

00:00:01	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
00:00:03	Jesse Thorn	Host	Welcome to the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast. I'm Bailiff Jesse Thorn. We're in chambers this week, clearing the docket. And with me... is the oldest living president, Judge John Hodgman.
00:00:14	John Hodgman	Host	<i>[Laughing quietly]</i> Ah, what a burden. What a burden of history it is.
00:00:19	Jesse	Host	It is. You gotta show up to all the funerals. For, you know, when Jacques Chirac dies or whatever. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:00:25	John	Host	You know what? I think being an ex-president would be pretty amazing. That would be great. All you have to do is go to funerals, right? And maybe you can do some good in this world?
00:00:45	Jesse	Host	I don't know. I'd be an ex-president any day. You know what? Everybody, John Hodgman for ex-president, 2020! <i>[Laughs.]</i> I'm in!
00:00:54	John	Host	<i>[Laughing]</i> It—I'd—I'd do that, too. I'd do it all! I'd do it all. That's why I'm running for ex-president.
			<i>[Jesse laughs.]</i>
			You heard it here first, everybody. John Hodgman 2020.
			You know what I <u>am</u> doing, Jesse, before we speak about this docket?
00:01:07	Jesse	Host	What's that?
00:01:08	John	Host	I'm getting very excited, 'cause we're closing in on the publication date of <i>Medallion Status</i> , my new book of funny stories, hard truths, and secret rooms.
			And I hope people will consider checking it out in any format they like! Did you know that you can go to Bit.ly/MEDALLIONSTATUS and order it from an indie seller? A local bookshop in your world? You can! Go to IndieBound when you click on Bit.ly/MEDALLIONSTATUS . Pick the IndieBound option!
			Or you can just call our friends at Books Are Magic, order one there. And I'll sign one for you, eventually. And they'll send it to you. But you won't—it'll take a little while, 'cause I have to get over there.
			See, it takes—I have to take a subway train.
00:01:50	John	Host	Jesse Thorn, I just had to—you know, #AlwaysBePlugging. You gotta—you gotta get your plugs in! You know what I mean?
00:01:56	Jesse	Host	ABP, that's the most famous hashtag of all time.
00:01:59	John	Host	#AlwaysBePlugging, #Let'sGetToTheDocket!
00:02:03	Jesse	Host	Here's something from Rachel. She says, "My fiancé Andrew does not make the bed. I <u>always</u> make the bed when I get up <u>after</u> him, which is about three or four times a week.

If I'm up before him, I come home to a messy, unmade bed. I would like Judge John Hodgman to order my fiancé to make the bed when he's the last one to wake up in the morning.

It's fair to share the responsibility of keeping our space clean and cozy."

00:02:29 John Host Jesse, you share a marital bed with your lovely bride and person in her own right, uh, Theresa Thorn.

00:02:34 Jesse Host That's true.

00:02:35 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** And you also share that bed with—

Jesse: *[Laughing]* And various children and dogs.

John: *[Laughing]* Right. Various children and dogs.

00:02:41 John Host California king? Do you have a California king?

00:02:43 Jesse Host We have a standard king, uh, not quite enough room in the bedroom for a California king, but I—I took your advice after children started showing up in my bed and upgraded from a queen to a king.

And it has made a great difference in terms of, particularly, me not falling off the side of the bed.

[Both laugh.]

00:03:01 John Host A person of your height should—uh, you know, a California king would be nice, 'cause they're longer, right? I think that's what that's all about.

00:03:07 Jesse Host Yeah, I think it's a little longer.

00:03:08 John Host One of these days, one of these days! But in the meantime, given what you describe, that bed has got to be a disaster area in the morning. Right?

00:03:17 Jesse Host Yep! And all day long, baby! *[Laughs.]*

00:03:19 John Host 'Cause no one makes it up? There's no policy?

00:03:21 Jesse Host Yeah, no one in our family is the bed maker. I would say I make it... hastily and casually, two or three days a week. *[Laughs.]*

I try and like, spread the bedspread so at least if the dogs go up on the bed, they're on the bedspread and not on the bedsheets.

00:03:37 John Host Right, right, right. You don't wanna make a bed with a dog and get it trapped in there. That could turn ugly.

00:03:42 Jesse Host *[Laughing]* No.

00:03:44 John Host It might not surprise listeners to know that when I sleep at night, and then get up in the morning, it's like I was never there.

[Both laugh.]

Many a night, I will just lie down on top of the covers, and not even get under the covers, and lie down straight like a robot and then shut down for a while and then wake up and get out of bed, and it's not been disturbed.

And even when I do get under the covers and sleep soundly in a cozy-type situation, there is a control mania in my unconscious mind that prevents me from messing up those covers.

00:04:18 John Host

Whereas the person that I share my bed with... I don't know how she does it. Like, usually the top sheet has been knotted into a series of intricate sailors' knots by the time morning has come.

And never mind the comforter, which is—maybe could be in another room at that point.

But we had to come up with a system for tidying this bed up that felt equitable. Since, let's put it frankly, only one person is messing it up.

[Both laugh.]

00:04:50 Jesse Host

This is a "did the crime, does the time" situation?

00:04:53 John Host

Well, no, it's just—you know, we decided to put everything in balance and realized since, you know, it couldn't just be my wife's responsibility, 'cause that's not fair.

00:05:04 Jesse Host

It's not necessarily fair to punish her for her actions while unconscious.

00:05:09 John Host

Yeah, it's just the way she sleeps! It's not a—I mean, it's—that's the way it is, exactly!

So we came up with a system that feels very equitable to me, especially when, uh, our children were littler and needed attention earlier in the morning than we wanted to wake up.

And that was the last person out of bed tidies the bed. That way the person who gets out of bed first doesn't have to worry about it, and the person who gets to sleep in a little bit does the basic decent thing of tidying the bed.

So that is our system. It is universally applied, insofar as when I am the last person to get up, I do tidy the bed. *[Laughing]* Otherwise, it never gets tidied. It is universally applied to me only.

00:05:50 John Host

But I will say this. Difference in tolerance for untidiness is something you need to figure out in your relationship right quick. You need to know how much tidiness each person feels is desirable and how much untidiness each person feels they can put up with.

Because I do think that it's a very personal thing. And if you are in a relationship where you desire tidiness, such as Rachel, but Andrew doesn't care about it, *[laughing]* such as Andrew, uh, that can turn into a low background hum of resentment that will be poisonous over time.

The first thing that has to happen if you're a tidy person living with an untidy person is you have to acknowledge that untidiness is not a moral failure. It's just that different people have different tolerance level for things being out of place or not quite right.

00:06:49 John Host

That said, the bed is the most intimate part of a relationship. This is the place where you should find some common ground. Andrew, Rachel isn't your mommy. People shouldn't be cleaning up after you.

Pull up the comforter; it's the least you can do.

In the meantime, Rachel, forgive him his untidiness, and Andrew respect her tidiness.

00:07:11 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:07:12 John Host Goodnight. *[Laughs.]*

00:07:14 Jesse Host Here's something from Lou.

"I bring this case against my dear, sweet partner. He doesn't always check to see how many bathroom towels are currently in use, and helps himself to a new one after showering.

This results in far too many active towels.

He says this isn't a problem. He believes towels can be returned to the linen closet after one or two uses."

00:07:37 John Host *[Weakly]* What?

00:07:38 Jesse Host Wow.

[John laughs.]

"If you rule in my favor, I would have you order that no used towels are allowed back in the linen closet, and that my husband must read the room before grabbing a fresh towel."

[Stifling laughter] Those other towels might disapprove.

00:07:51 John Host *[Laughing]* Yeah.

00:07:52 Jesse Host "I would also *[laughs]* have you order that he clean all active towels regularly for the next three months as damages. You may decide what you think is regular for towel-cleaning. We will follow your wise advice."

00:08:06 John Host Uhhh, there's a lot to process here. Before we start tearing this person apart—not Lou, but her partner—do you have a towel policy in your home?

00:08:18 Jesse Host I am responsible for my portion of the laundry, and my wife handles herself and our children.

00:08:25 John Host That's good, 'cause I would imagine given the number of vintage textiles and special cleaning items you have, your portion of the laundry is probably more complicated than a million tighty-whities.

00:08:38 Jesse Host Yeah. Exactly.

00:08:39 John Host Right.

00:08:40 Jesse Host I think that is exactly why. I mean, the real reason why is that my wife many years ago made the tactical mistake of saying to me that she enjoyed doing laundry.

00:08:48 John Host *[Laughing]* Oh no!

00:08:49 Jesse Host *[Laughs.]* But yeah, I do my laundry because I'm the one who does ironing. I'm the one who actually separates colors consistently.

00:08:57 John Host Yeah.

00:08:58 Jesse Host Etc., etc., etc. And my habit is to wash—I—I have white towels, and I

will wash my towels with my whites. Uh, which is about once a week.

00:09:10 John Host Yeah.

00:09:11 Jesse Host Uh, and I will also wash my mat with all that. I'll toss it all in there and, uh, deal with it, uh, once a week or so.

00:09:17 John Host Do you use a clean towel every day?

00:09:20 Jesse Host Well, when I'm in a hotel, but only because I want to destroy the environment—

[John laughs]

—in spite of that little card that they give you. *[Laughs.]*

00:09:27 John Host Yeah. When I get the card, I call down, and I go, "Could you print up 500 more of these cards?" *[Laughs.]*

00:09:33 Jesse Host *[Laughing]* "I need to use them to dry off."

00:09:35 John Host *[Laughs.]*

Uh, but at home—I mean, I asked you that question in a leading way to suggest that I would think it shameful if you did not use your towel at least twice before throwing it in the hamper.

I'll use a towel, and then I'll hang it up, and then I'll use it again the next day and I'll hang it up. And then eventually I'll smell it and I'll be like, "This smells dirty. I deserve a clean towel," and then I will take a clean towel.

It sounds to me like Lou's partner here is guilty of two crimes. One, using a clean towel every day like he's in a hotel and wants to destroy the environment.

I'm presuming since the damages that Lou is requesting is that Lou's partner do the towels, that he does not normally do the laundry.

00:10:16 John Host If he were normally doing the laundry, this would not be happening. Even if he did his own laundry, it is, as you point out Jesse, ecologically sub-optimal to be washing towels like that all the time.

Hang your towel up and use it, I would say, three times before washing it again. Twice if you get skeeved out by that. But a clean towel every day is not—there are too many active towels! As Lou points out.

And second crime—hey! Don't put a used towel in with the clean towels! *[Laughs.]* That's the weirdest thing I've ever heard! I mean, I've heard a lot of weird things on the podcast, so maybe it's not the weirdest thing I've ever heard.

But does that not strike you, Jesse, as malfeasance? And trickery?

00:10:59 Jesse Host It strikes me as sociopathic!

00:11:01 John Host *[Laughing]* Thank you.

00:11:03 Jesse Host I mean, my first thought was, "How is he activating so many towels? Like, how many racks and hooks are there in this bathroom?"

[Stifling laughter] I find out that the way he's getting around the limited rack and hook space is by re-folding and replacing, as though all towels are the same, used or unused?!

00:11:22 John Host Yeah! They're damp! You put them back in there and you fold them up, they're gonna stay damp and they're gonna get moldy! What are you even thinking, Lou's partner? No! *[Sighs.]*

00:11:33 Jesse Host I think the only answer is gonna be for this household to get one of those Dyson airblade hand dryers, but the full body edition.

00:11:42 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** Is—tell me that's a real thing.

Jesse: Just *[imitates the sound of a hand dryer]*. *[Laughs.]*

00:11:48 John Host By the way, my apologies to all the misophonics in the audience. Oh.

[Jesse laughs.]

That must have been hard for you. To hear Jesse imitating a Dyson full body air dryer.

I would love one of those things. Like, that thing you have to go into in the airport that scans all your bodies?

00:12:02 Jesse Host Yeah, but it has the airblades, like the airblade thing, and it just goes down, *[makes the sound again]*.

You don't think Bill Gates has one of these? You know Bill Gates has one of these. He just stands on two little pictures of feet in his bathroom on the floor.

00:12:16 John Host *[Laughs.]* Right.

00:12:17 Jesse Host And then the blades come down out of the sky. *[Makes the noise again.]*

[John laughs.]

And then he's dry. It all goes into a sluice.

00:12:23 John Host *[Laughs.]* Now I don't know who's gonna be angrier, the misophonics or people like me who hate the word "sluice."

00:12:30 Jesse Host You know what I think is possible? I'm upgrading Bill Gates's house right now. If he doesn't already have this, he will soon.

He goes in.

00:12:37 John Host Yeah.

00:12:38 Jesse Host He takes off his clothes.

00:12:39 John Host Yeah.

00:12:40 Jesse Host He's looking great, by the way.

00:12:41 John Host Yeah.

00:12:42 Jesse Host He puts his feet on the outlines of the feet, and then he goes through one of those automatic carwashes—

00:12:48 John Host Yes.

00:12:49 Jesse Host *[laughing]*—with all the things go, "Flop flop flop flop flop flop," you know, *[laughing]* like the pink and purple flappers that flap onto

your car?

He gets waxed up. He gets the deluxe.

00:12:59 John Host

Sure. The platinum package.

00:13:01 Jesse Host

Yeah. *[Laughing]* Tire dressing, the whole nine yards. That's why his feet are so shiny.

And then he shoots out! And he probably drops into a pair of pants.

00:13:11 John Host

So he's moving—he's on a conveyor belt, or in some kind of bath vehicle, moving through these cleaning agents like a carwash?

00:13:20 Jesse Host

That seems likely to me. I mean, I'm not an engineer, John. I'm more of an idea man.

00:13:24 John Host

[Laughs.] But for a small New York apartment, you would need a kind of stationary tube that contains all of this.

00:13:30 Jesse Host

Mmm.

00:13:31 John Host

You step into the tube. It sprays you down, then it dries you down.

00:13:35 Jesse Host

I think in a New York apartment, it's sort of like a small circular track, like a Christmas train set.

00:13:41 John Host

[Laughs.] Oh, right. So like a, uh, a studio body carwash.

00:13:46 Jesse Host

[Laughing] Exactly.

00:13:46 John Host

Studio size. A Murphy Bed style.

00:13:50 Jesse Host

[Laughing] Exactly.

00:13:51 John Host

Alright.

00:13:52 Jesse Host

But I mean, in all cases you're gonna need a pretty big sluice.

00:13:55 John Host

[Disgusted] Oh!

Can we move on? Lou, your partner is wrong.

00:13:59 Sound Effect Sound Effect

[Three gavel bangs.]

00:14:00 Jesse Host

[Laughing] Without that sluiceway!

00:14:01 John Host

[Unhappy] Oh...

00:14:02 Jesse Host

Without that sluiceway.

00:14:03 John Host

How dare you?

00:14:05 Jesse Host

[Laughing] Let's take a quick break. When we come back, we'll hear from a couple of friends of the court about a childcare dispute.

00:14:11 Sound Effect Transition

[Three gavel bangs.]

00:14:14 Promo Clip

[Music.]

Travis McElroy: I'm Travis McElroy.

Courtney Enlow: I'm Courtney Enlow.

Brent Black: I'm Brent Black, and we're the hosts of *Trends Like These*.

Courtney: *Trends Like These* is an Internet news show where we take the stories trending on social media, and go beyond the

headlines!

Travis: We'll give you the actual facts of the story, and not just the knee-jerk reactions.

00:14:30 Promo Clip

Brent: Plus we end every episode with a ray of hope that we call the Wi-Five of the Week.

Travis: So join us every Friday on Maximum Fun.

Courtney: Or wherever you get your podcasts!

Brent: *Trends Like These.* Real life friends talking Internet trends.

[Music ends.]

00:14:44 Sound Effect Transition

[Three gavel bangs.]

00:14:46 Promo Clip

[Music.]

Lisa Hanawalt: Hey, if you like your podcasts to be focused and well-researched, and your podcast hosts to be uncharismatic, unhorny strangers who have no interest in horses, then this is not the podcast for you.

Emily Heller: Yeah, and what's your deal?

[Lisa laughs.]

I'm Emily.

00:14:58 Promo Clip

Lisa: I'm Lisa.

Emily: Our show's called Baby Geniuses!

Lisa: And its hosts are horny adult idiots. We discover weird Wikipedia pages every episode.

Emily: We discuss institutional misogyny!

00:15:09 Promo Clip

Lisa: We ask each other the dumbest questions, and our listeners won't stop sending us pictures of their butts.

Emily: We haven't asked them to stop! But they also aren't stopping.

Lisa: Join us on Baby Geniuses.

Emily: Every other week on MaximumFun.org.

[Music ends.]

00:15:23 Sound Effect Transition

[Three gavel bangs.]

00:15:25 Jesse Host

Welcome back to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. We're clearing the docket.

00:15:29 John Host

At least you didn't say "sluice juice" before the break.

[Jesse cracks up.]

[Chuckles lightly.] Yeah.

00:15:35 Jesse Host *[Laughing]* The—the famous—the famous—Howard Hughes's famous boondoggle beverage, the sluice juice?

00:15:45 John Host *[Laughing]* Bill Gates's body—you get—all his dead skin cells and sweat get sprayed down and then dried off and all of that remaining water gets sluiced out and then it collects the sluice juice and repurposes it!

[Both laugh.]

00:15:59 Jesse Host *[Laughing]* Here's something from Sara. She says—

00:16:02 John Host I like the Howard Hughes joke better, by the way. For the record, everyone—

[Jesse laughs]

—Jesse's joke was better.

00:16:06 Jesse Host *[Winds down.]*

"My husband and I are going to Scotland next year. His parents will be watching our son while we're gone. Our son will be two by then.

I'd like them to come to Denver to stay with our son while we're gone. My husband thinks we should leave our son in Kansas with his parents.

My concerns are that my son doesn't know his grandparents particularly well, and I'm afraid that they'll take him to church."

[John laughs.]

00:16:34 Jesse Host "My husband thinks it's not right to make them uproot their lives for two weeks so that our child can stay in Denver."

00:16:42 John Host Hm!

Jesse, that's a thorny parenting issue. And luckily there's a great parenting podcast cohosted by someone named Thorn, Theresa Thorn, we were talking about her earlier! Cohost of *One Bad Mother* podcast with Biz Ellis.

It's a comedy show about parenthood, and we thought they'd be perfect expert witnesses to take on this dispute. So here's what Biz and Theresa have to say.

00:17:04 Theresa Thorn & Biz Ellis Guest Wooooo!

00:17:06 Biz Guest Woo, Theresa!

00:17:07 Theresa Guest Yeah!

00:17:08 Biz Guest This is a hot one!

00:17:09 Theresa Guest It is. Can we just start by—

00:17:11 Biz Guest Yeah.

00:17:12 Theresa Guest —throwing out the church concerns, 'cause he's two? Is that fair?

00:17:15 Biz Guest Yeah, I—

00:17:16 Theresa Guest I mean, I don't want my kids to go to church either, but I think he's two. I think it's gonna be okay if he goes to church.

00:17:21 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Biz:** And also—

Theresa: Can we—can we leave that, uh, aside?

00:17:23 Biz Guest Well, I just wanted to say: no matter where you go, church is there.

00:17:27 Theresa Guest True!

00:17:28 Biz Guest So if they're going to church, they're gonna go to church where you live as well.

00:17:32 Theresa Guest Oh, that's a good point!

00:17:33 Biz Guest So let's all remember that, and if this is really about church, then I think we know the answer to the rest of this question.

00:17:39 Theresa Guest Yes.

00:17:40 Biz Guest Uh, Theresa, would you like to weigh in on this first?

00:17:42 Theresa Guest Sure!

00:17:43 Biz Guest Yeah!

[Biz responds affirmatively and emphatically as Theresa speaks.]

00:17:44 Theresa Guest Um, I think that it would be definitely much better for a two-year-old who doesn't know their grandparents very well to stay in their own environment if they're gonna be away from their parents for a couple of weeks. I think that's pretty stressful on a little one, to be, um, cared for by totally different caregivers for an exte—a pretty extended period of time at that age.

However, I also just think it's interesting that the option of asking the in-laws what they would be comfortable with or what they would like to do hasn't been incorporated into this calculation. Um, so I think I would say, like, maybe the in-laws are up for it.

And they might even like for the kid to be in his more comfortable environment, 'cause that might make their job easier and more smooth.

00:18:36 Biz Guest Right! Where all the supplies are—

00:18:38 Theresa Guest Yeah!

00:18:39 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Biz:** —everything the child needs is—

Theresa: His bedtime routine.

Biz: Yeah.

[Biz continues responding emphatically as Theresa continues.]

00:18:41 Theresa Guest All the stuff that he's used to. They might be more up for that than your husband thinks. But at the same time, if it's actually very disruptive to their lives—they're both working, they both can't take that kind of time off, maybe they have more of a support network at home that can help them. *[Stifling laughter]*

I feel like these are all important questions that we might—you might

wanna take into consideration.

[Theresa responds emphatically as Biz speaks.]

00:19:08	Biz	Guest	Yeah. Because I think the core of this question is a very natural, emotional place that you are in as a parent of a two-year-old. You—I'm not gonna tell you what those emotions are. But I'm sure you have some.
00:19:28	Theresa	Guest	You know what they are.
<i>[Theresa continues responding affirmatively and emphatically.]</i>			
00:19:29	Biz	Guest	And you know, it's okay. That's the real bottom line. You can go on a trip. And your child, whichever, uh, decision is made, really will be fine. And you can, and are allowed, to have a good time.
00:19:49	Theresa	Guest	That's so true!
00:19:50	Biz	Guest	Yeah.
00:19:51	Theresa	Guest	That's such a good point.
00:19:52	Biz	Guest	Yeah. So you're doing a good job.
00:19:54	Theresa	Guest	Yeah, you are!
00:19:55	Biz	Guest	And yeah, I'm with Theresa. It sounds like there's some facts missing from a voice of the grandparents.
00:20:01	Theresa	Guest	Yeah.
00:20:02	Biz	Guest	So go ask them.
00:20:04	Theresa	Guest	And then have a great trip.
00:20:05	Biz	Guest	Woo!
00:20:07	Jesse	Host	What do you think, John?
00:20:09	John	Host	Well, first of all, thanks, Biz and Theresa. They honed in on some things that I hadn't thought of, which is where the supplies are, how those grandparents are gonna take that child to church no matter what.
<i>[Both laugh.]</i>			
That's true. That—that neutralizes that issue very nicely. And that, you know, when you go away and you're leaving your kid behind kind of for the first time, it—it is stressful.			
When we left our daughter alone at this age, it was a mistake.			
<i>[Laughing]</i> We should have invited my father to take care of her. No—we—we did invite our father to take—my father to take care of her, and his wife, and they came to <u>our</u> home.			
I think that that's the right call. Unless, as Biz and Theresa point out, that, uh, there's some missing information that means that the grandparents are ailing, or have less flexibility, or it doesn't really work for them to go to Denver, I think they should go to Denver.			
00:20:58	John	Host	I think that's a pretty common, typical, grandparenty thing to do. What do you think about it, Jesse?
00:21:03	Jesse	Host	I agree with you that if it were even-stein, 50/50, I would say that the grandparents, uh, should come to the kid rather than the other

way around.

But I would emphasize two things. One is that these grandparents who you don't trust your child with because they might take them to church for three hours—

[Both laugh.]

[Laughing] Um, speaking as someone who's been to a lot of church, it's fine. Like, I'm an atheist and everything. Church is fine—

00:21:37 John Host

Yeah!

00:21:38 Jesse Host

—generally. Certainly for a two-year-old.

00:21:40 John Host

Yeah! It's often interesting and pleasant. You know, I didn't go to as much church as you did, Jesse, but as a, uh, lapsed Catholic son of two lapsed Catholics, I did have to go to some masses when I was a little kid.

And the only traumatic thing about it was I didn't understand why all—everyone else was getting snack, and I wasn't.

[Jesse laughs.]

Part of me still wants to taste one of those communion wafers. I really felt like those gotta be the best-tasting Pringles in the world. God Pringles!

00:22:06 Jesse Host

Oooh, I'd love—*[eagerly]* I'd love to get my hands on the body of Christ!

[Both laugh.]

I think there are two key considerations that are being left out of the conversation. They're ones that Biz and Theresa were getting at that were not in this question.

One of them is that these people are doing an extraordinary favor for you and your partner. The two of you are gonna go on a two-week vacation while not taking care of your kid. That is really special, and if they want the kid to come to them, send the kid to them.

00:22:40 Jesse Host

Like, I don't think this would have come up if they didn't prefer the kid to come to them. I think it's probably less than perfect, and I would choose—again, 50/50, I'd choose for the grandparents to come to the kid.

But the second consideration is it will absolutely, 100%, be fine either way.

One of the best pieces of advice I ever got from my old therapist, who had been a child development specialist for a long time before he met me and realized that some adults needed child development specialists—um—*[laughs]*—

But one of the best pieces of advice I ever got from old Dr. Carr was that when it comes to your parents taking care of your children, or your in-laws taking care of your children, that—with the exception of

situations that are dangerous, such as, you know, if a parent is an alcoholic or if a parent is, you know, abusive or something along those lines, there's some reason to believe the child won't be safe—

00:23:45 Jesse Host

Uh, generally speaking, the child will gain from having experience doing things another way. That it will not invalidate the way that you have raised your child. It will add to your child's flexibility and toolkit in dealing with the world.

And I know that when you have a two-year-old, especially if it's your first or only child, it's hard to accept that; because you are really focused on making every decision the right way.

And the reason you're doing that is because you believe the stakes to be extraordinarily high, and they're not not high. But just remember, A) they're doing something really nice for you, so maybe kind of mention this but follow their lead.

And B) just know it'll be fine! It's totally gonna be fine. They have raised children. They're doing this voluntarily. It's gonna be great.

00:24:38 John Host

You know, Jesse, now that I've, uh, benefitted from your wise counsel, as well as Theresa and Biz's, I see something in this case that I hadn't considered before, which is it's not really clear what the grandparents want.

We know that Sara wants them to come to Denver. We know that her husband thinks—according to Sara, thinks—they should bring their son to Kansas.

But has her husband asked his parents what they want? Is he afraid to ask? Is he too shy to ask? If they know that the grandparents would prefer that their grandson come to Kansas, then that's one thing.

But you need to find out first. It is reasonable to ask them what is convenient, and it is important, especially when you're relying on grandparents for help, to really be open and communicative around what works for them.

00:25:33 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:25:34 John Host And by the way, *One Bad Mother*, you can hear it every Thursday on [MaximumFun.org](https://www.maximumfun.org) or wherever you get your podcasts, and you should hear it there every Thursday on [MaximumFun.org](https://www.maximumfun.org) or wherever you get your podcasts, 'cause it's great!

00:25:45 Jesse Host

Yeah. Totally rules.

Let's take a quick break. More items on the docket when we come back in just a minute.

00:25:51 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:25:54 Jesse Promo We're taking a quick break from the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast, and John, we are headed out on tour!

00:26:00 John Promo

That's correct, Jesse Thorn!

We are going out on the road again, bringing justice to the lawless lands of Toronto, Ontario on November 6th; Durham, North Carolina,

November 7th; Atlanta, Georgia, November 8th; Washington, DC at the Lincoln Theatre November 10th; and of course, Portland, Maine, November 11th.

We're hitting the State Theatre! I'm very excited about this, Jesse Thorn.

I love the Portland City Music Hall where we've performed before. But the State Theatre, that's their older sister venue! That's the big one! That's where, uh, *Stuff You Should Know* goes when they hit Portland.

00:26:34 Jesse Promo

[Whistles.]

00:26:35 John Promo

So, uh, folks of Maine, turn up! Because that's a big house, and we wanna—we're gonna bring a big show to you!

00:26:41 Jesse Promo

I hope you're ready to do some Maine humor, John!

00:26:43 John Promo

[Laughs.] Uh, nope! I threw that away.

[Both laugh.]

No, of course! [Laughs.] Of course, even though I have a brand new book out, called *Medallion Status*, uh, that has much less Maine content than *Vacationland*, Maine is still—holds, uh, a cold, dark place in my flinty, dead heart.

[Jesse laughs.]

And I cannot wait to go to all of these towns! Which I've not seen many of them for quite a while.

00:27:05 John Promo

We're gonna have, uh, surprises! Live cases! We're gonna open up the floor to disputes from the audience!

And of course, we're gonna have copies of *Medallion Status*, all kinds of merch, and all kinds of good feelings to give to you after the sh—well, we're gonna sell you the merch, but we're gonna give you the good feelings after the show.

We'll stay there as long as there's someone there to stay for. So it's *Judge John Hodgman: Live Justice*.

Toronto; Durham; Atlanta; Washington, DC; Portland, Maine. If you wanna get your tickets, and I hope you do, go to the MaximumFun.org events page, and/or go to [my JohnHodgman.com/tour](http://myJohnHodgman.com/tour) page for all the relevant hyperlinks on the world wide web.

00:27:47 Jesse Promo

And if you have a case and you live in Toronto, Durham, Atlanta, Washington DC, or Portland, or environs, we would love to hear them! We might get you into the show for free if we choose your case to, uh, talk about live on stage!

You can submit cases at MaximumFun.org/jjho or email hodgman@maximumfun.org and make sure that you mention that you're near one of those places.

00:28:19 John Promo That's MaximumFun.org/jjho or email hodgman@maximumfun.org. And in honor of the most popular hashtag on the Internet, #AlwaysBePlugging, let me remind you my new book *Medallion Status* comes out October 15th.

I put a lot of work into it. I hope you enjoy it. You can pre-order it at Bit.ly/MEDALLIONSTATUS. All one word, all capital letters. M-E-D-A-L-L-I-O-N-S-T-A-T-U-S.

You know, the—the reason I put so much emphasis on pre-ordering is that, um, *[stifling laughter]* it really helps. It really helps to get a lot of books moving that first week that it's out there.

So if you're in a mind and a position to give it a shot, please go to Bit.ly/MEDALLIONSTATUS. If you wanna save your money for the Live Justice tour, do that. Take the book out of the library. Or if you don't feel like reading it at all, I still love you.

00:29:07 John Promo Bit.ly/MEDALLIONSTATUS. Always be plugging. JohnHodgman.com/tour.

Let's get back to the docket!

00:29:12 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:29:14 Jesse Host Welcome back to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. This week, we're clearing the docket. We've got something here from Justin. He says:

"My wife Pam and I wrote a heavy metal song about our cleaning lady. The song is called 'Miriam the Destroyer,' and we sometimes sing it around the house.

Our four-year-old has now started singing it, too. Pam thinks we need to stop singing the song because our kid will inevitably sing it in front of Miriam, who we adore, despite her sometimes breaking things.

I think it's possible to keep singing our song, but we need to be discreet. *[Laughing]* She requests that you issue an injunction on the singing of this song."

00:29:53 John Host Well Jesse, I'm just gonna say that maybe this is a really funny song. Right? Maybe it is the most funny and clever heavy metal parody song of all time.

00:30:04 Jesse Host *[Laughing]* Even more so than "Three Little Pigs," by Green Jell-O?

00:30:08 John Host Yeah. I'm gonna say it's the gr—not only is it a super funny heavy metal parody song, but it intrinsically rocks. Because I don't want the quality of this song to be part of the consideration of the ethical nature of this song.

Because even if this song is an awesome, rocking song, it is wrong. Miriam is an actual person, who's doing work that you do not feel like doing. She is not a funny character to write a funny song about.

I'm sorry she breaks or destroys things from time to time, but that's part of the built-in cost of hiring help of any kind. If you have

someone do something that you don't feel like doing, they might break a thing! Whether that's, you know, knock over a vase in your home or, uh, miscalculate something on your tax return.

And the given probabilities, the likelihood is that she's probably someone who makes less money than you do, and she's probably someone—comes from a different background, maybe a less privileged background, and so Pam is right.

00:31:02 John Host It would be bad if your daughter [*stifling laughter*] sang it in from of Miriam!

That would be mortifying for you, and it would tip off Miriam that not only do you not think of her as a whole human being with dignity, but also, she would know that you have inadvertently trained your daughter, who doesn't know any better, to think of Miriam and people who do the kind of work that she does as—as joke-worthy.

And I know that's not your intention. I know that you "adore" Miriam. But adoration is less important than treating another person with respect and dignity, both in front of and behind their back.

So that song goes in the vaults.

00:31:41 Sound Effect Sound Effect [*Three gavel bangs.*]

00:31:42 Jesse Host So Judge Hodgman, audience, we often hear letters in response to rulings from the podcast.

But we have one here that is a letter responding to a ruling you wrote in the *New York Times* column, *Judge John Hodgman*, which appears in the newspaper *The New York Times*.

The dispute was about whether or not a couple should be compelled to hide their Squatty Potty, which is like the little stool that goes at the base of a toilet, when they have guests over.

Judge Hodgman, what was your ruling?

00:32:15 John Host So to clarify, as you point out, a Squatty Potty is a kind of—a special toilet footstool that helps you evacuate when you are pooping. Heavily advertised on... Howard Stern? And presumably podcasts that are more popular than ours.

[*Jesse laughs.*]

'Cause I would love to get some of that Squatty Potty money. You know what I mean, Squatty Potty? Come on. I'm ready to talk about this thing.

I think it's a great product! But they have two of them in this household, this couple that wrote in to me. They keep one upstairs and one downstairs, and the downstairs bathroom is the de facto guest bathroom when they have people coming through.

00:32:55 John Host And the husband wanted to put the Squatty Potty in the tub behind the shower curtain, and I said that that was a good idea. That you should hide that Squatty Potty when you have guests over.

But someone wrote in and said I was wrong. And his name is William. What does he say?

00:33:10 Jesse Host "As a longtime listener to the podcast, and reader of your mini column, I was shocked—shocked!—to read that you encourage poop-shaming.

Obviously, the buzz marketing of the Squatty Potty was a bit of a faux pas, but that's no reason to shame the users of this remarkable device.

Should people also hide their bidets? Make sure their dandruff shampoo is out of sight? Where does it end, Judge?

One who poops at a party is no party pooper. It is the one who poops a perfectly normal bodily function who is the pooper. And that pooper, sir, is... you."

00:33:48 John Host *[Laughing]* Did Monte Belmonte write this?

00:33:50 Jesse Host Yeah, gosh.

"PS, I do handyperson work in New York City, and I rely a great deal on people being *[stifling laughter]* okay with me using their home bathrooms, so this one struck a bit of a nerve."

00:34:00 John Host Well, William, may I say thank you for your service as a handyperson. You are a whole human being with dignity, and an obvious human right to poop and pee.

Now that we've said that—Jesse, do you have an opinion? Are you on William's side? Or my side?

It's not a side, choosing. What do you think?

00:34:20 Jesse Host John, I have such strong Squatty Potty opinions.

00:34:23 John Host *[Stifling laughter]* Okay. Say them, but please don't jeopardize our possible sponsorship with Squatty Potty. That's all I ask.

00:34:29 Jesse Host First of all, I believe in a comfortable restroom experience. I believe in being able to rest in that room.

00:34:38 John Host Yeah!

00:34:39 Jesse Host I believe in fancy toilet seats.

00:34:41 John Host Yeah.

00:34:42 Jesse Host And indeed, I believe in base-of-the-toilet stools, which do in fact encourage the natural processes in which one engages regularly in that room.

00:34:58 John Host It's good for pooping. I'm not shaming the Squatty Potty or its users! It's good for pooping!

In fact, Squatty Potty, here's a new catchphrase for you! "It's good for pooping," says Judge John Hodgman! Give me a check!

Go on, Jesse.

00:35:12 Jesse Host I will say that the stool in my own primary restroom is also a stool that my children occasionally use to stand on to access the sink,

because they're short.

00:35:25 John Host

Sure.

00:35:26 Jesse Host

And it is from a popular Swedish furniture retailer.

00:35:31 John Host

Right.

00:35:32 Jesse Host

And the main reason is not expense, but simply that it doesn't say "Squatty Potty" in big letters on top of it, *[laughing]* which I find unpleasant to look at.

[John laughs.]

And I wish—there are like—there's a variety of different Squatty Potty designs. I would love one that only says "Squatty Potty" on the underside or something.

[John laughs.]

'Cause as great a product as it is, *[stifling laughter]* I am a little uncomfortable looking at the phrase "Squatty Potty" while I'm using the bathroom.

00:36:00 John Host

It sort of infantilizes and minimizes the important work that's being done. Let's put it that way.

00:36:07 Jesse Host

Yeah, look—they—whoever named this product had a hard job!

00:36:10 John Host

Yeah.

00:36:11 Jesse Host

It's gotta be able to be used on radio and television, it's gotta be—uh, not make people uncomfortable, etc., etc., etc. I don't blame them. I'm just saying for me personally, I would rather not have that brand prominent, uh, in text, in my home.

00:36:25 John Host

Can I say, though, also—it's not a potty! It's not a potty. The potty is the pot!

00:36:30 Jesse Host

Yeah.

00:36:31 John Host

You could call it a Stool Stool! It's perfect for stools!

[Both laugh.]

00:36:35 Jesse Host

Are we just getting to the part of the show where we sing the song "Stool Boom" from *Waiting for Guffman*?

00:36:40 John Host

[Laughs.] I wish I could remember it, but my—my head is cream cheese. I mean, I remember the tune, but I don't know the words.

00:36:47 Jesse Host

[Laughing] The—the part I remember most vividly is they're like, "Working! Working! Never stopping, never thinking. Working! Working! Some for selling, some for keeping!"

[Both laugh.]

00:36:59 John Host

Okay. So you don't like the name Squatty Potty.

00:37:02 Jesse Host

But I do—I don't—uh, if I had one and used one, hiding it is a lot. I mean, I'm not saying they can't, but it—it feels like a lot.

00:37:10 John Host

Well, with great respect to you, my bailiff, and with great respect to William and the hard work he does doing stuff that other people can't or will not do, I do stand by my ruling, and here's why.

I had to explain, as you did, to our listeners, what a Squatty Potty is. Because we know, instinctively, not everybody knows. Lots of people do! Lots of people listen to Howard Stern. It's getting in there. It's in the zeitgeist.

You have a good stool in your bathroom. Right? 'Cause it's just a generic IKEA stool which can be used for the purpose of the Squatty Potty, but also can be camouflaged as kids-standing-up-on-the-sink stool. And you have little kids, and that's fine.

And I agree with you completely that a restroom should be a place of rest, should be a—an extremely comfortable room. But I do believe that there's a difference between a private facing bathroom, say, your—if you're in a home with more than one bathroom, a private facing bathroom, say the one that is, uh, closest to your bedroom. Right?

00:38:11 John Host

On the second floor, for example.

Vs. a public facing bathroom, which is the one de facto bathroom which if not specifically a guest bathroom is the one most likely to be used by guests.

And I certainly do not shame these people for using the Squatty Potty, and I encourage them to have a Squatty Potty in every bathroom that they want. I just simply advise that they not put a special defecation stool in their guest bathroom when people are coming over for a party!

Because some people are gonna know what that is, and that will just lead them to picture their hosts sitting down and squatting and pooping.

00:38:44 John Host

And then some people won't know what it is, and the next thing you know, they'll be coming out and going, "Hey! Uh, what's that stool for in the bathroom?"

And then your cocktail chatter is revolving around, [*Fancy voice*] "Oh, well, you know. We poop in interesting ways. Can I top off your Negroni?"

I just think it's awkward! If it's easy enough just to toss that thing into the bathtub and close the curtain, I as a guest would feel it more gracious, when I have to use the bathroom, that I not be invited to speculate upon the poop habits of my hosts, [*laughing*] or be confused about why there is this weird stool there.

That, I think, is the obligation of a public facing bathroom, whether it is in a home or in a public place. You know, the—you keep it clean, you keep it tidy, you create the illusion that no one has ever pooped there before in their lives.

00:39:29 John Host

But William? I appreciate your handypersoning, and you are a person of true dignity. And, uh, good luck finding a place to poop.

00:39:38 Jesse Host

The docket is clear! That's it for another episode of *Judge John Hodgman*. Our producer is Jennifer Marmor.

You can follow us on Twitter, [@JesseThorn](#) and [@hodgman](#).

We're on Instagram, [@judgejohnhodgman](#).

Make sure to hashtag your *Judge John Hodgman* Tweets [#JJHo](#).

00:39:55 Jesse Host

You can check out the Max Fun subreddit at [MaximumFun.Reddit.com](#) to chat about this episode.

Submit your cases at [MaximumFun.org/jjho](#) or email hodgman@maximumfun.org.

We'll talk to you next time on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

00:40:11 Sound Effect Transition

[Three gavel bangs.]

00:40:14 John Host

[Singing] Stool Stool! Everyone knows our name! We're number one in number two! Stool Stool!

[Speaking] Use promo code "Hodgman."

00:40:24 Music Transition

[A cheerful guitar chord.]

00:40:25 Speaker 1 Guest

[MaximumFun.org](#).

00:40:27 Speaker 2 Guest

Comedy and culture.

00:40:28 Speaker 3 Guest

Artist owned—

00:40:29 Speaker 4 Guest

—audience supported.