

00:00:00	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
00:00:01	Jesse	Host	Welcome to the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast. I'm Bailiff Jesse Thorn. We're in chambers this week, clearing the docket! How are you, Judge Hodgman?
00:00:11	John	Host	I'm freezing! <i>[Laughs.]</i> It's—winter really happened!
			<i>[Jesse laughs quietly.]</i>
			Here in Brooklyn, New York. It's really happening now, finally. And of course as I record from my office, and rather than have a proper heating system, my office instead has a giant hairdryer stuck in the wall...
			<i>[Both laugh.]</i>
			A loud hot air machine that just blows hot air in your face until your lips turn to corn husks.
			<i>[Jesse laughs.]</i>
			Not good for podcast recording so I had to, you know, turn that off, and now I'm cold! But I can't complain. I mean, I—I'm doing it, but I shouldn't. 'Cause everything's great! How are you, Jesse?
00:00:50	Jesse	Host	I'm doing okay. I too could use a midwinter celebration. A little break. Something special to remind me that spring is just around the corner. Can you think of anything?
00:01:06	John	Host	Uh, let's... take the day off.
			<i>[Both laugh.]</i>
00:01:10	Jesse	Host	Welp! That's it for this week's <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast!
			<i>[Both laugh.]</i>
			We're gonna go take naps!
00:01:16	John	Host	Let's go fly to Curaçao!
			<i>[Jesse laughs.]</i>
			Uh, no! I mean, it's—it—you know, we need a little something to get us over the darkness of the post-holiday season. Let's think about the holidays! We had so many letters coming in for the docket right around the holidays, with holiday-related disputes, that we just didn't have time to get to before the holidays actually happened. So we have a heaping plateful of what we'll call holiday leftovers for you today on the docket. And we're gonna answer as many of them as possible.
			Hey, speaking of leftovers, Jesse Thorn...
00:01:45	Jesse	Host	Yeah.
00:01:46	John	Host	After feast days of Saturnalia, of midwinter, of the Solstice... you got food leftovers. What's your favorite leftover meal? Like a turkey sandwich, or old mashed potatoes, or is there something that you

look forward to eating later on after the meal?

00:02:04 Jesse Host Yeah, I usually like to eat stuffing.

00:02:06 John Host Yeah!

00:02:07 Jesse Host And then on top of the stuffing, I'll put additional stuffing.

00:02:11 John Host *[Laughs.]* Just in a bowl?

00:02:13 Jesse Host Yeah. Yeah, but I mean, I do like to—you know, some people will make sort of a pancake from the stuffing.

00:02:18 John Host Oh!

00:02:19 Jesse Host I do like extra browning, so I'm not above reheating my stuffing in a big pan so it gets extra crispy. But I'm not gonna go through the effort to form it into a pancake. I'm not that fancy, I just—gimme that stuffing, num num num.

00:02:34 John Host *[Pompous voice]* "Dear Cook's Illustrated Magazine, I have..."

*[Jesse laughs, John stifles laughter.]*

"I am a fan of stuffing, but I enjoy extra brown stuffing. So I have a small propane torch—"

*[Both laugh.]*

You subscribe to *Cook's Illustrated Magazine*? Part of the America's Test Kitchen empire?

00:02:51 Jesse Host I do subscribe to *Cook's Illustrated Magazine*, and it has in it a section where people give the most baroque easy tips.

*[Both laugh.]*

00:03:01 John Host Yeah. Like what they call "quick tips," and it's in the front of the book. As they say in magazine parlance.

*[Jesse laughs quietly.]*

And it's like "Jean McGillicuddy of Brookline, Massachusetts finds that sometimes food goes bad when it is not wrapped up. So she—"

*[Laughs.]*

00:03:18 Jesse Host "Has tied her dog to a bottle of Saran Wrap."

*[Both laugh.]*

00:03:21 John Host Yeah! It's like so much extra work to do these things! *[Laughs.]*

00:03:26 Jesse Host Yeah! Yeah. I just am—settle for a lousy kitchen.

00:03:29 John Host "Dan Tongle gets annoyed when the tongs open in his kitchen drawer, so he has personally crocheted 500 tong caddies for all of his tongs."

Anyway. Tongs. It's a fun word to say.

00:03:44 Jesse Host It is fun to say "tongs."

00:03:45 John Host I like stuffing. You know how I like it? I like it in a sandwich. I like a stuffing sandwich.

00:03:50 Jesse Host Wow! Do you put anything else in there?

00:03:52 John Host Yeah, you know what I do? Vegetarians aren't gonna like this. I like when the leftover gravy is in the fridge, and it—it, you know, congeals?

00:04:00 Jesse Host *[Stifling laughter]* Yeah?

00:04:01 John Host Until it becomes a spread?

00:04:02 Jesse Host *[Stifling laughter]* Yeah, sure.

00:04:03 John Host Sometimes I'll just have toast with some congealed gravy on it.

00:04:05 Jesse Host Yeah, that sounds great!

00:04:06 John Host Gravy as a condiment is my favorite thing.

00:04:08 Jesse Host I'm in! It's basically a pâté at that point.

00:04:10 John Host Yeah, exactly so! Right? Ohh, but is it a sandwich?

*[Jesse laughs.]*

Let's not talk about it. Moving on.

00:04:16 Jesse Host Here's something from Sam. They write:

"During the holidays my wife Jenny makes a cranberry bread recipe that's been in her family for many years. It's a sweet quick bread, similar to banana bread or coffee cake. She insists—"

00:04:29 John Host Or tomato cake.

*[Jesse laughs.]*

Tomato soup cake, I mean. *[Laughs.]*

00:04:33 Jesse Host Have you tasted that cake yet? A number of listeners made that tomato soup cake.

00:04:36 John Host I had tomato soup cake at the [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org) office holiday party!

00:04:42 Jesse Host Oh, yeah! K.T., our office manager here at Maximum Fun, made that cake. How was it?

00:04:47 John Host A curious blend of sweet and savory. You would not be able to guess that it had tomato soup in it. If anything, you might guess a mushroom bisque. But it was good. I liked it a lot. Thanks, K.T.!

00:05:00 Jesse Host *[Laughs.]*

"Everyone outside of my wife's family thinks it's bizarre. The only justice I seek is for her to admit this bread is a dessert, and it's kind of weird to have alongside turkey and stuffing."

And we have the—we have—we do have the recipe here.

00:05:18 John Host Yeah.

00:05:19 Jesse Host And we'll put it on [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/). It is substantially similar to like, a poundcake or banana bread.

00:05:25 John Host And she is serving it on the table with the entrees.

00:05:28 Jesse Host Yeah. Next to the turkey or whatever.

00:05:31 John Host "Everyone outside of her family thinks this is bizarre." ...Yeah, I have to side with everyone outside of her family! This is one of those things, like, within the vacuum chamber of family tradition, something strange or... un-ordinary—I won't even say extra-ordinary—starts happening, then just gets repeated again and again and again until they think that it is normal.

And then someone in the family gets married and goes "Oh, no, you guys. Um, sorry... cannibalism is wrong. This is the wrong—"

*[Both laugh.]*

You can tell me if you disagree with me, Jesse. I don't think that this cranberry bread—which has a cup of sugar in it—is as bad as eating human flesh. But I do think it's a—

*[Jesse laughs.]*

—it feels an odd thing to serve.

00:06:18 Jesse Host *[Laughing]* Wait, is that the only part that I'm allowed to disagree with? My only option to demure here is to suggest that it's as bad or worse than eating human flesh?

00:06:28 John Host No! I'm just saying my instinct is, is that Sam is correct! It's a little destabilizing to have an obvious dessert bread on the table with the entree. Do you disagree?

00:06:40 Jesse Host I have to say this, John. And it might be because I am not a lover of dessert breads, and simply never have been.

00:06:49 John Host Yeah.

00:06:50 Jesse Host But if this was a dessert, I have to say I would be disappointed.  
*[Laughs.]* And—

00:06:58 John Host No, I see your point.

00:06:59 Jesse Host And while I think it is an odd bread to serve...

00:07:04 John Host Yeah.

00:07:05 Jesse Host You know, certainly a—you know, a dinner roll or a biscuit or something would be a more likely bread to serve alongside your mains. It doesn't offend me as part of the main food. In the same way that cranberry sauce doesn't offend me. It is a complement—a somewhat sweet complement, but a complement nonetheless. I don't see this as solely being the province of dessert.

00:07:35 John Host Yeah. Maybe Jenny's trying to sneak it in there because she knows that if she serves it with the real desserts, people are gonna be like "What's that—?"

00:07:41 Jesse Host No one will eat it. Yeah, no one will care. No one will want it.

00:07:43 John Host I don't want that gross ballast. No thanks.

00:07:45 Jesse Host Why would you look at a table that had two pies and some ice cream—

00:07:49 John Host Right.

00:07:50 Jesse Host —and a plate of cookies, and be like "Ah, yeah, I would like some cranberry bread!?"

00:07:56 John Host I mean, I admit that the holiday table is a time when... obviously lines blur between, you know, sweet and savory, dessert and the main meal. Cranberry sauce being an example of like, why is that even there?

But here's the thing. I understand—like, coffee cake is called coffee cake 'cause you have it with coffee. As a little sort of like, extension of a... English tea scenario, right? Where you have a kind of sweet and savory cake to go with your afternoon coffee, or after-dinner coffee. But when would be the right time to serve banana bread? Aside from never, 'cause it's gross. Like, if you liked banana bread—and I don't care for it—

00:08:37 Jesse Host *[Laughs.]* John, I just wanna warn you right here. I once said I don't like banana bread on Twitter, and the maelstrom that followed, you might have thought I'd insulted Bernie Sanders. Like, it was—forgive the pun—bananas.

*[Both laugh.]*

00:08:54 John Host I don't forgive that pun.

00:08:57 Jesse Host For like ten days afterwards, people were mad at me about not liking banana bread! *[Laughs.]*

00:09:02 John Host I'm gonna write into Twitter right now "I don't like banana bread." and I'll let you know by the end of the episode what happens.

*[Jesse laughs.]*

"I don't like banana bread." Aaand send. We'll see what happens! That's a little bit of a tease.

But my question stands. Like... banana bread is something you would have like in the morning, right?

00:09:22 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Jesse:** Yeah, here's the—

**John:** Doesn't it feel like a morning—?

00:09:24 Jesse Host I'm gonna suggest a test.

00:09:25 John Host Yeah.

00:09:26 Jesse Host It's not strictly a dessert if it's something that you would eat for breakfast.

00:09:31 John Host Yeah. Okay!

00:09:33 Jesse Host And I know donuts are a shady part of this, but that's because it's weird to just eat a donut for breakfast. I know some people eat donuts for breakfast, but that's because they want to feel edgy and slightly mad-eyed all day.

00:09:48 John Host Sugar high all day long?

00:09:49 Jesse Host *[Laughs.]* Sugar high for an hour, then just absolutely the pits for three until it's lunch time.

00:09:55 John Host *[Laughs.]* Yeah! Here's the thing. Alright. Now that we've talked about it a little bit... I think that it's odd to have this on the table with the entrees. Because the truth is that it has a lot in common with banana bread, and coffee cake, and banana bread's a morning bread, and

coffee cake is an afternoon cake. It's not properly a dessert, so in that sense Jenny is absolutely correct. And obviously it's important to her that she make it, and I'm sure it's delicious. And it certainly is holiday-y.

I think the perfect time to serve this cranberry bread would be like if you were celebrating Christmas on Christmas morning, while opening presents and having coffee. I also think it's something that you could cut up and hand around before dinner!

00:10:42 Jesse Host

Yeah. I agree.

00:10:43 John Host

But ultimately, you know, I'm not gonna rule against Jenny following her holiday tradition. Because that's what holidays are all about! Weird family tradition. But I am going to say to Sam, um... don't let Jenny gaslight you. It is unusual. You're not wrong to think that it's unusual. And you should feel confident going forward that I, Judge John Hodgman, agree with you.

00:11:08 Sound Effect Sound Effect

*[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:11:09 Jesse Host

Here's something from Christopher:

"My extended family includes some Christians who gather the family before meals to hold hands while someone says grace. This does not take place at the table, but standing around before hitting the buffet. A minority of the family—say, 10 out of 25 people—are not believers, and I wonder how we should handle it. A couple people have been sneaking away to avoid it, but the rest of us play along.

I figure there's no harm in playing along, but is that really true? Shouldn't we stand up for our beliefs, too, and choose to respectfully abstain by standing away from the circle of handholding and head-bowing? Does it matter if the person saying grace is not our host?

Thanks for your thoughts, and... Hail Satan."

00:11:55 John Host

Oh! Hail Satan to you, Christopher.

*[Jesse laughs quietly.]*

I mean, this is obviously an etiquette question more than it is a question of justice. It's interesting. What do you think, Jesse? I'm gonna buy some time by asking you your opinion while I think this true.

00:12:10 Jesse Host

Well, I think *Judge John Hodgman* listeners probably know that I am an atheist. But I grew up going to church, and worked in a church for a time. And I have to say that when this situation has come up for me—which it has occasionally—I am pretty comfortable taking the opportunity to reflect myself on my own gratitude, whether or not it comes from a Christian god.

00:12:41 John Host

Yeah.

00:12:42 Jesse Host

That a moment of grace is a moment of grace, whether or not you are religious. I think there are people for whom it would be... upsetting or, like, deeply unsettling in some way to participate in a Christian ritual. And for those people, I would say simply—yeah, that seems reasonable to me. That's fine, if that's actually how you feel.

But generally speaking, for most atheists—including myself—that I know, it's not a big imposition, and it is a nice opportunity to basically engage in the same ritual that the Christians around you are engaging in, but in a non-religious manner.

00:13:28 John Host

Yeah, I often reflect upon what Adam Savage, the former MythBuster, says. Which is that he does not believe in God, but he does believe in prayer. In the sense of quiet reflect and meditation, and a sense of seeking of purpose and meaning, in a moment of silence. You know, whether that is by yourself or in a group before having a meal. I don't wanna speak for him; I don't know how he would answer this particular question.

But I do think that—you know, this is a big family, and you're all getting together for the holidays. And I would think that while families are always diverse, and not everyone gets along with everyone else, I admire the fact that you are all gathering together in peace and fellowship. Even though—you know, you say a minority, but it's like, almost 50% of you do not have strong religious beliefs that would cause you to say grace. And yet you are rightly—I think the family is rightly in... uh, tolerant of those who do have that faith.

I think that it would be inappropriate to make a scene about it. I would hope that the people in your family who are observant are themselves tolerant and understanding of those who might want to quietly step away. And since the option of quietly stepping away is readily available here—you know, you're not all seated around a table, but you're going to the buffet—you don't have to be part of that prayer circle. And I think that that's fine, and those people who are in that circle know that not everyone's there, and everything seems to have gone along smoothly so far.

So it sounds to me like this problem was solved before you ever wrote to us. So the only thing that I might add is you should follow your own conscience and comfort, but if you choose to join, don't—how did you put it? "Play along." Don't fake it. Don't hold the hands of your family members and just sort of roll your—roll your eyes, even though your eyes are closed. Reflect upon something that is meaningful to you in that moment. Reflect upon what you're grateful for, as Jesse Thorn said. And reflect upon how it feels to have the family together and be holding their hands.

00:16:00 John Host

There can be meaningful grace in that moment, even if you are not a believer. And of course it is a great show of familial solidarity and support. But ultimately, if it's not for you, that's fine! Just go into the kitchen for a second and grab some congealed gravy and bread. That's a nice snack to have.

*[Jesse laughs.]*

And as far as etiquette goes, I mean, you should follow your host's lead. If your host is comfortable with it, then I think you need to be comfortable with it. And I don't think you need to necessarily form an anti-prayer circle in a kind of protest of your other family members, 'cause that's just dumb.

00:16:41 Jesse Host

That's what a jerk would do. *[Laughs quietly.]*

00:16:42 John Host Yeah, that would be a—that would make you a poop stirrer, and I would not support that.

But if you are—this goes for whether they're people of faith or not. But if they're using that prayer circle to speak to openly religious intolerance—you know, or to get political, or to pray for something that is against your values, I do think that you could then have a conversation with the host and say—or to your relative and say "I'm all for saying grace, but you know, I'm not here—out here saying 'Hail Satan,' so please don't say bad stuff about gay people or trans people or something in your prayer."

I don't think that's what's happening. Do you know what I mean? But if there's—there are certain flavors of religion that are stronger than others, and if that's what's coming into the situation, I think you can stand up for principles in a polite way, too.

So there! That's what I would say. Keep stepping away if that's how you feel like it. And if you step in, try to focus on the stuff that is meaningful to you.

00:17:42 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:17:44 John Host Oh, and Hail Satan. Hail Satan, by the way. Yeah.

00:17:46 Jesse Host Hail Satan to you, Judge Hodgman.

00:17:47 John Host Thank you.

00:17:48 Jesse Host Let's take a quick break. More holiday leftovers coming up in just a minute on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

00:17:52 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:17:54 Promo Clip **Music:** Uplifting, orchestral music plays.

**Moujan Zolfaghari:** Hey everyone, Moujan Zolfaghari here with the cast of *Mission to Zyxx!*

**The Cast:** *[Speaking out of sync and staggered.]* Hello!

**Moujan:** Our fourth season premieres on February 19th, and for those of you who aren't familiar with the show, we decided to ask one of our characters to give you a quick recap of what's happened so far.

*[Distant cheering.]*

**Moujan:** So, say hi, C-53!

**C-53:** *[Voice distorted electronically.]* Hello. How may I be of service?

**Moujan:** C, could you tell us what's happening in the Zyxx quadrant, leading up to season 4?

**C-53:** *[Pleasantly.]* Certainly. The evil Nermut Bundaloy—not to be confused with the nonevil Nermut Bundaloy of no relation—murdered his fellow counselors and crowned himself emperor of the galaxy. With the help of myself and the rest of the crew of *The Bargarean Jade*, Zima Knight Pleck Decksetter knocked the emperor and an ancient, cosmic entity known as Beano into a chasm aboard



the gigantic Planet Crusher Crusher—a machine built to crush Planet Crushers, which in turn were designed to crush planets. The resulting implosion created a vast celestial object with unknown powers. We're currently in search of our former rebel commander, Seesu Gundu, who may yet reunite our fractured galaxy. Is that sufficient?

**Moujan:** Yeah! All clear to me! Mission to Zyxx Season 4 debuts on February 19th, on Maximum Fun.

*[Music ends with a triumphant chorus of trumpets.]*

00:18:54 Sound Effect Transition

*[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:18:56 Jesse Host

Welcome back to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. This week we're clearing the leftover holiday disputes from the docket, in honor of the depths of winter. Here's something from Andrea:

"My parents updated their kitchen recently, and have a beautiful stainless steel stove with gas burners. They aren't big chefs, and they tend to prepare simple, heart-healthy meals like salmon on the grill, steamed broccoli, and roasted sweet potatoes. When I go home for the holidays and attempt to use the stove to sauté vegetables, my parents yell at me I'm getting oil splattered everywhere. They quickly intervene to put pieces of foil or lids on the pans.

I say stoves should be used for cooking! And I need the pan exposed to constantly stir whatever's sautéing. I wipe the stove after I use it, but my parents still insist on lids. Please tell my parents to stop policing my proper use of their stove."

00:19:51 John Host

Yeah, Andrea, your parents don't deserve those big open cast burners. That restaurant-style stove that you wanna cook all of your high-heat sautés on. 'Cause they don't wanna use that stuff! They'd be happier with a—with a hotplate! They'd be happier with like an induction range top, or an electric range top. 'Cause they're not using the range the way you wanna use it, the way it's meant to be used.

But too bad, Andrea! 'Cause their burners, their rules.

*[Both laugh.]*

It's their house! Like, I don't—I don't think they made the right choice for them. You know, I got a—when we moved into our place here in Brooklyn, we had to buy a stove. And I got—in envy of my friend Adam Sax, who had a real commercial stove—I got a brand of commercial stove that had these really big, high-heat open burners. And they looked really metal. And I loved them, and it would boil water, like, in a second.

But the truth is, we don't have proper ventilation in our apartment. And the—these things were useless! They were so powerful that you put anything in there, and you're setting off the smoke alarm in a second. And finally the fire department came and knocked down—well, they were let into our apartment and took the stove apart because there was a gas leak. Someone smelled gas in the hallway. Luckily no one was hurt. And we knew we could never trust that stove again, after a decade of using it, and we went and we got a

proper stove that was the right power for our apartment. And I'm thrilled to use it every day! Like, it was the greatest—it's the greatest thing that ever happened.

Uh, well, no. Not the greatest thing that ever happened in history, but it was a good—it was an—a life improvement. And it's a good thing to—when you are purchasing things for your home, if you have the ability to do so, it's exciting to get stuff that you see in magazines or on cooking shows or whatever. But you really have to think "What is my life all about?" And your life is maybe not about searing steaks in a cast-iron griddle at high heat and then setting off the fire alarm and running through the house waving brooms around to disperse the smoke. Maybe you're a retired older couple that likes to eat steamed broccoli, and when you do something high-heat, you put some salmon on the grill!

And then your daughter Andrea comes in and messes up your spot. I gotta feel for the parents in this one, Jesse. What do you think?

00:22:14	Jesse	Host	Yeah, I'm with you 100%. My parents have unremarkable stoves. My father has a tiny, ancient stove that I imagine is collectible.
00:22:26	John	Host	<i>[Stifling laughter]</i> Uh-huh?
00:22:27	Jesse	Host	But is not very convenient to cook on. And my mom has a rental stovetop that has been the same since she moved in there 25 years ago. But my in-laws have recently moved to a house with—that's like... I don't know, it's like maybe 20 feet by 20 feet? Something like that.
00:22:47	John	Host	Yeah. Right.
00:22:48	Jesse	Host	Maybe even a little bit less?
00:22:49	John	Host	Yeah.
00:22:50	Jesse	Host	And they don't have a stove anymore. They just hang on the wall one of those single induction burners.
00:22:57	John	Host	That's a—makes it hard to cook on it, it's hanging on the wall, though.
00:23:00	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	<b>Jesse:</b> Well, you take it down on—  <b>John:</b> <i>[Laughing]</i> Oh, okay.  <b>Jesse:</b> —on the tiny slice of counter when it's time to cook.  <b>John:</b> Yeah.
00:23:07	Jesse	Host	But yeah, I can imagine that if they had a big beautiful commercial range, and I—every time I visited I was gazing at it lovingly because at my house there's no gas line, and so I have to cook on an electric stovetop, which stinks, and I was—wanted to sauté all day on that beautiful big commercial range, that I'd be pretty steamed if they were telling me—
00:23:29	John	Host	Yeah!
00:23:30	Jesse	Host	—I had to put lids on top of everything and I couldn't use my wooden spoon to keep things moving on the—etc., etc., etc., but their house, their rules. I'm with you 100%.

00:23:38 John Host You wouldn't be steamed, you'd be seared.

00:23:40 Jesse Host Yeah.

*[Both laugh.]*

00:23:43 John Host Yeah! And here's another thing: It might not be the mess of the oil splattering, although I could see why that would be annoying to them. It might be a smell issue, an odor issue, for them. Because that stuff—long after you go, Andrea, the smell of your sautéed vegetables and your burnt oil might be hanging around. And maybe—you say you wipe it up. Maybe you don't do a good job! *[Stifles laughter.]* Maybe you need to do better!

But yeah. Just... go out there on the grill if you wanna do something! Get a grill basket. Or, if they have outdoor space, and they have a plug outside, get one of those single-unit induction burners. They're only like 75 bucks. That's what we used for two weeks while we were waiting for our new oven to come in. And that thing's amazing! And it gets hot. It gets—you can go out there and—outside and stir fry to your heart's delight. Just show up with your own induction burner and go for it.

00:24:35 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:24:36 Jesse Host Our next question concerns some specifics about Santa Claus.

00:24:42 John Host So parents, if you celebrate Christmas and Santa Claus is part of it, you might wanna hit, uh, that 15-second ahead button a couple of times. And Santa, if you're listening, and you don't like hearing what people say about you behind your back, you might also wanna skip ahead.

*[Both laugh.]*

00:24:57 Jesse Host Andrew says:

"My wife just proposed the madcap notion that Santa not wrap his gifts this year. All the other gifts would be wrapped. Not Santa's. I say this strikes a blow at a foundational Christmas tradition: opening presents. She argues the time, energy, money, and paper savings. We have four-and-a-half-year-old triplets."

*[Laughing]* Holy cow!

00:25:23 John Host Wowee!

00:25:25 Jesse Host I—I find in favor of the parents!

00:25:27 John Host Yeah!

00:25:28 Jesse Host Whatever—*[laughs]*—

00:25:29 John Host Yeah!

00:25:30 Jesse Host Forever and ever. *[Laughs.]*

"And my wife is a superhero. She's responsible for the vast majority of holiday prep, with the exception of gift-wrapping, which I've historically handled late at night, while binge-watching my favorite holiday TV episodes. I believe she's succumbing to Internet trendiness and sacrificing a time-honored tradition from both our

childhoods. This will be our kids' fifth Christmas, and Santa has been delivering wrapped presents every year prior.

She says it will eliminate confusion about whose presents are from whom, but I believe this scheme can only introduce potential confusion to their young, impressionable minds."

00:26:09 John Host

Yeah, wow! I—I mean, I would say that this... notion that Andrew's wife has is genuinely madcap! If you are celebrating Christmas, and Santa is part of that tradition, it is not uncommon to have some presents be from Santa, and some presents be from Mom and Dad and... Cousin Billy, or whatever it is. And it's not uncommon for the Santa presents to be wrapped with a certain kind of wrapping paper, which I think is a good solution. Like a Santa-only wrapping paper.

But this idea of leaving Santa's gifts unwrapped... I mean, I—I don't wanna—this is why we asked you to skip ahead. The—Santa—Santa Claus... is not a real human being. Santa Claus is a very important tradition to a lot of families, and what I advise people who have kids to say to their kids is that Santa is as real as your favorite fictional character. Which is pretty darn real!

And you can be forthright with your kids about the fact that Santa is a story, and I guarantee you it'll still be enjoyable that morning when the kids see the cookie nibbled, the wrapping paper—the special wrapping—um, when they see that live reindeer that you brought in that got left behind by Santa's sleigh. However it is that you do the Santa play in your house.

*[Jesse laughs, John stifles laughter.]*

Even kids who know what the straight dope is on Santa will find it charming and—you know, suspension of disbelief is not something that just happens to adults going to see movies. Kids do it all the time, too, and it's fun.

00:27:55 Jesse Host

I have to say, my eight-year-old daughter has been told "the truth," so—quote-unquote—about Santa Claus... and has rejected it.  
*[Laughs.]*

00:28:06 John Host

Right! Yeah! Exactly. First of all, I like the fact that you put quote marks around "the truth," because as we know it's 2020; there is no objective truth anymore. A.

00:28:16 Jesse Host

*[Laughs.]* Well, there is a truth about Santa, and there is a Truth about Santa with a capital T. And I think your plan speaks to the capital-T Truth of Santa. The idea that we all deserve something in the darkest time of year, especially if we've been trying to be virtuous.

00:28:35 John Host

Yeah! But also, I respect and admire your daughter's decision, and I don't think that it's an unusual one. I mean, the reason I came to the firm conclusion—if you haven't been listening to this for years and years and years, my wife when our daughter was born, before our son was born, my wife really wanted to do Santa as a—well, frankly, as a deception. Like, she wanted to pretend that Santa was a—to tell our daughter that Santa was really—there was a man who was actually intruding in our home to leave presents. Who then left by the piping, or whatever.

And our—and I was like "I don't think that's a great idea." 'Cause eventually you gotta come clean. And I don't ever remember being told that Santa was an actual person; I always remembered it being just sort of a fantasy play. But my wife won the day and then regretted it, because I was out there at the *Daily Show* holiday party singing karaoke with Paul Rudd—probably the whole reason I was born—and I got a call from my wife saying our daughter asked to know the real, real truth, 'cause some kids at school were saying it was just a lie. And my wife, you know, sort of took a deep breath and said "Do you really wanna know?"

And our daughter said "Yep," and she said "Well, your friends are right." And then our daughter went into a—you know, horrible sobbing that didn't stop for hours, because for her she felt she had lost a friend! She had—she was like the equivalent in her emotional life of having a loved one pass away! And when she later said "I know about Santa. [*Stifles laughter.*] What about the Tooth Fairy?" my wife was like "Ah, what do I say now?" [*Laughs.*]

And my daughter leaned in—our daughter leaned in—and whispered [*whispering*] "I know what the real truth is, but just say the thing."

[*Laughs. Back to regular volume.*]

And my wife said "The Tooth Fairy's real!" [*Laughs.*] And our daughter was like "Great. Now it's fine." Kids can do this! It's fine. You don't have to create a deception in their lives, and all that that entails.

Now! To this point, I do not know what Andrew's wife is trying to get away with here. I am all for reducing the amount of wrapping that happens at holiday time, 'cause it is a drudge. I would argue that the best way to reduce the amount of wrapping at the holiday time is to have fewer presents. Because once you get to be my age, you realize "This is all just a bunch of junk that I don't want." [*Laughs.*] It's too much stuff. Just have a couple of very special items, and then you have great pleasure in wrapping those.

00:31:17	John	Host	But leaving quote-unquote "Santa's" presents unwrapped feels... <i>tch</i> , [ <i>sighs</i> ] I hate to say this about Andrew's wife, but like, lazy. Like a weird shortcut that frankly dishonors the whole point of the Santa fantasy roleplay. Sorry to call you lazy, Andrew's life, but it's not a <u>meaningful</u> saving of paper to not wrap one or two of those presents. Like, it's just... it just feels like, <u>shoddy</u> to me. What do you think, Jesse?
00:31:43	Jesse	Host	Yeah. The whole point of Christmas is opening presents.
00:31:46	John	Host	There you have it, everybody! It's <u>all</u> about <u>stuff</u> . Get as much as you can, kids.
00:31:51	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	[ <i>Three gavel bangs.</i> ]
00:31:52	John	Host	That's what Jesse Thorn says! [ <i>Laughs.</i> ] It's all about getting the good toys, and getting that snow speeder that you remember from <i>The Empire Strikes Back</i> . That was my favorite one. That's probably my favorite, favorite Christmas present that I ever got. What was your favorite Christmas present you ever got?

00:32:07 Jesse Host My dad got me a scooter, which I had always wanted to have a scooter, when I was probably about nine years old, eight or nine years old, he got it for me. And it was the first major gift my dad had ever gotten for me like that. You know, I had two Christmases, one at each of my parents' house, and my dad that day put about half of it together, and then lost some pieces, and... *[stifling laughter]* never put the rest together.

00:32:36 John Host Oh, no. Oh.

*[Both laugh quietly.]*

Oh. That's a sad story.

00:32:44 Jesse Host Let's take a quick break. When we come back we'll hear a case about holiday travel and a letter from a friend of the court about the recent episode "Snickerdoodilience." (*Snickerdoodle + Due diligence*.)

00:32:54 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:32:55 Promo Clip *[A quick, energetic drumroll.]*

**Music:** Exciting techno music plays.

**Jarrett Hill:** Hey, I'm Jarrett Hill, co-host of the brand-new Maximum Fun podcast, *FANTI!*

**Tre'vell Anderson:** And I'm Tre'vell Anderson. I'm the other, more fabulous co-host, and the reason you really should be tuning in!

**Jarrett:** I feel the nausea rising.

**Tre'vell:** To be *FANTI* is to be a big fan of something, but also have some challenging or "anti" feelings toward it.

**Jarrett:** Kind of like Kanye.

**Tre'vell:** We're all fans of Kanye. He's a musical genius, but, like, you know...

**Jarrett:** He thinks slavery's a choice.

**Tre'vell:** Or, like, *The Real Housewives of Atlanta*. Like, I love the drama, but do I wanna see Black women fighting each other on screen? *[Singing.]* Hell, to the naaaaw. To the naw-naw-naaaw.

**Jarrett:** We're tackling all of those complex and complicated conversations about the people, places, and things that we love.

**Tre'vell:** Even though they may not love us back.

**Jarrett:** *FANTI!* Maximum Fun! Podcast!

**Tre'vell:** Yeah!

*[Music fades out.]*

00:33:44 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:33:46	Jesse	Promo	Judge Hodgman.
00:33:47	John	Promo	Yes!
00:33:48	Jesse	Promo	We're taking a quick break to remind our listeners that your new podcast is right around the corner! It premieres February 17th. It's the <u>only</u> podcast that recaps and discusses the 1970s television miniseries <i>I, Claudius</i> . It's called <a href="#">I, Podius!</a>
00:34:05	John	Promo	Yeah! It was a—it began as a little funny ha-ha between me and Elliott Kalan, one of your three favorite hosts of the <a href="#">Flop House</a> podcast, another great Maximum Fun podcast.
00:34:15	Jesse	Promo	Yeah, he's definitely top three.
00:34:17	John	Promo	<p>He's definitely top three. And I learned that Elliott Kalan had never watched the very famous 1976 BBC miniseries about Ancient Rome <i>I, Claudius</i>, one of my very, very favorite TV shows. It was truly the <i>Game of Thrones</i> of its time. This was water-cooler television when they actually had water-coolers. Like, when that was a thing. And grown-ups watched it, and kids would wander in—it was on PBS—and it's a—it's—the acting is incredible. The story is so much fun, so torrid and soap opera-y, but also serious.</p> <p>There's—<u>pretty</u> accurate portrayal of Rome during the Augustinian period. You'll figure out what that means when you watch it. You got John Hurt playing Caligula, wearing a golden wig and beard and dancing around like a cuckoo bird. <u>So</u> strange. Not for kids! <i>[Laughs.]</i> Grown-ups would watch this thing, and kids would wander in like I did as a youth, and be so traumatized by this show—<i>[laughs]</i> that they remember it forever. And indeed I would say a full 30% of the podcast is Elliott and I reading letters from people who accidentally saw episodes of this when they were kids, and they could not erase it from their brains. And they tell us funny stories about watching it in Latin class and stuff.</p> <p>It's—I don't know what to tell you about this show. I hope that I've just made you curious about <i>I, Claudius</i>. It's really one of the best pieces of television ever made, with actors like Derek Jacobi, John Rhys-Davis, Patrick Stewart with hair, Brian Blessed, Siân Phillips, Patricia Quinn. It's <u>so</u> fun and watchable and strange. Don't watch it with your kids. There's—there's nudity and sexual content in it, okay? But if you're an adult or an adult-at-heart, like I was when I was 14, watch it and then listen to Elliott Kalan and I—<u>and</u> our producer Jordan Kawling, <u>and</u> her mom Avis—talk about this show.</p> <p>It's—it was one of the funnest things I've done this year, and I'm really excited that it's coming out February 17th at MaximumFun.org or wherever you get your podcasts! Jesse Thorn, what do you have coming up? You've got other podcasts, too, doncha?</p>
00:36:29	Jesse	Promo	I host the NPR show <a href="#">Bullseye</a> , which I... created when I was in college. <i>[Stifles laughter.]</i>
00:36:35	John	Promo	Yeah.
00:36:36	Jesse	Promo	And I've been doing for almost 20 years. I hope people will listen to it. This week we have a totally fascinating interview with Steve Buscemi about his career not only as an actor, but also his career as a firefighter.

00:36:47	John	Promo	Yeah!
00:36:49	Jesse	Promo	Which he was for some time. And he's on my pal Simon Rich's new show, or second-season show on TBS, and it's really hilarious and Steve Buscemi is a totally fascinating and amazing human being. And later this week we'll have the song that changed my life on <i>Bullseye</i> with the one and only Mr. Huey Lewis.
00:37:13	John	Promo	What an incredible couple of gets, Jesse. Honestly, if you folks aren't listening to <i>Bullseye</i> by now... I'm sorry, you're dead to me. Sorry.
00:37:22	Jesse	Promo	<i>[Laughs.]</i> Wow.
00:37:24	John	Promo	You're ghosts. You're wraiths!
00:37:25	Jesse	Promo	Powerful. Powerful!
00:37:26	John	Promo	But guess what? You can come back to life! <i>[Laughs.]</i> You can come back to life and—by listening to the—one of the best interviewers <u>in</u> the business today... my friend, your friend, our bailiff Jesse Thorn, having great conversations with the most interesting people in the world.
00:37:44	Jesse	Promo	John, next week on <i>Bullseye</i> I have a conversation—I've already recorded it—a conversation with Ben Schwartz, the comic actor who—
00:37:50	John	Promo	Sure!
00:37:51	Jesse	Promo	—you know, people would know as Jean-Ralphio from <i>Parks and Recreation</i> .
00:37:56	John	Promo	<u>Or</u> the voice of BB-8. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:37:59	Jesse	Promo	Yeah, or the voice of BB-8. And now the voice of Sonic the Hedgehog in the movie <i>Sonic the Hedgehog</i> .
00:38:03	John	Promo	True, true!
00:38:04	Jesse	Promo	And because Ben is a—Ben is a real video game lover and <i>Sonic the Hedgehog</i> enthusiast, but he wasn't familiar with <i>Sonic the Hedgehog</i> fandom intimately, so I shared with him a lot of really cool...
00:38:19	John	Promo	<i>[Stifling laughter]</i> Oh no.
00:38:20	Jesse	Promo	...fun, and let's say <u>eccentric</u> <i>Sonic the Hedgehog</i> fanart.
00:38:24	John	Promo	Oh, yeah.
00:38:25	Jesse	Promo	Live on microphone. And it was really magical.
			<i>[John cackles.]</i>
			So make sure to subscribe to <i>Bullseye</i> . If you wanna know what he thinks about Sonic's... abs, <i>[stifling laughter]</i> which are the least unusual thing in the Sonics that I shared with him.
00:38:37	John	Promo	Yeah, there's a real—there's a really, really... shall we say eccentric demimonde—
			<i>[Jesse laughs.]</i>
			—of fans of <i>Sonic the Hedgehog</i> who draw pictures of Sonic the Hedgehog. It's rea—I cannot wait to hear it.



00:38:49 Jesse Promo Yeah.

00:38:50 John Promo *Bullseye* it's called?

00:38:51 Jesse Promo *Bullseye* it's called! *Bullseye with Jesse Thorn* in your favorite podcast app. Let's get back to that courtroom, baby.

00:38:57 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:38:58 Jesse Host Welcome back to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. We're clearing the docket of leftover holiday crap.

00:39:04 John Host We're not just clearing the docket, Jesse. We're also getting a lot of feedback on Twitter for my explosive Tweet... "I don't like banana bread."

*[Both laugh.]*

00:39:14 Jesse Host How's it going, John?

00:39:15 John Host Uh, a lot of people are—*[laughs]* a lot of people are being fairly kind, saying "I'm just here for the ratio."

*[Both laugh.]*

Mostly it's just sort of good-hearted, uh, you know—there's a gif of Cary Grant saying "Get out." There's a guy saying "Blocked and reported."

*[Jesse laughs.]*

The—*[laughs]* there are a few people saying "I agree with you" and "Zucchini bread is worse," and I heartily agree.

00:39:40 Jesse Host Yeah, that's the truth.

00:39:42 John Host Yeah. Most—but you know, I don't really get in trouble that much when I say something controversial on Twitter, because I'm a man!

*[Both laugh.]*

It's mostly—mostly that's a protective forcefield from abuse on Twitter.

00:39:57 Jesse Host I think I—I think when I posted something about banana bread, I said that banana bread was a trick, and it was actually just a way to get rid of garbage bananas.

*[Both laugh quietly.]*

00:40:06 John Host Well, that's exactly what it is! I mean—

00:40:08 Jesse Host Yeah, and I was like—and I think I said you should just freeze those and use 'em for smoothies.

00:40:12 John Host Oh!

00:40:13 Jesse Host But then everybody said they love to make banana bread for everyone at their office, and everyone loves it. And I was like "Ehhh, I don't know, I think just people will eat anything you put on the conference table at off—at the office."

00:40:23 John Host Yeah! Mike McLaughlin says "You hate to see it." Matt Historian says "It's gross and bananas are the fruit of oppression." *[Stifling laughter]*

Which is... kinda true. You know? Yeah.

- 00:40:32 Jesse Host *[Stifling laughter]* Yeah! That's an interesting sociopolitical perspective that I wasn't even prepared to get into! I wasn't prepared to engage with the colonialist legacy of the fruit.
- 00:40:41 John Host I—*[laughs]* yeah, I imagine that if I had said "I like bananas" then I— I didn't realize I would be coming under attack for being an imperialist, but it would be right.
- 00:40:50 Jesse Host Yeah, well I like *Babar*, so imagine how bad I am.
- 00:40:53 John Host Right. Zoiks says "I love banana bread. Might be related, I have never eaten a burger in my entire life." Which is—that's... that's a weird choice to make, but the person I suppose is a vegetarian.

And one of my favorites is—*[laughs]* uh, hang on, I gotta go back to the top. I got a lot of replies all of the sudden. It's gone fast and furious here. "How dare you not like a thing?" Which came from Elon Gale, the creator of *The Bachelor*.

*[Both laugh.]*

And he and I have never met, but I saw him—he's a very distinctive-looking guy, 'cause he's got a big—big hair, and big beard. And we were on a flight together at one point. And I did—we never met, but he had a rolling suitcase, like a hardshell rolling suitcase, and the hardshell was transparent. So you could see everything in his suitcase. And I had to say to him "That's one of the bravest things I've ever seen anyone do." And he says—

- 00:41:52 Jesse Host Yeah, that's a—that's what they call a "boss move" right there. *[Laughs.]*
- 00:41:55 John Host Yeah. *[Laughs.]* He says "It helps me to be mindful about how much I'm bringing." Like, wow. Yeah!

Anyway, that's what's happening on my Twitter feed, [@hodgman](#). But let's go ahead and hear some more justice! Or dispense it, anyway.

- 00:42:07 Jesse Host Here's something from Amanda.
- "Is it a sin to ask my husband to take a car to my parents' house on Christmas Day? Several factors combined such that I will be at my parents' house several days before Christmas. But my husband will arrive in the evening of the day. I suggested he grab a car from the airport instead of having me leave the festivities for over an hour to pick him up. He is offended. I think it's practical. What say you?"
- 00:42:37 John Host Yeah, we—I—I think that this is a little bit of a regional thing. And I have that impression because once I was flying to Seattle, and John Roderick, our friend—who lives in Seattle—said that he would pick me up at the airport. And I was like "Whyyy would you do that? Are there—do you not have taxicabs in Seattle? Are there no rideshare services?"

He's like "No, we have those. But in the West, we pick people up at the airport." And maybe there's something to that.

- 00:43:03 Jesse Host Well, I think you live in New York, a place where there are many,

many, many, many transportation options.

00:43:09 John Host

Right.

00:43:10 Jesse Host

And very few people have a car.

00:43:12 John Host

Yes.

00:43:13 Jesse Host

And even for those people who have a car, getting to the airport and back is a real nightmare.

00:43:18 John Host

And those people that do have cars are constantly driving them all the time, to the point that the roads are basically impassable 24 hours a day.

00:43:26 Jesse Host

But that's just because they can't find a place to park them.

00:43:29 John Host

That's exactly so.

I would say that picking people up at the airport is an extremely gracious thing to do. But something that works best at an airport that is relatively low-key in its traffic situation. And frankly not something that should be... demanded! Or even expected. It's a nice thing to do for someone else. I would even limit it to be like, you should only offer to pick someone up if it is not a hindrance to you, the driver, and also if it's not a hindrance to all of the other traffic at the airport. 'Cause why add another car to that scrum of Rav-4s and Kia Sols that are just jammed up in there?

You know, offer to pay for a cab! I think is a very gracious thing to do, if that's within your means as well. And in this case, like, I—I get why your husband might be... you know, sad? To not be picked up by his own wife to go to his parents' house on Christmas Day? But to be offended, particularly when, you know, it's a busy time for everybody, feels a little bit much. Do you pick up people at the Los Angeles International Airport, Jesse?

00:44:41 Jesse Host

*[Aghast]* No!

00:44:43 John Host

*[Laughing]* Right.

00:44:44 Jesse Host

No, no, no, no, no, no, no! A thousand times no!

00:44:47 John Host

That would be a madcap notion.

00:44:48 Jesse Host

I would never—never in a million, billion, trillion years would I make an unnecessary trip to Los Angeles International Airport. I would rather rent out my house and use—sleep, you know, on a friend's couch for a week, and use the money to get a taxicab for someone, than pick someone up at the Los Angeles International Airport.

00:45:16 John Host

Yeah!

00:45:17 Jesse Host

I might—I have taken people, and picked people up, at the Burbank Airport. Which is much smaller, much closer to my house, and is pretty easy. That saves a taxi fare for someone. But yeah. If you're flying into a big urban airport, never in a million years. And I certainly would never expect someone to pick me up at the airport. It would always be a lovely thing that they were doing on my behalf. And I have traveled to and from airports by every means imaginable. You know, I'm a big public transportation user. I—you know, if I fly into San Francisco to visit my family, I will take the BART Train to my mother's house, if I'm staying at my mother's house. I won't ask her to come pick me up.

So I—yeah, no. Not in a million, billion, trillion years. And I am—I'm happily married. And my wife has not picked me up at the airport in a decade or more.

00:46:14 John Host Even if it's an airport that is very, you know, small and charming. Like, an airport that I would like to drive to even if no one was coming in! Like the Santa Fe Municipal Airport, my favorite airport in the world, it looks like—

00:46:24 Jesse Host Or the airport from *Wings*.

00:46:26 John Host *[Laughs.]* Yeah, I love that one. 'Cause everyone there's so funny! I love just hanging around there.

00:46:29 Jesse Host It would be fun to see Tony Shalhoub, you know?

00:46:31 John Host Yeah, it would be great.

00:46:32 Jesse Host But it—that's a reason to take a taxi!

00:46:33 John Host Yeah! And like, Raleigh-Durham Airport is very—a very sort of reasonable, small metropolitan airport. The Asheville North Carolina Airport has an incredible—outside of security, so you can just go there and check it out any time you want, and I urge you to do it—it's a museum of the history of commercial air travel. *[Laughs.]*

00:46:52 Jesse Host Yeah, cool.

00:46:53 John Host And it's a—and by that, by museum, I mean maybe five but probably four glass display cases. *[Laughs.]*

00:47:00 Jesse Host *[Stifling laughter]* Mm-hm.

00:47:01 John Host That has one tray of all of the silverware and cutlery and glassware that Piedmont Airlines used to offer in like 1979. Like, it looks awesome.

*[Jesse laughs quietly.]*

And then they also have—*[laughs]* a pair of shoes, with a little placard saying "After 9/11, people had to take their shoes off."  
*[Laughs.]* It's just shoes!

00:47:21 Jesse Host *[Laughs.]* It's just a pair of shoes!

00:47:24 John Host They had a copy of Stephen King's *Carrie* there. A paperback copy. It's like "Example of some stuff that people like to read on the airplane." *[Laughs.]* It's the greatest.

But even if that were the situation, I would not expect someone to come pick me up at a small airport—even the smallest airport—on Christmas Day. Because I think it's hard to remember—I mean, I don't know what's going on in Amanda's family's house on Christmas Day, what kind of rituals they have, what kind of cranberry cake they're handing out, or whatever it is. But you know, leaving—as she points out, leaving the festivities for over an hour—that may seem like a little bit of time for Amanda's husband, but on holidays, Amanda's husband may not realize that on—in family gatherings on holidays, not everyone just gets to sit around and drink nog and eat cranberry cake and watch television.

In a lot of households, that tends to be the quote-unquote "job" of the

dudes. While often the women in the family are keeping things rolling and taking things into and out of the kitchen, getting things set up and doing other things. There's a lot of labor that goes on even on Christmas Day. It is not necessarily a relaxing time for everybody, and it is not uncommon that that labor be divided unequally between men and women, and I think Amanda's husband has to—maybe—should be conscious of that, if he is not already.

So... just get a cab.

00:48:55 Sound Effect Sound Effect [Three gavel bangs.]

00:48:57 Jesse Host Yeah, and I wanna be clear that I'm—I think we are presuming here that there is not a financial impediment or it would have been mentioned. But there are also plenty of other ways to get home from an airport besides a cab, which can tend to be expensive.

00:49:10 John Host Yeah! For sure! I mean, you know, if affordability is the issue, that's a different question, but that didn't seem to be this question.

00:49:17 Jesse Host Judge Hodgman, we received a letter from friend of the court Afton, who works at America's Test Kitchen!

00:49:23 John Host Yeah!

00:49:24 Jesse Host Speaking of America's Test Kitchen.

00:49:25 John Host Afton is a friend of the court. She was part of one of our shows in Portland, Maine a couple of years ago. She took her sister Hannah to court for not having a cellphone that got reception where she lived in Maine. Afton lives in—or works, at least, in Brookline, Massachusetts, and I don't think she would mind if we said her last name, 'cause she's a great person and kind of a public figure. Afton Cyrus. What did Afton have to say?

00:49:49 Jesse Host Well, she had some thoughts about the recipe in our recent dispute, "Snickerdoodiligence." And in that case, if you don't remember, Rachel introduced a cookie recipe to her husband Doug's family, and then her husband Doug's family quickly started referring to it as "Great-Grandma Hebig's recipe" over Rachel's objections. Given that it had actually been Rachel's recipe. It reminded—it was a combination of a joke and it reminded them of some cookies that their great grandmother had made.

00:50:23 John Host Essentially it was—Rachel was erased from the conversation. She made these cookies, and her husband and their—and his brothers ignored her role in making these cookies, and re-dubbed them Great-Grandma Hebig's cookies year after year after year. And she had enough of it, and I sided in her favor. And then they came to our—to my Chicago event for *Medallion Status*, and brought cookies, which I had ordered to be called Great Rachel's cookies, and the Great Rachels were delicious.

So that's the backstory. But what does Afton have to say about that?

00:50:55 Jesse Host Well, of course Afton has created many recipes in the Test Kitchen.

00:50:59 John Host Right.

00:51:00 Jesse Host And she says:

"I spend my days developing recipes destined to end up in

cookbooks and online publications, and eventually someone's kitchen. I often wonder when they stop being mine, and truly become someone else's, once they're out there in the world. The recipes I develop here don't usually have my name attached to them, and recipes can't be copyrighted, so they exist in a strange liminal space of ownership. Are they mine?"

00:51:26 John Host Mm. I love a liminal space. Mmm. *[Smacks lips.]*

00:51:30 Jesse Host Love liminality.

00:51:31 John Host Yeah.

00:51:32 Jesse Host Love liminality.

"Is it mine, because I wrote it and tested it over and over and over again on—over many weeks to perfect it? Or is it yours, because you bought the book, and love it, and make it all the time? I was delighted to hear in your ruling your encouragement for the litigants to try and find the original recipe developer of this cookie recipe! For those publications that have test kitchens with cooks on staff, we can be a sort of nameless, mysterious group, but we're real people who do a lot of hard work to make these recipes the best they can be for home cooks.

If Doug would like advice on where to start his own home testing to re-create his beloved family cookie, I'd be more than happy to consult, and maybe after experiencing the process of recipe development himself, he might come to appreciate. It's nice to give credit where it's due when one can.

That being said, if one of my recipes ever ended up as a family tradition for someone someday, that would be a high honor indeed, and I'd happily relinquish so-called ownership. I'd also be thrilled to hear about it, if an Internet court so ordered it."

Well, I have something to say about this, John!

00:52:38 John Host Yes?

00:52:39 Jesse Host You know, a couple years ago in the MaxFunDrive, we gave out a recipe book of family recipes from MaxFun hosts.

00:52:49 John Host I recall!

00:52:50 Jesse Host And it was much-demanded of me that I give out my famous blondie recipe. It used to be that when people became MaxFun members at a certain level, I would personally bake them a pan of blondies and mail it to them overnight. *[Laughs.]* It was very expensive. It was a bad thing to offer; that's why we don't offer it anymore. *[Laughs.]*

But the blondies were good, and I put that recipe into the MaxFun family cookbook. And that recipe came straight from America's Test Kitchen! I took out the chocolate because I can't eat chocolate.

00:53:25 John Host Right.

00:53:26 Jesse Host A lot of blondies include chocolate, and I—I don't remember, they might have had white chocolate and nuts in there in the original recipe, which I think are gross. And I like nuts as a snack, but I don't like nuts in baked goods generally. And white chocolate is an

abomination.

*[John laughs.]*

But yeah! It was just America's Test Kitchen recipe. It was from *America's Best Recipes*, I wanna say. Their famous cookbook, which is a wonderful guide to how to make a really good version of every regular boring food you would wanna make at home in a typical American home, that I love to cook from.

And, you know. I think I might have credited them, but I might not have. I don't know, I wasn't really paying attention. *[Laughs.]*

00:54:14 John Host So let that name ring out! First and last name! Afton Cyrus of America's Test Kitchen. Not only a *Judge John Hodgman* listener and litigant, but also the inventor of the blondie. *[Laughs.]*

00:54:26 Jesse Host Yeah. *[Laughs.]*

00:54:27 John Host And—*[laughs]* and banana bread!

*[Both laugh.]*

00:54:32 Jesse Host The first person to have pulled bananas out of the garbage and thought "I bet I could make something that's worse than cake from this."

00:54:40 John Host *[Laughs.]* Greg Burpy wrote to me to simply say, uh, "'Swear word' you!"

*[Both laugh.]*

C-Vins, @C-Vins, says, "If it's hot and fresh—" This is all responses to my banana bread. This is going on and on and on. "If it's hot and fresh out the oven and like 60/40 butter to bread, I'll take a sniff. But otherwise, nah." *[Laughs.]*

I'm just like, can you imagine cooking a banana bread to C-Vins's exacting specifications of butter-to-bread ratio? And having it fresh outta the oven, and handing it to that person, and C-Vins smelling it and then just like, "That's all I needed. Thanks, bye." *[Laughs.]*

00:55:23 Jesse Host Yeah, I'm actually right there with C-Vins! That's about where I'm at on banana bread. If it's hot and it's covered in butter, ah, yeah, I mean... I'm not gonna not eat it, I guess, but...

00:55:32 John Host Yeah. And meanwhile, I am—I have now composed [another Tweet](#) to take us out, and you guys can check it out on [my feed](#). It is, quote, "And white chocolate is an abomination," end quote. "[@JesseThorn](#)." And we'll see where that gets ya!

*[Both laugh.]*

I don't think anyone's gonna disagree with you! I think you're gonna get some good feedback there!

00:55:55 Jesse Host I just wanna be clear, I have no beef with basketball legend Jason Williams. Uh, otherwise known as White Chocolate. That guy had extraordinary handles, and I really enjoy that video of him as like a 46-year-old man playing in his local YMCA and just embarrassing

everyone recently. That was a lot of fun.

The docket is clear! That's it for another episode of *Judge John Hodgman*. This week's episode produced by Jennifer Marmor and Hannah Smith! Welcome back to Jennifer Marmor.

*[John applauds.]*

Our immense thanks to the great Hannah Smith, who's done such a wonderful job filling in for Jen while Jen was on parental leave. We're so grateful to Hannah. She did a great job, saw us through two tours and months and months of programs without so much as a hitch.

00:56:41 John Host

Truly.

00:56:42 Jesse Host

So thank you, Hannah—

00:56:43 John Host

Deep, deep thanks.

00:56:43 Jesse Host

—for the wonderful work that you did. You can hear Hannah's productions elsewhere on Maximum Fun; she remains the producer of *One Bad Mother*. So those of you out there who are parents or are just interested in parenting, go check out *One Bad Mother*. Hannah produces that show each and every week, and has for some years now, and she does a great job over there too.

You can follow us on Twitter at [@JesseThorn](#) and [@hodgman](#). We're on Instagram at [@judgejohnhodgman](#). Make sure to hashtag your *Judge John Hodgman* Tweets [#JJHo](#). Check out the MaxFun subreddit at [MaximumFun.Reddit.com](#) if you wanna chat about this episode. Submit your cases at [MaximumFun.org/ijho](#) or email [hodgman@maximumfun.org](mailto:hodgman@maximumfun.org).

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

00:57:28 John Host

I'm stuffed! Time for more congealed gravy.

00:57:31 Sound Effect Transition

*[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:57:34 Music Transition

A cheerful guitar chord.

00:57:35 Speaker 1 Guest

MaximumFun.org.

00:57:36 Speaker 2 Guest

Comedy and culture.

00:57:38 Speaker 3 Guest

Artist owned—

00:57:39 Speaker 4 Guest

—audience supported.