

00:00:00 Jesse Thorn Host Welcome to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. I'm Bailiff Jesse Thorn. This week, "Brush with the Law."

Sheila files suit against her sister Elyse. Sheila would like to paint the shed at their parents' house, but Elyse doesn't like the color scheme that Sheila picked out. Sheila says that since it was her idea to paint in the first place, she should get to pick the colors!

Who's right? Who's wrong? Only one can decide.

00:00:27 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[As Jesse speaks below: Door opens, chairs scrape on the floor, footsteps.]*

00:00:28 Jesse Host Please rise as Judge John Hodgman enters the courtroom and presents an obscure cultural reference.

00:00:34 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Door shuts.]*

00:00:35 John Hodgman Host *[Sulking]* Sure. Go ahead. Start the podcast. I can't do anything, anyways. I'm sick. You know sometimes when you're sick, you don't feel like putting rubber bands on your rubber band ball! You don't feel like doing anything at all!!!

[Sighs.]

I'm awfully sorry, Bailiff Jesse. You see, sometimes when we're sick, we snap at people when we don't mean to. Our emotions are awfully close to the surface. You understand, don't you?

00:01:00 Jesse Host *[Stifling laughter]* Sheila and Elyse, please rise and raise your right hands.

00:01:02 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Chairs scrape.]*

00:01:03 Jesse Host Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God or whatever?

00:01:08 Sheila Guest I do.

00:01:09 Elyse Guest I do.

00:01:10 Jesse Host Do you swear to abide by Judge John Hodgman's ruling, despite the fact that his coastal elitist lifestyle permits only enough room for a medium-size barbecue smoker, and certainly not a shed?

00:01:23 Sheila Guest *[Laughs.]* I do.

00:01:24 Elyse Guest Most certainly.

00:01:26 Jesse Host Judge Hodgman, you may proceed.

00:01:27 John Host You understand, don't you? How when we're sick at home, and we're close together, and we're stuck together, emotions are close to the surface, right, Jesse?! You didn't even answer me.

00:01:37 Jesse Host I—I couldn't tell whether it was rhetorical.

[One or both litigants laugh.]

00:01:40 John Host Well, it was part of the quote.

00:01:42 Jesse Host *[Stifling laughter]* Also, sometimes I space out while you're talking.

00:01:45 John Host Mm-hm. I understand.

[One of the litigants laughs.]

You know what? It's hard when we're stuck together, even when we're a continent apart.

00:01:50 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:01:51 John Host There's a lot—*[laughs]*—there's a lot of togetherness in the world right now.

[Jesse laughs quietly.]

It's nice to see you over there in Los Angeles.

00:01:57 Jesse Host And you, friend.

00:01:58 John Host Sheila and Elyse, you may be seated. Wherever you are.

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

00:02:01 John Host It's nice to see you as well. Oh, and hello, Jennifer Marmor, nice to see you. It's just seeing—it's just—this is a podcast about seeing people and being seen now!

[One of the litigants laughs.]

Sheila and Elyse, 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? Sheila! Let's start with you.

00:02:20 Sheila Guest I was so hoping it would be Arthur "Two Sheds" Jackson that I looked up what episode of *Flying Circus* it's in. But that's clearly not it.

[John and Sheila laugh.]

Um, I'm going to go with *A Doll's House*, by Henrik Ibsen.

00:02:35 John Host Interesting guess! Interesting guess.

[Sheila laughs quietly.]

I'll, uh—I'll enter that into the guess book.

00:02:40 Jesse Host John, what happened to *Monty Python* nerds, anyway?

[One or both litigants laugh.]

Where are they?

00:02:44 John Host I know! Sheila—Sheila's—

00:02:45 Jesse Host How come nobody ever talks about *Monty Python* nerd stuff anymore?

00:02:47 John Host Like, I'm sitting here going, "What's Sheila talking about? M—" What is it, Marty Two Sheds?

[The litigants laugh.]

What was the name of the—?

00:02:54 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Sheila:** Arthur "Two Sheds" Jackson.

John: Arthur "Two Sheds" Johnson?

00:02:56 John Host Jackson? Like, you know, I'm a fan of the *Python*, but that's a deep cut. I was lost.

[Sheila laughs.]

I don't know if it's—I don't know if the kids are picking it up these days, Jesse Thorn. I just don't think you're getting it on your PBS, uh, app. Alright.

00:03:11 Jesse Host It's a boring show.

[One of the litigants laughs.]

If you try and watch the show, it is boring.

00:03:14 John Host Whoa. Whoa.

00:03:15 Jesse Host The good parts are the best things that have ever been created, but like all sketch comedy, it's—age has been hard on it.

00:03:22 John Host How do you rank the—what is it again, Sheila? Arthur "Two Sheds" Jackson?

[The litigants laugh.]

00:03:28 Sheila Guest Yes. It's from the first episode of *Flying Circus*, "Whither Canada?"

00:03:33 John Host Season one, episode one?!

00:03:35 Sheila Guest Season one, episode one!

00:03:36 John Host Alright. Put a—put a pin in that.

[The litigants laugh.]

00:03:39 Jesse Host I'm more of a "Doug and Dinsdale Piranha" guy, myself.

[The litigants laugh.]

00:03:42 John Host Alright. We've been doing a lot of dockets lately, Jesse, so we're used to talking to each other. We have to remember what it's like to have guests in the courtroom.

[One of the litigants laughs.]

00:03:48 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:03:50 John Host Elyse? What's your guess?

00:03:53 Elyse Guest Um, I'm gonna go with the animated movie *Monster House*.

00:03:57 John Host Monster House? Written by Dan Harmon and Rob Schrab. One summer when my son was little, and he was in a summer camp situation, and he was—he was being lightly bullied. Not bad bullying. You know what I mean? Like, ignored, picked on a little bit, made to feel small. He found a copy—a DVD copy of *Monster House*, which I had never seen, at the Big Chicken Barn there in Elsworth, Maine, and just—and burned through it 19 times.

[One or both litigants laugh quietly.]

And it made him feel better. So look. I don't wanna brag, Sheila and

Elyse. I used to have a career.

[The litigants laugh.]

Do I have Dan Harmon's email address? I do. I wrote him and I said, "Thanks for making this movie that made my son feel better." What did Dan Harmon write back to me? Something really moving. Let me see if I can find it.

[Typing.]

We're never gonna hear your case, by the way. Just forget it. This dumb thing about a shed.

[The litigants laugh.]

00:05:00 John Host "Tell your son that kids practice being adults the way puppies practice being dogs. The unexceptional have to practice what they'll employ as adults: traveling in packs, policing each other for weakness, biting, and barking. When your son's having a hard time, he's just practicing being exceptional. He should feel sorry for kids that have perfected the arts of singling out individuals and chanting things in unison. Their function is designated. His gets to be discovered."

[Stifles laughter.] And then he goes on to say, "Or maybe don't tell him that. You might turn him into Ray Fiennes in *Red Dragon*."

[John and the litigants laugh.]

Dan Harmon. That guy knows a thing or two.

00:05:41 Jesse Host After that it just says, uh, "We will all be going home from work at four AM."

[John and the litigants laugh.]

00:05:49 John Host Anyway, Elyse, you're wrong. Sheila, you're wrong. Uh, I will give— Sheila, I will give you one more chance to walk away with this thing. You will get special consideration in this court, that can be pandered to.

[The litigants laugh.]

If you do as much of the Arthur "Two Sheds" Jackson sketch as you can recall. 'Cause this is—

00:06:08 Sheila Guest Oh my—

[One or both litigants laugh.]

00:06:09 John Host This is something that I haven't had to endure since college. People doing whole *Monty Python* sketches in the dining hall, or the cafeteria in high school. The kids in high school who used to play weird card games every day at that other table, and speak in fake brogues, and just recite *Monty Python* to each other. Glad you're here, bringing back the old arts.

[One or both litigants laugh.]

So Sheila, let's hear it.

00:06:34 Sheila Guest That was unabashedly me in high school. Alright.

00:06:35 John Host Wait a minute, wait a minute. You know what, Sheila? You know what?

[One of the litigants laughs.]

You know what, Sheila? Let's hear your case. We'll hear your *Monty Python* at the end of the show.

[More laughter.]

That'll keep people listening.

00:06:44 Sheila Guest Oh, that's a hook!

00:06:46 John Host That's right. I'm learning about how to podcast.

[The litigants laugh.]

Okay! But Sheila, you do bring this—oh, but you—oh, the—all guesses are wrong.

[The litigants laugh.]

Because this is a dispute about a shed. Right? But it is also a dispute—this shed is designated what?

00:07:05 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Sheila & Elyse:** The play house.

00:07:06 John Host Play house! So where's the quote from? Think of it. Big rubber band ball. Jesse Thorn, you know this.

00:07:12 Sheila Guest *[Sighs.] Pee-wee's Playhouse.*

00:07:13 John Host *Pee-wee's Playhouse!*

00:07:15 Elyse Guest Ohhh.

00:07:16 John Host Who said that? I didn't see who said it. Sheila or Elyse?

00:07:17 Elyse Guest It was—

00:07:18 Sheila Guest It was Sheila.

00:07:19 Elyse Guest That was Sheila.

00:07:20 John Host That was Sheila? Sheila's running away with this, Elyse.

[The litigants laugh.]

I'm afraid justice is not gonna be on your side today. *Pee-wee's Playhouse*, episode four, season two. "Pee-wee Catches a Cold." I thought that it—it both tied into the theme, play houses, but also the fact that we are all a little sick and tired of being sick and tired. And living together in extreme circumstances. Now, you two, Sheila and Elyse, are sisters? Is that correct?

00:07:55 Sheila Guest That is correct.

00:07:56 John Host And you are living together, correct?

00:07:58 Sheila Guest Yes.

00:07:59 John Host So where are you two, and this play house, located?

00:08:03 Elyse Guest Um, we are all in Carlsbad, California. It's a suburb of San Diego.

00:08:07 Jesse Host It's known best for the German delicatessen and restaurant Tip Top Meats.

00:08:11 John Host *[Stifles laughter.]* Oh.

00:08:12 Elyse Guest Correct. They have very good bread.

00:08:14 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:08:15 Sheila Guest I think most people would go to Legoland, but okay.

[Elyse laughs.]

00:08:17 Jesse Host Yeah. Tip Top Meats is the Legoland of German delicatessen restaurants.

[John and the litigants laugh.]

00:08:24 John Host This reminds me, since we're talking about *Pee-wee's Playhouse*, uh, we gotta do a secret word. And I—now I can't use "Tip Top Meats."

[The litigants laugh.]

I was trying to think of a secret word that I could tell you, Elyse and Sheila, but not tell Jesse.

[The litigants laugh.]

That he would inevitably say during the course of this thing, and so we could all scream real loud.

[More laughter.]

And I was like, "'Coco,' 'Sissy,' 'Marinate the stump,' 'San Francisco,' 'Giants,' 'Baseball,' 'Pocket square...'"

[More laughter.]

I went through all of them, but then I came up with the perfect one. So Jesse, take off your headphones for a second. And I can see. Promise not to listen.

00:09:06 John Host *[Hushed]* Alright. Hey, everybody. The secret word today is "courtroom."

[Back up to usual volume] "Courtroom" is the secret word. If Jesse says—or anybody says that word from now on, what do we do? Elyse and Sheila?

[The litigants scream quietly, and then laugh.]

That's right! Scream—scream real loud! Okay. Put 'em back on, Jesse.

00:09:28 Jesse Host Okay. My headphones are back on.

00:09:30 John Host Did you hear the secret word?

00:09:31 Jesse Host No, but I did see Sheila and Elyse scream real loud.

[Everyone laughs.]

00:09:38 John Host Okay. So you're living together in Carlsbad, California, in this house that has a play house in it. Is this your home?

00:09:44 Elyse Guest This is our parents' home.

00:09:45 John Host It is your parents' home. You are adults living at home with your parents. May I presume this is due to, uh, society collapsing and the economy being bad, and...

[One of the litigants laughs.]

...health being a concern?

00:09:59 Sheila Guest That's about right. It's—it's a good time to have a back yard, and neither of us could afford that on our own.

00:10:04 John Host Right. Sheila, what do you do all day?

00:10:06 Sheila Guest I work online, from home.

00:10:08 John Host Mm-hm.

00:10:09 Sheila Guest So that's—that's good right now. *[Laughs.]*

00:10:10 John Host Okay!

00:10:11 Sheila Guest I was already doing that before.

00:10:12 John Host Good. And where do you—where would you normally live, Sheila?

00:10:15 Sheila Guest I was actually in LA for a while, and I had just come back home for "a few months." *[Laughs.]*

00:10:20 John Host Mm-hm.

00:10:21 Sheila Guest Uh, because I was planning to get my own place in Madison, Wisconsin.

00:10:25 John Host Oh!

00:10:26 Sheila Guest And then everything... happened, and I'm still here. *[Laughs.]*

00:10:31 John Host Oh! So you're not a resident of Wisconsin.

00:10:35 Sheila Guest No. But I'm a fan. *[Laughs.]*

00:10:36 John Host You were going—you were going to be. Yeah, love that badger state! It's good.

[Sheila chuckles.]

You could be a poll worker in Wisconsin. You can be a poll worker there in Carlsbad. They need poll workers. And Elyse? What do you do in normal life?

00:10:51 Elyse Guest I actually started law school a couple of months ago.

00:10:54 John Host Oh, okay!

00:10:55 Elyse Guest So I was supposed to move to Michigan, um, in August, so we both got cheated out of voting in a swing state by this pandemic.

00:11:03 John Host You could've been battleground state sisters!

00:11:05 Elyse Guest I know! I'm—honestly, I picked University of Michigan partly because I was like, "Yes, I'll get to vote in a swing state, my dream!"

[Sheila laughs.]

And then—

00:11:13 John Host Yeah, you never had it before!

00:11:14 Elyse Guest No, I've always been in California! And it's so—well, there's some important props, and people should still vote in California because voting is the cornerstone of our democracy, but it's much more boring to vote in presidential elections in California.

00:11:25 John Host Right.

00:11:26 Elyse Guest Than it is in other states.

00:11:27 John Host Right. WillVote.com is a good website to go to, no matter what state you live in, to figure out how and when and where and why to vote. Not why to vote. It doesn't care about how you're vote—you know, how you're voting.

[The litigants laugh.]

It's telling you where to go. Alright. So you both got cheated out of being battleground state voters, and now you're living back at home. How does that feel?

[Pause.]

This is genuinely. I'm—I—not judgey. This is not judgey John Hodgman. This is genuinely John Hodgman asking.

00:11:58 Elyse Guest Got it. Um, yeah. For me, it's—so I was—since I graduated college, I've been living at home. Just because student debt.

00:12:05 John Host Yeah.

00:12:06 Elyse Guest Was already destroying the world.

00:12:07 John Host Right.

00:12:08 Elyse Guest So it was nice to be able to like, pay some of that off before getting different student debt. Um, but it's definitely disappointing, like, to—since some of my classmates did move to Ann Arbor.

00:12:19 John Host Mm-hm.

00:12:20 Elyse Guest And are, like, doing... in some responsible ways socializing, and maybe in some less than responsible ways socializing, so I'm definitely glad I have the opportunity to be in a place with, like, other responsible people. But it's also, like, a little disappointing to have to stay in the same place so long.

00:12:35 John Host Also, you're young people! You're—you're in your twenties. This is—lots of people in their twenties live with their moms and dads now.

00:12:41 Elyse Guest True. *[Laughs.]*

00:12:42 John Host Because of the student debt thing, long before this. Although, now, Elyse, it says here that you're 23. Sheila, you're 26.

00:12:48 Sheila Guest Yes.

00:12:49 John Host Yeah, you gotta get your act together. Get—move outta the house. Come on.

[The litigants laugh.]

Twenty-six. *[Stifles laughter.]* Just kidding. You're doing the right and smart and responsible thing. But you got this shed, this play house, that is in the back yard there in Carlsbad. Correct?

00:13:04 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Elyse & Sheila:** Yes.

00:13:05 John Host Alright. And Sheila, you want to paint the shed a certain way.

00:13:09 Sheila Guest I do.

00:13:10 John Host And let's not talk about that for a second.

[One of the litigants laughs.]

What are your respective relationships to this play house? This play shed? Did you play in it as youths?

00:13:22 Sheila Guest Yes, we—it started out with a very tiny table and chairs, and some fake food in there.

00:13:28 John Host Classic.

00:13:29 Sheila Guest And various decorations.

00:13:31 John Host Yeah.

00:13:32 Sheila Guest And then it—we had rabbits for almost a decade, as pets, who—it then became the rabbitat for a period of time.

[Elyse laughs, Sheila stifles laughter.]

00:13:42 John Host Did you say "rabbitat"?

00:13:45 Sheila Guest *[Laughing]* Yes.

[Elyse laughs.]

00:13:47 John Host You best get a patent. Right now.

[The litigants laugh.]

That's not a term I've ever heard before.

00:13:53 Sheila Guest TM, TM, TM. And, uh—and then the rabbits passed away a few years ago.

00:14:00 John Host I'm sorry to hear that.

00:14:01 Sheila Guest And we stuck some bikes and garden equipment in there, and now it... mostly gets ignored.

00:14:07 John Host So it's had many lives. Is that—would that be fair to say, uh, Sheila?

00:14:11 Sheila Guest That would be fair to say.

00:14:12 John Host And neither one of you has a particular emotional—more of an emotional connection to it than the other. Because, you know, there was playing that was happening, but then it was a rabbitat, and then it was a bike shed. Is that—would that be fair to say, Elyse?

00:14:27 Elyse Guest Yeah. I would say we have about the same relationship to it.

00:14:29 John Host Right. And how would you describe that relationship to it?

00:14:33 Elyse Guest I would say we definitely have—like, we're both fairly sentimental people. So I would say we're both—like, there's still drawings inside of it that like, we just did on the walls when we were little.

[Sheila laughs quietly.]

00:14:41 John Host Right.

00:14:42 Elyse Guest So there's definitely, like, signs of our childhood in there, but I also don't think either of us are hugely like, "Oh, if this shed were to look different, I would die!"

00:14:49 John Host Right. And Sheila, you wanna paint over all those drawings.

00:14:52 Sheila Guest *[Laughs.]* Uh—

00:14:53 John Host You want the past to be the past, you wanna paint it!

00:14:55 Sheila Guest To be fair, I probably don't have the ambition to do the inside as well, but—*[laughs]*—the outside.

00:14:59 John Host Oh this is just a pure exterior job?

00:15:01 Sheila Guest Yeah.

00:15:02 John Host You're gonna do a slapdash job and then flip it? I got you.

[One or both litigants laugh.]

I got your number. Increase curb appeal. Who cares about the inside?

[More laughter.]

I got some questions about the shed before we figure out how we're gonna destroy it.

[More laughter.]

Question one, Elyse, you brought up the pictures drawn on the walls. What are the pictures of?

00:15:19 Elyse Guest The ones I can most distinctly remember are us attempting to draw people that are extremely misshapen and in weird-colored outfits.

00:15:27 John Host Aughhhhh.

[One of the litigants laughs.]

Eughhhhhh, creepy!

00:15:31 Elyse Guest As seen in the evidence, um, I probably drew some of them, and I never really developed as an artist.

[One or both litigants laugh.]

00:15:36 John Host I understand. The world needs lawyers, too.

00:15:39 Elyse Guest That's what I like to think.

00:15:40 John Host Yeah. Most lawyers do like to think that way.

[The litigants laugh.]

Alright, you got creepy deformed human paintings on there. Sheila, how many rabbits did you have?

00:15:51 Sheila Guest Two.

00:15:52 John Host Two rabbits. And they lived in there for ten years?!

00:15:54 Sheila Guest There was a hutch outside, and then we moved them to the inside at night so that the coyotes couldn't get 'em.

00:16:00 John Host I don't wanna know the specific—I just mean that's a long life for rabbits, I think.

00:16:03 Sheila Guest *[Laughs.]* Oh, yes.

00:16:06 John Host And what were their names, these rabbits?

00:16:08 Sheila Guest Zoomzy and Hopsy.

[John snorts.]

00:16:10 Elyse Guest I would like to state for the record that Hopsy's full name was Mrs. Hoppy Pants. *[Laughs.]* And that Sheila tries to deny that she named a rabbit Mrs. Hoppy Pants.

[Someone laughs.]

00:16:19 John Host I can see why she would.

[One or both litigants laugh.]

Hopsy is a much cooler name.

00:16:22 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:16:23 John Host Zoomzy and Hopsy?

00:16:25 Sheila Guest Mm-hm.

00:16:26 John Host Uh-huh.

00:16:27 Jesse Host Hopsy sounds like a British rapper.

[John and the litigants laugh.]

Grime, Beats, and so forth.

00:16:35 Jesse Host Let's take a quick break, and hear about another wonderful show provided to your ears by MaximumFun.org. We'll be back in just a second on *Judge John Hodgman*.

00:16:44 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:16:46 Promo Clip *[Cheering crowd.]*

Danielle Radford: Mmmacho man, to the top rope!

[Thump!]

Danielle: The flying elbow! The cover!

[Crowd cheering swells.]

Speaker 2: *[Distant; impact on each word]* One! Two! Three!

[Ding ding ding!]

Danielle: We've got a new champion!

Music: Excited, sweeping music.

Lindsey Kelk: We're here with Macho Man Randy Savage after his big win to become the new world champion! What are you gonna do now, Mach?!

00:17:05 Promo Clip

Hal Lublin: *[Randy Savage impression]* I'm gonna go listen to the newest episode of the [Tights and Fights](#) podcast, oh yeah!

Lindsey: Tell us more about this podcast!

Hal: *[Continuing impression]* It's the podcast of power, too sweet to be sour! Funky like a monkey! Woke discussions, man! And jokes about wrestlers' fashion choices, myself excluded! Yeahh!

Lindsey: I can't wait to listen!

Hal: *[Continuing impression]* Neither can I! You can find it Saturdays on Maximum Fun! Oh yeahhh! Dig it!

[Music fades out.]

00:17:32 Sound Effect Transition

[Three gavel bangs.]

00:17:35 Jesse Host

Welcome back. Court is back in session.

00:17:38 John Host

Okay. So we got this shed now, that's full of weird, *Blair Witch-y* drawings.

[Someone stifles laughter.]

And the ghosts of two rabbits.

[One of the litigants laughs.]

And so Sheila, if I understand correctly, you wanna paint it spooky.

00:17:49 Sheila Guest

That is absolutely correct.

00:17:51 John Host

Let's go to the evidence. This is submitted by Elyse.

[Jesse laughs.]

We'll call this exhibit A. *[Laughs.]* Two different visions for how the play house should look.

00:18:07 Jesse Host

And you say you have—you never developed as an artist!

[The litigants and John laugh.]

00:18:11 John Host

I'm gonna say drawn by a charming, naive hand.

[A litigant laughs.]

This is a wonderful example of what we call "outsider art."

[John and one or both litigants laugh quietly.]

Who drew these? Elyse, or Sheila?

00:18:23 Elyse Guest

We each drew one. The—

00:18:24 John Host

You each drew your own.

00:18:25 Elyse Guest

Yes.

00:18:27 John Host

Well, it's—I mean, look. You—neither one of you is a better artist than the other, so you have that.

[A litigant laughs.]

Elyse, you wish to paint the play shed red. Correct?

00:18:40 Elyse Guest

Correct.

00:18:41 John Host

Tell me your vision. Describe your vision here to me.

00:18:44 Elyse Guest

There are two main reasons I have this vision. First off, I think that if we painted it red, it would look like a cute little, like, mini farmyard barn.

00:18:54 John Host

Yeah.

00:18:55 Elyse Guest

Which would be like, a fun aesthetic for the back yard, and something that if Sheila wanted to make it spooky around Halloween—like, there's definitely ways to get the haunted barn aesthetic, like, going.

00:19:03 John Host

How do you—yeah, *[sarcastically]* how do you make an old barn spooky?

[The litigants and John laugh.]

00:19:07 Elyse Guest

Precisely. She's got a lot to work with, but it doesn't have to be, like, specifically spooky year-round? Also, when we initially painted the play house, most of it was done yellow, and only the door was red, because yellow was Sheila's favorite color, and red was my favorite color. So her choice of color got to dominate last time. So I also see this as a tribute to my past self, of finally getting to win what color it is, in red.

00:19:30 John Host

Speaking of spooky, have either of you ever seen the horror movie *The Grudge*?

00:19:35 Sheila Guest

No.

00:19:36 Elyse Guest

No.

00:19:37 John Host

It's this movie about one sister having a life-long grudge over the other.

[One of the litigants laughs.]

For splashing yellow all over the play house and only getting to paint the door red.

[The litigants laugh.]

There is a photo—

00:19:46 Sheila Guest Your Honor, red is not her favorite color anymore.

00:19:49 John Host Look, that doesn't matter to The Grudge.

[More laughter.]

The debt must be paid. Doesn't matter what her favorite color is anymore, right, Elyse?

00:19:55 Elyse Guest Correct.

00:19:56 John Host Lawyer in training.

[The litigants laugh.]

Right? The—taste is immaterial. It is punishment for past crimes.

00:20:02 Elyse Guest Exactly. Justice has to be served somehow.

00:20:04 John Host All of [these photos](#) are available, of course, at the show page at [MaximumFun.org](#), as well as on our Instagram, [@judgejohnhodgman](#), where you will see—and I will describe for the listeners, so they do not immediately go to their phones and drive off the road—

[One or both litigants chuckle.]

—this shed in the back yard, that is, in its current incarnation, a wide, squat, yellow shed with white sort of beam accents and a red door. And it looks—based on these two ridiculous-looking dogs that you've put in for scale...

[The litigants laugh quietly.]

Who are those dogs?

00:20:43 Elyse Guest The dog in the front is named Willow.

00:20:45 John Host Uh-huh.

00:20:46 Elyse Guest And the dog in the back is Maverick.

00:20:48 John Host Willow and Maverick? What, are they—are those their names, or their secret security codenames?

[The litigants laugh.]

00:20:57 Elyse Guest Uh, it works either way!

00:20:58 John Host Alright.

00:20:59 Jesse Host They're named after legendary sort of nerd icons. So Willow is named after Willow from *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, and Maverick is named after the character Maverick from the movie *Maverick*.

[John and the litigants laugh.]

00:21:12 Elyse Guest Well, Willow is actually named after the character from *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*.

00:21:15 John Host Ohhh! Jesse, you got it!

00:21:16 Elyse Guest And Maverick we just adopted earlier this week, and he came with that name. And we didn't want to confuse him.

00:21:22 John Host Yeah, sure, of course! How are Willow and Maverick getting along?

00:21:26 Sheila Guest They were a little icy toward each other at first, but now they are playing very well, and laying down near each other on purpose. So we're pretty sure they're best friends at this point.

00:21:35 John Host And this human in this photo is Sheila? Is that you, Sheila?

00:21:38 Sheila Guest Yes. We could not get Maverick to stand still for the camera otherwise.

[The litigants laugh.]

00:21:42 John Host I'm not blaming you, I'm just trying to get a sense of the—the height of this shed is not terrific. It is—it is a short shed.

00:21:51 Sheila Guest Yes.

00:21:52 John Host Right? So you would have to crouch down to go through that little door.

00:21:55 Sheila Guest Yes.

00:21:56 John Host So it really was a thing for children at some point.

00:21:59 Sheila Guest Yes.

00:22:00 John Host It's an abandoned child's play house with weird drawings on the wall—

[One of the litigants laughs.]

—haunted by rabbit ghosts. Correct?

00:22:05 Sheila Guest Absolutely, yes.

00:22:06 Elyse Guest Pretty much sums it up.

00:22:07 John Host Probably still a lot of rabbit poop in there, right?

00:22:09 Sheila Guest There's only so much sweeping you can do.

[The litigants laugh quietly.]

00:22:11 John Host Yeah. That's right. Some old newspapers. Some old newspapers, uh, and a, uh, Devendra Banhart, uh, cassette tape on the floor? That's probably what's in there.

[One or both litigants laugh.]

Alright. So what Elyse has proposed is to paint the yellow part red, and keeping the accents white, and it would have a real barnyard look to it. And in, uh, Sheila's... rustic, scary drawing, it is a very different look indeed. Will you describe it to me, Sheila?

00:22:45 Sheila Guest Uh, I would like—

00:22:46 John Host Oh, no, you know what? You know what? I would like Elyse to describe it.

[The litigants laugh.]

And feel free to editorialize.

00:22:53 Elyse Guest Okay. So Sheila, in the middle of our bright, happy back yard, wants to paint a major—the part that's currently a bright yellow color into a

darker gray.

00:23:02 John Host Mm-hm.

00:23:04 Elyse Guest She wants to do a dark purple on the door.

00:23:05 John Host Mm-hm.

00:23:06 Elyse Guest Make all of the accents black. So just, like, suck all the color out of it. And then even paint spiderwebs on the top, in between some of the top beams, to make it look, um, even dirtier than it already is.

[John snorts, one or both litigants laugh.]

00:23:19 John Host And on the roof? On the peaked roof? What's this?

00:23:24 Elyse Guest I believe it's a small bat that she wants to put on the top, even though we have neighborhood birds who love to perch there and stare at us.

00:23:31 John Host And may I presume, Sheila, that to get this bat to stay there, you're going to nail it to the roof through its little hands?

[One or both litigants laugh quietly.]

00:23:39 Sheila Guest Um, I was more thinking of making some kind of bat gargoyle and having kind of weighted feet on the right angle that it could just... sit there.

00:23:49 John Host Right. *[Deadpan]* And then there's a g-g-g-ghost in the window?

[The litigants laugh quietly.]

That's just figurative, right?

00:23:54 Sheila Guest That's more for flavor.

00:23:55 John Host Yeah, okay, I got you. You have some Halloween decorations behind you. We are recording this in early October; it is—it is the Halloweening season. But Sheila, you want Halloweening all year long, in the form of a spooky shed.

Now, listen. We were talking before. Uh, I was trying to remember which one of you was the spookier one. And Sheila said, "It's me, Sheila." And I'm like, "Right. Spooky Sheila. Now I got it. Elyse is, like, barnyard normal. Everyday Elyse."

[The litigants laugh.]

That's my nickname for Elyse. Everyday Norm. Normie Elyse.

[More laughter.]

But I also know that you're sporting a Hatbox Ghost T-shirt from the Haunted Mansion in Disneyland. Uh, which—and I'm all about the Hatbox Ghost. Look it up online. You were saying that that's what makes the Haunted Mansion better at Disneyland than Walt Disney World, right?

00:24:42 Sheila Guest Absolutely.

00:24:43 John Host Yeah. Tell me more about your aesthetic. Why you wanna paint this shed this way. Why you love the Haunted Mansion. What this is

doing for you, that you would want to inflict this permanently upon, uh, your sister for the time that you're living there, and then your parents after you move away. I—which I hope happens someday.

[One or both litigants laugh.]

So you can resume your normal lives.

00:25:06 Sheila Guest I hope so too, so I can spook up a whole real-sized house. Uh—

00:25:11 John Host Ohhh!

[The litigants laugh.]

00:25:15 Sheila Guest Well, the purple and gray color scheme is definitely inspired by the Haunted Mansion at Disneyland.

00:25:21 John Host Mm-hm.

00:25:22 Sheila Guest Kind of the—the wallpaper aesthetic.

00:25:25 John Host Mm-hm.

00:25:26 Sheila Guest But I think that the gray with a touch of purple is... a nice look, that—

00:25:32 John Host No it's not.

00:25:34 Sheila Guest —while it certainly says "Haunted Mansion" to me, doesn't—

00:25:35 John Host It only says "Haunted Mansion." That's all it says.

[The litigants laugh.]

You—how could you—

00:25:39 Sheila Guest Alright, I'll—

00:25:40 John Host You have—you put—you're putting a bat on top of this thing. This is a specific look.

[The litigants laugh.]

00:25:44 Sheila Guest Well, listen. I'm saying the—

00:25:45 Jesse Host I don't know, John. I feel like painting spiderwebs onto your building could mean anything!

[The litigants and John laugh.]

00:25:52 John Host Yeah, don't, uh—don't come into this fake meeting of justice... chamber. *[Clears throat pointedly.]* Uh, and try to tell me that this is a normal look! This is a very specific look! And one that you love.

00:26:06 Sheila Guest That's fair.

00:26:07 John Host Elyse, how long has Sheila been into this kind of stuff? Is this a long-term thing, or like a recent affectation?

00:26:14 Elyse Guest Oh, it's definitely been a while. I feel like it really started to pick up in high school, when during her freshman year they did *Sweeney Todd* for the school musical.

00:26:22 John Host Well, there you go. So how long have there been that pumpkin, and other Halloween decorations up on that wall behind you?

00:26:32 Sheila Guest On the wall behind me, since only September...

00:26:35 John Host Uh-huh.

00:26:37 Sheila Guest ...um, 1st.

[John snorts, the litigants laugh.]

00:26:40 John Host Really dropped the "1st" in there, sotto voce.

[The litigants laugh.]

If you had it your way, you would have perpetual Halloween in your house? That's what you're looking for?

00:26:49 Sheila Guest No. Um, I do like making things special by bringing them out once a year. But there would maybe be certain Haunted Mansion aspects.

00:27:00 Jesse Host Cozy goth elements.

00:27:01 Sheila Guest Exactly.

00:27:02 John Host Yeah. Cozy goth. Shout-out to [cozy goth](#).

[One of the litigants chuckles.]

So whose idea was it to paint? Sheila's?

00:27:09 Sheila Guest Yes, it was my idea.

00:27:11 John Host Got it. And now, Elyse, aside from it being not to your taste, are there any other reasons that you are opposed to Sheila's idea?

00:27:22 Elyse Guest Um, despite—

00:27:23 John Host Not that your taste shouldn't matter! Even though that's what Sheila says.

[One or both litigants laugh quietly.]

Your taste does matter to me. But I'm wondering if there are other arguments that I need to be hearing.

00:27:34 Elyse Guest The main thing for me is just... it's not to my taste.

00:27:36 John Host Mm-hm.

00:27:37 Elyse Guest And though they do perpetually claim neutrality, I am convinced that the spooky aesthetic isn't as much my parents' aesthetic. And since this is their house that they plan to live in after we leave, I think we should be trying to account for like, their normal tastes when deciding how to paint it.

00:27:57 John Host Now, Sheila, you sent in a piece of evidence as well. 'Cause this is an important point. Which is that this is not a permanent arrangement for either of you. You wish to go forth into your lives, and leave your parents behind. Maybe even leave them locked up in that shed, I don't know what your plans are.

[The litigants laugh.]

So their taste must be taken into consideration. But Sheila, you submitted exhibit B, an affidavit from Sheila and Elyse's parents. It's short, and I'll read it here:

"To the honorable Judge John Hodgman,

As is evidenced by this case being in your hands, we have been unable to pick a side. We are aware of your reputation for having harsh but fair judgment in your... law chamber. Therefore we give you explicit parental permission to crush the spirit or soul of either or both of our daughters as you see fit!"

[John cackles, the litigants laugh.]

"Sincerely, the parents of Sheila and Elyse." I guess they have no other identity than that.

[The litigants laugh.]

And they just—not even their names. Sheila, who wrote this note? Did you draft it and have them sign it?

00:29:06 Sheila Guest

No. *[Stifles laughter.]* Our—we told them that that could submit an affidavit. They talked it over amongst themselves. All I did was say, "There's no E in Hodgman."

[The litigants chuckle.]

00:29:16 John Host

Hm...

00:29:17 Jesse Host

Then they took a quick break from watching *Monty Python* on PBS in the seventies.

[The litigants laugh.]

Dashed out that note.

[John laughs.]

Got back to their sets.

00:29:25 John Host

Elyse, this feels like, um, a note written under duress.

[The litigants laugh.]

Do you believe for a second that your parents, who are—shall remain nameless—

[The litigants and John laugh.]

—uh, don't have an opinion about this?

00:29:43 Elyse Guest

I can definitely attest that this was not written under duress. It is something that they specifically wanted to do, especially our very own weird dad, decided he needed to be a part of the thing we were doing. And he insisted on the "crushing the souls line."

[Sheila laughs quietly.]

00:29:56 John Host

Mm-hm. Alright.

00:29:58 Elyse Guest

I have tried to push my parents to have a strong opinion on this multiple times, and they do keep claiming to be neutral. So I think...

00:30:06 John Host

Mm-hm.

00:30:08 Elyse Guest I will admit I don't think they have a strong opinion one way or the other. I think they're like, "It's a thing in the back yard. If you two wanna paint it, go for it." But I still think we should be thinking about their taste, and the aesthetic of the whole back yard, when making a decision how to paint it.

00:30:22 John Host Do you think that your taste reflects, more accurately, their taste?

00:30:26 Elyse Guest I do.

00:30:27 John Host Mm-hm.

00:30:28 Elyse Guest Since they are the ones who ultimately decided the original color scheme of the shed—of the play house and how it was painted, I think mine... reflects that, and the way that they normally design things, better than Sheila's vision does.

00:30:39 John Host Well, no, it's not exactly a reflection of that, because when they made the decision early on, they were like, "Let's paint most of this Sheila yellow, and just a little bit Elyse red. That way they can never play in there without knowing exactly how our love is apportioned."

[The litigants laugh.]

00:30:56 Elyse Guest You make a fair point.

00:30:58 John Host Mm-hm. Do you feel... the fact that your parents—

[One of the litigants laughs, John stifles laughter.]

—are not immediately putting their foot down and say, "No! Save your kooky Haunted Mansion stuff for when you get to Madison! This is our house, and Elyse doesn't like it!"

[More laughter.]

Do you take that as—as hurtful? That they are perhaps not taking your feelings into consideration?

00:31:22 Elyse Guest Honestly, not really. Um—

00:31:24 John Host Well, you should.

00:31:25 Elyse Guest I—okay. That's good to know.

[Sheila and John laugh.]

I'll definitely be sure to write this down in things to talk to a therapist about.

00:31:29 John Host Tell them they can call me, and I'll tell them.

[One or both litigants laugh.]

Alright. Some practical questions before I get to my verdict. Whatever the design decision is, will you be working on it together? Will you be painting it together?

00:31:44 Sheila Guest I—I think, likely, I would be the one doing most of the work, either way.

00:31:50 John Host Why is that? Do you have experience in painting sheds?

00:31:53 Sheila Guest *[Laughs.]* Well, I went to every set-building day for my high school

theatre shows, so... *[Laughs.]*

00:31:59 John Host Be honest with me, Sheila. How would you rate Elyse's shed-painting game? Ten for best shed painting, zero for "Keep her away from sheds."

[Elyse stifles laughter.]

00:32:12 Sheila Guest Um, she's perhaps a... *[stifles laughter]* four, in, uh, crafts involving fine motor skills, and shed-painting is not as much that as... drawing or cutting or other things. I don't think she would be unable or unwilling to help. But I think generally between the two of us, I'm the one who does this type of thing.

00:32:39 John Host Elyse? Do you feel slighted by Sheila's assessment of your, um, fine motor skills? Or is that about—is she about right?

00:32:47 Elyse Guest No, that's pretty accurate.

00:32:48 John Host Harsh but fair?

00:32:49 Elyse Guest Harsh but fair.

00:32:50 John Host Elyse, do you have any interest in painting this thing at all?

00:32:54 Elyse Guest Yeah! I think it would be a fun project, especially given the times, and how few entertainment sources there are.

00:33:00 John Host Mm-hm.

00:33:01 Elyse Guest I think it could be a fun thing for us to do together. But I will admit, especially since law school started up, Sheila has a lot more hours in the day to do a project like this than I do.

00:33:11 John Host Is this really about painting the shed, or just having a project, would you say?

00:33:17 Sheila Guest I would say it's a little of each. It's nice to have a project, and have something that when you look at it afterwards, I really—you really feel proud of. And I think I could really make this look good. And kind of be eating outside, and looking at it, and going, "Yeah! That looks great!"

[Sheila, John, and Jesse laugh quietly.]

00:33:39 Jesse Host I immediately pictured, like, maybe an Instagram selfie with the shed, that says, "I make this look good."

[The litigants laugh.]

00:33:50 John Host And obviously, Sheila, if I were to rule in your favor, you would want me to rule... in your favor. Paint this thing scary. Scare it up. Jokey scary.

00:33:58 Sheila Guest Yes.

00:33:59 John Host *Munsters*-style.

[One of the litigants laughs quietly.]

If I refer to it as *Munsters* modern, would that turn you off the scheme? *[Laughs.]* Mid-century *Munsters* modern?

00:34:11 Sheila Guest I'm more of an *Addams*, personally, but, uh—but I accept *Munsters* modern. The—

00:34:16 John Host Yeah.

00:34:18 Sheila Guest The alliteration really sells it.

00:34:19 Jesse Host It's not modern, though. I mean, it's more of a spooky cottage core.

[John snorts, the litigants laugh.]

00:34:26 John Host Yeah. Can you get into this thing? Can you fit in this thing? Can you sit in there?

00:34:31 Sheila Guest We can fit in, like, to get items out of it.

00:34:35 Jesse Host Haunted dolls.

00:34:36 Sheila Guest It's not too hard. So there's some gardening tools in there.

00:34:39 John Host Yeah.

00:34:40 Sheila Guest You can duck in and grab a shovel easy enough.

00:34:41 John Host Alright. Okay. Is it being used for any other legit purpose?

00:34:45 Jesse Host Scarecrow storage.

[John snorts, one or both litigants laugh quietly.]

00:34:49 Elyse Guest Yeah, it's primarily being used for storage right now. Just of like... bunch of random stuff. Especially since we got the puppy, really everything that could—he could eat in the back yard that's not a dog toy has been stuffed inside the shed.

00:35:02 John Host Alright. Speaking of the puppy, we'll just take a look at this—at these dogs for a second. Jesse, can you take a look at these dogs for me?

00:35:09 Jesse Host Yeah.

[Someone laughs quietly.]

So there's a picture here of, uh, Willow enjoying Halloween. Willow has a sweet gray face, and she's eating some zombies' brains.

[John and one of the litigants laughs.]

And then—*[laughs]*—and there's another—this other one is a dog wearing eyeglasses! Looks like those might be your eyeglasses, Elyse.

00:35:27 Elyse Guest Correct.

00:35:28 Jesse Host Well, the dog can't see out of the eyeglasses, Elyse!

[Jesse and Sheila laugh.]

00:35:32 Elyse Guest Well, they're computer glasses, so they're non-prescription. So...

00:35:34 Jesse Host Ohhh.

00:35:35 John Host Ohhh!

00:35:36 Elyse Guest They cancel out blue light the same way.

00:35:37 Jesse Host So you're helping the dog go to sleep on time.

00:35:39 John Host Yeah.

00:35:40 Elyse Guest Exactly.

00:35:41 Jesse Host And avoid eye strain.

00:35:42 John Host Dogs don't see the color blue, so they don't need those glasses.

[One or both litigants laugh quietly.]

00:35:45 Elyse Guest Should have thought that through.

00:35:46 Jesse Host Awww, look at these sweet paws. Speaking of things to eat, I'd eat these paw pads. Num num num.

[John and one or both litigants laugh.]

00:35:52 John Host Uh, Elyse, if I were to rule in your favor, you want it to be red and white? Or are you willing to go back to the drawing board for a compromise?

00:36:01 Elyse Guest I'd be willing to go back to the drawing board for a compromise. I think—

00:36:04 John Host Well—mm-hm?

00:36:05 Elyse Guest I think that there is a middle ground that could exist. Like, I know that, again, being spooky is, like, a big part of who Sheila is. She's working on, like, a Halloween music podcast. This is just something she's really passionate about. So I would be willing to, like, look into it a little more. Like, maybe we could find a nice shade of orange, or do it like, some sort of purple, but not do the black and gray. So I think that there is a middle ground that exists.

00:36:29 John Host Mm-hm. Mm-hm. Alright. I think I've heard everything I need to in order to make my decision, so now it's time for me to go into my own spooky shed.

[Someone laughs quietly.]

And, uh—and, uh, I will consider my verdict, and I will be back in a moment.

00:36:45 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[As Jesse speaks below: Door opens, chairs scrape, footsteps.]*

00:36:47 Jesse Host Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom.

00:36:49 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** AHHHHHH!!!

Sheila: AHHHHHHH!!!

Elyse: AHHHHHHH!!!

Sound Effect: *[A bell rings four times.]*

[The bell stops abruptly, and the screaming turns to giggling.]

00:36:58 Jesse Host *[Deadpan]* Cool.

00:36:59 John Host *[Laughing in delight]* That was so dumb!

[The litigants laugh.]

00:37:02 Jesse Host Hm.

00:37:04 John Host Jesse, you said the secret word.

[The litigants laugh.]

00:37:06 Jesse Host I [*inaudible*].

00:37:07 John Host Do you know what the secret—?

00:37:08 Jesse Host The secret word is... one of the greatest things ever.

[*The litigants laugh.*]

00:37:12 John Host No, it's actually "courtroom."

00:37:13 Crosstalk Crosstalk [*Ding!*]

Sheila, Elyse, & John: AHHHHHHH!!!

[*Ding! Ding! Ding!*]

[*More laughter.*]

00:37:20 Jesse Host Uh, Sheila, I have to ask you... Do you believe in your heart that you could execute the design that you've laid out here, with the—I'm just asking because... the picture looks a little bit like something my six-year-old would bring home from summer camp. If there was a spooky summer camp.

00:37:40 Sheila Guest [*Laughs.*] I know it's a poor craftsman who blames their tools, but these markers have seen better days.

00:37:47 Jesse Host Uh-huh.

[*One or both litigants laugh, John snorts.*]

00:37:49 Sheila Guest This was sort of slapdash concept art.

00:37:52 Jesse Host I mean, you have a very ambitious plan to create a bat sculpture gargoyle that has feet at the correct angle, and weight-balanced such that it would attach itself to the roof pitch.

00:38:05 Sheila Guest Well, I've—I've made some sculpture things before. I made a Sans the skeleton head for a cosplay once. And I think, uh, I could—I could make this out of plaster and get the measurements right, and... measure twice, cut once, and do this thing.

00:38:24 Elyse Guest I can attest that Sheila tends—is very crafty, and has made some, like, really cool stuff. With her little hands.

[*Someone snorts.*]

00:38:32 Jesse Host Elyse, what's the appeal for you of just having a barn in your back yard? Like a tiny barn.

00:38:38 Elyse Guest I just think it'd be really cute. If it's like, "Oh, it's a little mini barn, but it's in our back yard!"

00:38:43 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:38:44 Elyse Guest "And it's filled with all of our tools!"

00:38:45 Jesse Host You should probably get a donk, though, right? It's a miniature donkey?

00:38:48 Elyse Guest Mm, that'd be good! Donkey Hotey. (*Don Quixote.*)

00:38:52 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:38:53 Elyse Guest We could have—yeah, we really could.

00:38:54 Jesse Host He could be called Donkey Hotey. I mean, I think we pretty much

solved it right there.

[Jesse and the litigants laugh.]

I don't really care what the judge has to say, now!

00:39:01 John Host

Which *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* character is that?

[Jesse and the litigants laugh.]

00:39:08 Jesse Host

Well, we'll see what Judge Hodgman has to say about all this when we come back in just a second.

00:39:12 Sound Effect Transition

[Three gavel bangs.]

00:39:16 Promo Clip

Music: Guitar strums as singer counts out "One, two, one two three four." Up-tempo guitar and harmonica music plays in the background.

Justin McElroy: Hi, everybody! My name is Justin McElroy.

Dr. Sydnee McElroy: I'm Sydnee McElroy!

Justin: We're both doctors, and—

Sydnee: Nope. Just me.

Justin: Okay, well Sydnee's a doctor and I'm a medical enthusiast.

Sydnee: Okay.

Justin: And we created *Sawbones*, a marital tour of misguided medicine!

Sydnee: Every week I dig through the annals of medical history to bring you the wildest, grossest—sometimes dumbest—tales of ways we've tried to treat people throughout history!

Justin: And lately we do a lot of modern fake medicine. Because everything's a disaster. But it's slightly less of a disaster every Friday, right here on MaximumFun.org, as we bring you *Sawbones: A Marital Tour of Misguided Medicine*. And remember:

Sydnee: Don't drill a hole in your head.

[Music ends.]

00:39:56 Sound Effect Transition

[Three gavel bangs.]

00:39:58 Jesse Promo

Judge Hodgman, we're taking a break from the case. We're in chambers, talking about what's going on. Your wonderful television program, the name of which we're not permitted to say on this show, is available in its entirety, without any—uh, all killer, no filler. On Hulu.

00:40:16 John Promo

Yeah.

00:40:17 Jesse Promo

If folks have Hulu. I really strongly recommend this delightful show in which you and your friend David Rees are, uh, teen detectives who have gone to seed.

00:40:26 John Promo

And grown up.

00:40:27 Jesse Promo Yeah. And, um—*[laughing]* uh, but still solve teen detective problems.

[John laughs.]

Teenagers' issues.

00:40:35 John Promo Yeah. We're hired—we're employed by teenagers to solve mysteries for children.

00:40:40 Jesse Promo My daughter has gotten really into *Nancy Drew* lately—

00:40:43 John Promo Oh!

00:40:44 Jesse Promo —and it's really given me a new appreciation for the show, which I will call *D-town*.

00:40:49 John Promo Well, if you wanna see all ten episodes—and I warn parents and children alike that, um, there are swear words in this show. It's a PG-13 show, let's say. Just go to Bit.ly/dicktown. That's D-I-C-K-T-O-W-N, all one word, all small letters. I don't know why Bitly assigned me that particular URL-shortening device. But that's what it's called.

00:41:11 Jesse Promo Mm-hm.

00:41:12 John Promo Bit.ly/dicktown. Also, *Medallion Status* is coming out in paperback on October 13th. I'll be doing virtual events at the Mark Twain House in West Hartford, Connecticut, home of the Whalers. *[Stifling laughter]* That's where they played.

00:41:24 Jesse Promo Mm-hm.

00:41:25 John Promo They played hockey at the Mark Twain historical home.

00:41:27 Jesse Promo Yeah.

00:41:28 John Promo It was a weird time.

00:41:29 Jesse Promo I mean, it makes sense why the team folded eventually.

00:41:32 John Promo *[Laughing]* Yeah, exactly.

00:41:33 Jesse Promo You just can't get a lot of paying customers in there.

00:41:34 John Promo Yeah, and al—

00:41:35 Jesse Promo Once you put the ice down.

00:41:36 John Promo Yeah, and also it was only a—a quarter of a court. *[Laughs.]*

00:41:39 Jesse Promo Yeah.

00:41:40 John Promo A quarter of an ice rink. Um—but I will be doing a virtual event there, as well as at Brookline Booksmith in my hometown of Brookline. I will not be there, but I'll be there in virtual conversation with someone you will like! JohnHodgman.com/tour will have all the details and more as they develop.

Meanwhile, coming up, if you would like to see me in a different virtual setting, why don't you join a phone bank Zoom that I've been taking part in? Listener Zach turned me onto it. Somerville voters calling into battleground states to have conversations with voters. It's every Sunday afternoon. I'll be joining them this Sunday afternoon, October the 11th at 3 PM, and you can sign up and join as well, at Bit.ly/gogetemzach. That's "Go get em Z-A-C-H."

And then on Monday, October 12th, I'll be joining listener Kelsey on the phone bank Zoom that she captains every Monday, where a whole bunch of people get together, Zooming together, and then use a very handy little dialer to call and recruit poll workers and poll observers in Wisconsin. It's not even a partisan thing. You're just getting people out there to work the polls, which is so necessary. That's on Monday, October 12th, at 5:30 PM Central Time. [Bit.ly/gogetemkelsey](http://bit.ly/gogetemkelsey).

Maybe I'll put that on the JohnHodgman.com/tour page as well. So sign in if you want. Hit me up in the chat. Watch my little Zoom box as I make calls, and probably pick my nose. Both Zach and Kelsey and all of their friends will walk you through what to do and how to do it. It's painless. It's fun. Doing phone banking with other people in a Zoom is terrific, 'cause, you know, there's a get-to-know-you session at the top, and then at the end there's a debrief session, where people go, "Ohhh, this is the person—cool person I talked to!" or "This was fun!" and everyone feels good.

00:43:30 John Promo If you are captaining a phone bank team and want me to drop in for a sesh, let me know at hodgman@maximumfun.org. I am through talk trained and ready to hop on. And if you don't like what I have to say about politics, uh, write me! At hodgman@maximumfun.org, too. I've enjoyed hearing from and engaging with listeners both to my left and right politically about the issues at stake on election day this year.

And even—there was one person who came in who was really kinda angry and mean to me. And I say, "Heyyy! You know what Tony Faulkner says, at Columbia University, in 1990. Take it down a thousand." And he apologized, and he's been really cool since, and we've shared and aired some issues and ideas. So it's been terrific.

Thank you, everyone, for listening. And Jesse Thorn, what have you got going on?

00:44:20 Jesse Promo All this month, we are debuting every Monday, new stock in the Put This On Shop, my vintage store. And I wanna make it clear, it's not a vintage clothing store, though there is a bit of vintage clothing in there. It's a vintage giftwares, accessories, clothing, and so forth... store.

00:44:42 John Promo It's mostly a store, uh, of *Popeye* gumball banks, I think.

[Jesse laughs.]

Mostly—

00:44:47 Jesse Promo *[Laughing]* We do have one *Popeye* gumball bank in there.

[John laughs.]

Uh, so, you know, if you're a *Popeye* fan, it's a pretty sweet *Popeye* gumball bank, I—I gotta say.

If you use the code "Justice," you get free shipping on almost everything in the store. And it's everything but the largest and most ungainly items, or things going overseas. And you can find

everything online at PutThisOnShop.com.

We have had a lot of *Judge John Hodgman* listeners choosing things! The tiny hats were a big it.

00:45:25	John	Promo	Oh!
00:45:27	Jesse	Promo	I purchased a collection of tiny plastic hats, which originally were for, like, if you bought a hat for someone for Christmas, but the hat was not made yet, you would give them this tiny plastic hat under the Christmas tree. Sold almost all of those. Though I think there are still a few left .
			And a lot of other stuff to <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> listeners. There's a lot of neat stuff left in the store, and new stuff every Monday.
00:45:48	John	Promo	I can't believe no one's picked up this "sterling silver exasperated little girl money clip."
00:45:53	Jesse	Promo	The little girl <u>really</u> is exasperated on the money clip.
			<i>[John laughs.]</i>
			Like, there is no—
00:45:57	John	Promo	It's so amazing!
00:45:58	Jesse	Promo	There's no other way to describe how she's feeling about the situation. One of my favorite new items is, uh, if anybody likes to use a liquor decanter, or a decanter for any other liquid, we have a sterling silver stopper in the shape of a top hat . It's part of our most recent collection, which is "The Finer Things," is the theme.
00:46:18	John	Promo	Oh!
00:46:19	Jesse	Promo	Also, if anyone is named Jimmy, we have an ID bracelet for someone named Jimmy.
			<i>[John laughs quietly.]</i>
			I'm looking for a Jimmy to purchase this from me.
00:46:26	John	Promo	<i>[Tinny]</i> Jimmy, please report to PutThisOnShop.com . We have your ID bracelet.
00:46:30	Jesse	Promo	<i>[Laughs quietly.]</i>
			PutThisOnShop.com , and you can use the code "Justice" for free shipping on most everything.
00:46:38	John	Promo	Let's get back to the case.
00:46:39	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
00:46:42	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	<i>[As Jesse speaks below: Door opens, chairs scrape on the floor, footsteps.]</i>
00:46:43	Jesse	Host	Please rise as Judge John Hodgman re-enters the courtroom—
00:46:46	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	<i>[Ding!]</i>

John, Elyse, & Sheila: AHHHHHHHH!!!

[Ding! Ding! Ding!]

00:46:50 Jesse Host —and presents his verdict.

00:46:51 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Door shuts.]*

00:46:54 John Host *[Laughs/sighs.]* I just wanna do this every time.

[The litigants laugh.]

00:46:56 Jesse Host It's fun. It's fun.

00:47:00 John Host Alright. So look. I am half empty nested, as a parent. Until very recently, we had two human children who lived with us. Now one of them has moved away. And I... enjoy very much the company of our younger human child. And am really, really glad that he gets to spend some time in the fullness of our company without the competition, and frankly dominance, that an older sibling sometimes brings to the table. *[Clears throat pointedly.]* Sheila.

That our younger human child can feel wholly and completely loved, and not feel like he only occupies one small red door in our hearts.

[One of the litigants laughs.]

But has the whole shed to himself, as it were. But he will move on in his life, too, eventually, and leave, and move to a swing state. If he follows my instructions. "Establish residence in a swing state."

[One or both litigants laugh.]

And that will be very sad for me! And while this has been a very, very... hard and challenging time for many, many reasons, and only reiterates how hard we have to work together to build a new and better normal, rather than bounce back to what was normal before, I will say this.

00:48:28 John Host If I were a parent, and my kids wanted to come and live back home with me in their twenties, I would be so happy. I would be so happy to have you adorable siblings living in my Carlsbad ranch house, or whatever it is.

[One or both litigants laugh.]

I would be so happy to have my human children fighting over what to paint the shed in the back yard. I'd be so delighted. I'd be sad for you, because your lives are on pause in a way that is not consistent with your dreams. Elyse, to move to Ann Arbor, and become a lawyer. And Sheila, to move to Wisconsin and buy Neil Gaiman's old house. And turn it into a new headquarters for the Church of Satan.

[One of the litigants laughs.]

But I would be so happy to have you guys hanging around! And yet, I have to think how it would feel if after the period of time of we all getting to live together and re-enact our early parental/childhood living arrangements, should you leave, and there was a Haunted Mansion in my back yard, I'm not sure how I'd feel about that!

[One or both litigants laugh quietly.]

I feel very... suspicious. *[Stifles laughter.]* That either one or both of your parents is not being honest with you, or they are not being honest with themselves. About what it's gonna be like to have this *Munsters* house in their back yard for the foreseeable future.

00:50:02 John Host

And it is a *Munsters* house, Sheila. I'm an *Addams Family* person as well. *[Disdainful]* This is *Munsters*. It's not *Addams* spooky. Forgive me. It's *Munsters* garish. There, I said it.

[One of the litigants laughs quietly.]

And it is not properly a difference in style. Right? Because these two things—the barn is—definitely leans towards barnyard, right? But it's very, very neutral, and kinda run-of-the-mill. Not that you are, Elyse. This spooky shed aesthetic is not neutral at all. This is a very big, strong statement that says one word. Two, actually. "Spooky. Sheila." Boom. "No. Elyse." Boom.

[One of the litigants laughs quietly.]

Now, Sheila. If it were the case that Elyse were to, you know, move out before you, and you were there alone, I'd say go for it. Turn that shed into perpetual Halloween. Turn your whole house into an ode to Halloween. And who cares about your parents? Let 'em suffer.

[John and the litigants laugh.]

I don't care about them! It's your time now! You're young! But you're there with your sister. Proposing a project that she has an investment in, and to leave behind this monument to Sheila-ness is only to compound the earlier tragedy of Sheila's diminishment in the original paint scheme. Red door. Yellow house. Red door! Door.

[One or both litigants laugh quietly.]

Not even that. Miniature door.

[More laughter.]

00:51:59 John Host

One you can't even walk through as a full human being. Red door. That's the bone we're gonna throw Elyse. Sheila, you get it all.

[The litigants laugh.]

Elyse, you get a door.

But then I thought to myself, "Wait a minute! What's spookier than a red door? *Amityville Horror* house had a red door, and it led to a secret red room! Scariest thing of all! That's scary."

00:52:25 Jesse Host

Yeah, the classic catchphrase. "Red room, red room."

00:52:28 John Host

"Red room, red room!" *[Laughs.]* I think a blood-red door is pretty spooky!

And then I started to think, "Wait a minute. These illustrations look bad. But my favorite color is gray." And I've spoken in the past on the podcast that our front door in our home is painted a deep, glossy

black, à la many of the house doors in Holland. A very specific deep, Dutch, glossy black color that graces the front doors of many city homes in Holland.

And I'm gonna go ahead and buzz-market this company. It all comes from Fine Paints of Europe. It's almost mesmerizing, how deep and glossy and black this is.

I think that there is a compromise here. I think that, frankly, as much as the only child in me wants to see you, Sheila, embrace your inner selfish only child, and just Haunted Mansion this thing up with abandon—I think it's a great project. I love it. But that's a project for your future, when you are alone. When you are in Madison. There are some spooky places in Madison that you can make very, very scary.

But you're not an only child. Sorry! Not all of us can enjoy it!

[One or both litigants laugh quietly.]

00:53:47 John Host

You've got Elyse hanging around.

And I think, because of my fondness for this project, but also my fondness for Elyse—I think you could find a common ground here. And this is what I would propose. I think a gray shed with black accents—particularly with high-quality paints, of the kind you might find in the catalogue of Fine Paints of Europe—would actually look pretty stately and good. It would not look bad.

I do not think that there should be any painted spider webs on it. That is too Sheila a signifier. And as for a gargoyle or a bat, that is not something that needs to be permanent. Indeed, as Elyse has already pointed out, she would be comfortable with you decorating the shed spookier than it is. But not a permanent spookiness.

Something that is neutral. What is more neutral than gray? Gray with deep, glossy black accents. And you get rid of that purple door, 'cause that's gross. Sorry.

[Someone stifles laughter.]

Sorry, Sheila. We gotta honor Elyse's traditional role, as supporter and enabler.

[One or both litigants laugh quietly.]

"I see a purple door, I wanna paint it red!" Paint that door a deep—and Elyse, you can pick out the red. In honor of her barn. In honor of the small fraction of her parents' love that was given to her.

[The litigants and Jesse laugh.]

In honor of Elyse! *[Laughs.]*

00:55:24 John Host

So that's my order! Is I'm finding in favor of Elyse. I am making this recommendation of a color palette. But it does not necessarily have to be these colors. Elyse gets a red door no matter what. That is her

legacy. That is the scraps that her parents left her.

[The litigants laugh.]

This is the sound of a gavel.

00:55:46 Sound Effect Sound Effect Two finger snaps.

00:55:48 John Host Now. Sheila, please do some *Monty Python* for us.

00:55:52 Sheila Guest *[Sheila maintains a British accent throughout*

"Now, we have here in studio with us today, Mr. Arthur 'Two Sheds' Jackson. Now, that—that is an interesting nickname. How did you come across it."

"Oh. Yes, well, you see, I—I have one shed in my yard, and... and I said one day, 'Well, I was thinking of—of getting a second shed,' and... well, it sort of just took off from there."

"So—so you never did get the second shed?"

"No. No, it's just—just the one... shed."

[Multiple people stifle laughter.]

[One or more people applaud.]

00:56:21 Jesse Host Bravo.

00:56:22 John Host Standing ovation from Brooklyn.

[The litigants laugh.]

00:56:29 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[As Jesse speaks below: Door opens, chairs scrape, footsteps.]*

00:56:30 Jesse Host Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom.

00:56:32 Crosstalk Crosstalk *[Ding!]*

John, Sheila, & Elyse: AHHHHHHH!!!

[Ding! Ding! Ding!]

00:56:37 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Door shuts.]*

00:56:38 Jesse Host Sheila, how do you feel about the verdict?

00:56:41 Sheila Guest I—I think I'm okay with the... with the color scheme the judge proposed, I think. Deep gray with a glossy black. I like the idea of like a very glossy black as the accents. I think that would look good. I think I could spook that up, and—

[Jesse and/or Elyse laughs quietly.]

Temporarily. Just during October, and September. And be very happy!

00:57:03 Jesse Host How are you feeling, Elyse?

00:57:06 Elyse Guest Yeah. I feel pretty good. I like that I won.

[Sheila laughs.]

That—that doesn't always happen, so that's good. And I'm glad that I'll keep my red door legacy.

[Jesse and one or both litigants laugh.]

00:57:17 Sheila Guest Even though your favorite color is now purple.

00:57:19 Elyse Guest True.

[The litigants and Jesse laugh.]

00:57:22 Jesse Host Well, Sheila, Elyse, thanks for joining us in the *Judge John Hodgman* courtroom.

00:57:25 Crosstalk Crosstalk *[Ding!]*

Elyse, Sheila, & John: AHHHHHHH!!!

[Someone does a gargling Wookiee-ish yell.]

[Ding! Ding! Ding!]

00:57:30 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:57:31 Jesse Host Another *Judge John Hodgman* case is in the books. Before we dispense some Swift Justice, our thanks to Luke Seemann for naming this week's episode, "Brush with the Law." And our thanks to whatever immigration official or... like, middle centuries priest named the Seemann family after the best Sega Dreamcast game.

[John snorts.]

John, it's a game where this fish with a human face lives inside your TV, and you have to talk to it through a microphone. *[Stifles laughter.]*

00:57:59 John Host Uh-huh?

00:58:00 Jesse Host And every so often, Leonard Nimoy tells you how it's developing.

00:58:03 John Host *[Laughing]* Oh, wow!

00:58:05 Jesse Host It's really great! *[Laughs.]* Uh, if you'd like to name a future episode, like *Judge John Hodgman* [on Facebook](#). We regularly put out our calls for submissions there.

Follow us on Twitter at [@JesseThorn](#) and [@hodgman](#). Hashtag your *Judge John Hodgman* Tweets [#JJHo](#). And visit us on the Maximum Fun subreddit, [MaximumFun.Reddit.com](#), to chat about [this week's episode](#). We're on Instagram at [@judgejohnhodgman](#). Make sure to follow us there for evidence and other fun stuff.

Judge John Hodgman is produced by Jennifer Marmor, with help this week from her dog, George.

[John and Jesse laugh quietly.]

00:58:44 John Host Thanks, George! Rrruff!

00:58:46 Jesse Host And his cone. *[Laughs.]* Now, Swift Justice, where we answer your small disputes with a quick judgment. James says:

"My wife says we should chide our child for saying the word 'crap,' because eventually teachers won't tolerate it. I think it's no big deal as long as he uses such words correctly. What do you say, Judge Hodgman?"

00:59:06 John Host Ah—um, there's an important piece of information left out here, which is the age of the child.

00:59:12 Jesse Host I presume it's a pre-teacher age, right? So...

00:59:14 John Host Right. So this is before kindergarten, even?

00:59:17 Jesse Host Yeah, maybe nursery school age.

00:59:20 John Host Well... crap!

[Both laugh.]

I—I think that if my nursery school age child was walking around the house saying, "Crap this" and "Crap that," I would feel like I was in *The Exorcist*.

[Unnerved] I don't like that. At all.

[Laughing] That feels too Halloweeny to me.

00:59:37 Jesse Host *[Laughing]* To me, it's almost worse than an actual swear word!

00:59:40 John Host Yeah! Um... I don't know that chiding is what's required here. I think, you know, there is a necessity to encourage children to understand the power that words have, and to use words that make other people comfortable, and to avoid using words that make other people uncomfortable. And frankly, a little kid even using as innocuous a curse word as "crap," I think would make me think your—your child was possessed by an evil demon.

But that's me! I won't even say "*Dicktown*" on my own podcast. So I don't know. But I would say there's no reason for a little kid to be a potty mouth. *[Laughs.]* That's something you should take up innn... I don't know. Sixth—fifth grade. Sixth grade. Seven—middle school. That's when you start dropping some C-bombs, as far as I'm concerned.

01:00:36 Jesse Host That's it for this week's episode. Submit your cases at MaximumFun.org/jjho, or email hodgman@maximumfun.org. No case is too small. We'll talk to you next time on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

01:00:50 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

01:00:52 John Host If people don't know, the common word for "Hades" is "courtroom."

01:00:55 Crosstalk Crosstalk *[Ding!]*

Jesse: AHHHH!!!

John: AHHHHH!!!

[Ding! Ding! Ding!]

[Quiet, stifled laughter.]

01:00:59	Music	Transition	A cheerful guitar chord.
01:01:00	Speaker 1	Guest	MaximumFun.org .
01:01:02	Speaker 2	Guest	Comedy and culture.
01:01:04	Speaker 3	Guest	Artist owned—
01:01:05	Speaker 4	Guest	—audience supported.