



Podcast Transcript | *The Fix*

Season 1, Episode 8

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Guests: Erin Bullock & Matt Valore

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Questions or Feedback: thefix@oatey.com

[music]

Katherine: Welcome to *The Fix*, the podcast made for the trades, where we sit down with inspiring individuals across the trades to discuss their unique take on the industry, including career paths, job site stories, overcoming challenges and everything in between. I'm your host, Katherine, a marketer here at Oatey with my co-host and friend Doug, one of Oatey's resident experts in all things trades. *The Fix* is more than a podcast. It's a community, a community built to support trade's people and inspire the next generation of essential pros. Let's start the conversation.

[music]

Katherine: All right, now today's episode, we brought in the Oatey A-team and I promise it is going to be fun, right there Doug?

Doug: Katherine, I'm going to tell you something, I always try to describe our guests ahead of time. This morning I'm driving in, there was a lot of gusty wind going on and I'm thinking, "You know what, we got two powerful forces joining us today." We got master plumber, we got master carpenter tile setting, we got it all today.

Katherine: I love it. Let's do some quick introductions. We've got Erin Bullock who is a product manager here at Oatey for all of the Dearborn line, as well as pipe support category and a master plumber. Lastly, Matt Valore is our technical application specialist focused on shower systems and a general contractor. Welcome guys to the show.

Matt: Thanks Katherine, thanks Doug.

Erin: Thanks Katherine, thanks Doug. Glad to be here.

Doug: I don't really want to talk to Erin too much because believe it or not, he started off as Oatey as one of my partners in crime-

Katherine: He left you.

Doug: -quickly left, went to PM.

Erin: Doug doesn't understand yet, that's what they were trying to do.

Katherine: All right. We've got a really fun kind of dialogue. This is from--we're going to go round Robin on these questions. I need all three of you to participate. This is from our Instagram followers. Erin silicone or plumbers putty for drains?

Erin: Depends on the application.

Katherine: Oh, man.

Doug: Here we go, I'm going to clarify this. Here's what we got, if you using abs drains, we do not want you using plumbers putty, we want you to use silicone. If you're using our PBC drains, absolutely you can use our putties or you can use silicone but remember, if you're putting these drains into a porous surface, you have to make sure you use our stain-free or our state put putty from Hercules.

Katherine: Oh my gosh. I need to go with you last, next time. All right, Matt?

Matt: Doug just gave you everything. I always use putties stain-free for everything.

Katherine: I love it. All right, good answer though, Doug. I like it-

Doug: Thank you, I practiced.

Katherine: -very thorough.

Erin: I didn't know we were going for an Oatey official.

Katherine: No, no.

[laughter]

Erin: He's the master.

Doug: See why I don't talk to him anymore?

[laughter]

Katherine: All right. We're going to start over on this side with Matt. Why is purple primer supposed to be wet when you apply the cement?

Matt: Because it's actually changing the pipe and the fitting. If it's dry, you got like five minutes to apply it. Doug's going to give you the full answer to this.

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Katherine: Sorry, go with Erin next. Hold on, Erin next. Let's see if-- [laughs]

Doug: Basically we can see that Matt's a construction guide this point, so we've divided the room.

Erin: What it's doing is preparing the pipe services and the fitting services to-- think about it like taking a shower, opens up the pores. When you apply that cement, it's going to dry and form a cross molecular entanglement by which it becomes a continuous phase.

Katherine: Oh, I don't think we need Doug's answer anymore.

Doug: I'm going to tell you something, that was actually kind of impressive, but not fully impressive. Basically, when we're talking about is primer being wet, the primer itself is not going to be dripping off the pipe or be wet, it's going through the evaporation process. As Erin said, the scenario we normally use is warm shower. You're going to open up those pores, you're going to get to open there. The soap in our case is the solids in our cement.

The primer causing that chemical reaction, it's opening it up, it's getting it prepped and we have to complete those joints within five minutes because that's the evaporation process or the wet phase of the primer.

Katherine: All right, good one.

Doug: How'd I do Erin?

Erin: Mic drop, nice.

Katherine: I like it, great combination. All right, the best way to remove purple primer from surfaces, that it shouldn't be on, tubs, flooring, et cetera. Matt, you're shaking your head already. Give it to me.

Matt: Trust me, I've built enough houses to have guys get purple primer on bathtubs. It's definitely not coming off.

Doug: Yes, Erin.

Erin: I've seen a couple of plumbing blocks, already have some ideas, but it doesn't come off.

Katherine: Doesn't come off. Sorry guys it does not come off

Doug: Every plumber out there knows that purple primer is like a bad relationship. You just never get rid of it. If you spill it, it might fade a little but it's always going to be there.

Katherine: Oh my goodness, you got it. How can we get into business with a new product idea. Remind you, these are questions that are coming from our Instagram followers.

Doug: I'm not sure if these guys have been exposed to that but let me try to fill this in. Basically, they can email in and say, "Hey, I have a very creative idea." Then we'll have a team of people, look at their idea, high-level overview, we'll ask if there are patents and things of that nature.

If we feel this is a product that Oatey could add to its product line and help us and that individual be more successful, we'll bring them in for a consultation. They can do their presentation to us and we'll evaluate it at that time. We'll look at possible sales, create a business case and then we'll see if we need to move forward.

Katherine: That's great. We've had a couple of scenarios like that. I believe Set-Rite was one of them. Some other new products we have coming out where we've been a partnership of someone who had an idea and Oatey helping them get to the finish line.

Erin: Absolutely.

Katherine: All right. We're going to get into some technical questions and I might as well just start with the biggest question and biggest topic that happened last year and the last two years on social media, dope gate. Is it tape and dope, dope then tape? We're going to go around the room on this one, Matt?

Matt: Taped then dope.

Doug: Oh, it's definitely tape and dope, I wrote the question.

[laughter]

Erin: Tape and dope.

Doug: Here let's elaborate on that a little bit, up to what pipe size.

Erin: Up to inch in a quarter. Anything over inch and a quarter, we recommend tape and dope.

Doug: Absolutely, we'll recommend that, but normally, if you're doing threaded connections, you're only going to go up to two-inch in diameter or anyhow, because two-inch and above, will always be welded together. How'd I do on that Erin?

Erin: Excellent [unintelligible 00:06:47].

Katherine: All right, Erin, this is for you. What makes Liquilock better than using a sponge or a Shop-Vac?

Erin: You don't have to put your hand in a toilet.

Katherine: I mean, amen to that.

[laughter]

Doug: A lot of guys like to Shop-Vac because they're not actually coming into contact with the wastewater, but here's the thing.

Katherine: You still got to empty it.

Doug: It's filling up the container, I can empty it too, but unless I actually sterilize my Shop-Vac, I have bacteria growing in there. It's the perfect situation, so the Liquilock is the perfect solution for all of those. We also recommend the Liquilock, we have our service contractors changing out hot water tanks. They can cut the top hot and cold, they can pour it down in through the cold pipe because the dip tube will go all the way to the bottom. It'll solidify that last inch and a half bit of water at the bottom. Then when they're taking it out, they don't have to worry about it sloshing around and damaging stuff.

Katherine: Yes. That's awesome. How about you, Matt, do you use it for anything else?

Matt: Liquilock all day long, changing out toilets. Shop-Vac, you give it to the guys that work for you and they still try to dump the toilet in the shower. Once you drop it in there, you can't fix the shower either, just like when you put purple primer in there.

Doug: Liquilock is also a good party favor because you just take it, dump it in the toilet, throw in a Baby Ruth and you got a Bill Murray scenario all over again.

[laughter]

Katherine: Oh, there's a new TikTok for us.

Doug: Absolutely. You come out there waving your hands, like ACE Ventura going, "Whoa you do not want to go into there."

[laughter]

Katherine: I hope you guys are all enjoying this as much as we. Let's talk about the most common mistake when installing an air remittance valve. Who wants to take this one, what do you see?

Matt: I'll take it, the start.

Katherine: Go for it.

Matt: I've seen so many AVs stuck behind drywall and a cavity of a wall or covered in insulation. Basically, they can't breathe at that point. That's what I've seen.

Katherine: Needs to have some way to breathe. Got it.

Erin: I was going to say I don't make mistakes so it's hard for me to--

[crosstalk]

[laughter]

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Doug: I think we'll have some conversation about that later. Matter of fact, I might even write a blog about that.

[laughter]

Erin: I would say not providing a minimum distance above the tram.

Katherine: Yes. We've seen that sometimes and sometimes we get that feedback on pictures that we re-share of **[unintelligible 00:09:07]**. Does that change for code in different areas?

Doug: No, because it's based on our manufacturer specifications. We tell you the elevations above the trap ware or flood level room of a fixture. The other common mistake that we have out there is, guys will forget to put a thread tape seal into a pipe joint compound on the threads because that becomes a leak path because there's consistent positive pressure in the sanitary sewer.

They want to always make sure they put the thread sealing on there and they also want to make sure that it's as vertical as possible, never more than 10 to 15 degrees off, vertical.

Katherine: That's great. Good points to highlight. You all can't pick the same one, but what are you, or your one time favorite all-time go-to Oatey product, even ones that you used before officially joining the Oatey team.

Matt: Go to?

Katherine: There's so many.

Matt: Talk about one I recently discovered as I was coming out of the field. That was Universal Hangers, these things are awesome. It's like a BK ratchet strap and it goes around any pipe size up to six inch-

Katherine: Any direction,

Matt: -any direction and for instance when you're in a crawl space, you're on your back and you're trying to get the right height for your pipe, hands down, it's easiest thing to use.

Katherine: Yes, that's great.

Doug: I would have to say because I'm older, I have boots older than two guys in this room right now and I would say solder flux.

Katherine: Oh, yes.

Doug: The reason why is, I come from an era where we soldered all of our pipelines together. Oatey Solder always was consistent for me, the fluxes were always consistent. I was Number Five guy, which is not allowed in a lot of jurisdictions today because it's not water soluble. I would say the solder flux category for me.

Erin: I would definitely say solder flux. I grew up to implying with-- I won't tell you who, with the guy sitting in the room with us and I've tried some other solders and fluxes on the market and they just don't work as well as Oatey Silver and Number Five.

Katherine: I love it, learning from your mentor.

Erin: Exactly.

Katherine: You got it. Let's switch gears a little bit and I want to talk about some career questions and advice and get into-- each one of you, give a quick highlight of how'd you get into the trades? Matt, you want to take us through the beginning part of how'd you get in the trades?

Matt: I grew up doing construction my father had a gutter company. I went from that and to doing high-end residential with my best friend's dad. Then I got into plumbing with Doug sitting next to me. Then I went on to do a lot of new residential multifamily, I probably built about 500 units, and did my own tile work and everything when I got into the renovation side. There's some insurance work in there too but that's basically where I'm at and I've done a lot of showers, so that's why I support the QuickDrain line.

Katherine: Erin, take it away.

Erin: Went to school for architecture. Three years into architecture program and decided, "Let me cut my losses." 2008 housing market was going downhill. All my friends were working at Target. Went back to Lowe's, worked there as a plumber sales specialist for about six years. I saw a guy walking through the aisle, like, "Hey, how do you become a plumber?" He said, "Got out to the local, early Monday [unintelligible 00:12:41] sign up," and it was like clockwork.

Went through an apprenticeship program, did some commercial [unintelligible 00:12:47] and then did some residential and some commercial projects with them and then became a contractor, did some of my own work. Worked for a buddy of mine as a project manager as well and saw an opportunity to come work for the Oatey company. That's all she wrote.

Katherine: There you go, and you're here.

Erin: Yes.

Katherine: You talked a little bit, Erin, about how you went to school for a little bit, decided, "Yes, I'm going to cut my losses, not really for me, I want to do something different." Did you ever have any external pressure to stay in college or to leave college? Did you have support from your parents and teachers?

Erin: Oh, yes. The thing was go to college, that's what was drilled into my head from the beginning, like, "Go to high school, you got to go to college." After figuring out what I really wanted to do, discovering the trades, I wish I would have known about it from the jump. It's probably the move I would have made from the beginning, instead

of wasting time and money. Even going through the program I went through, I was able to get college credit and learn as I went.

Katherine: That's key. We learned a lot about that, talking with the trades and talking with trade schools, career schools, that there's so many ways that you can work in the trades, get college credits, get paid for the work that you're doing, so learn and earn at the same time, which is really cool. I think a lot of people don't know that that's an option for them. Matt, tell me a little bit about what did your support look like and just the pressures around it?

Matt: I went to school for fire tech and paramedic. The biggest thing about the trades is, a lot of times I love being in the field, accomplishing a project. It's almost like the instant gratification. A couple of weeks ago, I worked with a guy that just graduated college on a project, was working with his dad doing tile work. Decided to take a year off, out of college to get into the trades a little bit. I talked to him a little bit and he says, "I love doing this." You don't always have to go to college to make a good living, that's for sure.

I decided fire tech and paramedic wasn't for me. For one, when I was trying to get into it, it was very hard to get into here. I loved being in the construction industry. I always told the guys that built for me, "It's nice to watch a house go up and the smile on people's face when you close their house, that's the largest investment of their life." It's a great industry, and I wouldn't trade it for anything else.

Katherine: That's great. Doug even for you too, any aha moments where you knew plumbing was for you or being in the trades, Matt was for you?

Doug: I think for me, it was the first GI Joe I threw in the toilet and flushed. I think I think I knew I was going to be a plumber at that point.

[laughter]

Katherine: Do I want to know what happened after that?

Doug: No, basically, I told my story, I think on the first episode, and my humble beginnings allowed me to meet a HVAC contractor who was changing a heating system in the building that we had lived in at that time.

Katherine: He was your, aha.

Doug: Yes, he was. I was fascinated, I was curious, he gave me an opportunity, I kept expanding on it. I had some nice opportunities in my lifetime.

Katherine: That's great. How about you, Erin.

Erin: For me, it was as an apprentice, making the transition from architecture to plumbing, it's some similarities involved because you have to be able to see the end result in the beginning. I added some creativity to it, also the hands-on, but also not being at the same place all the time, because you go in multiple job sites.

I know, I can get bored quick with certain jobs. It was one of those things where it's something different every day. As Matt mentioned, you get that instant gratification at the end of the day and you know, "I did that."

Katherine: Sure. For you, Matt.

Matt: Definitely for me, it's being able to make people's dreams a reality. I did a lot more GC work so I was not as focused on just plumbing, building people's houses that they're going to move their family into. That's really the, "Oh, man, this is great."

Katherine: That's cool. If you could go back in time and you could give your younger self one piece, not 10 there, Doug, one piece of advice, what would it be? I know that's tough, isn't it?

Doug: Just one.

Matt: Don't your waste the time going to school, for me, for fire tech and paramedic, go right into the trades. That's mine.

Doug: For me, I've taken a lot of risk in my life, calculated risk. Not to stress so much about the risk that I took and be more confident about the risk knowing that, hey, I stand a very good chance of being successful. That would have cut a lot of stress out of my life.

Katherine: It leaves you, Erin. The time is now, that one piece of advice.

Erin: Let me throw social media in here. TikTok, TikTok. For me, I got a different outlook about it because I think everything that I've been through makes me appreciate the journey that I've been through a little bit more and find employment later on. I think if I would have started right out of high school I might not have appreciated it as much as I do finding it later in life.

Katherine: That's a great perspective. I think for a lot of us, the way that things happen or meant to be, I like yours Doug about sometimes we get so worried and so stressed about, "Oh, should I do this or shouldn't I do it," and taking a good calculated step sometimes and not always worrying about what's going to happen is not a bad thing.

Speaking of social media, how do you feel TikTok and other social media platforms are playing a role in the trades today? The good and the bad.

Matt: I'll just put it this way. Sometimes I watch stuff on there and just want to respond back, "You're doing it wrong." It's pretty good how social media is able to drive business everything else but not everybody put doing stuff on there you should take to heart as they're doing it correctly.

Erin: I think it's good exposure for the trades definitely. Just showing a younger generation that trades is out here and is an option. The conversations back and forth and the comments, kind of funny because as soon as you see a picture, it's like, "Oh, that's not how we do it here," or "That's not code here." I don't know if a lot of people

don't realize the code is different amongst different states and municipalities and things of that sort. Good and bad, but it's definitely entertaining nonetheless.

Katherine: Yes. That's for sure.

Doug: What we do know here at Oatey, I'm recognized as a social media expert.

Katherine: No, you are not.

Doug: Basically I just figured out apps six months ago weren't something I ordered at dinner.

[laughter]

Doug: What I think the negatives are about social media is, we have a tremendous amount, what do we have by now, 30,000 followers at this point?

Katherine: That is the goal for 2022.

Doug: There you go. I think I'm actually going to maybe get a tattoo if we get that many or something.

Katherine: Oh, you hear that, Amanda? Tattoo for 30,000.

Doug: Anyhow, we have a lot of great technicians. Most of them are tuning into us all the time so that they can see what's going on in the industry. For those technicians, when they see things on social media that aren't accurate, like Matt said, I just want to reach out and say, "Oh God, it's not right." Here at Oatey, we always have conversation, we have collaboration and we have consistency.

What they're seeing out there in the field, a lot of times the younger folks here they'll come to me and they'll say, "Hey, Doug, I saw this thing on YouTube." My first response is, "Hey, I didn't know your dad did videos on YouTube." I get this always, "It's not my dad." I go like, "Oh, uncle, brother?" "No, no." They're like, "I don't know who they are." I say, "Exactly, you don't know who they are."

A lot of times you find technicians who discover workarounds, and you might look at that, but it won't apply to your application. I think that's where some of the negatives are. The positives are, you have a nationwide community with constant conversation.

Katherine: Global.

Doug: Yes, global.

Katherine: Global, we're all over.

Doug: Yes. I think that's one of the positives and it's instant too. It's like, I can see it now and it might help me get through a situation I'm having trouble with.

Katherine: Yes, I'm going to speak for myself on this one. I'm not in the trades nor have I ever, but really connected to the team that manages social. During the

File name: Episode 8.mp3

pandemic our sales team wasn't out there and they weren't able to travel and stuff. Really, we were able to connect with that community more than ever via social media. My five-year-old son was stuffing stickers, putting them in so we can send them out all over the world during the pandemic.

I really have appreciated the opportunity to understand and get to know the trades better, look at this great community that they have, it's really cool, and I tell everyone about it. I'm like, "You want to see a trade that really respects each other and works hard for each other and collaborates, and we give away product to one plumber and five more would say, "Hey, I want to try it." We'd send that product out to those other five, and it's just been a really a great opportunity for us to connect, to get to know what's working, what's not.

Our ambassador program that comes here, now we're going to be on our second year, which is super cool, but I also agree there's some negatives. There's some people out there who just hide behind social media and can be mean and not nice and put out videos and demonstrations that are aren't accurate. You always have to go in there a little bit guarded to know that not everything is the reality, but we have so enjoyed it here at Oatey as being a part of that community, which has been really fun.

Doug: Our season so far, Katherine, we've been basing it on opportunities and who wants to get in and stuff. One of the things I also noticed on social media is the simple fact that we have a lot of young great technicians out there. They don't have the opportunity to show people how much pride they take in their work and how well of a job they do. Social media gives them that opportunity.

Katherine: It does.

Doug: We'll see tons of young technicians out there and they'll send in their photographs for us to look at and you look at them you're like, "Wow, that's fantastic. I would hire a guy like that."

Katherine: Yes, for sure.

Doug: That's also good positive.

Katherine: Yes, and I think that by building that community it's going to allow other people to visually see it, and as we've been talking a lot about how do we get people into the trades, how do we get a publicized better? How do we get educators and parents and students to be talking about the trades more. Those sharing their stories and what job sites are and what plumbing really is, not the myth and what people think, but what it truly is, like you said, Erin, it was great that you had that architectural background so that you really could tie it into your plumbing. You have to be able to understand all of these things to be able to do plumbing and how things work and how houses are created. I think it makes a lot of sense.

Doug: I think Matt and Erin can also agree that as they started off in their career path, they were nervous.

Katherine: Sure.

File name: Episode 8.mp3

Doug: They had anxiety over it, but I bet you if we looked at both of them right now and said, ""Hey, was it worth that moment in time for where you are today?" They would both agree and say yes.

Matt: Absolutely.

Erin: Oh, yes.

Matt: Absolutely.

Katherine: All right. We're going to go personal stories here. You guys ready?

Doug: Oh, lord.

Katherine: Could we please keep these PG 13?

Doug: All right. Perfect.

Katherine: All right. Thank you. I would appreciate it. I didn't say PG, by the way, PG 13.

Doug: Are we going to extend this to a late-night Oatey raw type of thing, and then we can go 17 or something.

Matt: Oatey, okay?

Doug: Rated R.

Katherine: Not on this podcast.

Doug: All right okay.

Katherine: I think all of us enjoy working for Oatey and would like to stay here.

Doug: This is true.

Katherine: All right. Tell me a little bit, what's your best or funniest job site story and this is the one that's like, "Oh my gosh, if you would have been there, you would have just died," type of story?

Matt: Doug, we'll let you take this first.

Doug: Okay, here we go. I had a very good friend of mine. He was having a big party, had a wedding that I was going to actually be in. He called me up. He's like, "Hey, you got to come over here, I got this party coming and my sewer's, backed up." I went over and I remember my father saying, "Hey, you're going to be in this wedding, I don't want you doing any sewer cleaning or any drain cleaning because it stains up your hands and you're going to stink."

I promised him I would, I went over and my buddies looking at me, his wife was practically in tears, I said, "Let me give this a go." I get the sewer machine out and I'm trying to sneak this thing, cannot get this thing clear. Had excavator around the

File name: Episode 8.mp3

corner, I called him up, I said, "Hey, come on over, I need you to clear a little yard out for me so we can find this sewer line."

While he's coming over to clear this out, I'm standing on this cement block in the front of this yard in a very modern community. I looked at him and I said, "Hey Dave, what was this pad for?" I was thinking patio. Before I got the words out, boom, I fell in and what I fell into was a septic tank.

Katherine: Oh no.

Doug: It was full of poop. Can we say poop? Okay, great.

Katherine: You can say shit, that's disgusting.

Doug: It was full of poop.

[laughter]

Doug: I managed to keep steady. Then after the excavator and my friend Dave finished, throwing up basically, they dropped the chain down to me and then got me out of it. I stripped down butt ass naked. I think we can say butt naked ass naked.

[laughter]

Katherine: I don't have a bleep button on this thing.

[laughter]

Doug: In case we have to bleep it, I stripped down to my bareness and then hosed off. I became acclimated to the smell. I thought it was good. I went to the rehearsal dinner and I was informed that I should leave because of the odor. I went and I took tomato bass. I went, I called a veterinarian. They hooked me up with some skunk stuff. I bathed so much, I lost three layers of skin.

I'm thinking, Hey, I smell like roses at this point. On the day of the wedding got in my tucks, drove to the wedding. I didn't meet up with anybody beforehand and walked in and they actually wouldn't let me sit at the wedding party table because I stunk so bad.

Katherine: Oh no.

Doug: The funniest part about the whole story was, I took the tuxedo back. Turn it in from the rental.

Katherine: [laughs] They said you could keep it?

Doug: The guy told me I had to buy the tuxedo because it stunk so bad.

Katherine: Oh my gosh.

Doug: I guess by my adrenaline pumping so much, all my pores just opened up and I just absorbed-

File name: Episode 8.mp3

Katherine: You sucked it all in.

Doug: -shit.

Matt: Oh my God.

Katherine: Oh my goodness.

Doug: I think that's my funniest story.

Katherine: That's hysterical. Dave, was it Dave's life?

Doug: No, it wasn't Dave's life.

Katherine: All right. That's who it was coming to my mind.

Doug: [laughs] That would have been funny if it was Dave.

Katherine: That would have, I could have seen him. Oh my goodness, Doug. All right. Sorry, Erin and Matt, can you guys top that.

Matt: I got another sewer machine story go along with Doug's.

Katherine: All right. Let's hear it.

Matt: Probably the funniest one. I was actually working for Doug and he sent us out to snake this lady's storm lines out in Shaker Heights. We're out there and we couldn't get the machine down into the window well. A guy I was working with was down there and he got his shirt too close to the sewer machine. Next thing I knew he had no shirt on.

Shirt got ripped off, was stuck to the snake. He's yelling, "Stop, stop." That was probably one of the funniest plumbing questions. The funniest one about Doug was the day he got purple primer all over him. For me, that was funny. It wasn't funny for Doug.

Doug: I was piping in one of the vats and the vat was supposed to be drained. I checked ahead of time, they said, "Yes, it's drained." I pulled a valve and when I pulled the valve, I was covered in purple primer. There again, I was butt-ass naked as I was running-

[laughter]

Doug: -to the shower to try to drench this off of me. I was purple for probably about two weeks. I looked like a huge Barney at that time.

Katherine: Oh my gosh.

Doug: The funny part was, I just started dating a young lady and we were supposed to go out that night and we never did go out because I had to keep saying, oh, I'm sorry, I can't show up. That's another funny one.

File name: Episode 8.mp3

Katherine: Oh my goodness. All right, Erin, you're up?

Erin: I don't have anything that funny.

[laughter]

Erin: I was on a job site, us plumbers decided to go to war with the electricians.

Katherine: Oh, when does that not happen?

Matt: All the time.

Katherine: All the time.

Erin: It was a friendly war. It was just a little prank war, things like we were sitting up on the second floor, we would throw banana peels through their window during break. They got real creative and they strung up, they had some conduit in the room over our break table and they sent a string through and it was a bag full of like old fruit and things of that sort. [laughs] They were in the hallway, they cut the string and splat under our break table. At that moment, we gave them the crown said, "You win."

Matt: Maybe we should have a podcast just about pranks-

Katherine: Oh goodness.

Matt: -that have happened on the job sites, I got a ton of those.

Doug: We could do plenty of them. [laughs]

Katherine: Oh, I am sure. Erin, what would you say has been the most rewarding part of your trade's profession?

Erin: Most rewarding part is being able to share my experience with the youth right now, younger generation and just spread the word about the trades and given the opportunity that I wish I had at that age.

Katherine: That's great. How about you Matt?

Matt: I think training. Training is my favorite part about the job. Training people and teach them how to do stuff. Once you learn something, you continue doing it for life. I think that's probably my most rewarding part of the job.

Katherine: What do you say Matt is something that people may not know or expect about you? Any misconceptions about as you combat a general contractor?

Matt: No, I'm pretty straightforward. Got to tell it how it is, but most people, from a GC standpoint, the hardest part about being general contractor is spending a lot of time with your family. That's a big trade off you got to make sure. I always try to be at all my kids' sporting events, even though we're still running jobs, but--

Katherine: Yes, the balance between work and home.

File name: Episode 8.mp3

Matt: Work-life balance, man that's super important, especially for people that think about going into the trades, always remember that.

Katherine: Yes, for sure. Doug.

Doug: Oh boy.

Katherine: Biggest pet peeve when dealing with a customer or homeowner. Now this is not like within Oatey because we love all of our customers.

Matt: I got one.

Katherine: I'm talking about working outside of the four walls. Ah, biggest pet peeve.

Doug: I would have to say when I'm hired by someone, then I come in as an expert, which is why they retain my services, at that point in time, what they do is, they tell me how to do my job. At that point, I almost feel like, "Why am I here, should I even be billing you for my time because you obviously already know what you're doing." Then after I'm doing the work I started and I'm progressing along, they come in and they start saying, "Oh I did this before and I probably would have done it that way."

As a professional master plumber who had a pretty nice career, for me to come in and say, "Oh, I didn't know you were in construction." "Oh, well I remodeled my basement once." It's like, "Okay, yes, that puts us on the same level." I would have to say that would be my biggest pet peeve.

Katherine: I see like everyone's head shaking in the room.

Erin: I call those the helicopter customers, the ones that like the hover and stand over your back the whole time.

Matt: Oh yes.

Katherine: It's like when you go to the doctor and they diagnose you with something and you're like, "Oh no, I think it's this because I googled it." Somebody just went to school for that long and--

Matt: I'm going to go right along with Doug and what Erin said, my biggest pet peeve, I used to build a lot of houses, customers that want to try to be on the job site standing in the house while you're flying trusses or throwing lumber overhead. It's like, "Hey, go sit in your car or something like that before you get hurt."

That was my biggest pet peeve. they're hiring you to do something, you're the one that's-- you're the professional, you know what you're doing and they want to try to micromanage a build.

Katherine: All right. This is the funny one. What are your go-to snacks/ drinks on the job site?

Erin: Oh man. Go-to drink most probably energy drinks.

Katherine: Monster?

Erin: Monster, Red Bull, whatever I get my hands on. Go-to snack, I'd say probably some Cheez-Its.

Katherine: Cheeze-Its? The puffy kind or the hard kind.

Erin: The hard kind.

Katherine: Hard kind. All right. Cheeze-Its, energy drink

Matt: Doing plumbing, you don't get to wash your hands. You try to get food that you don't have to touch.

Katherine: Like a long Turkey stick.

Matt: Get a Slim Jim or something, but the energy drinks, yes, put a case in the van and live on it.

Doug: I'm a little older. We didn't really have energy drinks back then but Mountain Dew. Get all jacked up on Mountain Dew after a while.

Katherine: That's just as good as a-- that is an energy drink.

Doug: As far as snacks go--

Katherine: I don't know if I know your favorite snack. What is it?

Doug: I don't know if I really have one. Never really snacked much because we were always so busy you forget to even eat during the day.

Katherine: Yes, just when you finally sit down to eat.

Erin: That's true.

Doug: Bags of beef jerky.

Katherine: Bags and bags.

Erin: Whatever you pass on the way home-

Katherine: That's what you're getting.

Erin: -that's what you're getting.

Matt: Yes, exactly.

Katherine: What's your favorite part about working with one another every day?

Doug: I'll tell you what, I used to really enjoy working with these two guys, okay-

Katherine: Here it comes.

File name: Episode 8.mp3

Doug: -but then Erin left me, got promoted, and then Matt, they found he had such great value that he's out in the field all the time, so, I'm basically here alone Katherine. The only time I get social conversation is when you come.

Katherine: Is with me now? Oh boy.

Matt: I think everybody's knowledge. I think a lot of us at this table have a lot of industry knowledge when it comes to commercial, residential. It's nice to sit here with these guys and we have questions or just throw stuff back and forth off each other.

Katherine: Yes, how about you Erin?

Erin: For me it's that and then it's the continued job site banter from time to time.

Doug: Oh yes.

Katherine: You need that sometimes, right?

Erin: Oh yes, when no one else is in the building, we get to talk construction work.

Matt: Shop talk, yes.

Katherine: Yes, sure. You're over at the university and not at corporate, right?

Erin: Yes, and then the stories, just the different stories. It gets pretty funny.

Katherine: Good, guys, I really appreciate the time to sit down and talk with you. I know I work with all of you individually but this was really fun to get together and get to have some banter back and forth and keep it at PG 13, so, thanks so much.

[music]

Katherine: That's a wrap of season one of *The Fix*. We had a blast talking to so many people about the trades and we learned a ton along the way. Be sure to follow along with us on social media to hear what else we're up to at Oatey and stay tuned for season two. See you next time.

[music]

[00:37:30] [END OF AUDIO]