

Brains On (APM) | The Joy of Swimming 01G786H90V9NBH3TQERVH4BBNG

JOY DOLO: The Forever Ago pool, a place of relaxing waters and sparkly goggles. Everything was peaceful until--

[SUSPENSEFUL MUSIC]

This pool isn't big enough for the both of us.

BROOKLYN: Sure as shoot, it's not. This here deep end is my territory.

JOY DOLO: You'll never make me stay in the shallow end! That place is for the birds!

BROOKLYN: I'll tell you what. If you can make a bigger splash than me, you can come on over.

JOY DOLO: I've been splashing since I was in the womb. This is no contest.

BROOKLYN: Then come on. Put your floaties where your mouth is.

JOY DOLO: Them's fighting words. I'm gonna jump in there and splash you all over! I challenge you to a splash duel!

BROOKLYN: I thought you'd never ask.

JOY DOLO: Now this is what I call the double Dolo dive-- hoo ha!

[WATER SPLASHING]

BROOKLYN: Oh, yeah? This is what I call the Brooklyn Bridge!

[WATER SPLASHING]

[MUSIC PLAYING]

JOY DOLO: Welcome to *Forever Ago* from APM Studios. I'm Joy Dolo.

BROOKLYN: And I'm Brooklyn. Today, we are going to explore swimming-- the good, the bad, and the ugly, and the pretty, and the frustrating.

JOY DOLO: And the joyful! Brooklyn and I are both swimmers. Isn't that right, Brooklyn?

BROOKLYN: Yes, I am.

JOY DOLO: Yes, you are. How old were you when you learned how to swim?

BROOKLYN: My first lesson started when I was four years old at the YMCA in Brooklyn, New York.

JOY DOLO: Oh, wow-- in Brooklyn, New York and your name is Brooklyn? Are you named after Brooklyn, New York?

BROOKLYN: Yes, I am.

JOY DOLO: Look at that! If that was my name, my name would be Fridley, which isn't so cool. But so you learned when you were four years old. That was pretty young. Do you remember your swimming lessons? Were you scared?

BROOKLYN: I actually have no memories of the swimming lessons. My mom actually told me that I learned when I was four.

JOY DOLO: Oh, wow. Would you say you have a favorite style of swimming?

BROOKLYN: At the YMCA, they taught us this thing called the ice cream scoops. And we curved our hands. And then we like scooped out the water as we were swimming.

JOY DOLO: It was called the ice cream scoop? And so you make little walrus claws-- is what I'm doing right now. And you just kind of scoop it out. And I'm assuming that when you were at the YMCA, you were mostly in a pool, right?

BROOKLYN: Yes, I was.

JOY DOLO: But have you ever swam in a lake or an ocean?

BROOKLYN: I have never swam in a lake or an ocean-- no.

JOY DOLO: Oh, wow. Well, you know, now is the time. At some point, you should get out there. It'd be pretty cool to try that out.

BROOKLYN: Well, I mean, if you count the beach then, yeah-- but not the actual ocean.

JOY DOLO: Yeah, I do count the beach. The beach is a totally different atmosphere.

BROOKLYN: Well, yeah, I've been to the beach. I swam at the beach-- so yeah.

JOY DOLO: That's pretty cool. I like beaches too. Those are my favorite. Did you know I only learned how to swim five years ago?

BROOKLYN: Really? Why?

JOY DOLO: Well, my first memory of swimming was around seven or eight. I was at Camp Joy. That was the name of the camp. It's also my name. I know it's confusing. So anyway, the activity that day was pool time. And I was terrified because I couldn't swim. And there were these girls there. And they were laughing and splashing and having a great time. And it looked like so much fun.

Then, out of nowhere, one of the girls asked me if I wanted to jump in. And I wanted to be friends with them so bad. So I said, sure. The next thing I remember was falling to the bottom of the pool, looking straight up, and not knowing how to get out. Luckily, there was a lifeguard who pulled me out just in time. After that, I didn't swim at all. Pools, lakes, the ocean-- it didn't matter. Every time I was near water, I would get nervous.

Also, I grew up in a mostly white area. So I was always the only Black person around the water. And that made me self-conscious. I was scared because I couldn't swim and embarrassed because I looked different than the other kids. So I decided swimming just wasn't for me. As I grew up, I realized this is a familiar story for African-Americans. Over 60% have little or no swimming ability. That's far less than any other group. But why?

BROOKLYN: So is this the bad or the ugly part?

JOY DOLO: This is the history part! Today, we're going to explore how this trend came to be. And we'll talk about some difficult things. But we're also going to hear some uplifting stories and meet someone helping teach more Black kids to swim. Plus, I'll tell you how I conquered my fear and fell in love with water. Or should I say, dived in love? Great joke-- pat on the back. So are you ready to go way back, Brooklyn?

BROOKLYN: Totally-- let's go-- cannonball!

[WATER SPLASHING]

[MUSIC PLAYING]

JOY DOLO: OK. So, before we swim forward, let's backstroke to where it all began. Much like landing a solid joke, swimming is a skill. And it's hard to pinpoint where this skill began.

BROOKLYN: We know it dates back to at least 10,000 years ago. There is a cave of old rock carvings in Egypt called the Cave of Swimmers.

JOY DOLO: The carvings show variations of swimming-- images that we now refer to as the doggy paddle or the backstroke.

BROOKLYN: Any Brooklyn Bridges?

JOY DOLO: I don't think they're ready for a dive like that yet. The Cave of Swimmers is important because it's located in a dry desert. And this told archaeologists that at some point long ago, that area had plenty of water. And people probably Dolo dived into it.

BROOKLYN: Makes sense. If you live by water, you used it.

JOY DOLO: Exactly. Lakes, oceans, archipelagos-- you know what I mean? A group of islands--

BROOKLYN: Archipelagos?

JOY DOLO: Yeah! It's a tongue twister! And people swam all the time in the Americas, in the islands, and in Africa.

BROOKLYN: And Africans were especially good at swimming-- ridiculously good.

JOY DOLO: That's because many Africans near the coast were brought up swimming. As soon as they could walk, they would be taught how to swim-- some as young as three years old. These Africans would not only use the water for fun times. They traveled on water from island to island to trade and share goods.

BROOKLYN: And a lot of them were expert divers too. They could go underwater and find conchs, fish, shells, and more. These divers' lungs were used to the water. Some could hold their breath for more than two minutes.

JOY DOLO: I can do that.

[HOLDING BREATH]

I give up.

BROOKLYN: In fact, African swimmers were so good that people around the world talked about it.

JOY DOLO: Right. In 1455, a merchant named Alvise de Ca' da Mosto from Venice wrote--

MAN 1: Africans are the best swimmers in the world.

JOY DOLO: And then Robert Baker, who was English, said in a poem that when his boat capsized far away from the shore, he and his entire crew were saved by Africans.

MAN 2: Yes, I did write about that over 450 years ago-- terrifying day but made for a great poem.

JOY DOLO: And there's a story about a United States Marine being rescued in my homeland of Liberia way back in 1843.

BROOKLYN: So Africans were kind of like lifeguards?

JOY DOLO: More on lifeguards in our next episode. But yeah, it brings up the question--

KEVIN DAWSON: How do you take a people who have been so, historically speaking, proficient at swimming-- and now they are 6 to 10 times more likely to drown than white Americans?

JOY DOLO: That's Kevin Dawson. He's a scholar of African-American swimming and history. He's pointing out that even though African-Americans descend from these amazing swimmers, over time, that tradition was lost. And get this. Kevin says white Americans, who tend to be more skilled at swimming today-- many of them descend from Europeans who once feared the water.

KEVIN DAWSON: Most Europeans were fairly proficient swimmers. And then swimming goes into decline in Europe during the Middle Ages for a few reasons. I mean, there was this theory that the body was made up of four humors-- solid, liquid, hot, and cold. And the belief was that if you immersed yourself in water or any kind of liquid, you'd get sick. And so that's what was causing dysentery, cholera, bubonic plague.

MAN 1: Hmm, yes-- Alvis here-- the Venetian merchant from before. I just wanted to echo Kevin. I've seen the plague-- ooh, nasty stuff. If staying dry would keep me from getting sick like that, well, then dry it is.

JOY DOLO: Back then, they didn't know it was germs making you sick. We talk about this in our baths and soap episode. Go check it out. But Kevin says this theory that water equals bad still pops up today.

KEVIN DAWSON: People say, don't go out in the rain. If your hair is wet after you get a shower, you're going to get sick. If you get your feet wet in the rain, you're going to get sick.

JOY DOLO: Yeah, my mom used to say that too-- always put on your boots and your raincoat if you're going out and it's raining. And even now, I don't even like to go outside in the rain, just because I'm like, well, I'm going to get sick. So you associate sickness with rain, which is interesting.

MAN 1: So yes, many of us Europeans shuddered at the idea of spending time splashing about in the water. And when we came across Africans who had no fear of water and could swim with ease, we were like, whoa-- amazing!

JOY DOLO: So Africans were historically joyful in the water for hundreds of years. But that started to change in the 15th century. This is a period that history books call the Age of Exploration or the Age of Discovery. It's when Europeans had boats that could travel across oceans.

BROOKLYN: But it wasn't about discovery or exploration for the people they visited.

JOY DOLO: For those groups, this age brought about some very dark things, like others taking over their land and even in enslavement. European colonizers enslaved Indigenous people in the Americas and later did the same to Africans who were kidnapped from their home countries and brought to the Americas, where they were forced to work and care for the land.

BROOKLYN: Since these Europeans spent so much time at sea, they liked having Africans on their boats who were strong swimmers.

JOY DOLO: They saw it as a valuable skill. But the European colonizers also looked down on the Africans and Indigenous people for the way they swam. The Europeans considered themselves more advanced than these groups with darker skin. In other words, they were racist.

BROOKLYN: Many Indigenous people in North America and Africans swam in a style that was more similar to what we now call the front crawl. It was very fast, and it caused some splashing.

JOY DOLO: This style of swimming wasn't considered the right way to swim by upper-class, hoity-toity English white males.

MAN 3: You rang?

JOY DOLO: No, I did not.

MAN 3: Well, I'm here. Bartholomew J. Hoity-Toity here, just in time to--

JOY DOLO: I think we can handle it, Bart.

MAN 3: Clearly, you need help. Lucky for you, I am an accomplished pamphleteer.

JOY DOLO: Pamphlets were a popular way to communicate in the 18th century-- kind of like a little newspaper and not as easy as posting on your Instagram.

MAN 3: With my self-help pamphlets, I could tell people what I think and influence what they think as well! My pamphlet, Teaching People to Swim the Right Way, was such a hit. I thought I'd go for a series.

JOY DOLO: But your pamphlet said that swimming can only be done gracefully and smoothly and that any other way was animalistic. You said anyone who wasn't doing the breaststroke was doing it wrong. So you were basically ragging on the way Africans, Native Americans, Hawaiians, and, essentially, people that don't look like you swim.

MAN 3: Don't be mad. By keeping the head above water and moving in even, smooth strokes, the water will remain still and calm. And if that's not sophisticated, I don't know what is.

JOY DOLO: But then you can't swim fast or dive deep or splash around.

MAN 3: Splashing is what animals do.

JOY DOLO: OK-- bye, Bart. We're done here.

MAN 3: Wait! I wanted to tell you about my new pamphlet, How to Host a Podcast the Right Way.

[DOOR CLOSSES]

Wait-- I'm not done yet!

JOY DOLO: Ugh, he's so annoying. But unfortunately, people listened to people like him. So the way African swimmers swam was looked down on. And because of slavery, many Africans brought to America never learned about their ancestors and their amazing swimming skills. In fact, many slave owners didn't want Black people swimming at all because it could make it easier for them to escape their enslavers. So they would keep them from learning how to do it.

BROOKLYN: In a way, it was kind of like white slave owners were trying to take away Africans' power.

JOY DOLO: So, during this time for Black Americans, the skill of swimming was drifting out to sea. But we'll talk about how it comes back ashore in just a minute. For now, why don't we take a break.

[WATER SPLASHING]

Let's relax on these inner tubes and play a little--

[MUSIC PLAYING]

SONG: (SINGING) First thing's first!

[GAME SHOW SOUNDS]

JOY DOLO: Eee! It's the game where we try to put things in order from oldest to newest. And today's items are swim caps, swim fins, and swim goggles. OK. Now we have to guess. Which one came first? Which one came second? And which one came most recently in history? So, Brooklyn, what do you think?

BROOKLYN: OK. So swim-- the fins--

JOY DOLO: The swim fins?

BROOKLYN: Yeah, well, I think that's in the middle. I don't know yet.

JOY DOLO: Yeah.

BROOKLYN: I think goggles were the first one because I feel like most people would-- I don't know. I think that's the first thing that you think of when you're going swimming.

JOY DOLO: Yeah, it's like they want to see underwater.

BROOKLYN: Yeah.

JOY DOLO: Yeah.

BROOKLYN: So the goggles, then the--

JOY DOLO: The fins?

BROOKLYN: Yeah, fins-- I don't know why I couldn't think of that.

JOY DOLO: Yeah, the swimming hands-- and then swim caps?

BROOKLYN: Yeah, I think the swim caps came-- I think that's most recent.

JOY DOLO: Yeah, why do you think?

BROOKLYN: I don't know. I don't think that they cared that much about their hair at first. And I feel like, maybe later on, they're like, oh, maybe we should not get our hair wet.

JOY DOLO: That makes sense. You know what's interesting too? when you said goggles were first, I was thinking that too because of glasses. I don't know. I feel like maybe all the eye stuff came at the same time. I don't know.

BROOKLYN: Yeah, that's smart.

JOY DOLO: Yeah, OK-- so we have goggles, swim fins, and swim caps. Let's go with it. I trust you. Well, we'll hear the answers in just a bit.

BROOKLYN: We'll be right back.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

JOY DOLO: The present is part of history too because for people in the future, our right now will be their way back when.

BROOKLYN: So we're building a time capsule to show what our time is like.

JOY DOLO: And we want to know, what would you put in our time capsule?

BROOKLYN: Maybe it's something from your favorite sport or one of your hobbies.

JOY DOLO: Record yourself telling us about the item you have in mind and why you want to save it.

BROOKLYN: And send it to us at ForeverAgo.org/contact.

JOY DOLO: So, Brooklyn, what would you put into the time capsule this week?

BROOKLYN: Does it have to relate to swimming?

JOY DOLO: No.

BROOKLYN: OK, well, cheer.

JOY DOLO: You do cheer too?

BROOKLYN: Yeah.

JOY DOLO: Oh, cool. So what from cheer would you put into the time capsule for people to see?

BROOKLYN: Maybe they're going to change their hairstyle. Instead of putting a high pony, they put their hair in a bun or something like that.

JOY DOLO: Oh, yeah, so they change the hairstyle completely?

BROOKLYN: Yeah.

JOY DOLO: That'd be cool. We'll hear what more listeners would put in the time capsule at the very end of the show, after the credits. Send us your recording ForeverAgo.org/contact. We can't wait to hear what you come up with.

BROOKLYN: More *Forever Ago* in just a moment-- don't go anywhere.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

JOY DOLO: All right, Brooklyn, let's reveal which of our first things first is actually the oldest. Drum roll, please.

[DRUM ROLL]

All right first up is-- oh, my goodness. I'm just going to tell you. We got it right. We got it completely right. I've never won anything in my life, Brooklyn.

BROOKLYN: Wait, the whole thing?

JOY DOLO: We got the whole-- goggles, fins, caps-- we did it.

BROOKLYN: Oh, my gosh.

JOY DOLO: Everybody just--

BROOKLYN: We are so good.

JOY DOLO: --pause wherever you are and take this in because this never happens. So, first up--

BROOKLYN: Yay!

JOY DOLO: --swim goggles-- first known instance was in 14th century Persia, when pearl divers used polished tortoise shells to protect their eyes. Early 20th century distance swimmers used modified motorcycle goggles. And then, second, the swim fins-- first invented by Benjamin Franklin in 1717. He put them on his hands instead of his feet, though. And they were made of wood, which doesn't sound helpful.

BROOKLYN: Yeah.

JOY DOLO: All early swim fins had a strap to keep them on swimmers' feet. It wasn't until 1948 that an Italian inventor, Luigi Ferraro, developed a fin that slips on like a shoe-- smart guy. And then last but not least is swim caps. Made of rubber starting in the late 1800s, it gained popularity as a fashion item in the 1920s when women started perming their hair-- a chemical process that is ruined by water. Now made of latex or silicone to help competitive swimmers reduce drag in the water-- so you were right, especially about the hair.

BROOKLYN: That's crazy.

JOY DOLO: That's right. When they started doing their hair, they started needing swim caps.

BROOKLYN: Yeah, we got it spot-on.

JOY DOLO: Can you believe it? And that was some really good guessing too. What would you say surprised you the most? Did any of this surprise you?

BROOKLYN: Maybe the fins. I actually didn't-- I wasn't sure about that one. I didn't know if I was putting it in the right place. At first, I was like, um, so maybe the fins.

JOY DOLO: Yeah, and it's interesting that it was made of wood at first. And then he put it on his hands.

BROOKLYN: Yeah.

JOY DOLO: Could you imagine putting swim fins on your hands right now?

BROOKLYN: Yeah, that'd be silly.

JOY DOLO: If you do it, take a picture and send it to ForeverAgo.org.

[LAUGHTER]

Cool.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

We're back with *Forever Ago*. I'm Joy.

BROOKLYN: And I'm Brooklyn.

JOY DOLO: And we're figuring out why it took me so long to learn to swim-- and why, for so long, so many African-Americans have struggled to learn the skill too.

BROOKLYN: So did anyone ever try to teach you to swim, Joy-- like, in school?

JOY DOLO: So many people-- but yeah, specifically, there was one lady, Mrs. Zinter, who was my PE teacher in middle school. She was determined to teach me how to swim. Swimming was a part of our class. And in our predominantly white school, I was one of the few kids who couldn't do it.

So, on swim days, Mrs. Zinter would set me up in the shallow end and help just put my head under the water. She kept trying to teach me to float. But I couldn't master it because I couldn't relax in the water. I wouldn't let go of the edge of the pool long enough to splash, let alone learn the backstroke.

And if I did let go, I would flail and frantically search for the bottom of the pool with my feet. This went on and on until swim lessons stopped. I graduated from the class, but I still couldn't swim. I should let Mrs. Zinter know I got over my fear.

BROOKLYN: Yeah, I'm sure she'd love to hear that.

MAN 3: Hello?

JOY DOLO: Oh, hey, I guess Bartholomew J. Hoity-Toity is still here.

MAN 3: Did you see my Brooklyn Bridge?

JOY DOLO: No, I was a little busy sharing something vulnerable.

MAN 3: Ooh, pamphlet idea-- Vulnerability the Right Way.

JOY DOLO: You know, Bart, we have a little more show to do. So can you just be quiet for a while?

MAN 3: Why, yes, stony silences are one of my specialties. Oh, another idea-- I shall write a pamphlet-- How To Be Quiet the Right Way.

[SIGHS]

JOY DOLO: Anyway-- so, when we left off, enslaved Africans were losing touch with their long tradition of swimming. In fact, they were being taught to fear the water so their enslavers had more control over them. This went on for far too long. But eventually, Black Americans were freed.

BROOKLYN: After the Civil War, slavery became illegal. And Black Americans had more rights. But they still were treated unfairly.

JOY DOLO: Right. After the Civil War, laws were passed that made it legally OK to keep Black and white people separate. These were sometimes called Jim Crow laws. And it meant that Black people were kept out of a lot of places. But in the late 1800s, they were still allowed in public bathing places. Oh, excuse me.

WOMAN: Oh, excuse us. We are in such a rush to get to the bathhouse. OK, does everyone have their things?

CHILD 1: Yes, mama. I got my towel and my hairbrush.

MAN 4: Yes, honey. I have my comb and my slippers, made special for my arthritis.

CHILD 1: I got my rubber duck.

WOMAN: And I have my magazines. I'm ready for a little me time. Let's go to the bathhouse.

BROOKLYN: Wait, what's a bathhouse?

WOMAN: Oh, it's where you gather to bathe leisurely, of course. Our family goes here all the time to bathe. Of course, it's separated by gender-- men over there and women over there.

JOY DOLO: These bathhouses were pretty common in American cities in the 1890s. They're basically giant pools. But they were mostly for getting clean, not swimming. And back then, poorer people of all races would use the bathhouse. It was separated by gender so that men and women wouldn't use them together. These were like the very beginning of the public pools we know today.

WOMAN: "Pew-wells"?

CHILD 1: Mamma, look what I can do. Mommy! Mom! Mom! Mommy!

WOMAN: Coming! Good luck with your pee-pee!

BROOKLYN: It's pools-- swimming pools.

JOY DOLO: Yeah, so families like this realized they could hang out in these bathhouses for fun, using the time to swim and socialize. But the rules for these places changed around the 1920s. Men and women could swim together. But because of racism, Black people were told they couldn't.

Over the next few decades, more pools were built. But the rules stayed pretty much the same-- no Black people allowed. Or if they were allowed, it would only be on certain days, like right before the pool was cleaned when the water was at its dirtiest.

BROOKLYN: That's terrible.

JOY DOLO: I know. And sometimes, when Black people would try to use pools, they were bullied or even attacked. Things could get really scary for Black people at pools.

BROOKLYN: It's no wonder that some Black families decided it was best to avoid swimming altogether.

JOY DOLO: So while white people used these pools to get better at swimming, most Black people didn't. Over time, fewer and fewer picked up the skill. Eventually, the rules changed. And today, everybody is allowed in public pools. But all this history meant that people like me-- we really didn't feel at home in the water.

BROOKLYN: But today, people are working to change that.

EBONY ROSEMOND: My name is Ebony Rosemond, and I'm the Executive Director of Black Kids Swim.

JOY DOLO: Ebony has been swimming her whole life-- and so has her whole family.

BROOKLYN: When her daughter began to swim competitively, they didn't see a lot of people of color competing. They thought it was quite odd.

EBONY ROSEMOND: We're talking about it in the car-- my husband, my daughter, and I. And she just takes my phone and Googles the phrase, Black kids swim. And the returns were extremely negative.

JOY DOLO: Negative stuff like news of Black kids drowning or stories about how Black kids don't have the skill-- she started her organization to fix that.

BROOKLYN: Black Kids Swim is all about helping Black kids get the skills they need to have fun in water.

EBONY ROSEMOND: Now if you Google that phrase, you'll get very, very different returns-- a lot of positivity, a lot of Black children excelling in competitive swimming, earning scholarships to swim at the collegiate level.

JOY DOLO: What would you say to a young person of color who wants to know why it's important to learn to swim?

EBONY ROSEMOND: We live in a really big world. And sometimes we forget it because we go from home to school to church to our friend's house. It's a huge world out there with all of these oceans and places to go scuba diving and sailing. And as a mom, I want all kids to be able to experience every single fun thing in life that there is to do. I don't ever want you to feel afraid and say no to an opportunity because you're scared. So you need to learn how to swim so you don't miss out on the fun stuff.

JOY DOLO: I just thought of one last question.

EBONY ROSEMOND: Yes!

JOY DOLO: What's your favorite swimming style?

EBONY ROSEMOND: Oh, by far, the butterfly.

JOY DOLO: Butterfly-- that's a good one.

EBONY I have tried. My daughter has tried to teach me. And I will continue to try. I think it is the most warrior-like stroke.

ROSEMOND: And it's so beautiful, and I love watching my daughter do it. When swimmers do it well, it is almost like dancing.

JOY DOLO: Mmm-- water dancing. I eventually learned to water dance myself. For me, learning to swim wasn't just about learning to move in water. It was about conquering my fear and trusting that I was going to be OK. To encourage myself, I booked a trip to Hawaii. That's a good prize for learning to swim, right?

So I signed up for the local YMCA and enlisted a coach I trusted with my life-- my husband. My husband and his family are all good swimmers, so I figured he'd be perfect. Every morning at 6:00 AM, we both arrived at the pools to practice. At first, the smell of chlorine scared me. Just getting into the pool was hard.

I remember walking down the little steps into the three-foot deep section, and my heart was just pounding. I remember one time, my husband told me to lay on my back and float. And I was like, for real-- float? I didn't think I could do it. I tried to lay back to relax. But I kept thinking of Camp Joy-- of laying at the bottom of the pool. And I'd start to sink.

Then my husband put his arms underneath me. He told me he would not let me drown. And with his help, I floated. Soon, I was doing the doggy paddle, the breaststroke, and just plain jumping into the deep end. I started thinking more about how much fun I was having, and my fear started fading away.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Six months later, we arrived at Waikiki Beach. It was beautiful-- big waves, sandy beaches, everyone wearing those leis of flower around their neck. OK, maybe I'm imagining that part still. But I walked up to the water. And I was afraid, sure.

But I knew I could do it. With all my courage, I waded in, I let go, and I swam. I swam in the Pacific Ocean-- specifically, the Pacific Ocean! And it felt amazing. Now I can finally say that I have swam in oceans, lakes, and even "pew-wells!"

[WATER SPLASHING]

So, Brooklyn, we've learned that Africans once had a strong relationship with the water, but many lost that when they were enslaved and brought to the US.

BROOKLYN: And racism and Jim Crow laws kept Black people from feeling comfortable in the water long after slavery ended.

JOY DOLO: Yeah, but thanks to people like Ebony and groups like Black Kids Swim, more Black kids are getting in the water. And speaking of, I think it's time.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

BROOKLYN: For what?

JOY DOLO: Time for the biggest splash show down this pool's ever seen. I've been working on a new dive, partner. And it's a real doozy.

BROOKLYN: I'm ready for it.

JOY DOLO: It's the Brooklyn dolo double dipper. And it takes two to do this tango. Let's go-- yee-ha!

[WATER SPLASHING]

BROOKLYN: Woo!

[WATER SPLASHING]

[MUSIC PLAYING]

JOY DOLO: This episode was written by me, Joy Dolo, and produced by Tara Anderson, Sanden Totten, and Molly Bloom, with additional production support from Kaleisha Toddy, Menaka Wilhelm, and Anna Goldfield. Sound design by Eduardo Perez. Theme music by Mark Sanchez. Beth Perlman is our executive producer. Voice acting by Brant Miller, Lulu, and Alex Wright.

We had engineering help from Jess Berg and Rachel Brees. The executives in charge of APM studios are Chandra Kavati, Joanne Griffith, and Alex Schaffert. Special thanks to Tracy and Miguel Malcolm. Thanks, Graham, for teaching me how to swim. And thanks to my family for putting up with all my talk about swimming.

[GEARS TURNING]

Now let's see what we'll be adding to the time capsule this week.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

PALOMA: Hello, my name is Paloma, and I'm from Oklahoma. I would like to add to this time capsule iPhones and iPads. There might not be phones and iPads in the future. Maybe they use holograms or other gadgets.

RONAN: Hello, *Forever Ago*. I'm Ronan. I'm nine years old, and I'm from Los Angeles, California. If I could put something in the time capsule, well, I'd probably put in something like some ice cream. I don't know how that wouldn't melt-- because I bet that in the future, ice cream will be just popped up. You can just press a button, and ice cream just pops up in your cone or something. Bye! You guys are awesome. Keep up the good work.

JOY DOLO: Thanks to Ronan and Paloma for those fabulous ideas. If you have an idea of what you'd like to add to the time capsule, send it to us at ForeverAgo.org/contact. Your answer could be played on a future episode. Brooklyn and I will be back next week with a history of lifeguarding. See you next time, and thanks for listening.

[MUSIC PLAYING]