don't, I mean I've never bought it.

**Justin:**

'Cause maybe they wanna sell it. Like—

**Sydnee:**

No, that—

**Justin:**

Oh and the berries.

**Sydnee:**

I like that thinking, that drug companies—

**Justin:**

The berries look like—

**Sydnee:**

... that drug companies are always out to make a buck—

**Justin:**

The berries look like—

**Sydnee:**

... from the mistletoe.

**Justin:**

... the berries look like little pills too, so...

**Sydnee:**

So it's perfect. [laughs] But I would say that despite that, my best advice, and this is important.

**Justin:**

Good, good. 'Cause I'm a little confused about mistletoe. So 'cause I do wanna not get cancer.

**Sydnee:**

Okay.

**Justin:**

So—

**Sydnee:**

But you also don't wanna die for Christmas.

**Justin:**

Right. So what's the number one, gimme like, gimme some guide rules for mistletoe.

**Sydnee:**

I'm gonna break it down real simple 'cause I know that's not just Cheerwine in that, in that can, um, [laughs] very simply.

**Justin:**

Thanks to whoever brought the Cheerwine, by the way.

**Sydnee:**

Don't eat mistletoe. [laughs]

**Justin:**

Don't, everybody. Don't eat mistletoe.

**Sydnee:**

You got it?

**Justin:**

Okay. That seems very fair to me.

**Sydnee:**

Okay.

**Justin:**

Um, that's an, that's an easier thing to, to remember because, uh, I've always been somebody who believes that b— above all...

**Sydnee:**

Justin, are you okay?

**Justin:**

Don'the—it's the Grinch! Oh no—

**Sydnee:**

The Grinch, no!

**Justin:**

... no, no, not me! Why was I so festive? No!

**Sydnee:**

The Grinch stole Justin! [laughs] Oh no. He's such a mean one.

[audience laughs]

[theme music plays]

[ad break]

**Sydnee:**

Oh no. I feel like that part in Wayne's World when it's just Garth, you know? Um, well, so usually, um, on Sawbones when Justin isn't here, I have like a backup. Um, I think I need a, somebody to fill in. Thank you.

[audience cheers]

**Sydnee:**

I'm back up, my hand's in. No, you're gonna have to sit over here a mic for us. this is Rileigh. She's my sister.

[audience cheers]

**Rileigh:**

Hi everybody.

**Sydnee:**

You, you may remember her from such episodes of Sawbones as the one where Rileigh was there or the other one where Rileigh was there.

**Rileigh:**

Or maybe the ones you just skipped because Justin wasn't on there.

**Sydnee:**

[laughs] No, no. There was a, there was, see, there was this crazy thing that happened once where Justin and Rileigh Freaky Friday'd into each other's bodies. And so Rileigh had to help me. Well, Justin in Rileigh's body had to help me hope the, host the podcast, and then Rileigh in Justin's body, I think you had to cover E3.

**Rileigh:**

I did. And it was really confusing. Uh, I don't know a lot about video games or traveling or anything.

**Sydnee:**

I don't know how you didn't get Justin fired, but I'm glad.

**Raleigh:**

I almost did. But then I recovered and just made a funny joke that sounded like something Justin would say.

**Sydnee:**

[laughs] Just, you just pretended your way through, that's interesting.

**Raleigh:**

Yeah.

**Sydnee:**

Well, Raleigh, thank you. Uh, the Grinch stole Justin. So, um, I'm assuming he'll bring him back at some point, but—

**Raleigh:**

Christmas came early for me.

**Sydnee:**

[laughs] Uh, but we're talking about, Justin and I have been talking about things that could kill you at Christmas.

**Raleigh:**

Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:**

And you asked me a really weird question the other day about things that could kill you at Christmas. Do, could you share the, and this is, this is real, this isn't like a, this isn't like a bit, she really asked me this question.

[laughs]

**Raleigh:**

I'm still wondering about it. And it's a real question. Uh, do you think anyone has ever tried to poison Santa Claus with cookies?

**Sydnee:**

So I have some problems, [laughs] with this. I, I'm a little worried. So are, um, where are you on the Santa existence?

**Raleigh:**

What?

**Sydnee:**

Okay. I got it. Never mind. We'll move on from there. Okay. So, I hope not.

**Raleigh:**

I mean, I would hope so too. That would be awful.

**Sydnee:**

Right?

**Raleigh:**

Who could ever do such a thing?

**Sydnee:**

But well, some people have tried to poison others with Christmas cookies.

**Raleigh:**

It's such a jolly season.

**Sydnee:**

I know, but, but cookies are so delicious and nobody can resist them. And so they're perfect for poisoning.

**Raleigh:**

I mean, I guess I get it, but it's Christmas.

**Sydnee:**

So let, let me tell you about a couple times where I don't know, I mean, let's say they weren't trying to poison Santa with Christmas cookies, but Santa may have been like an accidental victim—

**Raleigh:**

Wait, what?

**Sydnee:**

... of these cookies had they been set out, right?

**Rileigh:**

It happened?

**Sydnee:**

Yes. Well not, I mean, not Santa, like Santa was not killed by Christmas cookies— [laughs]

**Rileigh:**

You scared me.

**Sydnee:**

... as far as I know. As far as I know, I mean, tell me, I don't, I don't keep up with Twitter all the time. So somebody let me know, during this show. Uh, so last year there was, uh, a woman in New York. And when you look at these, by the way, if you ever look at these stories, 'cause these are real stories. Uh, the women who have done this look so sweet. Their mug shots, they're in like Christmas sweaters. [laughs] They're like these little ladies and they're like, "Hi. And I poisoned somebody with cookies."

Um, there was a, an older woman in New York who mailed Christmas cookies laced with rat poisoning and laxatives, [laughs] because I love that. It's not enough just to kill somebody. You're gonna poop yourself a lot before you die.

**Rileigh:**

That's almost worse. Isn't it?

**Sydnee:**

[laughs] I think so. Like it's insult to injury. It's like, "Hahaha, you're pooping and you're dying. Hahaha." [laughs]

[audience laughs]

**Sydnee:**

Um, and she, she mailed them to like a, another resident of the, of the town she lived in, randomly and the resident got suspicious. I don't know if they like, sniffed the cookies or gave them to somebody they didn't like, I don't know what they did, but they, they called the police and they got the woman arrested and seriously, you should look up this mugshot 'cause she looks so pleasant.

**Rileigh:**

Wait...

**Sydnee:**

But she tried to kill somebody with Christmas cookies.

**Rileigh:**

So she just picked a random person.

**Sydnee:**

Mm-hmm.

**Rileigh:**

She just like, picked a random address outta the phone book and was like, "This is what I want for Christmas this year. I wanna kill someone while they're pooping their pants with Christmas cookies."

**Sydnee:**

I guess she was bored.

**Rileigh:**

I mean, hey.

**Sydnee:**

It was a dare. [laughs] She just had a lot of vacation time around Christmas and was like, "Eh, you know, it's on the bucket list." [laughs] Um, now, week before last, this just happened. This was just in the news. Uh—

**Rileigh:**

Breaking news.

**Sydnee:**

Yeah. Breaking news, week before last. Um, there was an older woman in Germany who was caught handing out, uh, poisoned Christmas cookies, just to people like out in the town square. So she lived in Berlin and she was just wandering up to people like a really pleasant looking woman and was like, "Hello, dearie. Here's," well, only in German. I can't speak German. But, "Hello dearie," in German, "here are some Christmas cookies."

**Rileigh:**

So Snow White.



**Sydnee:**

"Merry Christmas." [laughs] Sort of like Snow White.

**Raleigh:**

Here, cookies.

**Sydnee:**

Eat this apple, but it's better. It's cookies.

**Raleigh:**

Who could do such a thing?

**Sydnee:**

I know, but so she, she gave cookies to this couple and they got super sick and ended up in the hospital and it turned out again, rat poison.

**Raleigh:**

Why is this such a common like, Christmas time occurrence?

**Sydnee:**

I don't know. And why rat poisoning?

**Raleigh:**

Why rat poisoning?

**Sydnee:**

I guess 'cause everybody has it. I don't know.

**Raleigh:**

Does anyone know?

**Sydnee:**

But, um, what's terrifying is, she's still at large.

**Raleigh:**

What? Are you here?

**Sydnee:**

[laughs] They haven't caught her yet, so I guess if you go to Berlin, be careful. [laughs] Don't take—

**Raleigh:**

Don't take cookies from strangers.

**Sydnee:**

... don't take cookies from strangers.

**Raleigh:**

I would think that would be like common sense. I mean, I don't know. Maybe not. For most people. Not see like a random lady on the street, just be like, "Hey, here's some cookies." And they're like, "Oh my gosh, thank you."

**Sydnee:**

But do you know that, weirdly, do you know that they also tried to assassinate Rasputin with cookies?

**Raleigh:**

Who?

**Sydnee:**

You know, like Rasputin from like the Disney movie?

**Raleigh:**

I don't...

**Sydnee:**

That one.

**Raleigh:**

What?

**Sydnee:**

The evil sorcerer guy from the Disney movie. Ain't that what he was? He was in the Disney movie and the...

**Raleigh:**

I've never seen that movie. [laughs]

**Sydnee:**

You don't know who Rasputin is?

**Raleigh:**

I have no idea.

**Sydnee:**

We'll cover that another day. Anyway, [laughs] they tried to assassinate him with cookies, but it didn't work. So they shot him or stabbed him or something. [laughs] So, not a great story.

**Raleigh:**

I would think the cookies would be better way to go.

**Sydnee:**

I think, I think there's a, there's a really practical piece of advice that I can give you.

**Raleigh:**

Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:**

Um, and, uh, listen very closely.

**Raleigh:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

And you have to pay attention. Um, because again, that's not just Cheerwine. Don't drink that. Uh, [laughs] but because you're a teenager and you know.

**Raleigh:**

Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:**

I know with the phones and the TV and the electronics, the attention—

**Raleigh:**

All those gadgets.

**Sydnee:**

The gadgets, right? Don't eat cookies. [laughs]

**Raleigh:**

Ever?

**Sydnee:**

I would say just don't. Be, just be on the safe side. Just don't eat cookies.

**Raleigh:**

That's such a depressing thing to tell me—

**Justin:**

Sydnee. Sydnee, run! Sydnee!

**Sydnee:**

Justin's back.

**Raleigh:**

No!

**Justin:**

I'm okay. He was, um, he's doing massages. He feels bad about stealing, all the stealing, bad Christmas stuff, and he's doing, uh, massages.

**Raleigh:**

What?

**Justin:**

Yeah, he's doing spa ch—stuff. All the spa stuff.

**Raleigh:**

That sounds really creepy. I mean, Sydnee just told me how to take cookies from strangers. Why would I take massages from strangers?

**Justin:**

Maybe a mani-pedi?

**Raleigh:**

I could go for a mani-pedi right now.

**Justin:**

Ladies and gentlemen, Raleigh Smirl.

**Sydnee:**

Thank you, Raleigh.

**Justin:**

Um, that, those have to—

**Sydnee:**

Now he's back. [laughs]

**Justin:**

Those have to, so mistletoe.

**Sydnee:**

Mm-hmm.

**Justin:**

Whatever you just talked about.

**Sydnee:**

Right, cookies.

**Justin:**

Oh, cookies. Oh man.

**Sydnee:**

I know.

**Justin:**

Did you eat cookies or did you just talk?

**Sydnee:**

Oh no, no. I told 'em, I told Raleigh not to. I told everybody not to.

**Justin:**

Perfect. Okay.

**Sydnee:**

Don't eat cookies ever again 'cause I told you not to.

**Justin:**

I don't care if I, as long as I didn't miss any eating of cookies. Uh, but those are the two things that I have to worry about at Christmas, right?

**Sydnee:**

No, not the, probably not the only two things.

**Justin:**

Uh, what about holly?

**Sydnee:**

Oh no, no, no, no. You gotta watch out for holly. Um, if you eat just, uh, 'cause you probably have heard this too. Holly is poisonous as well. Um, if you eat a couple berries.

**Justin:**

Christmas, how's it going? Seems bad. Like a lot of poisonous things, it seems like.

**Sydnee:**

If you eat like one or two berries you're, I mean you're probably gonna be okay. Like, I don't know of why you wanna do this. [laughs] Like, "I heard I would be okay if I ate these two." I don't think they're delicious.

**Justin:**

[laughs] You're trying to build up a tolerance like Iocane powder. Are you trying to, "By next Christmas I'm gonna be willable to eat three holly berries. God is my witness."

**Sydnee:**

But if you eat like, 20 you'll die. So don't do that.

**Justin:**

Okay. Got it.

**Sydnee:**

So somewhere between two and 20 is the number. Don't try it. Um, it has, it has something called Theobromine, which is actually really structurally similar to, uh, caffeine. And it's, there's a lot of it in chocolate. Not enough to hurt us, but that's why dogs can't eat chocolate.

**Justin:**

Oh.

**Sydnee:**

Figured this puzzle out while I was solving the holly problem. I'm sorry. I just was excited about that.

**Justin:**

Uh, what about, no, that's good. What about, uh, poinsettias? Everybody loves those and knows where to buy 'em.

**Sydnee:**

And, and poinsettias I think ki— kinda does sound like pois—

**Justin:**

Is it poinsettia? Points—

**Sydnee:**

Poison. They sound like poison.

**Justin:**

Poinsettias or poinsettias?

**Sydnee:**

Poinsettia? Settia?

**Justin:**

Okay. Got it.

**Sydnee:**

I think they kind of sound like poison either way and everybody I think knows like, don't eat poinsettias. They're actually not as bad for you, so if you wanna eat a poinsettias and then you, like, let's say you have something you wanna get out of. So you wanna be sick, but not really sick. You could eat some poinsettia. 'Cause it'll just make you kinda like, "Oh, my tummy." But it like—

**Justin:**

So—sorry, one more time?

**Sydnee:**

Oh, my tummy. [laughs]

**Justin:**

Okay. That was really cute. So I just wanted to see, okay. Okay.

**Sydnee:**

That's kind of like how you and your brothers are all the time. You're kind of always like, "Oh, my tummy." [laughs]

**Justin:**

Okay. Well what about, what about Christmas trees? Certainly, they're okay. Right?

**Sydnee:**

Um, if you wanna eat a pine tree.

**Justin:**

Oh, tannenbaum?

**Sydnee:**

[laughs] If you wanna eat a pine tree, you'll probably be okay, like in terms of like—

**Justin:**

You know me so well.

**Sydnee:**

... but like a lot of people. [laughs]

**Justin:**

I do, I do wanna do that.

**Sydnee:**

A lot of people don't eat pine trees. Um—

**Justin:**

They don't know what they're missing. [laughs]

**Sydnee:**

... generally, uh—

**Justin:**

If you, the, the secret is you gotta cook 'em low and slow. [laughs] If you try to rush into that bad boy you're, it's gonna be tough as nails. You gotta



cook it low and slow. 12 hours saute, little Rosemary, little bark. Extra bark.  
[laughs]

**Sydnee:**

[laughs] It's more of a, it's, [laughs] it's more of a mechanical problem because the little needles will like lodge in your GI tract. Like—

**Justin:**

Oh.

**Sydnee:**

... place and that's bad. Like you don't want that.

**Justin:**

Um, do you know, uh, Travis actually got a, a Christmas tree needle stuck in his foot once and got infected, he got a surgery. Ask him about it later.

**Sydnee:**

Is he okay?

**Justin:**

No, he... Um, okay. I got one.

**Sydnee:**

So we'll be closing the show tonight—

**Justin:**

Yeah, goodnight.

**Sydnee:**

... thank you for coming.

**Justin:**

This is a lock. Eggnog. Uh, eggnog. Hey, real quick here, show of hands, if you're down with eggnog, raise your hand. I'm curious where we stand. Okay. Put 'em down. Not down with eggnog, raise your hand. It's literally like 50/50, right? It's crazy.

**Sydnee:**

Eh.

**Justin:**

Okay. Sorry. You're like, eh, on it. Right? We made our own.

**Sydnee:**

No, I like eggnog.

**Justin:**

You're into it. We made our own, it was great. Anyhoo.

**Sydnee:**

And we made our own and we made it without like, cooking anything. We just made like the raw eggs—

**Justin:**

That's how we do, ride or die. We don't care.

**Sydnee:**

... and blended them.

**Justin:**

I know a doctor.

**Sydnee:**

So the reason that everybody's worried about eggnog is because like raw eggs, salmonella, right?

**Justin:**

Yeah.

**Sydnee:**

Like I did a, we did a whole show on that. I'm not gonna talk about salmonella.

**Justin:**

Look it up.

**Sydnee:**

Um, it's probably, it's probably okay most of the time if the eggs were pasteurized. You're probably still, still pretty cool. Like there is a risk, it's like something in like 400,000 eggs a year in the US do have salmonella in them. [laughs] So I don't know, take your chances?

**Justin:**

Yeah.

**Sydnee:**

Maybe? Um, I think this is kind of cool. At Rockefeller University, uh, there is a bacterial pathogenesis in the immunology lab where they have been, for like 50 years, every year around this time. Well, earlier in December, they make a batch of eggnog and then, out of raw eggs, and then they keep it in the cold room. Like not in the fridge, in the cold room, until Christmas and then they all drink it and nobody gets sick.

**Justin:**

Oh really?

**Sydnee:**

And it's like a tradition, I guess this is how like, bacteriologists have fun. [laughs] Like, "Haha. We knew it was safe and we proved it."

**Justin:**

Take that. Don't they have like, um, science for that? [laughs] Can't they just do some science?

**Sydnee:**

It may be because the one, the batch they make is like 14% alcohol, which is a little higher than most of like, [laughs] your store bought eggnogs or like what you're probably making.

**Justin:**

Not quite Cheerwine levels, but, I mean this Cheerwine.

**Sydnee:**

Yeah. No really. But generally, generally the booze won't kill the bacteria, so don't rely on that. I mean, do add it, but don't rely on that.

**Justin:**

Sydnee, can I sing you something?

**Sydnee:**

Yeah.

**Justin:**

[singing] What about chestnuts?

**Sydnee:**

Yeah. You wanna be really careful about that.

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

Uh, the main reason is, I mean, chestnuts are fine. If you get the, like the eating ones, the sweet Chestnuts, the American Chestnuts. If you accidentally get horse Chestnuts, those are, are definitely poisonous and will make you puke a lot.

**Justin:**

Cool.

**Sydnee:**

So don't eat that and you should be able to tell because, um, the chestnuts you can eat are encased in this super sharp, like needle sharp, [laughs] shell of little spiny green things. And if you pick it up, it hurts really badly. So if it's that, eat it.

**Justin:**

[laughs] Cool job, nature. You did it again.

**Sydnee:**

We have a ton of those in our backyard.

**Justin:**

Um, grandma and grandpa?

**Sydnee:**

Uh, you might wanna be careful.

**Justin:**

What?

**Sydnee:**

About grandma and grandpa. Um, because this was actually, I found this on a list of like dangers around the holiday season, watch out for these things, watch out for grandma and grandpa. They might have medicine in their purse. [laughs] And your kids might get into it.

**Justin:**

Like—

**Sydnee:**

So don't, don't you think they're so cuddly and snuggly, grandma and grandpa. And then—

**Justin:**

They're walking dangers with fake teeth. They're waiting to give your kids drugs. If I have to worry about everybody's gonna give our baby drugs, I'm never gonna get to do anything else. What about my free time, you know? Um, so is there anything, is there anything you can, uh, trust?

**Sydnee:**

I mean like the, just the, you know, the joy and the peace of the holiday season, brotherly love and family, togetherness, beer.

**Justin:**

[laughs] Okay, great.

**Sydnee:**

That's all I got.

**Justin:**

Ladies and gentlemen—

**Sydnee:**

I didn't, I didn't research beer, so it may, I'm never gonna know. It may be dangerous, but I'm just gonna stick with, it's fine.

**Justin:**

What? For, uh, that's gonna do it for us. Thank you so much for coming out to Candlesnights. Um, uh, we got a lot more, so make sure you stick around. Thank you, thank you, thank you for coming. You're all so super cool. Uh, and thank you for listening to Sawbones. If you've never listened before, uh, you can go to [sawbonesshow.com](http://sawbonesshow.com) and listen to more. But, uh, anyway—

**Sydnee:**

Thank you for the, thank you to the Grinch for stealing Justin.

**Justin:**

Thanks, the Grinch.

**Sydnee:**

Yes. So that, uh, Rileigh could come out.

**Justin:**

Thanks to Rileigh Smirl, and uh, for, uh, Sydnee M—uh, so until the next time we talk to you for perfectly safe beer, my name is Justin McElroy.

**Sydnee:**

My name's Sydnee McElroy.

**Justin:**

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

[theme music plays]

MaximumFun.org.

Comedy and culture.

Artist owned.

Audience supported.