

00:00:00	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
00:00:01	Jesse Thorn	Host	Welcome to the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast. I'm Bailiff Jesse Thorn. This week: "Tattoos of Limitations" (<i>Statute of Limitations</i>). Misty files suit against her husband Scott. Scott started getting tattoos in his mid-30s, and now has tattoos covering his upper arms. Scott has intentionally <u>not</u> told his parents about his tattoos. Misty thinks he should come clean. Scott wants to keep them a secret. Who's right? Who's wrong? Only one can decide.
00:00:29	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	<i>[As Jesse speaks below: Door opens, chairs scrape on the floor, footsteps.]</i>
00:00:30	Jesse	Host	Please rise as Judge John Hodgman enters the courtroom and presents an obscure cultural reference.
00:00:36	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	<i>[Door shuts.]</i>
00:00:37	Elliott Kalan	Guest	<i>[Singing]</i> <i>Livia, oh Livia, say have you met Livia? Livia the poisoning lady By tainting wine and food and figs She maintains control of her cardboard digs</i> <i>Livia, oh Livia, she's full of Invidia Livia the schemer of schemes Protecting Rome or so she claims She poisons, betrays, and rapist frames</i> <i>But how can she remember all of their names? It's not easy being Livia!</i>
00:01:04	John	Host	Bailiff Jesse Thorn, you may swear them in.
00:01:06	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	<i>[As Jesse speaks below: chairs scrape.]</i>
00:01:07	Jesse	Host	Misty, Scott, please rise and raise your right hands. Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God or whatever?
00:01:15	Misty	Guest	Yes.
00:01:16	Scott	Guest	I do.
00:01:17	Jesse	Host	Do you swear to abide by Judge John Hodgman's ruling, despite the fact that he made us listen to that caterwauling just now? <i>[Scott laughs quietly.]</i>
00:01:23	Misty	Guest	Yes.
00:01:24	Scott	Guest	Yes.
00:01:25	Jesse	Host	Judge Hodgman, you may proceed.
00:01:27	John	Host	Jesse Thorn, you know who that was singing! Not me! You know what pot of feces you are stirring with that... slander! <i>[Jesse laughs.]</i>

But to Misty and Scott—first of all, Misty and Scott, have a seat.

00:01:38 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Chairs scrape.]*

00:01:39 John Host For an immediate summary judgment in one of yours' favors, can either of you name the piece of culture that not I but someone else sung, as I entered the courtroom? Misty, let's start with you.

00:01:50 Misty Guest I'm gonna say... a old cartoon. Maybe *Felix*?

00:01:56 John Host Mm-hm! Mm-hm! That's almost correct!

[John and Jesse laugh.]

00:02:02 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:02:03 John Host Very adept, very astute. I'm not saying it's wrong. But I will say it's more correct than guesses usually are.

00:02:10 Misty Guest Okay.

00:02:11 John Host What about you, Scott? Do you have a guess?

00:02:13 Scott Guest *[Laughs quietly.]* Well, I had in my mind *Fantasy Island* because of the character Tattoo, but—

[John bursts out laughing.]

—that clearly is not that. Uh, yeah, maybe too obvious. So... it sounds like, you know, some song from a vaudeville show, maybe *The Tattooed Lady* or something.

00:02:28 John Host Mm-hm.

00:02:29 Scott Guest That's my guess.

00:02:30 John Host Mm-hm. Also almost correct! All guesses are almost correct!

[Misty chuckles.]

But all of them are also wrong. The reason I'm so tickled by your guesses—and frankly aghast at Jesse's... characterization...

[Jesse laughs.]

...is that is our Maximum Fun network label-mate, and I daresay friend, Elliott Kalan! One of the tri-hosts of the *Flop House* podcast, a very popular podcast here on the Maximum Fun network. Sometimes I pretend that they're our rivals, 'cause they do a little bit better than we do. But they're not our rivals, they're our friends!

And if you don't know who Elliott Kalan is, and you don't know the *Flop House* podcast, you should [take a listen to it](#). It's three friends—three smart, funny friends watch a terrible movie and then talk about it. Simple as can be. And Elliott Kalan used to be the head writer for *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*, when Jon Stewart was the host. And is a small man... who I think would be flattered by a comparison to Felix the Cat! It's apt!

[Misty, Jesse, and Scott laugh.]

He's a little bit of a mischief stirrer, for sure. And what he's known for on the *Flop House* podcast is making up songs on the fly. Now that tune—and this is where you were almost correct, Scott—that tune is actually a song called "Lydia, the Tattooed Lady." It was written by Harold Arlen and Yip Harburg for the 1939 Marx Brothers movie *At the Circus*. "Lydia, the Tattooed Lady" is essentially Groucho Marx's signature song, one of his signature songs.

00:04:02 John Host But Elliott had written new lyrics to it, to reflect a character named Livia. A main character from the famous BBC mid-seventies miniseries about Ancient Rome called *I, Claudius*. And that was just a little preview of a little side hustle that Elliott and I have been doing and putting together. We recorded 12—actually 13—episodes of a very special Maximum Fun miniseries event called *I, Podius*, in which we watch and recap every episode of *I, Claudius*.

So that's a little plug for something that's gonna happen, and I can tell the listeners now that I have been informed by our incredible producer Jordan Kauwling that *I, Podius* all 12 episodes will drop mid-February. Mid-February. All of them will drop at once. So you'll have all the time in the world to go see *I, Claudius* and [follow along with us!](#)

So you're both—hey, Misty or Scott, you ever watch *I, Claudius*?

00:04:55 Scott Guest

Never.

00:04:56 Misty Guest

Never. Mm-mm.

00:04:57 John Host

You have any idea what I'm talking about?

00:04:59 Scott Guest

...No. *[Laughs.]*

00:05:01 John Host

"Nooo. No way, man!"

00:05:03 Misty Guest

No.

00:05:04 John Host

"I'm not an old man like you! I'm a young man with tattoos on my arms!"

[The litigants laugh quietly.]

I'm pre-judging you, and ordering you—sentencing you to watch *I, Claudius*. So you can listen to *I, Podius*, the podcast that we did about it! But meanwhile, let's hear this case! Misty, you bring this case against Scott. What is—what's your beef?

00:05:22 Misty Guest

Okay. So my husband has tattoos. He's an adult. And he has never told his parents.

00:05:30 John Host

Oh my goodness.

00:05:31 Misty Guest

And I want him to tell his parents.

00:05:33 Jesse Host

Misty, when you say his parents, do you mean his mommy and his daddy?

[Scott laughs.]

00:05:36 Misty Guest

His mommy and his daddy, yes.

[John laughs.]

00:05:40 Jesse Host

Thank you.

00:05:42 John Host How adult are you, Scott?

00:05:44 Scott Guest I'm 41.

00:05:46 John Host Yeah, you're definitely a grown-up. It says here that you live in Atlanta, Georgia?

00:05:49 Scott Guest We do. For two years now.

00:05:51 John Host But based on the evidence you submitted—which we will get to in a moment—it would seem that you, Scott, and you, Misty, and I, John Hodgman, have met before. Is that correct?

00:06:01 Misty Guest Yes, we did. We met in Charleston, West Virginia, and we saw you in Atlanta in November.

00:06:09 John Host Oh, just recently! Jesse Thorn and I did the live Atlanta show.

00:06:11 Scott Guest Yeah.

00:06:12 Misty Guest Yes.

00:06:13 John Host Nice to speak to you again! You sent in a nice photo of the three of us, with me signing a thing, and I was like "That's gotta be the West Virginia show!" 'Cause it was—*[laughs]* it was in the lobby of that museum. Right? The Museum of West Virginia.

00:06:26 Scott Guest The Cultural Museum. And you were quite miffed that Misty didn't know who Patrick Stewart was.

00:06:31 John Host ...Now I'm miffed again!

[The litigants laugh.]

I'm double miffed!

00:06:36 Misty Guest I was nervous.

00:06:38 John Host Do you know who Patrick Stewart is now?

00:06:39 Misty Guest Absolutely. *[Laughs.]*

00:06:41 John Host How did you not know? How old are you, 12?

00:06:44 Misty Guest *[Laughing]* Thirty-eight.

00:06:47 John Host You're a grown-up, too!

00:06:48 Misty Guest Yes. I knew who he was, just could not remember.

00:06:51 John Host You know who's in *I, Claudius*?

00:06:52 Misty Guest *[Hesitantly]* Patrick Stewart...?

00:06:54 John Host Among many famous British character actors. Yeah, Patrick Stewart. Check it out. Check it out. You—I know you will! I ordered you to.

00:07:01 Misty Guest Okay.

00:07:02 John Host Well, nice to talk to you guys again! Now, Scott... tell me about your tattoos. Where are they, how many do you have, you're hiding them from your mommy and daddy, you gotta keep 'em on your bum, right? They're not gonna look there.

[Scott laughs.]

Not since you were 35 did they look there.

00:07:16 Scott Guest Yeah.

[The litigants chuckle.]

So no, they are all on my—you know, basically my arms from my shoulder down to just the top of my elbow, both inside and out.

00:07:28 John Host

Oh!

00:07:29 Scott Guest

So I'd say I technically have... like, five. It started with one small one, and then added onto it, and started getting bigger pieces and incorporating smaller things into one thing. Kind of became a—you know, a midlife crisis obsession for me, I guess. *[Chuckles.]*

00:07:46 John Host

But you've barely wandered into midlife! You still have a year of youth left to you.

[Scott laughs, John stifles laughter.]

Maybe you're well past your midlife, I don't know. I hope you live a good long time, is my point. So you have like two half-sleeves of interlocking tattoos from each of your respective shoulders down to each of your respective elbows. Which is tricky, right? Because I'm presuming you're hiding these from your mommy and daddy by wearing, you know, long-sleeve shirts, but if you put on a T-shirt, they would see. Right?

00:08:14 Scott Guest

That's correct.

00:08:15 John Host

Yeah. You didn't plan this very well. Let's take a look at these things! Let's go to the evidence, let's take a look at these tattoos. What was the first one you got?

00:08:22 Scott Guest

So the very first one was basically a Celtic knot that was formed with bass and treble clefs. Because when I'm not doing my day job I'm a musician, and that's kind of my passion hobby.

00:08:35 John Host

Okay!

00:08:36 Scott Guest

And I don't know if that's represented in the evidence, but I added onto that.

00:08:40 John Host

Did you not see the evidence?

00:08:41 Scott Guest

I did, but I don't think I sent the individual very first tattoo. I think I sent you the larger one that has a microphone and the guitar neck, and in the middle of that is that, you know, Celtic knot that I referenced. Uh—

00:08:53 John Host

No, no, no, no, I could pick out what the—I know what a Celtic knot looks like, sir. I know what a treble clef and a bass clef look like as well. I got it. I see it right here, on your left arm!

00:09:01 Jesse Host

I am looking at the evidence right now and I have to admit that I was ready to mock Scott's Celtic knot made out of bass and treble clefs, which is the dorkiest phrase I've ever heard in my life. But it looks pretty good!

00:09:13 Scott Guest

[Laughs.] Thank you.

00:09:15 John Host

Did you design it yourself, Scott?

00:09:16 Scott Guest

No, sadly. I found that design on the Internet, *[laughs]* and that was my very first tattoo.

00:09:23 John Host

Hey, if you wanna see all of Scott's tattoos, including his dorky Celtic

knot, all of these photos of course are gonna be published on the *Judge John Hodgman* page at MaximumFun.org, as well as on our Instagram, which is @judgejohnhodgman. And then—so on your left shoulder and upper arm, you got the Celtic knot. You've got the microphone, an old-timey microphone.

00:09:41 Scott Guest That's right.

00:09:42 John Host You got a rose.

00:09:43 Scott Guest Mm-hm.

00:09:44 John Host You've got a lot of musical notes.

00:09:45 Scott Guest Yes.

00:09:46 John Host And some flowers and stuff. And it's mostly grays and blacks, with some red musical notes. And then on that other—on this other arm. *[Exhales inquisitively.]* Tell me about what you've got.

00:09:54 Scott Guest Okay, so it's an owl. A colorful owl. And I got that basically in kind of celebration of getting my PhD. That's on the outer side. 'Cause owls are smart. *[Chuckles.]*

00:10:07 John Host I'm looking at exhibit B—*[laughs]* and I woulda sworn this was a lobster. *[Laughs.]* And now you're gaslighting me telling me it's an owl?! I'm cycling through all of these things and I don't see an owl anywhere here! Exhibit C I see more sheet music and notes.

00:10:19 Scott Guest Ah. Okay.

00:10:20 John Host I don't see an owl anywhere! Why are you telling me this lobster's an owl?

00:10:22 Scott Guest I am sorry, I was looking at the wrong photo. So now I am on track, and so yes. I grew up in Massachusetts, and my parents now live in Portland, Maine. And to celebrate my affinity for the area, I got this lobster and lighthouse to kind of represent where I've come from.

00:10:38 John Host I wish the podcast could have preserved the look on my face as I looked at this lobster and you said "Yeah, it's an owl."

[The litigants laugh.]

It speaks directly to one of my weird and sort of most Stephen King-y horror story Maine experiences, which was when my wife and I were pregnant with our first child, we visited her dad in Maine, and were staying at her then-deceased grandmother's house. It was a dark, dark, silent night on the coast of Maine. And all of a sudden, *[stifles laughter]* I swear to you, we heard this sound outside:

"AUGHHHH! AUGHHH-aghHHH!"

[Jesse and John laugh.]

And like, I sat bolt upright! I was like "There's someone outside! There's some distressed weirdo man yelling outside." And I looked out the window, and I couldn't see anything. I went back to bed and then I heard it again. "AUGHHHH-AHHH!" *[Laughs.]* And I said "Should we wake up your dad?" and my wife was like "No, let's not wake him up. We'll just wait."

And it finally went away, and the next morning I described the sound to my father-in-law. And I said "It was really disturbing and I think there was someone in distress out there," and he goes "Mm... it was probably an owl."

[John and Jesse laugh.]

00:11:54 Jesse Host I love owls as a symbol of academic success, because they remind me of a joke from my friend Chris Fairbanks's act, where he says *[stifling laughter]* "Hey, nice mortarboard, owl, but I haven't seen you on campus all semester."

[John and the litigants laugh.]

00:12:09 John Host I know, they're notorious class-cutters, the owls.

[Jesse laughs.]

I'm looking through all these photos, I don't see a picture of one darn owl! Where you getting this—where is the owl?!

00:12:19 Scott Guest I thought it was submitted for evidence, Judge. I apologize. *[Laughs.]*

00:12:23 John Host No, but I do see a photo—speaking of mortarboards, here's exhibit... D, I guess. Scott and his father at Scott's doctoral hooding.

00:12:31 Scott Guest That's correct.

00:12:32 John Host And there you are! You're wearing a mortarboard.

00:12:34 Scott Guest That's right. *[Laughs.]*

00:12:35 John Host And there's your dad.

00:12:36 Scott Guest Yep.

00:12:37 John Host Your dad is so proud. And he's so happy. And he has no idea that you've been keeping a secret from him.

[Misty laughs.]

For how long? When did you get this—when'd you get this Celtic knot?

00:12:47 Scott Guest Gosh, we're going on... probably eight years now? *[Laughs.]*

00:12:52 Misty Guest Yeah.

00:12:53 John Host Eight years, right!

00:12:55 Scott Guest Eight years.

00:12:56 John Host And for the past eight years you've been wearing long sleeves at all occasions! Hanging out with your dad, keeping this secret from him. And I guess you're pretty confident that he doesn't listen to any podcasts, right? *[Chuckles.]* 'Cause obviously—

00:13:10 Scott Guest Yeah.

00:13:11 John Host —this whole thing could be blown right now.

00:13:12 Scott Guest It could be.

00:13:14 Jesse Host He only listens to Rogan, Your Honor.

[John and Misty laugh.]

00:13:17 John Host Yeah, does your dad listen to Rogan?

00:13:18 Scott Guest That would be a hard no. *[Laughs.]*

00:13:20 Jesse Host He just... likes to get a variety of viewpoints.

00:13:24 John Host Yeah, he's just a—he's a freethinker, right?

00:13:27 Jesse Host *[Laughing]* Yeah, exactly.

00:13:28 John Host Yeah.

00:13:29 Scott Guest He is an academic.

00:13:30 John Host Does your daddy vape?

[Jesse and Misty laugh.]

00:13:32 Scott Guest He—that'd be a definite no as well. *[Laughs.]*

00:13:35 John Host So it sounds like your dad's pretty straitlaced! He doesn't listen to Rogan, he doesn't vape. He's got a pretty narrow mind.

[Jesse and John laugh.]

Is this why you wanna hide these tattoos from him, or what? What's the reasoning?

00:13:46 Scott Guest Yeah. I mean, basically my parents are, you know—I would say old-fashioned. But you know, and I—or conservative. However you wanna term it. But just kind of... Baby Boomers that came up, you know, hardscrabble life and made a good life for themselves, and seem to be very straitlaced with respect to, you know, societal norms. And they always tend to have a way to make mountains out of molehills, and I know that Misty can attest to this.

00:14:14 John Host Mm-hm.

00:14:15 Scott Guest You know, even the idea of talking about what's for dinner could create a awkward argument that would last an hour. So just the thought of having to tell them this big thing is scary.

[Misty laughs.]

00:14:29 John Host Misty, can you attest to a conversation about dinner turning into a big conversation that would last an hour?

00:14:34 Misty Guest Dinner? Yes. But I think that they are both very open-minded, and they're quite liberal. And I think they would accept it. And now that we live in Atlanta, I have a feeling his parents—his dad—will be coming to visit. And Scott cannot wear long sleeves all the time. Plus I would like to visit them during the warmer months to get away from the Atlanta heat, and I would like for him to be comfortable visiting them in Maine in July or August.

So I feel like if he just tells them, you know, ahead of time, give them a few months. Let 'em—let it sink in... they would be okay with it.

00:15:20 John Host Misty, when you're visiting Scott's parents, what kind of things does Scott do to avoid letting his parents see his tattoos?

00:15:28 Misty Guest He always has to wear long-sleeved T-shirts or button-up shirts.

00:15:32 John Host Mm-hm.

00:15:33 Misty Guest Going, you know, to the shower and from the shower, he has to

make sure he's dressed.

[Someone snorts, Misty chuckles.]

00:15:39 John Host Mm-hm.
00:15:40 Misty Guest He plans, he stresses about it. It's—conversation we have before, multiple times, about you know, "What am I gonna wear? Do I need to buy more baseball-length T-shirts? Like three-quarter-length sleeve shirts?"

[Misty, Jesse, and John laugh.]

00:15:55 John Host Yeah.
00:15:56 Misty Guest "What's the weather gonna be?" It's a lot of preparation.
00:15:59 John Host Jesse, I haven't seen those three-quarter-length baseball T-shirts out there for a long time. Are those in style or out of style currently?
00:16:05 Jesse Host Not even a little bit stylish.

[The litigants and John laugh.]

You pretty much have to go to like—not just to a sporting goods store, but to what I would call a dusty sporting goods store?

[Misty laughs quietly.]

00:16:16 John Host Uh-huh?
00:16:17 Jesse Host To get them. One where there's like—all the shirts have like a line of soil from the neckline to the shoulder line, just from not having been moved on the rack in 15 years.
00:16:27 John Host When I was in high school, shopping at The Gap, those were big. I feel like they came around the same time boxer briefs came around.
00:16:33 Jesse Host Totally.

[Someone laughs quietly.]

00:16:34 John Host Where the whole thing was like "Let's make everything just a little bit longer." *[Laughs.]*
00:16:37 Jesse Host Yeah. *[Laughs.]*
00:16:38 John Host "Little bit longer all around. Longer tubes!"

[Both laugh.]

"Longer tubes up top, longer tubes down below!" How many of these dumb T-shirts do you own, Scott?

[The litigants laugh.]

00:16:44 Scott Guest I would probably say maybe four or five that I've bought specifically for this, you know... purpose.
00:16:52 Jesse Host Scott, how long do you usually stay with your parents? When this situation was described to me, I immediately imagined visiting parents for a few hours at a time. But if you're staying at their home, how long are we talking about?
00:17:07 Scott Guest It's usually four days, five days.

00:17:11 Misty Guest 'Cause that's all the shirts he has.
[Scott, Jesse, and John laugh.]

00:17:17 John Host Then you run outta shirts and you get outta Portland?

00:17:19 Scott Guest I guess so. No, the—I didn't make that connection 'til just now, but—that was not intentional. Yeah, usually long weekends.

00:17:26 John Host Mm-hm.

00:17:27 Scott Guest You know, we lived in West Virginia for a time. We moved here for my dad—or moved to West Virginia for my dad's job as an academic. When he retired they promptly went back to Portland, Maine. And so we would have to visit them to see them. My dad would occasionally come back and visit us while we were in West Virginia, but not as often. So we would—you know, the onus was on us to go see them. And of course I wanna see them. But at the same time I'm avoiding this conflict, and you know... preparing as needed to do so. *[Laughs quietly.]*

00:17:54 Jesse Host Let's take a quick recess. We'll be back in just a moment on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

00:17:58 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:18:00 Jesse Promo The *Judge John Hodgman* podcast is of course always supported by the members of MaximumFun.org. All the folks who go to MaximumFun.org/join and join us in paying for this program. We also have a sponsor this week... Dashlane!

00:18:17 John Promo Daaashlaaane!

00:18:18 Jesse Promo Dashlane makes everything you do online easier!

00:18:23 John Promo Yeah! It fills out forms for you fast, and remembers all your passwords fast!

00:18:27 Jesse Promo *[Zoomy "Shka-choo!" noise.]*

00:18:28 John Promo It autofills for your payment information fast!

00:18:30 Jesse Promo Shka-choo!

00:18:31 John Promo Keeps your online data accessible and safe with its all-in-one app. Dashlane works across all your devices, so you can access all your accounts no matter what computer or phone you're using.

00:18:43 Jesse Promo Yeah, maybe you're using the Amiga today!

00:18:45 John Promo *[Laughs quietly.]* Yeah, maybe, uh—I don't know, maybe you can boot up your old Zune! Will Dashlane work with that? Probably not.

00:18:50 Jesse Promo Maybe you're on your Sharp Personal Organizer.

00:18:53 John Promo Look. All of the devices that exist today, *[laughs]* and are not antiques—
[Jesse laughs.]

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Jesse, do you know why it's called Dashlane?

00:19:31 Jesse Promo

Why is that?

00:19:32 John Promo

'Cause that's what it's called!

[Jesse laughs.]

Dashlane! *[Stifling laughter]* That's what it's called.

00:19:36 Sound Effect Transition

[Three gavel bangs.]

00:19:37 Promo Clip

Music: Rhythmic percussion and bass.

Speaker 1: I listen to *Bullseye* because Jesse always has really good questions.

Jesse Thorn: What did John Malkovich wear when he was 20?

Speaker 2: *[Laughs.]* I don't know how to describe it!

Speaker 3: There's always that moment where Jesse asks a question that the person he's interviewing has not thought of before?

Speaker 4: I don't think anyone's ever said that to me or acknowledged that to me and that is so real!

Jesse Thorn: *Bullseye!* Interviews with creators you love and creators you need to know. From MaximumFun.org and NPR.

00:20:07 Sound Effect Transition

[Three gavel bangs.]

00:20:10 Jesse Host

Court is back in session! Let's return to the courtroom for more justice.

Scott, there's a picture of you in the evidence performing with your band, which appears to be called The Dial Up? Is that correct?

00:20:22 Scott Guest

That's correct.

00:20:23 Jesse Host

It's a great name. You're wearing what look like canvas sneakers, maybe a Van style canvas sneakers. You're wearing jean shorts, and you're wearing what appears to be a sleeveless Super Mario Brothers T-shirt. Two questions: number one, is this intended to be Jordan Morris cosplay?

[The litigants and John laugh, Jesse stifles laughter.]

Or is it just purely a coincidence that you're dressed exactly like the co-host of my show *Jordan, Jesse, Go!*?

And the second question is how often are you wearing fully sleeveless shirts to show off your ink?

00:20:55 Scott Guest

I guess to answer the first question, if it helps my chances, this was completely intentional.

[Jesse laughs.]

I was just trying to evoke a nineties vibe. They're—the sleeveless shirt is a byproduct of living in Atlanta, *[chuckles]* where it's very hot for a long period of time. So I would say during the summer months I would tend to wear that kind of a shirt, you know, more often than not if I'm going out in a casual, you know, weekend environment.

00:21:20	John	Host	And may I presume to evoke the nineties vibe, your—the band, The Dial Up, is a pop ska band?
00:21:26	Scott	Guest	<i>[Laughs.]</i> Kind of an every band, you know, every genre the nineties, you know—not <u>just</u> nineties. Nineties mostly, but... you know. Late eighties to early 2000s era, as it were.
00:21:36	John	Host	Mm-hm! Is it a cover band or do you do orig?
00:21:38	Scott	Guest	It's a cover band, yeah. It's a lot of fun.
00:21:41	John	Host	What's your favorite song to perform?
00:21:43	Scott	Guest	Oh my goodness. There's so many. You know, anything that's maybe right now by, you know, the Foo Fighters. That seems to be very popular. I like what makes people react.
00:21:52	John	Host	You're really rocking out here, and you look—I think you look great.
00:21:56	Scott	Guest	Thank you.
00:21:57	John	Host	And I think you also look great in your doctoral robes. You look great both exposed and all covered up. What is your doctorate in?
00:22:05	Scott	Guest	Education sciences.
00:22:06	John	Host	Lying-to-parent-ology?
00:22:08	Scott	Guest	Yeah.
			<i>[The litigants laugh.]</i>
00:22:09	John	Host	Mm-hm? What?
00:22:10	Scott	Guest	That was my minor. <i>[Laughs.]</i> Administration, basically. Education administration.
00:22:14	John	Host	Oh, okay, great! And are you working in that field now?
00:22:17	Scott	Guest	Yeah, I'm actually—well, kind of. I'm a contracting officer at a major research university here in Atlanta.
00:22:23	John	Host	It's within your field, right?
00:22:25	Scott	Guest	Pretty much, yeah! I basically help faculty with grants and contracts.
00:22:30	John	Host	You're living your life, but you're keeping something hidden from your dad. You've fully embraced all of your interests, both academic administration— <i>[laughs]</i> and nineties rock!
			<i>[The litigants laugh.]</i>
			And you're wearing that ink proudly on your arms for everyone else in the world but your mom and dad, who I'm sure are very pr—they're proud of you, right?
00:22:48	Scott	Guest	I—I think so, yeah.
00:22:49	Misty	Guest	Absolutely.

00:22:50 John Host So let me ask you this, Scott. Do you have evidence, in your experience, that your mom and dad don't like tattoos, or think that they simply make you look like a nineties scuzzy indie rocker that is who you are in your heart?

00:23:06 Jesse Host *[Stifling laughter]* Perhaps a member of the legendary indie rock band the Foo Fighters.

[The litigants laugh.]

00:23:12 John Host Have they expressed disapproval of tattoos?

00:23:14 Scott Guest I mean, in a roundabout way, yes. I mean have they specifically, you know, pointedly said, you know, "People with tattoos, you know, are all going to Hell and they're awful people," no. But I have heard... you know, general conversation about, you know, social status, social class, and people with tattoos. You know, particularly with my—you know, my brother, as well as my parents. But it's not just that. It's any of these, you know—*[sighs]* social—and I struggle to bring this up, but when I was in college, *[stifles laughter]* my mother found a condom in my pocket and she screamed like someone had died.

[John laughs.]

And you know, that whole experience was so gut-wrenching for me—

[Misty laughs, Scott stifles laughter.]

—that it's now ruined me for any other kind of awkward conversations with my parents.

00:24:02 John Host Listen, if you're a kid listening to this podcast, ask your mom, dad, or guardian what Scott's talking about. I'm—I'm not gonna describe it to you.

But you were so embarrassed—have you just avoided all potentially... awkward conversations or revelations with your parents? Did you—do they know that you're married to Misty?

[Laughs.]

00:24:20 Misty Guest And may I say one thing? His parents know that I have a tattoo. I had that before we ever met.

00:24:27 John Host Oh!

00:24:28 Misty Guest And they know about it.

00:24:29 John Host Ah-ha! So the plot thickens! What's your tattoo? A Celtic knot of a bass clef and a treble clef? What a coincidence.

00:24:37 Misty Guest Unfortunately my tattoo's not as great as Scott's. I got it when I was 21. It's a butterfly.

00:24:43 John Host Mm-hm.

00:24:44 Misty Guest It's on my back.

00:24:45 John Host Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

00:24:46 Misty Guest And his parents have always known that I've had it. Unless Scott's never told me, they've never judged me!

00:24:52 John Host Scott, have your parents ever taken you aside—
[John and Scott and/or Misty laugh.]
—and said "Misty seems like a nice girl but she's got the most cliched tattoo possible on her body and you can't marry her"?
[Misty laughs.]

00:25:02 Scott Guest She failed to mention the Chinese symbol.
00:25:04 Misty Guest Yeah...
00:25:05 Scott Guest Which is even more cliché, I would argue.
00:25:07 John Host What's the Chinese symbol? I'm—oh, I'm afraid to ask.
[The litigants laugh.]

00:25:10 Misty Guest It's "love." It's a Chinese symbol for love. So I'm told. Um—
[Misty and John laugh, possibly also Scott and/or Jesse.]

00:25:16 John Host *[Laughing]* Are you sure?
00:25:18 Misty Guest I was 21. *[Laughs.]*
00:25:21 John Host No, I know! I know. Tattoos are a record of our bad judgment and poor taste!
00:25:26 Misty Guest That's true!
00:25:27 John Host That we wear with us forever!
00:25:29 Misty Guest I agree. But Scott waited 'til he was in his 30s to get his, and he made good decisions.
00:25:35 Scott Guest But my parents have never judged Misty for her tattoo. That's for sure.
00:25:39 John Host Right! Misty's wonderful. What do you do down there in Atlanta, Misty?
00:25:42 Misty Guest Oh, thank you! I work—I'm a nurse.
00:25:45 John Host That's incredible.
00:25:46 Misty Guest Thank you.
00:25:47 John Host You're allowed to have any dumb tattoo you want if you're a nurse.
00:25:50 Misty Guest I agree. Thank you.
[Scott laughs.]

00:25:52 John Host There are two issues here, Scott. And I'm sure you've considered both of them. One is whether your parents will—you know, will have an opinion about the basic idea of you having a tattoo. Or in this case, many tattoos. And two, what are they gonna say when they realize that you've had the tattoos for eight years? And you've kept it hidden all that time. But now you've got eight years of deception that you've gotta—have to explain to them. Does that factor into your decision-making, Scott?

00:26:26 Scott Guest I hadn't thought of it in that context. To me it's more of just, I guess, protecting them from any—you know, any—being upset or being aggravated. They've had a rough year with health issues. My dad's

had some health issues, but he's doing better now. But the last thing I wanna do is bring unnecessary strife to their lives. They've retired, they're trying to live their best lives now, you know. I feel like it's unnecessary to, you know, burden them with this when what they don't know doesn't hurt them.

00:26:56 John Host Misty, does that make sense to you?

00:26:58 Misty Guest I don't think that they would be stressed. I think that they would accept it. Yeah, I don't think they'd be stressed at all. His mom is very artistic. I think that she would be proud of him. I think that she would like them. Like—she would like the tattoos. No, I disagree.

00:27:16 John Host You think, but you don't know.

00:27:17 Misty Guest Well, no. But I'm pretty certain that they would rather their son be happy and comfortable and not sweating with a long-sleeve T-shirt on.

[Scott laughs.]

And plus, if his dad comes to visit us in Atlanta during the warm months, there's no way he's gonna be able to hide this.

00:27:37 John Host What was your dad's position? What did he study?

00:27:40 Scott Guest So he was a biochemist when he retired. He was the senior associate dean for research at a medical school.

00:27:47 John Host So when did he retire, again?

00:27:49 Scott Guest 2004.

00:27:51 Misty Guest '14.

00:27:52 Scott Guest '14, I'm sorry. 2014.

00:27:53 John Host That's a long time ago now. They're settled in Portland.

00:27:57 Scott Guest Mm-hm.

00:27:58 John Host This has been a hard year, you say? Like, is there a time when... conceive of revealing this to them? When things settle down and whatever's going on with their health issues?

00:28:06 Scott Guest Now that there's distance between us, you know, just, yeah, visiting them maybe twice a year. You know, again, I'm not—we're not seeing them a ton of times, and I don't feel like it—me doing what I do to conceal the fact that I have tattoos, I don't think it diminishes the time we spend together. It doesn't—certainly doesn't diminish, you know, my love for them. I feel like it's, you know, protecting any—again, undue stress. So I don't feel like it's, you know, watering down the experience. If that makes sense.

00:28:37 John Host Does anyone else know about your tattoos in your family?

00:28:40 Scott Guest My older brother does. And I only told him because I was goaded by my wife to do so, and... *[laughs]*.

00:28:47 Misty Guest And he accepted. And if he would accept them, I know Scott's parents would.

00:28:53 John Host Why, what's your older brother all about?

00:28:55 Scott Guest He's—he's an interesting fella. He dances to the beat to his own drum. You know, he's a wonderful, interesting, colorful guy. You

know, says what he thinks and thinks what he says. I definitely was scared to tell him bec—

00:29:07 John Host Definitely sounds like someone who wouldn't be into tattoos or Joe Rogan. *[Laughs.]*

00:29:11 Scott Guest He isn't, though! You know, you—you know, I say that, but at the same time I have heard him audibly, you know, make condescending comment to a barista at a coffee shop 'cause they had a neck tattoo, and he kind of implied that maybe his coffee was now unclean because somebody with a neck tattoo had served it to him. So, you know, again, he's an enigma.

00:29:28 John Host Let me say this about that: booo.

[Scott laughs.]

00:29:30 Misty Guest I agree.

00:29:32 Scott Guest I agree as well.

00:29:33 John Host That's rude, and mean.

00:29:34 Misty Guest That is. And the fact that he accepted, I feel like Scott's parents would be definitely okay with it. They would never say anything like that.

00:29:43 John Host Did you talk to your brother about whether—about the fact that you've been hiding them from your mom and dad, and did he have an opinion on it?

00:29:49 Scott Guest *[Sighs.]* He, you know, kind of just... was like "Well, if that's what you wanna do..." I did think—I do remember him implying "Well, Mom and Dad are not gonna be happy about that! They definitely won't approve of it." But that was really as far as it went. I didn't want to get too in-depth in the conversation, because again it was awkward for me, so... we kind of—you know, just kind of glossed over it after the fact, and you know, now it's really a non-issue between us. So—and we don't really talk about it anymore. He's used to them now, so...

00:30:17 John Host When did you reveal this to him?

00:30:19 Misty Guest About 2015 or '16.

00:30:22 Scott Guest Okay.

00:30:23 Misty Guest Yeah.

00:30:24 Scott Guest She's probably correct, yeah.

00:30:25 John Host Yeah. A long time ago. He's had this power over you this whole time. Don't you realize what a blackmail opportunity—this is kompromat!

00:30:31 Misty Guest I agree.

00:30:32 John Host This is fraternal kompromat! Do you have a good relationship with him?

00:30:35 Scott Guest I do. We get along pretty well.

00:30:36 John Host He could blow you up pretty quick.

00:30:38 Scott Guest Yes. *[Laughs.]*

00:30:39 John Host Has he ever threatened to? Threatened to tell?

00:30:40 Scott Guest Thankfully no. No. But that was a fear of mine.

00:30:44 John Host Hm. Have you ever—Misty, have you ever encouraged your brother-in-law to just spill the beans and... have you—or have you ever felt like just calling up your mother-in-law and father-in-law and just going like "Guys, you gotta know this."

[Misty laughs.]

"Scott's got a bunch of tattoos."

00:30:57 Misty Guest Yeah, Scott's gotta tell his parents. I think he should just text them a photo, or... have 'em listen to the podcast...

[The litigants laugh.]

00:31:06 John Host Yeah. "Can you handle it, Pops?"

[The litigants laugh.]

00:31:12 Scott Guest Scott, surely you have thought about telling them in the past, right?

00:31:15 John Host Yeah. Yeah, I have. I have.

Host If you had to tell them—say, because your brother was blackmailing you, or say, a podcast told you to—

[Scott and/or Misty laughs.]

—what would be the scenario that you envision? Would you sit 'em both down? Would you get like a breakaway shirt?

[The litigants laugh.]

00:31:36 Scott Guest I don't think I'd be that dramatic. I would like to do it in person, you know, just because I... think that that would be a good thing to do. Or maybe—I don't know! You know, now I'm second-guessing it. Maybe—maybe over text is the way to do it! *[Laughs.]*

00:31:49 John Host Pretend I'm your pops. Do a little roleplay with me. I'm your dad, and you're visiting me in Portland. And your mom's here too, and we're just cutting up vegetables in the kitchen, like they do in movies when they show families. And you're—you just decide you gotta tell me. Because a podcast told you to or your brother's blackmailing you. Say the words you would say, and the—but—and however you would say it. And just end it with "Can you handle it, Pops?" That's all I ask.

[The litigants laugh.]

00:32:19 Scott Guest Okay. Um, okay. I'll give it a shot.

00:32:21 John Host *[Weird voice]* "Well, son, how are you doing today? It's good to—I'm glad you're visiting me here in Portland. This is a Massachusetts accent that I'm using."

00:32:29 Scott Guest *[Laughs.]* Okay. "So Dad, Mom, there's something I wanna tell you. Don't freak out, 'cause it's nothing serious. It's nothing bad. Everybody's healthy, everybody's fine, but I've been keeping something from you for a long time, and I wanna fess up and be honest."

I guess at that point I would roll up my sleeves and say "I for the last

several years have been getting some tattoos, and here they are. It doesn't change who I am. I've been very successful in life, been doing very well in Atlanta. I have my advanced degree. I'm happily married. We want for nothing, and I'm still the same son that you've known all your life, but I just wanted you to know, and the reason I didn't tell you is because I was afraid you would be disappointed. And that fear of disappointment from your parents I guess never goes away, even when you're 41. So please don't be mad, I love you, I have tattoos. Can you handle that, Pops?"

00:33:16 John Host "Uhhh—I thank you for your honesty. While I respect your right to live your life however you wish, please know that you are now officially disowned."

[John and Scott laugh.]

"And I only have one son now. Your brother."

[Scott laughs.]

"You may leave."

[John, Scott, and Misty laugh.]

It seems unlikely that he would say that. I don't know what he would say. I mean, that's the thing. We don't know. But how did you feel when you were saying that? To me. Faking it. Even in a fakey way.

00:33:44 Scott Guest Eh. I mean, if I'm being honest, I felt okay about it. You know. Felt maybe—you know, a little cathartic. Because you know, it's a double-edged sword, you know, I am 41, *[stifles laughter]* and I can do what I want and I've had a good life, and I've done well for myself. But on the other point, as I've said, the fear of disappointing your parents never goes away from you. No matter how old you are. So I'm still holding on to that. *[Stifling laughter]* Your mock response did nothing to quell those fears.

00:34:10 John Host I appreciate the fear of losing parental approval, but have they ever disapproved of stuff that you—in your past? Choices that you made? Has that affected your life?

00:34:20 Scott Guest You know, only, you know, poor choices. Again, you know, the product of being a young, dumb kid getting in trouble. Doing stupid stuff, you know, whether it was... you know, driving around with my friends, you know, lighting off firecrackers and—in front of people's houses or something. You know, dumb kid prank things. But not since I think I've been a bonafide adult have I done anything to disappoint them.

00:34:42 John Host Well, you said that it's a double-edged sword. And I just wanted to say, before I go into my chambers, that... a double-edged sword would be a cool tattoo.

[John and Scott laugh.]

To have right down your spine. Think about it.

[Misty laughs.]

If I were to rule in your favor, Scott... never reveal. Always conceal, never reveal.

[Someone laughs quietly.]

Correct?

00:35:00 Scott Guest Yes! That would be—that would be good.

00:35:02 John Host And Misty, if I were to rule in your favor it's gonna be reveal as soon as possible.

00:35:05 Misty Guest Yes.

00:35:06 John Host How does this affect your life, Misty? Because we do try to hear disputes where the other party is wronged in some way. Are you being wronged in some way?

00:35:13 Misty Guest Yeah. Scott really stresses over this every time we prepare to go visit them. You know, he's gotta figure out his clothes, and it's always gotta be during the cooler months. I see a day that his dad comes to visit us, and it's June, July, or August in Atlanta, and Scott is stressing.

00:35:35 John Host And Scott's wearing a turtleneck.

00:35:36 Misty Guest Yep.

[Scott laughs.]

00:35:38 John Host A big, chunky turtleneck 'cause he got a neck tattoo just to piss off his older bro. I gotcha. Alright. I think I've heard everything I need to in order to make my decision. I'm gonna go into this tattoo parlor and have my verdict tattooed onto my chest. Upside-down, so I can read it. I'll be back in a moment.

00:35:53 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[As Jesse speaks below: Door opens, chairs scrape, footsteps.]*

00:35:54 Jesse Host Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom.

00:35:57 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Door shuts.]*

00:35:58 Jesse Host Misty, how do you feel about your chances here?

00:36:00 Misty Guest I don't know. Not too confident. I think he's gonna make Scott continue to live in—live his lies.

00:36:07 Jesse Host *[Laughs.]* Why's that?

00:36:10 Misty Guest To protect his parents. I could be wrong, but I could see him siding with Scott and say "Hey, you've done this for this long. Keep it up."

00:36:19 Jesse Host Scott, your parents have dealt with you for a long time. Do they need protecting?

00:36:23 Scott Guest I mean, in general, no. But do I want to save them from unnecessary aggravation? Absolutely. *[Laughs.]* And maybe in myself at the same time. *[Laughs.]*

00:36:33 Jesse Host Do you need protecting?

00:36:35 Scott Guest Probably, yeah. *[Laughs.]*

00:36:36 Jesse Host How do you feel about your chances?

00:36:38 Scott Guest Strangely enough, I feel equally as un-confident as Misty does. I feel like the verdict is leaning her way. So we'll see! *[Stifling laughter]* But

00:36:48 Jesse Host yeah, I'm not feeling too good either.
Well, we'll see what Judge John Hodgman has to say about this.
Hopefully everyone will lose!

[One of the litigants laughs.]

When we come back in just a second on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

00:36:57 Sound Effect Transition [Three gavel bangs.]

00:36:58 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—

00:37:22 Promo Clip [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!

00:37:43 Sound Effect Transition

[Three gavel bangs.]

00:37:45 Jesse Promo

Judge Hodgman, we're taking a break from the case. What have you got upcoming?

00:37:48 John Promo

It's early February, and guess what's coming up soon? [I, Podius!](#) The very special podcast miniseries recorded by... I, John Hodgman, of the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast; and he, Elliott Kalan, of the *Flop House* podcast; and produced by our friend Jordan Kauwling. It's a whole podcast about one of my very favorite pieces of culture, the 1976 BBC miniseries *I, Claudius*, starring Patrick Stewart with hair, and all of your very favorite British character actors when they were younger and hairier.

It's such a great work of art, and—I'm talking about the TV show, [stifles laughter] and I daresay the podcast is fun, too! So this would be a good time to start planning out to watch *I, Claudius* and then listen to each episode of *I, Podius* as it comes out, or enjoy it in whatever way you like. We put a lot of—well, I wouldn't call it work. We put a lot of fun into it, and I think you're gonna get a lot of fun out of it. So take a listen if you will. Keep an eye on everywhere you get your podcasts, and MaximumFun.org of course, for *I, Podius*.

And a special shout-out to Adam "Apelad" Koford for probably suggesting that name, *I, Podius!* I don't remember where I got the idea, but I know he Tweeted it at me at some point. And he's wonderful and he actually contributes a great letter to the show.

So that's what I've got going on! What about you, Jesse Thorn?

00:39:02 Jesse Promo

Folks have been asking me how they can watch *I, Claudius* ahead of the debut of the podcast, or along with the podcast. It is of course available for digital purchase download on various platforms. It is also available, among other places, on Hoopla. Which is a streaming platform that is available to a lot of people with library cards. Somewhere between a lot and most here in the United States.

I want to mention that on my podcast and NPR radio program *Bullseye*, which is an arts and culture interview show that you should be listening to if you don't already, we have some really great guests that have just been on the show and are upcoming on the show. Just talked to the great Greta Gerwig, who was—who is nominated for two Oscars, should be nominated for three or more.

00:39:52 John Promo

For sure!

00:39:53 Jesse Promo

For her brilliant film *Little Women*. The amazing Joe Pera, who co-created and is the star of my favorite show on TV right now, *Joe Pera Talks with You*, which is a beautiful Northern Midwestern pastoral comedy infotainment that is as elegant and hilarious and loving as anything I've ever seen on TV. Oh, I love it so much. I love it so much. And Joe is really great.

Plus, next week on the show, John...

00:40:26 John Promo

Yeah?

00:40:27	Jesse	Promo	Steve Buscemi. <i>[John exclaims.]</i> And a certain Mr. Huey Lewis.
00:40:31	John	Promo	Ohhh! What a powerful episode of <i>Bullseye</i> that shall be!
00:40:36	Jesse	Promo	Yeah. So go get <i>Bullseye</i> ! Open your—go take your phone outta your pocket right now! Subscribe to <i>Bullseye</i> . You deserve it.
00:40:41	John	Promo	If you're listening to this and you hear about this episode, Steve Buscemi and Huey Lewis, and you're like "Hm, that sounds like a missable episode," that's where I step up in your face and go "No, opposite! That's un-missable!"
00:40:54	Jesse	Promo	<i>[Laughs.]</i> <u>And</u> everyone who listens to this show knows that I have my own vintage and antique store called The Put This On Shop at PutThisOnShop.com.
00:41:04	John	Promo	Yeah.
00:41:05	Jesse	Promo	It is a spinoff from my menswear site, Put This On . And it doesn't just sell vintage clothes! In fact it sells relatively few vintage clothes. Mostly other items. And you know, it's after holidays clearance time. I decided—I made a code for 25% off anything in the store just for <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> listeners, <u>just</u> this week. So go to PutThisOnShop.com and use the code MEGAJUSTICE. MEGAJUSTICE.
00:41:32	John	Promo	MEGAJUSTICE.
00:41:33	Jesse	Promo	MEGAJUSTICE at PutThisOnShop.com will get you 25% off anything. in. the. store. I'm talking about—what about solid gold items?! Yeah! I'm giving you the discount!
00:41:46	John	Promo	That's worth its weight in gold!
00:41:48	Jesse	Promo	Exactly.
00:41:49	John	Promo	Jesse, you mentioned <i>Bullseye</i> , an incredible podcast and radio show here on the Maximum Fun network. I forgot to mention something that I just did with another Maximum Fun friend. Speaking of Joe Pera, his colleague Jo Firestone co-hosts a podcast called <i>Dr. Gameshow</i> with Manolo Moreno, and I just guested on <i>Dr. Gameshow</i> , and the episode has not come out yet. So this is a great time to go check out the back catalogue and to subscribe. 'Cause this show is so much fun! And I've heard it and I've enjoyed it, but we had such a great time playing made-up gameshow games by listeners, and playing them with people who called in. It was <u>so</u> much fun.
00:42:30	Jesse	Promo	Yeah, and a family-friendly show that you can listen to with your kids in the car!
00:42:33	John	Promo	Completely.
00:42:35	Jesse	Promo	As long as your kids enjoy madcap madness.
00:42:38	John	Promo	Yeah. It's great. And I had such a great time.
00:42:41	Jesse	Promo	It's a gameshow where the listeners provide the games, and they play them whether they make sense or not.
00:42:45	John	Promo	So I just wanted to thank Jo and Manolo for having me by, and

everyone should take a listen to it.

00:42:51	Jesse	Promo	Let's get back to the case!
00:42:52	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
00:42:54	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	<i>[As Jesse speaks below: Door opens, chairs scrape on the floor, footsteps.]</i>
00:42:55	Jesse	Host	Please rise as Judge John Hodgman re-enters the courtroom and presents his verdict.
00:42:58	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	<i>[Door shuts.]</i>
00:42:59	John	Host	Before I present my verdict, Bailiff Jesse Thorn, may I guide your attention to one last piece of evidence?
00:43:04	Jesse	Host	Sure.
00:43:06	John	Host	It is the photo labeled number 9, at the bottom of the evidence.
00:43:09	Jesse	Host	<i>[Stifling laughter]</i> Mm-hm.
00:43:11	John	Host	It's a cat drinking a glass of wine.
			<i>[John and Jesse laugh.]</i>
00:43:14	Jesse	Host	Yeah, white wine, specifically. Maybe a Chablis?
00:43:17	John	Host	Whose cat is that, Misty?
00:43:19	Misty	Guest	That is our cat Butters. He is 15 years old.
00:43:23	John	Host	Wow! He looks really good for 15!
00:43:25	Misty	Guest	He is, he's quite spry.
00:43:27	John	Host	Looks like he's got some extra toes. He's lifting his paw up to grab this rather massive glass of...
			<i>[Misty laughs.]</i>
			...of Chardonnay here. <i>[Laughs.]</i> Does he have extra toes, or is that just a blur in the photo?
00:43:40	Misty	Guest	No, he does not have extra toes. It does look like it in the photo. But no, he's got his paws open wide. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:43:47	Scott	Guest	For the wine.
00:43:48	John	Host	Yeah. He wants that wine! I just needed to show Jesse that photo. And now I'm going to judge you.
			"The liar has many friends, and leads an existence of great loneliness." You know who said that, Scott?
00:44:02	Scott	Guest	I don't.
00:44:04	John	Host	The poet and essayist Adrienne Rich. From <i>On Lies, Secrets, and Silence</i> . I was introduced to this book by my wife, and we bandy about a paraphrase of Adrienne Rich, which is "We lie when our own truth isn't good enough." And that's heavy, right? That's heavy.
			You've been keeping a lie for a loong time. And as Adrienne Rich says, lying is done with words and also with silence. And I get it! You're a good boy. I was a good boy. I followed all the rules. I didn't have an older brother to compensate for. But because I was an only

child, and just because of who I am cursed to be, because of the way my brain operates, I felt a very heavy burden to be—follow the rules and be really, really, really, really, really good, and no trouble at all for my parents.

And that changed when I turned, you know, 18, 19, and I was away in college. And I decided "I don't wanna be a good boy anymore! I wanna be a bad boy. I wanna get into some scrapes and some adventures." And one of the scrapes and adventures I got into was to drive to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and get a tattoo on my shoulder of a diamond. Why a diamond? Well, of course, it represents the repeated figure of the diamond that shows up in the short story *Death and the Compass* by Jorge Luis Borges. Because, like everybody, I chose my tattoo based on a loathsome affectation. A pretentious love for Latin American literature, in my case. *[Stifles laughter.]* It was my version of a Celtic knot of bass clefs and treble clefs!

I don't remember how I told my parents that I had this thing. But I told 'em pretty quick! Because even though I was a bad boy, getting a tattoo on my shoulder of this highly pretentious short story reference, I was also still a good boy and I didn't wanna hide something from them. You know? But it's funny, I don't have a memory of saying it to them or showing it to them. Not a specific memory.

I do have a memory, once I got started, that I wanted to get more tattoos. That I wanted to build a whole sleeve around this diamond on my shoulder. And specifically I wanted to get a tattoo of a chili pepper, 'cause it was 1990.

[John and one or both litigants laugh.]

00:46:13 Jesse Host

Wait, did you wanna get a tattoo of a red hot chili pepper?

00:46:16 John Host

I wanted to get a tattoo of a hot chili pepper! And it was probably going to be red! But it was not going to be a Red Hot Chili Pepper tattoo. Not for the band, but for my love of spicy foods! *[Stifles laughter.]* I was also gonna get the words "Bad baby" tattooed on my arm. In Spanish. 'Cause I was learning Spanish at the time.

And then I decided—I think it was "Malo nen—" I couldn't get the translation right. Thankfully I couldn't, and I put a pause on that plan. Because that would have become—what was already a fairly embarrassing-looking, small, almost prison-style tattoo, would turn into one of the great cliches of the 1990s. I saved myself. I'm glad that I never had to reveal that to my parents.

But would I have? I bet I would have.

So 33-year-old, late-blooming bad boy. You're like "I'm gonna get this Celtic knot. I don't care who sees it! Except for my mommy and daddy. They can never see it." *[Stifles laughter.]* A weeeird interplay of rebellion and refusal to rebel, in this. And you kept doing it. In quiet. In silence. Lying with silence rather than with words. Building a life for yourself with Misty, with your rock and roll, with your academics. Becoming a full human adult making decisions for yourself, but keeping this hidden for now almost a decade.

Adrienne Rich says in lying to others, we end up lying to ourselves. We deny the importance of an event or a person, and thus deprive ourselves of a part of our lives. We lose faith even within our own lives. It was a bad decision for you to not tell your parents about your tattoos. I understand why you did it—because you were scared of them being disapproving.

00:48:04 John

Host

This whole stuff about like, you wanted to save them aggravation, I think that probably you've convinced yourself that that's true. As you expressed, when you sort of did your roleplay talking to your dad about how you've succeeded in life, and you've not failed, and therefore it's okay that you have a tattoo. You're not just some... crustpunk ska band guy. You actually are Dr. Scott. A successful adult man, moving swiftly into middle age.

I thought it was interesting how quickly you said "Oh, I'm middle-aged now." And 41—I mean, take it from me. I also thought I was middle-aged when I was 35.

[John and Scott laugh quietly.]

I'm like you. I throw myself ahead in years and yearn for the grave.

[Scott laughs.]

But you're young. You deserve to be young. You deserve to make mistakes. You deserve to be your own person. And I know that you know that you deserve the unconditional love and affection of your mom and dad, which you enjoy, and I'm pretty sure... they would not withhold that love and affection, even if they hated that Celtic knot like nothing else in the world. 'Cause they—'cause they're you!

And you made a mistake by not telling them, and you've compounded that mistake. And I understand why. It just happened, day after day, year after year, of wearing long sleeves. And you've compounded that mistake to now the point that you have a double confession to make. One, you have tattoos. Which like, who cares? I mean, look around you. Everyone in the world's got a tattoo.

You know, there's nothing to be ashamed or embarrassed about by expressing your own taste and your own personhood right there. *[Laughs quietly.]* You're literally, or quasi-literally, wearing your knot on your sleeve. You're showing your thing to the world, but you're hiding it from your mom and dad, and you've been hiding it for eight years. And I can only imagine that this is corrosive emotionally, never mind annoying to Misty.

00:49:49 John

Host

I think you owe it to yourself to clear this air. 'Cause I don't think it's gonna be... *[stifles laughter]* as bad as you think it's gonna be.

That said... I don't know! Could be terrible!

[Everyone laughs.]

My wife and I bandied about this, you know, "One only lies when the truth isn't good enough" with regard to a hard email that we had to

write some people that we know, just to explain, you know, where our limits were. We were like "This might be a little hurtful to them, but if we couch it the right way and express our truth, surely they'll understand." Oh, they did not. They did not. And it caused them a lot of pain, and they—it turns out they're very unhappy with us. But that's—that's okay, too. 'Cause now we know. Now we know what the truth is.

So yeah. I mean, I don't know what else to say. Scott, you've laid a double trap for yourself. But you have to show them your "Big bad baby" tattoo, and let them know: Scott's a bad baby. Not just a good boy! Also a bad baby. "Look at that! He's got a microphone! Got a lobster! It's got an owl! He contains multitudes! It's written on his skin!"

And the fact is, Scott, I don't think anybody who goes to Portland to retire is gonna be mad that their son has a tattoo of a lobster on their arm.

So the question is, how do you wanna do it, Scott? Do you wanna tell 'em yourself? Or do you want me to call them up?

[The litigants laugh.]

00:51:11 Scott Guest

[Laughing] Oh, god.

I should probably tell them myself. I—I don't know if they... would appreciate the whimsy of having John Hodgman do it. *[Laughs.]* As awesome as it would be for us, I do need to consider their feelings. *[Laughs.]*

00:51:25 John Host

Clearly they're not fans, or—because you are so confident in coming on this podcast and telling your stuff to the world, knowing they will never, ever listen to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

[The litigants laugh quietly.]

But the truth is that maybe on some level, you're like a serial killer in the movies! You wanna be caught! Because the fact is, your brother knows. You're putting this out on the podcast.

00:51:45 Scott Guest

Yeah...

00:51:46 John Host

And your mom found that condom!

[The litigants laugh.]

That wasn't by accident, Scott! Even if it was, accidents will happen. A time will come when your brother's gonna spill the beans, or I'll be up there in Portland just telling every older couple I know that their son has a tattoo.

[The litigants laugh.]

Or you're gonna be visiting, and you know, your bathrobe's gonna slip off by accident or whatever. I don't know how a T-shirt would fall off exactly, but—*[laughs]* they'll—you know, your mom might walk into the bathroom while you're putting your shirt on or whatever, and

see it, and then it's like, uh-oh, you got some 'splaining to do!

I think it's time to get out ahead of this. So obviously, I'm finding in Misty's favor. And Scott... even though your parents hate *Judge John Hodgman*—

[Scott laughs.]

00:52:34 Misty Guest

Aw!

00:52:35 John Host

—so much that they would never listen to it... I'm gonna arm you—you can use this or not. I'm gonna give you this recording to play. What are their names?

00:52:41 Scott Guest

Richard and Elaine.

00:52:43 John Host

Richard, Elaine, this is John Hodgman. I used to be on television sometimes. I'm an author, comedian, performer, and a podcaster as well. I've got a podcast called *Judge John Hodgman*, and your son Scott and his wife Misty came to me with a dilemma. And that dilemma was whether or not to reveal to you that Scott has tattoos. Not on one arm: two arms! All of his arms. Shoulder down to his elbow.

He's been very self-conscious about this for a long, long time. Because he is afraid that you will dislike the tattoos, and you will confuse the things that adorn his skin with the person that he is, and that you will dislike him. Now, look. I know that you love Scott. I'll tell you something else: I love Scott! This guy's a good guy! You raised a good son! Look, he's a doctor of whatever he's a doctor of! He's got an incredible wife, Misty, who's a nurse.

I hope that he's revealed to you that he's also a rock star in a cover band. Or else he's been hiding more stuff from you than I thought.

You love Scott! And the truth is, we all love Maine. *[Laughs quietly.]* We all have this in common, so I'm saying this to you: as someone who visits Maine, to someone who is retired to Maine, let Scott know. That he is more than what he wears on his skin, and you see him for much more than that. As parents, you've seen Scott wear all kinds of terrible clothes that you didn't approve of! That he doesn't remember that, but that you hated. And you still loved him!

So I am not telling you anything that I'm sure you wouldn't tell him. But just in case, I'm letting you know that I—a person who used to be on television and now is mostly a podcaster and a writer—I believe in Scott and I know he's great. So I am now ordering Scott, as he sits in front of you playing this recording, to lift up his sleeves. And I'll just close this by saying... Can you handle it, Pops?

This is the sound of a gavel.

00:54:48 Sound Effect Sound Effect

[Tattoo gun buzzing.]

00:54:50 John Host

Judge John Hodgman rules, that is all.

00:54:53 Sound Effect Sound Effect

[As Jesse speaks below: Door opens, chairs scrape, footsteps.]

00:54:54 Jesse Host

Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom.

00:54:56 Sound Effect Sound Effect

[Door shuts.]

00:54:57 Jesse Host Scott! Can you handle it, Pops?

[The litigants laugh.]

00:55:01 Scott Guest You know? I think I can. Yeah. It's—it's time. I have nothing to be ashamed of. It's only my own fear holding me back at this point, I'm sure. So... bandaids will be ripped, in some form or fashion. Maybe I just hand them my phone with the podcast and run. *[Laughs.]*

00:55:20 Jesse Host It's either gonna be ripped off by this podcast, or by the fact that you can no longer find a sporting goods store with enough dead stock softball shirts—

[Jesse and the litigants laugh.]

—to keep covering your arms past the elbow! Misty, how are you feeling?

00:55:37 Misty Guest I feel great. *[Laughs.]* I think Scott's gonna feel a lot better after he tells them. And it will make visits with them so much more comfortable.

00:55:47 Jesse Host Are you gonna feel better, too?

00:55:48 Misty Guest Oh, absolutely! Absolutely. He'll—Scott will be a lot more comfortable. And I'm... that will just make me happy.

00:56:00 Jesse Host Do you have a favorite place, Misty, that you could take Scott in Maine if his parents need an hour or two to get over it?

00:56:07 Misty Guest *[Laughs.]* Oh, for sure. Any of the breweries.

[Misty and Jesse laugh.]

00:56:14 Jesse Host With his—with his fellow, uh, half-sleeve Super Mario shirt dads.

[Misty and Jesse laugh again.]

00:56:20 Misty Guest Yes.

00:56:23 Jesse Host Misty, Scott, thank you for joining us on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

00:56:26 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:56:27 Jesse Host Another *Judge John Hodgman* case—kapow!—in the books. That's the sound of the books closing after we put the case in there.

00:56:35 John Host *[Laughs.]* I thought that was Lightning McQueen!

00:56:37 Jesse Host *[Laughs.]* Before we dispense some Swift Justice, our thanks to Doug Wykstra for naming this week's episode, "Tattoos of Limitations." If you want to name a future episode, "like" *Judge John Hodgman on Facebook*. We regularly put out our calls for submissions there. You too could have your name potentially mispronounced by me on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast!

Follow us on Twitter at [@JesseThorn](https://twitter.com/JesseThorn) and [@hodgman](https://twitter.com/hodgman). Hashtag your *Judge John Hodgman* Tweets [#JJHo](https://twitter.com/hashtag/JJHo). Check out the Maximum Fun subreddit at [MaximumFun.Reddit.com](https://www.reddit.com/r/MaximumFun) to chat about this episode. We're also on Instagram at [@judgejohnhodgman](https://www.instagram.com/judgejohnhodgman), where you can see the picture of that boozy kitty cat. Make sure to follow us there for evidence and other fun stuff, like the picture of that boozy kitty cat.

This week's episode recorded by Lexie at Rich Productions. It was produced by Hannah Smith, and edited by Jesus Ambrosio. Special thanks to Jennifer Marmor for sitting in! She's here for a picture, she's almost back.

00:57:34 John Host

Yaaay!

00:57:35 Jesse Host

Love her, we're happy to see her.

Now let's get to Swift Justice, where we answer your small disputes with a quick judgment. Lola says:

"My husband likes to tell tales and amusing lies. When I see people believing one of his fibs, I can't help saying 'He's lying.' Is that so wrong?"

00:57:54 John Host

[Laughs.] Hoo! Talk about creeps! Look, it may seem hypocritical for a person who wrote maybe exactly 1,000 pages of fake facts and baldfaced lies in my books *The Areas of My Expertise*, *More Information Than You Require*, and *That Is All*, to say this is a bad practice. But yeah, it's terrible! Don't lie to people's faces! If you're not writing a book or doing a comedy show, don't say fake things and trick people. In general.

I mean, maybe one or two misdirections. But mostly that kind of joking is mean. And so I would say no. I would say what Adrienne Rich says: Lies are usually attempts to make everything simpler for the liar than it really is or ought to be.

It doesn't exactly track with the situation. *[Stifles laughter.]* But I—it was the only Adrienne Rich quote I had left that I hadn't already read.

00:58:42 Jesse Host

[Laughs.] That's it for this week's *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. Submit your cases at MaximumFun.org/ijho or email hodgman@maximumfun.org. No case is too small.

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

00:58:58 Sound Effect Transition

[Three gavel bangs.]

00:58:59 Music Transition

A cheerful guitar chord.

00:59:00 Speaker 1 Host

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00:59:02 Speaker 2 Host

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00:59:03 Speaker 3 Host

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00:59:04 Speaker 4 Host

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