

00:00:00	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
00:00:01	Jesse Thorn	Promo	Welcome to the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast. I'm Bailiff Jesse Thorn, and with me as always is justice personified, Judge John Hodgman. We'll go to the courtroom for this week's case in just a second, but first we wanna tell you a little bit about the MaxFunDrive, which just started.
00:00:18	John Hodgman	Promo	The MaxFunDrive has started! So you know that Maximum Fun's business model is "Artist owned, audience supported." You hear me saying it every week, all over the network. What that means is that when you become a Maximum Fun member, especially during MaxFunDrive, you are directly affecting our ability to continue to do <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> , as well as MaxFun's ability to plan for other future, probably better, podcasts.
			<i>[Jesse laughs.]</i>
			I mean, let's face it. <i>[Laughs.]</i> It's only up from here.
00:00:49	Jesse	Promo	Maximum Fun is supported by your monthly support. You can choose an amount that's comfortable for you. Most folks support us with five or ten dollars a month. It goes to 20, 35, even 100 or more if you're comfortable with that. It's really all about what works for you. We'll get into the nitty gritty of how the MaxFunDrive works later on.
			<i>[John chuckles.]</i>
			But if you wanna become a member right now, we'd love that. You can go to MaximumFun.org/join for all the information you need, and also to check out the great thank-you gifts that we have this year.
00:01:22	John	Promo	Yeah.
00:01:23	Jesse	Promo	That's MaximumFun.org/join .
00:01:26	John	Promo	Stay tuned for the nitty gritty. That's—I can't wait to get nitty and gritty.
			<i>[Jesse laughs.]</i>
			But let's go.
00:01:30	Jesse	Promo	Now, this week's case: "You Can't Acquit With Us."
			Stephanie files suit against her younger sister, Ashley. As kids, they both created clubs with their friends, and each excluded the other. Stephanie believes that Ashley started her club first, excluding Stephanie and sparking this years-long dispute. Ashley disagrees. Stephanie would now like to be retroactively inducted into Ashley's childhood club.
			Who's right? Who's wrong? Only one can decide.
00:02:00	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	<i>[As Jesse speaks below: Door opens, chairs scrape on the floor, footsteps.]</i>
00:02:01	Jesse	Host	Please rise as Judge John Hodgman enters the courtroom and presents an obscure cultural reference.
00:02:05	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	<i>[Door shuts.]</i>

00:02:06 John Host I must not fear. Fear is the mind killer. Fear is the little death that brings total obliteration. I will face my fear. I will permit it to pass over me and through me, and when it has gone past, I will turn the inner eye to see its path.

Where the fear has gone, there will be nothing. Only I will remain.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn, please swear them in.

00:02:27 Jesse Host Stephanie, Ashley, please rise and raise your right hands.

00:02:30 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Chairs scrape.]*

00:02:31 Jesse Host Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God or whatever?

00:02:37 Stephanie Guest I do.

00:02:38 Ashley Guest I do.

00:02:40 Jesse Host Do you swear to abide by Judge John Hodgman's ruling, despite the fact that he doesn't wanna belong to any club that would accept him as a member?

00:02:47 Stephanie Guest Yes.

00:02:48 Ashley Guest Yes.

00:02:49 Jesse Host Judge Hodgman, you may proceed.

00:02:52 John Host You have that a little bit wrong, Jesse. I only wanna belong to clubs that desperately want me as a member, and that don't require me to do anything to get in.

[John and Jesse laugh.]

Like, I feel—I feel like the Yale Whiffenpoofs should have just said, "You're in, even though you don't sing very well."

[John and Jesse laugh.]

That's what I—that's how I feel.

[Singing] From the tables down at Mory's—

[Speaking] Come on, guys, put me in the mix! Stephanie and Ashley, you may be seated.

00:03:14 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Chairs scrape.]*

00:03:15 John Host For an immediate summary judgment in one of yours' favors, can either of you name the piece of culture I referenced when I entered the courtroom? Question mark? Stephanie. Do you have a guess?

00:03:24 Stephanie Guest I'm gonna guess *The Tick*, the animated series.

00:03:28 John Host *The Tick*, the animated series. That—that would be, um, probably the least obscure of the three versions of *The Tick*.

[One or both litigants laugh.]

But still very obscure. Ashley, what's your guess?

00:03:42 Ashley Guest Um, I am guessing that it is an excerpt from—

00:03:48 John Host Oh!

00:03:49 Ashley Guest —a mission statement of one of your secret childhood clubs.

00:03:53 John Host Well, I'll put that in the guess book, but I being an only child had one club, the club of me.

[One or more people laugh quietly.]

There was no other member. And all guesses are wrong. Sorry.

[The litigants laugh.]

In fact, that was the Litany Against Fear. I was really taking a risk with this one. If either of you had ever read the Frank Herbert novel *Dune*, or had any glancing familiarity with that... cuckoo book, you would have known this one right away. You would have said, "*Dune!*"

00:04:28 Jesse Host 'Cause it is from the science fiction eco, uh, epic, *Dune*. And—
John, you were not exactly in safe territory, making a reference to *Dune* with *Judge John Hodgman* listeners.

[Jesse and one of the litigants laugh.]

00:04:35 John Host No, that's what I'm saying! It was a real risk!

[Jesse laughs.]

00:04:39 Jesse Host Did I say I was in safe territory? I misspoke if I did.
[Laughing] No, you didn't! You were rolling the dice there, buddy!

00:04:42 John Host Yeah. I thought it could be—I was like, "Stephanie or Ashley is gonna get it. And then I'm gonna have to be like, 'But what is it called?'
"The Litany Against Fear."
And then I would say, "Well, what is... the super secret space club of women with psychic powers who created that Litany Against Fear? Who banded together behind the scenes to manipulate generations of births to genetically create the galaxy's savior, the Kwisatz Haderach?" What would be the name of that sisterhood, Stephanie or Ashley? Any guess?

[One or both litigants laugh quietly.]

00:05:17 Stephanie Guest *[Stifling laughter]* I'm not aware.

00:05:18 John Host The Sisterhood of the Bene Gesserit, of course.

00:05:20 Ashley Guest Hm.

00:05:22 John Host You guys gotta read *Dune!* It's good!

[One of the litigants laughs.]

00:05:26 Jesse Host It's a good book. Do you ever read *Dune*, Jesse?
I—I tried to read *Dune* once.

00:05:29 John Host It's very readable.

00:05:30 Jesse Host Uh-huh.

00:05:31 John Host *[Laughs.]* I've never read any of the other ones, but I like *Dune* a lot. Alright, anyway. Here we go. Uh, so, let's see here. Stephanie, you bring the case against Ashley. And your complaint is that when you were children, as sisters, Ashley excluded you from a club? Explain.

00:05:48 Stephanie Guest Yes. So this dispute stems from—we're talking about circa 1994. I would have been in third grade, and Ashley would have been in first grade.

00:06:00 John Host We're talking about the era of the animated *Tick*. That's what it's called.

00:06:03 Stephanie Guest Yes. *[Laughs.]*

00:06:05 John Host Alright.

00:06:05 Stephanie Guest Yes. Also the era of the pog.

00:06:08 John Host Yeah!

00:06:09 Stephanie Guest My friend Lacey and I had a club called, uh, SL Poggalators. It was a pog-playing—

[Jesse cracks up. John and Stephanie laugh.]

00:06:23 John Host *[Over Jesse's laughter]* So Stephanie, you had a club with—with Lacey, *[laughs]* called S—

00:06:27 Jesse Host *[Still laughing]* It was a—it was a pog club!

[John and one or both litigants laugh.]

00:06:33 John Host Ohh. I didn't know this would hit you this hard, Jesse.

00:06:36 Jesse Host *[Recovering]* I didn't—that wasn't in the notes that I read, so it was a surprise!

[One of the litigants laughs.]

00:06:41 John Host You gotta—

00:06:42 Jesse Host I thought it was pretty fun when she said it was the era of the pog.

[Everyone laughs.]

[Laughing] But I didn't know it was a pog club!

00:06:49 John Host And it was—

00:06:50 Jesse Host You guys had some really good metal slammers?

00:06:52 Stephanie Guest Plastic. I had a plastic one.

[Jesse laughs/sighs.]

00:06:56 John Host I didn't know that was gonna set off a, uh—a Jesse Thorn laughter storm. That was good.

[Jesse and one or both litigants laugh.]

00:07:01 Jesse Host You—you know how I feel about the—*[laughs]*—the caps from Passion fruit Orange Guava juice bottles!

00:07:08 John Host Yeah, for those who don't know, and I—honestly, I count myself among them...

[Jesse laughs.]

'Cause I was a grown man when pogs were a thing. Uh, Stephanie, what—what were pogs, and what was the mission statement of the SL Poggalators?

00:07:20 Stephanie Guest *[Laughs.]* Pogs are about a silver dollar shape. Uh, thick paper. And you stack 'em up. Um, it's a pretty simple game. You basically stack all the pogs up. You have a slammer, which is a plastic or metal thicker piece that you throw at the pile. And you're trying to flip the pogs over. They have a kind of a front side with nineties memorabilia on it, and a back side that's blank.

00:07:49 Jesse Host Alf. The front side has Alf on it.

[The litigants laugh quietly.]

00:07:51 John Host Huh? And the back side has, like, what on it?

00:07:55 Stephanie Guest Just white paper, or... it's blank. And—

00:07:58 John Host I don't understand. The slammer—how do you—you throw it at the pile like a skipping stone? Like a mini Frisbee? A mini Friz? Or what?

00:08:07 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Stephanie:** There's—there's different techniques.

John: Or do you—or what—where does the—the slamming come in?

00:08:12 Stephanie Guest Uh—yeah. The—I think the only rule, as far as I know, is that your hand can't be in contact with the slammer when it hits the pile. So you've gotta throw it. But there's different—I think there are different techniques. I was quite the expert, but, um, *[stifles laughter]* I was trying to refresh my knowledge on how the game works.

00:08:30 John Host Yeah, because you've left childish things behind you.

[Stephanie laughs.]

And these dumb childhood clubs don't matter to you anymore, 'cause you're a grown woman.

[She laughs again.]

Or oh, no, no, you're not at all! You are living in the past, and you hold a grudge, and the grudge is against your sister!

00:08:43 Stephanie Guest *[Laughs.]* Yes.

[Both litigants laugh.]

00:08:46 John Host Now SL Poggalators—may I presume that S and—the SL in SL Poggalators stood for Stephanie and Lacey?

00:08:53 Stephanie Guest Yes.

00:08:54 John Host Were—I presume they were the only members of the club?

00:08:58 Stephanie Guest Yes, it was a two-person pog-playing club.

[Jesse laughs.]

00:09:02 John Host And what—what were the—

[John laughs, Jesse laughs harder, and then Stephanie laughs.]

00:09:05 Stephanie Guest I think Jesse's laughing because—

00:09:08 John Host What—how—

00:09:09 Stephanie Guest —pogs is a game that's not any fun with two people. *[Laughs.]*

00:09:12 John Host How many people normally get in on a pog match?

00:09:17 Stephanie Guest Well, it's the more the better, really. You play for keeps. So...

00:09:22 John Host Ah.

00:09:23 Stephanie Guest With two people, you're just kind of passing them back and forth. Uh... It's really improved by having more than two people in it.

00:09:30 Jesse Host Yeah, pogs is a little bit in spirit like marbles.

00:09:34 John Host Mm-hm.

00:09:35 Jesse Host Which is to say that part of the purpose is to collect pogs, and then in playing pogs, those pogs that you manage to flip over with your slammer, you get to keep. So it's sort of like a children's collecting game, just like in marbles, the marbles that you—I mean, I don't know exactly. I didn't grow up in Brooklyn in 1952, but I think the marbles that you knock out of the circle you get to keep.

00:10:00 John Host Mm-hm.

00:10:01 Jesse Host So it's sort of like a gambling game of skill for children, involving Alf and possibly Denver the last dinosaur.

00:10:09 John Host And these pog discs, these thick paper pog discs, they originally started, like, as—as beverage—like, the liner of a beverage cap, right? Or like a milk cap?

00:10:20 Jesse Host Exactly. From pa—it's a Hawaiian game, based on the cap liner of a bottle of POG juice, which stands for Passion fruit, Orange, Guava. It's a blend that you can still buy in Hawai'i, and some other places.

00:10:34 John Host Oh, wow. I never knew that.

00:10:36 Jesse Host But then it traveled to the mainland, and became a mania in the early 1990s.

00:10:44 John Host You slammed some pogs, Jesse?

00:10:46 Jesse Host I slammed a few pogs in my time, yeah.

00:10:47 John Host What would you say is the best technique for slamming pogs? 'Cause I don't understand from Stephanie what the physical action is. Sorry, Stephanie.

00:10:55 Jesse Host Well, first of all, you're gonna need a powerful slammer. So Stephanie only had a plastic slammer, which is a okay slammer, but you really ultimately are gonna want a metal slammer. Uh, and that—that could really set you back. I mean, you're gonna have to go to that baseball card and comic book store.

[Someone laughs quietly.]

And either buy a lot of packs of random ones, or really put in an investment of \$5 to get yourself that premium metal slammer. And then you are holding it flat between your thumb and middle finger, with your index finger on top, and slamming it directly flat

downwards, and your goal is to kind of hit it both—hit the pile both powerfully, and somewhat off-center, sort of like how you would flip a tiddlywink. So that as many pogs are not only thrown into the air, but flipped over, as possible.

00:11:49 John Host And you're slamming it onto the surface of the table or the street or whatever, and it bounces up to hit the pile?

00:11:55 Jesse Host You're slamming it onto the pile, directly onto the pile.

00:11:57 John Host Directly onto the pile. Huh, how about that.

00:11:59 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:12:00 John Host Sounds fun. Should we change this into an all-pog podcast?

00:12:03 Jesse Host I think it would be more popular.

[The litigants laugh.]

00:12:05 John Host A pog—a pogcast, as it were? Yeah.

[More laughter.]

00:12:07 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:12:09 John Host Uh, okay. So Stephanie, you had this very lonely club of two pog players, called SL Poggalators.

[Someone laughs.]

And then what did Ashley do to provoke, in your opinion, this dispute?

00:12:19 Stephanie Guest Well, Ashley had a club with her friend Lauren that was called the Mr. Thowell Club.

00:12:26 John Host Mr. Thowell? T-H-O-W-E-L-L?

00:12:29 Stephanie Guest Yes.

00:12:30 John Host Okay.

00:12:31 Stephanie Guest It was pronounced with a T-H, but it was—was it a...? I'm looking at—

00:12:34 Ashley Guest It was Thowell.

00:12:35 Stephanie Guest Was it related to the concept of a vowel?

00:12:37 Ashley Guest No.

00:12:38 Stephanie Guest It wasn't—it was a—

00:12:39 Ashley Guest Completely unrelated.

00:12:40 Stephanie Guest *[Laughs quietly.]* It was a vowel-heavy language.

00:12:42 John Host A language? Hang on, let me turn to Ashley and get a sense of what her club was all about. Ashley, you're the younger sister, right?

00:12:48 Ashley Guest The younger sister, yes.

00:12:51 John Host And you guys are in Virginia now, correct? But you—did you grow up there?

00:12:56 Ashley Guest Yes.

00:12:57 John Host Okay. And, uh, tell me about the Mr. Thowell Club!

00:13:01 Ashley Guest So, um, the Mr. Thowell Club—and I'm big enough to admit this—it was really lame.

[Stephanie laughs quietly.]

It was essentially me and one other person.

00:13:11 John Host What, you mean lamer than—lamer than SL Poggalators?

00:13:14 Ashley Guest Well, you know, you're—*[laughs]*.

00:13:15 Jesse Host Yeah. Not as cool as most first-grade clubs?

[John and the litigants laugh.]

00:13:21 Ashley Guest You know, one thing I have to correct you on is that the SL Poggalators was very cool.

[Stephanie laughs.]

It was very cool. It was very hip, it was exclusive, it was where everyone wanted to be, especially me. Everything about it was awesome.

00:13:35 John Host So Ashley, you really wanted to be part of the SL Poggalators.

00:13:38 Ashley Guest Oh yeah, it was awesome.

00:13:39 John Host What made them so cool? I mean, you're—you're—I mean, you're the younger sister, right? So were you just looking up to your older sister?

00:13:43 Ashley Guest Oh, yeah.

00:13:44 John Host Or what was going on?

00:13:45 Ashley Guest Yeah, Stephanie and Lacey were always really awesome. They were, you know, two and three years my senior. And so they did everything first. You know, they were cheerleaders on the peewee football team, which mind you I tried out for and got cut from. They, you know, were like walking, talking encyclopedias of early nineties boybands. Um, and then they played pogs! And they were really awesome when they did it.

And Lacey had a lot of pogs. So kind of between them, just the amount, the volume of pogs they had to play with, was envious.

00:14:20 John Host Right, but they were just pushing those pogs back and forth between each other, 'cause it was so exclusive.

[Stephanie laughs quietly.]

00:14:24 Ashley Guest Right. Right.

00:14:26 Jesse Host Stephanie, what pog were you most proud of?

00:14:30 Stephanie Guest I know you've been teasing me for my slammer, but I had a silver, sparkly *Looney Tunes* slammer. And it was pretty great.

00:14:40 John Host Wow. Overture, light the lights, this is it, the pog of nights!

[Everyone laughs.]

Uh, well, that was our segment on—called "Top Pogs"!

[More laughter.]

Here on the podcast.

00:14:53 Jesse Host Ashley, did you have any pogs at the time?

00:14:55 Ashley Guest I had a few pogs. I also had a silver *Looney Tunes* slammer. But I unfortunately did not have anyone to play with.

[Ashley and Stephanie laugh.]

So I did not get to use it very frequently.

00:15:07 John Host It sounds like Ashley could have been a real asset to the SL Poggalators. Stephanie, why was she not invited to join?

00:15:13 Stephanie Guest She had the Mr. Thowell Club. It's my clear memory that the Mr. Thowell Club existed first, and that Lacey and I created the Poggalators in response to that. Although—

00:15:25 John Host I see.

00:15:26 Stephanie Guest I have—I have a little confession about that.

00:15:28 John Host I will allow it.

00:15:30 Stephanie Guest It doesn't help my case, but, uh—

00:15:31 John Host Then I'll double allow it.

[The litigants laugh.]

00:15:34 Stephanie Guest I was researching—well, I was—I reached out to Lacey, to see if she still had any pogs, 'cause I wanted to submit a picture for the evidence.

00:15:43 John Host Mm-hm.

00:15:44 Stephanie Guest And, uh—well, her first reaction was, "Why? Are pogs coming back?"

[John snorts, Jesse laughs, Stephanie stifles laughter.]

And I said, "No, I'm gonna be on this podcast where we're gonna talk about—"

00:15:53 Jesse Host She's like, "I'm there! I'll meet you at the ska concert!"

[Stephanie and John laugh.]

00:15:58 Stephanie Guest So I told her we were gonna talk about the Poggalators and the Mr. Thowell Club, and her immediate response was, "Oh, the Mr. Thowell Club. That's the club that Ashley and Lauren created after we excluded them from the Poggalators, isn't it?" So...

00:16:13 John Host Ohhh, so there's a little bit of a Gray House dispute here!

00:16:17 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Stephanie & Lacey:** Mm-hm.

00:16:18 John Host In *Judge John Hodgman* parlance.

00:16:20 Stephanie Guest Yeah.

00:16:21 John Host As to what actually happened. Which came first? The Poggalators or the Thowells?

00:16:25 Stephanie Guest Yeah. Ashley doesn't—didn't know about that.

00:16:28 John Host Yeah.

00:16:29 Stephanie Guest But Lacey's recollection is in line with Ashley's, I have to admit.

00:16:33 John Host Right.

00:16:34 Ashley Guest Well, I must say I'm not surprised.

[Stephanie laughs.]

00:16:35 John Host And just because you brought it up, you do have some evidence, Stephanie. Specifically exhibit A, being Lacey's pogs. She still has 'em. You sent in a photo of her pog collection. And this of course is available on the *Judge John Hodgman* page at MaximumFun.org, as well as on our Instagram [@judgejohnhodgman](https://www.instagram.com/judgejohnhodgman).

And I don't know if you're seeing this, Jesse. As a pog neophyte, this is a pretty impressive collection of pogs to me. What do you think?

00:17:02 Jesse Host Now, I'm opening up the pog collection here. I'm seeing a lot of holograms. Which is very impressive to me.

[Stephanie or Ashley chuckles.]

Uh, one of them says "Be My Valentine," which is a—that's a seasonal hologram. That's double valuable. Uh, there's also what looks like a unicorn pegasus, which is one of the most powerful creatures. Um...

[One of the litigants laughs quietly.]

00:17:26 John Host In pogs, or in—in general? I—

00:17:28 Jesse Host Uh, I think both in pogs and in general.

00:17:31 John Host But in—like, in pog parlance, a unicorn pegasus is something you're looking for?

00:17:37 Jesse Host Well, I think you're looking for holograms, but you're also looking for incredible creatures.

00:17:41 John Host *[Laughs.]* Okay. Like that red cardinal just sitting there on the grass...

00:17:45 Jesse Host *[Laughs.]* The red cardinal that is apparently from a series of pogs that just depict types of bird.

00:17:51 John Host Yeah. *[Laughs.]*

00:17:53 Jesse Host Is a less impressive pog, I have to say.

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

00:17:56 John Host What about these—what about these, uh, cartoonish footprints that are styled in the flags of the United States and then I guess the Republic of Ireland, respectively? Is that something you're looking for, footprint flag pogs?

00:18:11 Jesse Host Well, I mean, I wouldn't turn down a footprint flag pog. *[Laughs.]* I'm no Quentin Tarantino, but it's fun.

00:18:18 John Host Is that something that's common, Stephanie? The FFP, the Footprint Flag Pog? Gotta get 'em all?

00:18:22 Stephanie Guest *[Laughs.]* Not that I'm especially aware of, but there was a—a wide variety.

00:18:29 Jesse Host I think these Disney pogs also look like particularly covetable pogs. I see one featuring Aladdin from the movie *Aladdin*, of course with his famous monkey on his head.

00:18:40 John Host Yep. Classic monkey head pog.

00:18:41 Jesse Host And then I'm seeing one featuring Cinderella, from the movie *Cinderella*.

00:18:45 John Host Oh, yeah, that's what that one is! Yeah, that looks good, too!

00:18:48 Jesse Host She also submitted a picture of a genuinely impressive holographic bunny rabbit. And a big yellow pog tube. Which, I'm gonna be frank, uh, in retrospect, definitely looks like something you keep drugs in.

[John and one or both litigants laugh.]

00:19:05 John Host It looks like a big, tall film canister, but it's the size—that's where you keep your pogs, in the long—in this cylindrical carrying case. Is that correct, Stephanie?

00:19:13 Stephanie Guest Yes.

00:19:16 John Host So on a scale of awesome to radical...

[Jesse laughs.]

Where would you place Lacey's pog collection?

00:19:23 Jesse Host Well, I'm gonna say I'm seeing relatively few exciting branded characters. I would have liked to have seen perhaps some characters from *U.S. Acres*.

[John laughs.]

Uh, the other—*[laughs]*—

00:19:38 John Host The off-brand *Garfield*? I mean, it was Jim Davis, so—

00:19:39 Jesse Host *[Laughing]* Yeah, the other half of the *Garfield* television show.

[Stops laughing.]

It had maybe an egg with feet? I don't remember.

00:19:48 John Host There was an egg with feet. There was a—a pig named Orson. These things I recall.

00:19:52 Jesse Host But I think overall, especially given the sheer volume of reflective and holographic pogs, it's a not unimpressive collection, and I would say that the holographic "Be My Valentine," uh, which is a type of love pog—

[John snorts quietly.]

—and the blacklight poster-style eyeball with lightning bolts, uh, are two of the real highlights.

00:20:16 John Host So first of all, I now wish upon you a career as *Antiques Roadshow* only pog appraiser.

[Jesse and John laugh.]

Like, would that be a blessing or a curse? I mean, it would be a curse, obviously, but like...

[Jesse laughs.]

If *Antiques Roadshow* called you up, Jesse, and said, "Guess what? We finally—we really need you this time. We want you to be on *Antiques Roadshow*."

[One of the litigants laughs.]

"Once a month. But you're only allowed to appraise pogs." Would that be a yes or a no?"

00:20:42 Jesse Host Well, you know, the experts on *Antiques Roadshow* aren't paid, and have to pay their own way to the places where they tape *Antiques Roadshow*...

00:20:50 John Host Oh my gosh, really?

00:20:51 Jesse Host Uh, that's all true. Uh, but I think I would still do it.

[Jesse and John laugh.]

00:20:58 John Host Alright, good. I'll—you know, I got an email from them once. I'll let them know. I'll let them know that you're interested in the job.

Stephanie, are there any pogs in this collection—and Ashley, we haven't forgotten about you. This is not the exclusion of little sisters right now.

[The litigants laugh.]

You're gonna get your full due. But I'm deep into this pog culture now! This is my life! Stephanie, are there any pogs in Lacey's collection that used to be yours?

00:21:25 Stephanie Guest I'm sure there are.

00:21:26 John Host That you remember losing in a bad beat?

[The litigants laugh.]

00:21:30 Stephanie Guest I don't have any—there aren't any specific memories that come to mind. I mean, most games kind of went... the same—the game kinda goes the same way no matter when you play it, but, uh, we just kinda traded back and forth, and it became—

00:21:44 John Host Yeah, but there was a day when the SL Poggalators disbanded, and the last game of pogs between you and Lacey unfolded. You're not haunted by the loss of any of these particular pogs?

[Stephanie laughs.]

There's no one that got away in here, that you wish you could have back?

00:22:00 Stephanie Guest No—as far as I can remember I never actually, uh, purchased any of the pogs. I think they all came my way through playing the game. So they just kinda—they come and they go. They're transient.

00:22:12 John Host Right. You—and you—but—and you've left pogs behind, obviously. You don't have your pogs, do you?

00:22:17 Stephanie Guest No, I don't.

00:22:18 John Host No. So the whole thing—you didn't even care about the pogs. It was just excluding your sister, it sounds like to me.

[The litigants laugh.]

Making her feel bad.

00:22:25 Jesse Host Let's take a break, and talk about this year's MxFunDrive. We'll be back in the courtroom with more about the SL Poggalators and the Mr. Thowell Club in just a second.

00:22:36 Jesse Promo So our Twitter account, the [MaxFunHQ](#) Twitter account, asked what MaxFun means to all the folks who follow it. And I was pretty deeply touched by the responses that we got to that Tweet.

I'm just gonna give an example. One person, *[struggling with pronunciation]* [@Zixise](#)—Z-I-X-I-S-E—Zix—

00:22:59 John Promo Zixxy!

00:23:00 Jesse Promo Zz—Zixizzy.

00:23:01 John Promo Zixizzy. Zizizy. Great handle.

00:23:03 Jesse Promo Said, "The thing I like about [@MaxFunHQ](#) is when they say they care, I actually believe them."

00:23:10 John Promo Mm-hm!

00:23:12 Jesse Promo And I know that, uh—uh... *[stifles laughter]* my life has been particularly difficult, as the lives of many other people who are listening to this have been particularly difficult, recently. And... I know that both listening to MaxFun shows—my favorite MaxFun shows to listen to—and the audience community around MaxFun have been such an immense support and comfort to me. That I have to say, like, not only do I agree, because—

[Both laugh quietly.]

—I know that we do actually care, but I feel like that caring is reciprocated.

00:23:51 John Promo Yeah.

00:23:52 Jesse Promo And in tough times, that kind of thing goes a long way, I think.

00:23:57 John Promo Yeah. I mean, we had Lisa from—writing in from Liverpool. And I know she's not lying, 'cause she spelled "favourite" with a U.

[Jesse laughs.]

She wrote, "Listening to my favourite (*fave-owr-it*) podcasts—"

[Jesse laughs.]

"—feels like hanging out with old friends. And as someone who's stuck home alone for the foreseeable future, it really lifts my spirits." And you know, I'm profoundly lucky in lots and lots and lots of ways.

And one of the things that I'm luckiest for is that I get to do this podcast. I mean, not merely because—you know, my life had transitioned largely to sitting alone in a room, talking into a microphone, and writing books for the past couple of years already, so... the great changes in my life were fairly minor, compared to a lot of people who lost work, lost family, who went through big, hard changes.

For me, I had the luck of being able to continue to... talk into a microphone, with my friends and to my friends. And that luck is only compounded by my realizing that, you know, through this time, not only have you stayed with us in spirit and in support in a way that has totally astounded me, but also you've stayed with me. You've kept me company. In your letters, in your emails, your Tweets, talking to you on Instagram. It's been so valuable to me personally, to appreciate—again! Not that I didn't appreciate it before, but this time even deeper—what this community of listeners and this community of podcasters at MaxFun means to me.

Over the past few years, *Judge John Hodgman* has become so much more of a central part of not merely my financial life, but my creative life. And now my personal life. And I'm very grateful for it. So thank you for hanging in there with us, and listening.

Um—uh, I don't use this term, 'cause it refers to God or whatever a lot. But I feel really blessed and lucky that I and we have been able to share this strange and hard period of time with you, and be a little less alone.

00:26:17	Jesse	Promo	Yeah. I mean, I think listeners might have noticed that I haven't been on the show as much lately. And it's because, uh, this has been a very difficult time for me personally, and for my family, and the support that I've gotten from our community has been... extraordinarily important. And not only in terms of people contacting me and talking to me, and—that has been pretty incredible. But also that our audience has stood with us, and I've been very grateful that I've—you know, as I've been going through really tough things in my life, that I have still been able to, you know, pay my mortgage and so forth. And pay medical bills, and so on.
00:27:00	John	Promo	And pay your employees! And pay <u>their</u> insurance!
00:27:03	Jesse	Promo	And—exactly. <u>Not</u> have to think that I'm gonna have to lay off—
00:27:05	John	Promo	Right!
00:27:06	Jesse	Promo	—these people who work here at MaxFun, because they really care.
00:27:09	John	Promo	Yeah. So we know that there are <u>so</u> many, many worthy causes. Particularly now. And times are harder! Than—for a lot of people, than they have been in a lifetime. I mean, I—to show you how the vegan sausage is made, you know, we recorded these pledge breaks for MaxFunDrive weeks and weeks and weeks ago, before we knew any of this was going to happen, because we were planning to—you know, schedule it as we usually do, for the early spring.

And as soon as things started to turn, we knew this is not the time to add any stress to our listenership. And to our incredible delight and

surprise, you've stayed with us. And we're grateful. And now I'm re-recording these pledge breaks, and now I'm not in my home studio! I am in a small closet in Maine, surrounded by my laundry. And I couldn't be happier to be here.

So if you're not in a financial position to be a MaxFun member, obviously zero problem. Completely understand. We're just glad you're out there. But if you are in a position to invest in this show, the *Judge John Hodgman* show, or any of your favorite shows on MaximumFun.org, we really appreciate your supporting our ability to make it. 'Cause it really counts.

00:28:30 Jesse Promo

Yeah. You can go to MaximumFun.org/join to join now. We have really cool gifts for people who become members. There's a new *Judge John Hodgman* pin that says "Like what you like," and there are so many other great gifts, and anyone who joins at any of our monthly levels gets access to a huge trove of bonus content that is exclusive to members.

Most of all, though, we wanna thank everybody who already is a member, and everyone who is able to become a member, because you are the reasons we're able to keep the lights on right now. The advertising economy's in the tank. There's a lot of other media businesses that are shutting their doors and laying off employees, and we've been able to commit to keeping all of our employees, keeping our shows in production, because of your support. So we're really, really grateful for that. It's something that—a day doesn't pass that I don't specifically feel grateful for it.

So if you're able—if you're not able, we understand. If you are able, you can go to MaximumFun.org/join.

00:29:37 John Promo

And I just wanna repeat, as I always do every year, if you join or upgrade in support of *Judge John Hodgman* at the \$35 a month level during the MaxFunDrive, show me some proof of purchase. You know, email, you know, hodgman@maximumfun.org. That's probably the easiest way to do it. And I will thank you, and mispronounce your name on Instagram, as I always do every year.

And in—I will add to that, you know, if you're listening to this now, you know upcoming this Saturday night, Chuck Bryant and I are virtually recreating our annual MaxFunCon pub quiz. You know, you go to MaximumFun.org to find out ways that you can follow along with that. But that's a fundraiser for the Equal Justice Initiative. And for every one of you who do join or upgrade at the \$35 a month level in support of *Judge John Hodgman* and send me that proof of purchase, I will not only mispronounce your name on the Internet, I will donate \$35 of my own money—take a month of your support, and donate it to the Equal Justice Initiative as well.

So that's what I'm offering.

00:30:45 Jesse Promo

Wow. That's really awesome. So MaximumFun.org—

00:30:48 John Promo

Well, the pin—the pin is better. The pin is better, let's face it.

00:30:50 Jesse Promo

[Laughs.] MaximumFun.org/join is where you can go to join, and thank you, everybody, so much. Let's get back to the courtroom.

00:30:57	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
00:31:00	John	Host	Let's talk to Ashley for a second. Ashley, tell me about the Mr. Thowell Club. Uh, a very interesting title for a club. Arguably, I would dare say.
00:31:10	Ashley	Guest	Well— <i>[laughs]</i> .
00:31:12	John	Host	Better and more creative than SL Poggalators.
			<i>[The litigants laugh.]</i>
00:31:15	Ashley	Guest	Perhaps.
00:31:16	John	Host	Though both are charming! Ashley, what is the—what was the Mr. Dowell Club—what was its charter? What was its mission? Who were its founding members?
00:31:25	Ashley	Guest	So we were a group—a group of two.
			<i>[Someone snorts.]</i>
			Who... We kind of had a little bit of a setup—it was kind of like a <i>Charlie's Angels</i> type deal, where we had an—kind of invisible/imaginary boss, who would instruct us on things like our secret language, and what games to play, and you know, silly faces to make towards each other. And that was pretty much it.
00:31:50	John	Host	Oh my god. Did you have characters? Were you playing characters within the context of the Mr. Thowell Club?
00:31:56	Ashley	Guest	No, just ourselves.
00:31:57	John	Host	And this imaginary Bosley-type boss—Bosley being the—no, Bosley was the friend of the <i>Charlie's Angels</i> . Charlie was the mysterious voice that only came over the speaker phone to give the <i>Charlie's Angels</i> their crimefighting instructions. That was who Mr. Thowell was in your universe?
00:32:17	Ashley	Guest	Correct.
00:32:18	John	Host	And how did you channel the voice of Mr. Thowell?
			<i>[Stephanie laughs.]</i>
00:32:22	Ashley	Guest	Um— <i>[laughs]</i> .
00:32:24	Stephanie	Guest	He had a siren call that I think Ashley should... grace us with.
00:32:28	Ashley	Guest	Well, there was a lot of intuition involved.
			<i>[Stephanie laughs.]</i>
			We just—a lot of telepathic communication, if you will.
00:32:35	John	Host	I will, if you give me something more to go on than that.
			<i>[John and one or both litigants laugh.]</i>
			I mean, my question here is, did one of you—who's your co-angel in your fake <i>Charlie's Angels</i> Mr. Thowell gang?
00:32:48	Ashley	Guest	Lauren.
00:32:49	John	Host	Lauren. Alright. And so did Lauren do a voice? Or did you do a

voice? The voice of Mr. Thowell? Or would you say, "I'm just receiving a communication from Mr. Thowell."

00:32:58 Ashley Guest Yes. "I'm receiving a communication." Often we instinctively knew that each other was telling the truth about the communications that we received from Mr. Thowell.

00:33:08 John Host Well, I would imagine that's the law of the Mr. Thowell Club.

00:33:10 Ashley Guest Well, naturally.

00:33:11 John Host There are no liars in Mr. Thowell.

00:33:12 Ashley Guest Right.

[Stephanie laughs quietly.]

00:33:14 John Host And what kind of instructions would Mr. Thowell give you? You mentioned something about language?

00:33:19 Ashley Guest There was a language that we spoke, which was loosely based on Pig Latin.

00:33:26 John Host Mm-hm.

00:33:27 Ashley Guest And he—

00:33:28 John Host A secret code language that only you and Lauren were supposed to know?

00:33:33 Ashley Guest That was the intention.

00:33:34 John Host Mm-hm.

00:33:35 Ashley Guest It was not that hard to decipher, in fairness. But the intention was for it to be a private language that only members of the Mr. Thowell Club could speak and understand.

00:33:45 Jesse Host I'm sorry. I feel like I've heard a lot of talk about this language...

[Someone or multiple someones laugh.]

But maybe I missed it, I haven't heard any talk in this language!

00:33:52 John Host Yeah, can you still speak it? What is the name of the language, and can you still speak it?

00:33:55 Ashley Guest The name—*[stifles laughter]*. The language does not have a name. It just—it just is.

00:33:59 John Host Mm-hm.

00:34:00 Ashley Guest It's just—it just exists. But it was mostly you take the first letter of a word, and then drop the remaining letters, and then just substitute 'em with a lot of As, and then one E. So for example, my name Ashley would have been Aaaaaaae.

[Beat. Someone laughs quietly.]

A-A-A-A-A-A-E.

00:34:21 John Host Pronounced... how? *[Laughs.]*

00:34:22 Ashley Guest Pronounced, "Ay."

00:34:23 John Host Pronounced "Ay." Aaaaaaae. Okay.

00:34:25 Ashley Guest Sometimes—

00:34:26 John Host Wait. Is there a more illustrative example that you can give me?

[Stephanie laughs.]

00:34:30 Ashley Guest Well—*[laughs]*.

00:34:32 John Host Like, "I would like to play pogs, please, sister." How would that come out?

[Pause. Stephanie laughs.]

00:34:39 Ashley Guest Probably something along the lines of "I would like to pay... pay."

[The litigants laugh.]

00:34:45 John Host How about—how about something simpler, like, "Please love me, sister."

[The litigants laugh.]

00:34:53 Ashley Guest That would be, "Please love me... stay."

[Stephanie laughs.]

00:34:57 John Host Okay. You only do one word?! In the whole sentence?

[Stephanie laughs.]

00:35:00 Ashley Guest Yeahhh. It wasn't particularly inventive.

[One or both litigants laugh.]

00:35:04 John Host Alright. But let me get this straight. This is your—this is first grade. Right?

00:35:09 Ashley Guest Right.

00:35:04 John Host First grade. You and Lauren are channeling... an entity.

00:35:16 Ashley Guest Correct.

00:35:17 John Host Known as Mr. Thowell. Who is teaching you a secret language.

00:35:22 Ashley Guest *[Stifling laughter]* Yes.

00:35:24 John Host And—and pardon me. Uh, Hannah Smith, producer? You're gonna have to bleep this out. And you wanted to play f*[bleep]* pogs? You—this was such a cool club!

[The litigants laugh.]

It's incredible! *[Laughs.]*

00:35:35 Stephanie Guest It was—it—this is Stephanie. The Mr. Thowell Club is by far cooler than the Poggalators.

00:35:41 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** Yeah! I mean—

Ashley: I really disagree.

[Stephanie laughs.]

00:35:43 John Host Oh—Ashley! What are you—I'm not sure you're fit to judge! You're too far inside of it!

[The litigants laugh.]

So Ashley, from your point of view, which club came first?

00:35:54 Ashley Guest

The Poggalators.

00:35:55 John Host

The Poggalators.

00:35:56 Ashley Guest

Yes.

00:35:57 John Host

And you and Lauren formed Mr. Thowell in order to have a thing once Stephanie rejected your application to the Poggalators.

00:36:05 Ashley Guest

Right.

00:36:06 John Host

Do you remember the day that you asked to be part of the Poggalators, and the day that Stephanie said, "No, never. Not even when we're in our thirties"?

00:36:14 Ashley Guest

It was really an ongoing process, where every single time they would play, they would lock themselves in Stephanie's room. And I would beg to play. "Please let me play, let me play, let me play, just this one time!" and every single time the answer was no.

00:36:29 John Host

And how did that make you feel?

00:36:31 Ashley Guest

Well, it made me feel like I was an outsider. Like I was less-than. I wasn't fit to play pogs.

00:36:38 John Host

Stephanie, do you recall this happening? Do you recall excluding your sister from the club?

00:36:42 Stephanie Guest

Yes. Yes. If—it was most of the fun. Of the Poggalators.

[John and Stephanie laugh.]

00:36:49 John Host

It was just—it was a—it was like a Diamond Medallion Status.

[One or both litigants laugh.]

A completely meaningless award that you only want because someone else has it.

00:36:59 Stephanie Guest

Yes.

00:37:00 John Host

Alright. So Ashley, here's the thing. I'm trying to get to the point of where this is still a dispute. This happened in the distant past. And part of that has to do with who came first, the Thowell or the pogs.

[One of the litigants laughs.]

The classic riddle. Who came first? The Thowell, or the pogs? Your memory, Ashley, is what? Poggalators first?

00:37:18 Ashley Guest

Poggalators first.

00:37:20 John Host

You know, Stephanie, I think we can now stipulate that probably Poggalators did come first. Because that's what Lacey recalls, right?

00:37:27 Stephanie Guest

I would say it's in dispute. I'm—

00:37:30 John Host

Mmm...

[The litigants laugh.]

00:37:32 Stephanie Guest

Mmm. It's—it's a gray area. But—but I—

00:37:36 John Host Well, I don't know about that...

00:37:37 Stephanie Guest I do wanna say that, uh, Ashley has continued to give Lacey and I such a hard time about the Poggalators for so many years that, uh—

00:37:48 John Host Yeah, you were MEAN! You were a mean older sister!

[The litigants laugh.]

00:37:52 Stephanie Guest But, a few years ago, Lacey and I attempted to make amends by making Ashley a retroactive member, and renaming the club the SLA Poggalators.

00:38:02 John Host And what did Ashley say to that?

00:38:04 Ashley Guest This is Ashley. I was delighted to join!

[Stephanie laughs.]

But... um...

[John laughs.]

There is a but.

[The litigants laugh.]

So... Stephanie claims that, "Well, we made you a part of the SLA Poggalators." Well, by what definition? Because we have never played pogs. Stephanie and Lacey sometimes hang out, secretly, under the guise of having playdates with their babies. But now we know Lacey still has pogs, so what if they're playing pogs? I don't know what they're doing!

[Stephanie and John laugh.]

They could be playing pogs!

00:38:38 John Host Yeah, but they invited you to join the club! You can—you would—all you'd have to do is offer them the standard \$100,000 initiation fee.

[The litigants laugh.]

And then go through the rites and rituals of joining the Poggalators, and then you would know all their secrets!

00:38:54 Ashley Guest There was no formal ceremony.

[Stephanie laughs.]

It was very much an afterthought. It was, um—I think we were—I think it was Stephanie's bachelorette party. And they both kind of—one of them, I don't even remember who, was like, "Oh, okay, fine, you can be in the club."

And I was like, "Oh my god!" You know, "This is unexpected! This is like a party for me right now." But there was no—

00:39:13 John Host Right. And then as you thought about it...

00:39:15 Ashley Guest But they—yeah! I thought, "Well—where was the ceremony?" You

know?

[Stephanie laughs quietly.]

There wasn't any kind of oath, or the—no—there were no speeches.

[Stephanie laughs.]

Um, it wasn't—it wasn't special. So I think they did it, really—I think it was unplanned.

00:39:33 Stephanie Guest Oh, it was—we discussed it. It was—we discussed it. We—Lacey and I had deliberations for several hours before making the decision to let you in.

00:39:42 Ashley Guest Well, I think the plaintiff has proven herself to be a little less than credible at this point, so, you know, maybe, maybe not.

[Stephanie and John laugh.]

00:39:50 John Host You're saying that Stephanie and Lacey just threw this to you, that it was a sop.

00:39:54 Ashley Guest Right.

00:39:55 John Host It was nothing to them.

00:39:56 Ashley Guest Right.

00:39:57 John Host Plus there was no pogs being played anymore! As far as you knew. So who cares?

00:40:01 Ashley Guest Right! Right.

00:40:02 John Host Right! I mean, the Poggalators may have been formed with the express purpose of being mean to you, from their point of view.

[One of the litigants laughs.]

But Ashley, you wanted to play some pogs!

[Stephanie laughs.]

00:40:12 Ashley Guest Right! I wanna get in on this!

00:40:15 John Host So you said no? You—did you refuse the invitation to the SLA Poggalators?

00:40:19 Ashley Guest Oh, I accepted the invitation.

[Stephanie laughs.]

I would never be so rash as to refuse an invitation I'd waited for for over 25 years.

00:40:27 John Host Well, okay. So then, do you feel you had justice, even though you still suspect your older sister of foul play?

00:40:33 Ashley Guest Um... no. There—I have some requests.

00:40:37 John Host Some requests?!

00:40:38 Ashley Guest Yeah. But I—I think—

00:40:40 John Host I just forgot, you're not even the one who's bringing this case!

Stephanie's suing you!

[Stephanie laughs.]

00:40:44 Ashley Guest

Well, it's a bit of a countersuit, I guess, if you will.

00:40:46 John Host

Alright. Hold on your requests for a second, because I need to talk to Stephanie. Stephanie...

00:40:50 Stephanie Guest

Yes.

00:40:51 John Host

You are bringing this lawsuit. And it is clear that you are the wrong party, in every way.

[The litigants laugh.]

So what are you possibly suing Ashley for?

00:41:02 Stephanie Guest

I sued Ashley because she—even after we've attempted to make amends, she's not accepted our gesture. She hasn't, uh—she continues to give us a hard time about it. Any time I see Lacey, it's, "Oh, did you guys play pogs without me? Did—are you going out to see Lacey?"

[John cracks up. Jesse and Stephanie laugh.]

"Are you guys gonna go see Lacey, and form another secret club to exclude me from?" And it's... it's incessant. She won't leave us alone, so I want the, uh—

00:41:32 John Host

Yeah!

00:41:33 Stephanie Guest

I want it to stop.

00:41:36 John Host

You know the saying from the game of pogs... "You reap what you sow"?

[The litigants laugh.]

Sometimes you slam, and sometimes you get slammed.

[The litigants laugh.]

The other thing that's weird here, Stephanie, is that unless Ashley is now lying to me, she says that she has now accepted the invitation. And you say she's not accepted the invitation. You also say that she formed the Mr. Thowell Club before you, but Lacey says that she formed the Mr. Thowell Club after you, as a reaction to being excluded from the Poggalators. Uh, you are as unreliable a narrator who has ever written a Yelp review, as far as I'm concerned.

[The litigants laugh.]

00:42:17 Stephanie Guest

She accepted the membership to the SLA Poggalators, but she hasn't accepted it as a—she hasn't taken it as a resolved issue. She continues to hold a grudge about the whole thing.

00:42:29 John Host

You were hoping that by offering her membership in this club, that it would erase all of her hurt feelings, and it would all be water under the bridge, as they say in pog-playing circles.

[Ashley laughs quietly.]

00:42:42 Stephanie Guest Yes. It was an attempt to make amends for our past wrongs.
00:42:47 John Host It was an attempt to put a slammer down on her feelings.

[The litigants laugh.]

And turn you into the good guy, finally.

[They laugh again.]

You see where I'm going with this. Why are you suing Ashley? Did you wanna join the Mr. Thowell Club?

00:43:02 Stephanie Guest Yes, I do. I think Lacey and I have done the right thing by admitting Ashley into the Poggalators, and I think Ashley should do the same thing for me.

00:43:13 John Host I—wait, wait, wait. Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait. Did you ever wanna join the Mr. Thowell Club when it was going on?

00:43:19 Stephanie Guest Oh, yes.

00:43:20 John Host 'Cause Ashley formed this cool club that was based on imagination and friendship.

[Someone laughs quietly.]

She wasn't just playing a game. She was playing a mind game on you. *[Laughs.]*

00:43:33 Stephanie Guest Her club was—they—it was, uh—I think it was designed to be, uh, attention-grabbing? They would run around doing this... call. *[Laughs.]* That was—it was—

00:43:47 John Host What was the call of the Mr. Thowell Club?

00:43:48 Stephanie Guest I'm trying to make Ashley do it, but I don't think she's going to.

00:43:52 John Host You have to do the imitation of it, Stephanie.

00:43:55 Stephanie Guest *[Laughs.]* It was, "A-woo-woo-woo-woo-woo!"

[Stephanie laughs, John snorts.]

00:44:00 Ashley Guest It had a little more, like, chutzpah to it.

00:44:02 Stephanie Guest *[Laughing]* Yeah. Well, why don't you do it?

00:44:04 John Host Well, you're invited to set the record straight and do it yourself, Ashley.

00:44:07 Ashley Guest Oh, I—I couldn't possibly. That would be gauche.

00:44:10 John Host Why? Because it would violate a secret of your order, or because you're a-scared?

[The litigants laugh.]

00:44:17 Ashley Guest Uh, the former.

00:44:18 Stephanie Guest *[Laughing]* No.

00:44:19 John Host Ashley, apart from the obvious vitriol between you and Stephanie—you know, the Charlie's Angels had three members.

00:44:28 Stephanie Guest Mmm.

00:44:30 John Host Why not invite Stephanie in—you know, why not broker a peace years ago? And say, "You want into Mr. Thowell Club, great. We'll teach you the language. You change one letter of one word of every sentence you say."

[The litigants laugh.]

"And then you go 'Oowoo-oo-woo-oo!'"

[They laugh again, John stifles laughter.]

"And you also—you also have to receive transmissions from a weird, extra-dimensional being."

[They laugh again.]

"But you gotta let me into that pog club."

[One of the litigants laughs.]

You could've quashed this beef then! You could've brokered a peace then. Why not?

00:44:56 Ashley Guest You know, to induct someone into a sacred club is a big deal. It's not something I take lightly, unlike the plaintiff.

[Stephanie laughs quietly.]

It's, you know, something that needs—there needs to be a lot of thought, and a lot of effort, and ceremony, and it needs to be special, and unique. And I would never just offer someone admission to the Mr. Thowell Club without really putting forth the groundwork that would need to go into that. So maybe at some point that would be reasonable. But at this point, I'm still—frankly, I'm still upset. I'm still upset about not being in the Poggalators.

00:45:29 John Host Alright. *[Laughs.]* I mean, that was your joke answer.

[The litigants laugh.]

But I a—*[laughs]*. Because how many rituals of initiation into the Mr. Thowell Club have there ever been? Zero. You and Lauren got together and just started hearing voices.

[The litigants laugh.]

Can't tell me that you had like a—a whole... initiation rite mapped out. A whole system of debating Stephanie's merits or demerits as a potential member.

[The litigants laugh.]

You just didn't let—you didn't let her in 'cause you were mad 'cause you weren't in the Poggalators Club! As you just admitted, correct?

[The litigants laugh.]

00:46:01 Ashley Guest That's fair.

00:46:03 John Host Are you still friends with Lauren?

00:46:04 Ashley Guest Peripherally. We're not as tight as we used to be. Life just kind of, uh, took us down our own paths. So we're not as tight as the Poggalators are.

[One or both litigants laugh quietly.]

00:46:13 John Host You never call her up and go, "Oowoo-oo-oo-oo!"?

[The litigants laugh.]

And then slam down the phone?

00:46:18 Ashley Guest *[Laughing]* Unfortunately, no.

00:46:23 John Host Stephanie, you have a child?

00:46:25 Stephanie Guest I do, I have a daughter.

00:46:26 John Host 'Cause you and Lacey are getting together for mom dates and playdates and stuff?

00:46:31 Stephanie Guest She lives, uh, a couple states away, but we still see each other pretty often.

00:46:36 John Host And Ashley, do you have a child?

00:46:38 Ashley Guest I do not.

00:46:39 John Host Mm-hm. Interesting. Alright. So Stephanie, what would you have me rule if I were to rule in your favor, and why should I?

00:46:46 Stephanie Guest I would like you to rule that Ashley needs to let bygones be bygones, accept the gesture that Lacey and I made by inducting her into the Poggalators as a—a—you know, that amends have been made, and that there's no further wrongdoing. And leave us alone about it.

And I also think she should do the same for me, and let me into the Mr. Thowell Club.

00:47:09 John Host Uh, it says here you also want Ashley to acknowledge that she started the dispute?

[One or both litigants laugh.]

Is that something you still believe is true?

00:47:15 Stephanie Guest Well, the—in light of the new evidence, uh, I'm willing to, uh, concede on that one.

00:47:20 John Host Ashley, what would you have me order if I were to find in your favor?

00:47:25 Ashley Guest I think a very reasonable ruling would be... the following.

[John snorts.]

I would like both Stephanie—

[Stephanie laughs.]

00:47:33 John Host I—I—we're not in the same room, but I feel like I'm hearing you unspool an ancient parchment.

[The litigants laugh.]

On which you have written your demands.

00:47:45 Ashley Guest I think it would be very reasonable for both of them—both Stephanie and Lacey—to prepare a written apology, in which they accept that they excluded me from the club on purpose, they apologize for that, and then they then offer me a real role of membership in the SLA Poggalators.

I then think we should commemorate the new membership, the real membership, with some kind of ceremony. And I'll be—you know, I think we can compromise on what that process would be. And I would like to play at least one game of pogs. With the SL Poggalators.

00:48:29 John Host If the—if all of this was provided, would you suitably induct Stephanie, and perhaps Lacey, into the Mr. Thowell Club?

00:48:37 Ashley Guest I think that would be reasonable. Yes.

00:48:39 John Host Alright. You're ready to settle this. Stephanie, all she's asking for is... an elaborate written apology.

[John and one or both litigants laugh.]

Do you think you and Lacey can provide that?

00:48:53 Stephanie Guest I'm not sure even if we did that it would, uh, meet her standards.

00:48:56 John Host You think that she is shifting demands? That she just wants to get you to humiliate yourself with an apology, and then will start making more demands?

[The litigants laugh.]

00:49:05 Stephanie Guest Yes.

00:49:07 John Host Is there any evidence to suggest that that is Ashley's modus operandi?

00:49:12 Stephanie Guest Well, I think the past, uh, 25 years of her teasing us about it are the evidence.

00:49:18 John Host What does the teasing mean to you? You're the big sister. You've got a life. You've got kids. Who cares?

00:49:24 Stephanie Guest Well—*[sighs]*. To me, it reminds me of a part of my childhood that I'm not proud of. *[Stifles laughter.]* I'm not, uh—

00:49:31 John Host Right.

00:49:32 Stephanie Guest I don't like being reminded that I created a club to exclude my sister.

[Someone laughs quietly.]

So, that—it doesn't make me feel good to be reminded that that happened.

00:49:42 John Host Ashley, how does Stephanie feeling bad about herself around this make you feel?

00:49:47 Ashley Guest Well, I don't want her to feel bad.

[Beat.]

00:49:50 John Host Are you sure?

[John, Jesse, and Stephanie laugh.]

00:49:51 Ashley Guest But I would like—I would like—[laughs].

00:49:55 John Host Seems like you enjoy it.

[More laughter.]

00:50:03 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Ashley:** I think—

John: [Laughing] Okay.

00:50:04 Ashley Guest I think it's high time for us to bury it.

00:50:07 John Host Uh, alright. I think I've heard everything I need to in order to make my decision. Before I go into my secret star chamber here in the windowless tomb that is my private clubhouse of one, uh, there is one other piece of evidence, Stephanie, that you submitted.

[Stephanie laughs quietly.]

It is exhibit B, Jesse Thorn. I'll let you look at that before you usher me out of this courtroom.

00:50:31 Jesse Host [Laughing] Wait. This dog isn't really sleeping, is it?

00:50:37 John Host This is Stephanie's dog Riley, sleeping on a—on a bed. A dog bed.

00:50:41 Stephanie Guest Yeah, that's—that's how he sleeps, yes.

00:50:42 Jesse Host [Laughing] He's not! No, he's itching his back or something!

00:50:46 Stephanie Guest [Stifling laughter] No, that's how he sleeps. Ashley's witnessed it.

00:50:49 Jesse Host [Laughing] No he doesn't!

00:50:50 Stephanie Guest [Laughing] Yeah!

00:50:51 Jesse Host Don't—

00:50:52 John Host I gotta tell you—

00:50:53 Jesse Host Don't try and fool me!

[Multiple people are laughing.]

00:50:56 John Host I'm gonna tell you, everyone can go look on the Instagram, [@judgejohnhodgman](#), and the show page. But I'm gonna tell you, Jesse. It took me a long time to figure out which was the head of this dog, and which was the tail.

[Jesse and one or both litigants laugh.]

It did not—this is like—this dog—this is like—this isn't a dog, this is a furry Möbius strip.

[More laughter.]

00:51:14 Ashley Guest Google Images recognizes him as a cat.

00:51:16 Stephanie Guest [Laughing] Yeah.

00:51:18 Jesse Host *[Laughing]* This is so weird!

[John laughs.]

This is the kind of pictures people should be sending me. If your dog doesn't sleep upside-down, don't @ me.

[More laughter.]

Well, I'm happy.

00:51:32 John Host Okay, good. Can you get me outta here? *[Laughs.]*

00:51:35 Jesse Host *[Laughs.]* Yeah. Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom.

00:51:39 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Door opens, chairs scrape, footsteps. Door shuts.]*

00:51:40 Jesse Host Uh, Stephanie, how you feeling?

00:51:41 Stephanie Guest Uh... well, not great, since the judge, uh, basically told me I was wrong. So I'm not feeling too good.

00:51:47 Jesse Host Are you feeling bad because you've been abusing your sister, or because you're gonna lose?

00:51:50 Stephanie Guest *[Laughs.]* Little bit of both.

00:51:53 Jesse Host Ashley, how are you feeling?

00:51:56 Ashley Guest Well, I think that went very well for me.

[Ashley and Stephanie laugh.]

I was not expecting a third witness to come in and basically prove my case, so that was a nice little treat.

[Stephanie laughs.]

But, uh, you know. I think we'll have a good—a fair ruling.

00:52:10 Jesse Host If you could have one pog in the world, any pog in the world, what pog would you like to have?

00:52:17 Ashley Guest Hm... I don't know, maybe one of those metal slammers that you're talking about. Because I had never heard about that.

[Stephanie laughs quietly.]

It probably would have been unsafe to let a bunch of eight-year-olds play with those, but... you know. We're all grown now, and I think I'm ready for a metal slammer.

00:52:35 Jesse Host How about you, Stephanie?

00:52:37 Stephanie Guest Probably just something like a nineties insignia that said "Pow" would be pretty cool.

[Jesse and one or both litigants laugh.]

00:52:44 Jesse Host Yeah. Okay.

[More laughter.]

I mean, you two are really setting your sights low there, but—

[They laugh harder.]

—I'm gonna let it slide. We'll be back in just a second with Judge John Hodgman's ruling.

00:52:55 Sound Effect Transition

[Three gavel bangs.]

00:52:59 Jesse Promo

Judge John Hodgman is of course now more than ever supported by our members who go to MaximumFun.org/join. We're also supported this week by our friends at Sun Basket. If you're one of the many folks who are at home a lot, avoiding unnecessary grocery trips, this is a perfect and delicious solution for the times in which we are currently living.

00:53:21 John Promo

I'm gonna say this, Jesse Thorn. When you say "delicious," I agree.

[Jesse laughs quietly.]

You know how I know? I ate it. I ate the Sun Basket. Not the basket. *[Stifles laughter.]* Doesn't come in a basket! It comes in an ingenious, ecologically friendly freezer pack. But the food inside—oh. It was really good! And I hadn't tried any of these mail order meal services before. I'll—I'm gonna tell you right now, I was a snob. I was like, "Mm. I don't need that."

I did need it! I made some coconut shrimp. It was the first time my daughter ever complimented me on my cooking.

[Jesse bursts out laughing. John stifles laughter.]

Sun Basket delivers fresh, healthy, delicious—I'll say it again—recipes and ingredients for all kinds of dietary preferences, including paleo, gluten-free, Mediterranean, vegetarian, and more! They make it easy and convenient. Everything's pre-portioned and ready to prep and cook. You can enjoy a dinner of organic, fresh produce, and clean ingredients, in as little as 15 minutes, no matter how much experience you have in the kitchen.

And if you have a lot of experience in the kitchen, like I do, don't be a snob. *[Stifling laughter]* Give it a try. It's good.

00:54:27 Jesse Promo

Yeah. I had hoisin steak strip lettuce cups with pickled daikon and carrots. Like, make a little quick pickle? Oh, it was really tasty! I have a very personal connection to Sun Basket—

00:54:37 John Promo

Yeah.

00:54:38 Jesse Promo

—because one of the founders of Sun Basket is one of my closest friends from college. And—

00:54:42 John Promo

Full disclosure.

00:54:44 Jesse Promo

Yeah, full disclosure. And he's also one of the most wonderful human beings I've ever known in my life. Just a radiant beam of kindness. And I'm so grateful that we have them as a sponsor, because they have worked so hard to start this company and provide great food in a responsible way that is a wonderful—provide a wonderful service to the customers, and also to take care of the world around us as

best they can in so doing.

And I—as far as I'm concerned, they have been very successful at it. I love my Sun Basket food, and I had a great time cooking it, and my family had a great time eating it.

00:55:21 John Promo

Yeah!

00:55:22 Jesse Promo

They are, by the way, right now offering \$35 off your order when you go right now to SunBasket.com/hodgman and enter the promo code "Hodgman" at checkout.

00:55:34 John Promo

That's SunBasket.com/hodgman, and enter promo code "Hodgman" at checkout for \$35 off your order. I'll say it again. SunBasket.com/hodgman, and enter promo code "Hodgman."

Sun Basket! Their motto should be... "Founded by Jesse's friends from college."

[Jesse laughs.]

Because what better endorsement is there? *[Laughs.]*

00:55:54 Jesse Promo

We also have another sponsor on this week's *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. *Vote! The Podcast*. It is a podcast about voting rights. It's produced by Vote.org and Spread The Vote. It is called *Vote!* It is specifically about how to get people, including yourself, to participate in the democratic process, and how to make sure that they are able to exercise their right to do so.

00:56:23 John Promo

Yeah, because you know what, there are people in this world who would rather you not get around to voting. Who wanna obfuscate the information about where and when and how to vote. Who would rather you stay home. And if you've ever felt powerless or overwhelmed or just plain lost when it comes to voting or elections, *Vote!*—exclamation point—*The Podcast* is here for you.

The hosts Kat and Andrea, they're voting experts. They're inviting some of their favorite activists, celebrities, and voting rights crushes to help them answer your biggest questions about voting. People like Stacey Abrams, yees! LeVar Burton! Oh, guest of the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast! And Bradley Whitford, a guy who used to work in the fake White House on television. And has never been on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

Stacey, Bradley? You're welcome here. But until then, go listen to them on *Vote! The Podcast*.

00:57:10 Jesse Promo

I gotta tell you, John. You know, I used to work for the Department of Elections in the city of San Francisco. And that experience was so affirming, so exciting, such a thrill.

00:57:22 John Promo

Yeah!

00:57:23 Jesse Promo

And there is no better part about being an American than getting to participate in voting. It's so central and important. And I'm really excited about this show. Which, by the way—

00:57:36 John Promo

Yeah?

00:57:37 Jesse Promo

This show, produced by Julia Smith!

[John gasps.]

Long-time producer of *Judge John Hodgman* and a very good friend of ours. And—

- 00:57:44 John Promo Also part of the extended *Judge John Hodgman* Universe.
- 00:57:48 Jesse Promo Yeah, and I—any show produced by Julia Smith is an automatic listen for me.
- 00:57:52 John Promo Yeah.
- 00:57:53 Jesse Promo *Vote! The Podcast* is available now. Subscribe to *Vote!* in Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Stitcher, wherever you listen. Just search for "*Vote!*"
- 00:58:01 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*
- 00:58:03 Jesse Promo Judge Hodgman, we're taking a quick break from the case, and you have an event coming up that literally everyone listening to this program can attend. For once!
- 00:58:14 John Promo That's right, Jesse. It's this Saturday, July 18th, from 2 to 5:30 PM Pacific Time. What's happening? Oh, it's only me and your friend Chuck Bryant from *Stuff You Should Know*, co-hosting our annual MaxFunCon pub quiz! Normally this happens at MaxFunCon, up in the mountains of Lake Arrowhead in a function room, with, um, one working microphone! But now it's happening virtually!

[Jesse laughs, John stifles laughter.]

On your computers! You can go to MaximumFun.org for tickets. A portion of all tickets are going to the Equal Justice Initiative. You can play along with your friends. You can watch along with your enemies. I don't care, get over there! It's gonna be a lot of fun. You love Chuck Bryant. You tolerate me every week. MaximumFun.org for details and tickets.

Also, I just wanna say real quick: Thanks, everybody, uh—[stifles laughter]—who tried, and also to those who succeeded in watching David Rees's and my TV show *Bleepatown*, on FXX's *Cake* show on Thursday nights. Every Thursday nights for the next—mm—seven or eight weeks, tune into *Cake* at ten PM. You'll see a new episode of *Booptown*. And then check it out on FX on Hulu the next day. Search for "*Cake*." That's the name of the anthology show that *Booptown* is a part of.

And the nice thing about *Cake* is I can say "*Cake*" on this podcast.

- 00:59:36 Jesse Promo Yeah. *[Laughs.]* I watched it. I thought it was so hilarious.
- 00:59:39 John Promo Oh, thanks!
- 00:59:40 Jesse Promo I had such a great—my wife and I watched it together and had a great time. It's full of great jokes, and a lot of David Rees bullying you, which is a lot of fun.
- 00:59:48 John Promo *[Laughs.]* Real-life bullying! A lot of it was—*[laughs]*—improvised and scriptless. Also, episode one featured Guest Bailiff Jean Grae! Another member of the *Judge John Hodgman*-iverse.

01:00:01 Jesse Promo It was nice to see her as a—as a cosplaying teen.

01:00:04 John Promo That's right.

01:00:06 Jesse Promo Uh, [Matt Berry is on Bullseye](#) this week—

[John gasps.]

—if you're a fan of *The Mighty Boosh*, or *What We Do in Shadows*.

01:00:11 John Promo Yes. Yes!

01:00:12 Jesse Promo Or *Toast of London*, which I think might be my favorite of all of his things. The wonderful British comic actor Matt Berry is on this week, and next week we'll have [Kelly Reichardt](#), who is the director of an amazing, beautiful new movie called *First Cow*, that—the release of which was delayed.

01:00:32 John Promo Mm-hm.

01:00:33 Jesse Promo And it's just coming out now, and it is one of the most beautiful and funny and humane movies you'll ever see. It's about, like, a couple of frontiersmen, and the first cow that comes to the territory in which they live, and the milk that they steal from it. Um, it is—

01:00:50 John Promo I thought—I thought it was about a cow who was elected president, and this—

[Both laugh.]

01:00:57 Jesse Promo Yeah. Voiced by Kevin Hart. *[Laughs.]*

01:00:58 John Promo Yeah. President Cow and First Cow.

01:01:02 Jesse Promo *[Laughs.]* Anyway. That's on *Bullseye* this week. But I would encourage everybody to go to [MaximumFun.org](#) and check out that events calendar, because every week—not just the pub trivia, but every week we're going to be having a charity live-streaming event. So you can take a look at the calendar, and make some plans to come and hang out with your favorite MaxFun talent, hang out with your fellow MaxFunsters virtually, and support a great charity in the process.

Let's get back to the case.

01:01:33 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

01:01:36 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[As Jesse speaks below: Door opens, chairs scrape on the floor, footsteps.]*

01:01:37 Jesse Host Please rise as Judge John Hodgman re-enters the courtroom and presents his verdict.

01:01:40 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Door shuts.]*

01:01:42 John Host So... I like you both very much. Right? Ashley, you are a provocateur. A classic, uh, poop-stirrer. A grudge-holder. A poker in the ribs of your sister. Truly the picture of a Mr. Thowell Club member.

[The litigants laugh.]

And Stephanie, you are at best mis-remembering the order in which these clubs were formed, and the purpose for which they were formed. You are trying to rewrite history, such that Mr. Thowell Club

came first, so that you can cast yourself as the aggrieved party who had no choice but to form the SL Poggalators! And exclude Ashley from your room. As payback for being excluded from her special club.

But Lacey, unfortunately for you, undermined that. And I do think that it is a mis-remembering. Because you, yourself, know that why you are rewriting this history—because remembering it accurately makes you feel bad. You formed a club with your cool friend to play the coolest game on Earth, pogs. [*Stifles laughter.*] But you didn't care enough to even remember which pogs you had?

[The litigants laugh.]

Which pogs you cared about? You didn't even care about which pogs you kept! Because your pogs are thrown to the winds. You formed the club in order to needle your sister. And that's what older sisters do. I dare say it's what all older siblings do. Because... it's fun.

[The litigants laugh quietly.]

And now—now!—all that has happened in the ensuing... [*stifles laughter*] two and a half decades is Ashley needling you back. Reminding you of this time in your life, when you were less—slightly less—than gracious. I don't think you were outright mean. But Ashley felt bad. And now she takes pleasure in making you feel bad. Yes you do, Ashley! You do take pleasure. I can tell.

[The litigants laugh.]

01:03:49 John

Host

I think the first thing that needs to happen for your relationship to be repaired and for you to progress, is for Stephanie, for you to acknowledge that this alternate reality that you've constructed in order to make yourself the good guy—and indeed, to justify your bringing this case to me as though you were the wounded party, when clearly the wound is entirely born by Ashley—is to acknowledge this. And to not just offer a membership in the Poggalators as a throwaway at a bachelorette party, but to really get out a quill and parchment. Get some Poggalators letterhead.

[John and one or both litigants laugh quietly.]

Write a letter of apology from you and from Lacey, and indeed the entire Poggalators organization, acknowledging that the club was formed at least in your mind purposely to exclude Ashley. And you may even need to apologize to Lacey, too, because it seems like Lacey actually liked pogs.

[The litigants laugh.]

Whereas you just—[*laughs*]—you just liked the sad sound of your sister banging at your door.

[John and the litigants laugh.]

I say this not merely to rule in Ashley's favor, which obviously I do, but also because it's important! Especially since you and Lacey are

now once again in a club to which Ashley does not belong, which is motherhood! Parenthood! You are once again at a slightly different and yet pivotal stage of your lives. And Ashley's on the outside looking in. Ashley, you like your niece?

01:05:29 Ashley Guest

Oh, she's the best. She's adorable. I'm also her godmother!

01:05:32 Stephanie Guest

Mm-hm.

01:05:33 John Host

Yeah. Yeah, no, I have no doubt—I mean, I'm not suggesting that just because you like hurting your sister, you don't like your niece. Of course you love your niece.

[The litigants and John laugh.]

But this informs—I wanted to establish for the record that obviously, you have love for your sister Stephanie, you have a love for her daughter, you probably enjoy being an aunt. You're probably an amazing aunt. Would you say that's true, Stephanie?

01:06:03 Stephanie Guest

Yes. It is.

01:06:05 John Host

And what kind of child does Lacey have?

01:06:09 Stephanie Guest

She has a boy.

01:06:11 John Host

She has a boy. And she lives a couple of states away?

01:06:15 Stephanie Guest

She's in New Jersey.

01:06:16 John Host

Based on the geographical information you provided me, I'm prepared to make both my ruling and my sentence. First of all, obviously, I rule in Ashley's favor. As I said, a written apology is in order. Ashley, I then order you to drop all beef. Slam all beef down.

[The litigants laugh.]

Gross. Sounds gross! But you know my intention. *[Laughs.]* Trying to draw everything into pogs doesn't work. That's—you know. Maybe I shouldn't be running a pogcast after all.

[The litigants laugh.]

Uh, you gotta let it go. You gotta let it go. And then I want Stephanie, you to invite Ashley to be part of the Poggalators, and you guys are going to get a couple of rooms in a nice hotel about midway between where you are in Northern Virginia, and where Lacey is in Southern New Jersey. Or maybe an Airbnb. And you, Stephanie, and your daughter, and Lacey and her son, and Auntie Ashley here are all gonna meet there, and there will be an induction ceremony. I would like pictures of it.

[The litigants laugh.]

And then you're gonna play an incredible game of pogs. And finally give Ashley the justice that she deserves. And Ashley, you are gonna forgive your sister. And Lacey. And then you are going to, uh, take their children, and secretly induct them into the Mr. Thowell Club.

[The litigants laugh.]

This is the sound of a gavel.

01:07:47 Stephanie Guest "A-woo-woo-woo-woo-woo!" *[Laughs.]*

01:07:48 John Host Judge John Hodgman rules; that is all.

01:07:49 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[As Jesse speaks below: Door opens, chairs scrape, footsteps.]*

01:07:50 Jesse Host Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom.

01:07:53 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Door shuts.]*

01:07:54 Jesse Host How do you feel, Ashley?

01:07:55 Ashley Guest I think it's a very fair ruling. And I think we can both adhere to it. Especially the last part.

[Stephanie laughs.]

01:08:03 Jesse Host How about you, Stephanie?

01:08:05 Stephanie Guest I feel pretty good, even though I lost. Ashley has to drop the beef, so I feel good about that.

01:08:11 Ashley Guest Slam the beef.

[Stephanie laughs.]

01:08:13 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Door opens.]*

01:08:14 John Host Oh, I just forgot about something! This whole ruling, by the way, is contingent upon Ashley doing the call. If Ashley doesn't do the call, uh, I'm going the other way. And the beef continues.

01:08:25 Ashley Guest Oh, gosh. Well, there's only one thing I can do, which is... "Awoowoowoowooo!"

[The litigants laugh.]

01:08:32 John Host That's the sound of a gavel.

[The litigants laugh harder.]

Thank you guys!

01:08:37 Jesse Host Stephanie, Ashley, thanks for joining us on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

01:08:41 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

01:08:42 Jesse Promo Another *Judge John Hodgman* case is in the books. Our thanks to all of MaxFun's members. Everyone who's retained their membership through tough times. Everyone who's added a membership. Everybody who's upgraded a membership. We're grateful to every single one of you, and we cannot thank you enough.

01:09:00 John Promo Hey, Jesse, I have a question.

01:09:02 Jesse Promo Yeah.

01:09:03 John Promo If I wanted to gift a membership to someone else, can I do that?

01:09:06 Jesse Promo Absolutely. This is something that we were—it was a lot of work to implement, as it turns out, but we did it because, you know, this is something that people have asked for in the past, but given the fact that there are so many people out there whose circumstances have changed, so many people out there who wish they could become a

member but just aren't in a position to, and there have been so many people who have reached out to us and contacted us and said they wanna do something to allow those people to become members. You can give a gift membership at MaximumFun.org/join.

So if you're already a member, and you're looking for a way to do a little something extra, that benefits Maximum Fun, and it'll benefit somebody who otherwise isn't in a position to become a member.

01:09:48 John Promo If you haven't had a chance to become a member yet, you can do so at MaximumFun.org/join. I'll say it again, 'cause I like saying URLs. MaximumFun.org/join.

01:10:00 Jesse Host I also want to give one more thank-you, not just to our members, and not just to all the folks who are buying tickets to the events that benefit the Equal Justice Initiative. But I also want to thank... my, uh—my father passed away a couple weeks ago. *[Sounding a bit emotional]* And I shared some stuff about him and his life on Twitter and on social media, and I—I offered that if people wanted to give a memorial gift, they could give it to an organization called Swords to Plowshares in San Francisco, which is a veterans' organization that does direct services for veterans.

And it's one that my dad received services from when he was a homeless addict who was struggling with post-traumatic stress disorder, and it's a place where my dad worked after he got clean. And they just dropped me an email and said that they raised about \$10,000 in my dad's name. And I'm—I'm very grateful to everybody for that.

01:11:02 John Host Mm.

01:11:04 Jesse Host And I also want to thank, um—just... out of the blue the other day, I got an email from my dad's hospice doctor. And I hadn't been able to be up there in the Bay Area where he was in hospice at the VA hospital, because of pandemic restrictions. And she sent me an email, and she said just completely coincidentally, she was a MaxFunster.

01:11:29 John Host Oh!

01:11:30 Jesse Host And that she knew about my dad, and realized it was him when—when one of the nurses mentioned to her that he had been a peace activist. And she said, "Well, if he was a peace activist, and his last name is Thorn, it must be Jesse Thorn's dad." And my dad had pretty advanced dementia by the time he passed away, and the doctor told me that she was able to connect with him over long lunches when she was in the hospice center because she knew so much about his life and work.

And, um... it was the most vivid illustration to me of the effect that our community has had on my life, and my family's life. So I want to thank her. Her name's Dr. Chubak. *(Chuh-bik.)* I'm probably pronouncing it wrong and it's Choo-book or something. *[Shaky laugh.]* Um, sorry, Doc.

But more than that, I just want to thank everybody who—who helped me in remembering my dad, and... earlier this year in remembering my friend Evan who passed away, and, um... who had been so kind

and supportive about me being away from the show as much as I have been, which is obviously not what I want. I love doing this show. And who have made it possible for us to make this kind of business over the past decade or so.

So thanks, everybody. And especially thanks, Dr. Chubak, for—for helping my dad. And thanks, John and Jen, for the kindness that you guys have given me. I'm so proud to work with you, and so grateful to work with you.

01:13:15 John Host

We love you, Jesse. And, um... you know. It's—it's—it's hard to express that when, you know, you're crying, and your tears are mixing with the sweat from standing in a laundry closet.

[Both laugh.]

But the stories about your dad were very inspiring and meaningful to me over the years. And part of the deep DNA of this show, and, um... to quote him... "I'm sorry I stepped on your gerbil." (*"Gerbil" with a hard G.*)

[Both laugh.]

01:13:58 Jesse Host

[Laughing] A true classic.

01:14:00 John Host

Sometimes you step on people's gerbils. And all you can do is say "I'm sorry."

01:14:04 Jesse Host

When I think about the legacy that my father left me and the rest of my family—and my father was a complicated man with many failings, but also an extraordinary man, and one of the things that he always taught me—and it's something that he learned when he was working as a peace activist, as a Veterans Peace activist, and you know, among other things, they wanted to march in the Veterans Day Parade, and the VFW wouldn't let them. And when they joined the parade, the VFW and the cops beat the crap out of them.

Um, and he told me that story. And he laughed about it, because it was so dumb that they did it.

[John snorts.]

Not that they joined the parade—*[laughs]*—but what a dumb reason to beat somebody up.

01:14:50 John Host

Huh.

01:14:52 Jesse Host

And he used to say, "If you can't laugh, then what's the point?" And he was—he was not funny. But he was an amazing laugher.

[John chuckles.]

And he loved—he even laughed when I told that story about him stepping on my hamster, which is probably the—*[laughs]*—his—I mean, he's the one who stepped on the hamster.

01:15:13 John Host

Right.

01:15:14 Jesse Host

So it was—I can't imagine it was anything less than nightmarish for him. *[Laughs.]* But I don't think I would've gone into this work if it

wasn't for him, so...

01:15:24 John Host

Yeah.

01:15:25 Jesse Host

I'm so grateful to him for teaching me to laugh in the face of pain. And I'm grateful to you guys for giving me the chance to do that every week. It's such an important part of my life. And I'm grateful to my dad for teaching me that any time I need a laugh, I can just think about the time that he was talking about how funny you were, John—

01:15:46 John Host

Aw.

01:15:47 Jesse Host

—but he described you as, uh, and this is a quote from my dad, "Your friend Houseman."

[Both laugh.]

01:15:57 John Host

No—no greater honor. It's better than Hod-a-guh-man. Which is what I usually get.

01:16:02 Jesse Host

Okay. Uh—*[laughs]*.

01:16:03 John Host

Yeah, so, look. Most of the podcasts that we do here at Maximum Fun, they're—you know, they're pretty comedic! And I think, you know, it's been a pretty un-funny time. And it's been a real joy and privilege and consolation to be able to provide some distraction.

01:16:25 Jesse Host

We have Swift Justice coming up in just a second. We wanna thank—

01:16:26 John Host

Oh, yeah! We—we're doing a show, right? *[Laughs.]* Okay.

01:16:29 Jesse Host

Yeah. *[Laughs.]* We wanna thank Ryan Stratton for naming this week's episode, "You Can't Acquit With Us." If you'd like to name a future episode, like *Judge John Hodgman on Facebook*. We put out our calls for submissions there.

Follow us on Twitter at [@JesseThorn](#) and [@hodgman](#). Hashtag your *Judge John Hodgman* Tweets [#JJHo](#), and check out the [Maximum Fun subreddit](#) to discuss [this episode](#). We're on Instagram at [@judgejohnhodgman](#). Make sure to follow us there for evidence and other fun stuff.

This week's episode was recorded by Peter Solomon at Virginia Public Media, back when people were allowed to go into radio studios. This week's episode produced by [Jennifer Marmor](#) and [Hannah Smith](#), who have been doing extraordinary work in extraordinary circumstances. We're so grateful to them and [Jesus](#) and all of our colleagues at Maximum Fun.

01:17:15 John Host

Alright, what about Swift Justice?

01:17:18 Jesse Host

Steve says:

"Is it okay for me to ring the bell on my bike as I'm approaching pedestrians from behind on a shared pathway? I ring my bell to warn them I'm coming, but often they're startled by the noise. Help!"

01:17:29 John Host

[Laughs.] Why doesn't he just throw pogs at 'em? That's what this podcast's about!

[Jesse laughs.]

Pedestrians are gonna get startled no matter what if you're coming up from behind them! I think you're doing the right thing by giving them a little "ding-ding!" As long as you give 'em a little "ding-ding," and not like, "BRRRING-BRRRING-BRRRING-BRRRING-BRRRING-BRRRING!"

There—here's the thing, Steve. I understand you're trying to do the right thing. But whether you ring or you don't ring, you have to remember, you're a bicyclist. There is no way the world isn't gonna hate you. Pedestrians and cars will hate you, no matter what you do! Whether you're a good cyclist or a bad cyclist. And I urge you to be a good cyclist! There's gonna be a certain amount of anger thrown your way.

But the compensation for that is, as a bicyclist, you know in your heart... you're the best person in the world.

[John and Jesse laugh.]

01:18:24	Jesse	Host	That's why you get to wear those pants!
01:18:26	John	Host	That's right! <i>[Laughs.]</i> You're the most <u>virtuous</u> and best person in the <u>world</u> .
			Everyone take care of each other out there on the roads. Come on. Share the road.
01:18:36	Jesse	Host	Yeah, and it's good to ride bikes.
01:18:37	John	Host	It's great to ride bikes.
01:18:39	Jesse	Host	That's it for this week's episode. Submit your cases at MaximumFun.org/jiho . Or email hodgman@maximumfun.org . No case is too small. We'll see you next time on the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast.
01:18:51	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
01:18:53	Music	Transition	A cheerful guitar chord.
01:18:54	Speaker 1	Guest	MaximumFun.org .
01:18:56	Speaker 2	Guest	Comedy and culture.
01:18:57	Speaker 3	Guest	Artist owned—
01:18:58	Speaker 4	Guest	—audience supported.