**Sawbones 598: Horror Doctors**

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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!

["Medicines" by The Taxpayers plays]

**Justin**: Hello, everybody! And welcome to Sawbones, a marital tour of misguided medicine. I'm your co-host, Justin McElroy.

**Sydnee**: And I'm Sydnee McElroy.

**Justin**: I hope I didn't scare you, Syd. I meant to—okay. So, pretend when I—when I was coming up with this intro, I did the first part in a scary voice. So like, pretend that I did that, okay?

**Sydnee**: Okay.

**Justin**: Okay. Hope I didn't scare you, Syd.

**Sydnee**: Oh? You did a little bit, Justin!

**Justin**: Well, that makes sense, because it is October, and that is the time when ghouls and ghosts tend to haunt the local schools and churches.

**Sydnee**: You know, Justin, we were kind of—the churches?

**Justin**: I don't know.

**Sydnee**: Okay. We were kind of on theme last week with October with scary stuff, when we talked about lead and cinnamon. I know that wasn't in—

**Justin**: Not intentional.

**Sydnee**: We weren't intending to do a—

**Justin**: Pretty scary.

**Sydnee**: Horror podcast at that point, but it is.

**Justin**: Yeah.

**Sydnee**: In some way.

**Justin**: Here is what we're going to be doing today, Sydnee. I would l—we always love to talk about the depictions of doctors in media.

**Sydnee**: That's—yes.

**Justin**: And I would like to bring before you some horror movie doctors. Now, I started this research and I got through the '60s before I decided that's a full episode. So, we're only getting through the horror doctors of 1960, okay?

**Sydnee**: Okay.

**Justin**: Up through the 1960s, beginning with the advent of film.

**Sydnee**: Okay.

**Justin**: So yeah, it's a lengthy list.

**Sydnee**: So I'll have never seen any of these movies.

**Justin**: There's… some of the movies, probably not, most of the movies, probably not, but the characters are ones that I think you'll be able to adjudicate upon. And that is what I'm going to be asking you, the movie medical board, the one person movie medical board to do. I'm going to be telling you about these doctors, and you are going to be deciding whether or not you strip them of their license.

**Sydnee**: Okay.

**Justin**: I was going to say this bar, but I don't think you say that.

**Sydnee**: No, we don't say that. But you know I don't have the authority to do that really.

**Justin**: Yes, but they are not real doctors.

**Sydnee**: Well, then I guess it works.

**Justin**: Perfect. Frankenstein! Yeah, folks, that's the doctor. So, if you've been saying it wrong this whole time, there is egg on your face.

**Sydnee**: They haven't. Our Sawbones listeners have not been saying it wrong. And let's be honest, some of you have probably corrected somebody on this once or twice. Let's be honest here!

**Justin**: I don't have to tell you how many times Frankenstein, Frankenshteen, however you want to say it, has been portrayed in media. Obviously, this is one of our classic horror movie doctors. If somehow you have escaped the tale of Dr. Frankenstein, it was first put into film in 1910, it looks like was the first version of it, a 16 minute long Edison Studios short. And of course, it's been, you know, Mary Shelley's Frankenstein. That's Kenneth Branagh's Frankenstein.

**Sydnee**: Right, Mary And Shelley wrote Frankenstein.

**Justin**: What? Yeah. Mary Shelley wrote Frankenstein.

**Sydnee**: Just giving the credit, you know.

**Justin**: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I mean, she wrote it.

**Sydnee**: Yeah.

**Justin**: And you know this—the tale, a doctor, Frankenstein is obsessed with creating life where there is no life. Cobbles together some corpse pieces,

uses electricity, turns it on, fries the corpse, comes back to life, reanimates the dead. Obviously, is kind of the classic example of so obsessed with whether or not he can, doesn't stop to think if he should.

**Sydnee**: Yeah. Yeah.

**Justin**: You know, I feel like we use that. But what about Dr. Frankenstein? Are you going to leave him with a medical license, Sydnee?

**Sydnee**: Did he ever have one?

**Justin**: So, it depends on which version of it you're talking about. Like obviously sometimes it's Dr. Frankenstein, sometimes he's a medical student, sometimes he… whatever.

**Sydnee**: Well, is he but like a doctor of medicine? I didn't know if that was the kind of doctor. Because it's…

**Justin**: Do you feel like this is a yes anding of my bit, or do you feel like this is maybe getting in the weeds a little bit?

**Sydnee**: Well, okay, what I'm trying to understand is, doctoring is really about like keeping people who are already alive, alive longer, as opposed to building new people.

**Justin**: Right.

**Sydnee**: Right? And then bringing them to life. So it just, it was a weird fit. What I'll say is this. First of all, he had to get those body parts from somewhere.

**Justin**: Yes.

**Sydnee**: So, I assume there was some grave robbing at best, and murdering at worst.

**Justin**: It depends on the version!

**Sydnee**: Yeah. So like those would be reasons to take a medical license. I think that would not hold to professional standards. He did… these are not standard of care procedures. Sewing body parts together and then electrifying them.

**Justin**: Yes, I don't think that he's—

**Sydnee**: It does not meet any standard practice.

**Justin**: Sure.

**Sydnee**: And if it was experimental, which it was, he did not get IRB approval. So, I think that there are multiple reasons that he loses a medical license, if he did, in fact, have one. Which I find doubtful.

**Justin**: A—na—dang, sorry—

**Sydnee**: Now—now, is that—is that like I'm going to defy mortality and build a human, sew it together and bring it to life myself? Is that the attitude that a lot of surgeons carry into the operating room? Absolutely.

**Justin**: Right, but they stop short of the lightning rod and everything.

**Sydnee**: Yes. Yes.

**Justin**: The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari… probably best known for being one of Nicolas Cage's favorite films.

[both chuckle]

**Sydnee**: That's my only reference. I mean, I've heard of it. I've never seen it.

**Justin**: That is a—it is the story—it is a very early and classic example of German expressionist filmmaking.

**Sydnee**: Mm-hm.

**Justin**: It is—

**Sydnee**: Right, not my favorite—

**Justin**: Not your—

**Sydnee**: Example of German expressionist filming. [chuckles]

**Justin**: This is a silent picture. And I'm going to be a little bit light on the details here, because I'm going to try to not outright spoil—

**Sydnee**: Okay.

**Justin**: The whole kit and caboodle with these films. But Dr. Caligari is someone who is in charge of an asylum, and he does use hypnotism to get his patients… to commit murder. And now that I'm saying that—

**Sydnee**: I mean, do you really need to ask the question?

**Justin**: I mean, now that I'm saying it out loud, even I, a layman, can see that there are some issues here.

**Sydnee**: I think it's—this is so in the realm of fiction, primarily because I can't… I don't think I c—I can't talk my patients into taking a pill a day sometimes. [chuckles]

**Justin**: Mm-hm.

**Sydnee**: The idea that any force, including hypnotism, could be used to convince your patients to commit murder, that's not realistic.

**Justin**: Well, they do it while they're sleeping.

**Sydnee**: That…

**Justin**: He does it while they're sleeping.

**Sydnee**: That still doesn't… Well, okay, so, we've talked about hypnotism before. It is not an accepted medical practice. So again, what we're looking for here, if we're going to take somebody's license, is like egregious deviations from standard of care. It's not like an oopsie. You don't lose your license for an oopsie.

**Justin**: Not for a whoopsie doodle.

**Sydnee**: No. And you don't lose your license because you one time did something where you were like, ah, it's off label or it's still in pra—-you know? I mean, there…

**Justin**: Did a lot of these though, so—

**Sydnee**: Yeah, you lose them for, I mean, it's negligence, it's misuse of power, which I guess if we believed hypnotism was real, then you have the ability to do this, you've used it for nefarious purposes, you've used it to serve your own ends. So, those would be reasons to lose a license for sure. And then just like… gross deviation from professional standards. Things like assault and murder and, I don't know, theft? No, we probably don't for theft. Maybe.

**Justin**: So, are you c—how are you—

**Sydnee**: State specific.

**Justin**: Where are you going to leave Dr. Caligari, Sydnee?

**Sydnee**: I mean, of course you lose your license for that.

**Justin**: Ah, dang it, doc!

**Sydnee**: Of course you do. Of course?

**Justin**: I was rooting for you. Maybe next time. Dr. Jekyll, not Mr. Hyde. [chuckles] He loses the da—he loses the… his credentials once he's out there. Dr. Henry Jekyll is a nice guy that runs a free clinic.

**Sydnee**: Mm-hm.

**Justin**: He's a good—

**Sydnee**: I love that.

**Justin**: Good dude. [chuckles]

**Sydnee**: Right.

**Justin**: He's a—he's a sweetheart. And he… he makes a potion that makes him into a stinker named Mr. Hyde. Now, this is one of—a story that has been adapted, you know, a bajillion times, based on Robert Louis Stevenson's novella, about the same—the same ta—he does not… Let's see… He is a credentialed doctor on paper. His will names him as Henry Jekyll M.D.D.C.L.L.D.F.R.S. So…

**Sydnee**: What are all those letters?

**Justin**: There's a lot of them. I'm assuming they're mainly British.

**Sydnee**: Okay, yeah, I lost track of what he was—

**Justin**: So, Dr. Jekyll, he drinks the potion. Now, he's been, of course, in a bunch. My favorite is the '80s sex comedy, Jekyll and Hyde: Together Again. Which uses a metaphor of cocaine, which was extremely popular at the time.

**Sydnee**: Mm!

**Justin**: So, he has a little bit of cocaine, turns him into Hyde, who has like one huge, you know, disco nostril. [chuckles] And a little coke spoon that like emerges from his chest, and his chest gets hairy. That's in—that's in Jekyll and Hyde: Together Again.

**Sydnee**: Now, remind me, does he—he ha—he willfully has to take the potion to be Hyde, right?

**Justin**: That is my understanding. At least at first. I think—

**Sydnee**: Oh, and then he can't control it. Okay.

**Justin**: Yeah. It's definitely like he's experimenting with forces beyond his control at first. And then it's like, I don't know if he loses control or—you know, it depends on, you know, again, there's—

**Sydnee**: You know that's—

**Justin**: Dozens of adaptations.

**Sydnee**: This is ta—does—when he's Hyde, does he attempt to practice medicine?

**Justin**: I mean, I'm assuming from the 'mister' that like he is more focused on sort of crime stuff.

**Sydnee**: Well, because so I think this might be a case where we don't have to revoke a license.

**Justin**: Okay?

**Sydnee**: Here's my thought. If… let's—you use this movie that was a metaphor for like cocaine use. If you have… and I'm not saying that a medical board would endorse cocaine use. Certainly, that would be a problem.

**Justin**: Sure.

**Sydnee**: But if you have a physician who, let's use something that's legal, alcohol, who during their work hours is a—is a Jekyll, a good—I mean, I'm assuming Jekyll practiced standard of care medicine. Let's say he did. A good physician who does what they're supposed to do and follow standard of care and, you know, isn't committing malpractice. And then when they're off… gets drunk.

**Justin**: Yeah.

**Sydnee**: That would not be a reason to take a medical license, as long as while they're drunk, they're not attempting to practice medicine. They're not on call. You know, there's no reality where they'd be called in to do so. You're allowed to do that. So, I think that would be the key. As long as he is not going to try to practice medicine while he's Mr. Hyde, I don't think he—that necessarily Dr. Jekyll will lose his license. Although as I'm saying this, does Mr. Hyde kill people?

**Justin**: I think that might be part of the bit. Again, I don't want to get into the spoiler territory—

**Sydnee**: Oh, well, if he kills people, then yeah, then he… I mean, unfortunately—

**Justin**: But that's Mr. Hyde!

**Sydnee**: Now, I mean, like if we continue this metaphorically, is there a way for Jekyll to stop being Mr. Hyde? Like, can he go through some sort of treatment—

**Justin**: Some sort of program.

**Sydnee**: Process? Because like yeah, because then we can like, I mean just like we can do—

**Justin**: We can rehabilitate him.

**Sydnee**: For substance use, right? We can—we can—you can go through a treatment process and retain your license. I… this one's gray.

**Justin**: Okay, we're gonna leave it. The—in 1940, there was a movie called The Ape, and Boris Karloff had a heck of a run. 1940. These are both Boris Karloff pictures. First is The Ape. [chuckles] He plays Dr. Bernard Adrian, okay?

**Sydnee**: Mm-hm.

**Justin**: It's about Dr. Bernard Adrian, who is trying to cure a young woman's polio, using experiments involving spinal fluid.

**Sydnee**: Oh.

**Justin**: And alongside this, an escaped ape has been terrorizing the town, and it breaks into the lab, okay? The doctor, Dr. Bernard Adrian—

**Sydnee**: Who thought of this?

**Justin**: Fights the ape.

**Sydnee**: Uh-huh.

**Justin**: It's base—here's the cray—it's based on a play. I kid you not. Breaks into the lab. The doctor fights the ape and kills it. [chuckles] And the spinal fluid samples that he had been using were also destroyed. So, what does he do? The only thing he can do.

**Sydnee**: He uses the ape spinal fluid?

**Justin**: No, he wears the ape skin as a suit to kill people and steal their spinal fluid. [chuckles] I don't think it's gonna go good for him.

**Sydnee**: No… No, I mean, that…

**Justin**: Sir—

**Sydnee**: The—

**Justin**: Listen, all of the—it's—now listen. It's in pers—listen. Listen! It's in pursuit of curing polio!

**Sydnee**: Yeah, but—

**Justin**: You gotta push the envelope!

**Sydnee**: Okay.

**Justin**: You can't make a Tomlette without breaking a few Greggs, Sydnee?

**Sydnee**: I'm concerned for the stability of this individual's like mental health, because—

**Justin**: Who, the ape? He's fine! He just wants to cure polio!

**Sydnee**: No, this doctor. [chuckles] Because if—when you said, so he does the only thing that he can at that point, the idea that anyone who doesn't need some form of treatment would answer, oh, well, you're gonna wear the ape suit.

**Justin**: You wear the ape suit.

**Sydnee**: You're gonna wear—put the ape skin on you, put the hide on you—

**Justin**: Listen, I'm not trying to diagnose this guy! I'm just trying to decide if he can go in the office tomorrow and practice medicine!

**Sydnee**: That's not a rational train of thought, right? Like, there's a problem. We've departed rational, logical thinking and processing, which I think alone would question like, can this person hold a medical license? And then, of course, the murder. You know, the murder. Murder is gonna kind of be a hard stop. Once you murder people, you can't have a medical license.

**Justin**: So we're taking Dr. Bernard Adrian's license away, is that fair to say?

**Sydnee**: I mean, noble to want to cure polio. Very noble.

**Justin**: Very noble, beautiful.

**Sydnee**: But like, you know, as we've talked about many times on Sawbones, when other physicians in history have been in similar situations, trying to do something almost impossible, not sure if they're there yet or not, they often resort to self-experimentation. Why didn't he just use his own spinal fluid?

**Justin**: Great question, Sydnee.

**Sydnee**: So, there's that.

**Justin**: Same year, Black Friday, Dr. Ernest Sovok is a surgeon. Okay, this is a little bit complex, so hang with me, okay? So, Sovok's a surgeon, and he's a friend of a guy named George Kingsley, okay? Kingsley is in a car accident, and Sovok saves his life by taking some brain matter from a gangster named Red Cannon, who was in the same crash, okay?

**Sydnee**: Was he already dead?

**Justin**: He becomes dead. So—[chuckles]

**Sydnee**: No, I mean like when he took his brain, was he like, "This guy just died, I'm gonna use—"

**Justin**: Dying!

**Sydnee**: "His brain."

**Justin**: He's dying in the same crash.

**Sydnee**: Okay.

**Justin**: So he's trying to—but here's the thing.

**Sydnee**: Okay.

**Justin**: When he puts the brain matter into Kingsley, it starts like infecting his brain and his personality. And so, Sovac finds out that the Cannon had half a million dollars hidden somewhere. And he wants to use that money to start a laboratory. And so, he's trying to push his friend deeper into becoming Cannon, so he can find out where the money is hidden, okay?

**Sydnee**: Okay.

**Justin**: Does that make sense?

**Sydnee**: Yes. Well, I mean, in the fictional—

**Justin**: He uses hypnosis to try—

**Sydnee**: Structure.

**Justin**: To get to the memories, and…

**Sydnee**: That's not—

**Justin**: Yada, yada, yada.

**Sydnee**: Not how any of that works.

**Justin**: Things spiral out of his control.

**Sydnee**: That's not… we all understand that we can't take a chunk of someone's brain, put it in someone else's head, and turn them into that person, right?

**Justin**: Yeah, sorry, Dr. Killjoy, that's not the episode. We're actually just trying to figure out if you're gonna remove his medical license.

**Sydnee**: Just making sure we understand that.

**Justin**: Yeah, you're gonna have a heck of a time once we get to Dr. Giggles if you are this hung up at this point.

**Sydnee**: I mean, you know, it's interesting, because obviously this is all fictional and not real and not how that works, but there are times where doctors… I'm aware of them, where they have engaged in a procedure that is sort of a last-ditch life-saving effort.

**Justin**: Mm-hm.

**Sydnee**: Like but it is not approved by any means. It's not standard of care, it's not FDA approved, it is not—it is not something that we can do as doctors.

**Justin**: Mm-hm.

**Sydnee**: But the idea is this person's gonna die, so it's either this or nothing. Now, this is unethical. We are not supposed to do this, right? There are a lot of rules against it, because it is putting—somebody's in a desperate situation, they might agree to something they wouldn't otherwise, right?

**Justin**: Sure.

**Sydnee**: Now, there are protocols where that could—there are exceptions. Anyway, the point is, doing that in terms of actually putting the brain matter inside him to save his life—I'm assuming that's why he did it—

**Justin**: Yes.

**Sydnee**: Right? To save his life.

**Justin**: Best of intentions.

**Sydnee**: I… that will not automatically result in revoking someone's license.

**Justin**: Okay, but hypnotize—

**Sydnee**: I mean maybe this specific procedure, because it's not something we do, but like the concept of that—

**Justin**: That's maybe—

**Sydnee**: Is not—I'm—I… I am aware of physicians who have done s—not that, but—

**Justin**: Exact—not exactly.

**Sydnee**: But something questionable, and are still practicing medicine, and did not lose their license.

**Justin**: Okay.

**Sydnee**: So—

**Justin**: But maybe hypnotizing his friend to try to get him to turn more into a gangster so he can find the location of a half a million dollars?

**Sydnee**: I don't know, does the friend agree? Is there consent obtained?

**Justin**: I don't want to get into spoilers.

**Sydnee**: I'm—I—I don't know. I mean, and this is not me saying like yes, I think—I don't think any of these people should practice medicine that you've talked about. But by the standards that exist, would this person definitely lose their license? I don't know that they necessarily would.

**Justin**: This part was originally supposed to go to Bela Lugosi. Just so you know, this would have been a three-peat for him. No, wait, make that a f—

**Sydnee**: The—there also has to be a complaint, by the way.

**Justin**: Oh, for the…

**Sydnee**: I mean, if the licensing board is going to revoke your license, somebody's got to tell them you're doing something wrong.

**Justin**: That's true. That's true.

**Sydnee**: They're not going to, I mean, they won't know.

**Justin**: I watched a little bit of this movie, I think it would have become obvious that something was going on—he like had a full transformation, like physical transformation, I think people would have been like, hey, pal, what's going on here? I want to talk more about Bela Lugosi being a stinker… on film, but first we gotta go to the billing department.

**Sydnee**: Let's go.

[theme music plays]

[ad break]

**Justin**: I said three-peat for Bela, I actually should have s—because that—he was in that movie, but he was not the star of the movie. He was supposed to be in—Karloff really wanted the role. He was, in 1942, he comes back as Dr. Lorenz in The Corpse Vanishes. Now, this one… this one, I'm worried for him already. I'm going to go ahead up front and say I don't think this is great for Bella, but… Turns out what this cat was doing, this is—there's a rash of brides dying, and then their corpses disappearing. So this happens a few times and people are like, what on earth is happening? Turns out that Bela Lugosi, a physician who has a horticulture obsession, he has

Sends these brides poisoned orchids that slows their heart rate down to almost death-like levels, and then he steals the bodies after people think they are dead. And then takes their glandular fluid to inject it into his wife, the countess, she's called, to keep her young. They also sleep in coffins. Now, this is inspired, or at least it echoes a sort of craze, thanks to a Sergei Voronof, who grafted monkey testicle tissues onto wealthy men. Now, this is no longer being done at this time, but there was a lot of talk about this idea of, you know, preserving life through, you know…

**Sydnee**: This also reminds me of the—some of the inspiration for vampires, was—there was the—was it a countess? Who used to bathe in the blood of young women to try to keep her—

**Justin**: Yeah, very similar.

**Sydnee**: Yeah.

**Justin**: I mean, this is Bela Lugosi, so obviously you're playing with the iconography. They sleep in coffins, so it does feel like kind of like vampire adjacent.

**Sydnee**: This is not… I mean, we're not even practicing medicine at this point, so it's har—I mean like it's just murder.

**Justin**: Yeah… it's t—this one's tough.

**Sydnee**: Yeah…

**Justin**: This one's tough for Bela, not his finest moment. Captive Wild Woman, 1943, Dr. Sigmund Walters. Now, this… this is a similar—

**Sydnee**: So weird.

**Justin**: Weirdly similar story, okay?

**Sydnee**: So weird none of these doctors are ladies so far. So weird. Can't imagine why.

**Justin**: It's—well, because they're the—all women doctors are nice. That's what it says here—

**Sydnee**: [laughs]

**Justin**: On the white sheet of paper.

**Sydnee**: Because we're superior.

**Justin**: Yeah, because you're the superior. Okay, so this guy—[chuckles] this—Dr. Sigmund Walters is an endocrinologist, who's doing experiments. And a lab animal dies, he needs a bigger one, so he steals a circus gorilla named Chila. And so he injects her with sex hormones, and grabs glandular tissue taken from a young female patient, and later a brain transplant, until the ape becomes a beautiful amnesiac woman that he names Paula Dupree. [chuckles]

**Sydnee**: No, again, this isn't medis—like we're not practicing medicine anymore.

**Justin**: [laughs] Yeah! But he's lonely—

**Sydnee**: I don't even think—

**Justin**: And he wants an ape wife named Paula Dupree!

**Sydnee**: But I don't think, again, I don't think this is a medical doctor.

**Justin**: What? He runs a sanitarium. So…

**Sydnee**: Oh, in addition to his experiments?

**Justin**: Mm-hm. Yeah. Trust me.

**Sydnee**: You know how we talk a lot about medical TV shows, and how realistic they are? Like what it—how true they are to what it's like to practice medicine?

**Justin**: Mm-hm.

**Sydnee**: I guess that was not a concern for much of film history, right? Is what I'm gleaning. Is that the idea of what a doctor is and does was kind of like… whatever they decided to make up.

**Justin**: A little bit amorphous.

**Sydnee**: Yeah, because this feels very removed from anything that resembles—and I know this is a different time period, but even then, there were doctors who were just like normal—

**Justin**: Yeah!

**Sydnee**: Doctors.

**Justin**: Yeah.

**Sydnee**: Just normal—

**Justin**: You're definitely—

**Sydnee**: Stuff.

**Justin**: Hitting the major thing here. Don't worry, you're not lost in the weeds at all. He stole a gorilla named Chila and turned her into a woman, by all means, be concerned about the portrayal of doctors—

**Sydnee**: I'm just saying.

**Justin**: In a role in society. [chuckles]

**Sydnee**: It doesn't sound like—I mean, it's not—I don't know. He shouldn't have a license.

**Justin**: All right, in the 1950s, we're gonna start with Donovan's Brain. This was a Dr. Patrick Corey who had been doing experiments to try to keep extracted brains alive. And then this millionaire named Warren Donovan dies in a plane crash near him. And they rush Donovan to try to save him before he dies, obviously. Can't do it, but does manage to keep his brain alive in like a jar of saline.

**Sydnee**: Mm-hm.

**Justin**: Is—like has electromagnetic forces in there keeping it alive with that. You know, yada, yada.

**Sydnee**: Right, right. I have seen—I have seen depictions that obviously this is something we thought would work.

**Justin**: But it basically allows this brain to start communicating telepathically with the people around them.

**Sydnee**: Oh.

**Justin**: And… starts to like use their bodies in… crimes and what have you.

**Sydnee**: Is he the doctor in this?

**Justin**: No, the doctor is the one that brought the brain back to life, and kept it alive in a saline tank.

**Sydnee**: I, you know, here's what I'll say. I have absolutely no doubt that there are billionaires who exist right now who have already arranged for something like this to happen upon their death. I have no doubt that some of those like body hackers, weird, you know, probably tech people, have already thought about that and are fine with it, and have signed contracts, and there are—there are professionals ready to make it happen.

**Justin**: Mm-hm.

**Sydnee**: And then other weird stuff like that. I don't think you lose your license for this. Now, whatever this brain is doing afterwards, that has—you know. But that's not the doctor's fault.

**Justin**: Yeah, I know, but like he's prob—he's gotta convince you, the medical board, that he was being telepathically controlled by a brain, and like, do you buy it? I don't know. Just because you, the audience member, know that the brain was controlling it. [chuckles] I think if—

**Sydnee**: Oh, wait, so he's the one doing the bad things?

**Justin**: Well, his physical body is. And then he and his assistant realized that he can only control one brain at a ti—anyway.

**Sydnee**: No, I don't think—I don't think anything you've said is—there is dif—there's a difference between like, that was bad or you shouldn't have done that. But like if we're talking specifically about the licensing board, I don't know that we have necessarily violated that at this point.

**Justin**: In vey—okay. Congratulations, you can hang on to it. Invasion of the Body Snatchers is one that's been done many, many times, as you know, there's been many film adaptations. At the center of it is… I think has always

been, or maybe with one exception, had been a doctor, a small-town doctor, or some sort of physician. The most famous version in '56 centers on Dr. Miles Bennell, who is a family doctor in Santa Mira, which is a fake town in California. And he has several patients that come to him and are like, "Hey, listen, my family's acting pretty weird. I don't know what's going on." So he goes to this town psychiatrist who's like, "I don't think it's a big deal, Miles. I think you need to chill out." Spoiler alert, he's one of the pod people too. And it is this family doctor who has to… convince the government that there is an actual problem, while no one believes him. And he has to warn everybody about the pod people's plan. The small-town family doctor.

**Sydnee**: I mean, I think, you know, first of all, he's a small-town family doctor, I'm on his team.

**Justin**: Yeah, of course.

**Sydnee**: I'm on his side. You know, kinship. But no, I—he's like the hero, right? I assume? I haven't seen this movie. I assume he's the hero?

**Justin**: Yeah!

**Sydnee**: So yeah, now—

**Justin**: Yeah, he's the hero.

**Sydnee**: Now, I will say if the licensing board gets taken over by pod people—

**Justin**: That might—

**Sydnee**: Then he—

**Justin**: Be tough—

**Sydnee**: Then he probably—

**Justin**: He might lose lice—

**Sydnee**: Does lose his license—

**Justin**: He might lose his license!

**Sydnee**: Right?

**Justin**: So I don't know, Dr. Miles—

**Sydnee**: But it would be unjust.

**Justin**: It would be unfair. Not this movie medical board.

**Sydnee**: Not me. I'm not taking it away, but…

**Justin**: Okay, this is—The Man Who Could Cheat Death is about a Paris doctor, named Dr. George Bonné, or maybe Bonnet, depending on who you ask, who is a doctor. And he is secretly over 100 years old, because he has been getting parathyroid gland transplants every 10 years as part of an anti-aging process. [chuckles]

**Sydnee**: I mean, did he murder the people?

**Justin**: So here's the thing, he does start—was the problem is, the glands that he is harvesting from the dead people don't work as well. So, he starts harvesting the organs from the living, he disca—the discovers. And what they—they do discover the—this is kind of a wild, like a… a wild detail, but they do discover the secret to eternal life, but they can't share it. Because if they told everybody about it, then everybody would live forever, and then they wouldn't have any more glands. [chuckles] So then everybody would die. So they have to keep it like pretty a—pretty a…

**Sydnee**: I don't think—I mean, if he was just using—well, that's desecration of a corpse. If you're, I mean, you know, I was going to say like if there—if the person's dead. Now, I mean, you can take out somebody's parathyroid gland and not kill them, let me just say, that that is not—that is not like… It's not like if we remove your liver and don't—do something like that, yes, that is fatal. But if we remove your parathyroid gland, you're not going to die. You'll have problems, but you're not going to die. But—and you have more

than one. But I think that if you're desecrating a corpse, that's going to cause you to lose your license, and then certainly if he escalates to murder.

**Justin**: It's tough.

**Sydnee**: Yeah.

**Justin**: The ta—the murder is a tough beat to shake.

**Sydnee**: I will say, in case anybody was wondering, the key to eternal life is definitely not the parathyroid gland. [chuckles] I'm not saying it's not an important gland, but it is not the key to eternal life. It's a weird choice for this, frankly. It's very odd to me that that's what they chose.
And—[chuckles]

**Justin**: Yeah, no parathyroid—no need to harvest those from the young.

**Sydnee**: No. And I do—but I do think it's interesting to see that sort of idea, that we doctors know the secret to like health and wellness, or eternal life, whatever it is. The secret cure for cancer, that's what it always is, and we won't tell you what—your doctors won't tell you. It's interesting to see that that's an—that's that old. The idea has been around that—I mean, it's not true.

**Justin**: The Brain That Wouldn't Die is notable mainly for a couple of reasons. One, it was a… a very early Mike MST3K movie. [titters] But also, it was entered in the public domain from the day of its release due to an error in the paperwork. [chuckles] So it's been in public domain since the day it came out.

**Sydnee**: Oh?

**Justin**: It is about a brash, young surgeon who brings someone who is declared dead back from the dead, brings them back to life. And his father, who's also a doctor, is like, "You're going too far. You are absolutely beyond the bounds." And then there is a car crash where his fiancé is decapitated. And he preserves her head in a lab, in a ja—in like a… what would you say, like a tray of chemicals and what have you. And she begs him to let her die,

because she's in anguish. But he refuses. And then eventually he decides to kill someone to get her a new body, and so he starts hunting at burlesque shows and beauty contests and what have you, trying to harvest a new body for—

**Sydnee**: Gross.

**Justin**: His lady.

**Sydnee**: Gross.

**Justin**: Gross, 1960. Gross!

**Sydnee**: Yeah. No, I mean, I don't think if you… I mean, when he brought somebody back from the dead, I'm not really sure what that entailed. But I—

**Justin**: I think it was a transplant thing.

**Sydnee**: Yeah. Well, I mean, that's not bad.

**Justin**: No, that's not.

**Sydnee**: Like we do that—

**Justin**: That's okay.

**Sydnee**: Routinely.

**Justin**: Yeah.

**Sydnee**: We… I have—

**Justin**: Yeah—

**Sydnee**: I have participated in that action.

**Justin**: Yeah. Far—

**Sydnee**: And it's—

**Justin**: A far cry from keeping a head alive.

**Sydnee**: Yeah. I was gonna say, the initial thing you said—

**Justin**: Yeah.

**Sydnee**: That not only do you not lose your license, you're kind of like, yay, good job—

**Justin**: Good job.

**Sydnee**: Like you get applause for that. But then, no, I think keeping a head in a jar—and especially against their will. You're also not allowed to keep your patient's remains or pieces, or like—like if you took out somebody's appendix, you can't take it home. That's illegal. So…

**Justin**: Fair enough.

**Sydnee**: Yeah. We don't—we don't own the parts just because we remove them. [chuckles]

**Justin**: Lastly, I did want to tell you about… [chuckles] X: The Man with the X-ray Eyes.

**Sydnee**: Okay.

**Justin**: This is our last film.

**Sydnee**: Well, this is going to be a creeper already.

**Justin**: No. Well—

**Sydnee**: No?

**Justin**: Okay. Well, okay.

**Sydnee**: Sounds like a creeper.

**Justin**: So this doctor, Dr. Xavier, is working on these experimental eye drops. They're about to cut his funding, right? So he hurries his trials and uses them on himself. They're meant to push human sight past visible light, into ultraviolet and X-rays and stuff like that. And so he tests the drops on himself because he doesn't think animals can describe what they see. Fair.

**Sydnee**: Which we've accepted, doctors have done all throughout history and have not lost licenses for.

**Justin**: So, he helps in an operation after using them, and he sees that the surgeons have misdiagnosed this girl, because he can see into her body, and he saves her. And but then gets threatened with a malpractice lawsuit.

**Sydnee**: Why?

**Justin**: Beca—I don't know, because it was not what the standard of care, I guess.

**Sydnee**: Oh, okay.

**Justin**: And then he goes on the run, because the X-ray vision that eventually… Eventually makes him… mad, it drives him insane. Because he starts seeing more than he intends to, he starts seeing like through everything. And then he can't see—he can't ever have—like he can't close his eyes, because he still sees through his eyes.

**Sydnee**: Oh?

**Justin**: And like when people come to visit, like his—at some point, his girlfriend comes to visit him, or a former lover comes visit him after he's been on the run and he doesn't recognize her because he just sees like the wavelengths around her. So, at the end, it drives him so wild that it drives him into—he's on the run, because somebody—and he ends up at a revival where they goad him into plucking out his own eyes, because the eye—his eyes offend God in like a—you know, he is driven mad by it. It's a Roger

Corman movie. He wrote it in an afternoon, apparently, believe it or not. But—

**Sydnee**: Sad story.

**Justin**: Such a sad story. But do you remove his medical license for his X-ray eyes?

**Sydnee**: Well… I mean, no? No? I don't—I mean, it sounds like at the end, he's kind of abandoned the practice of medicine on his own.

**Justin**: It would be a long road back, I would say, to getting credentialed at a reputable hospital after that, yeah.

**Sydnee**: Yeah, it would—it—I mean, it would be very difficult with what he's been through. Also, he's going to have to relearn how to practice medicine without sight.

**Justin**: That's true, but—

**Sydnee**: So, he's got that ahead of him.

**Justin**: Could happen.

**Sydnee**: But yeah, I mean, he could, it just, he has to relearn how to do that. I don't think—I mean, okay, self-experimentation we've accepted…

**Justin**: Mm-hm.

**Sydnee**: Does—has happened throughout medical history, and that doesn't lose it. The fact that he was able to diagnose somebody and save their life? I don't know how we punish that. I don't know inherently why he loses his license for any of these actions. I think it would not be conducive—it sounds like it has—it's very distressing to him. And so I guess if the—if the mental distress reached a level where you could not function, then you would be unable to do any job, medicine or otherwise.

**Justin**: Okay.

**Sydnee**: But I don't know—I mean, again, like none of that's going to become before a licensing board, as much as…

**Justin**: Say maybe Dr. Xavier is on hiatus.

**Sydnee**: Yeah.

**Justin**: Maybe on a sabbatical.

**Sydnee**: Yeah, I mean, he's going to need some help to get back into the practice of medicine, but I don't think he is beyond redemption.

**Justin**: And neither are you, because you've listened to Sawbones. That was a weird transition, but you get the idea. We appreciate you.

**Sydnee**: [chuckles] That was so weird.

**Justin**: You get it.

**Sydnee**: Is—does our show redeem people?

**Justin**: You've been redeemed from not knowing which movie doctors should have their licenses revoked. So now there you go, and you have that.

**Sydnee**: Are you going to—the next time we do this, will you give me more hero doctors? I feel like it's very—I only got one doctor who was like the good… person.

**Justin**: I mean they're horror movies, so you don't get a lot of heroes. Like—

**Sydnee**: But the doctors should be heroes, shouldn't we?

**Justin**: There's something to what you're saying, I think.

**Sydnee**: That we're not…

**Justin**: Well, no, I think that you…you know, how we see doctors and what kind of feelings we have on a—the base level that horror works on, I think that what you're seeing here is a reflection of like fears that people have about doctors, you know.

**Sydnee**: That's true.

**Justin**: Thank you so much for listening to our podcast. We hope you have enjoyed it. Thanks to The Taxpayers for the use of their song "Medicines" as the intro and outro of our program. And thanks to you for listening. I really appreciate it. That's going to do it for us. Until next time, my name is Justin McElroy.

**Sydnee**: I'm Sydnee McElroy.

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

["Medicines" by The Taxpayers plays]

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