

## FOGO Episode 8 “Medical Clearance”

Transcription:

{{Sound cues}}

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{{Outdoor sounds fade in, birds chirping, breeze over tall grass, crickets humming }}

Ivy Le, narrating:

“I had the great privilege to study abroad in Eastern Europe in college. One of my classes stayed overnight in a small rural town in Romania with a big cherry tree farm. Everyone on the trip was super excited about the cherry tree farm. But I guess I wasn't that excited because I couldn't remember ever having real cherries before. So I was suspicious. There's two big reasons why I, put everything Leslie the lepidopterist gave me in my mouth. I, have nearly died from eating nuts and still regret nothing. There's two big reasons why I would have no memory of eating something. Excess, or allergies. So either I've never had access, culturally, economically, geographically. Or I'd had them when I was too young to remember that I stopped eating them because of an allergic reaction. So when we got to the farm, I asked someone to bite open a cherry and show me the fruit inside. The main category of fruits I can't eat is mostly raw stone fruits. But the cherry looked like a grape to me. Maybe I wasn't looking that hard. But grapes are delicious. So I get to climbing. I got this tree all to myself at golden hour, sitting in this very exclusive farm to my mouth restaurant. I probably scarf down, I don't know, half a pound before my throat started itching. I was like, “Oh, no, oh, no, no, no,” I better climb down the street while I still can. When that happens, you got to slow down your heart and your breath. So I got my Buddha on. I calmly walked over to my professor, constantly clearing my throat, trying to breathe like

{{Ivy itches her throat}} {{coughing noises}}

“Professor, I think I'm allergic to cherries.”

“We're in the middle of nowhere. I didn't have allergy medicine. I didn't know yet that I still had unknown allergies to discover. We're hours from a hospital. But this man has seen some shit. He springs into action. He yells to everyone, “Get back on the bus!” Except for the graduate assistant, who's working the trip, he tells her to come with us out to a field by the orchard. So me, the professor, and the grad assistant, go sit criss-cross applesauce, like we're meditating, sitting, looking out the setting sun in front

of us. I'm still like -- {{Ivy clears her throat}} -- and spitting. We're on either side of my professor in a line, he tells us to close our eyes.”

{{ spiritual music fades in}}

He tells her to visualize my esophagus and my airway and imagine sticking her hand between them to keep them separate. Then he tells me to imagine that I'm floating out over this field to the horizon and up, up out to the ocean. Tears start coming up. I was imagining just what he's telling me too but I felt light and held at the same time. I was being cared for, in a way I didn't understand, but could feel because of how unburden it made me. So I'm crying silently, peacefully, even. But I'm coughing and spitting less and less. And my professor starts coughing and spitting more and more. We open our eyes and walk to the bus where everyone else is waiting. By evening I was fine. A little shaken but physically fine. When I saw them in the morning, the graduate assistant and my professor, they were fine and we never talked about it. I mean, when we were walking to the bus, he said that he transferred his reaction to him. But that's all and he was coughing and spitting. So I didn't want to ask him any follow up questions and be bothersome. I know it sounds crazy and you want some explanation, probably. I get it. But I don't have one. All I can tell you with certainty is what I know from my body. It's not a mystery in my mind I have to solve. I just accept that it worked with gratitude, with a lot of gratitude. And I started carrying allergy meds on me after that.”

{{ Spiritual music fades out, FOGO theme music comes in }}

Ivy Le, narrating:

“This is Ivy Le with one E and you're listening to FOGO, Fear Of Going Outside, where I venture to find out what's so great about the outdoors. Last time on FOGO, I survived a gauntlet of insects and I got face to face with a snake in their habitat. And although I got the field knowledge I came for, I had some health fallout afterwards. Which is a good reminder, I've taken nearly all the steps I need to figure out how to go camping. It's probably time to figure out if I physically can't. Today's episode, Medical Clearance. We're going to the doctors.”

{{ Wacky horn sounds}}

Ivy Le, narrating:

“I've done a lot since I decided I would figure out how to go camping. I reached out to friends when I couldn't find the language to start my research. I went to therapy for my mental preparedness. I took camping lessons and got supplies. I practiced hiking, and tested myself in wild Texas thicket. I realized I didn't know how to identify key native

Texas plants and animal species. So I found someone to teach me but my life isn't all guts and glory y'all.

{{ banjo sounds fade in }}

"My body has been hating all of this. Every time I've gone outdoors. I was completely fatigued afterwards and twice, I got serious nosebleeds and these were after just a couple hours outside. After all these outings, I've also come down with a cough. My hands are red and tingly, which is super weird and I suspect this is all related. My only major lifestyle change has been going outside for FOGO. If these are early warning signs that I shouldn't go, I cannot afford to ignore them. I got kids! If I get killed by the birds and the bees, the talk is gonna be very traumatic. So today, I'm seeing a doctor to get medically cleared to go camping. We're supposed to even see a doctor before a diet or new exercise program. But, who's doing that? Who's doing an expensive diet in this economy? I'm joking. That's a joke. What I really mean is, who's seeing doctors and the only industrialized country without universal health care. I go to doctors because I want access to the science. I don't particularly trust individual doctors, but our production's insurance company wouldn't accept a tarot reading as an official document. So here we are, meeting a new doctor."

Dr. Howland:

"Dr. Howland, pleased to meet you."

Ivy:

"Hey Dr. Howland."

{{ rustling noises}}

Dr. Howland:

"Mighty fine. Mighty fine."

Ivy Le, narrating:

"Dr. William Howland is an allergy specialist at the allergy and asthma center in Austin. He came highly recommended by friends and he's comfortable with a mic on him because he's in a rock band called, Code Blue."

{{Guitar riff comes in}}

"He has white hair and a white mustache. He's strange, but that's good. Because in my experience, strange people only get through rigid places like medical school if they're

just so freakin' good that everyone else has to deal. So you're about to hear my doctor's appointment. Like my therapy appointment with Adam in episode three, it's edited for length, but I don't cut anything for just personal reasons. I mean, I would have if I felt like something was too, too private. But y'all know about the time I almost got jungle ants in my coochie and this step of my camping quest is really important. So I want to be transparent. I know a lot of my fears are in my head, but the danger is to my body, and we need to grapple with that. I came armed with a list of questions for him, which I rehearsed to spit out as fast as I can, because doctors always interrupt me before I can tell them all my concerns. I know doctors like to say that the internet can't diagnose you like they can. But also, I know a lot of patients who say they sure wish a doctor would give them an actual diagnosis."

{{ drum beat fades in }}

Ivy:

"Am I allergic to natural air? Can I go camping?"

Dr. Howland

"I would say we do some, some allergy tests and find out if you can or not."

Ivy:

"Why are my hands tingly? Do I have nerve damage from going outside?"

Dr. Howland:

"Let's try to figure that out. So you're not allergic to any medicines though?"

Ivy:

"Not that I know of."

Dr Howland:

"Yay!"

Ivy:

"Okay, but most importantly, can I eat pecan pie?"

Dr. Howland:

"In general, if a person is allergic to pecans, walnuts, almonds, etc. We say don't eat any of them."

{{ cymbal crash }}

Ivy Le, narrating:

“Next on my list of ailments is my chronic cough. For six plus years, I get coughs that last for months on end. So of course, I'm in the middle of one right now before the big FOGO camping trip. I bring it up because it sure would make recording a podcast, where I talk a lot easier. But half a dozen doctors have already asked me the same questions that go nowhere, like a troubleshoot hotline from hell. But Dr. Howland, asked me questions I was not prepared for and listened for my answers.”

{{ soft violins fade in}}

Dr Howland:

“Have you ever had any heart problems, blood pressure, cholesterol issues?”

Ivy:

“I had the, the high blood pressure thing um when I had my first child right after...”

{{ violins get louder }}

Dr. Howland:

“Mhhmm mhhhmm”

Ivy:

“That was kind of an emergency...”

Dr. Howland:

“Yes.”

Ivy:

“But generally I'm a more of a low blood pressure kind of person.”

Dr Howland:

“Perfect. Um, Have you had any kidney or urinary problems?”

Ivy:

“Uhh no just your regular old UTI every once again.”

Dr. Howland:

“Yeah. Do you have any joint pain, back pains, stiffness?”

Ivy:

“Oh my God! I am, wow that's like half my questions on my list for you.”

Dr. Howland:

“Okay.”

Ivy:

My back has been killing me this week...”

Dr Howland:

“Mmhm.”

Ivy:

“and I was wondering if it's possible that allergies are making the material around my vertebrae swell, because the only lifestyle change that has happened is I'm going outdoors more because of this podcast.”

Dr. Howland, listening:

“Mhmm, yes yes yes.”

Ivy:

“I also have really weak ankles and honestly really weak wrists as well.”

Dr. Howland:

“Oooh. Oooh.”

Ivy:

“And I was wondering if that's why my my hands and feet are tingling? And is there, should I see somebody about that before I go camping where the ground isn't flat?”

Dr. Howland:

“Well, I mean, you might be more uncomfortable, but you don't have to see anyone. In terms of your back pain, I suspect you probably have a viral infection right now, but I haven't examined it yet.”

Ivy:

“So can a viral infection make your back hurt?”

Dr. Howland:

“It'll just make you, it can make you ache all over.”

Ivy Le, narrating:

“Holy smokes! I've heard people say the whole body is connecte, but I've never heard that, from a doctor! When you talk to a doctor, if the conversation moves to a different body part, they end the appointment and send you to a specialist in that body part. And those doctors won't even talk to each other! They won't even email each other. You have to pay for printouts of their notes on your one body part and physically carry them to the other doctor at an appointment where you relay the contents verbally because they don't actually have time to read them. He's not sending me anywhere. He writes down the battery of tests we're going to do. We're going to do them right there in his office. Like, literally right now. A nurse comes in to start assisting with the test. The first test measures my lung capacity and airflow, which is an indicator of asthma. I have always known I have small lungs. And if I forget, I just do some warm up exercises, and then I remember.”

Nurse:

“Alright, so with this one, I'm gonna have you do a big breath in again..”

{{ Ivy takes deep breath }}

Nurse:

“And put your lips tight around. You can hold it for me there. Blow as hard as you can for as long as you can. So whenever you're ready.”

Ivy:

“Okay.”

{{ Big, deep deep breath and deep exhale}}

Nurse:

“And keep going, blow out all the air out and when there's no more..”

{{ Ivy breathing, starts coughing }}

Nurse:

“Very good.”

Dr. Howland:

“Good work. Alright, so what's jolly is, that you in some ways measure higher than the average person your height and age.”

Ivy:

“Alright, so I excelled. That’s awesome.”

Dr Howland:

“Yes, you did.”

{{ thematic music trills in }}

Ivy Le, narrating:

“Did he just say I excelled at blowing? I mean, I’ve been told that, but not by a health professional about my lungs. I mean, I’m an overachiever. But that’s impossible. A doctor told me when I was a kid that I had smaller than average lungs and I always would. Basically, when I went in for allergy testing, after years of bringing out the hives almost every day, they also tested my lungs and found I was a little asthmatic. And it wasn’t a big deal, because I never did anything to aggravate it. I was never that interested in athletics or going outside anyway. Or was it because I thought my lungs weren’t good enough to do them well, so I never tried? Dr. Howland tries another test to find the source of my recurring mystery cough. They wheel in a machine I’m supposed to breathe into.”

Nurse:

“...and blow...”

Dr. Howland:

“Nice.”

{{Ivy coughs}}

Dr. Howland:

“There it goes. That’s kind of a harsh sounding cough. That’s kind of the cough that people have that have the hidden condition you’re unaware of.”

{{ Ivy coughs }}

Nurse:

“Slow breath in, slow and steady and start blowing out slow and steady. Into the mouthpiece a little harder...”

Dr Howland:

“Blow harder... harder”



Nurse:

“Harder, harder, harder, harder”

{{ machine beeps }}

Nurse:

“So sad face down low means you're going too soft, okay?”

Ivy:

“Okay”

Nurse:

“So you're going to have to when you see that it's down low there, increase your pressure just a little bit and you're going to see it pop up.”

Ivy:

That face is very demoralizing.”

Nurse:

“Oh.”

{{ Nurse giggles }}

{{ bass music softly fades in}}

Ivy Le, narrating:

“I increase the pressure. I dig deep for the validation of this machine and I passed. Dr. Howland looks pretty pleased when he sees the readings. He looks like me when someone who doubts me checks their phone and I get to watch them read the Google results for 40% of cops.”

Dr. Howland:

“Alright, so the thing I've alluded to, but held back about is one of your main problems. Silent acid reflux.”

Ivy:

“Silent acid reflux.”

Dr. Howland:

“So it's not heartburn. This is a problem where acid escapes your stomach, through this valve comes all the way up into your throat, goes all the way back down. You don't feel heartburn, you don't perceive it. But it makes you cough. Then you've coughed enough at some points. Maybe now, to sprain your chest wall.”

{{Ivy coughs}}

Ivy:

“Yeah.”

Dr. Howland:

“So that's this. That's the name of this tune.”

Ivy:

“That's, I definitely felt like I felt injured.”

Dr. Howland:

“Right, right. Right. Yeah and so wherever you sprain it, you know I happen to poke you here. It's going to give a person some pain and tears, but also usually gives a person a breathless sensation. The chest is tight or heavier. They can't get enough air. They can't do, it's like asthma. Asthma is like a shortness of breath. But this one's different. This one is, doesn't respond so well to dulera and albuterol.”

Ivy Le, narrating:

“I can't believe this. He hands me a bulleted info sheet that has symptoms I didn't even know were related to this cough. I don't have a weak immune system that catches colds easily. I just have a kind of acid reflux. He told me, the reason why my inhalers don't work is because I don't have asthma at all. I have something that looks just like it. And after six years, this allergist figured it out in half an hour. And it's not even allergy related. It's not even a real cough. I own every cough medicine available on four continents. What the hell?! I can barely catch up to what he's telling me. He's telling me something about my body. That is different from the story, I have had to tell myself to not feel completely hopeless about it after all these years. But he's having fun. He's like Doctor house, except all he had to do to be a genius is just actually let me finish telling him my symptoms. He moves on to investigate my allergies, with pleasure. It's his specialty after all, and he seems to be enjoying the challenge.”

Dr. Howland:

“Allergies involve cells in your body called mast cells, part of the parasite fighting system.”

Ivy:

“Part of the what?”

Dr. Howland:

“Parasite fighting system.”

Ivy:

“Okay.”

Dr. Howland:

“Yeah. So, in developed countries we don't have parasites very much.”

{{electronic music fades in}}

Dr Howland:

“So this system usually doesn't do anything unless you have an allergy. So here there's a misrecognition. A protein called an antibody, grabs a hold of something harmless you've inhaled, or eaten, and tells your system it's a parasite, a worm, an amoeba from a jungle. A cell called a mast cell gets excited. It freaks out. Squirts out 25 chemicals that would defend you against parasites, instead, it irritates your tissues, all over the body, if it's a food allergy, like a nut. So there's a number of treatments for this. So for nut allergy, the main thing is don't eat it. Because we don't have a way to make you less sensitive, and there's no medicine that prevents nut allergies. On the other hand, the the other stone fruit things you get, not a big problem. And if you cook the food in one body, so that's not a big thing. But avoiding is another thing you do for respiratory algae. But how can you do that? It's the real world you got to go around. So that's impractical for most things.”

Ivy Le, narrating:

“He's absolutely right. You can't avoid everything you're allergic to all the time. For example, I'm a southerner and continuing to avoid pecan pie is just not a sustainable strategy. I know this treatment won't allow me to eat nuts, but hope floats, okay, and I look forward where I can. So he brings in this machine that's going to administer this medicated mist and see if it has any effect on my cough.”

{ {loud machine whirring } }

Dr. Howland:

“So your case is complex enough that we, you know should spend two or three hours together. But yeah, we’re gonna get the highlights today. But yeah, you got a lot of stuff going on.”

Ivy Le, narrating:

“Two or three hours together, just because I’m a complex case? There are Americans listening to this right now who are about to wreck their cars in disbelief that someone practices medicine this way. We have whole TV shows where this happens and we all know it’s a fiction. This episode, right here right now where a doctor is going through all my problems is escapist entertainment for us.”

{{quirky guitar riff}}

“When we come back, I loooooove these drugs.”

Preview -

Ivy:

“Ok, she totally thinks I’m normal. I am doing great. I’m doing awesome. I’m doing awesome.”

{{ Guitar riff fades out}}

{{ electronic noise fades in }}

Ivy Le, narrating:

“We are back in Dr. Howland's office and I have been sitting by myself breathing in this medicated mist for several minutes. The mist was a hero's dose of albuterol. Albuterol is a common drug people have inhalers for to treat asthma, I have one that I got free with a coupon and I use it very judiciously because they're expensive. But you do not get this amount that I was getting from an inhaler. This treatment was meant to drastically reduce my cough, which it did. But before you hear its full effects on me, it should be noted that this doctor's appointment and this whole camping quest took place before the pan-demi lovato. And at this point in my life, I had never ever ever tried any drug unless it was legally available to me. Not even the devil's cabbage.”

{{ bong rip sound }}

“Like I smoked cigarettes for a minute, but never before I was 18 and I did drink professionally as a beer reporter but never before I was 21. Okay, so just so you know,

the medicated mist really hit me in ways I could not have predicted. My side effects are listed as possible, but very, very rare.”

{{smooth jazzy music fades in}}  
{{ Ivy takes a deep breath }}

Ivy:

“Oh,”

{{ivy giggles}}

“I just got the logo on this lung machine, this asthma testing machine. It's a the o in the word pulmoni is that it looks like insect bug's head with like the big old insect bug eyes but it's, it's not a bug. It's not a bug. It's, it's your lungs.”

{{giggles to herself}}

“Okay.”

Ivy Le, narrating:

“I'm trying so hard to keep it together.”

Ivy:

“My cheeks, my cheeks. My cheeks are feeling fuzzy”

{{Ivy giggles}}

“They're not, they're fuzzy, I don't have a lot of facial hair but they feel fuzzy.”

{{laughter}}

“Oh my god, I'm cry. I'm crying”

{{ laughter continues }}

Ivy Le, narrating:

“I'm physically disoriented, but I'm emotionally suddenly so open.”

Ivy:

“Hey Jeff, I'm thinking of you right now, and I just wanted to send you this video.

{{ giggling}}

“My hands are shaking. My hands are shaking, I can't take this video. Hope you're doing well. I'm gonna return a lot of that REI stuff um, because I found it. I found some stuff at Costco. Talk to you later. Bye... I miss that guy.

{{ deep sigh}}

He's such a good guest on the REI episode.”

Ivy Le, narrating:

“The nurse is so nice.”

Ivy:

“I feel like I'm nodding a lot.”

Nurse:

“Yeah, that's okay. You're just, just a little little wound up. That's normal too. It'll go away. Big breath in and blow again.”

{{Ivy breathes then exhales}}

“And keep on going. Good job. You got it. So whenever you when you're done with the breath out, just make sure you finish and get all the air out of your lungs that you can. So I'm going to print this for Dr. Howland, he'll come in and go over the results with you and then make some recommendations from there and we'll try to finish up soon.”

Ivy:

“Okay.”

Nurse:

“You've been here a while, so”

Ivy:

“No no, thank you. I really, I thought doctors could be with you for like 15 minutes.”

Ivy Le, narrating:

“I even feel more empathy and love for myself.”

Ivy:

“That's good. I didn't ...possibly and I thought we possibly wouldn't be able to get through my list of questions, but..”

Nurse:

“Okay... you’ve addressed everything?”

Ivy:

“There’s like one question left, I think.”

Nurse:

“That’s good! He’s still going to come in and do treatment recommendations and everything next. So not quite done yet. But getting there. Okay.”

Ivy:

“Great. Thank you.”

{{Nurse leaves and door shuts}}

Ivy:

“Whew. She totally thinks I’m normal. I am doing great. I’m doing awesome. I’m doing awesome.”

Ivy Le, narrating:

“I’m telling myself, I’m doing awesome, because I’m tripping balls. But I think I’m also feeling a lot of love for myself in this moment. There’s just something about that concentrated dose of albuterol that made me sentimental and more in touch with my feelings towards myself and others. I started texting people I haven’t seen in a long time, I sent a love message to my husband and I’m telling myself, hey, you’re doing good. You’re doing good. That is not a habit that I have. That’s not a thing that I do sober. Normally, I send dank memes with people I love. Before the panaderia, when I was working at an office, if someone was having a hard time, I would bring them an emotional support baguette because carbs legitimately help. But also I wanted to show my support without talking about our feelings. And me, well, I never say I’m doing awesome except sarcastically. I look for every way I’ve fallen short of perfection and make lists of everything I could do better next time, because I can always improve. I’m doing great. I’m trying so hard to keep it together and listening to it now I obviously could be doing a better job of it. But in that moment, I was letting myself feel how much effort I was putting forward to put on a normal face. But also letting myself see that all my effort was working. This is not that bad. This is not that bad.”

Dr. Howland:

“Okly-dokly, So did you feel shaky with the stuff?”

Ivy:  
"I did."

Dr. Howland:  
"Yeah. So that that was basically you know, the regular albuterol. Yeah, that was a bigger dose of it. So that's the one that made shaky plus it's cold in here. Do you want me to make it warmer?"

Ivy:  
"Um.. I've got the blanket."

Dr. Howland:  
"Okay. Let's make it warmer anyways. "

Ivy:  
"Okay."

Dr. Howland:  
"Do you feel any less like coughing after you breathe all that stuff in?"

Ivy:  
"Um ... yeah I guess some."

Dr Howland:  
"Mmm maybe somewhat?"

Ivy:  
"But I have coughed a few times."

Dr. Howland:  
"Yeah, let me hit the air here."

Ivy:  
"Oooo Act normal. Act Normal. Ok. I'm starting to feel normal again."

Dr. Howland:  
"Okay, so you had a case of the vapors earlier. I had too much coffee and I got so cool. Let's make it warmer."



{{ door shuts}}

“So your breathing to us, which was excellent to start with and higher than the average person, didn't change airflow rates. But with coughing asthma, it's more do you cough less, not necessarily changing airflow rates and so that's going to be your you know, you watch yourself for the next four to six hours. Do I cough less or no?”

Ivy:

“Wait, so I have good lungs?”

Dr. Howland:

“Killer lungs. Yeah. Yeah, look at this. Well your..”

Ivy:

“What! I had a doctor tell me when I was little that I had tiny lungs.”

Dr. Howland:

“Well, you don't. They were wrong. But no. So your flow rates, those things they show asthma are, how much air can you exhale in the first second? So of the total air... how much... so you can blow out 91% of your air in the first second, the average woman, your height and age can only do 83%.”

Ivy:

“Well, how do they know how much? How can you figure out the percent of my lungs when you don't know how much is in my lungs?”

Dr. Howland:

“Well, we do because that's the top number. So the top number here shows what percentage you are of the average lung capacity, where you're normal. You're 86%. That's normal. And then the question is, this is how much you blow in the first second so you divide this by that you say how much comes out in the first second? Well, people with asthma it comes out right away. And you have even higher flow rates than the average person who has asthma or a regular person that doesn't.”

Ivy:

“Wait. So that's bad, right?”

Dr. Howland:

“No, that's good.”

Ivy:

“Cause it's like, I'm doing worse than the people with actual asthma.”

Dr. Howland:

“No, you're doing way better than them.”

Ivy:

“I am so confused right now.”

Dr Howland:

“Way better than the person with asthma. Way better than a person with COPD. So a person with COPD who's all blocked up from smoking or whatever. It can take them 10 seconds to empty their lungs with air. You can blow out 91.4% of your air in the very first second. That's the opposite of asthma. That's the opposite of COPD. Ain't that killer? That's so jolly.”

Ivy:

“But like, don't I want to keep my air?”

Dr. Howland:

“No, no, no, you want it to flow easy in and out. Yes. And your inflammation test is jolly, suggesting you don't need an inhaled steroid, like the stuff in dulera.”

Ivy Le, narrating:

“Wait. I am the opposite of a person with asthma. I have exceptional lungs? I have a bag of asthma inhaler samplers, y'all. Samples because the prescriptions are very expensive. And I couldn't justify spending that kind of money as long as I wasn't training for the National Women's Soccer Team or something. Decades, I have spent not being Megan Rapinoe's bestie for nothing! I thought I was supposed to be the weakest of my species.”

Ivy:

“What about my nosebleeds?”

Dr: Howland:

“Um, you know one is whenever you get a cold more blood flows in your nose. Two, when you blow your nose and rub the Kleenex. Three possibly, if you spray these things in there”

Ivy:

“So is it just a coincidence that happened both times after I've been outside and then I went inside?”

Dr. Howland:

“Well, you have this cold now. So...”

Ivy:

“Well now. But this was, this is this week. I'm talking about the week before that.”

Dr. Howland:

“Yeah, you probably got a cold then too. Because you were so tired. Remember.”

Ivy:

“I was only tired after going outside. “

Dr. Howland:

“Yeah, but that was part of your cold.”

{{music fades in}}

Ivy Le, narrating:

“So my body isn't allergic to the outside. At least not when it's warm. I just had a cold virus that is just about on its way out. That's Dr. Howland's explanation of why I had to pull over to sleep on the highway. He has a plan to head off my highs and he recommends some over the counter medications out with my cough, which has actually just been silent acid reflux this whole time. We also get a follow up appointment for some blood work. And I'm still hopeful the tests will say I can try pecan pie. And of course I don't have dinky lungs. I have exceptional lungs. I'm asian mom Jacques Cousteau, bitch. This man is changing everything I thought I knew about my physical limitations. We finally came to the big crossroads. I'm at the end of my list. I asked him my final question.”

Ivy:

“Am I okay to go camping?”

Dr. Howland:

Of course! Yeah when you've got some of these tools. You're gonna rock. You're gonna do great. Yeah, even better. I think.”

Ivy:

“Just bring along some of this medicine with me, and I'm gonna be fine.”

Dr. Howland:

“Yeah, plus you’re gonna be over this cold. You’re just about over it now.”

{{drums come in, cymbals crash}}

Ivy Le, narrating:

“He just clears me to go camping as if it's nothing. Because to him, yeah, you just have acid reflux. Just go. To me, this is world shifting. I think of myself as a physically very average person who is always just one word crisis away from carpal tunnel syndrome. I am a regular healthy person with about 99 minor problems, which become major problems outdoors. I thought he was gonna be like, yes, you can go camping, as long as you bring these epi pens malaria meds, wear a medical brace and carry these oxygen tanks. But no he's just like, just go. Oh, but like watch out for the chiggers, because of course, we discover a new threat every day here on FOGO.”

Dr. Howland:

“The other reason to not sit and grass right now is chiggers, which are these crummy bugs that you get these mosquito-bite like sores but they last for three weeks.

Ivy:

“Oh my god, 3 weeks..”

Dr. Howland:

“Yeah,they’re bad. They’re very bad and they come out more in the spring. What they do is sort of interesting. They they spit into your skin, they poke your skin and spit and the Spirit makes a little area of dissolved skin. Then they suck that skin out and they fall off. It's their spit that makes you get this terrible reaction much worse than a mosquito bite.”

{{ electronic music fades in}}

Ivy:

“And mosquito bites are already terrible.”

Dr. Howland:

“Yeah, well, that's because you have this chronic hive thing.”

Ivy Le, narrating:

“But my chronic hives give me an advantage when it comes to poison ivy.”

Dr. Howland:

“Poison Ivy, they say leaves of three, let it be. So this the three leaves coming out of the same place on this stem and if you look it up, you'll see that too.”

Ivy:

“Okay, and if I do find poison ivy and I do accidentally touch it...”

Dr. Howland:

“Yeah, you probably won't have a reaction.”

Ivy:

“Okay. “

Dr. Howland:

“So about half people do and half people don't.”

Ivy:

“Then I probably wouldn't? I feel like I'm allergic to everything.”

Dr. Howland:

“Well, it's funny, a lot of people that have allergies aren't allergic to poison ivy.”

Ivy:

“WHAAAAAT! I'm basically a super human!”

Dr. Howland:

“Yeah.”

Ivy Le, narrating:

“HAAAAA! You hear that?! Your girl has exceptional lungs, and is probably immune to poison ivy. Poison Ivy, the taunt of my elementary school bullies. Are you kidding me? I'm basically Psylocke. I'm the same person who walked into this office that because he practiced medicine in a slightly different way to include me, I'm walking out like I was born to make a nature show. I walked in a mutant, and I'm walking out an X-Man. I am not inherently frail. These are very easy fixes. If his treatment plan works, my quest to go camping will in fact have changed my life. I would have never found this practice, if I weren't looking for someone who could clear me for camping specifically. No other doctor over several years have sent me to an allergy specialist for my cough. Much later during the pancetta, I would come back to the same doctor because I thought I'd had a heart attack. But several specialists couldn't figure out what happened. It's important to

sort out if I had some sort of condition because my dad actually died of a heart attack. Dr. Howland just pressed on my chest, which hurt like a motherfucker. And he said no, you don't have a heart problem, you have a musculoskeletal problem. So I went to see a massage therapist and now I can pop my chest whenever it gets tight. I had all these limiting assumptions about my body that I didn't want to test because the stakes are very high when it's your health. If I get hurt, it's not always easy to find someone who can get you healed up. But man I probably did miss out on some life experiences because of what I thought my limitations were. I'm glad I finally got a second opinion."

Ivy:

Thank you, Dr. Howland. I am gonna go camping. I'm gonna report back to you.

Dr. Howland:

"I want to hear about it. Yeah."

Ivy Le, narrating:

Next time on FOGO, I practice camping in my backyard because I AM the Adele of Camping and professionals practice!

Ivy:

"I have no plan. I have no food plan, and as you can hear my children just got home"

CREDITS

Only 2 episodes left of this season of FOGO! Share it with your Bestie to binge asap, so you can talk about it without spoilers!

FOGO: Fear of Going Outside is a Spotify Sound Up Series and was workshopped as part of the Spotify Sound Up Podcast Accelerator Program.

FOGO is written, hosted, and produced by me, Ivy Le, and produced and edited by Myrriah Gossett.

Music by Michelangelo Rodriguez.

FOGO is engineered and mixed by Robyn Edgar, with additional story editing by Aira Juliet and Minda Wei. Production support by Benjamin Grosse-Siestrup.

You can learn more about Dr. Howland at [nosneezes.com](https://nosneezes.com).

FOGO's board of advisors is Jeff Zhao and Martin Thomas.

From Spotify, our Executive Producers are Gina Delvac, Candace Manriquez Wrenn, Andrea Silenzi, Natalie Tulloch, and Jane Zumwalt.

Special thanks to Brian Marquis, Teal Kratky, Yasmeen Afifi and Shirley Ramos for production support.

Listen to FOGO: Fear of Going Outside for free on Spotify!

You can follow me on Twitter and TikTok @IvyLeWithOneE, the phrase all spelled out, or visit @fogopodcast on Facebook or Instagram to see the video I tried to send Jeff in my less than sober state.

Minda Wei, narrating like the end of a pharmaceutical commercial:

“The FOGO camping quest program is for entertainment purposes only. If you or someone you know would like to embark on a major lifestyle change by going outside, consult your physician before starting this or any other physical regimen. If you experience an erection lasting more than 4 hours, do not send unsolicited dick pics to anyone. Call your physician immediately. Other side effects may include: sneezing, nose bleeds, unwanted contact with people on trails, REI credit card debt, and a sudden increase in white acquaintances.”