

Sawbones 51: Hiccups

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

[theme music plays]

Justin:

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

Sydnee:

And I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Justin:

Sydnee I've been, uh thinking a lot about this and I have to find a way to improve my brand, to increase the scope and power of the Justin McElroy brand.

Sydnee:

Aren't you, like, already internet famous enough?

Justin:

Oh, 34,000 followers on Twitter? What's that Sydnee? It's nothing. It's a drop in the hat. Look at Gaga, look at Bieber. I gotta get into the ranks.

Sydnee:

You just really love to throw that number around whenever you can, don't you?

Justin:

No, I don't. I don't know about that. Anyway, I gotta—

Sydnee:

Justin corrects me constantly, I'll be like "Justin has over like 20,000," he's like "Uh, um, that's 30,000."

Justin:

Um... that's all I've got. Um—

Sydnee:

I'm sorry.

Justin:

... the, uh, the brand of Justin McElroy, I feel like it's been on the— the wane, I need it to wax, I need to improve my brand, I need to grow. I need your ideas for how I can do this.

Sydnee:

Uh, have you considered getting like, a case of hiccups that won't go away?

Justin:

Uh, that was not high on my list. Did that work for somebody?

Sydnee:

There was a— yeah, there was this girl in Florida, in like Tampa, Jennifer Mee, May, Mee, something, who, uh, got hiccups when she was 15 for like several weeks. And, you know, like news stations like to do those, listen to this zany piece of news. I think that comes after like the squirrel on water skis kind of bit.

Justin:

Right, okay. So a really bad case of hiccups, that's it?

Sydnee:

Well, I think the only problem is—

Justin:

Hiccup boy.

Sydnee:

Yeah.

Justin:

Justin McElroy, hiccup boy.

Sydnee:

But I don't think it's very long lasting fame.

Justin:

Oh yeah?

Sydnee:

Like, I think it's the kinda thing that everybody's like, "Did you hear about hiccup girl?" And then like it fades over time. So you kinda have to do something else—

Justin:

Okay, spice it up.

Sydnee:

... to remind people later, like, "Hey, I'm still out there, I'm still—"

Justin:

Like what? I'm— I wanna extend my brand as much as possible.

Sydnee:

Well, uh, last year hiccup girl was found guilty of murder.

Justin:

Oh, okay. Well that's not a—that's not great for the brand. That's kinda short sighted.

Sydnee:

I mean, she had to do something else I guess to keep herself in the spotlight.

Justin:

I guess. Sh—like, really?

Sydnee:

Yeah, she—

Justin:

Did the— did the—

Sydnee:

... really did.

Justin:

... headlines like read, "Hiccup girl murders somebody"?

Sydnee:

Yeah, hiccup girl guilty of first degree murder.

Justin:

Hatchi matchi, I—

Sydnee:

Which is not, I mean, I— I understand not wanting to be known as hiccup girl, I mean, I don't think—

Justin:

There are better way—how about helpful girl?

Sydnee:

[laughs]

Justin:

Help— uh, la— lady who helps the homeless girl, that would be effective, more effective. But I mean, it's gotta be annoying having hiccups for so long. You're on edge.

Sydnee:

It's so annoying that years later, you murder someone.

Justin:

Perhaps. Okay, uh, I— let— I need a better exit strategy than this. Let's say I become hiccup boy, but I need—I need to get out, I need to get out of the game. Tell me that there are some cures, uh, from history that can help me.

Sydnee:

Well, as you may imagine, there are many, many cures. Well, I shouldn't say there are many cures for hiccups. There are many theoretical, supposed, alleged cures for hiccups.

Justin:

We do air quotes a lot—

Sydnee:

Other than murder.

Justin:

... uh, while we record this show that you can't see. There's a lot of air quoting.

Sydnee:

Yeah. Uh, so let's talk about hiccups. First I wanna say thank you to Tommy who suggested this topic, I think many moons ago.

Justin:

Thanks Tommy.

Sydnee:

And we finally got around to talking about it. So, hiccups can also be called synchronous diaphragmatic flutter.

Justin:

Okay. What does that mean?

Sydnee:

Well, I just thought that was a much better name, don't you think? I mean, it's—

Justin:

Oh yeah, far catchier. [laughs]

Sydnee:

... it's easier to remember. [laughs]

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

Um, it also singultus, by the way.

Justin:

Singultus?

Sydnee:

Mm-hmm. Singultus, I think.

Justin:

Is— is that the medical name or—

Sydnee:

Yes.

Justin:

... do they just use hiccups?

Sydnee:

That's Latin for, uh, what happens when you catch your breath while you're sobbing [laughs] I didn't know there was a— I think it's interesting there's a word for that in Latin.

Justin:

Yeah. Why don't they just say hiccups, you know?

Sydnee:

Yeah.

Justin:

Would have been a lot easier.

Sydnee:

[laughs] Well there's not a word for that in English clearly, because we say catching your breath while sobbing to describe it.

Justin:

Right.

Sydnee:

So there's not a word for that. Um, or you could also say hiccough.

Justin:

Hiccough.

Sydnee:

I—have you seen that? Hiccough?

Justin:

Is that a UK thing?

Sydnee:

No, I think that that's actually, um—

Justin:

A combo when you hiccup and cough—

Sydnee:

... an outdated—

Justin:

... at the same time?

Sydnee:

[laughs] No, it's an out— that would be uncomfortable though.

Justin:

Ugh, yeah.

Sydnee:

It's an outdated kinda term when they used to think hiccups had something to do with coughing.

Justin:

Hmm.

Sydnee:

But they don't. So... so what are they? They are an involuntary reflex. Uh, basically your diaphragm is contracting—

Justin:

Mm-hmm.

Sydnee:

... and then your vocal chords close for just a second.

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

And that's what makes the, you know, hic, hic, that sound.

Justin:

Sorry, what do hiccups sound like again?

Sydnee:

Hic.

Justin:

Okay, got it.

Sydnee:

How was that? Is that how they sound?

Justin:

Perfect, perfection.

Sydnee:

Was that a good? It's actually, if you want to just if you're out there searching for hiccup information because—

Justin:

And who isn't?

Sydnee:

... 'cause you're so intrigued by this topic, you can find lots of recorded hiccup sounds online at a lot of informational [laughs] websites.

Justin:

Those are some weird ones, yeah.

Sydnee:

Just in case you wanna know what a hiccup sounds like, I guess if you're lucky enough to have never had them. Um, and it involves the vagus nerve—

Justin:

Mm-hmm.

Sydnee:

... that, uh, innervates the diaphragm.

Justin:

Got it.

Sydnee:

So...

Justin:

I mean I don't got it, but I heard the words.

Sydnee:

So yeah, well the— the only reason I tell you that, that it involves the vagus nerve, is 'cause later when I talk about cures I'm gonna talk about the vagus nerve again.

Justin:

Got it.

Sydnee:

So I'm gonna introduce the concept now. It's foreshadowing.

Justin:

Callback.

Sydnee:

Right. So why do we hiccup?

Justin:

Oh God, are you asking me?

Sydnee:

Yeah, go ahead. Tell me Justin.

Justin:

Air, you swallow air and it goes in the wrong sort of—

Sydnee:

It goes in the wrong way?

Justin:

... thing. It goes in the wrong thing, does the wrong thing.

Sydnee:

Where— when you swallow air, where— where should it go? [laughs]

Justin:

Into your lungs.

Sydnee:

When you swallow it?

Justin:

Breath—

Sydnee:

There are so many problems here.

Justin:

... swallowing air is breathing, this is what I mean.

Sydnee:

Oh no, okay.

Justin:

Of course. Obviously.

Sydnee:

Okay, so...

Justin:

That's how I breathe. Do you know that's a breathing noise I made? [makes some sort of awful inhaling noise] That's my breathing noise. [laughs]

Sydnee:

[laughs]

Justin:

Really. I'm terrible to live with. I don't know how you do— put up with me.

Sydnee:

Um, you're just such a great dancer, I'll put up with anything. That's really what it is. [laughs]

Justin:

Wait until I get a good hit on the dance floor, then it really starts coming. [keeps mouthing weird sounds]

Sydnee:

Okay, you have to stop.

Justin:

Yeah, it sounds like a heart murmur. It's a nightmare.

Sydnee:

I'm gonna have to keep—I'm gonna have to keep living with you after this. Uh, so there was, uh, there have actually been a lot of researchers who have tried to figure out why we hiccup. I don't know that that's exactly a great way to spend your research time.

Justin:

Yeah, but if you could eradicate it forever?

Sydnee:

[laughs]

Justin:

Imagine.

Sydnee:

Is it such a scourge?

Justin:

Imagine a world without hiccups. Peace on earth.

Sydnee:

There was one, I— I read about there was a meeting of an international respiratory research group. That's a— and that's sounds like a pretty hefty ti— an international respiratory research group.

Justin:

Yeah, they sound like some heavy people.

Sydnee:

And part of what they saw, I imagine them like locking themselves in like a hotel conference room with, like—

Justin:

We are not coming out of here.

Sydnee:

[laughs]

Justin:

This is the most basic thing, how can we not fix this one thing?

Sydnee:

We've got so much coffee, we've got lots of, I don't know—

Justin:

Put your keys down Diane.

Sydnee:

... catering.

Justin:

Put your keys down Diane.

Sydnee:

[laughs]

Justin:

You're not going anywhere.

Sydnee:

We've got all those little peanut butter crackers, we're just gonna sit in here and figure out where hiccups come from.

Justin:

Little Skyler's gonna have to get his own Lunchable today Diane, we're fixing hiccups.

Sydnee:

[laughs] So, they came up with the idea that it has something to do with our, um, evolutionary roots as amphibians.

Justin:

Mm-hmm.

Sydnee:

So that there are— there's a period of time I guess where tadpoles can— can have water and air go through their gills.

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

And they have a kind of reflex that's similar to the hiccup reflex to get the air out.

Justin:

Huh.

Sydnee:

And that— that is the evolution in us of that reflex.

Justin:

Hmm. Okay.

Sydnee:

So that was one theory.

Justin:

A kind of vestigial, I guess?

Sydnee:

Yeah, yeah. That would— and that would insinuate that it's not really helpful. Um, there's some more recent, because people are st— people are still spending time on this. [laughs]

Justin:

Right.

Sydnee:

There's some more recent research that says, you know what, actually, uh, they've observed that all mammals burp.

Justin:

Hmm.

Sydnee:

Burp? Hiccup.

Justin:

Hiccup.

Sydnee:

Sorry.

Justin:

Right.

Sydnee:

All mammals hiccup and that it is a, uh, it's a reflex that allows babies to breathe and nurse.

Justin:

Hmm.

Sydnee:

And that it's important, um, because babies have to periodically empty their stomachs of, uh, air so that they can, you know, leave room for more food.

Justin:

Right.

Sydnee:

More milk room. And so it's like a self-burping kinda thing.

Justin:

Okay. That's very industries, babies.

Sydnee:

And that's what a hiccup is.

Justin:

I'm proud of you.

Sydnee:

And that— and that actually is supported by the fact that, and this is something that we have observed firsthand very recently, that, uh, fetus' hiccup.

Justin:

Yes, yes, they do, and it's very weird, because it's faster than you would think it would be.

Sydnee:

Mm-hmm.

Justin:

So it's— it's very odd.

Sydnee:

It feels very much like I'm hiccupping.

Justin:

Mm-hmm.

Sydnee:

Which is weird.

Justin:

That is weird.

Sydnee:

But, um, but a lot of, uh, a lot of women who've had children can tell you that they— they know that their infant was— was hiccupping at some point in— in utero. And infants do a lot of hiccupping. Especially preemies, do a— do an ex— excessive amount of hiccupping. So that would kinda lead to this idea that maybe it has something to do with drinking and breathing and that whole reflex.

Justin:

Mm-hmm.

Sydnee:

Um, in adults you can bring them on by eating too fast, drinking pop or beer, laughing, getting really emotional can bring on hiccups.

Justin:

So breathing, uh, try catching your breath while sobbing.

Sydnee:

Yes, exactly.

Justin:

Hmm.

Sydnee:

Or singultus.

Justin:

Singultus, as they say—

Sydnee:

Uh huh.

Justin:

... in the medical community.

Sydnee:

In Latin.

Justin:

I dabble.

Sydnee:

[laughs] Um, it can also indicate, and it usually doesn't, but in very rare, very rare instances, hiccups may be the harbinger of something much more serious going on with you.

Justin:

Oh good. Oh, wonderful. Wond— excellent, excellent. Everyone enjoy your hiccups. Enjoy your benign hiccups that maybe probably not but probably are something very serious. Hiccup away, folks.

Sydnee:

So, I'm not gonna tell you all of the other things that—

Justin:

Oh thank you.

Sydnee:

... could possibly present with hiccups because m— the vast majority of the time, your hiccups are just hiccups.

Justin:

Let's just go with that, pretend the last few minutes didn't happen.

Sydnee:

I guess the— I guess the disclaimer would be, if your hiccups don't go away at some point you should probably see a doctor.

Justin:

Uh, yeah, let's go, yes, absolutely.

Sydnee:

So, if you wanna get rid of 'em though.

Justin:

And I do at this point, 'cause apparently they're fatal.

Sydnee:

[laughs] They're not fatal, you're not— let me clarify, I'm not saying that hiccups—

Justin:

Fatal hiccups.

Sydnee:

No, hiccups won't kill you, hiccups are not dangerous. There are rare cases where hiccups are a symptom of something more serious. But we won't talk about that.

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

'Cause then Justin will just worry about it.

Justin:

Constantly.

Sydnee:

So, uh, the ancient Greeks wrote about hiccups.

Justin:

What'd those dudes have to say?

Sydnee:

They thought hiccups happened when an enemy was talking about you.

Justin:

Hmm, kinda like a ears are burning type vibe.

Sydnee:

Exactly, exactly. You get the hiccups. And it was to help, um, release like a negative emotion from your body.

Justin:

Mm-hmm.

Sydnee:

That was the— what was why they thought it was happening. Um, and so the way that they proposed getting rid of them was tied to that.

Justin:

To find the g— uh, guy who was talking about you and going "Hey buddy, buddy, stop it."

Sydnee:

Well similar. You have to be able to guess which enemy is talking about you and say their name out loud.

Justin:

Hmm.

Sydnee:

And then your hiccups will go away.

Justin:

If I had to start listing off my enemies every time I had hiccups, that would take forever.

Sydnee:

[laughs]

Justin:

It's a long list.

Sydnee:

I guess this is a good a—

Justin:

Looking at you Fred Stuart.

Sydnee:

[laughs] This is a good incentive to not have a lot of enemies because then your list is short.

Justin:

Uh, right. Because it'll be much quicker for you to, uh, fix your hiccups.

Sydnee:

Right, so just name the few people. So, uh, I— I'm gonna assume every time I get hiccups I just need to say Jenny McCarthy and—

Justin:

[laughs]

Sydnee:

... [laughs] and move on with my life, hiccup free.

Justin:

Yup.

Sydnee:

Do you— do you think she's talking about me?

Justin:

Right this second.

Sydnee:

[laughs] Have I created enough buzz yet?

Justin:

I hope so.

Sydnee:

I'm working on it.

Justin:

You need to extend your brand.

Sydnee:

Um, this has also persisted into some European cultures where it's thought, uh, and again, this is more like folklore, I'm not saying that [laughs] there's anyone who actually believes this, it's a sign of somebody talking bad about you even today. So, somebody's, you know, going around behind your back and "Sheila is such a B."

Justin:

A B, like she's always hiccupping.

Sydnee:

[laughs]

Justin:

Hey?

Sydnee:

In, uh, Russian folklore it could also mean that, this idea has— has, um, uh, penetrated many different cultural backgrounds, that somebody's talking about you or perhaps that you're owned by the devil.

Justin:

Perhaps you are owned by the devil.

Sydnee:

So one of the two.

Justin:

Either someone's talking about you or you're owned by the devil. So... try to think of people who don't like you, because the alternative is you're owned by the devil.

Sydnee:

I— there's no proposed cure for that. I guess, don't be owned by the devil.

Justin:

And don't have enemies and you'll never have hiccups again.

Sydnee:

Uh, in some Japanese folklore it's said that if you hiccup 100 times, you're going to die soon. [laughs]

Justin:

Cool.

Sydnee:

[laughs]

Justin:

Cool, so don't—

Sydnee:

Which is—

Justin:

... go from Japan to Russia with hiccups because you're about to die soon and you're owned by the devil.

Sydnee:

Which are pretty intense considering that, like, for the most part, hiccups are pretty short—lived, you know, self—limited—

Justin:

Like, you just got—

Sydnee:

... process.

Justin:

... us scared, are you just trying to scare your kids? Like, I don't understand. I don't understand why—why anyone would say these things.

Sydnee:

Now, do you think this was a way of getting rid of hiccups? I didn't think about that.

Justin:

Find the devil and kill him?

Sydnee:

No [laughs] Yes.

Justin:

Buy your soul back from the devil?

Sydnee:

Go on a quest—go on a quest to find the devil.

Justin:

I don't need these sweet fiddle playing skills, devil.

Sydnee:

[laughs]

Justin:

I was wrong this whole time. Take— please give my soul back.

Sydnee:

No—

Justin:

And take back my sweet, sweet shredding skills.

Sydnee:

[laughs] I meant that maybe it would scare you.

Justin:

Oh, okay.

Sydnee:

Oh, you're hiccupping?

Justin:

Oh!

Sydnee:

I guess

Justin:

Like you gasp, like, oh.

Sydnee:

... that means you're owned by the devil!

Justin:

Gasp! Hiccups cured. Soul returned. Now, Sydnee, I know that our boy Pliny the Elder had a— or sorry, Pliny the Elder probably had something to say about this. What was Pliny's, uh, take on hiccups?

Sydnee:

Well, Justin, uh, I'm gonna share with you all the information about Pliny and hiccups that your heart has ever desired. But before I do that, I'm gonna need you to walk down the hallway here to our billing department and check some things out.

Justin:

Uh, okay. Here we go.

[theme music plays]

Justin:

So Pliny the Elder, hit me.

Sydnee:

So of course Pliny has something—

Justin:

You know he has to weigh in.

Sydnee:

... to say about hiccups because—

Justin:

He can't keep his piece.

Sydnee:

No. Because hiccups are so vitally important, so he's gotta talk about 'em.

Justin:

Right. He didn't have real diseases to occupy his time.

Sydnee:

Now, what I like about this treatment for hiccups is that it's not actually a treatment as much as a— a prophylactic hiccup cure.

Justin:

Okay, he's getting out in front of hiccups, I like that.

Sydnee:

Right, I— which I guess hiccups must've been quite the scourge in Pl— in Pliny's life.

Justin:

Mm-hmm.

Sydnee:

Uh, so take a horseshoe—

Justin:

Got it.

Sydnee:

... put it somewhere—

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

... just wherever, just put it somewhere. And then when some point in the future you do have hiccups, you can think about where you put that horseshoe and then your hiccups will go away. [laughs]

Justin:

Pliny, I love you. That's the dumbest crap I've ever he— I think even you are pulling that out of your butt at this point. Come on. Come on.

Sydnee:

I—

Justin:

Come on.

Sydnee:

... I just really like, the forethought that that requires, like—

Justin:

Uh—

Sydnee:

... you know?

Justin:

Yeah, I—

Sydnee:

I can get— I can get hiccups at some point.

Justin:

... I leave stuff by the stairs that I'm gonna take upstairs. I, like, over and over and over again I think, well, the next time I go up, I am definitely gonna grab that sweater I need to hang up. Definitely next time. I can't be bothered to do that. I'm already going upstairs. At— how bored are you that— where you're like, well, next on my list of chores, I'm gonna hide a horseshoe for when I maybe get hiccups at some point?

Sydnee:

And that's tricky too because you don't wanna hide it too well, 'cause then you won't be able to remember where you put it.

Justin:

Right.

Sydnee:

And then it doesn't work, I guess.

Justin:

You have to think about it constantly. [laughs]

Sydnee:

[laughs]

Justin:

You have to develop a severe obsession with your horseshoe and the hiccups it's protecting you from.

Sydnee:

And then— and I don't know if, like, you have to, like, picture it, like go to a special place and—

Justin:

You gotta visualize it, you gotta meditate on that.

Sydnee:

... yeah. The horseshoe, I don't know. Uh, in the Middle Ages, it was thought that hiccups were caused by elves. Uh, they didn't really suggest anything for that. I guess you could try to hunt down the elves and murder them?

Justin:

Sure, why not?

Sydnee:

I don't know, that's my suggestion, that there was no cure, just, well, maybe it's just too bad, it's caused by elves.

Justin:

Sorry.

Sydnee:

But they did recommend—

Justin:

You know how elves be.

Sydnee:

... uh, if you don't— if you didn't feel like looking for elves and killing them, you could try drinking the blood of a freshly killed pigeon.

Justin:

Perfect. Every time I see a pigeon, you know what I think? I don't know what's inside there, but I really wanna wrap my lips around it.

Sydnee:

You do not, you think, ah!

Justin:

Ah! Pigeon! Stay away!

Sydnee:

You hate pigeons.

Justin:

They're the rats of the skies.

Sydnee:

In the 16th century, it was suggested that maybe you want to hold your chin, so you got hiccups—

Justin:

Got it.

Sydnee:

... hold— hold your chin and then somebody else needs to sing gospel songs.

Justin:

So—

Sydnee:

[laughs]

Justin:

... the— the cure is enacted by me holding my chin and trying to announce the words, "Please stop singing gospel songs—

Sydnee:

[laughs]

Justin:

... that's very annoying."

Sydnee:

Maybe—

Justin:

[singing]

Sydnee:

[laughs] Maybe that was a way to trick your kids into going to church when they didn't want to.

Justin:

Is that how gospel puppetry got started? Is that— is that—

Sydnee:

[laughs]

Justin:

... how Christian puppets came to be?

Sydnee:

That's— that's where it—

Justin:

They were practicing their ventriloquism and—

Sydnee:

That's the beginning of—

Justin:

... trying to cure their hiccups?

Sydnee:

... Christian ventriloquism.

Justin:

Everybody always asks us—

Sydnee:

It starts with hiccups.

Justin:

... how did Christian ventriloquism get started?

Sydnee:

[laughs]

Justin:

Well, there you go.

Sydnee:

That is the most common request we get for a show topic, Christian ventriloquism.

Justin:

Christian ventriloquism.

Sydnee:

Uh, y— now more recently, as in, like, people will still tell you this, uh, you've probably heard that you're supposed to drink from the opposite side of a glass.

Justin:

Yeah, I've heard of that one.

Sydnee:

Man, I will—I will tell you this, if you wanna know how to do that, there is no shortage [laughs] of YouTube videos.

Justin:

Of drinking from the other side of a glass?

Sydnee:

Yes.

Justin:

You know, the one that I've actually, uh, well, I'm sure we'll have a lot of these. But, um, the standing on your head, like, if you're like, uh, leaning over the couch or something.

Sydnee:

Mm-hmm.

Justin:

You know? So you're upside down drinking water like that.

Sydnee:

Right. There's lots of descriptions of how you can do this effectively if this is your bag.

Justin:

Mm-hmm.

Sydnee:

I'm not recommending that.

Justin:

Perfect.

Sydnee:

I don't think it'll hurt you but I don't believe it's gonna fix your hiccups.

Justin:

Mm-hmm.

Sydnee:

I also saw recommended, um, inhaling black pepper.

Justin:

Ew.

Sydnee:

Basically so you'll sneeze. [laughs]

Justin:

That's hugely unpleasant.

Sydnee:

And then, like, I guess occupy your, you know, your body with sneezing, then you don't hiccup.

Justin:

Ugh, or you have snuck ups.

Sydnee:

I don't know, I think I—

Justin:

A weird combo.

Sydnee:

I think I'd rather just keep hiccupping until they go away.

Justin:

Mm-hmm.

Sydnee:

Uh, I thought this was great. I found this article in the Milwaukee Journal from 1944.

Justin:

Mm-hmm.

Sydnee:

And all I can guess is that it was a really slow news day in Milwaukee because there was an article about a local man who had had hiccups for 13 days straight and was hospitalized with them.

Justin:

[laughs]

Sydnee:

And there [laughs] were lots of people in the community who were sending him suggestions. "Oh, well I'll tell you what works for hiccups." And this was an article in the newspaper. My first question, Justin, as a journalist, is why aren't there more articles like that now?

Justin:

Are you kidding me? Have you not read BuzzFeed? This is literally all it is.

Sydnee:

[laughs]

Justin:

So these 25 weird cure will help you get rid of hiccups. Are you kidding? That's literally the whole internet.

Sydnee:

But I love the idea that this was about an actual guy in town and all the, like, local weirdos were like "Hey, look at me."

Justin:

I could— I could call this cat, but I think I'm gonna write to the paper, cure of him.

Sydnee:

[laughs] Tell him some things to do to get rid of his hiccups. So some of the recommendations in this article were, uh, eating the heart of a salamander. This is in 1944, this is not like ancient.

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

Uh, you could try running naked through the woods on a Saturday night.

Justin:

Perfect, love it.

Sydnee:

And maybe that was somebody who was just, like, hot for this guy.

Justin:

[laughs]

Sydnee:

You know?

Justin:

Hey, uh—

Sydnee:

Hey, why don't you take all your clothes off?

Justin:

... I know a great, uh, spot out behind the McCurry place. Sincerely, Byron McCurry.

Sydnee:

[laughs] Uh, one reader suggested placing a live frog on your chest and then wait until it dies, and that's when the hiccups have gone into it.

Justin:

Cool afternoon! Cool like two weeks, squaring off in a battle to the death with the world's most resilient frog.

Sydnee:

This is where Justin tries to guess the lifespan of a frog.

Justin:

Like, 100 years, 20 minutes? I have no idea. And I'm not gonna have more of an idea when I have hiccups and I've got this, uh, thing on my chest.

Sydnee:

Whose job is it to keep grabbing it and putting it back? 'Cause I'm— I'm— I don't think the frog's gonna wanna stay there.

Justin:

No, I think it'll probably get pretty bored of it. And then I bet you he will lick you in every place imaginable—

Sydnee:

Why lick?

Justin:

... they can reach.

Sydnee:

Why do you think frogs are gonna lick you?

Justin:

Fro— they have those long tongues, right?

Sydnee:

That's not— I know, but they're not for licking humans.

Justin:

Uh, I think he'll probably try anything, uh, Sydnee. I think he's probably gonna try whatever, uh, machinations he has at his disposal to remove himself from his fleshy prison.

Sydnee:

I don't think that— I don't think that a frog's tongue is a defense mechanism, it's for like eating bugs, right?

Justin:

I'm saying it'll try anything! You're holding it there till it dies. It's gonna see if this strange giant peach colored six foot tall frog would maybe enjoy the pleasure of having frog tongue, uh, uh, caress his chest.

Sydnee:

Now things are getting weird.

Justin:

Now things are super weird.

Sydnee:

What I—what I like best about, uh, the end of this article is that the doctor who was treating this poor man with his hiccups responded by saying that he— he had it under control, he was treating him with great success by using electric shock therapy. [laughs]

Justin:

Perfect.

Sydnee:

So, uh, I don't know that ECT works for, uh, hiccups. I, again, probably wouldn't recommend it.

Justin:

Okay, so real quick Syd, I know everybody's got their own little private thing. What— what, uh, more treatments, give 'em to me.

Sydnee:

Okay, so there are a lot of things you could ingest that are recommended. Uh, ginger is very popular, lemon, I saw somebody recommend pouring a bunch of salt in some yogurt, mixing it up and eating that, ew.

Justin:

Ew, no thanks.

Sydnee:

Uh, cardamom, uh, mint in the form of mint tea was suggested a lot, I mean, at least that's pleasant. Um, peanut butter, that was recommended as a great cure for kids' hiccups. I don't think that that's, like, particular because kids have different kinds of hiccups, I think it's just 'cause kids like peanut butter.

Justin:

Sure. At least she'll shut up about the hiccups for five minutes.

Sydnee:

I saw, uh, one person say that Hot Pockets would cure hiccups.

Justin:

Come on.

Sydnee:

You're just looking for any excuse, aren't you?

Justin:

Just anything to get the—I know I said I gave 'em up but these hiccups are, phew, they're really doing a number.

Sydnee:

I'm gonna have to eat a Hot Pocket.

Justin:

Gotta—gotta eat a Hot Pocket, somebody fire me up a Italian meatball.

Sydnee:

[laughs] I saw Slim Jims and Dr. Pepper.

Justin:

Mm-hmm.

Sydnee:

Like, not mixed together, I think you just k— you eat 'em and drink 'em at the same time. And then Sweet'N Low was mentioned.

Justin:

Ugh, not worth it.

Sydnee:

Which I don't— if you told me I had to eat Sweet'N Low, I think I'd get so scared that my hiccups would stop.

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

Who eats Sweet'N Low?

Justin:

Nobody.

Sydnee:

Uh, Jägermeister—

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

... was recommended, as was marijuana. I would put those in the well, you're gon— not gonna care so much about the hiccups after you do this category.

Justin:

After you enjoy some marijuana. You know the one that has always worked for me, my go to? I guess everybody— a lot of people probably have theirs. Mine is a teaspoon of sugar. Just eating a teaspoon of sugar straight up. That works a lot of the time for me.

Sydnee:

That's actually, you're skipping ahead a little bit there.

Justin:

Oh really?

Sydnee:

J-man. That's actually gonna be in my list of real, real possible cures.

Justin:

Holy crap, I'm a doctor basically.

Sydnee:

[laughs] You just hit on some real medicine.

Justin:

Holy crap, okay, go on. What else? What else we got?

Sydnee:

Uh, so there is a, uh, what I would call like a patent medicine that you can find online called Hiccups Away. And I was trying to figure out what the heck was in this stuff, it's like this little silver packet with a smiley face on it that you can buy online and it is described as a liquid made from natural ingredients. [laughs]

Justin:

Wink.

Sydnee:

Which is as vague as anything could get. It's in liquid form, it's made from ingredients—

Justin:

That's—

Sydnee:

... they're natural.

Justin:

... nightmare-ish, you really have to hate hiccups at that point.

Sydnee:

There's so little, even the t— like I— check out t— uh, check this out, check out this website please. 'Cause even the testimonials aren't finished.

Justin:

[laughs]

Sydnee:

They're like "My son has a lot of..." and then they just stop.

Justin:

[laughs] Take out porn.

Sydnee:

I mean, I'm guessing hiccups, I'm guessing—

Justin:

What is— what is—

Sydnee:

... your son has a lot of hiccups.

Justin:

A lot of hiccups. What has my life come to? I'm writing to a website for— for a fake hiccup product, I can't do this. I'm gonna go outside, read a book.

Sydnee:

[laughs] It's— it's a really terrible website, uh, but I would— I would advise checking it out. But not taking the product. Uh, then there is also the Hic-Cup. The Hic—

Justin:

Cute.

Sydnee:

... hi— H-I-C dash Cup, you get it?

Justin:

Mm-hmm.

Sydnee:

And it is a cup with, like, this metal rod with a ball extending from one edge of the rim so that if you can imagine that when you pick it up and drink it, the rod kinda touches your cheek.

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

And there's some sort of what they call galvanic action that occurs.

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

And then your hiccups are cured.

Justin:

Perfect.

Sydnee:

Uh, I— I had to find this mentioned peripherally on other websites because their website, uh, the Hic-Cup, I don't know, .com or whatever it was has been down, is down and has been down it looks like for a while.

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

They apologize for that.

Justin:

Sorry about that.

Sydnee:

The Hic-Cup, if it's ever available again, will be \$25.

Justin:

You should not purchase it.

Sydnee:

No. Uh, do you wanna know who the longest hiccup-er in history was, by the way?

Justin:

Yes, very quick.

Sydnee:

It's a man named Charles Osborne of Iowa. He started hiccupping after a hog fell on him—

Justin:

[laughs]

Sydnee:

... that he was about to slaughter.

Justin:

I shouldn't laugh, but that's— that's some sweet revenge.

Sydnee:

Uh, that was in 1922 and his hiccups did not stop for 68 years. And he was 97—

Justin:

Did he—

Sydnee:

... years old.

Justin:

... did they— I mean, did they stop because he wrapped it up, or...?

Sydnee:

No, he died the next year.

Justin:

Well at least, I mean, that was a sweet year though.

Sydnee:

That ye— that one year that he was 98 and didn't have hiccups?

Justin:

Is— are hiccups the secret to longevity?

Sydnee:

Hey.

Justin:

Hey.

Sydnee:

I don't know that we could do a study with an— an N of one, we have one person. But...

Justin:

Sydnee, uh, what— uh, how do I actually get rid of them?

Sydnee:

Okay. So one thing you mentioned, uh, eating a spoonful of sugar or something really sweet actually can 'cause it, one— one of the theories, I mentioned the vagus nerve was important, is that if you can distract or overwhelm the vagus nerve with other business that it must deal with [laughs] then you could stop the hiccuping. And one way to do that is to eat something incredibly sweet. So they recommend taking a big spoonful of sugar and putting it back towards the back of your tongue—

Justin:

Mm-hmm.

Sydnee:

... and then swallowing it.

Justin:

Yup, that's what I do.

Sydnee:

Or just drink a whole bunch. I think everybody has heard that. You don't have to drink from the opposite side of the glass, you don't have to, I— there's nothing in particular. Just drink a whole, you know, water is probably your best bet. Drink a whole bunch of water really quickly.

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

Um, and then the other kinda w— uh, there— and there are a lot of other things that fall into that category. The other category would be anything that interrupts your breathing so that your body kinda focuses on getting the breathing back in order and stops hiccupping. So holding your breath is one of most common, you'll hear that and that actually can work. Or breathing into a paper bag so that you get more carbon dioxide in your blood and then your body kinda goes, "Uh, that's a little more important than hiccupping at the moment—

Justin:

[laughs]

Sydnee:

... I'll shift my focus elsewhere."

Justin:

Good job body.

Sydnee:

Uh, one thing I found some recent reports on, just in the last couple of years, that— uh, this is a doctor, says does work, is digital rectal massage.

Justin:

Oh.

Sydnee:

Again, this— no, it's not— this isn't a euphemism. [laughs]

Justin:

Oh, I— no, I just didn't understand what it meant until I— I thought about it.

Sydnee:

Right, like, like, bend over.

Justin:

Bend over.

Sydnee:

And pull your pants down.

Justin:

And let's cure those hiccups.

Sydnee:

And let me massage your rectum. [laughs]

Justin:

[laughs]

Sydnee:

It's another— it's— it's vagal stimulation, it's the—

Justin:

Oh doc, you know what?

Sydnee:

... vagus nerve.

Justin:

I have hi— they went away. Yeah. Oh, they're gone. Oh, it's a miracle. Oh, you did it. Uh, yeah, well I gotta go, I'll just pay the— the— the guy out front or whatever. Okay bye, hu—

Sydnee:

I don't know if g— along the same lines, it's like a scare tactic again, all right, well, here's what it's come to.

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

And you snap your rubber glove and the patient's suddenly cured. Um, an orgasm can also—

Justin:

All right.

Sydnee:

... do something similar, it is pr— it is proposed.

Justin:

I mean, it's better than the alternative.

Sydnee:

I think that that's a fine cure to explore. And then, um, a good scare actually could work. Although you be careful with that. There are medicines that you can use that doctors prescribe at times, but really only for really resistant cases. Um, for the most part, hiccups are gonna go away on their own.

Justin:

Mm-hmm.

Sydnee:

Hold your breath or drink some water or just chill out, they're gonna go away, calm down. And if you're worried and your hiccups aren't going away—

Justin:

You're dying.

Sydnee:

... don't eat the heart of a salamander. Just, you know, go ask your doctor. If by the time your appointment comes around and you're still having hiccups, you probably should ask your doctor about it.

Justin:

Uh, but I'm sure you're fine. Uh, listen, folks, thank you so much for listening to our program. Um, thank you to The Taxpayers for letting us use their song, uh, Medicines as our intro and outro. Thanks to the Maximum Fun network for letting us be a part of the Maximum Fun network. There's

a— a ton of great programs you s— listen to like Lady to Lady, The Goosedown, uh, Stop Podcasting Yourself. Sydnee actually did a guest appearance on an upcoming episode of One Bad Mother, so listen for that on the Maximum Fun Network, should be coming out soon.

Sydnee:

And Justin on his other show, I call it his other show, My Brother, My Brother and Me, uh, just had a very special guest on the episode that aired today.

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

Elizabeth Gilbert.

Justin:

Yeah, author of Eat, Pray, Love and the Signature of All Things. It's a— it's a cool one.

Sydnee:

So— so go download that if you haven't already.

Justin:

Go download that, go listen to it, listen to everything. Uh, thank you to, uh, everyone who has listened to this program. If you get a chance this week, could you maybe go, uh, review our show on iTunes? It would really mean a lot to us.

And thank you to people Tweeting about the show with the @Sawbones hash tag, like Christina, Joseph, Cally, Bishop, Patrick M, Digital Sextant, uh, Andrew Sutton, uh, Killing Suba, uh, Diana Vigard, Patrick M, Kimberly, Kip, so many others.

Uh, we really appreciate all of you, uh, Tweeting about the show. If you could share with a friend this week, our link is, uh, sawbonesshow.com, that'll get people here. Uh, that's gonna do it for us until next Tuesday. I am Justin McElroy.

Sydnee:

I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Justin:

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

[theme music plays]

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