

00:00:00	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
00:00:02	Jesse Thorn	Host	Welcome to the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast. I'm Bailiff Jesse Thorn. This week's episode recorded live in Durham, North Carolina at the Carolina Theatre.
00:00:12	John Hodgman	Host	And this is your judge, John Hodgman. This is also our <u>last</u> episode of the year! We hope you have a very happy New Year. Thank you for listening. We'll be back in 2020 to bring you more justice.
00:00:23	Jesse	Host	Let's go to the stage at the Carolina Theatre.
00:00:26	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
00:00:27	Jesse	Host	Durham, you've come to us desperate for justice! And we're here at the Carolina Theatre to deliver it!
			<i>[Crowd cheers and applauds.]</i>
			Friends, let's bring out our first set of litigants! Please welcome to the stage: Grant and Pastor Ervin!
			<i>[More cheering and applause.]</i>
			Tonight's case: "Son of a Preacher Ban." Grant files suit against his father, Pastor Ervin. Pastor Ervin regularly incorporates stories from his own life into his sermons, including stories about his children.
			<i>[Light audience laughter.]</i>
			Greg grew up hearing his father's Sunday sermons which oftentimes included stories <u>about</u> Greg. Greg would like for his father to <u>stop</u> talking about him in his sermons.
			<i>[More laughter.]</i>
			Paster Ervin feels he has the right to share stories about his family. Who's right? Who's wrong? Only one can decide. Please rise—metaphorically—as Judge John Hodgman enters the courtroom and delivers an obscure cultural reference.
			<i>[More cheering and applause.]</i>
00:01:38	John	Host	Podcasting... is awful.
			<i>[Light audience laughter.]</i>
			It's awful. It's painful. It's frightening. Makes you doubt yourself. <u>Judge... yourself!</u> Distance yourself from other people in your life. Makes you selfish. Makes you... <u>creepy</u> .
			<i>[More laughter.]</i>
			Makes you obsessed with your hair! Makes you cruel. Makes you say and do things you never thought you would do. It's all any of us want! Podcasting. And it's <u>hell</u> when we get there. So no wonder it's something we don't want to do on our own. I was told that if we were born with podcasting, then life is about choosing the right place to put it.

People talk about that a lot. It feeling right. When it feels right, it's easy! But I'm not sure that's true. Takes strength to know what's right. And podcasting isn't something that weak people do.

[More laughter.]

Being a podcaster takes a hell of a lot of hope. I think that's what they mean when they say you find somebody that you podcast with... it feels like hope.

[More laughter.]

Bailiff Jesse Thorn, please swear them in.

00:02:51	Jesse	Host	Grant, Pastor Ervin, please rise and raise your right hands. Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth...
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[Anticipatory audience laughter.]

...and nothing but the truth, so help you God or whatever?

00:03:02	Grant	Guest	I do.
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00:03:03	Pastor Ervin	Guest	I do.
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00:03:04	Jesse	Host	Do you swear to abide by Judge John Hodgman's ruling, <i>[stifling laughter]</i> despite the fact that he consorts with members of the Church of Satan?
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[Audience and one or both litigants laugh.]

00:03:12	John	Host	It's true. It's true.
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00:03:13	Jesse	Host	<i>[Stifling laughter]</i> It's true.
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00:03:14	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	John: It's true.
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Jesse: He's friends with them! They're nice!

00:03:16	John	Host	It's true.
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00:03:17	Pastor Ervin	Guest	Yes.
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00:03:18	Jesse	Host	Inter-faith, it's called.
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00:03:19	Pastor Ervin	Guest	Sure.
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[Audience laughter.]

00:03:21	John	Host	Let the record show the pastor said "Sure."
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[Jesse and the audience laugh.]

00:03:25	Jesse	Host	Judge Hodgman, you may proceed.
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00:03:26	John	Host	<i>[Laughs.]</i> First of all, Grant and Pastor Ervin, you may be seated.
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[Audience laughter.]

It's true that I thought for the cultural reference that I would read the blurb that my first book, *The Areas of My Expertise*, was given by Peter H. Gilmore, High Magus of the Church of Satan. Which was "Thank you for bringing more laughter into this world."

[John and the audience laugh.]

They're fun. Not actual devil-worshippers, Pastor Ervin, it's more of an art project. Don't worry.

[More audience laughter.]

But for an immediate summary judgment in one of yours' favors, can either of you name the piece of culture that I referenced as I entered this courtroom? Grant, you're young.

00:03:58 Jesse Host You're cosplaying as Adam Scott on *Parks and Rec*.

[John and the audience laugh.]

00:04:03 Grant Guest I'll—I'll just say, uh... Reverend Jesse James autobiographyyy, maybe? Or...

00:04:09 John Host Reverend... Jesse James.

[Audience laughter.]

00:04:11 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Jesse:** Autobiography.

John: Autobiography.

00:04:13 John Host Those are words. Sure!

00:04:15 Jesse Host John—

[Audience laughter.]

So Jesse James is a famous outlaw.

00:04:19 John Host Yeah.

[More laughter.]

00:04:21 Jesse Host Um...

00:04:22 John Host Who then became ordained in the Universal Church of Life when his friends asked him to marry them?

[More laughter from audience and one of the litigants.]

He's like, "Ugh, I gotta go to the Internet and do this thing!"

00:04:29 Jesse Host Can I tell you an honest fact?

00:04:31 John Host Yeah!

00:04:32 Jesse Host My father and stepmother were married by a priest named Jesse James.

00:04:35 John Host Really!

00:04:36 Jesse Host Yeah. That's a true story.

00:04:37 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** So that's who you were referencing, specifically, obviously, Grant.

Grant: That's what I meant.

Jesse: Yeah.

Grant: Yeah.

[Audience laughter.]

00:04:40	Jesse	Host	Kind of an inside baseball thing, but I like the guess.
00:04:42	John	Host	That's a—that's right. Very good. Alright.
00:04:43	Jesse	Host	Good research.
00:04:44	John	Host	Pastor Ervin, do you have a guess? As to what piece of culture I referenced as I entered the courtroom?
00:04:48	Pastor Ervin	Guest	It sounded like a little bit like Gandhi.
00:04:50	John	Host	Gandhi... and Jesse James.
<i>[Audience laughter.]</i>			
That's... truly is a flip of the coin.			
00:04:56	Jesse	Host	I guess Montezuma!
00:04:57	John	Host	<u>All</u> guesses are wrong!
<i>[Audience laughter.]</i>			
00:05:00	Jesse	Host	<i>[Stifling laughter]</i> Was it Teddy Roosevelt? I'm just naming figures from history.
00:05:03	John	Host	No.
<i>[Someone laughs.]</i>			
00:05:04	Jesse	Host	That's what <u>they</u> did!
<i>[Someone laughs.]</i>			
00:05:05	John	Host	Fictional character. Did anyone get it?
00:05:07	Audience Member	Guest	<i>Fleabag!</i>
00:05:09	John	Host	<i>Fleabag</i> is correct!
<i>[Audience cheering.]</i>			
It's the priest's homily at the wedding in the second season of <i>Fleabag</i> . Check it out.			
00:05:15	Jesse	Host	Hot priest?
00:05:16	John	Host	Hot priest.
00:05:17	Jesse	Host	Yeah.
00:05:18	John	Host	That's right. Hot priest. Sorry, I was talking to them for a while. Let's talk to you. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:05:19	Grant	Guest	I—I did mean Jesse Jackson. When I—just—
00:05:22	John	Host	J—I—no, I understand. It's very—don't worry about it for a second.
00:05:25	Grant	Guest	Okay.

[Audience laughter.]

00:05:26 John Host You have something in your hand. Is that evidence?
00:05:28 Grant Guest Uh, no. But—it's just a gift.
00:05:30 John Host Oh, really!

[Interested shouts from the audience.]

00:05:31 Grant Guest It's just some bribery.
00:05:33 John Host A gift, you say! *[Laughs.]*
00:05:35 Grant Guest Yeah. It's a—
00:05:36 John Host Another gift! Maybe—
00:05:38 Grant Guest It's a card game.
00:05:39 John Host *[Audibly disappointed/disgusted.]* Oh.

[Audience and Grant laugh.]

00:05:41 Jesse Host Classic!
00:05:43 John Host *[Sternly]* We'll buzz-market your card game near the end!
00:05:46 Grant Guest Alright. Thank you.
00:05:47 John Host Ugh.

[Laughter dies down.]

So, alright. You bring this case, do you not, Grant?
00:05:50 Grant Guest Yes.
00:05:51 John Host And tell me what the—what is the—
00:05:52 Jesse Host Hold on. Grant, why don't you just bring an asthma inhaler?!

[Scattered audience laughter.]

00:05:56 John Host Actually, I could use one right about now.

[Jesse and some audience members laugh.]

00:05:59 Grant Guest Uh, I don't have a prescription for that, so I just couldn't really get ahold of it. But, uh—
00:06:02 John Host I understand.
00:06:03 Grant Guest You know, growing up, my dad would be at the pulpit from time to time.
00:06:09 John Host Sure.
00:06:10 Grant Guest He actually spent about 20 years as a children's minister.
00:06:11 John Host Mm-hm.
00:06:12 Grant Guest So he was my direct Sunday instructor for quite a while.
00:06:16 John Host Sure.
00:06:17 Grant Guest You know, he would bring up these stories... about my childhood, about my sisters' childhood, that were a little embarrassing. He's pretty good at what he does, so we would be at pretty big churches. And on Sunday morning if he would tell a fairly embarrassing story,

there would be... maybe half as many people as there are in this room right now, like, hundreds of people.

00:06:37 John Host

Yeah.

00:06:38 Grant Guest

Listening about what I did when I was four years old, three years old.

00:06:41 John Host

Right. And that—and what sort of things would he tell that were so embarrassing?

[Audience laughs.]

00:06:47 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Grant: You know, I was a hand—

Jesse: *[Stifling laughter]* We want as many examples as you can remember.

[Audience and Grant or Paster Ervin laugh.]

00:06:52 Grant Guest

I was a handful as a kid, but he specifically told a story about me wanting some attention while he was on the phone. And I cut the phone line. Uh...

[Audience laughter.]

00:07:01 John Host

And I presume he was on the phone... with God?

[More laughter.]

00:07:03 Pastor Ervin Guest

Yeah.

00:07:05 Grant Guest

Yes.

00:07:06 John Host

That was—*[laughing]* okay.

[More laughter.]

Pastor Ervin... what denomination are you a pastor in?

00:07:10 Pastor Ervin Guest

United Methodist Church.

[A few scattered cheers.]

00:07:12 John Host

Fantastic. How do you defend yourself against your son's accusations that you have been misusing his life in the sermons?

00:07:17 Pastor Ervin Guest

I guess I usually just respond with, you know, "I'll give you five bucks, you know, for royalties."

[John and some of the audience laugh.]

Uh—*[laughing]* yeah. Just—

00:07:25 John Host

Have you ever—have you ever made good on that offer, sir?

00:07:27 Pastor Ervin Guest

Probably not.

00:07:28 John Host

Ah, I see! Well.

00:07:29 Pastor Ervin Guest

Yeah... Probably not.

00:07:30 John Host

Then there may be some damages to be awarded.

[Some more audience laughter.]

00:07:31 Pastor Ervin Guest

But you know, it's like these stories that I tell, though, they're stories

			that involve—you know, both of us.
00:07:36	John	Host	Sure.
00:07:37	Pastor Ervin	Guest	You know, it's our father-son relationship, you know?
00:07:39	John	Host	Yeah.
00:07:40	Pastor Ervin	Guest	I was on the phone with somebody and he wanted to talk to me, and I walked right by him coming home from—that's back when I was teaching school.
00:07:47	John	Host	Right.
00:07:48	Pastor Ervin	Guest	And I kinda—just kinda switched hats, switched gears, and kinda ignored him.
00:07:51	John	Host	Mm-hm.
00:07:52	Pastor Ervin	Guest	And so he reached his hand into one of those, uh, childproof locked drawers, pulled out a pair of scissors—
00:07:57	John	Host	Yeah.
00:07:58	Pastor Ervin	Guest	—and cut the cord, and of course I did what—you know, we all did back then. You know, "Hello? Hello?"
00:08:04	John	Host	<i>[Laughing]</i> Right.
			<i>[Some audience laughter.]</i>
00:08:05	Pastor Ervin	Guest	You know. And there's nobody there. So—and then I looked down, and he looks at me. He's about three years old at that point.
00:08:11	John	Host	Right.
00:08:12	Pastor Ervin	Guest	And he goes "Are you gonna listen to me now?"
00:08:14	John	Host	Ohhh.
			<i>[Audience laughs.]</i>
00:08:16	Jesse	Host	Whoa!
00:08:17	Pastor Ervin	Guest	And then I—I think I start to change some colors, you know, kinda like—you know, white to dark red. And then he takes off and goes run—uh, run down—he runs down the hall and he gets under his Barney bed.
00:08:29	John	Host	Right.
00:08:30	Pastor Ervin	Guest	'Cause he's scared.
00:08:31	Grant	Guest	So I was like, you know, 12, 15, 16, 17, and these stories were coming up.
00:08:35	Jesse	Host	Yeah.
00:08:36	John	Host	Yeah, but this is—!
00:08:38	Jesse	Host	To clarify, John—'cause there <u>are</u> some kids here—later on, if you're interested romantically in another kid, uh, the best thing to do—this'll happen when you're 12, 15, 16—is just have your dad bring up your Barney bed.
			<i>[John and the audience laugh.]</i>
00:08:53	John	Host	Or even—
00:08:54	Grant	Guest	It's great, isn't it?

00:08:55	John	Host	Even now, how old are you now?
00:08:56	Grant	Guest	I'm 27.
00:08:57	John	Host	You still have that Barney bed, Grant?
			<i>[Pastor Ervin and some of the audience laugh.]</i>
00:08:59	Grant	Guest	No.
00:09:00	Jesse	Host	You still B-bedding it, baby?
			<i>[He and Grant laugh.]</i>
			He's like, "No, I got a race car now, man!"
			<i>[Audience laughter.]</i>
00:09:05	Grant	Guest	Yeah.
00:09:06	John	Host	In your father's defense, that's a pretty badass story.
			<i>[Some audience laughter.]</i>
			That's—I mean—you know, first of all, that took some skill to get into that childproof drawer.
00:09:13	Grant	Guest	Mm-hm.
00:09:14	John	Host	Get those scissors.
00:09:15	Grant	Guest	Right.
00:09:16	John	Host	That was a big move to cut the cord. I presume that when you're under your Barney bed, the demon speaks to you and tells you what to do?
			<i>[Audience and some on-stage laughter.]</i>
			In order to—and—and so—I mean, I think that's an incredible story. What was the context of the story in your sermon?
00:09:30	Pastor Ervin	Guest	Well, the context was I was drawing an analogy to how sometimes we don't wanna listen to God.
00:09:35	John	Host	Right.
00:09:36	Pastor Ervin	Guest	How that we get so busy that we don't really wanna tune in and hear what he has to say. And so sometimes—
00:09:41	John	Host	So you're saying your son is God.
00:09:42	Pastor Ervin	Guest	Nnno.
			<i>[Audience laughter.]</i>
			No, it was an analogy.
00:09:46	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	John: <i>[Laughs.]</i> Oh—oh, sorry.
			Pastor Ervin: Yeah. Right. You know. Yeah, actua—yeah. It—it was an analogy. Yeah!
			John: No, but you're—but yes! No, I think that that's right!

00:09:51	Pastor Ervin	Guest	You know, kinda part of the things that we've done and all the experiences that we've had, and so, you know, a good storyteller tries to draw on, you know, those personal things.
00:10:01	John	Host	But—yeah, I mean, I think that that's—it's not merely just a heartwarming story, but it's a fairly <u>arresting</u> story about being mindful in life.
00:10:08	Pastor Ervin	Guest	Right.
00:10:09	John	Host	To the things that are meaningful to you. Correct?
00:10:11	Pastor Ervin	Guest	Right! Right.
00:10:12	John	Host	I thought that was—
00:10:13	Pastor Ervin	Guest	Yeah!
00:10:14	John	Host	I think that's fair use. I don't think you owe him five bucks for that one.
			<i>[Some audience laughter.]</i>
00:10:16	Pastor Ervin	Guest	Well...
00:10:17	John	Host	Grant, you have another complaint?
00:10:18	Grant	Guest	Yeah.
00:10:19	John	Host	What's another one that you felt bad about?
			<i>[Some audience laughter.]</i>
00:10:20	Grant	Guest	Uh—well.
			<i>[Someone laughs.]</i>
			Yeah, so, that's one example, but he also mentioned a story about—you know, when I needed to get a booster shot, and I got put into one of those harnesses.
			<i>[Some audience laughter.]</i>
			And he tried to kind of soothe me and say, uh, you know, "You're like a caterpillar. You'll be a butterfly." And then I shrieked "I don't <u>want</u> to be a butterfly."
			<i>[More laughter.]</i>
			That's in line with the material—
00:10:38	Pastor Ervin	Guest	Well, I was trying to get his mind off the blood getting drawn and—
00:10:41	John	Host	Yeah, no, that's—!
00:10:42	Grant	Guest	Right.
00:10:43	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	John: That's extremely touching! <i>[Inaudible.]</i>
			<i>[Audience laughter.]</i>
			Pastor Ervin: Right, I mean, he was three years old, and he had never had that kinda high fever thing, and—
00:10:49	John	Host	Right.

00:10:50	Pastor Ervin	Guest	He's, you know, there, and they're putting this Velcro papoose thing all around him to hold him still.
00:10:55	John	Host	Yeah.
00:10:56	Pastor Ervin	Guest	So they can draw the blood, and I thought, "Well, that'd be a great idea." You know, take his mind off it and—you know, "You're gonna be a butterfly!" and then he said, with just crocodile ears coming down his cheeks, "Daddy, I don't wanna be a butterfly!"
00:11:09	John	Host	I don't—crocodile tears suggests insincerity. Do you think he was faking it?
00:11:12	Pastor Ervin	Guest	Oh, no.
00:11:13	John	Host	Okay. Gotcha.
00:11:14	Pastor Ervin	Guest	No. No.
00:11:15	John	Host	Why didn't you wanna be a butterfly, Grant?
			<i>[Audience laughter.]</i>
00:11:18	Grant	Guest	I just wasn't ready yet.
00:11:19	John	Host	Are you there now? Are you close? Are you there?
00:11:21	Grant	Guest	Almost.
00:11:22	John	Host	Almost there? Almost.
00:11:23	Grant	Guest	When I turn 30, I think I'll—I'll be there.
00:11:24	John	Host	Yeah.
00:11:25	Jesse	Host	Grant, you know what story my Aunt Gail likes to tell about me?
00:11:28	Grant	Guest	What's that?
00:11:29	Jesse	Host	It's the time I went to her company picnic, and I disappeared for a little while. It was on an island near San Francisco called Angel Island. I disappeared for a little while, and I came back while everyone was getting their food.
00:11:41	Grant	Guest	Hm.
00:11:42	Jesse	Host	And I looked up at her and I said at the top of my voice, "Aunt Gail! I pooped on the beach like a dog!"
			<i>[Audience and one or both litigants laugh.]</i>
			The moral of the story is you <u>can</u> win these negotiations! <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:11:57	John	Host	So in the context, Pastor Ervin, of the sermon...
00:12:01	Pastor Ervin	Guest	Right.
00:12:02	John	Host	This story symbolizes what? What were you illustrating in the story of—or were you just sort of bragging about what a great dad you are?
			<i>[Grant laughs.]</i>
00:12:09	Pastor Ervin	Guest	No, no, no, no, no! I—
00:12:10	John	Host	'Cause I thought—
00:12:11	Pastor Ervin	Guest	No.
00:12:12	John	Host	By the way, that's a <u>very</u> touching story.

00:12:13	Pastor Ervin	Guest	Well, thank you.
00:12:14	John	Host	And when Grant tells it I'm like, "This dad's terrific!"
00:12:17	Pastor Ervin	Guest	Right.
00:12:18	John	Host	And then thinking of you telling it at church, I'm like "This dad likes talking about what a good dad he is."
			<i>[John and the audience laugh.]</i>
			But I <u>don't</u> think it was about that.
00:12:23	Pastor Ervin	Guest	No.
00:12:24	John	Host	What was the context?
00:12:25	Pastor Ervin	Guest	No. It's about, you know, the idea of new life. You know, that God loves us and God wants to bring us new life and give us an opportunity to... to be everything that he's created us to be! So that's kinda where the story fits. Kinda new creation.
00:12:39	John	Host	I'm gonna give that one a B-plus.
00:12:41	Pastor Ervin	Guest	Okay.
			<i>[Audience laughter.]</i>
00:12:42	Jesse	Host	That's generous. God wants us to turn into butterflies by getting our blood drawn? Is that the message here?
			<i>[Audience laughter.]</i>
00:12:49	John	Host	This is not a comment on your expression of faith.
00:12:51	Pastor Ervin	Guest	Right.
00:12:52	John	Host	Which is A-plus.
00:12:53	Pastor Ervin	Guest	Right.
00:12:54	John	Host	I am a purely agnostic non-religious person, but A-plus for expression of faith. Very touching. And then also I would say solid A for a fun story about your kid.
00:13:03	Pastor Ervin	Guest	Right.
00:13:04	John	Host	But it feels a little—they feel shoehorned together.
00:13:06	Pastor Ervin	Guest	Yeah.
			<i>[Audience laughter.]</i>
00:13:07	John	Host	Whereas cutting the telephone cord—"Are you listening to me now?" is like "Bwoah!"
			<i>[Audience laughter.]</i>
00:13:10	Pastor Ervin	Guest	Yeah.
00:13:11	John	Host	You know what I mean? Like, I—
00:13:12	Pastor Ervin	Guest	Yeah.
00:13:13	John	Host	I feel healed by that.
			<i>[Pastor Ervin laughs.]</i>

Do you know, like—that makes me wanna walk again.

[Pastor Ervin laughs harder, audience also laughs.]

00:13:20 Jesse Host I don't think that's what the Methodists are up to, but...

[Audience and Pastor Ervin laugh.]

00:13:22 John Host Yeah. I—I apologize for... every joke that I make.

[Some more audience laughter.]

When did you start telling these stories? How old was Grant initially?

00:13:32 Pastor Ervin Guest Grant was probably about, you know, eight or nine.

00:13:35 John Host Eight or nine.

00:13:36 Pastor Ervin Guest Yeah.

00:13:37 John Host Was he in the congregation?

00:13:38 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Pastor Ervin:** Uh, sometimes.

John: Mm-hm.

Pastor Ervin: Yeah, sometimes it was a—

Grant: Every time, yeah. I mean—

[Audience laughter.]

Pastor Ervin: Well—*[laughs]*.

00:13:41 Grant Guest Between the ages of like, one and eighteen, I was in church.

00:13:44 John Host Right.

00:13:45 Grant Guest Like, every—every week.

00:13:46 John Host Right.

00:13:47 Grant Guest Yeah.

00:13:48 John Host So, okay. *[Stifling laughter]* Were you not aware that he was there every week?

[Audience and litigant laughter.]

00:13:50 Pastor Ervin Guest There were just different venues.

00:13:51 John Host Yeah.

00:13:52 Pastor Ervin Guest You know, that we—we shared them, sometimes at camp. You know, great camp stories, and... I just found that, you know, kids really appreciated hearing about stories that they could relate to.

00:14:02 John Host Sure.

00:14:03 Pastor Ervin Guest You know, times in their lives where things didn't work out good or they got in trouble, or stuff like that. And you know, Grant... Grant got in trouble a lot.

00:14:12 John Host What—tell me more!

[Audience laughter.]

Tell me another story. This one doesn't have to be a metaphor for anything.

[More audience laughter.]

00:14:18 Pastor Ervin Guest

Okay. We had just moved to a church in Orlando, and we'd just been there a few months, and sometimes in between services I wouldn't have a total track of where my kids were. So I tried to keep an eye on 'em as much as I could, but I was talking to people, doing my pastor thing, and so he actually came up to my boss, the senior pastor, and actually kinda hit him in the family jewels.

[Some light audience shock/laughter.]

So...

00:14:41 Jesse Host

Yeah...

00:14:42 Pastor Ervin Guest

Yeah.

00:14:43 Jesse Host

Cool.

00:14:44 Pastor Ervin Guest

I think that's a kid-friendly term. So like I said, he just really gave us great material! You know?

[Some audience laughter.]

00:14:48 John Host

Yeah. Is he an okay kid now, or is—do I have to watch myself?

00:14:50 Pastor Ervin Guest

Oh, he's a great kid now.

00:14:51 John Host

Okay, yeah.

00:14:52 Pastor Ervin Guest

Yeah.

00:14:53 Grant Guest

I'm employed. So that's good.

00:14:54 Pastor Ervin Guest

Yes.

[Audience laughter.]

00:14:55 John Host

You're making—tell us about your card game.

00:14:58 Grant Guest

Uh, that's something I do in my spare time.

00:14:59 John Host

Okay.

00:15:00 Grant Guest

I have a studio called Honeycomb Interactive.

00:15:02 John Host

Okay.

00:15:03 Grant Guest

But I also work full-time at a major video game company in the area.

00:15:06 John Host

You never yourself felt the call to service as your dad did.

00:15:09 Grant Guest

No.

00:15:10 John Host

No. When did you decide to become a pastor, if I may ask?

00:15:12 Pastor Ervin Guest

When I was 12.

00:15:13 John Host

When you were 12 years old!

00:15:14 Pastor Ervin Guest

Mm-hm! Yeah! Actually, my mom was a teacher.

00:15:17 John Host

Mm-hm.

00:15:18 Pastor Ervin Guest

And I was, you know, for a while. And my dad was a fire chief.

00:15:21	John	Host	Mm-hm.
00:15:22	Pastor Ervin	Guest	And so no, I—I have an uncle who's a pastor.
00:15:24	John	Host	Alright.
00:15:25	Pastor Ervin	Guest	But I was really the first pastor, clergy in my immediate family. But when I started out in ministry, I—like Grant was saying, for the first 20 years I was involved in children's ministry. I was a children's pastor, so I would use lots of different object lessons and puppetry and different things like that, and that's kinda where Grant and I kinda first shared, you know, those hobbies—that were first hobbies.
00:15:48	John	Host	Right.
00:15:49	Pastor Ervin	Guest	Before I went into the ministry full-time. And one of them was puppetry, and he was doing puppet characters like at the age of three!
00:15:55	John	Host	Right.
00:15:56	Pastor Ervin	Guest	And he was memorizing scripts, and—and so storytelling was always kind of a part of our relationship, you know?
00:16:02	John	Host	Mm-hm.
00:16:03	Pastor Ervin	Guest	We just love stories.
00:16:04	John	Host	Right. And then you just started taking his stories and using them...
			<i>[Audience laughter.]</i>
00:16:07	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Pastor Ervin: Uhhh, yeah!
			John: To spread the word.
00:16:09	Pastor Ervin	Guest	I—I guess! Yeah.
00:16:10	Jesse	Host	For your ooown spiritual gain.
			<i>[Audience and on-stage laughter.]</i>
00:16:16	John	Host	Grant, did you ever express your displeasure with your father?
00:16:19	Grant	Guest	Not before my mother did.
00:16:21	John	Host	Oh, okay! What was <u>her</u> complaint?
00:16:23	Grant	Guest	She said "Andy, it's embarrassing the children. <i>[Laughing]</i> Don't do it."
			<i>[Audience laughter.]</i>
00:16:28	John	Host	That would be you, Pastor Ervin?
00:16:29	Pastor Ervin	Guest	Right.
00:16:30	Grant	Guest	Yeah.
00:16:31	Pastor Ervin	Guest	She tried to advocate—
00:16:32	John	Host	She's <u>allowed</u> to call you something other than Pastor—
00:16:32	Pastor Ervin	Guest	Right.
00:16:33	John	Host	—unlike me. Right, I got it.
00:16:34	Pastor Ervin	Guest	Right.
			<i>[Audience laughter.]</i>

00:16:35	John	Host	We're not—okay, I got it. We're not on that level. I got it.
00:16:36	Pastor Ervin	Guest	Right.
00:16:37	John	Host	We'll get there.
00:16:38	Pastor Ervin	Guest	Right.
00:16:39	John	Host	Okay!
<i>[Audience laughter.]</i>			
Were you embarrassed? Did you say something to your mom?			
00:16:42	Grant	Guest	Uh, yeah. I think we eventually—me and my sisters—'cause we're all kinda three years apart.
00:16:46	John	Host	Okay.
00:16:47	Grant	Guest	So we all kind of grew up with this experience.
00:16:50	John	Host	And your sisters are also grist for the story mill?
00:16:52	Grant	Guest	Not as much as me.
00:16:53	John	Host	And you sent in some evidence, right? Some photos of the family?
00:16:55	Grant	Guest	Some photos, yeah.
00:16:56	John	Host	Mm-hm. Who sent it in? Was it—would it be you, Grant?
00:16:58	Grant	Guest	My mother picked them out.
00:16:59	John	Host	Okay.
00:17:00	Grant	Guest	And I kinda sent them in.
00:17:01	John	Host	Let's have a look at these photos. They'll all be available on the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> page at MaximumFun.org and our—
<i>[Positive crowd noises.]</i>			
Wow! This is adorable. Also on Instagram at @judgejohnhodgman .			
<i>[Audience and Grant laugh.]</i>			
00:17:11	Pastor Ervin	Guest	Yeah.
00:17:12	John	Host	So here's Pastor Ervin and Grant, young Grant, sporting not one but two gold medallions; thank you for being gold.
<i>[Audience laughter.]</i>			
00:17:19	Grant	Guest	Yes.
00:17:20	John	Host	What'd you get those awards in?
00:17:21	Grant	Guest	Probably Bible quizzing.
<i>[Someone snorts.]</i>			
I would— <i>[laughing]</i> I'd guess.			
<i>[Audience laughter.]</i>			
00:17:26	Pastor Ervin	Guest	And some puppetry!
00:17:27	Grant	Guest	And— <i>[laughing]</i> yeah.

00:17:28	John	Host	Double gold. One gold in Bible quizzing, one gold in puppetry.
			<i>[Audience and one or both litigants laugh.]</i>
			Grant, what is this evidence you sent in to represent?
00:17:35	Grant	Guest	Proof that I was a child, and that he was a dad. Or <u>is</u> a dad.
00:17:39	John	Host	Yeah.
			<i>[Pastor Ervin and audience laugh.]</i>
00:17:40	Grant	Guest	You know.
00:17:41	Pastor Ervin	Guest	The stories are true.
			<i>[Litigants and audience laugh.]</i>
00:17:44	John	Host	Yes, I recognize you as those people at an—at a—earlier time.
00:17:46	Pastor Ervin	Guest	Yeah.
00:17:47	John	Host	Next piece of evidence, please? Here is a family portrait. These—
00:17:48	Pastor Ervin	Guest	Right.
00:17:49	Grant	Guest	Yeah.
00:17:50	John	Host	These are the whole family, including—
00:17:51	Pastor Ervin	Guest	Right. The Ervin Five.
00:17:52	John	Host	—your wife/Grant's mom, plus the two sisters, right?
00:17:56	Pastor Ervin	Guest	Yep.
00:17:57	John	Host	And do the sisters ever figure into the sermons, or did Grant get special treatment?
00:18:00	Pastor Ervin	Guest	Sometimes. Yeah.
00:18:01	John	Host	But less often? Grant was the—
00:18:02	Pastor Ervin	Guest	Probably Grant.
00:18:03	John	Host	Right, 'cause he was—
00:18:04	Pastor Ervin	Guest	Yeah.
00:18:05	John	Host	—a terror.
			<i>[Litigants and audience laugh.]</i>
00:18:07	Jesse	Host	Is this a picture of the five of you on your way to audition for a local production of Fosse?
			<i>[Audience laughs.]</i>
00:18:12	Pastor Ervin	Guest	Yeah. No, it was a—
00:18:14	Grant	Guest	We were—
00:18:15	Pastor Ervin	Guest	<i>[Stifling laughter]</i> It was a church directory photo, actually.
00:18:17	John	Host	Right.
00:18:18	Grant	Guest	We're dressed as beatniks.
			<i>[Jesse laughs.]</i>
00:18:19	Pastor Ervin	Guest	My wife said we're all wearing one color.

00:18:21	John	Host	I hate to say this, 'cause it already made everyone uncomfortable, but there's a real Church of Satan vibe in this.
			<i>[Audience, Jesse, and one or both litigants laugh.]</i>
00:18:32	Pastor Ervin	Guest	<i>[Bemused]</i> Okay...
00:18:33	John	Host	Just—it's a <u>striking</u> look.
00:18:34	Pastor Ervin	Guest	Alright...
00:18:35	John	Host	It's just—it's just with the all black... Yeah.
			<i>[More audience laughter.]</i>
			Next slide, please. Yeah, this is—this is what I'm talking about! Loving family.
00:18:41	Pastor Ervin	Guest	Yeah.
00:18:42	John	Host	Next to some—a body of water. And this is a vacation?
00:18:45	Grant	Guest	Yeah. We're all happy here, uh, 'cause someone's missing in the, uh—
00:18:48	John	Host	Ohhh!
00:18:49	Grant	Guest	— <i>[laughing]</i> picture.
			<i>[Mixed laughter and shock from the audience.]</i>
00:18:51	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	John: Right in the—right in the metaphorical family jewels!
			<i>[Audience and one or both litigants laugh.]</i>
			Pastor Ervin: I was taking the picture!
00:18:56	Grant	Guest	That's true.
00:18:57	John	Host	He was <u>taking</u> the picture.
00:18:58	Grant	Guest	He was there.
00:18:59	John	Host	<i>[Laughs.]</i> "When I was not there, I was the one taking the picture." Right? That—
			<i>[John, the audience, Jesse, and one or both litigants laugh.]</i>
			And this is to represent...? This is meant to—?
00:19:12	Grant	Guest	Proof of family.
00:19:13	John	Host	Yeah, this is— <i>[stifling laughter]</i> proof of fam—proof of fam—
			<i>[Audience and one or both litigants laugh.]</i>
			—proof of family life. Well, they're adorable photos.
00:19:17	Grant	Guest	Thank you.
00:19:18	John	Host	Did you ever think to—at a certain point—to <u>ask</u> Grant's permission to continue to use these stories?
			<i>[Pause.]</i>
			<i>[Someone in the audience laughs.]</i>

00:19:27	Pastor Ervin	Guest	<i>[Nonchalantly]</i> No.
			<i>[Audience laughs.]</i>
00:19:30	John	Host	Do you use them to this day?
00:19:33	Pastor Ervin	Guest	Yeah.
			<i>[Audience and someone on stage laughs. Some of the audience switches gears to "ohhh" at something, and then the audience laughs again.]</i>
			Well, you know, again, they're stories that kinda describe our relationship! I mean, we're both in the stories.
00:19:45	John	Host	Sure!
00:19:46	Pastor Ervin	Guest	We both, you know, are involved. And—and—
00:19:48	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	John: No—no, I understand, but—but—
			Pastor Ervin: It kinda supports that—you know, kinda his origins and where he started from and like, all these things that kinda became part of his identity.
00:19:57	John	Host	I understand, and I could definitely see—as a father myself—I could definitely see an argument that <u>my</u> children's lives and life stories... belong to me. They're my intellectual property.
			<i>[Audience and one or both litigants laugh.]</i>
			And I—and I've— <i>[laughs]</i> .
00:20:12	Pastor Ervin	Guest	Right.
00:20:13	John	Host	I've certainly made a bundle off them in my books.
			<i>[Pastor Ervin laughs.]</i>
			But I ask this—Grant has now expressed, first via his mother, now in person, in an open forum...
00:20:25	Pastor Ervin	Guest	Right.
00:20:26	John	Host	...that this makes him uncomfortable! I mean Grant, are you asking me to rule that your father not tell these stories again?
00:20:32	Grant	Guest	There's another wrinkle. Uh, because he is a published author. So it's—it covers <u>vocal</u> stories, but then also written word. I just want a full coverage...
			<i>[Audience laughter.]</i>
			Full protection.
00:20:44	John	Host	Oh, I thought you were asking for a portion of his earnings.
00:20:47	Grant	Guest	<i>[Laughing]</i> No, no!
			<i>[Audience and Pastor Ervin laugh.]</i>
			I—I understand raising a child is expensive, so I'm not looking for damages.

00:20:52 Jesse Host *[Scattered audience laughter.]*
Grant, if you decide to seek damages...

00:20:58 Grant Guest *[One of the litigants laughs.]*
...I got a few good negotiating techniques you might try. *[Laughs.]*
Okay.

00:21:00 John Host *[Grant and the audience laugh.]*
The family jewels?

00:21:01 Jesse Host *[John, Jesse, and others laugh.]*
Pooping on the beach like a dog!

00:21:02 John Host *[Laughing]* Oh, right!

00:21:03 Grant Guest Oh!

00:21:07 John Host *[Audience and on-stage laughter.]*
So you would like me to order your father to excise...

00:21:22 Grant Guest *[Someone stifles laughter.]*
...all of the stories, all the Grant stories, in his sermon repertoire. And no longer write them down, either.

00:21:23 John Host Correct.
And I presume destroy all copies of his books to date?

00:21:27 Jesse Host *[Some audience laughter.]*
How does he even work these childhood stories into his spy thrillers?

00:21:32 Pastor Ervin Guest *[John, one of the litigants, and some of the audience laugh.]*
It's a secret. If I told you, I'd have to kill you.

00:21:34 John Host Oh!

00:21:37 Pastor Ervin Guest *[Some more audience laughter.]*
What—what kind of books are you writing?
They're really books about, uh, working with kids.

00:21:40 John Host Yeah.

00:21:41 Pastor Ervin Guest You know, in the church, and—

00:21:42 John Host Yeah. Mm-hm.

00:21:43 Pastor Ervin Guest Cool stuff.

00:21:44 John Host Now—now—those are strong demands. So I presume that they are underscored by strong and sincere feelings of discomfort with these stories being told. Now that Grant has expressed that, does that make you feel differently about telling the stories?

00:21:59 Pastor Ervin Guest I think they've—make me feel... more sensitive to... using stories that

			are gonna still put him in a very positive light.
00:22:08	John	Host	Mm-hm.
00:22:09	Pastor Ervin	Guest	You know, I don't ever wanna say anything or do anything that <u>would</u> intentionally embarrass him or upset him, but I—it definitely makes me think <u>more</u> about, you know, being sensitive to...
			<i>[Someone in the audience laughs.]</i>
			...to that.
00:22:22	John	Host	Yeah.
00:22:23	Pastor Ervin	Guest	So...
00:22:24	John	Host	Alright. I think I've heard everything I need to in order to make my decision.
00:22:27	Pastor Ervin	Guest	Okay.
00:22:28	John	Host	I'm going to go into my, uh, private Church of Satan chapel.
			<i>[Some of the audience and one or both litigants laugh.]</i>
			And I'll be back in a moment with my verdict.
00:22:35	Jesse	Host	Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom.
			<i>[Cheering and applause.]</i>
			Grant, how are you feeling about your chances in the case right now?
00:22:51	Grant	Guest	You know, fantastic. Pretty much.
			<i>[Some audience laughter.]</i>
			It was a little—you know, I had to lose a little. 'Cause those stories did come out in the open air in front of... a lot of people.
			<i>[A little more laughter.]</i>
			Uh, but—
00:22:59	Pastor Ervin	Guest	Yeah, I was surprised you told the first one!
00:23:01	Grant	Guest	Well, yeah, so it's—I think it was worth it. Overall.
00:23:05	Jesse	Host	...We're also gonna <u>podcast</u> this; did you know that?
			<i>[Jesse, one or both litigants, and the audience laugh.]</i>
00:23:09	Grant	Guest	I did, yeah.
00:23:11	Jesse	Host	<i>[Stifling laughter]</i> I'm just saying don't run for Congress or whatever.
			<i>[Audience and one of the litigants laugh.]</i>
			Pastor Ervin...
00:23:18	Pastor Ervin	Guest	Yes.
00:23:19	Jesse	Host	How are you feeling about your chances?

00:23:21	Pastor Ervin	Guest	<p>You know, I have... no really worries about it, you know? I think that John and I are both dads... you know, we both—</p> <p><i>[Light, scattered audience laughter.]</i></p> <p>—have been on some—both some interesting journeys, and I think he appreciates my son's creativity as much as I do.</p>
00:23:40	Jesse	Host	<p>Take a look at your son right now.</p> <p><i>[Light audience laughter.]</i></p> <p>I don't know if he has children. But he's already a dad.</p> <p><i>[Jesse, audience, and both litigants laugh.]</i></p> <p>The two of you are on even footing!</p> <p><i>[Pastor Ervin laughs.]</i></p> <p>Pastor Ervin... I don't know how Methodists feel about throwing Hail Mary passes.</p> <p><i>[Audience and Pastor Ervin laugh.]</i></p> <p>You might be in trouble here.</p> <p><i>[Some more audience laughter.]</i></p>
00:24:08	Pastor Ervin	Guest	<p>Hmm.</p>
00:24:10	Jesse	Host	<p><i>[Stifling laughter]</i> And I think I've got a negotiating technique for ya.</p> <p><i>[Audience laughs.]</i></p>
00:24:13	Pastor Ervin	Guest	<p><i>[Laughing]</i> Okay.</p>
00:24:14	Jesse	Host	<p>No, no, no, no, no, no, no!</p> <p><i>[Pastor Ervin laughs.]</i></p> <p>We'll see what Judge John Hodgman has to say about all of this.</p> <p><i>[Audience cheers and applauds.]</i></p>
00:24:21	Sound Effect	Transition	<p><i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i></p>
00:24:23	Jesse	Promo	<p>The <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast is of course supported every week by all of the members of Maximum Fun. We are <u>also</u> supported <u>this</u> week by the kind folks at Mozilla.</p>
00:24:35	John	Promo	<p>You can't see them... but <u>they</u> can <u>see you</u>! They know your age, your relationship status, your musical tastes, your political opinions! What am I talking about, Jesse? Spies?!</p>
00:24:47	Jesse	Promo	<p>Online trackers! Online trackers know a <u>ton</u> about you, because they are <u>everywhere</u> online! Collecting your personal information and selling it for a profit without your consent! That is why Firefox blocks ten <u>billion</u> trackers for users every day, <u>all</u> the time, <u>all</u> over the web.</p>
00:25:09	John	Promo	<p>Automatically!</p>

00:25:11	Jesse	Promo	Get Firefox. Get your privacy back. Learn more at Firefox.com/privacy .
00:25:17	John	Promo	Firefox fights for you.
00:25:20	Jesse	Promo	For you! <i>[Mimicking an echo]</i> For you, for you, for you...
00:25:22	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
00:25:24	Jesse	Host	Please rise as Judge John Hodgman re-enters the courtroom and presents his verdict.
			<i>[Audience cheers and applauds.]</i>
00:25:38	John	Host	You both seemed very confident, as I listened in to your...
			<i>[Audience and John laugh.]</i>
			...assessment of your chances in the case. There is a little saying that we have... in the Church of Satan.
			<i>[Audience and one of the litigants laugh.]</i>
			"Pride goeth before the fall."
			<i>[More audience laughter.]</i>
			No, no, no, the Church of Satan doesn't say that! They say "Do whatever you want." <i>[Laughs.]</i>
			<i>[Audience and onstage laughter. Some audience members cheer.]</i>
			"Let God sort it out." <i>[Laughs.]</i>
			<i>[More laughter from audience and one or both litigants.]</i>
			I <u>guess</u> . I don't know. <i>[Laughs.]</i> I'm not a member of the Church of Satan. I just—that's—
			<i>[More audience laughter.]</i>
			Neither are any of the members of this family.
			I alluded to the fact that I am also a storyteller. Just for money.
			<i>[More audience laughter. John also laughs.]</i>
			No larger purpose.
00:26:24	Jesse	Host	<i>[Chiding]</i> John!
00:26:25	John	Host	Whatsoever. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:26:26	Jesse	Host	John... money <u>and</u> vanity.
00:26:28	John	Host	That's right!
			<i>[John, audience, and one or both litigants laugh.]</i>
			Money, vanity, pride, envy, sloth. <i>[Stifles laughter.]</i> All those things.

[More audience laughter.]

00:26:37 Pastor Ervin Guest

Yeah.

00:26:38 John Host

That's why I'm out here slinging the stories.

[Some of the audience and one or both litigants laugh.]

And for a long time, I chose not to tell stories about my children. Either directly or in indirect, fictional ways. And I refused to even name them in my early written work. In part because I respected their privacy. In part because telling stories about children, especially when they are young—and especially, I would say, in comedy—can verge on hackiness very quickly.

00:27:13 Pastor Ervin Guest

Mm.

00:27:14 John Host

'Cause kids are kind of dumb, and they say hilarious things.

[John and the audience laugh.]

They are basically material generators. Do you know what I mean?

[More audience laughter.]

00:27:20 Pastor Ervin Guest

Mm-hm.

00:27:21 John Host

"My kid's brain hasn't grown to full adulthood yet, and so they said a dumb thing, ha-ha-ha."

[Some more laughter.]

But in a very real way because I did not want to use them for material. And then I moved into a different phase of my storytelling, when instead of telling very arch, absurdist, humorous... "ha-ha jokes," I started telling true stories from my life, as you tell true stories from yours. And the time came, both I felt to be open about my journey through fatherhood and that that might be helpful to other people, and so I would talk about my children and tell stories about things that we experienced together, without naming them, but—you know, they don't need me to get famous. Or they shouldn't. *[Laughs.]*

[Audience laughter.]

The point is I'm the famous one, not them.

[Audience and one or both litigants laugh.]

I'm not here to make them famous. *[Laughs.]*

[Some more audience and on-stage laughter.]

And I also started telling stories about their lives... 'cause I was out of material, and I had to.

[More audience laughter.]

All—*[laughs]* all of my concerns about hackiness went into the garbage, 'cause like, I gotta fill up time.

[Some more laughter.]

00:28:28	Pastor Ervin	Guest	One question I didn't ask, and <u>should</u> have—honest answer—
00:28:29	John	Host	Mm.
			How big a part of your "act"—in comedy terms—is Grant a part of? Settle on a percentage individually. Like... 50% of your sermons have a Grant story in them? 25%? 5%? 90%? Settle on something in your mind.
00:28:47	Pastor Ervin	Guest	Okay.
00:28:48	John	Host	You settle on something in your mind.
00:28:49	Pastor Ervin	Guest	Okay.
00:28:50	John	Host	And after I say "three," you both say what you came up with. One, two, three.
00:28:54	Pastor Ervin	Guest	15%.
00:28:55	Grant	Guest	I would land on 15 as well. Yeah.
00:28:58	John	Host	You just waited until your daddy talked first!

[Audience and Paster Ervin laugh.]

You're supposed to be a rule-breaker!

[More laughter.]

So... it is a choice, every time. Especially as your children grow up, and they become whole human beings. Who have feelings, and reputations, of their own! Who are known in their community, and have a right to a measure of privacy. "Is this story worth it? Is this story going to communicate something to someone else and really help them, such that it is worth violating the privacy of my child without their permission? Or is it just... sorta funny?"

[Pause.]

One of them I gave a B-plus. Solid B, B-plus. In terms of its engagement with what you were trying to say to your congregation. The other one—cutting the phone cord? It was such a powerful illustration of what you were trying to talk about. You can tell that one for the rest of your life.

[Audience, John, and one or both litigants laugh.]

I mean, here's the thing. I think that you should take very seriously the fact that Grant is made uncomfortable. That he has asked you to stop. And if Grant had not goaded you into telling the story about him punching someone in the nuts...

[Audience laughs, someone stifles laughter.]

...I might take him seriously! I might have ruled in his favor completely!

[Audience laughs, John stifles laughter.]

But clearly—

[The litigants laugh.]

—your lives and your stories are entwined! There are some stories that you wanna have out there! Such as you... hurting your dad's... pastor boss.

[More audience and on-stage laughter.]

Shall be enshrined forever in podcast history.

[Some more audience laughter.]

00:30:56	John	Host	Your lives are entwined. And... Grant, I—I <u>can't</u> in good conscience put a injunction on your dad's right to remember you as you were when you were younger... just cutting and punching and running and hiding—
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[Audience, litigants, and John laugh.]

—and screaming and crying, and non-butterflying.

[More laughter.]

You know.

00:31:20	Jesse	Host	And wearing that one hat from that picture. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
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00:31:23	John	Host	Yeah.
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[One or both litigants and the audience laugh.]

00:31:24	Grant	Guest	2009 was a heady time. It was—
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00:31:26	John	Host	I know. That's right.
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[Some more audience laughter. Someone claps.]

These are stories that are not merely, uh, of service to his congregation, when used correctly. But also of service to him, I would think, to remember what it was like to be a parent of a younger child. 'Cause you are disappearing before his eyes. You have grown into a handsome... childless young dad.

[John, audience, and someone else laughs.]

Wearing a shawl collar sweater.

[More audience laughter.]

So I am not going to find in your favor, Grant. I am going to instead grant your dad, Pastor Ervin, the right to continue to tell these stories, on two conditions. One is: you need to think very carefully, now that your son is an adult and you know how he feels, whether it's worth it. There are times when parents say—*[laughs]* and parents have said to me, "I know it's wrong, but I'm doing it anyway."

[John and the audience laugh.]

If he does not actively grant your permission, and you use the story anyway, you need to be able to justify it in the power of the storytelling.

00:32:34 Pastor Ervin Guest

Hm.

00:32:35 John Host

Such that you can turn to your son and say "I know it's wrong, but I'm doing it anyway."

[Audience laughter.]

And... that—I want you to think carefully before you use those stories.

00:32:44 Pastor Ervin Guest

Mm.

00:32:45 John Host

And I don't think that butter—that butterfly story is a great dinner table story!

00:32:48 Pastor Ervin Guest

Yeah.

00:32:49 John Host

When it is totally appropriate to embarrass your son.

[Someone stifles laughter, audience laughs.]

00:32:51 Pastor Ervin Guest

Right.

00:32:52 John Host

You know, then it's not embarrassing. It's just a story about what a great dad you are. You know? That "cutting the phone cord," boy oh boy...

[One of the litigants and the audience laugh.]

Phew. *[Smooch.]* Chef kiss.

[Audience and one or more people on stage laugh.]

The other caveat—*[stifling laughter]* or commandment, if I may.

00:33:07 Pastor Ervin Guest

Hm.

[Audience and multiple people on stage laugh.]

00:33:13 John Host

Is atonement! Pride goeth before the fall.

00:33:18 Pastor Ervin Guest

Hm.

00:33:19 John Host

You sat up there, you're like, "I don't care what he thinks! I'm gonna keep telling these stories!" I would like you to turn to your son and say, in your own words, you care what he thinks and you're sorry that you hurt his feelings.

[Beat.]

But into the microphone. And it's really hard—

[Audience and John laugh.]

00:33:36 Pastor Ervin Guest

Grant, I really do care about you. And I'm sorry that I hurt your feelings.

			<i>["Awww"ing and applause from the audience.]</i>
00:33:44	John	Host	And now—now say "But I'm doing it anyway."
			<i>[John, the audience, and one of the litigants laugh.]</i>
00:33:50	Pastor Ervin	Guest	But I'm doing it anyway.
00:33:51	John	Host	Alright. Very good!
			<i>[Pastor Ervin and the audience laugh.]</i>
			This is the sound of a gavel!
			<i>[Five live gavel thuds. Audience is cheering and applauding.]</i>
00:33:55	Jesse	Host	Grant and Pastor Ervin, thank you!
00:34:00	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
00:34:02	Jesse	Promo	Judge Hodgman, we're taking a quick break. Let's get into chambers, talk about what we've got upcoming.
00:34:07	John	Promo	Yeah, Jesse. While this is our last podcast episode of the year 2019, it's not necessarily your last chance to hear my voice before year's end. I mean, you might live with me! That might be—you might run into me on the street. Or... if you live in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, you might come see me and your old friend, summertime fun time guest Bailiff Monte Belmonte. We're putting on a holiday spectacle at the Shea Theatre in Turners Falls, Massachusetts, my old stomping grounds, with special musical guest Aaron McCune! Lots of comedy, storytelling, chats from us. I might take some Snap Justice questions from the audience. And Odyssey Books will be selling copies of <i>Medallion Status</i> there, which I can sign for you if you want.
			It's gonna be a good old fun time, with a singalong. Why don't you check it out if you don't mind? At Bit.ly/HODGMONTE . Capital H-O-D-G-M-O-N-T-E. That's all capital letters, all one word.
			And then I'll be taking a rest, and I hope you will be doing the same, as New Year's comes along and then goes away. And <u>then</u> , Jesse Thorn, you and I are hitting the road again!
00:35:11	Jesse	Promo	Yeah! We're headed to Brooklyn, New York on January 13 th at the Murmrr Theatre. Boston, Massachusetts at the Wilbur Theatre on January 14 th . And then we are headed to the Castro Theatre in San Francisco for SF Sketchfest. Three big blowout shows! We're looking for you to come attend them, if you live in one of those places or regions. <u>And</u> we are looking for your cases! So be sure to submit them at MaximumFun.org/jjho and let us know that you live in one of those places, <u>and</u> be sure to grab some tickets! You can find more information at MaximumFun.org/events or JohnHodgman.com/tour .
00:35:54	John	Promo	You know, every time we go out on tour we have a great time, they're a ton of surprises, they're completely unpredictable. New cases at every show. These are three of our favorite places to play. And we'll have lots of fun merch that you can look at and maybe buy if you want. Lots of fun times to have, for sure. So again, please, JohnHodgman.com/tour or MaximumFun.org/events for tickets. And

you know, we need your cases! So I'll just say it again:
MaximumFun.org/ijho. Let us know if you're in town and we'll
consider your case for litigation on stage!

If we choose you to be litigated on stage, guess what? Your tickets
are free, and I will say hello to you backstage.

00:36:31 Sound Effect Transition

[Three gavel bangs.]

00:36:33 Jesse Host

We have brought so far I think a modest amount of justice. I think
that the Durham area, the research triangle, requires further justice.
Do you think we could do it? I mean, we only got about 15 minutes to
do this.

00:36:48 John Host

We have children in the audience, one of whom is desperately
wanting to go to bed, I can see right now.

[Some audience laughter.]

00:36:52 Jesse Host

Do you think we can offer treble justice in 15 minutes?

00:36:55 John Host

Set a timer! And let's move to Swift Justice!

00:36:58 Jesse Host

Okay!

[Sound that might be gavel-thumping. Crowd cheers and applauds.]

Please welcome our first case: Linda and Bridget.

00:37:03 John Host

Linda and Bridget... Which one is Linda, please?

00:37:06 Linda Guest

This is Linda.

00:37:07 John Host

Hi, Linda! How are you?

00:37:08 Linda Guest

Linda: I'm great. How are you?

John: You can move that stool a little bit closer to the microphone if
you'd like to be more comfortable that way.

00:37:12 John Host

And you must be Bridget?

00:37:13 Bridget Guest

Yeah.

00:37:14 John Host

And your relationship is...?

00:37:15 Bridget Guest

She's my mom.

00:37:16 John Host

Okay. And she's your daughter.

00:37:18 Linda Guest

She's my daughter, yes.

00:37:18 Bridget Guest

[Stifling laughter] Mm-hm.

00:37:19 John Host

I put that together very well. Perfect.

[Litigants and audience laugh.]

Who comes to this court seeking justice? Is it you, Bridget, or you,
Linda?

00:37:23 Bridget Guest

I do. Yeah.

00:37:24 John Host

And Bridget, what is your complaint?

00:37:25 Bridget Guest

So my mom, uh, about a year ago started doing this thing where she
planks every single day. Um... and she's been increasing it by ten

seconds every day for the past year.

[A few people cheer enthusiastically, there's some scattered applause.]

00:37:39	John	Host	For the benefit—for the benefit of the sedentary in the audience, would you explain what planking is, Linda?
			<i>[Some audience laughter.]</i>
00:37:44	Linda	Guest	Planking is—for <u>me</u> , the way I do it, I am in... not a <u>prone</u> position, but in a position where I'm up on my arms and my toes.
00:37:54	John	Host	Ly—sort of—
00:37:55	Linda	Guest	In a—
00:37:56	John	Host	Plank—planking your body above the floor, holding yourself aloft on your arms.
00:38:01	Linda	Guest	Exactly. Exactly.
00:38:02	John	Host	And this is a—is this a Pilates move?
			<i>[Linda laughs or sighs.]</i>
			Or a—just a general sort of core strength training move?
00:38:07	Linda	Guest	I think it's just a general fitness move, yeah.
00:38:08	John	Host	Right. And how did this get started for you?
00:38:11	Linda	Guest	So I was in a yoga class.
00:38:13	John	Host	Yeah.
00:38:14	Linda	Guest	And my instructor was—just one day mentioned "Oh, the world record for planking was set." And—
00:38:19	John	Host	What was it?
00:38:20	Linda	Guest	It was like ten hours—
00:38:22	John	Host	Oh my—
			<i>[Light audience laughter.]</i>
00:38:23	Linda	Guest	—ten minutes, and ten seconds. And then he stopped and took like a 30-minute break and then planked for another like, nine hours.
00:38:30	John	Host	A- <u>after</u> he set the record?
00:38:32	Linda	Guest	Yeah.
00:38:33	John	Host	The world-record planker.
00:38:34	Linda	Guest	Exactly.
00:38:35	John	Host	And what's this person's name?
00:38:36	Linda	Guest	George Hood.
00:38:37	John	Host	Well, alright! I didn't think you were gonna remember. <i>[Laughing]</i> I was gonna—
			<i>[Litigants and audience laugh.]</i>
00:38:40	Linda	Guest	<i>[Laughing]</i> I didn't either.
00:38:41	John	Host	I was going to speak to the futility of planking in the history of the

world, how no one's ever remembered for planking.

[More laughter.]

00:38:47 Linda Guest

Only the weirdos.

00:38:48 John Host

Yeah, but—George Hood?

00:38:50 Linda Guest

George Hood.

00:38:51 John Host

George Hood. Well...

00:38:53 Jesse Host

He's now internationally famous via our podcast.

00:38:56 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Linda: I'm surprised.

John: I should not have—

Jesse: To literally dozens of people.

John: Yeah.

[Audience laughter.]

00:39:00 John Host

I should—I should not—I should not have thrown shade on a planker. And what's your goal with the planking? How much—how long can you do it, and what's your goal?

00:39:07 Linda Guest

So I'm up to an hour and 16 minutes and 50 seconds.

[Audience cheers and applauds enthusiastically.]

And I'd like to go to two hours.

00:39:18 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Linda: I don't do it every day.

John: Okay. That's what you—

Linda: I've backed off a little bit.

John: Right.

00:39:22 Linda Guest

I started, and when I got to about 40 minutes it was just too much, so—

00:39:25 John Host

Do you—what do you think about when you're doing this?

00:39:29 Linda Guest

I do different things. Like, I can read.

00:39:32 John Host

Oh, okay.

[Some audience laughter.]

It's not purely meditative.

00:39:34 Linda Guest

No.

00:39:35 John Host

It's just self-punishing.

00:39:36 Linda Guest

[Laughing] The—exactly.

[Audience laughs.]

00:39:37 John Host

Right.

00:39:38 Jesse Host

Why not—

00:39:39	Linda	Guest	It's punitive, yeah.
00:39:40	John	Host	Do you watch shows? Do you stream? Do you listen to podcasts, or—?
00:39:43	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Linda: Listen to podcasts, read, yeah.
			John: Right. Right.
00:39:44	John	Host	How do you turn the pages?
			<i>[Beat. Scattered audience laughter.]</i>
00:39:46	Linda	Guest	I just take a—I don't do it on my elbows; I do arm planking. So I just do one-handed plank—
00:39:51	John	Host	That doesn't ruin the plank?
00:39:52	Linda	Guest	Nah.
00:39:53	John	Host	Alright! Good! What are you reading?
			<i>[Beat. Scattered audience laughter.]</i>
00:39:55	Linda	Guest	Lots of things!
00:39:56	John	Host	Yeah, I know, it's the worst question in the world, I apologize.
			<i>[The litigants and the audience laugh.]</i>
			Your mom seems pretty awesome. <u>Why</u> do you—what are—what's your complaint? Do you live at home?
00:40:04	Bridget	Guest	I—no.
00:40:06	John	Host	Okay.
00:40:07	Bridget	Guest	I live away from home.
00:40:08	John	Host	Yeah.
00:40:09	Bridget	Guest	My problem—
00:40:10	John	Host	Are you a legal adult?
00:40:11	Bridget	Guest	I'm—I'm 20. Yes. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:40:12	John	Host	You're out in the world?
00:40:13	Bridget	Guest	Yeah, I'm out in the world.
00:40:14	John	Host	Right? It's not like you're at home, tripping over your mom—
			<i>[Bridget and the audience laugh.]</i>
			—getting a snack or whatever.
00:40:17	Bridget	Guest	No! No, no. But I'll—
00:40:18	Jesse	Host	She's probably just like all the other... whatever comes after Millennials; she's just planking TikToks!
			<i>[Audience and one or both litigants laugh.]</i>
00:40:25	Bridget	Guest	It's true. Or like, not even a TikTok. Not even a full TikTok.
00:40:29	John	Host	No.
00:40:30	Bridget	Guest	Like— <i>[laughs]</i> .

00:40:31 John Host But sincerely, why—why—why bring your case before this court?

00:40:34 Bridget Guest She—it's not so much the planking, because I know that she loves it. *[Laughs.]* But it's the extremity of the planking. And I'll like call her, like, during the week. And I'll be like "Hey mom, what's up?" And she's like "Oh, I'm just planking."

[Jesse, the litigants, and the audience laugh.]

Or like, I'll go over there—I'll go over there to spend the night or something, over to her house, and she's like "Okay, I gotta do my plank now." And then I'll just be sitting on my phone while she's like, on the floor, planking.

[More audience laughter. One or both litigants laugh quietly as John responds.]

00:41:02 John Host Yeah, but she can read a book! She can have a conversation! I mean admittedly it's strange—

[Bridget and the audience laugh.]

00:41:06 Bridget Guest It is—that's the problem. And—

00:41:08 John Host But it's not—she's not going into her—right? You're not going into your own world, right, Linda? You can still have a conversation with Bridget—

00:41:14 Linda Guest Yeah!

00:41:15 John Host —while planking, right?

00:41:16 Bridget Guest Yeah! I like the distraction of a conversation while planking.

00:41:18 John Host Oh, well you just—oh, so you're just using Bridget as a—

[Audience and one or both litigants laugh.]

00:41:22 Linda Guest *[Laughing]* Yeah.

00:41:23 John Host As a plank distraction.

00:41:24 Linda Guest "Hey Bridget, can you come over so I can plank and have a conversation?"

[Litigants and some audience laugh.]

00:41:26 John Host Yeah! What—why do you think Bridget is concerned about your planking? What do you—what do you interpret this as? 'Cause I don't get it.

00:41:33 Linda Guest I interpret it as her just thinking that I'm going overboard and being a little over-the-top, maybe.

00:41:40 John Host And you agree, Bridget?

00:41:41 Bridget Guest Yeah, and like maybe like a—and healths concern? Like, what if—

00:41:46 John Host There's a health concern?

00:41:47 Bridget Guest It's—a little bit. *[Laughs.]*

00:41:49 John Host Are you afraid she might break herself in half?

[Audience and one or both litigants laugh.]

00:41:51	Jesse	Host	I'm just gonna cut to the chase here, John. Linda, are you just afraid to die?
			<i>[Audience and one or both litigants laugh.]</i>
00:41:58	Bridget	Guest	<i>[Laughing]</i> Yes.
			<i>[Audience laughs.]</i>
00:42:00	Jesse	Host	Yes or no?!
00:42:01	Linda	Guest	I welcome death.
			<i>[Everyone laughs, including Linda. Someone claps.]</i>
00:42:07	Jesse	Host	<i>[Laughing]</i> She said she welcomes death!
00:42:11	John	Host	<i>[Audience laughter swells again as John speaks, vocally straight-faced.]</i>
			Does your mom's welcoming of death trouble you, Bridget?
00:42:17	Bridget	Guest	<i>[Laughs.]</i> I don't—she's not, you know, like, buying me groceries anymore, <i>[stifling laughter]</i> so—
			<i>[Audience and Linda laugh.]</i>
00:42:21	John	Host	Right.
00:42:22	Bridget	Guest	<i>[Stifling laughter]</i> So less than—less than maybe like, six years ago. But like— <i>[laughs]</i> .
			<i>[John and the audience laugh.]</i>
00:42:27	John	Host	Now that you can feed yourself, it's fine for her to die?!
			<i>[Audience and Bridget laugh.]</i>
00:42:32	Bridget	Guest	I'm just kidding!
00:42:33	John	Host	Sure!
			<i>[Bridget laughs.]</i>
			Okay!
00:42:34	Jesse	Host	John, that's called the circle of life!
			<i>[More laughter from the audience and both litigants.]</i>
00:42:36	John	Host	Right. I think I'm—I think you're coming into focus for me now, Bridget.
			<i>[John, the litigants, and the audience laugh.]</i>
			There are two things that I think could be going on here, and let me know if either of them resonate with you. Does your mom have a history of going overboard with hobbies in the past?
00:42:50	Bridget	Guest	Yeah, exercise hobbies.
00:42:52	John	Host	Can you give me an example?
00:42:54	Bridget	Guest	Well... <i>[Sighs.]</i> She's just like, this reverence, like—like a <u>worship</u> for like, the workout—her workout regime.

00:43:01	John	Host	Yeah.
00:43:02	Bridget	Guest	Like, she's like, "I'm—I'm empty without it." <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:43:04	John	Host	We want to be alive! We <u>don't</u> welcome death! I don't believe your body.

[Laughter from the audience and the litigants.]

The other thing that might be going on that it's sometimes hard for adult children to adjust to how their parents start getting weirder and weirder once they've left the house.

[More laughter.]

As we try to figure out what just happened for the past 18, 20 years of our lives.

[More laughter.]

Where—*[laughs]* when our entire lives were given over to this lovely parasite that we were raising.

[More laughter.]

And now all they wanna do is criticize us on stage.

[More laughter. One of the litigants is cracking up. Some of the audience applauds and cheers.]

00:43:43	Bridget	Guest	Does your mom's weird hobby just freak you out a little bit?
			Maybe partially that?
00:43:45	John	Host	Yeah.
00:43:46	Bridget	Guest	I think it's a very—like—I feel like it might be more productive to just like... go to a therapist or something.

[Jesse bursts out laughing, the audience and the litigants also laugh.]

00:43:54	John	Host	<u>Wow</u> .
00:43:55	Bridget	Guest	<i>[Laughing]</i> Sorry, sorry, Mom!
00:43:56	Linda	Guest	I <u>do</u> that!

[Audience and both litigants laugh.]

00:43:57	John	Host	Look. I appreciate that you can have open communication with each other.
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[More laughter.]

I think there's only one way to resolve this dispute. And that is... trial by planking!

[Audience cheers and applauds.]

Linda... would you mind planking on stage? In this area?

[Scattered laughter.]

00:44:20 Linda Guest I do not mind.

00:44:21 John Host I'm glad to hear that.

[Linda laughs.]

Because Linda, if you can plank... for the rest of this entire segment—

[Audience laughs.]

—then I shall rule in your favor.

[Audience laughs again.]

If you should falter... Bridget shall be the winner.

[More laughter.]

00:44:37 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Bridget:** That's not fair! *[Laughs.]*

John: I don't even know what it means except winning or losing. It's not fair?!

[Audience and both litigants laugh.]

Bridget: She can do it! *[Laughs.]* She can do it!

John: Let me tell you something, young lady, life isn't fair!

[More laughter.]

00:44:46 John Host Mom, get planking!

00:44:47 Jesse Host The stakes are higher for your mother!

[Audience starts cheering and applauding.]

[Stifling laughter] If she loses, we murder her!

[Audience and Bridget laugh.]

00:44:53 Bridget Guest *[Laughing]* Okay! That's acceptable!

00:44:54 John Host Could we—let's—let's get Linda into planking mode.

[Someone shouts something inaudible.]

00:44:57 Jesse Host Linda's—

00:44:58 John Host Oh, someone wants to plank with her!

[Some laughter and cheers from the audience.]

Are—there she goes.

[Cheering and applause from the audience.]

And now—

00:45:02 Jesse Host Linda's removed her sensible and attractive flats.
00:45:09 John Host Someone start a timer. Someone—here, this person on the end, start a timer. We'll add ten seconds to whatever your result is. Bridget, if you would like to sit by your mom while she planks, or you may leave the stage. Which would you like?

[Pause. Linda or an audience member shouts something, only "planking" can be made out. Bridget and the audience laugh.]

I know this is very—

00:45:26 Bridget Guest I'm gonna watch you from afar. *[Laughs.]*
00:45:28 John Host Watch it—right, okay.
00:45:29 Bridget Guest I love you, good luck. *[Laughs.]*

[Jesse and the audience laugh.]

00:45:32 John Host Bridget, we'll have you come out later when we figure out the result of this.
00:45:34 Bridget Guest Okay!
00:45:35 John Host But we're—let's move on to the next case.
00:45:36 Jesse Host Please welcome Megan and Laura!

[Audience cheers and applauds.]

00:45:39 John Host She can't even watch you, Linda. She can't even watch you.

Megan and Laura... who brings this case before me?

00:45:49 Megan Guest I do.
00:45:50 John Host And what justice do you seek, and what's your name, also?
00:45:51 Megan Guest I'm—I'm Megan.
00:45:52 John Host Hi, Megan.
00:45:53 Megan Guest Hi!
00:45:54 John Host How are you? I'm John.
00:45:55 Megan Guest *[Laughing]* Good, I guess.
00:45:56 Jesse Host I'm Jesse.
00:45:57 John Host You can—you can call me Pastor John.

[Megan, Jesse, and the audience laugh.]

00:46:01 Megan Guest So I bring this case against my sister.
00:46:04 John Host Yeah.
00:46:05 Megan Guest I really like to sing.
00:46:07 John Host Yeah!
00:46:08 Megan Guest I often make up songs, and words to songs. I'm just singing along with songs in my head all the time.
00:46:14 John Host Yeah.

00:46:15	Megan	Guest	And Laura says that I <u>ruin</u> songs.
			<i>[John gasps, then he, the audience, and Megan laugh.]</i>
			And I would like her to stop telling me that I ruin songs, and just let me live my life.
			<i>[Megan and the audience laugh.]</i>
00:46:28	John	Host	May I presume that Laura is the elder sister?
00:46:31	Laura	Guest	I'm the middle child.
00:46:33	John	Host	And in—in age relation to Megan?
00:46:36	Laura	Guest	Eh, Megan's like a year and a half older than me.
00:46:37	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Megan: I'm the oldest.
			John: Oh, you're older—oh, you're the eldest!
			Laura: She's the—
00:46:40	Laura	Guest	We get that a lot, actually.
00:46:41	John	Host	Oh, interesting!
00:46:42	Laura	Guest	Yeah.
00:46:43	John	Host	Yeah, because you are... uh, an angry, controlling person who wants to—
00:46:46	Laura	Guest	Well...
			<i>[Everyone laughs, including Laura.]</i>
00:46:48	John	Host	Who resents your sister's joy!
			<i>[More laughter.]</i>
			You resent her freedom to move through the world happily and without the need to be the <u>good</u> one all the time.
00:47:01	Laura	Guest	Those are <u>not</u> —
00:47:02	John	Host	That's why I pegged you for the older sister, but—
00:47:03	Laura	Guest	Those are not the words I would choose.
00:47:04	John	Host	No. No. You're just a middle child.
00:47:07	Laura	Guest	Yes.
00:47:08	John	Host	So—
00:47:09	Laura	Guest	Very much so.
00:47:10	John	Host	So alright, I understand. How does Megan "ruin" songs?
00:47:12	Laura	Guest	I'd like to point out, for the record, that Megan <u>does</u> have a beautiful singing voice. Megan sings like a bird, she harmonizes, it's beautiful. So when she's singing for <u>real</u> , it's a beautiful thing! But then all of a <u>sudden</u> , she'll just—
			<i>[Laura blows raspberries, Megan and the audience laugh. Megan continues laughing quietly.]</i>

Or change the words, or like, make fun of it, and so then it just grinds my gears! I'm like, "Why can't you just either sing the beautiful, normal words, *[stifling laughter]* or—or just sit in silence?"

[Audience and Megan laugh.]

00:47:45 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Megan:** Well—and then—*[laughs]*.

Jesse: Have you ever considered she might be singing a song by the Fat Boys, in which case going—

[The audience and one or both litigants laugh as Jesse briefly beatboxes, similar to the raspberry sound.]

Jesse: —would be perfectly appropriate!

00:47:55 John Host How ya doing, Linda? Good?

00:47:56 Linda Guest Good!

00:47:57 John Host Fantastic.

00:47:58 Jesse Host Yeah.

[Audience cheers and laughs.]

00:48:00 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Jesse:** Still there. She's down there steady plankin'.

John: Megan?

Megan: *[Laughing]* Yes?

00:48:03 John Host At s—at one point, you were going to speak.

[He and Megan laugh.]

Let's go back to that.

00:48:07 Megan Guest Okay. Um, well, also part of the problem is that I don't even have to say anything before I ruin a song for Laura. And I do try to be conscious of certain songs that she is sensitive to, or—

[Audience laughter.]

00:48:20 John Host What songs in particular?

00:48:22 Megan Guest So Laura is an aerialist performer—

00:48:25 John Host Oh!

[Scattered cheers.]

00:48:26 Megan Guest —so if she is going to be doing an aerialist—

00:48:28 Jesse Host Wait, hold on. A *Judge John Hodgman* litigant with circus skills?!

[One or both litigants laugh. Swell of cheering and applause from the audience.]

00:48:33 Laura Guest Yes.

00:48:34 Jesse Host *[Stifling laughter]* Do you also like board games, Ma'am?

[Litigants and audience laugh.]

00:48:37	Laura	Guest	Very much so.
00:48:38	Jesse	Host	Yeah.
00:48:39	Megan	Guest	So you know, if it's something that is meaningful for Laura I try very hard, my best, to not sing different words or sing in a goofy voice. But I don't realize that I'm doing it most of the time, which is the issue, is I—I don't—I can't always help myself.
00:48:54	John	Host	I'm sorry, what does this have to do with aerial... artistry?
00:48:57	Megan	Guest	If it's a song that she's performing to...
00:49:00	John	Host	Oh, I see.
00:49:01	Megan	Guest	...then she will say "Don't sing to this song. That's the only thing I'll think about while I'm in the air is you singing the weird way of the song," so... <i>[laughs]</i> .
00:49:10	John	Host	Do you—before I ask what the song—well, what is the song?
00:49:13	Megan	Guest	Well, she's done several performances. She's done one to Sylvan Esso and <i>[hesitantly]</i> Hoosier?
00:49:20	Laura	Guest	Hozier.
00:49:21	John	Host	These are nonsense syllables.
			<i>[The audience and the litigants laugh.]</i>
			This is not—this is not <i>Huey Lewis and the News: Sports</i> . I got there, Jesse.
00:49:28	Jesse	Host	Yeah.
00:49:29	Laura	Guest	Sylvan Esso—Durhamites know what Sylvan Esso is.
			<i>[Litigants laugh, audience cheers and applauds.]</i>
00:49:35	John	Host	Uh, what is— <i>[stifling laughter]</i> what is the song?
00:49:36	Laura	Guest	So it's called "Come Down," and it's one of their lesser-known ones, and it's a capella, and it's <u>just</u> Amelia singing over some weird, like, vibey electronic stuff.
00:49:44	John	Host	Cool.
00:49:45	Laura	Guest	So it's super soft and sweet. And so the <u>last</u> thing I need when I'm 18 feet in the air, doing this very serious piece, is Megan in the back of my head going <i>[cartoonishly wavery and intense]</i> "Cooooome doooooown!"
			<i>[Megan and the audience laugh.]</i>
			I'm just...
00:50:03	Jesse	Host	<i>[Stifling laughter]</i> So you—you mostly do Scott Stapp voice?
			<i>[Audience and litigants laugh.]</i>
00:50:08	Megan	Guest	Honestly, I don't know! 'Cause I don't even always realize that I'm doing it. She'll just be like, "Megan, you're doing it!"
00:50:13	John	Host	Megan says that you have a beautiful voice, but that you sometimes go <i>[blows raspberries]</i> and whatever.

[One of the litigants laughs.]

How do you res—is that true? And are you—are you moving into weird voice on purpose? Obviously we're gonna hear demo of good voice and weird voice in a moment.

[One of the litigants laughs.]

But I just—like, what's going on?

00:50:29 Megan Guest Definitely there is a combination. And like I said, I don't even always realize that I'm doing it. So I'm probably doing it by myself in the car. Yeah, I'll be either just singing on purpose and if either I don't know the words or if there's a natural pause in the song, and I'm like, "This needs a little rapping in the middle."

[Audience laughs.]

Um, you know, then something comes out.

00:50:49 John Host I can guarantee that's not true.

[Litigants and audience laugh.]

00:50:52 Laura Guest We did submit some evidence, I don't know if it's available.

00:50:55 John Host Oh, yes! I—of course. Let's see.

00:50:57 Megan Guest But it's not...

[Audience and litigants laugh.]

00:51:01 John Host Let the record show that there is a beautiful photo of Megan and Laura levitating.

[More laughter.]

00:51:08 Laura Guest At Long Island.

00:51:09 John Host An incredible—you're an incredible aerialist. You're doing that without a trapeze or anything.

00:51:13 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** No—no stilts or whatever.

Laura: That's right, yeah.

Megan: Yeah, she's holding me up.

[One of the litigants laughs.]

John: Right. That's—yeah.

Laura: Yeah. Right.

00:51:16 Laura Guest There is a picture of Megan—this is not this one, unfortunately, although—

00:51:19 John Host Next slide, then?

[Pause.]

[Audience and litigants laugh.]

00:51:25	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	This is a picture of someone stealing— Laura: That's Megan!
			Megan: That's me!
00:51:26	John	Host	That's Megan stealing an hors d'oeuvre, or a cookie?
00:51:28	Laura	Guest	A cookie at our sister's wedding. And this demonstrates Megan's... just, commitment to whimsy.
			<i>[Audience laughter.]</i>
			And—
00:51:35	John	Host	I thought it was gonna be lack of impulse control, but sure.
			<i>[Audience and Megan laugh.]</i>
00:51:38	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Laura: Well, yes! And—she wanted to be—
			John: It's kind of the same thing.
00:51:40	Laura	Guest	Correct. Yes.
			<i>[Megan laughs.]</i>
00:51:41	John	Host	Right.
00:51:42	Laura	Guest	That's actually also not the picture I was thinking—well, let's see. It's coming.
			<i>[Pause.]</i>
			Oh, that's— <i>[laughs]</i> .
00:51:47	John	Host	Oh.
			<i>[Audience, litigants, and Jesse laugh.]</i>
00:51:49	Jesse	Host	Hey! Look at this, a <u>dog</u> dressed as a goshdarn <u>rainbow</u> !
			<i>[More laughter.]</i>
00:51:56	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	John: Linda, are you okay?
			Jesse: Ohhh, but he's also dressed as the Joker from the movie <i>The Jokerrr</i> !
			<i>[More laughter.]</i>
00:52:04	Jesse	Host	He doesn't care for society's conventions!
			<i>[More laughter. Someone claps a few times.]</i>
00:52:10	John	Host	What does this represent?
00:52:11	Laura	Guest	So this is my dog Quincy. He's a ten-year-old toy poodle rescue.
00:52:15	John	Host	Lovely.
00:52:16	Laura	Guest	And it demonstrates that I too have a sense of whimsy! And I'm not a... whatever you called me at the beginning.

[Audience and Megan laugh.]

Controlling...

00:52:25 John Host Obsessed with control and resentful of younger, freer people because—

[Both litigants and the audience laugh.]

—you lived your entire life under the pressure to be the good one.

[Someone in the audience cheers.]

00:52:34 Laura Guest ...Yeah, my dog's a rainbow!

[The litigants, Jesse, and the audience laugh.]

00:52:38 Jesse Host John, she's got a point! The dog's a rainbow!

00:52:41 John Host Methinks thou doth dress your dog up too much.

[Litigants and audience laugh.]

And is there any other evidence that you wish to share?

00:52:47 Megan Guest There—there, uh—

00:52:48 John Host No, we don't—

00:52:49 Laura Guest Oh, this—okay. There actually was a picture of Megan singing "Wings Beneath My Wings" as she made a hole-in-one in mini-golf.

[Audience laughter.]

00:52:55 John Host Yeah!

00:52:56 Laura Guest So, but...

00:52:57 John Host Well, a picture of that would not be as good as...

[Megan laughs.]

00:52:59 Laura Guest *[Laughing]* You're right. Let's do it.

00:53:00 John Host ...Megan singing it now. Obviously you care very much about each other.

00:53:03 Megan Guest Yes.

00:53:04 John Host Right?

00:53:05 Laura Guest Yes. Yes.

00:53:06 John Host And you spend a lot of time together.

00:53:07 Laura Guest Yes.

00:53:08 John Host Or else this wouldn't be an issue.

00:53:09 Laura Guest *[Laughing]* Right.

00:53:10 John Host If you were estranged, you wouldn't—you would never hear her sing... sing again. And if I were to rule in your favor, that's exactly what's gonna happen.

[Audience and litigants laugh.]

You'll never hear her sing again.

00:53:19 Laura Guest There's gotta be a middle ground.

00:53:20 John Host So—no! No, middle child, no middle ground!

[More laughter. John also laughs.]

You're the one who brought this case—no.

00:53:28 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Megan:** I did.

John: You are. Alright.

Laura: I did, yes. *[Laughs.]*

00:53:29 John Host So. Sing to your sister "Wind Beneath My Wings," and we'll decide!

00:53:35 Megan Guest Sure. Okay. Uh—ahem.

[Laura laughs quietly.]

00:53:40 John Host That was a total fake throat-clear, by the way.

[Audience and litigants laugh.]

00:53:42 Megan Guest *[Laughing]* That was—

00:53:43 John Host "Heh-hem. Heh-hem. *[Singing]* Mi, mi, mi, mi, mi! Miii, miii! Mm! *[Vocal exercise variant of a raspberry]!* Mm! *[Singing]* Open pit barbecue sauce!"

[Speaking] Alright?

[John, the litigants, and the audience laugh.]

00:53:52 Megan Guest *[Megan sings genuinely, vocally straight-faced.]*

Did I ever tell you you're my heeerooo? You're everything I wish I couuuld beee. I could fly higher than an eeeagle. 'Cause you are the wind beneath my wings!

[Someone in the audience shouts something not quite clear but positive-sounding, possibly "Linda." Someone laughs. Audience cheers and applauds.]

00:54:13 Jesse Host Nailed it.

00:54:18 John Host Even—even the woman who is planking managed to applaud!

[Audience and the litigants laugh.]

I do not understand how you could be ruining any song!

00:54:29 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Megan:** That wasn't a ruining example. *[Laughs.]*

Linda: Okay—okay—

John: I—

00:54:32 Laura Guest How about Ill sing the song, and then you ruin it?

[The litigants and the audience laugh.]

00:54:36	John	Host	Alright. I'll allow it. Quickly now.
00:54:38	Laura	Guest	<i>[Singing]</i> Did I ever tell you you're my heeerooo—
00:54:43	Megan	Guest	You're my hero, baby, yeah!
			<i>[Audience and one or both litigants laugh.]</i>
00:54:46	Jesse	Host	Oh, wow. <i>[Stifling laughter]</i> Nailed it again!
00:54:50	John	Host	I find—
00:54:51	Jesse	Host	Reverse nailed it!
00:54:52	John	Host	I find in Megan's favor. Sing whatever you want.
00:54:54	Megan	Guest	Yes!
00:54:55	John	Host	This is the sound of a—
			<i>[Several live gavel bangs as the audience cheers and applauds.]</i>
00:54:58	Jesse	Host	Please welcome Ali and Karen!
00:55:02	John	Host	Ali and Karen, please come to the stage. Oh! But 'tis the season of giving! <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:55:09	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Ali: 'Tis!
			John: You have <u>also</u> brought something to the court.
00:55:11	Ali	Guest	I sure have.
00:55:12	John	Host	And... probably not drugs, right?
			<i>[Audience and one or both litigants laugh.]</i>
00:55:17	Ali	Guest	Not this time, sorry. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:55:18	John	Host	Oh, alright. Who seeks justice before the court, please?
00:55:21	Ali	Guest	I seek justice before the court.
00:55:23	John	Host	And you are...?
00:55:24	Ali	Guest	I'm Ali.
00:55:25	John	Host	Ali, and you must be Karen.
00:55:26	Karen	Guest	Yes.
00:55:27	John	Host	Ali, what is the nature of the dispute and the reason for these two beautiful cakes out here?
00:55:31	Ali	Guest	My favorite sister in the whole world, and I have a whole bunch— <i>[laughs]</i> I love her so much—
00:55:35	John	Host	Wait a minute, what?
00:55:36	Jesse	Host	<i>[Laughing]</i> We're <u>recording</u> this!
			<i>[Audience laughs.]</i>
00:55:37	Ali	Guest	Yeah, no, I have a whole bunch.
			<i>[John and/or Jesse laughs.]</i>
			I would do anything for her on her birthday.
00:55:41	John	Host	Mm-hm.

00:55:42	Ali	Guest	And she has become—she <u>is</u> very inflexible about the cake that she wants.
00:55:47	John	Host	She's very inflexible about the <u>cake</u> that she wants.
00:55:49	Ali	Guest	Yeah.
00:55:50	John	Host	What cake do you want?
00:55:51	Karen	Guest	Yellow cake from a box with chocolate frosting from a can.
<i>[John and the audience laugh. Some cheering and applause.]</i>			
00:56:00	John	Host	That's a classic! You understand. Ali. That's a classic.
00:56:03	Ali	Guest	It's a disgusting classic. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:56:06	John	Host	Yeah, but it's Karen's birthday!
00:56:07	Karen	Guest	It's not Funfetti.
00:56:08	Ali	Guest	I understand that.
<i>[Audience laughter.]</i>			
But I can make <u>any</u> cake! And my cakes are so delicious that she has told me on <u>other</u> occasions that she would invite the cake <u>into her marriage</u> , and her husband's okay with it!			
<i>[Ali and the audience laugh.]</i>			
00:56:22	John	Host	It—she would bring the cake into her marital bed?
00:56:25	Ali	Guest	The—perhaps.
00:56:26	Karen	Guest	No, I would marry the cake and have an extra spouse.
<i>[John and the audience laugh.]</i>			
00:56:29	Ali	Guest	Yeah! <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:56:30	John	Host	A spouse cake!
00:56:31	Ali	Guest	Yeah. Sister cakes!
<i>[One or both litigants laugh.]</i>			
00:56:33	John	Host	Karen, is Ali a really good baker?
00:56:34	Karen	Guest	She is.
00:56:35	John	Host	Okay. Does Ali make you cakes other times of the year?
00:56:38	Karen	Guest	Sometimes.
00:56:39	John	Host	What kinds of cakes does she make?
00:56:41	Karen	Guest	She makes a lot of different things. Chocolate tortes. She doesn't always make cakes, but she makes a lot of dinners. I don't ever cook anything, so if there's a family event, a lot of the cooking comes from her, and she's a very good cook.
00:56:52	John	Host	Right. And you brought some evidence to show the court here?
00:56:55	Ali	Guest	I did.
00:56:56	John	Host	Let's take a look on the screen. Okay. This is some David Cronenberg-ian body horror, I believe. I, uh...

[Audience, litigants, and Jesse laugh.]

00:57:06 Ali Guest

This is—

00:57:07 John Host

Looks like a writhing mass of wounded flesh...

[More laughter.]

...pierced with flaming knives? Uh...

I'm just kidding.

00:57:15 Ali Guest

Yeah.

00:57:16 John Host

It's a bird's-eye view of a cake!

00:57:17 Ali Guest

Yeah.

00:57:18 John Host

What kind of cake is it?

00:57:19 Ali Guest

That would be the bad cake.

00:57:20 John Host

That's a *Videodrome* cake. Why?

00:57:22 Ali Guest

Uh, yeah.

[She, the audience, and John laugh.]

00:57:24 John Host

This is—oh, this is the bad cake!

00:57:26 Ali Guest

This is the bad cake, yeah.

00:57:27 John Host

Oh, this is your yellow cake from a box, chocolate frosting from a can—

00:57:30 Ali Guest

Yes.

00:57:31 John Host

—shot from above.

00:57:32 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Ali & Karen: Yes.

00:57:33 John Host

Okay, so, right. And, uh—*[laughs]* by the way, candles? Very haphazard. Is that part of the deal? Like...

[Audience and litigants laugh.]

00:57:38 Karen Guest

It's an A for my sister April and a heart.

00:57:41 John Host

Ohhhhhh!

00:57:42 Ali Guest

Yeah.

00:57:43 Jesse Host

[Stifling laughter] I mean, sort of.

00:57:45 John Host

[Laughing] Yeah.

[Audience and litigants laugh.]

00:57:47 Ali Guest

Yeah. *[Laughs.]*

00:57:49 John Host

You could get a little pastry bag and do a little piping and it'll look a lot neater.

00:57:51 Ali Guest

Yeah.

00:57:52 Karen Guest

I don't own one.

00:57:53 Ali Guest

She can't do that.

[Both litigants laugh.]

00:57:54	John	Host	Okay. No, I no, but—this is the cake that you made yourself.
00:57:57	Karen	Guest	Yeah.
00:57:58	John	Host	For your other sister, April.
00:57:59	Karen	Guest	Yes.
00:58:00	John	Host	Right, okay, gotcha.
00:58:01	Karen	Guest	Yeah. Yeah.
00:58:02	John	Host	And—your many, many sisters.
00:58:03	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Karen: Yeah.
			Ali: There's a lot. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:58:04	John	Host	How many are there?
00:58:05	Jesse	Host	Your many less-preferred sisters.
			<i>[Jesse, one of the litigants, and the audience laugh.]</i>
00:58:06	Ali	Guest	Yeah.
00:58:07	Karen	Guest	There's five girls and one boy.
00:58:08	John	Host	Wowie.
00:58:09	Karen	Guest	Yeah.
00:58:10	John	Host	Alright. So let's go to the next slide, please? This is a dark chocolate cake with raspberries on it. What's the—
00:58:14	Ali	Guest	It's a chocolate torte.
00:58:15	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Ali: With choc—
			John: A chocolate torte. Oh, pardon me. I apologize.
			<i>[Audience laughs.]</i>
			Ali: Yeah. With chocolate ganache.
00:58:18	Ali	Guest	And fresh raspberries.
00:58:20	John	Host	This is something that you made—
00:58:20	Ali	Guest	Yes.
00:58:21	John	Host	—Ali, for Karen?
00:58:23	Ali	Guest	I make it for Karen, and anyone else who wants to enjoy it.
00:58:25	John	Host	Right.
00:58:26	Ali	Guest	Including you. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:58:27	John	Host	It looks very good. Nice work.
00:58:28	Ali	Guest	Thanks. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:58:29	John	Host	It does not look like a David Cronenberg horror movie.
00:58:32	Ali	Guest	No.
			<i>[Audience laughter.]</i>
00:58:33	John	Host	I'll say that. Next slide, please? Oh!
00:58:34	Ali	Guest	Oh.

00:58:35	John	Host	There we go!
00:58:36	Ali	Guest	That's it.
			<i>[Audience laughter.]</i>
00:58:37	John	Host	So the evidence is you make beautiful-looking cakes, and they're delicious.
00:58:39	Ali	Guest	I do.
00:58:40	John	Host	And you want to make your sister a cake for her birthday that is <u>not</u> the junk cake that she desires.
00:58:46	Ali	Guest	Right.
00:58:47	John	Host	And do you have a birthday coming up any time soon?
00:58:50	Karen	Guest	No.
00:58:51	John	Host	Okay.
			<i>[Audience and one or both litigants laugh.]</i>
00:58:54	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Ali: She just had one.
			John: Alright!
			Jesse: <i>[Stifling laughter]</i> Would you say you have one coming up in the next year or so?
			John: Yeah! Yeah.
			<i>[Audience and litigants laugh.]</i>
			Karen: Yes.
00:58:58	John	Host	I was going to say, "Ali, it seems like case closed! Your sister has stopped aging, so it doesn't matter anyway."
			<i>[Audience and litigants laugh.]</i>
00:59:04	Ali	Guest	That's right.
00:59:08	John	Host	For Karen's next birthday, whenever it may be...
00:59:11	Ali	Guest	Yeah.
00:59:12	John	Host	What cake do you propose to make, instead of her favorite?
00:59:15	Ali	Guest	<u>Any</u> other cake from scratch.
			<i>[Ali and some of the audience laugh.]</i>
			I've offered to make that cake for her from scratch, yellow cake from scratch. Pound cake—
00:59:23	John	Host	Oh, the <u>exact</u> cake!
00:59:24	Ali	Guest	The exact cake!
00:59:26	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	John: Okay, <u>now</u> you've got a case!
			Ali: Yeah. Right.
			John: Now you've got a case!

Ali: Just not from a box.

John: To make an exact—right.

00:59:30 John Host An exact, from-scratch yellow cake with chocolate frosting. That is not acceptable to you, Karen?

00:59:36 Karen Guest Mm, no.

00:59:37 John Host Alright!

[Audience and one or both litigants laugh.]

Why do you have these two cakes here?

00:59:40 Ali Guest Okay. So that you can taste-test the cakes.

00:59:42 John Host Oh—

00:59:43 Ali Guest So you can see the true—yeah.

00:59:44 John Host Oh! So you have junk cake and a—and a different—?

00:59:45 Ali Guest Yeah. I have trash cake... and delicious torte.

[Ali and the audience laugh.]

00:59:50 John Host I normally do not eat sweets. I do not have a sweet tooth, but...

00:59:53 Ali Guest I understand that.

00:59:54 John Host I have an alcohol molar.

[Audience laughs.]

00:59:55 Ali Guest I know, I—I accounted for that. *[Laughs.]*

00:59:58 John Host Oh, what is this that you're offering me?

01:00:00 Ali Guest This is—this is—

01:00:01 John Host Johnnie Walker Blue Label?

01:00:02 Ali Guest This—*[laughs]*.

01:00:03 John Host Druuuugs!

[Audience and litigants laugh, audience cheers and applauds.]

[John sighs happily.] Thank you!

01:00:12 Ali Guest You're welcome.

01:00:13 John Host It's a very kind gift, but as this is the season of giving, there you go, child.

[Audience and litigants laugh.]

Take this whiskey.

01:00:21 Ali Guest Yeah.

01:00:22 John Host I'm a man with a mustache, take this whiskey!

[More laughter and applause.]

01:00:24 Ali Guest Yeah. Yeah. Alright. *[Laughs.]*

01:00:28	John	Host	So the cake I'm holding is chocolate torte with raspberries, made by you, Ali.
01:00:32	Ali	Guest	And chocolate ganache.
01:00:33	John	Host	And choc—I'm—alright.
01:00:34	Ali	Guest	Yeah.
01:00:35	John	Host	I'm <u>sorry</u> I forgot the ganache.
<i>[Ali and the audience laugh.]</i>			
<u>Again.</u> Maybe this is why your sister doesn't wanna make—have you make one of these cakes!			
<i>[More laughter.]</i>			
01:00:43	Ali	Guest	Yeah. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
01:00:46	John	Host	<i>[Laughs.]</i> "I hope you're appreciating the dusting of cocoa."
01:00:49	Ali	Guest	<i>[Stifling laughter]</i> There is dusting of cocoa.
01:00:51	John	Host	<i>[Viciously]</i> Of course there's dusting of cocoa!
<i>[Audience and litigants laugh.]</i>			
<i>[Regular tone]</i> Linda, how you doing? Good.			
01:00:56	Ali	Guest	Yeah. Okay.
01:00:58	John	Host	And this is trash cake.
01:01:00	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Ali: Yes, from a box mix.
John: This is <u>legit</u> trash cake.			
Ali: Right.			
John: Not Ali's take on trash cake.			
01:01:05	Ali	Guest	No.
01:01:06	John	Host	Alright.
01:01:06	Ali	Guest	Frosting from a can.
01:01:08	Jesse	Host	John is inserting the fork into the trash cake.
<i>[Audience laughter.]</i>			
01:01:12	John	Host	First I'm getting that bite ready.
01:01:14	Jesse	Host	Preparing a bite, preparing a raspberry and all. Looks like—that looks like a chocolate ganache to me.
<i>[More laughter.]</i>			
01:01:19	John	Host	Now, the fact is I'm—I'm actually... you know, on the road you have to be careful about what you eat. I am eating no carbs at this time. So I'm gonna give this to Linda and she'll decide.
<i>[Audience cheers and applauds.]</i>			
01:01:27	Ali	Guest	Yeah.

[The litigants laugh.]

Yeah. Yeah.

01:01:31 Jesse Host Linda is planking and chewing.

01:01:33 Ali Guest Yeah. *[Laughs.]* Yeah.

01:01:35 Jesse Host Hi, Linda. I'm sideline reporter Jesse Thorn.

[Audience and litigants laugh. Someone in the audience shouts Linda's name.]

[Laughing] She wants the bourbon now!

[Everyone laughs. Audience cheers and applauds.]

01:01:47 John Host Yeah.

01:01:49 Jesse Host Linda—

01:01:51 John Host No, the ch—I—the child can't give up his bourbon! How dare you?

[More laughter.]

I'll buy you a drink after the show. Don't worry.

01:01:57 Ali Guest Yeah.

[Many people are laughing. Child in the audience says something inaudible.]

01:01:59 John Host What did you say, young man?

[Child repeats himself.]

01:02:00 Jesse Host He said—

01:02:01 John Host You don't need it? Alright, do you wanna give it to this nice lady?

01:02:03 Jesse Host After going through this experience...

01:02:04 John Host *[Laughing]* Yeah.

01:02:05 Jesse Host *[Laughing]* You'll need it later.

[Audience laughs, cheers, and applauds.]

01:02:08 John Host Let the record show Linda expertly and swiftly planked over.

[Jesse and the audience laugh.]

It is not bourbon, technically. It is one of the finest blended whiskeys, and it's very delicious. And I hope you enjoy it.

01:02:22 Jesse Host *[Stifling laughter]* She planked over there like nature's greatest plunker, the iguana.

[Audience laughs.]

01:02:26 Ali Guest Yeah.

01:02:28 John Host Alright, Linda. Here is the trash cake.

[More laughter, some cheering and applause.]

01:02:37 Jesse Host Linda, how's that chew? It's going—Linda's doing her chewing now. I wanna give her an opportun—John, can you grab the milk for Linda?

01:02:44 John Host That's a good idea.

[More laughter.]

01:02:45 Ali Guest Yeah.

01:02:46 Jesse Host She's gonna have to—*[laughs]* cleanse her palate here.

01:02:48 John Host Is there a straw available?

[More laughter.]

01:02:50 Ali Guest Mm-mm. I did not bring one, sorry!

01:02:51 Jesse Host It's okay, she can drink it while planking!

[More laughter.]

01:02:56 John Host Producer Hannah, could you come out here? I've only got one hand, I can't open a bottle of milk.

01:02:59 Ali Guest I can open—*[laughs]*.

01:03:00 Jesse Host Okay.

01:03:01 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** Our producer Hannah Smith, everybody.

Jesse: Our producer Hannah Smith, folks!

[Audience cheers and applauds.]

01:03:08 Jesse Host Okay, now Linda is...

01:03:10 John Host This is amazing.

01:03:11 Jesse Host ...drinking the milk while planking!

[More cheering and applause.]

01:03:16 John Host NSP: Never Stop Planking!

01:03:21 Jesse Host Linda—

01:03:22 John Host Jesse, would you hold the microphone to Linda so that I may ask her some questions?

01:03:25 Linda Guest Yes.

01:03:26 John Host Linda. Which of those two cakes did you enjoy more?

01:03:30 Linda Guest I'm the wrong person to ask. I will always choose nasty cake over—*[laughs]*.

[Audience and litigants laugh.]

01:03:40 John Host Surprise decision from Linda!

01:03:41 Linda Guest Yeah.

01:03:43 John Host But that wasn't the ruling. That was just which did she enjoy more?

01:03:47 Ali Guest Yeah.

01:03:48 John Host It's subjective.

01:03:49	Ali	Guest	Mm.
01:03:50	John	Host	Linda happens to be like your sister; she loves trash cake!
			<i>[Some audience laughter.]</i>
			This is a beautiful cake. No one can deny this is a beautiful cake. But Linda, in your opinion, on someone's birthday, should they have the trash cake they want? Or the chocolate ganache their sister wants to force on them?
			<i>[Audience and litigants laugh.]</i>
01:04:06	Linda	Guest	Trash cake you want. Always.
			<i>[Audience cheers and applauds.]</i>
01:04:07	John	Host	Trash cake you want, I'm afraid. I'm sorry, Ali. You're a very generous sister, but birthdays are birthdays, after all.
			<i>[Several live gavel bangs.]</i>
			I find in Karen's favor. We have a tradition in Swift Justice. The segment cannot end until... the person planking...
			<i>[Audience laughter.]</i>
			...drinks some blended whiskey out of a small bottle.
			<i>[Audience and litigants laugh.]</i>
			I don't think you should be—what—can she open that?
01:04:33	Jesse	Host	<i>[Laughing]</i> Holy cow!
			<i>[More laughter, swelling into raucous applause and cheering.]</i>
			She's opening it with her mouth like an alcoholic iguana!
01:04:46	John	Host	<i>[Shouting/projecting over the applause.]</i> Where's Bridget?! Where's Bridget?! In absentia, I find in Linda's favor! I find in Ali's favor! That's Swift Justice!
			<i>[Seven live gavel bangs.]</i>
01:05:00	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Jesse: Ali, Karen—
			John: You can stop planking, Madam!
01:05:03	Jesse	Host	And the legendary Linda!
			<i>[Applause and cheering is still going strong.]</i>
01:05:08	John	Host	You may stop! You may stop. Thank you.
01:05:12	Jesse	Host	Let's hear it for Linda, ladies and gentlemen!
			<i>[Applause and cheering redoubles and then the live audio fades out.]</i>
01:05:19	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
01:05:20	Promo	Clip	Music: Mid-tempo, upbeat music.

Jo Firestone: Hi, I'm Jo Firestone.

Manolo Moreno: And I'm Manolo Moreno.

Jo: And we're the hosts of *Dr. Gameshow*, which is a podcast where we play games submitted by listeners, regardless of quality or content, with in-studio guests and callers from all over the world!

Manolo: And you can win a custom magnet.

Jo: A custom magnet!

Manolo: Subscribe now to make sure you get our next episode.

Jo: What's an example of a game, Manolo?

Manolo: "Pokémon or Medication?"

Jo: How do you play that?

Manolo: You have to guess if something's a Pokémon name—

[Next two lines overlapping]

Jo: Or medication?

Manolo: —or a medication.

Manolo: First-time listener, if you want to listen to episode highlights and also know how to participate, follow *Dr. Gameshow* on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

Jo: We'd love to hear from you!

Manolo: Yeah, it's really fun!

Jo: For the whole family! We'll be every other Wednesday starting March 13th, and we're coming to MAX FUN!

Manolo: Snorlax.

Jo: Pokémon?

Manolo: Yes.

Jo: Nice!

Music: Gentle, upbeat piano music.

J. Keith van Straaten: Hey everybody, this is J. Keith van Straaten, host of *Go Fact Yourself*, a live game show here on the Maximum Fun network. On *Go Fact Yourself*, we take the smartest people we know, and make them look dumb.

J. Keith: Paul, by the way, how much do you know about chicken husbandry?

01:05:45 Promo Clip

01:06:05 Promo Clip

Paul F. Tompkins: You gotta give ‘em that grain.

J. Keith: Alright!

[Audience laughs.]

Paul: You gotta give ‘em that grain!

J. Keith: And then smart again.

J. Keith: What future hall of fame pitcher for the Cleveland Indians became the first active player to enlist—

Speaker 1: Bob Feller.

J. Keith: —wh—oh. Okay!

[Audience laughs again.]

01:06:30 Promo Clip

J. Keith: We’ve got me, co-host Helen Hong, plus celebrity guests and actual surprise experts.

J. Keith: Alright, we have an expert on hand for sure.

Speaker 2: Is it Allan Havey?

J. Keith: Helen, who do we have tonight?

Helen Hong: Allan Havey!

J. Keith: Allan Havey!

[Crowd cheers.]

J. Keith: In the coming weeks, you can hear guests like Maria Bamford, Tom Bergeron, Paul F. Tompkins, Janet Varney, and Grant Imahara. Check us out on the first and third Friday of every month, here on the Maximum Fun network.

[Music continues for a moment, then ends.]

01:06:56 Sound Effect Transition

[Three gavel bangs.]

01:06:58 Jesse Host

Our thanks to all of the litigants who shared their disputes with us in Durham, North Carolina, and of course all of the folks who came out to the show. We had a great time. I hope that you enjoyed listening to it.

This episode recorded by our friend Jeff Bird, native son of San Francisco, and produced by the great Hannah Smith. Jesus Ambrosio is our editor. Follow us on Twitter at [@JesseThorn](#) and [@hodgman](#). Hashtag your *Judge John Hodgman* Tweets #JJHo! And check out the Maximum Fun subreddit—that’s at [MaximumFun.Reddit.com](#)—to chat about this week’s episode. We’re on Instagram at [@judgejohnhodgman](#); make sure to follow us there for evidence and other fun stuff.

			We'll see you next time on the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast.
01:07:43	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
01:07:44	Music	Transition	A cheerful guitar chord.
01:07:45	Speaker 1	Guest	MaximumFun.org .
01:07:47	Speaker 2	Guest	Comedy and culture.
01:07:48	Speaker 3	Guest	Artist owned—
01:07:50	Speaker 4	Guest	—audience supported.