

00:00:01 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Three gavel bangs.]*  
00:00:02 Jesse Thorn Host Welcome to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. I'm Bailiff Jesse Thorn. This week: "Snickerdoodle Diligence!"

Rachel files suit against her husband, Doug. Early in their marriage, she brought cookies to his family's Christmas Eve celebration. Doug and his brothers realized the cookies were similar to a beloved family recipe that had been lost to time.

20 years later, Doug and his brothers still refer to these cookies as their Great-Grandma Hebig's cookies. But Rachel thinks she deserves the credit for the cookies.

00:00:40 Sound Effect Sound Effect Who's right? Who's wrong? Only one can decide.  
*[Door opens, and then during the following: footsteps, chairs scrape against the floor.]*  
00:00:41 Jesse Host Please rise as Judge John Hodgman enters the courtroom and presents an obscure cultural reference.  
00:00:47 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Door shuts.]*  
00:00:48 John Hodgman Host Early podcasts were different, with the ingredients being flour, oats, and water.

In addition, the Advent season was a time of fasting, and podcasters were not allowed to use butter. Only oil. And the podcasts were tasteless and hard.

In the 15th century, in medieval Saxony, the Prince Elector Ernst decided to remedy this by writing to the pope in Rome. He said that Saxon bakers needed to use butter, as oil in Saxony was expensive.

Pope Nicholas V denied the first appeal. Five popes died before finally, in 1490, Pope Innocent VIII sent a letter—known as The Butter Letter—to the prince.

This granted the use of butter in podcasts, but only for the prince elector and his family and podcast network.

00:01:35 Sound Effect Sound Effect Bailiff Jesse Thorn, swear them in.  
00:01:36 Jesse Host *[Chairs scrape during Jesse's next line.]*  
Please rise, Rachel and Doug, and raise your right hands. Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God or whatever?  
00:01:44 Doug Guest I do.  
00:01:45 Rachel Guest I do.  
00:01:46 Jesse Host Do you swear to abide by Judge John Hodgman's ruling, despite the fact that he believe brownies are a cookie?  
  
*[Both litigants laugh.]*  
00:01:53 Doug Guest I do.  
00:01:54 Rachel Guest I do.  
00:01:55 Jesse Host That's not confirmed.

*[John laughs quietly.]*

00:01:58 John Host Judge Hodgman, you may proceed.  
No, of course not, brownies are a sandwich.

*[The others laugh.]*

Doug and Rachel, *[stifling laughter]* you may be seated. And since we're stirring the pot with a culinary episode—ugh. I made a—I made a wordplay.

And also with that "brownies are a sandwich" comment, I don't wanna stir it further, oh bailiff my bailiff, because Jeremy Frank sent in this week's title, and I read it as "Snickerdoodilgence" (*Snicker Due Diligence*).

You read it as "Snickerdoodle Diligence," which I think both are equally pretty clever; but if I didn't point out that it's "Snickerdoodilgence," we'd be getting a lot of letters from Jeremy. So.

*[Jesse bursts out laughing.]*

00:02:30 Crosstalk Crosstalk Jeremy—  
**Jesse:** I think we'll get a lot of letters from Jeremy one way or the other.

**John:** We're gonna get a lot of letters from Jeremy anyway.

00:02:33 John Host *[Jesse laughs.]*  
Yeah. Mayor of Max Fun Con Town.

*[Jesse laughs.]*

But Jeremy, stand down. Stand down, Jeremy. Now! We're—it's not about you, Jeremy, it's about Rachel and Doug.

Rachel and Doug, for an immediate summary judgment in one of yours' favors, can either of you name the piece of culture that I paraphrased as I entered this fake Internet courtroom?

00:02:54 Rachel Guest How about you, Rachel? What's your guess?  
I'm gonna guess *Back to the Table: The Reunion of Food and Family*, by Oprah Winfrey's personal chef, Art Smith.

00:03:02 John Host *[Thoughtfully]* *Back to the Table...*

00:03:09 Rachel Guest You're coming in with a heavy duty, prepared-but-solid guess.  
Off the top of my head.

00:03:10 John Host Really, you didn't have that written down in front of you? Is that one of your favorite cookbooks?

00:03:13 Rachel Guest I may have written it down. *[Laughs.]*

00:03:15 John Host Is this the cookbook where the cookies' in question recipe come from?

00:03:18 Rachel Guest No. No, it's not.

00:03:19 John Host I should have figured that one out. That would have been a good cultural reference.

*[Rachel laughs.]*

Okay. But I'm not saying you're wrong... yet. I'm just putting it in the guess book.

00:03:29 Doug Guest Doug, what's your deal? What's your guess? Let's hear it.  
00:03:33 John Host I'm gonna say *The Wooden Spoon Cookbook*.  
*The Wooden Spoon Cookbook*. It's really the one cookbook you need when you're eating wooden spoons.  
00:03:38 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Doug:** *[Laughs.]* Exactly. Yeah.

**Jesse:** Yeah, you gotta cook 'em slow.

*[Doug and John laugh.]*  
00:03:40 Jesse Host Slow and low.  
00:03:41 John Host *[Laughing]* Yeah. Exactly. You can't just throw 'em on the grill.  
00:03:44 Jesse Host Lot of liquid, or they'll dry out.  
00:03:46 John Host That's right. You've gotta bra—they're a braising—they're a braising cut, for sure.

*[Jesse or Doug laughs.]*

00:03:55 Doug Guest Uhhh, *The Wooden Spoon Cookbook*, what is that, Doug? Is that something you just made up, uh, off your dome?  
It's a cookbook that we have in our house that has lots of old-timey cakes and cookies—  
00:04:00 John Host Ohhhhhh!  
00:04:01 Doug Guest —and things like that, that we've used for years.  
00:04:04 John Host Is this possibly where the recipe for the disputed cookies comes from?  
00:04:08 Doug Guest No, it does not.  
00:04:09 John Host Alright.

Well, it doesn't matter, 'cause both of your guesses, and indeed all of them are wrong. The correct answer *[laughs]* waaas a Wikipedia page.

I don't like to quote from Wikipedia very often.

*[Someone is laughing quietly.]*

00:04:29 John Host This was a hard one, 'cause you're talking about cookie recipes and the ownership of that IP. And I was having a hard time coming up with a cultural reference.  
But then I found a Wikipedia page for a particular fruitcake. Not only that, a holiday fruitcake—'cause these are holiday cookies. And not only that, but a Germanic—an old Germanic fruitcake!

00:04:52 Doug Guest Part of the dispute is that the cookies that Rachel makes reminds you, Doug, of your grandmother's German-style holiday cookies, is that right?  
00:04:53 John Host Correct.  
So I thought I was really onto something, and as I'm reading this—the history of this particular style of fruitcake, *[laughing]* I get to this thing called The Butter Letter, where Pope Innocent VIII gave the prince elect of Saxony the right to use butter in this fruitcake instead of oil, and I'm like,

00:05:18 Jesse Host "I gotta get my hands on this Butter Letter. I'm gonna read this Butter Letter—also referred to as The Butter Brief, in history—"  
 00:05:20 John Host *[Laughs.]* I'm wearing butter briefs right now!  
*[Laughs.]* I—I'm wearing butter boxer briefs.

But the thing is, nowhere on the Internet could I find the text—translated or untranslated—of The Butter Brief!

So I put this to you, *Judge John Hodgman* fans—particularly those of you who work in libraries, which is I think 83% of you—could you please find me the text of The Butter Brief? 'Cause I just had to read this thing from the—that alluded to it from the Wikipedia!

Now, can either of you guess the particular style of buttery, dense, German holiday fruitcake made most famous, perhaps, in Dresden? That this Wikipedia page is for?

00:06:05 Rachel Guest Rachel? Doug? Doug? Rachel? Can you guess? Can you guess?  
 00:06:06 Doug Guest Uhhh—*[laughs]*.  
 00:06:08 John Host I'm gonna say Stollen.  
 00:06:09 Sound Effect Sound Effect Stollen is correct!  
 00:06:10 John Host *[Three gavel bangs.]*  
 This doesn't win you the case. *[Laughs.]* But I'm really impressed.

*[Doug laughs.]*

Stollen is correct. Just like the legacy of the cookies that Rachel's made have been Stollen (*stolen*) by your family.

*[Doug laughs again.]*

00:06:26 Doug Guest And attributed to your Great-Grammy Hebig? Is that right?  
 00:06:27 John Host Correct.  
 Rachel, you come to this court seeking justice. Tell me about Great-Grammy Hebig and the case of the Stollen (*stolen*) cookies.  
 00:06:33 Rachel Guest *[Laughs.]* Sure. So I found this recipe for giant ginger cookies in a popular home magazine in 1998. And it was the following year, in 1999, when we were spending the holidays with Doug's family and participating in their tradition, which is the annual Christmas Eve buffet.  
 00:06:56 John Host Mm-hm.  
 00:06:57 Rachel Guest Which is a day-long feast of various noshes, mostly meat-based.

I thought this would be a good addition to the Christmas Eve buffet table. There were no desserts planned. I'm not a big dessert fan, but these are pretty much as close as you can get to savory cookies, and so I thought this would be a good addition.

00:07:17 John Host Could I ask you to pause for one second before we get into what a huge hit they were?

00:07:21 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Rachel:** Sure.

00:07:22 John Host **John:** I just have two quick—  
 Two quick questions.

*[Rachel responds emphatically as John speaks.]*

I don't care for sweets, but I enj—I'll occasionally enjoy a gingery cookie, 'cause they are savory.

Is it always the case that Doug and his family put out all the meats in the world, but not a single dessert? 'Cause even I, not a dessert person, thinks that that's a little imbalanced.

00:07:38 Rachel Guest

I mean, there's usually some cookies, maybe some fudge. But the main focus is meat-based dips.

00:07:48 John Host

Whoa.

*[Rachel laughs, and again as John continues.]*

Because we are talking about meat, I was like, "Oh, we should've put a content warning on top of this for the vegans and vegetarians like we did with the barbecue episode."

So I'm gonna give a content warning right now, 'cause ev—I'm a carnivore, and meat-based dips just triggered me. That is gross.

*[Multiple people laugh.]*

00:08:09 Doug Guest

Doug, what is this?! What's a meat-based dip?

So, we have what we refer to in my family as the holy trinity of dips.

*[John laughs.]*

00:08:19 Crosstalk Crosstalk

That come out every year for the—

**John:** Oh no.

**Doug:** —Christmas Even buffet.

**John:** Oh no.

00:08:21 Jesse Host

**Doug:** Uh—

There's a different epistolary about the dips, by the way.

*[Multiple people laugh quietly.]*

00:08:27 Crosstalk Crosstalk

**Doug:** And so—

00:08:28 John Host

**John:** Wait a minute, wait a minute.

You guys are in Chicago, right?

00:08:29 Doug Guest

Correct.

00:08:30 John Host

Are you Midwesterners?

00:08:31 Doug Guest

Yes.

00:08:32 Rachel Guest

Oh, yeah.

00:08:33 Crosstalk Crosstalk

**John:** Oh, yeah. Figured that out.

00:08:34 Doug Guest

**Doug:** So this—the Christmas Eve buffet—

—takes place in my hometown, in—in rural Iowa.

00:08:37 John Host

Oh, okay! So let me hear about the holy trinity of dips.

00:08:40 Doug Guest

So, they're not all meat-based. There's a—one of them is a spinach dip. But then the other two are a dried beef dip—

00:08:47 John Host

*[Loud exhale of dismay.]*

00:08:48 Jesse Host

Wait, when you say a dried beef dip, are you referring to jerky?

00:08:57 Doug Guest No, it's a thinly sliced, air-dried beef. They're—we find it, um, and use it, but I can't remember where we find it.

00:09:02 Jesse Host *[Cracking up]* Wait! You find it and use it?

*[John or Doug laughs.]*

00:09:14 John Host *[Still cracking up]* I appreciate your every-part-of-the-buffalo sentiments here, but you find it and use it? It's part of the tradition, Jesse. It's the—you can't buy it. You have to find it. It's part of—it's part of the Christmas miracle, the finding of the dried beef.

*[Jesse is still laughing.]*

I know what you're talking about. It's kinda like a bresaola, but it's flakier.

00:09:29 Doug Guest Yeah. Exactly.

00:09:30 John Host Alright.

00:09:37 Doug Guest So dried beef dip. You're cutting up the dried beef and then mixing it in with mayonnaise and sour cream or something?

00:09:43 John Host Yeah, it's dairy products. Cream cheese is involved. I can't remember the full recipe, but it's—yeah. Yeah.

00:09:44 Doug Guest And what's the third one?

00:09:46 John Host It's braunschweiger dip.

00:09:48 Doug Guest You're talking about a liverwurst dip. You're talking about chopped liver.

00:09:49 John Host Yeah.

00:09:51 Doug Guest Okay! That's the holy trinity.

00:09:52 John Host Correct.

00:09:56 Doug Guest Which is the father, which is the son, and which is the holy ghost of those dips, would you say?

00:09:59 John Host Shockingly, we've never debated that.

00:10:05 Doug Guest I am shocked. Off the top of your head, so you can have a fight with your brothers later. What do you maintain?

00:10:08 John Host I would say the spinach dip would have to be the holy spirit.

00:10:09 Doug Guest Of course.

00:10:12 John Host I'd say dried beef is Jesus, and braunschweiger is God.

I think that that's right! I agree with you! I'm not gonna fight that.

Rachel, you've married into an interesting family. How long have you been married?

00:10:21 Rachel Guest Uh, 21 years.

00:10:24 John Host Wow! Congratulations!

00:10:25 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Rachel:** Thank you.

00:10:27 John Host **Doug:** Thanks.

So Rachel, the other thing that I wanted to ask was you very coyly eluded saying the name of the popular home magazine that you got this recipe from. But it's okay for us to say brand names on this podcast now, 'cause usually getting around saying the brand names just ends up being confusing.

00:10:45 Rachel Guest Was it, perhaps... *Good Housekeeping*?

No, it was *Better Homes and Gardens*.

|          |           |           |   |
|----------|-----------|-----------|---|
| 00:10:48 | John      | Host      | <i>[As a sigh/groan]</i> Oh.  |
| 00:10:48 | Rachel    | Guest     | The November 1998 issue.  |
| 00:10:50 | John      | Host      | <i>[As a sigh/groan]</i> Ohhh, I ta—and I fou—I take it back now. I find in Doug's favor. Get outta here.   |
|          |           |           | <i>[Rachel and Doug or Jesse laugh.]</i>  |
| 00:11:06 | Jesse     | Host      | Only because—and I feel, Jesse, that we have not made a big enough deal about this—but we have <u>literally</u> received the <i>Good Housekeeping</i> seal of approval, have we not, Jesse Thorn? Yeah! <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> , as seen in <i>Good Housekeeping Magazine</i> ! Or at least <a href="http://GoodHousekeeping.com">GoodHousekeeping.com</a> . |
| 00:11:11 | John      | Host      | This is not the ancient times of 1998, when Rachel was tearing out giant ginger cookie recipes from—what was it? <i>Better Homes and Gardens</i> ? Good thing you were tearing that recipe out. You should be tearing up the <u>rest</u> of that magazine.  |
|          |           |           | <i>[Rachel laughs.]</i>   |
|          |           |           | They didn't put us on any lists.  |
| 00:11:30 | John      | Host      | No, I have no—I have no beef with them. I have no dried beef with <i>Better Homes and Gardens</i> . So the recipe has an or—a point of origin that is established. It is a provenance, as they say. Correct?  |
| 00:11:36 | Rachel    | Guest     | Correct.  |
| 00:11:37 | John      | Host      | And you made these cookies, and you brought them, and you plopped them right next down to the holy trinity of meat dips, in the huge open space where Doug's family didn't even <u>bother</u> to provide a decent dessert, and what happened?   |
| 00:11:51 | Rachel    | Guest     | They were a <u>huge</u> hit. Everybody loved them. Yeah. They were devoured. Everybody wanted the recipe.   |
| 00:11:58 | John      | Host      | Who's everybody? Brother Jim. Brother Scott. I know those guys from the evidence. We're talking about mother-in-law, father-in-law.   |
| 00:12:04 | Rachel    | Guest     | Correct.  |
| 00:12:05 | Crosstalk | Crosstalk | <b>John &amp; Rachel:</b> Yeah.   |
| 00:12:06 | Rachel    | Guest     | And at that point, Doug was the only one who'd brought somebody else into the family so far, so.  |
| 00:12:11 | John      | Host      | Oh!   |
| 00:12:12 | Rachel    | Guest     | But that evening, the three brothers, who have a well-documented history of—let's call it brotherly banter gone too far.  |
|          |           |           | They started kinda winding each other up with this story about these cookies, that they were not actually cookies that I had brought into the family, but they were in fact cookies that reminded them of the ones made by their Grandma Mary, and that they ate when they would come home from school and be with her.   |
|          |           |           | And then they decided that she had <u>learned</u> the recipe for those cookies from <u>her</u> mother, their Great-Grandmother Hebig, who they'd <u>never</u> met.  |
| 00:12:51 | John      | Host      | Okay.   |
| 00:12:52 | Rachel    | Guest     | Or had cookies from. Or had any evidence that she had ever made cookies like this. They just <u>reminded</u> them of the ones their grandmother had made.   |

00:13:01 John Host Okay, so let me make sure that I understand this. You—you drop these cookies. Everyone enjoys them.

And then Doug and his two brothers say, "You know what, these remind me of those cookies that our—that our grandmother used to give us. And those cookies originated with our Great-Grammy Hebig. So now we're gonna call these Great-Grammy Hebig cookies."

00:13:20 Rachel Guest Is that right?  
That's right. And they had had a couple drinks at this point, and were—

00:13:23 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** Ah, well, come on.

00:13:24 John Host **Rachel:** You know.  
You know Doug and Jim and Scott! Doug, where are you in the birth order of Jim and Scott?

00:13:29 Doug Guest I'm the middle child.

00:13:31 John Host And so—alright. So you're doing whatever you need to to just get attention, like go on a podcast about a cookie fight.

*[Doug or Jesse laughs.]*

I gotcha. Okay.

00:13:42 Doug Guest Is this true about, like, brotherly banter go too far?  
Well, I wouldn't say it's gone too far. But it is definitely brotherly banter.

The way we see it is we are kind of appreciating Rachel re-introducing this cookie that we had really fond memories of from our childhood, and my dad has fond memories of from his childhood.

And it was this recipe that my grandmother had made, was lost to time. We have no idea what happened to it. And we thought, you know, we appreciate that Rachel was re, uh, invigorating this tradition of these cookies and bringing them back, uh, in a way, to our family.

00:14:15 John Host And so—  
So you were surprised and happy.

00:14:17 Doug Guest Exactly.

00:14:18 John Host Let me be perfectly clear here. Do the cookies remind you of these childhood cookies you used to have from your grandmother? Or did you believe that somehow, through the magic of the—of the holy trinity of dips, Rachel's cookies had been transubstantiated into the very cookies?

*[Assorted quiet snickers.]*

00:14:42 Doug Guest The body of Hebig? That you would eat at this last supper. Is that what happened here?  
I really like that explanation, yes.

00:14:45 John Host Well, you set a magical table, but you are a rational person. You're just saying that these cookies reminded you—

00:14:51 Doug Guest Right.

00:14:52 John Host —of Grandma Hebig's cookies, but since then you refer to them how? How do you refer to these cookies, should Rachel ever make them?



|          |              |            |  |
|----------|--------------|------------|--|
| 00:14:58 | Doug         | Guest      | As Great-Grandma Hebig's, uh, ginger molasses cookies.   |
| 00:15:02 | John         | Host       | Who else is making the cookies now?!   |
| 00:15:04 | Rachel       | Guest      | Everybody.   |
| 00:15:05 | Doug         | Guest      | Yeah.  |
| 00:15:06 | John         | Host       | Who else, Rachel? Who else is stealing your IP?  |
| 00:15:09 | Rachel       | Guest      | Well, so, when the other sister-in-laws married into the family, you know, they were told these were Great-Grandma Hebig's cookies. They, Doug, his brothers, they've all made them for office parties, for neighbors, nieces and nephews now have made the cookies.   |
|          |              |            | They've really gotten around, and people always ask for the recipe, and even more than that, Doug's brothers Scott and Jim have infiltrated <u>two</u> children's cookbooks and gotten this recipe put into those cookbooks—the one from the magazine—with the title "Great-Grandma Hebig's Cookies."              |
|          |              |            | And so—I mean, who <u>knows</u> how many people are making these cookies now?  |
| 00:15:52 | John         | Host       | So your accusation is that they are messing with the timeline. They are changing history. They are erasing not only that recipe's original origin in that magazine, but also your legacy of bringing them to the table at the first place.   |
| 00:16:07 | Rachel       | Guest      | Correct. Their nostalgia for their childhood is short-circuiting the true narrative of these cookies.  |
| 00:16:16 | John         | Host       | Well, let's talk about nostalgia, the most toxic impulse, for a moment, Doug.  |
|          |              |            | Describe for me the moment that you ate this cookie and flashed back to that time when you were a French novelist eating a madeleine. What was wonderful about rediscovering molasses cookies was I spent—you know, when I was a—young, my grandmother would, you know, watch us after school.                     |
| 00:16:26 | Doug         | Guest      | So I spent a lot of time at her house, and a lot of really fond memories of that time with her. And my brothers similarly have fond memories.  |
|          |              |            | And so I honestly hadn't thought about those particular cookies for a number of years, because Grandmother at that point wasn't making those anymore, and it had been a while since she made them, and so it really was—it's a <u>warm</u> kind of <u>good memory</u> for me, and for my brothers, from childhood. |
|          |              |            | And so, um, it was just really exciting! To kinda be reconnected to that and be able to reminisce, and to think that this has been brought back to our family.   |
| 00:17:14 | Jesse        | Host       | Let's take a quick recess. We'll be back in just a moment on the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast.  |
| 00:17:19 | Sound Effect | Transition | [Three gavel bangs.]   |
| 00:17:21 | Jesse        | Promo      | Judge Hodgman, we're taking a quick break from the case to talk about where we're headed and what we're up to.   |
|          |              |            | This is what I call <i>Medallion Status</i> season.  |
| 00:17:31 | John         | Promo      | Yeah! I hope everyone is starting to deck the halls with copies of <i>Medallion Status</i> . Oh—no, you can't yet, 'cause it hasn't come out.  |

You can pre-order it, though—if you wish, obviously—at [Bit.ly/MEDALLIONSTATUS](http://Bit.ly/MEDALLIONSTATUS). It's my new book of true stories from secret rooms.

I really hope that you'll check it out at that URL, [Bit.ly/MEDALLIONSTATUS](http://Bit.ly/MEDALLIONSTATUS), and if you wanna pre-order it, you don't just have to order it from an Internet reseller.

Uh, IndieBound will connect you to your local bookseller, or just call your local bookseller. In fact, you can call Books Are Magic right now and order a copy, and I will sign it to you, and they will mail it to you! If you are unable to meet me at any of the stops of my *Medallion Status* or our *Judge John Hodgman* tour coming up this fall.

00:18:09 John Promo

You can see all my *Medallion Status* tour dates at [JohnHodgman.com/tour](http://JohnHodgman.com/tour), starting with next week at Symphony Space with Elizabeth Gilbert, and then in Boston, and then Chicago, and Minneapolis, and all these other places.

But Jesse Thorn, a lot of people don't know that you and I are going on tour together this November! Isn't that right?

00:18:29 Jesse Promo

That's right! We'll be at Danforth Music Hall in Toronto, Ontario; at the Carolina Theatre in Durham, North Carolina; the Variety Playhouse in Atlanta, Georgia; the Lincoln Theatre in Washington, DC; and the State Theatre in Portland, Maine; all between November 6<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>.

You can find those tour dates at [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org).

And... I... am going to be... at The Regent in downtown Los Angeles October 12<sup>th</sup>, for *The Flop House*!

00:18:59 John Promo

Oh, wow! Our friends at *The Flop House*!

00:19:01 Jesse Promo

I know what you're thinking, John. "Have your friends, Elliott, Dan, and Stu, invited you to be on *The Flop House* and contribute your extemporaneous wit to the proceedings?"

No!

I've bought tickets for my wife and myself.

00:19:13 John Promo

*[Laughing]* Oh! That's so nice.

You're just going as an audience member and a supporter.

00:19:17 Jesse Promo

Yeah! And a guy who did the work to find a babysitter.

00:19:20 John Promo

So where are—where are those Floppies doing their Housing?

00:19:23 Jesse Promo

That's at the Regent Theatre in downtown Los Angeles, October 12<sup>th</sup>. It's gonna be a blast.

00:19:27 John Promo

Look, everybody. We're gonna be almost everywhere, that we can be at least, between October and November.

Obviously I'm presenting *Medallion Status*, my new book. Then we're gonna be doing these *Live Justice* shows. Me and my good friend and bailiff, Jesse Thorn, it's always a delight.

Books will be available at every stop along the tour, both the *Medallion Status*, uh, leg tour, and then the *Live Justice* tour.

If you buy a book on tour, you get a special Aaron Draplin–designed

00:19:56 John Promo Famous Corgi pin. If you buy two books—because maybe you pre-ordered one at [Bit.ly/MEDALLIONSTATUS](https://bit.ly/MEDALLIONSTATUS) and then bought another one on tour—you show up in the signing line with two books, guess what?

You get an upgrade to double Corgi status. Is there a triple Corgi elite status? Yes. I'll tell you more about that later.

*[Jesse laughs.]*

The point is, we love seeing you at these shows. They're always so much better when you're there. Go to the events page at [MaximumFun.org](https://MaximumFun.org) and check out all of the different live shows that Maximum Fun podcasts are doing.

00:20:23 John Promo Go to [JohnHodgman.com/tour](https://JohnHodgman.com/tour) to see exactly where I'll be, whenever I remember to type it into that page. But it's all up to date right now.

00:20:31 Jesse Promo Let's get back to the case.

00:20:32 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:20:34 John Host May I presume that your grandmother, Mary, is no longer living?

00:20:37 Doug Guest Correct.

00:20:38 John Host I mean, did she ever write down the recipe for the actual Hebig cookies?

00:20:42 Doug Guest To the best of my knowledge, no. Um, there are other recipes of things that she would make that survived, but we don't know where that recipe is, if it lives on somewhere, or—we have no idea.

00:20:53 John Host Once this style of molasses-y, gingery, savory cookie was re-introduced to your taste buds, sending you hurtling back through time to your beloved childhood, and you sought to reclaim that childhood, did it occur to you that you could maybe aaask?

Go through her stuff, see if that original recipe was there somewhere? Did—did not that curiosity spark you to go on a journey to find the original recipe? 'Cause I would have.

00:21:18 Doug Guest *[Hesitant]* No.

I, at that point, felt like we had, in essence, rediscovered her recipe, and felt like it was already there with us.

00:21:26 John Host Was it you, Doug, or was it Jim or Scott who led the charge to take these cookies and ascribe them to your mythical great-grandmother, if she did indeed exist?

00:21:36 Doug Guest I was the first person to bring up the idea, and both my brothers heartily agreed.

00:21:42 John Host Oh, okay. So you are the originator of this.

00:21:45 Doug Guest I think I am. Yeah.

00:21:47 John Host How does it make you feel, Rachel, when they are referred to as Great-Grandma Hebig's cookies?

00:21:52 Rachel Guest I think that food has a really important place in family history, and I think looking at the stories of food in families, it both brings back memories, but it also—you know, there's something about it and families merging, and how when new people come into families, recipes change, and new recipes are introduced.

And I feel like they have kind of short-circuited that story for our nieces and nephews, who—they love these cookies. They now are a part of our Christmas traditions with Doug's families. They've all, you

know, made them for other parties.

And I think they've lost the opportunity to have that full family story, and what really happened with these cookies. And I think it's an interesting and nuanced story.

When I brought this case, that was the moment, unfortunately, when some of the children in the family learned the true origins of the recipe, and I think it was really upsetting for one of them in particular, my nephew, Jack.

And I submitted evidence, uh, for the case about Jack's reaction. And I just—you know, lying to children isn't great. They don't like it. You know, I brought this case on behalf of my nephew, Jack, and others who have learned by my bringing this case that they were not Great-Grandma Hebig's recipe.

00:23:14 John Host

You did send in some evidence, and let me please take a look at that now. All of the evidence that is visual in nature, of course, will be available on the *Judge John Hodgman* page at [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org), as well as on our Instagram page at [Instagram.com/judgejohnhodgman](https://www.instagram.com/judgejohnhodgman).

And as long as I'm saying URLs, I might as well just say [Bit.ly/MEDALLIONSTATUS](https://bit.ly/MEDALLIONSTATUS). Always be plugging. Okay, here we go.

*[Someone laughs quietly.]*

Exhibit A, the original recipe, *Better Homes and Garden*, November 1998. Here is the recipe itself for "giant ginger cookies," is published—wow. You still have this piece of paper! Is that correct?

00:23:48 Rachel Guest  
00:23:49 John Host

I sure do.

Wow. Doug, your wife is coming in with a lot of hard evidence. A paper trail, I dare say. This isn't something that you retrieved off of, uh—like, Google search. Or Google Magazine Doc. This is the thing. This is a picture you took.

*[Rachel laughs.]*

It includes the incredibly disgusting advertisement at the bottom of the page, that's—*[laughs]* an advertisement for Lysol. It says, "Spread joy, not salmonella, this holiday." And it's a Lysol bottle pointed at a raw turkey.

They really knew how to sell products in those days.

*[Rachel laughs.]*

Now, you've circled something here, and I'm trying to get closer to see it. Oh, it's just the—it's just the date. It's just the date.

00:24:26 Rachel Guest  
00:24:27 John Host

Yes. Yeah.

Who is the author of this recipe, I wonder? Did it ever occur to you to look into that? Rachel? Or were you—were you content to steal?

00:24:37 Rachel Guest

I guess my—my feeling is that, unless you have, you know, a professional chef in your family, every recipe that's assigned to a member of that family probably came from somewhere. A cookbook or a magazine.

00:24:51 John Host Right. But you're here petitioning to have your name re-entered into family history after it has been erased by Doug and his brothers. And yet you're content to sit and erase the name of this person. You also felt no curiosity to go back to the original source.

*[Beat.]*

I'm just bringing it up. It's not determining.

*[Rachel and Doug or Jesse laugh.]*

00:25:15 John Host I'm just bringing it up. It's a—it's a little of what we call "what about"-ism. *[Laughs.]* That we use to muddy the waters. *[Multiple people are laughing.]*

00:25:25 John Host When one obvious crime has been committed, *[laughing]* and you wanna cover—you wanna keep it interesting so you—so that cable news will have something to talk about. Or you can keep the podcast going.

00:25:25 John Host Alright, exhibit B. The compromised nephew.

Look, everybody. I've seen a lot of evidence in my time here on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. Rachel is killing it with her evidence. Killing it!

It's well-organized. It's pertinent. I don't see one gratuitous picture of a pet yet. Actually, there's a lot of evidence. I didn't even see all of this.

00:26:00 John Host But let's go to this. This is Jack, ready for his bake sale, I'm quoting your caption. And then the thread between Jack, Aunt Rachel, Uncles Doug and Jim—that's you, Doug—and Jack's dad, Scott, after Jack learned that his cookies were a fraud. *[Laughs.]* Jack says, "I've been lied to my whole life, and I will not take these crimes lightly."

And then Jim says, "What is the truth, Jack? Where did the cookies really originate?"

And Jack says, "Cookie fraud."

And Doug says, "Your parents need to sit you down and talk this through with you."

00:26:17 John Host And Jack says, "They have. I've never been the same." It—sometimes it's hard to face crimes in history! Has he learned about, *[laughing]* uh, Native American genocide yet?

00:26:22 Rachel Guest *[Jesse or Doug laughs.]* Yeahhh.

00:26:23 John Host He seems very sensitive. I'm concerned.

00:26:25 Rachel Guest He's actually a huge history buff. He's a big World War II history buff.

00:26:30 John Host Oh, right. Yeah, exactly. Ah, Jack is into this.

Doug says, "Then you understand that history is a complex narrative." Ugh, Doug, weasel words.

Jack says, "I'm already preparing my case."

Scott says, "This is a complex narrative, Jack. Life isn't black and white."

Jack says, "That's very clear now." Mm.

And then someone jumps in and says, "I will always tell you the truth, Jack." Who's that?

00:26:52 Rachel Guest  
00:26:53 John Host

That's me.

Yeah, Rachel.

Let me ask you a question—and then there's more evidence; we'll come back to this in a second, but—do you still make the cookies, Rachel?

00:27:02 Rachel Guest

I don't often have a chance anymore, because Doug rushes to make them—

*[John or Doug laughs]*

—usually a few weeks before Christmas, and then again for the Christmas Eve buffet.

He also makes them for office parties. He's kind of taken over that recipe, to the point that when I brought this case, he admitted to me that he had actually forgotten that I had been the one—

00:27:28 John Host  
00:27:29 Rachel Guest  
00:27:31 John Host

Wow.

—to make them first. And he thought he had.

Wow. That is a total re-writing of history.

Exhibit C, the compromised cookbook. *Great Recipes from Great-Grandparents*. Is this Jack's cookbook?

00:27:40 Rachel Guest

No, this is a cookbook that my mother prepared for our son a couple years ago. Our son was an aspiring chef at the time, and she—

00:27:48 John Host

I see.

00:27:49 Rachel Guest

—compiled recipes from his great-grandparents and great-great-grandparents from both sides of the family.

00:27:54 John Host

Wow.

00:27:55 Rachel Guest

And she did biographies of all of them, and collected recipes by interviewing all of our family members.

And I submitted as evidence where Scott and Jim trolled his cookbook and got that recipe put in, and you can see my mom's author note that, uh—

*[John bursts out laughing]*

—the relationship of these cookies to Great-Grandma Hebig is... not entirely clear, but that Uncle Jim and Uncle Scott felt the recipe definitely had to be in the cookbook.

00:28:26 John Host

This is an incredible thing that Rachel's mom made for her grandson, Sam, with a long and wonderful introduction to this family cookbook.

And here is a very detailed biography of Great-Grandma Hebig, born

and raised on a farm in Minnesota. She moved to Carroll, Iowa, to attend boarding school at St. Angela's Domestic Sciences School for Girls, was, uh, etc., etc., fantastic, just—biographies of everybody.

Putting them in as Great-Grandma Mary Hebig's Ginger Cookies.

"Although the relationship of their Great-Grandma Hebig—your great-great grandma Hebig—to these cookies is, as you know, not entirely clear—"

00:29:07 John Host

What?!  
"—Jim and Scott both feel the recipe should be included in the cookbook." Shocking. Not entirely clear?! It's obvious!

*[Someone laughs.]*

00:29:20 Doug Guest  
00:29:22 Jesse Host

We know where these cookies came from, Doug! The relationship is entirely clear! It is the imagination of you and your brothers!  
We're—we're expanding upon family history.  
*[Laughing]* "We're expanding upon family history!"

00:29:29 John Host

*[Someone laughs.]*  
*[Stifling laughter]* Right.

Yeah. Okay. I—I see. This is—this is like fanfiction. Family—family history fanfic.

*[Someone laughs.]*

00:29:40 Jesse Host

In your headcanon, these are your great-grandmother's cookies. I think we really just found a new lane of revenue for [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com).

00:29:49 John Host

*[Jesse, John, and Rachel laugh.]*  
And now I'm scrolling through this cookbook, through all of these bios, like Great-Grandma Nana, Great-Grandpa Victor, blah blah blah, and then it comes down to Rachel.

"Not sure who she is, maybe your mom." That was a weird bio to put in this thing.

00:30:04 John Host

*[Rachel and Jesse or Doug laugh.]*  
And there's lots more evidence that you can peruse, but I think that we've seen most of the important stuff here.

00:30:14 Doug Guest  
00:30:15 John Host

And then there's evidence that you submitted, Doug. A let—an affidavit from your brothers.  
Correct.  
I'll just read a—a slightly shortened version of this.

"Molasses cookies were introduced to us by our grandmother. As children, we only knew this type of cookie to exist in one place: our grandmother's kitchen."

*[Laughing]* It's a very strange argument to make.

*[Rachel laughs.]*

*[Mocking, not reading]* "We were so ignorant of this kind of cookie that once we learned that other people in the world made it, we had to have it for our grandmother." Alright!

00:30:35 John Host

*[Reading]* "It wasn't until we were adults that we discovered that a recipe existed that replicates our grandmother's cookies. It was introduced to us by our brother Doug, and sister-in-law.

We don't remember the first time the cookies were baked by our brother and sister-in-law, but we do remember how they immediately reminded us of our grandmother and her kitchen from childhood.

When Doug named them Great-Grandma Hebig's Molasses Cookies, we immediately understood the joke." Oh, they're joking. It's comedy. They were doing it as a character. I get it.

*[Jesse cracks up.]*

00:31:04 John Host

"And thought it was a fine name for the recipe." *[Laughs.]*

"The name we have given to the cookies is in no way meant to lessen or denigrate the contributions Rachel has made to our family. We are grateful that Rachel found the recipe and helped re-introduce a treat to our family that connected the generations."

Wow. So basically, Doug, your brothers are basically saying "It was just a joke. We are boundary pushers." *[Laughs.]* "We take risks as comedians." Their intention was never to hurt anyone. And they're sorry if anyone was actually offended.

Do you stand by that?

*[Doug or Jesse laughs.]*

00:31:35 Doug Guest

You stand by your two brothers?

00:31:38 John Host

I don't know if I would characterize it so much as a—as a joke.

00:31:40 Doug Guest

Their words, sir! Their words.

Right. Right. And I appreciate and I understand kind of the sentiment that they are expressing.

You know, when I come at it, it's more about, you know, how do we both honor kind of what the history, you know, generations of our family have contributed, and—and I think it's just really fantastic that Rachel, as a new member to the family, was able to connect this history of this cookie and bring it in.

I think it's a really neat storyline to have, uh—

00:32:10 John Host

*[Jesse laughs.]*

00:32:12 Jesse Host

She didn't connect—*[breaks off, laughing]*.

*[Laughing]* "It's a neat storyline!"

We were just waiting for her heel turn!"

*[John and Doug or Rachel laugh.]*



00:32:20 John Host I think it's gonna come in this podcast.

00:32:22 Jesse Host HA!

00:32:24 John Host Rachel, do you correct people when they claim this cookie for Great-Grandma Hebig? And how do they feel when you do it?

00:32:30 Rachel Guest I probably gave up a couple years in, trying to correct it, only because—again, he and his brothers, they're like this little improv troupe that just gets on a roll, and their mom is pretty much the only one who can shut them down.

So, you know, I haven't put a lot of effort into it. I kinda push back on Doug sometimes about it.

But when Jack had this cookie bake sale, and I saw that, you know, he was sort of being implicated in this, I—that's when I felt like it was time to come forward with the truth.

00:33:02 John Host *[Laughs.]*

When you say that these guys have sort of a—an improv troupe element to them—and Scott and Jim did refer to a joke—

00:33:11 Rachel Guest Mm-hm.

00:33:12 John Host Like, do you think that part of this is them getting your goat? For a—for a laugh?

00:33:19 Rachel Guest I mean, there's a precedent. *[Laughs.]*

00:33:22 John Host Go on. I'll allow it.

00:33:24 Rachel Guest I mean, I can't think of a particular sort of joke. I mean, this is really kind of a long con. The other ones are usually just kind of in the moment, and they do it with everybody in the family. They do it with each other.

00:33:37 John Host *[Stifling laughter]* They gaslight them into saying these cookies are not your cookies?

What do they do?

00:33:41 Rachel Guest So there's a very famous family story of when the boys were young. They were watching TV, and Jim, the youngest—there was a JCPenney white sale ad on, and he asked, uh, his brothers what a white sale was.

And he was about five or six at the time, and they told him—and they kept this going the whole day until their mom got home—they told him that white sales—

00:34:05 John Host I'm nervous about where this is going, *[stifling laughter]* but I'll allow it.

00:34:09 Rachel Guest He told them that a JCPenney white sale is where their parents got him. That that's where he had come from, was a JCPenney white sale.

00:34:17 John Host That he had been purchased from JCPenney as a child.

00:34:19 Rachel Guest Exactly.

00:34:20 John Host Right.

00:34:21 Rachel Guest And he was in tears by the end of the day, and his mom—you know, I think there were some "hail Mary"s in the corner for Doug and Scott.

But that basically—that—that's kind of precedent.

00:34:31 John Host They're—they're pranksters. They're jokesters.

00:34:32 Rachel Guest Yes.

00:34:33 John Host Right? They're just—everyone's too sensitive. Can't—why can't they just laugh. They're equal opportunity offenders. I don't know what I'm

referring to here. Someone does, though.

*[Quiet snickering from someone.]*

Alright, anyway—*[laughs]*.

Doug, you've invented this connection between this cookie, which has an obvious provenance that is not your great-grandmother. You've made this connection to your great-grandmother the storyline, and gone back through and created a new history, which—which erases your wife.

Is this a joke? Or is this sincere that you really love these cookies and, like, you know what I mean? Is your—is your connection that you are fabricating to your Great-Grandmother Hebig born of a genuine love for that family history, or are you just trying to get Rachel's goat?

00:35:16 Doug Guest

And I'll remind you you're under fake oath.

I think there's a little in both camps. I'd say that I truly love these cookies, and they truly remind me of really fond childhood memories, and I like the fact that calling them Great-Grandma Hebig's cookies gives an opportunity to talk about our childhood and where these cookies fit in that history and everything like that.

There's no intention to erase Rachel. I don't deny, uh, when asked if these—the specific recipe came somewhere other than my Great Grandma Hebig. You know, they came from *Better Homes and Garden* magazine.

And, you know, I'll say, like—if Rachel had developed the recipe herself, you know, tinkered and, you know, figured out the different measurements and everything like that, I never would have in any way called them anything but Rachel's cookies.

00:36:18 John Host

But, you know. As you pointed out, it came from a magazine. It could be anybody's.

It's just like jokes. They have no author, you can just take them.

00:36:21 Jesse Host

*[Laughter from multiple people that continues for several moments.]*

Yeah, and post them on Instagram. Re-write them in the Notes app. Screenshot it. Post it in Instagram.

00:36:28 John Host

That's right, because even if someone else makes a joke, it's just the way you put your spin on it.

She didn't actually put anything into this. I gotcha. I gotcha, Doug. I'm holding a side trial in my own mind, *[laughing]* I think.

*[All laughter fades as John continues speaking.]*

00:36:48 Rachel Guest

Rachel, what would you have me order if I were to find in your favor? I think—you know, I'd want to think of a new name for this cookie that creates an opportunity to really acknowledge their true history in our family.

At one point I was thinking of kind of a mashup of my name and

Doug's grandmother, but I think that, um, the adjudication of this recipe is now a part of their history. And it's now a part of our family history.

And in an effort to not sort of halt history with nostalgia, and just say they're mine, I would be fine with some kind of ruling that we re-name these cookies in a way that reflects their appearance on fake Internet court.

But most of all, I'd seek a mandate that when asked about the name or the cookie, that Doug and his brothers have to tell the full and true story. And that they all share that story with their children.

00:37:39 John Host

Do they dissemble when asked? You know, when someone says, "Mm, these are amazing. Are these really your great-grandmother's cookies?", do they lie or evade the truth?

00:37:47 Rachel Guest

Yes. They absolutely do.

00:37:48 Crosstalk Crosstalk

**Doug:** I—now—I would not say—

**Rachel:** The—my sis—

00:37:51 Doug Guest

**Doug:** —we always do that.

I—it's happened, but I—it's—I think—lots of times I say that they're, uh, from a magazine.

00:37:59 Rachel Guest

*[John bursts out laughing.]*

Yeah, the number of—

00:38:00 John Host

You can't say—

*[Rachel laughs.]*

You can't say the word "Rachel," can you?! Is that the problem?

00:38:07 Doug Guest

*[Doug and Rachel laugh.]*

Magazine-slash-Rachel. Uh—

00:38:08 John Host

Doug, you make the cookies a lot, now, right?

00:38:10 Doug Guest

I do. Yeah.

00:38:11 John Host

Yeah. You're a baker as well, right?

00:38:12 Doug Guest

Yeah.

00:38:14 John Host

Super cool. So what would you have me order if I were to rule in your favor?

00:38:17 Doug Guest

Yeah, I don't expect Rachel to embrace Great-Grandma Hebig's cookies in—in the same way that I and my brothers—I think she would enjoy embracing that family tradition, and speaking to it, if she chose to.

00:38:29 Jesse Host

*[Someone snorts.]*

When you say "embrace" this tradition, you mean embrace it with a web of lies?

00:38:36 Doug Guest

*[Multiple people laugh.]*

I mean, there's different ways to talk about it, but you know, it's—I think there's fun in lifting up that family history, and—at the very least, it'd be nice if when we talk about them and say that they're Great Hama's—Grandma Hebig's cookies, that she doesn't instantly respond that we're liars.

|          |              |              |   |
|----------|--------------|--------------|---|
| 00:38:53 | John         | Host         | Why is it important to you, Doug?   |
| 00:38:55 | Doug         | Guest        | I think it's important because I really do enjoy, you know, talking about them as a cookie that has family tradition.   |
| 00:39:07 | John         | Host         | And I like to talk about the fact that—<br><i>[Shouting]</i> It <u>has</u> a family tradition! Your wife made them and brought them 20 years ago!   |
|          |              |              | <i>[Doug or Rachel laughs.]</i>   |
| 00:39:13 | Doug         | Guest        | That's the tradition!   |
| 00:39:15 | John         | Host         | That is <u>part</u> of the tradition, that's true.<br>Do you lack a connection to your ancestral past, such that you <u>need</u> to create this fetish object out of nothing in order to feel a connection to it?   |
| 00:39:24 | Doug         | Guest        | Well, I will say that my family, particularly the—the side of the family that we're referring to with Great-Grandma Hebig—we—we're not big history folks. We don't have a lot of conversation about kind of our roots, or have a lot of stories that are passed down. |
| 00:39:40 | John         | Host         | It's just not what we've done.<br>Have you read the cookbook that <u>your</u> mother-in-law, Rachel's mother, made?   |
| 00:39:44 | Doug         | Guest        | It's amazing, yeah! Yeah. It's a fantastic—she did an amazing job with that.  |
| 00:39:47 | John         | Host         | She did the homework. She didn't just steal a cookie.   |
|          |              |              | <i>[Scattered, quiet laughter.]</i>   |
| 00:39:58 | Sound Effect | Sound Effect | I think I've heard everything I need to in order to make my decision. I'm gonna go into my test kitchen, and I'll be back in a moment with my verdict.<br><i>[Door opens. Chairs scrape the ground on Jesse's next line.]</i>   |
| 00:39:59 | Jesse        | Host         | Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom.  |
| 00:40:02 | Sound Effect | Sound Effect | <i>[Footsteps. Door shuts.]</i>   |
| 00:40:03 | Jesse        | Host         | Doug, it's been an intense grilling for you. How are you feeling right now?   |
| 00:40:08 | Doug         | Guest        | Uh, really bad. Yeah. I'm... not feeling good at all.   |
| 00:40:12 | Jesse        | Host         | <i>[Laughing]</i> Just—   |
|          |              |              | <i>[Rachel laughs]</i>  |
| 00:40:18 | Doug         | Guest        | —overall, physically, emotionally, or specifically about your chances in the case?<br>I think the—my chances in the case have affected my overall.  |
| 00:40:24 | Jesse        | Host         | <i>[Jesse and Rachel laugh.]</i><br>Doug, we gotta tear you down if we're gonna build you up!   |
|          |              |              | <i>[Jesse and Doug laugh.]</i>  |
| 00:40:32 | Rachel       | Guest        | Rachel, how are you feeling?<br>I have to say, having the judge say that this is the greatest set of evidence ever submitted makes this pretty much the best day of my life.  |

|          |              |              |   |
|----------|--------------|--------------|---|
| 00:40:40 | Jesse        | Host         | It is genuinely impressive. <i>[Laughing]</i> You put together a PDF. You really—you really went all the way here. I feel like, uh, instead of evidence, I—I received a deck.   |
|          |              |              | <i>[Rachel and Doug laugh.]</i>   |
| 00:40:56 | Rachel       | Guest        | Whatever business people call a deck, I think that's what this is.  |
| 00:40:58 | Jesse        | Host         | It's 20 years in the making.  |
|          |              |              | Doug, Rachel, we'll see what Judge Hodgman has to say about all this when we come back in just a second.  |
| 00:41:03 | Sound Effect | Transition   | <i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>   |
| 00:41:04 | Clip         | Promo        | <i>[Straightforward, thump-y electric bass guitar beat with light drums.]</i>   |
|          |              |              | <b>Laurie:</b> Hi. I am Laurie Kilmartin.   |
|          |              |              | <b>Jackie:</b> And I'm Jackie Kashian.  |
|          |              |              | <b>Laurie:</b> Together we host a podcast called:   |
|          |              |              | <b>Jackie:</b> <i>The Jackie and Laurie Show.</i>   |
| 00:41:13 | Clip         | Promo        | <b>Laurie:</b> Uh, we're both stand-up comics. We <u>recently</u> met each other, because women weren't allowed to work together, uh—uh, on the road or in gigs for a long, long time, and so... our friendship has been unfolding on this podcast for a couple years.                |
|          |              |              | Jackie <u>constantly</u> works the road; I write for <i>Conan</i> and then I work the road in-between.  |
|          |              |              | <b>Jackie:</b> We do a lot of stand-up comedy, and so we celebrate stand-up—  |
| 00:41:34 | Clip         | Promo        | <b>Laurie:</b> Yes.   |
|          |              |              | <b>Jackie:</b> —and we also... bitch about it.  |
|          |              |              | <b>Laurie:</b> We keep it to an hour; we don't have any guests. We somehow find enough to talk about every single week. So find us! You can subscribe to <i>The Jackie and Laurie Show</i> at <a href="http://MaximumFun.org">MaximumFun.org</a> , or wherever you get your podcasts. |
|          |              |              | <b>Jackie:</b> <i>[Nonplussed]</i> K, bye.  |
|          |              |              | <i>[Music ends.]</i>  |
| 00:41:50 | Sound Effect | Transition   | <i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>   |
| 00:41:52 | Jesse        | Host         | Please rise as Judge John Hodgman re-enters the courtroom and presents his verdict.   |
| 00:41:56 | Sound Effect | Sound Effect | <i>[During above: door opens, chairs scrape the ground, footsteps.</i>  |
|          |              |              | <i>And then: door shuts.]</i>   |
| 00:41:58 | John         | Host         | So, recipes are like jokes. That was the half joke that I was making, or alluding to, earlier on. And that authorship is something that has traditionally been a little slippery. Right?  |
|          |              |              | People create recipes, and then they give them away in cookbooks, and then those recipes get taken and made. They are <u>designed</u> to be reproduced. And essentially, reproduced over and over and over  |

again until the author kind of disappears.

Very rarely do authors retain a kind of ownership, aside from that original edition of the cookbook, over the recipes that they put out into the world.

And similarly, jokes are something that a certain subset of people feel are similarly just like, "Here's a funny idea. Take it. Share it. I had an original observation, but now it is for the world," and that's how joke thievery happens.

00:42:45 John Host And it happens often with—I won't say the best of intentions, but the medium-est of intentions. Without fully understanding that work goes into creating a recipe, just like work goes into creating a joke.

It requires imagination, and self-editing, and re-working, and testing. And they are not just things to be taken away and re-ascribed to someone else.

Rachel, of course, you know, this is especially true—I mean, this is true for jokes, but it's like, especially true for—for baking. Right? Which is very specific. Like—unlike the kind of cooking I do, which is like, "That looks brown," baking is chemistry and it requires very specific ingredients.

There are a wide variety of different kinds of molasses-y, gingery type cookies. Shout-out to Elizabeth Connors's rugby cookies, the greatest cookie I've ever eaten in my life. [*Stumbling over words*] Guinness Poundcake.

00:43:35 John Host These are the sweets that I like. This is why this whole conversation, to me, is delicious, even though I do not have a sweet tooth, as you know. I have an alcohol molar.

And Rachel took a recipe and brought it to her new husband's family gathering. And her intentions were fine. She did not go in there saying, "I invented this recipe." She took it, as anyone would, from a magazine.

Only to have her labor stolen from her, almost immediately, by Doug and his brothers. And to create this fantasy that this is in fact Great Grandma Hebig's recipe.

You could probably sense, Doug, my immediate frustration with this IP theft, and my double frustration with this re-writing of history in a gaslight-y kind of way, where Rachel's position with regard to these cookies was gradually being erased, and a new history was being written into the record to prop up the fantasy.

00:44:31 John Host But rather than being simply grateful that Rachel had introduced a memory of these cookies that you had basically forgotten about, but now zoomed you back in a series of sensations back to being a kid, when your Grandma Mary baked Hebig's cookies for you—

You instead take that away from Rachel and give them to Hebig. And that's frustrating, too, because joining a family is—is hard! You guys have been married for 21 years, is that right?

00:44:55 Doug Guest

Yes.

00:44:56 John Host Yeah, joining a family is a hard thing. Especially if you're joining a close-knit family, that itself has a lot of tri-brother traditions [*laughing*] of bullying and joking. And lying. And also a—a family that has long traditions of meat dips.

You are the outsider coming in. And I feel bad for Rachel, almost at the very beginning of your marriage, having her work essentially ignored by you and your brothers. And only sort of, like, grudgingly acknowledged when forced to.

I know that your intentions are good. I believe that your brothers—your brothers' apology, or non-apology, in their letter—is clearly, like, they didn't mean to hurt anybody.

And even though Rachel isn't here saying "This hurts me," I am hurt on her behalf, and there's a reason that she brought this to the courtroom. Right?

00:45:51 John Host One of the hardest things that we have to learn to understand is that even when our intentions are good and fine, and we don't think we're doing anything wrong, sometimes someone says "Hey, you know what? That hurts me."

And because you never intended to hurt that person, you're like, "What are you talking about? You're easily offended! Get outta here! These are my great-grandma's cookies, period!" or whatever it is.

And this is the third point of frustration that I feel. It's a hard thing—in life to learn, for all of us, and some of us more than others, that even when we feel our intentions are good and we didn't think we were doing anything wrong, when someone says, "This makes me feel bad," you have a choice to become either defensive and double down and say,

00:46:36 John Host "You shouldn't feel this way. It's just a fun family tradition." Or to say, "Oh! Holy moly. You know, I didn't think about it. Let me think about that some more. You're right."

Rachel, you have a place in this family history. [*Laughing*] She is now part of the family! And part of the history is she sparked a memory in your mind with cookies.

Which is obviously was cookies are so good for. That's what Proust knew. Sparking mems.

And she deserves a place in that history.

Now, here's what I'm going to order. And this goes for every member of your family. And that includes you, Rachel.

00:47:09 John Host First of all, I want you both to do some homework. Just like Rachel's mom did. Try to find out who wrote that *Good Housekeeping* recipe. Rachel, that's your job, so that you can credit it properly.

You may never find out. I—and I accept that. But you can give it a try. You can put—uh, it wasn't *Good Housekeeping*, I'm sorry, it was *Better Homes and Gardens*.

They still exist. Somewhere in there, you could try—probably narrow it down. I'd like you to make a good faith effort.

And similarly, and perhaps more successfully, I'd like you, Doug—and Jim and Scott—to make a good faith effort... try to find that recipe for Hebig's molasses cookies!

00:47:49 John Host

There were some recipes written down. There have to be more of them. It may not be possible. But—all that stuff may have burned in a fire, I don't know. But you owe it to people who create recipes to try to find out where they came from, and to credit them properly.

At least make a good faith effort. I get that it might not work. The main reason I'm ordering this to both of you is that my hope is that Rachel is gonna find out that the person who wrote the *Good Housekeeping* article is actually your Great-Grandmother Hebig.

*[Rachel, Jesse, and Doug laugh.]*

And it'll be another—yet another Doug family tri—meat dip miracle.

*[Laughs.]*

00:48:24 John Host

But my main order is this. From now on, Rachel's recipe—the *Better Homes and Gardens* recipe—will no longer be called Great-Grandma Hebig's cookies. Sorry, Doug's family. You are feasting in a palace of lies when you do that.

And the repercussions are already clear. Jack was traumatized to learn that his family history had been falsified. And Jack is our future, and I encourage—I want Jacks of the world to believe, especially in this time, that facts are facts. And not storylines.

That history is real, and not a narrative. Even when that real history is uncomfortable, Jack wants to confront it, and I want to give him every opportunity to do it.

From now on those cookies, which are part of family lore, will be called Great Rachels.

*[Multiple people snickering quietly.]*

00:49:17 John Host

As adapted from *Better Homes and Gardens*, 1998 or whatever. And that all needs to be there. "Great Rachels, as adapted from *Better Homes and Garden*, dateline November '98" or whatever it is.

And now you—don't be too—don't—do not despair, though, Doug. You are a nice guy, and I bet you make really good cookies. All you need to do, my friend, is get in there and mess around with that recipe a little bit more.

Tinker with it. Put in the work. Find a new angle. Add a pith of a mandarin orange or a satsuma or something. Figure out some new cookie!

First of all, a new cookie is a way forward, as opposed to this nostalgic path backwards. But second of all, maybe you'll spark an even stronger memory of your grandma, and your great-grandma, and



|          |              |              |  |
|----------|--------------|--------------|--|
| 00:50:09 | John         | Host         | your family history.<br>And <u>those</u> cookies, when you make that small addition, that small change—and that literally could be an extra gram of sugar. Doesn't matter. <u>You</u> have naming rights over those. <u>Those</u> become Great-Grandma Hebig's cookies, because you're allowed to make up that false story if it's your own cookie.                              |
| 00:50:25 | Sound Effect | Sound Effect | This is the sound of a gavel.<br>[Cooking timer dings three times.]  |
| 00:50:29 | John         | Host         | Judge John Hodgman rules; that is all.   |
| 00:50:31 | Jesse        | Host         | Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom.   |
| 00:50:32 | Sound Effect | Sound Effect | [During the above: door opens, chairs scrape the ground, footsteps, door shuts.]   |
| 00:50:36 | Jesse        | Host         | A somewhat more <u>expansive</u> verdict than you might have anticipated, Doug. How are you feeling?   |
| 00:50:41 | Doug         | Guest        | I think it's fair. He makes a lot of good points about respecting what Rachel's contributed, and, you know, honoring her perspective, so I think that's all very fair.   |
| 00:51:07 | John         | Host         | And I'm excited about, uh, the opportunity to tinker with the recipe to be able to kinda make it my own and—and—and give it a name, and so I might, like, you know, see if I can get any of the—the dips in there or something like that to change it up.<br>Wait a minute, you're talking about put—you're talking about putting <u>dried beef dip</u> into the cookies, Doug?! |
| 00:51:11 | Doug         | Guest        | [Laughs.] It's—it's a—it's experimentation. We'll see.   |
| 00:51:14 | John         | Host         | ...Okay.   |
| 00:51:15 | Jesse        | Host         | Rachel, how are you feeling?   |
| 00:51:17 | Rachel       | Guest        | Um, I feel good! I'm excited about trying to track down the origins of the <i>Better Homes and Gardens</i> recipe, and maybe I will bring my nephew Jack, the aspiring historian, in on that with me to figure that out.   |
| 00:51:31 | Jesse        | Host         | Rachel, Doug, thanks for joining us on the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast.  |
| 00:51:34 | Sound Effect | Transition   | [Three gavel bangs.]   |
| 00:51:36 | Promo        | Clip         | [Background music.]  |
|          |              |              | <b>Speaker 1:</b> I listen to <i>Reading Glasses</i> because Brea and Mallory have great tips.   |
|          |              |              | <b>Mallory O'Meara:</b> You're a comics reader and you wanna use a library-connected app, you can try out Hoopla.  |
|          |              |              | <b>Speaker 2:</b> I listen for the author interviews.  |
|          |              |              | <b>Speaker 3:</b> I'm mad at myself that I waited as long as I did to start reading Joan Didion.   |
| 00:51:50 | Promo        | Clip         | <b>Speaker 4:</b> They give me reading advice I didn't even know I needed.   |
|          |              |              | <b>Mallory:</b> If you go in person to an event, and go up to an author or a filmmaker, or <u>anybody</u> , and tell them what they—you don't like about their work, you're a trash baby.  |
|          |              |              | <b>Brea Grant:</b> I—look. I understand you didn't like <i>Heroes</i> season three, that's fine.   |

*[Mallory cracks up.]*

|          |              |            |   |
|----------|--------------|------------|---|
| 00:52:09 | Promo        | Clip       | <p>I like—I don't actually need to know that information.<br/><b>Brea:</b> I'm Brea Grant.</p> <p><b>Mallory:</b> And I'm Mallory O'Meara.</p> <p><b>Brea:</b> We're <i>Reading Glasses</i>, and we solve all your bookish problems. Every Thursday on Maximum Fun.</p>   |
| 00:52:16 | Sound Effect | Transition | <p><i>[Music ends.]</i></p>   |
| 00:52:18 | Jesse        | Host       | <p><i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i><br/>Another <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> case in the books.</p> <p>Before we dispense some Swift Justice, we wanna thank Jeremy Frank for naming this week's episode, "Snickerdoodilignce," or "Snickerdoodle Dilignce," as you prefer.</p> <p>If you'd like to name a future episode, like <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> on Facebook. That's where we put out our calls for submissions. And hey, remember that Jesse Thorn and I are going to be on tour with the <i>Judge John Hodgman: Live Justice</i> show this fall. As well as I'll be out there promoting my book, <i>Medallion Status</i>.</p> <p>In fact, I had a little conversation with, uh—with Doug and, uh, Rachel. They're gonna be at my Chicago event, at the Chicago Festival of the Humanities in November.</p> <p>And, uh, they're gonna bring me a Great Rachel, and they're gonna bring me a New Hebig, and I'm gonna figure out which one is better!</p> <p>So you can be there when that happens if you wish! Or at any of our great events across this land of ours, and Toronto, by going to <a href="http://JohnHodgman.com/tour">JohnHodgman.com/tour</a> or the events page on Maximum Fun.</p> |
| 00:53:20 | Jesse        | Host       | <p>Where can they follow us, Jesse?<br/>They can follow us on Twitter, <a href="https://twitter.com/JesseThorn">@JesseThorn</a> and <a href="https://twitter.com/hodgman">@hodgman</a>. Hashtag your <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> Tweets <a href="https://twitter.com/hashtag/JJHo">#JJHo</a>. I love to see what folks are saying about the show.</p> <p>Check out the Maximum Fun subreddit at <a href="http://MaximumFun.Reddit.com">MaximumFun.Reddit.com</a>, another place for pleasant discussion.</p>  |
| 00:53:38 | John         | Host       | <p>Yeah! I've been enjoying it! I've been—I've been dropping in! I—I discovered that I have a login at Reddit that I forgot about, <i>[laughing]</i> from my book six years ago, and now I'm getting in the mix!</p>  |
| 00:53:50 | Jesse        | Host       | <p>I'm—I'm talking to people over there! It's a lot of fun!<br/>It's great! I love, uh, checking out what everyone is talking about about the show. I love deleting the posts of people who are being jerks. <i>[Laughs.]</i></p> <p>I love everything about it. It's a great place. It's one of the warmest and friendliest places on Reddit. <a href="http://MaximumFun.Reddit.com">MaximumFun.Reddit.com</a>.</p>  |

And of course, our evidence—*[stifling laughter]* including some really beautiful evidence for this week's show—is on Instagram, [@judgejohnhodgman](#).

00:54:21 Jesse Host You can follow us there. We post evidence there, other fun stuff, it's great. [@judgejohnhodgman](#).  
This week's episode recorded by Collin Ashmead-Bobbitt at WBEZ in Chicago. Our editor is Jesus Ambrosio. This episode produced by Hannah Smith and Jennifer Marmor.

Now, Swift Justice! We answer your small disputes with quick judgment.

Andrew wants to know, Judge Hodgman:

00:54:46 John Host "Penguins: Adorable? Or terrifying?"  
I have never thought this was a question at all. I love a penguin! All penguins are great! They're adorable!  
00:54:53 Jesse Host Everybody loves penguins, except for little fish!  
00:54:56 John Host Yeah! Right, exactly! Everyone loves penguins, you know?

I've been in a penguin tank. Inside. When I was young and dumb and thought I was immortal, and figured that I probably would never be prosecuted for anything in my life because of what I look like.

*[Chuckles.]* And I—I was kind of kind of right.

00:55:13 John Host I snuck into the London Zoo.  
You may have heard about this on *This American Life* many years ago. Snuck into that London Zoo. Very little, uh, security at the London Zoo at this time. 1990s. It was a great—great decade for sneaking into zoos.

*[Jesse laughs.]*

I got—*[laughs]* I got there, I looked at the penguins, I'm like, "Those penguins look great. I'm gonna climb in that enclosure with them," and I did it. And I walked among the sleeping penguins.

And I reached up to pet a penguin, and that penguin bit me on the finger. And even that was adorable.

*[Laughing]* And obviously warranted, too, because I was invading its home.

00:55:46 Jesse Host And that's the story of how John was cast in the film *The Batman*.  
00:55:49 John Host *[Laughs.]* I only wish. I just got thrown in a London jail for a night. Immediately caught, and they had to hold me until they could determine that none of the penguins were, uh, harmed or injured.

And then they let us go, because there was a bombing in Paddington Station.

It was the nineties in London! The Swinging Nineties.

*[Beat.]*

00:56:11 Jesse Host They're adorable, Andrew! Penguins are wonderful. But you know what? Give 'em their space. They deserve it. They're creatures. That's it for this week's *Judge John Hodgman*. Submit your cases at [MaximumFun.org/jjho](http://MaximumFun.org/jjho), and remember we are particularly looking for cases in those cities that we are visiting on our national tour of several cities!

00:56:26 John Host That's Durham, North Carolina; Washington, DC, our nation's capital; Portland, Maine, of course.

Uh, Toronto, which everyone is yelling at me on the Internet to say "Tranna" instead of "Tuh-ron-to."

00:56:40 Jesse Host And a fifth city! Which you're going to remember, Jesse!

00:56:42 John Host Atlanta, Georgia!

00:56:45 Jesse Host Yees! Atlanta, the capital of Georgia.

00:56:50 John Host I will, from—from now on, always remember to say "Tuh-ron-uh," as a native of "San Fransisky."

[Laughs.] If you've got a dispute in any of those cities, or you're coming to the show from wherever you may be coming, please write in!

MaximumFun.org/jjho, or [hodgman@maximumfun.org](mailto:hodgman@maximumfun.org). Let us know that it's for consideration in a particular city. We'll put it in a special pile, and if we, uh, choose to hear your case on stage, guess what? You're getting in for free!

00:57:14 Jesse Host And I'll say hello to you! Sooo, come on! Pick a fight!

00:57:16 Crosstalk Crosstalk I'll stare at you icily.

**John:** [Laughs.] You've got the warmest—

**Jesse:** I'll probably say—

00:57:19 Jesse Host **John:** No. You're—

00:57:20 John Host I'll probably say hello, John.

You're so—no. He—you've got the—you've got the warmest eyes in podcasting, I have to say, Jesse Thorn. The kindest eyes in podcasting.

And basically, because of your beard, it's the only part of your face that's visible.

[Jesse cracks up.]

00:57:35 Jesse Host So—[laughs].

00:57:39 Sound Effect Transition We'll talk to you next time on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

00:57:41 Music Transition [Three gavel bangs.]

00:57:42 Speaker 1 Guest [A cheerful guitar chord.]

00:57:43 Speaker 2 Guest [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org).

00:57:45 Speaker 3 Guest Comedy and culture.

00:57:46 Speaker 4 Guest Artist owned—

—audience supported.