

00:00:00	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
00:00:02	Jesse Thorn	Host	Welcome to the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast. I'm Bailiff Jesse Thorn. We're in chambers this week, clearing the docket. And with me is... Brooklyn's own— <i>[John snorts.]</i> —Judge John Hodgman.
00:00:16	John Hodgman	Host	Brookline and Brooklyn's own. Also also unnamed town in Maine that sounds like that! I only live in certain places, Jesse. Don't ask me why I'm drawn to them. I like a place where the line is delineated by a brook. Or any body of water, actually! <i>[Laughs.]</i> Don't like it—if there's no river, I'm not there. Anyway, here I am. And guess what, Jesse Thorn? I'm not gonna keep talking, because we've got an incredible guest to join us in our, uh—our trademark mix, as we determined before we started recording. Our trademark mix of camaraderie and pettiness. Please welcome, Jesse Thorn and listeners, to <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> , the incredible Cory Doctorow! Hi, Cory!
00:00:56	Cory Doctorow	Guest	Hi John, Hi Jesse, Hi Jennifer! It's so great to be here!
00:01:00	John	Host	It's great to have you! Folks, if you don't know who Cory Doctorow is, you've—you've done some things wrong in your life, but it's fine! Cory is... an author. An electronic freedom frontiersman. A digital rights activist! A really fun, smart, and funny guy. He was one of the editorial team at Boing Boing for a long, long time. Boing Boing, one of the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> favorite, favorite websites. And you may remember Cory Doctorow as the author of one of the very nicest reviews I've ever gotten for anything I've ever written, in his review of <i>Vacationland</i> <u>and</u> <i>Medallion Status</i> ! Two books that I wrote. So this is, as <i>Spy Magazine</i> used to call, "Logrolling in our Time"— <i>[John and someone else laugh quietly.]</i> —but it is genuine affection with which we—and appreciation, with which we ask Cory to join us today! Cory's the author of a whole bunch of novels. You should read them all. He's got one that just came out yesterday called <i>Attack Surface</i> , which is part three in the <i>Little Brother</i> series. Is that correct, Cory?
00:02:04	Cory	Guest	It is correct-ish! It is the third <i>Little Brother</i> book, but it's a standalone novel for adults. So you can read it even if you haven't read the other two, but you <u>should</u> read the other two.
00:02:12	John	Host	Cool. And what is it all about, the <i>Attack Surface</i> ?
00:02:16	Cory	Guest	So <i>Attack Surface</i> , like <i>Little Brother</i> , is a techno thriller. And what sets it apart from most of the rest of the genre is that instead of treating computers as, like, metaphors, the way that novelists and congress does—
00:02:28	John	Host	<i>[Stifling laughter]</i> Mm-hm.

[Jesse laughs quietly.]

00:02:29 Cory Guest —it treats computers as actual things that have capabilities and limitations, and finds the storylines that are latent in there. And it's a book about a young woman who's spent her whole life being a surveillance contractor. She starts off working in the DHS on domestic surveillance. Becomes a beltway bandit and ends up in a forward operations base in Iraq, where she's spying on insurgents. Then she's in the former Soviet Union spying on pro-democracy activists.

And she has to confront what her life's work is. The whole time she's been trying to make herself out to be a good person by finding compromises, none of which are very good or sustainable, like, you know, teaching the people she's spying on how to avoid the surveillance in secret.

00:03:06 John Host Uh-huh.

00:03:07 Cory Guest This is not the kind of thing your bosses are gonna like. So she ends up back in San Francisco, in her hometown, where her childhood best friend is now a Black Lives Matter activist. And she is being surveilled by the very same cyber weapons that this character Masha Maximow has spent her whole life building. And she has to figure out what it means to have talked herself into doing something not so great. And then to come back and confront your moral legacy, and how you can be better.

00:03:37 Jesse Host John, just to—let me help you out here, just for context on what Cory said. San Francisco is a city on the western coast of the United States.

00:03:46 John Host Oh.

00:03:47 Jesse Host It sits on a—it sits on a peninsula that protects a beautiful bay called the San Francisco Bay.

00:03:55 John Host Yeah, I always thought that that was just a novelistic metaphor, like a computer, but you're saying it's a real thing?

00:04:00 Jesse Host No, a lot of people think that it was invented for *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home*.

00:04:04 John Host Yeah. That's what I thought.

00:04:06 Jesse Host But no, it's a real city, yeah.

00:04:08 Cory Guest Yeah, known for such notable foodstuffs as, uh, cylinders of rice and hot meat in a tortilla, and also rice.

00:04:15 Jesse Host Mm-hm.

[John laughs, Jesse stifles laughter.]

Wow. Cory is coming out guns blazing against the San Francisco burrito! He's shooting directly for me heart!

[Cory laughs.]

Luckily, your bullet bounced off of the It's-It that I always keep in my breast pocket.

[John and Cory laugh.]

00:04:32	John	Host	<i>Attack Surface</i> —so, you know, Cory, you've made your life talking about, thinking about, writing about both in fiction and nonfiction, about non-metaphoric computers. Their capabilities, their limitations. Their scary capabilities, their thankful limitations. And this sounds like a really fun thriller about someone having to reckon with the fact that they didn't do great stuff all the time, and how do they make amends? Which is something that we deal with a lot in society right now.
00:04:57	Cory	Guest	Oh, yeah! And—
00:04:58	John	Host	And here. On the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast.
00:05:00	Cory	Guest	And to be clear, the capabilities aren't just the scary ones, right? Like, part of the story of this book, and the story of my career, and the story of how we think about computers, is balancing the liberatory power of computers with their power to control and manipulate us. And, you know, this is someone who said, "Well, we'll probably never be able to make computers into a force for liberation, so I'll <u>just</u> work on making them a force for control," who's meeting her childhood friend, who's <u>made</u> computers the <u>center</u> of how she plans to liberate her city and her society from reaction and oppression, and who is running up against the ways that computers can be used for control and manipulation.
00:05:40	John	Host	So <i>Attack Surface</i> is available as of yesterday, if you're listening on release day of <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> . Anywhere books are... sold, loaned, traded on the Internet. And as an audiobook as well, right?
00:05:56	Cory	Guest	Yeah, there's a really great audiobook. I don't allow DRM on any of my work, because that is, uh, a centerpiece of my doctrine.
00:06:05	John	Host	And that's digital rights management.
00:06:07	Cory	Guest	That's right.
00:06:08	John	Host	For tho—for, you know—we've got a lot of smart 13-year-olds who listen to this who know what you're talking about, but their parents are currently going, "What the—huh?"
00:06:15	Cory	Guest	Yeah.
00:06:16	Jesse	Host	And the doctrine in question is the Doctorow Doctrine?
00:06:19	Cory	Guest	The Doctorow Doctrine. It's, uh—it's pajamas on airplanes, no DRM, uh, coffee in AeroPresses. Those are the three central tenets.
00:06:29	John	Host	We'll get to pajamas on airplanes in a second, but—
00:06:31	Cory	Guest	I know. Oh, I know.
00:06:33	John	Host	But explain to the dum-dums like me what "DRM" means and why it's bad, and why you don't—why it's not part of the Doctorow Doctrine doctoral program at Dr. Doctorow's university.
00:06:42	Cory	Guest	My parents are Dr. and Dr. Doctorow.
00:06:45	John	Host	Oh no. [Laughs.]
00:06:47	Cory	Guest	So DRM is the stuff that stops you from using technology the way you want. Like, you know, watching a European DVD in your DVD player. Something you may remember from your video store days, John.

00:06:56 John Host Right.

00:06:57 Cory Guest And it—it doesn't work very well. Like, all of the audiobooks sold on Audible, which is the largest audiobook store in the world—it's owned by Amazon. They control more than 90% of the market. And all of their audiobooks are sold with DRM, and if you wanna remove it, you just type, "How do I remove DRM from an Audible book?" into a search engine. So it's clearly not helping us.

But thanks to an American law, the Digital Millennium Copyright Act that's been in place since 1998, it's a felony to remove it. It's a five-year prison sentence and a \$500,000 fine for a first offense. So you have this technology that doesn't stop piracy at all, but does make it illegal for you, my customer for my work, to take your audiobook to a non-Amazon player or reader or platform, unless Amazon authorizes it. And you have to ask yourself, how is this possibly good for me?!

Now of course this has also, like, expanded into other domains. So, you know, the fact that if it's digital you can put DRM on it means that you have companies like Medtronic, who make the biggest ventilator—you know, workhorse ventilator—they use DRM to stop independent hospital technicians from fixing their own ventilators.

00:08:07 John Host Oh.

00:08:08 Cory Guest And it's a felony to do that.

00:08:09 John Host Why would that even be timely to talk about right now?

00:08:11 Cory Guest Yeah! Yeah, exactly. *[Laughs.]* Uh, notice to people in the future, ventilators are timely. So all of that to say that this a really toxic dynamic. And the Electronic Frontier Foundation, a nonprofit I've worked for for nearly 20 years now, we're actually suing the US government to overturn this law so that you can break DRM if you have a legitimate reason to do it.

But in the meantime, Macmillan—my lovely publishers who are very good to me—quite reasonably said, "Hey. You don't wanna sell your audiobook in the marketplace that is 90% of our sales, so we're just not gonna give you any money for the rights, but you can keep 'em if you want." Which was a very reasonable thing for them to do, and I don't want anyone to think I'm down on them for this. And I was like, "I'll keep 'em."

So I hired my friend Amber Benson, who lives here in Southern California with me—

00:08:56 John Host Oh, you mean the actor!

00:08:57 Cory Guest The actor, Tara from *Buff*y. Also the novelist. She's an amazing novelist. And we went to Skyboat Media, which is one of the powerhouse audiobook studios, also pretty close to us here in North Hollywood. And we got my sound editor John Taylor Williams to edit it. And then to prove that it could be a success commercially without Amazon, I put it up for sale as a Kickstarter pre-sale.

00:09:22 John Host Yeah.

00:09:23 Cory Guest And we just—as we're recording this a few days before it's going live, we closed the Kickstarter at about \$270,000.

00:09:28 John Host Oh, congratulations! That's very good!

00:09:30 Cory Guest Yeah, it was really good! It's a record-breaking Kickstarter. My hope is that this might convince publishers and authors—bestselling authors, authors who know how to reach a big audience—that they can make more money by doing a different kind of Audible exclusive. The kind that is exclusive of Audible. 'Cause I'm gonna sell this everywhere except Audible afterwards.

00:09:49 Jesse Host Now, Cory. Uh, we release *Judge John Hodgman* as a .Zune file. Um—

00:09:54 Cory Guest Oh, good!

00:09:55 John Host I'm so mad at you, Jesse. I was just—I was just getting up to a Zune joke!

[Cory and Jesse laugh.]

You got there first. You win. You win!

00:10:02 Cory Guest It's—I don't—I wanna know why I can't get it in .MIDI format.

[Jesse and/or John laughs quietly.]

00:10:07 John Host Well, Cory Doctorow, author, digital privacy activist, thank you so much for joining us today, via Zoom, so that we can peer into your home. *[Stifles laughter.]*

00:10:20 Cory Guest *[Laughing]* Yeah, well—

00:10:21 John Host And record your facial data for some database probably owned by a foreign government as we speak. So, thank you.

00:10:27 Cory Guest I don't know why you needed my social security number for me to appear, but I'm sure that the fact that you wanna put it in the episode title will work out fine for me.

00:10:34 John Host And also, you did mention wearing pajamas on airplanes, a precedent in the *Judge John Hodgman* courtroom being that that is, uh, not allowable. You're gonna make a counterargument to that a little later on in the podcast. But right now we've got a lot of justice to clear off this docket. Jesse, let's get going.

00:10:48 Jesse Host Here's something from Spencer:

"My housemate Josh refuses to contribute to the Internet bill, because he claims it's a luxury which he does not require, since he uses his phone's unlimited data plan. I maintain Internet is a communal utility, available to everyone in the house, regardless of how much they choose to use it. It's not about the money to me, but as the one responsible for collecting, it feels wrong and uncomfortable to ask everyone else to bow to his cheapness.

Besides myself, I've spoken with two more of the six total occupants. They agree he should contribute his share."

00:11:29 John Host Cory, what is your impression?

00:11:31 Cory Guest I struggled with this one. 'Cause at first I was like, "Well, if he's really not using the Internet, why should he contribute?"

00:11:36 John Host Mm-hm.

00:11:37 Cory Guest But then I thought, "What if this guy walked around with a candle all the time and said, 'Why should I pay for the lightbulbs?'"

And you know... the house wouldn't be a house without the Internet. Right? They wouldn't be able to do all the things they need to do. They wouldn't have jobs; they wouldn't be able to summon 911; they wouldn't be able to, you know, go to school; they wouldn't be able to order dinner. They wouldn't be able to do all the things. I mean, the Internet is now just firmly enmeshed in our life. Before the plague, it was a thing that it was involved in everything we do. Now it's required for everything we do.

And I just think that even if you don't use it, that's like—even if I'd—"I don't admire the shrubs! Why should I pay to water them?" You're part of the household. It's a household necessity. I think you gotta pitch in.

00:12:16 John Host I did actually follow up, 'cause that was my obvious question. Like, is—can it be true that Josh really only uses his phone for data? And specifically, his paid-by-himself, presumably grandpersoned in, unlimited data plan. And according to Spencer, Josh does claim he only uses his phone data. And he has no other devices that he is using that require Wi-Fi access. *[Stifles laughter.]* Uh, and also Spencer has checked with the rest of the housemates, and they all want Josh to subsidize their Wi-Fi usage.

00:12:54 Jesse Host Yeah, my one question, John, was why he had checked with two of the housemates, but not the other ones.

[Everyone laughs.]

00:13:02 John Host Yeah!

00:13:03 Jesse Host It's like—seemed a little shady.

[Jesse and John laugh.]

But if he's now checked with all of them...

00:13:07 John Host Well, Cory is an expert in fictional utopian societies or dystopian societies. It might be the rules of the house! They form a council, there's a quorum, who—to divide the Wi-Fi!

00:13:17 Jesse Host I bet Cory still has an open Wi-Fi network for people who are passing by his front door like it was San Francisco in 1996.

00:13:27 Cory Guest I did have one of those in San Francisco in 1999 in Potrero Hill! And people used it—it was on the early Wi-Fi maps. I would always know if someone was lost on the way to the airport, because they'd pull up in front of my house to get directions from MapQuest.

[John laughs.]

So I—I do not presently have an open Wi-Fi network, because I live in the city of Burbank, where we have hundred gigabit fiber passing under our foundation slab that the city paid for, but which I'm not allowed to use. It's only for large businesses, and I have to use Charter Spectrum.

00:13:57 John Host Whoa! What?!

00:13:58 Cory Guest Who are from Hell. Yeah, I know. Yeah.

00:13:59 John Host Whoa! It's almost as like corporations are interfering with technology for their own benefit!

00:14:06 Cory Guest I mean, this is a—it's a radical hypothesis, but I think we could come up with a falsifiable experiment and see whether it's true.

So I don't think these guys have a utopian society, by the way. I think that they are in fact members of different subcultures, and the reason that he only asked two of the roommates is that the other four are steampunks.

00:14:24 John Host *[Laughs.]* Wha—why do you get that?! What would you get the steampunk from?!

00:14:28 Cory Guest I just—you know, if we're going to imagine a radical social experiment household with new social arrangements, I just like the idea that there's a couple of them who are just LARPing Victorianism, and therefore only communicate by semaphore.

[Jesse laughs.]

00:14:43 John Host I can't wait to read this novel by you, Cory Doctorow.

[Cory chuckles.]

But let me ask you this technical question.

00:14:48 Cory Guest Sure.

00:14:49 John Host 'Cause you know more about it than I do. Which is the better way to get your memes and your funs up and down the Internet highway? Over the phone via unlimited data? Or via Wi-Fi? And you can answer that question in terms of quality, in terms of security, in terms of cost, in terms of benefit to society, I don't know. But like, if Josh is really just using his phone for data, and nothing else in the house, is that good, bad, neutral?

00:15:20 Cory Guest I think it's okay. I mean, I think that in general, mobile hotspots are a little less reliable—

00:15:28 John Host Mm-hm.

00:15:29 Cory Guest —than fixed line hotspots. So I mean, the question isn't Wi-Fi. It's like, how the Wi-Fi gets into the house. I mean, one way to think about this is that we have one universe with one electromagnetic spectrum, and you're sharing it with everybody else. Right? And only the slice of it. Once you take a wire and you wrap it in some insulation, then you've got like a little pocket universe! Right? It has its own electromagnetic spectrum that is different from the electromagnetic spectrum that's right next to it, even if you're broadcasting the same frequencies! And so there is a capacity thing.

So this is the nexus of the non-outlandish, stupid claims about 5G. There are outlandish, stupid claims about 5G, which made people go and burn them down.

00:16:07 John Host Uh-huh.

00:16:08 Cory Guest But the stupid claims about 5G are just that we can use 5G instead of fiber to wire up our cities, because somehow these radio-based

stations will give us fast Internet, without them needing to be connected to the fast Internet.

00:16:22 John Host Okay.

00:16:23 Cory Guest And that's like saying you could have a really big faucet on your house, and it doesn't matter what kind of water main it's connected to. It's—you know, the faucet is not your problem there.

00:16:33 John Host So let's talk about water for a second! 'Cause I'm not sure I agree with—with you on this. Let's talk about water. Right?

00:16:39 Cory Guest Okay.

00:16:40 John Host If the house pays a water bill, and—*[stifles laughter]*—and Josh is—uh, decides to only drink bottled water that he brings in, he only pees into—*[laughs]*—a composting toilet that he has in his house. And he takes care of all—he never touches a drop of water. This is like a *Dune* type situation. Dude wears a stillsuit. Totally water-independent of the rest of the house.

[Cory laughs.]

Should he have to pay part of the water bill? Simply because it's available?

00:17:08 Cory Guest Okay, I'm gonna make a different argument here. I'm gonna—I'm gonna scratch and refactor here. The reason he should do it is the categorical imperative. If all six of these people sat down and said, "Well, you know, we all pitch in for the groceries, but I never eat lettuce, so I want 18 cents off my grocery bill," and you know, "We all pitch in for this, we all pitch in for that," and "I don't even—I don't even like the TV! Why am I paying for the wall space that it occupies?" You know. "I never sat on that sofa! The six square feet of the sitting room that it occupies should be deducted from my share of the rent!"

To live in a house is not to have that arrangement. To live in a house communally and happily is to have an arrangement where you acknowledge that there are some positive externalities that other people benefit from, just as you benefit from their positive externalities.

00:18:00 John Host I agree with all of those things except the Wi-Fi. I'm sorry!

[John and Cory laugh.]

Here's what I'm gonna say. I'm gonna give you—it pains me to disagree with my friend Cory Doctorow. Even though I agree with Cory on all points. If it can be said truthfully—if Josh is not using that Wi-Fi. If he's not watching the television. Right? If he's not streaming a thing. If he's like—if it's true that the only Internet that he's getting is off of his own phone, in no other way, then I do not feel that he needs to contribute to the Wi-Fi bill. Okay?

But. Because I'm going this—as far as to disagree even slightly with Cory Doctorow, I'm gonna give the most anti-Cory Doctorow ruling I can. Spencer, you should spy on him.

[John and Cory laugh.]

Spy on him! Get a thing—look. I know there's—I know there's a thing, 'cause I have this thing, but I'm not gonna advertise this thing. But you can get a Wi-Fi system that is monitoring who is using it at any given time. You will know! You will know, Spencer, if Josh even takes one—what's the smallest bit there is? Minibit?

00:19:06 Cory Guest A bit.

00:19:07 John Host A bit? There's nothing smaller—

00:19:08 Cory Guest A bit.

00:19:09 John Host I'm gonna make it a half bit! You know what? That's how small I'm gonna make it.

00:19:11 Jesse Host It's pronounced a "ha'bit," (*hay bit*) John.

[John and Cory laugh.]

00:19:14 Cory Guest A hay—it's a groat!

00:19:16 John Host It's a groat.

00:19:17 Jesse Host If you haven't got a bit, a ha'bit will do.

00:19:20 John Host If he takes even a ha'bit of the Internet off you guys... *[Smack!]* Split it up evenly! Then he's taking advantage of the common, uh, good. But if he's not taking advantage of the common good, I don't think he has to pay for it. I betcha he is. Spencer, I'd bet you're gonna spy on him, and then you guys are gonna have so much fun as your perfect society dissolves into chaos, and anger, and resentment, and bitterness. And camaraderie! Just like the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

00:19:44 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:19:46 Jesse Host This is like one of those people who goes to dinner with a group of people and says they're—"Well, I only got a drink. So I'm only paying the tip on the cost of the drink."

00:19:54 John Host Yeah.

00:19:55 Jesse Host "I won't split the tip evenly."

00:19:56 Cory Guest Yeah!

00:19:57 John Host Yeah, look! I'm not saying that Josh is a generous person, or even a genial person! But this is a—I think this is slightly different than the kind of person who goes to dinner and says, "I really wasn't that hungry. *[Laughing]* So I'm not paying."

00:20:09 Cory Guest How about the kind of person who says, "My gate-guarded community should have a private firefighting arrangement, and if you don't pay the firefighter tax, they should let your house burn down"?

00:20:18 Jesse Host *[Laughing]* Yeah. What about that, John?

00:20:19 Cory Guest Those are a thing! *[Laughs.]*

00:20:25 John Host But—but—*[sighs]*. If I lived in—alright. Alright! Alright! You know what? Fine. I'm living in your gated community. I've taken a look at your fire department, and I think it's dumb. I don't think they're good at it.

[Cory and John laugh.]

I'm hiring a private firefighter to live with me.

[Cory laughs.]

That's the name of this sitcom! *My Private Firefighter*. John Hodgman and his private firefighter—*[laughs]*—

00:20:51 Jesse Host

Played by Rob Riggle.

00:20:52 John Host

And his—*[laughs]*—played by Rob Riggle. Oh, sold in the room! Come on!

[Jesse laughs.]

Living together in a gated community, just waiting for a fire to bust out!

00:21:02 Cory Guest

Is the character's catchline "Thank you for your service"? Is that what they—like—*[laughs]*—

00:21:05 Jesse Host

Mm-hm.

00:21:06 John Host

Sure.

00:21:07 Cory Guest

"Pass me the salt! Thank you for your service!"

00:21:09 John Host

You can get in on this IP!

00:21:10 Jesse Host

"Who ate my peanut butter?!" And then Rob Riggle says, *[kind of gruff]* "I did!"

[Usual voice] And then you say, "Thank you for your service."

[Cory and maybe John laugh.]

Here's something from Rob, not Riggle:

"I seek to file suit against—"

Or maybe it's Riggle! Doesn't say that it's not Riggle. I just presumed it's not Rob Riggle. Could be—

00:21:23 John Host

[Laughs.]

[Gruff] "Hey, Hodgman! Riggle here!" *[Laughs.]*

00:21:28 Jesse Host

Could be Rob Corddry! Who knows what Rob it is? Probably Rob Huebel, though.

"I seek to file suit against my friend Tyler. Tyler will not update software on his phone until the device forces him. Every time this happens, he sends me a message complaining about an update that the general public received months and sometimes years before him. His complaints are usually trivial, like the position of a button being a farther reach for him now.

I would like you to order him to update his phone software and stop making me relive a software update months after it happens."

[John and Cory laugh.]

00:22:01 John Host I love how Rob acknowledges that a software update is inherently traumatic, and something you don't wanna relive. *[Laughs.]* No matter what so-called improvements are there, it is like, "Why have you just changed my whole world around? I'm just—I just got used to having my thumb there!"

Cory, what do you think?

00:22:17 Cory Guest So, I think that's he right for the wrong reason.

00:22:20 John Host Yeahhh!

00:22:21 Cory Guest I mean, keeping your software updated is like getting vaccinated. Because the problem with your phone being broken into is not just what happens to you, although that can be really horrific, but also what happens to the people you communicate with.

00:22:33 John Host Mm-hm.

00:22:34 Cory Guest And their data being compromised. And the people whose data you have on your phone. It's actually—I—you could subtitle this, "Why Andrew Yang is wrong."

[John snorts.]

'Cause the whole idea that you should be paid for your data—

00:22:43 John Host Oh—oh—oh, boy. I'm getting outta here. *[Laughs.]*

00:22:45 Cory Guest Yeah, yeah, right!

00:22:46 John Host I don't want these letters!

[John and Cory laugh.]

00:22:48 Jesse Host "Uh, gotta go!"

00:22:50 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Cory:** But the idea that you should be paid for your data—

John: Welcome to the *Cory Doctorow Only Podcast!*

[Cory and Jesse or John laugh.]

00:22:55 Cory Guest Well, look. Just the idea that you should be paid for your data is really incoherent. 'Cause like, who owns the fact that we're having this conversation? Is it me or you? Which one of us gets—

00:23:01 John Host Me.

00:23:02 Cory Guest —to sell it to Facebook?

00:23:03 John Host Me.

00:23:04 Cory Guest Really.

00:23:04 John Host Yeah.

00:23:05 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:23:06 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** Well, it's a split between me and Jesse.

Cory: And what if you're rude to me?

00:23:08 Cory Guest But what if you're rude to me, and I wanna—I wanna, uh, disclose that fact to other potential guests? Should you get a veto, 'cause you have a property right in the fact that I was on your podcast? I just

think that it—

00:23:20 John Host Wait a minute. Jennifer, did Cory not sign the NDA?

[John and Cory laugh.]

00:23:25 Cory Guest So anyway, I just think that like, this is—this is the thing! Right? I have your data on my phone. 'Cause it's also my data! Right?

00:23:31 John Host Right.

00:23:32 Cory Guest The pictures of us together, your phone number in my address book. All that stuff—

00:23:35 John Host This is starting to sound like a threat.

00:23:37 Cory Guest *[Laughing]* Yeah.

[John laughs.]

So for that reason, you should be updated. And then the other thing is that, um, he's right that it—updates suck, because they break everything. And you should have the right and ability to put it back the way you want it. I miss old Twitter.

00:23:51 John Host So in a perfect world, Tyler's unwillingness to update should be tolerated and encouraged. Wait a minute. In terms of features. But not in terms of security.

00:24:02 Cory Guest Right.

00:24:03 John Host Tyler should be updating regularly for the purpose of the security of his data, and the other people whose data he's collected in his own phone. Correct?

00:24:11 Cory Guest Sure. And just so his phone doesn't end up part of a botnet that's being used to, like, spread ransomware to hospitals and shut them down. You know? Just for all of that good stuff.

00:24:19 John Host Yeah, Tyler! Does that sound like fun to you? Also you're bothering your buddy Rob! By complaining about something you should have done months or years ago, apparently! Yeah. Update your stuff.

What kind of phone and kind of phone security do you have going on, Cory Doctorow? Do you have a rec?

00:24:35 Cory Guest So I don't have a phone rec. I just have, like, a phone counsel of despair.

[John snorts.]

Which is that we live in feudal times. And there are bandits. And there are warlords. And the warlords have got these castles called Google, and Facebook. So you can have PDP 11, you can have a PDP 8, you can have a PDP 9. Anyways—you know, that—that basically, if you stay updated, and it's a reputable vendor, and they're large, they will keep you safe from everyone except them, most of the time.

00:25:05 John Host Mm-hm.

00:25:06 Cory Guest And that's where I've landed. On my laptop, it's a little better. I use, you know, ThinkPad hardware, but I use a version of Linux called Ubuntu that I've used for 15 years now, and I love to pieces. It's

easy, it works. It's great.

00:25:21 John Host "Ubuntu, by Cory Doctorow. A brand new fragrance."

[Someone laughs quietly.]

00:25:25 Cory Guest Yeah. Yeah! A brand new fragrance.

[John laughs.]

It—it smells like my, uh, palm sweat.

00:25:29 John Host *[Laughs.]* It smells like palm sweat and privacy.

Oh, so final ruling! Tyler, update your phone.

00:25:35 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:25:37 Jesse Host Let's take a quick break. More items on the docket coming up in just a minute on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

00:25:43 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:25:45 Jesse Promo It's *Judge John Hodgman*, and of course every *Judge John Hodgman* episode is supported by all of the members of MaximumFun.org. Never more important than now, all the folks who've gone to MaximumFun.org/join. This week, we're also supported by our friends at Babbel!

00:26:03 John Promo Hmm. French, German, Italian, Russian, Portuguese, Turkish, Dutch... Swedish! Polish, Norwegian, Indonesian, Danish. Which will it be, Jesse? Which language shall I learn using Babbel, so that I can move to another country? No, no, I—

[Both laugh.]

I'm—I choose to stay and fight for this country that I love and believe in! But it is good to know other languages. It is good to be a member of the world community. It is good for your getting around, as soon as we're able to travel again. And it is good for your brain, 'cause it keeps it lively and active. And it is good for your soul to know that you can communicate with others in a different language.

And what better way to do that than to learn it? Babbel.com offers you this opportunity. The daily lessons. Look, what is it? It's an app on your phone. And it's a website. It offers you daily lessons that are 10 to 15 minutes long. And they start by teaching you words and phrases you will actually use. Gradually, the sentences get more complex, and soon you're practicing short conversations with your phone! And then with your friends! The lessons are thoughtfully created by over a hundred language experts, and their teaching method has been proven by science to be effective across multiple studies.

With Babbel, you can choose from 14 languages. Including Spanish, French, Italian, German—you heard all the ones that I said up at the top! Danish. I think that's what I'm gonna do, Jesse. Here's what I'm gonna do. I'm gonna learn—

00:27:32 Jesse Promo Yeah.

00:27:33 John Promo I'm gonna learn Danish. *[Chuckles.]* I'm gonna—do you say Copenhagen (*Co-pin-hah-gin*) or Copenhagen (*Co-pin-hay-gin*)? I don't know. I gotta check it out on Babel.

00:27:39 Jesse Promo Yeah.

00:27:40 John Promo I'm gonna learn how to pronounce the capital city. And I'm gonna spend some quality time there. Just relaxing in a wonderful, world-class city—*[stifles laughter]*—where—where—

00:27:48 Jesse Promo Man, that city rules so hard.

00:27:49 John Promo —where everyone speaks English anyway. *[Laughs.]* But I'll—! *[Laughs.]*

00:27:51 Jesse Promo And everyone is much better-looking than we are. *[Laughs.]*

00:27:53 John Promo I'll have the—I'll have a command of Danish! And you know what they'll say to me? Uh, "Thanks for making the effort." And you know how they'll say it? In English probably. *[Laughs.]*

00:28:03 Jesse Promo Yeah. *[Laughs.]*

00:28:04 John Promo But they'll mean it. "Thanks for making the effort. Thanks for using Babel."

00:28:08 Jesse Promo Right now when you purchase a three-month subscription, Babel will give our listeners three additional months for free! With the promo code "Hodgman." Three months for free if you go to Babel.com and use promo code "Hodgman" on your three-month subscription.

00:28:23 John Promo That's B-A-B-B-E-L.com, promo code "Hodgman."

00:28:30 Jesse Promo You know, John, the other day, friend of *Judge John Hodgman* Linda Holmes sent me a DM on Twitter. Not to brag, but yes.

00:28:38 John Promo Whooooa. What?

00:28:39 Jesse Promo I'm on DMing terms with the host of NPR's *Pop Culture Happy Hour*.

00:28:42 John Promo *[Sighs.]* You're so lucky.

00:28:44 Jesse Promo And she said to me, "I just ate a really great pork sandwich. You know why?"

00:28:48 John Promo Oh! Why?

00:28:50 Jesse Promo *[Stifling laughter]* "'Cause I heard the ad for Sun Basket on *Judge John Hodgman*."

00:28:52 John Promo Whoa!

00:28:54 Jesse Promo She's not being paid for this! I'll make sure of that. *[Laughs.]*

00:28:56 John Promo We got the private direct message Linda Holmes vouch?! For Sun Basket?!

00:29:00 Jesse Promo Yeah! This isn't—previously, everybody said, "Well, of course I would use Sun Basket for my meal kit deliveries."

00:29:06 John Promo Yeah.

00:29:07 Jesse Promo "It's the only meal kit delivery service founded by Jesse's friend Tyler from college!"

[John laughs.]

But now that it has the Linda Holmes imprimatur, it's going to the stars!

00:29:18 John Promo I'll tell you something. We usually record in what is for me the late afternoon, here on the East Coast of the United States. This is a bad time for me to be talking about food.

[Jesse laughs.]

Now I'm getting really hungry. *[Laughs.]* And it is a bad time for me to be looking at SunBasket.com to see what's on offer these days, because I'm basically shoving the mic aside to start licking the screen. Look at this! Burmese chicken aloo curry. This looks really good! Malaysian stir-fried hawker noodles with shrimp. I don't know what a hawker noodle is, but I wanna eat it!

00:29:52 Jesse Promo The thing I like the best about Sun Basket is I feel like, of all the meal services I've tried—and I've tried a number of them! And I have no complaints about any of the ones that I've tried. But I think that Sun Basket is the one that is the most focused on fresh, clean, high-quality ingredients.

00:30:11 John Promo

00:30:12 Jesse Promo The recipes are simple and straightforward. It's not—but I like that they're not trying to disguise their ingredients with complicated preparations. They pick good stuff, and let it shine. And I really appreciate that when I'm making a Sun Basket meal.

00:30:29 John Promo Their meals come freshly prepared, and heat up in as little as six minutes. They have paleo, vegetarian, Mediterranean, gluten-free options.

00:30:39 Jesse Promo John, this is important for my family. My wife is allergic to wheat (*hweet*).

[John laughs.]

It's—she's not—she doesn't have celiac disease—she's also allergic to me pronouncing "wheat (*hweet*)" as though it was spelled H-W-E-A-T.

00:30:48 John Promo *[Laughs.]* Yeah, I think—I think everyone is. *[Laughs.]*

00:30:51 Jesse Promo She doesn't have celiac disease, she's not gonna die, she just gets really itchy! You know what, John? No one wants an itchy spouse!

00:30:58 John Promo That's right!

00:30:59 Jesse Promo If you want an itchy spouse, get your meals wherever you want! But if you're careful about keeping your spouse itch-free, know that there's paleo, vegetarian, Mediterranean, and gluten-free options at Sun Basket.

00:31:12 John Promo Just look at the tabs that I'm looking at! "Gluten-free," "pescatarian," "fresh and ready," "Mediterranean," "paleo." There's a whole tab for "crab-conscious"!

00:31:18 Jesse Promo *[Stifling laughter]* Cool!

00:31:19 John Promo Oh no, sorry, that's "carb-conscious."

[Both laugh.]

00:31:21 Jesse Promo Oh. Yeah, I was gonna say, "That's perfect for me! I'm always thinking about crabs!"

[Both laugh.]

Right now, Sun Basket is offering \$35 off your order when you go right now to SunBasket.com/hodgman, and enter promo code "Hodgman" at checkout. That's SunBasket.com/hodgman, and enter promo code "Hodgman" at checkout for \$35 off your order.

00:31:46 John Promo SunBasket.com/hodgman, and enter promo code "Hodgman."

00:31:52 Jesse Promo Sun Basket! The only meal kit delivery service... co-founded by my friend Tyler from college.

00:31:58 John Promo Crab-conscious for life.

00:32:01 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:32:03 Promo Clip **Music:** Fun, cheerful music.

Kirk Hamilton: Video games!

Jason Schreier: Video games!

Maddy Myers: Video games! You like 'em?

Jason: Maybe you wish you had more time for them?

Kirk: Maybe you wanna know the best ones to play?

Jason: Maybe you wanna know what happens to Mario when he dies?

[Someone chuckles.]

Maddy: In that case, you should check out [Triple Click!](#) It's a brand new podcast about video games.

Jason: A podcast about video games?! But I don't have time for that!

00:32:22 Promo Clip **Kirk:** Sure you do. Once a week, kick back as three video game experts give you everything from critical takes on the hottest new releases—

Jason: —to scoops, interviews, and explanations about how video games work—

Maddy: —to fascinating and sometimes weird stories about the games we love.

Kirk: *Triple Click* is hosted by me, Kirk Hamilton.

Jason: Me, Jason Schreier.

Maddy: And me, Maddy Myers.

Kirk: You can find *Triple Click* wherever you get your podcasts, and listen at MaximumFun.org.

Maddy: Bye!

[Music finishes.]

00:32:48 Sound Effect Transition

[Three gavel bangs.]

00:32:49 Jesse Host

Welcome back to the *Judge John Hodgman!* We are clearing out the docket with our friend Cory Doctorow, whose new book *Attack Surface* is available now in both book and audiobook form.

00:33:03 John Host

Read by Amber Benson!

00:33:04 Jesse Host

Yeah, Cory, we got—we have something we need to address here.

00:33:06 John Host

Yeah.

00:33:07 Cory Guest

Yeah.

00:33:08 John Host

So you may remember that there was a time when we had, uh, a partially functioning society that included air travel as a part of day to day life. For most people. Many, anyway. And we established a precedent on this podcast that people who change into pajamas for an airplane flight, uh, are monsters.

And yet, we have learned that our dear friend Cory Doctorow practices this very, uh, monstrous habit! What—tell me about your—tell me about your airplane PJs. And when was the last time you flew?

00:33:40 Cory Guest

Yeah, so let me tell you a story of the Great Before, when we flew on airplanes. And I fly a lot. I was EFF's European director for several years. I lived in London for 13 years. And most of my family and work were in the US and Canada. And there were months when I flew across the ocean four times. And I have a chronic pain problem. Like so many... dudes who spend too much time in front of keyboards.

00:34:06 John Host

Sure.

00:34:07 Cory Guest

And, uh, dudettes. And I discovered that I could build a thing called the "most comfortable man in the sky" kit.

[John snorts, Jesse laughs quietly.]

And in that kit was a little sleeping bag that was silk on one side and down on the other. So you had a cold side and a warm side. A pair of really nice pajamas that I would iron before I flew. A buckwheat eye mask. A pair of slippers. A hot water bottle and an icepack. Some pretty good painkillers.

[John laughs.]

And that I could just get on a plane, change into my—

00:34:41 John Host

You realize the last thing is all you need. *[Laughs.]*

00:34:44 Cory Guest

No, no, no, it's not true! 'Cause I tried it!

00:34:45 John Host

Now I understand—now I understand how it works.

00:34:49 Cory Guest

Change into my jim-jams, crawl into my sleep sack—

00:34:50 John Host

Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

00:34:52 Cory Guest

—and aestivate like a lungfish. Right? That—that—like, it was as

close as I could come to my dream of Ninja Air, which is when you're flying tomorrow long-haul. In the middle of the night, a ninja breaks into your house and blow-darts you with sedative, and shrink-wraps you and packs your suitcase, and packs you in the cargo hold of the airplane. And then you're like, wheeled to the curb, driven to your hotel, un-shrink-wrapped. All of your stuff is unpacked. You're tucked into bed. The ninja opens the window. This is the most unrealistic part, 'cause they never open.

[John laughs.]

And then the ninja blow-darts you with the antidote, and like, repels down the side of the building as you yawn and stretch, with no perception of time having gone by!

00:35:33 John Host *[Laughs.]* You don't need a ninja to do that, Cory! You just need what I have! A butler! A good one.

00:35:40 Cory Guest *[Laughs.]* Alfred.

[Cory and John laugh.]

No, but seriously!

00:35:43 John Host Yeah.

00:35:44 Cory Guest It—look. Airplanes are so uncomfortable.

00:35:45 John Host Right.

00:35:46 Cory Guest And pajamas are so comfortable. And they're much more comfortable than the most comfortable clothes that you can wear that aren't pajamas. Right? They're much more comfortable than a track suit, say.

00:35:55 John Host Do you wear a—a sleeping cap? A Scrooge-style sleeping cap?

00:36:01 Cory Guest I have pondered this, but I do not wear a Scrooge-style sleeping cap. I do just keep a bare head. But I do have Bluetooth, like, sleep mask/headphones. For—

00:36:10 John Host Yeah! That came up on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast recently.

00:36:14 Cory Guest Oh, I love 'em.

00:36:15 John Host Because people—

00:36:16 Cory Guest Falling asleep to podcasts.

00:36:17 John Host A woman was concerned about her partner falling asleep to podcasts and getting tangled in his earbud cords.

00:36:24 Cory Guest Yep.

00:36:25 John Host But now they have special sleep masks with the ear—Bluetooth, uh, things, so people can listen to my *[ratcheting his pitch up and down]* dulcet tones as they fall asleep.

[Cory laughs.]

[Back to usual voice] Well, Jesse Thorn, you are the sartorial expert. How do you feel about Cory Doctorow's long-haul "most comfortable person in the sky" kit?

00:36:43 Jesse Host I mean, Cory Doctorow is introducing two special circumstances to

this situation. One is a physical disability. And as someone who suffers from a physical disability that's exacerbated by airplanes myself—I'm a chronic migraine sufferer, and airline travel is a real big trigger for me, as you know, John, from having toured with me. It's really tough. I'm hesitant to get in the way of anyone's accommodations.

Also, Cory is specifically talking about overnight flights. Actual sleep flights. Not just red-eyes from coast to coast, but real ten-hour—
Long-haul.

00:37:25 John Host

00:37:26 Jesse Host

Long-haul. I mean, these are flights where if you fly on a fancy enough airline, they give you pajamas to wear.

00:37:34 John Host

Yeah. Yeah. That's true.

00:37:37 Jesse Host

I think it is reasonable to wear pajamas on an overnight flight where you expect to sleep a night's sleep. And it's reasonable to do all this other stuff when you are trying to accommodate a physical ailment. I think it's entirely possible to wear pajamas while sleeping on an airplane without, you know, getting in a taxicab to the airport in your pajamas. Or hanging out in a—in a, uh—in a flight waiting area in your pajamas. Or standing in a bunch of lines in front of—

[John snorts, Jesse stifles laughter.]

—normal adult humans in your pajamas. *[Laughs.]* But if you're on an airplane, and you're actually sleeping, and you're wearing pajamas, and they're a—you know, they're appropriately modest.

[Jesse and John laugh.]

Then I don't have a problem with that.

[John laughs.]

00:38:40 Cory Guest

You make me realize that I omitted something, which is that I change into the pajamas. And this is actually a feature, and not a bug. It's—it's gross changing in an airplane change—uh, bathroom. But, you land with clothes that you haven't slept in!

00:38:53 John Host

Right.

00:38:54 Cory Guest

And sometimes you gotta hit the road running. And you know, you get out of Heathrow, and you gotta go straight to—or JFK or whatever, and you gotta go straight and do something. Well, if you're gonna do that, it's so nice to have put on some clothes, gone to the airport, packed them away again neatly in the bathroom just a few hours after you put them on, so they're still pretty fresh, and then change just before landing.

00:39:17 Jesse Host

Yeah. I—I'm generally a proponent of clothing being utilized for its purpose. And I think Cory sleeping in pajamas on an airplane, that he has changed into, *[stifles laughter]* is a perfectly appropriate use of pajamas. Even though it is a weird situation where you're sleeping in public. And it's the same reason that I don't—I don't begrudge people wearing sweatsuits on airplanes, even though, you know, I wouldn't wear a sweatsuit in public unless I was, you know—

00:39:48 Cory Guest

Sweating.

00:39:49 Jesse Host —starring in a stage production of *Rocky*.

[Cory and maybe John laugh.]

But I—and, you know. Any kind of comfortable—it's fine. But just... a little... acknowledgement that you're in public is nice.

[John snorts.]

That's what I'm asking. Just a little acknowledgement of the other people there.

00:40:06 John Host What—*[laughs]*—what does that involve?

00:40:09 Jesse Host I think there's a certain amount, in people who are in their jam-jams at the gate, or going through security in their jam-jams, which is, uh... "To heck with y'all, I'mma do me."

[John snorts, Cory laughs.]

And part of dressing is about... respecting the other people around you, whether you like it or not. Like, that's the reason why we wear clothes most of the time. Sometimes we wear it 'cause otherwise we'd be too cold or we'd get sunburned. But the main reason is to, you know, have a communication, have a conversation with the people around us. And the message that you send when you're, you know, using an airport bathroom in your jam-jams, is... "My comfort is more important than anything else in the world."

00:41:04 Cory Guest Hmm.

00:41:05 John Host Well, I'll say this. The other benefit of changing in the airplane lavatory—you do this after takeoff? As you're getting ready—

00:41:14 Cory Guest Mm-hm. Uh, no, no, before takeoff.

00:41:16 John Host Before takeoff.

00:41:17 Cory Guest No, I—I get—I—I have Medallion status, so I board first.

[John snorts.]

And I make good use of that time.

00:41:22 John Host *[Laughs knowingly.]* Well!

00:41:24 Cory Guest I'm changing the climate! Ask me how!

00:41:25 John Host Jennifer and Jesse, you may hang up now.

[Jesse laughs quietly.]

I did not realize that I was talking to a fellow Diamond Medallion member.

00:41:31 Cory Guest Oh no, I'm BA, so I'm like a 33rd order Mason within their [inaudible].

00:41:34 John Host *[Bursts out laughing.]* In any case, changing in the airplane lavatory before settling into bed is more acceptable than hanging around the airport in your pajamas, because that's unnerving to other people. And also you're doing a service to the rest of your, uh, companions on the flight! Because after they see that you've changed into their

silk pajamas, they're like, "Oh. Well, effectively just cleaned up all the pee and hairs from the floor."

[John and Cory laugh.]

- 00:42:05 Cory Guest Very true! I—
- 00:42:06 John Host "While changing. While putting his clothes on the floor in there. So now it's much more clean in there for me."
- 00:42:11 Cory Guest And you know, we share a book birthday. Right? I heard you mention that *Medallion Status* paperback's out on the 13th. That's when *Attack Surface* is out. And it made me think about—
- 00:42:20 John Host It's not a competition.
- 00:42:22 Cory Guest No, no, it's great!
- 00:42:23 John Host You're gonna win.
- 00:42:24 Cory Guest I love sharing book birthdays. If there—if the world wasn't wrapped in plague, we would probably run into each other on the road in airport lounges! And, you know, be in the same bookstore one after the other. As often I—I'm doing—
- 00:42:32 John Host Yeah, and then I could go up to you in the airport and say, *[whispering]* "You're still wearing your pajamas. I'm not sure you noticed."
- 00:42:38 Cory Guest *[Laughs.]* I'm doing a gig at the Brookline Booksmith for *Attack Surface*!
- 00:42:41 John Host Oh, wonderful!
- 00:42:42 Cory Guest I mean like, we're—we're in each other's tracks. I once followed Salman Rushdie on a book tour, and every bookstore I went to was like, "You wouldn't believe the security!"
- [John laughs.]*
- But I did—I—for *Walkaway*—I did—
- 00:42:54 John Host You inadvertently were part of the fatwa! *[Laughs.]*
- 00:42:56 Cory Guest *[Laughing]* That's right!
- 00:42:57 John Host You were following Salman Rushdie around the country!
- 00:43:00 Cory Guest That's right. And running into him in lounges, and just like, was seeing him look just exhausted.
- 00:43:04 John Host Yeah.
- 00:43:04 Cory Guest So I went on 35 cities in 45 days for *Walkaway*. In the US, Canada, and the UK. And in the US, they put me up in the same brand of hotel over and over and over again. And you know how when you take, like, a glass from the bar up to your room, it's okay?
- 00:43:22 John Host Mm-hm.
- 00:43:23 Cory Guest I was flying really early in the morning, and I really wanted to get just like one more hour of sleep on the plane. And so I thought, "If I just take this pillow from, like, one Marriott, and then leave it in another Marriott... it's okay, right?" *[Laughs.]*
- 00:43:38 John Host *[Exhales like an appreciative whistle.]*

What a—what a chain hotel life hack!

[Cory and John laugh.]

00:43:42 Cory Guest And it's totally not okay, and I—you know, every time I did it I had the voice of John Hodgman in my head explaining why it wasn't okay, but I rationalized my way into it.

00:43:50 John Host I think that Marriott pillows are fungible. I think it's fine. You move one to the other, it's fine. Here's what I gotta say, though. One thing you haven't considered. I'm gonna allow this, presuming that you and your little sleep sack are not blocking access for other people to go use the bathroom. And I see he's waving me off, "No, no way."

00:44:08 Cory Guest Hundred percent. Yeah. No.

00:44:09 John Host Personally, I would never take a window seat unless I was wearing a stillsuit. You heard me mention that before. That's a thing from *Dune*. If you listen to my, uh, MaxFun members-only special episode where I guested on *Friendly Fire*, we talk about the movie *Dune*. We talk about stillsuits. I would wear a stillsuit if I had a window seat, because I wouldn't have to use the bathroom, because the urine and feces are processed in the thigh pads.

00:44:30 Cory Guest Correct!

00:44:31 John Host That's a shout-out to my David Lynch *Dune* pals.

So I will allow—I will allow this... Dr. Doctorow Doctrine, regarding pajamas. On long-haul flights. The "most comfortable person in the air" kit sounds fine to me. But you are missing one thing, Cory, and I'm surprised that you're missing this, because you are such an advocacy of—of privacy. You're not thinking about dream theft.

[Cory and Jesse laugh.]

You're sleeping with an open dome. Anyone could shoot a dream drone over your head, and pick up your dreams. That's why you gotta wear a sleeping cap! Specifically, a *Judge John Hodgman* brand Dream Theft Prevention Device sleeping cap. It has that embroidered on there. And we're gonna make this product. *[Laughs.]*

00:45:18 Cory Guest I'm gonna say, I just ordered that product in my mind, so I'm 100% all over that.

00:45:22 John Host I know. I know, 'cause I stole your dreams! I knew you were going to order it. That's why you gotta get one. Gonna get a sleeping cap, and we're gonna get it up at the MaxFun shop, and it's gonna say, "*Judge John Hodgman patented*, DRM-protected, Dream Theft Prevention Device."

[Jesse and/or someone else laugh quietly.]

00:45:42 Cory Guest It's a Faraday cage for your mind.

00:45:44 John Host There you go.

00:45:45 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:45:47 Jesse Host Here's something from Savannah:

"My husband Brent plays gospel a cappella quartet music from the

late 1980s and early 1990s with relative frequency. He says he finds it funny. I think he actually really likes it. We're not religious. I grew up as a preacher's daughter in a strict church where no musical instruments were allowed. I hate hearing these songs."

[John stifles laughter.]

"They make me feel strangely claustrophobic. He thinks I should learn to laugh at them. I want the judge to order an injunction stating that Brent cannot play these songs over our shared house speakers, and especially not in the car on road trips."

And then in parentheses, "(Ask me about the Josh Groban incident.)"

00:46:26	John	Host	<i>[Laughs.]</i> Uh, I did—I—we did request some information about the Josh Groban incident, and it's about as you would imagine, Cory. Essentially, Savannah— <i>[laughs]</i> —went on a—
00:46:38	Jesse	Host	It's a classic Groban incident. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:46:40	John	Host	It's a classic Groban incident. <i>[Laughs.]</i> Uh, it's a—uh, Brent and Savannah were on a 14-hour road trip from Indiana to South Dakota, and Brent made her listen to a Josh Groban religious song over and over and over again, and she found herself to be, uh, distracted and, um, frankly triggered by it. And it was very uncomfortable for her.
			So Cory, let me ask you this question. This is a personal question. Uh, are you a religious person? Do you believe in God or whatever, of any kind?
00:47:11	Cory	Guest	Uh, no, I—I am irreligious.
00:47:14	John	Host	You are <u>irreligious</u> .
00:47:15	Cory	Guest	Yes.
00:47:16	John	Host	Do you—this is something of a leading question. Do you think it's funny to play sincere, if somewhat... sappy or ridiculous, but sincere religious music, over and over, to laugh at in your house? Whether or not your <u>formerly</u> religious wife, who was <u>raised</u> in a religious environment, tells you that it's annoying to her specifically. Is that funny? Is it <u>funny</u> to make fun of religious music?
00:47:51	Cory	Guest	Uh—
00:47:52	Jesse	Host	Is that <u>funny</u> to you, Cory?
00:47:53	John	Host	Is that <u>funny</u> ? <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:47:54	Cory	Guest	I sincerely like a lot of religious music.
00:47:56	John	Host	Yeah!
00:47:57	Cory	Guest	So this is—this is a somewhat difficult discussion for me. Gordon Gano, the frontman for the Violent Femmes, had a whole side hustle called The Mercy Seat that recorded some <u>incredibly</u> good gospel music. I could listen to it all day long. I often do.

I—I mean, I think this is kind of a no-brainer. Right? You share a space with other people. You've gotta find a playlist that you both like. And each of you might ask the other one to tolerate a little bit of your favorite music. Like for example, I live with someone who labors under the unfortunate misapprehension that listening to Talking

Heads all day, every day, for the rest of your life, is not good.

[John laughs.]

And, you know—

00:48:30 John Host You probably ask yourself, "How did you get there?" *[Laughs.]*

00:48:32 Cory Guest And "Who is this beautiful wife?"

[John laughs.]

"Where is that beautiful wife?" And so on. And you know, she's wrong, but I love her, and so sometimes I put on David Byrne's solo albums instead. And that's how we arrive at a marital bliss.

00:48:50 John Host Yeah, but she's not playing the Talking Heads because she thinks they're dumb.

00:48:57 Cory Guest No.

00:48:58 John Host And that it's hilarious, and she goes around the house going, "Listen to this big suit music!"

00:49:02 Cory Guest So—

00:49:03 John Host *[Stifling laughter]* And also she knows that you toured with the Talking Heads, and it was a horrible experience in your life.

00:49:08 Cory Guest Yeah, just to be clear, never toured with Talking Heads. It would have been great. But—

00:49:11 John Host I know. It could never be a bad experience. It would be the greatest.

00:49:12 Cory Guest No, no. No! No! I—in fact, I once did a gig with David Byrne! Back to book tours! Right?

00:49:17 John Host Yeahhhh! Yeah, me too!

00:49:18 Cory Guest I was on a tour, he was on a tour, we did a thing together, it was so—he's so nice! Anyway—

00:49:23 John Host So nice! I once did a book event—I hosted a book event with David Byrne at the Free Library in Philadelphia.

00:49:31 Cory Guest Wow!

00:49:32 John Host And the decision was made—we both lived in New York. And we both had independently come to the decision we were going to go back to New York that night on Amtrak. And I got—and the train was delayed by hours, and I sat with David Byrne and his—the woman who was helping him on his tour, at the Dunkin' Donuts at 30th Street Station at one o'clock in the morning in Philadelphia for about an hour. It was the strangest and best David Byrne experience I could ever have in my life.

People are like, "Are you gonna go see David Byrne's *American Utopia*?" I know it's brilliant, but I've already seen the greatest show on Earth. *[Stifles laughter.]*

00:50:03 Cory Guest Yeah! *[Laughs.]*

00:50:04 John Host David Byrne drinking a Dunkin' Donuts coffee. *[Laughs.]*

00:50:08 Jesse Host "I lived it."

00:50:09 Cory Guest Oh my god! You're living the dream! But, you know, the most salient fact about any of this is that he's doing a thing that annoys his partner and he does it all the time, and that's not cool.

00:50:18 John Host I agree.

00:50:20 Cory Guest I mean, it doesn't matter that he's laughing at it or not laughing at it. If it was something that was not gospel, and he wasn't laughing at it, and he still was like, "Hey, honey, here's a thing you hate! Can I play this thing you hate, a lot?" It would still make him a jerk.

00:50:31 John Host Right! And—but I don't see—the point that I'm trying to make is... I—it seems to me pretty clear that not even Brent likes this music. If he genuinely liked it—right? Then you would have a point of discussion. But he enjoys it ironically. It's like for him, it's the nineties or something. He's enjoying it ironically.

00:50:51 Cory Guest Mm.

00:50:52 John Host And—and it bothers his partner. So I am—I am a non-religious person myself. And in terms of my faith, I have very little. *[Chuckles.]* Very little faith. But I will say that liking a thing ironically, and hurting your partner, is bad for your soul. And earns you eternal damnation in the court of *Judge John Hodgman*.

00:51:15 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:51:16 John Host I once was on a sailboat that used to belong to Tina Weymouth. I'm gonna get a connection to all of these Talking Heads.

00:51:22 Jesse Host Let's take a quick break. When we come back, we'll hear about using smartphone maps with our guest, Cory Doctorow.

00:51:28 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:51:30 Promo Clip **Music:** Relaxing ukulele music.

Manolo Moreno: Hey, you've reached *Dr. Gameshow*. Leave your message after the beep.

[Music stops.]

[Beep!]

Steve: Hello, this is Steve from Albany, talking about my favorite podcast, *Dr. Gameshow*. *Dr. Gameshow* is a show where listeners submit their crazy ideas for gameshows, and the two hosts have to play them. And they often bring in celebrities and small children to share in the pain and hilarity.

At first it might seem like Jo Firestone has a contentious relationship with listeners, but that is only mostly true. She actually really respects us. It's a lot like *Lethal Weapon*, where Jo is like, "Aw listeners, you're all loose cannons! You're out of control!" And we're like, "No, Firestone, you're too by the book. You've forgotten what it's like out there."

And that's why I love the show.

[Beep!]

[Music resumes.]

Jo Firestone: Listen to [Dr. Gameshow](#) on Maximum Fun. New episodes every other Wednesday.

[Music fades out.]

00:52:18 Sound Effect Transition

[Three gavel bangs.]

00:52:20 Jesse Promo

Judge Hodgman, we're taking a quick break here from clearing the docket. What have you got upcoming?

00:52:25 John Promo

Well, as you know—or as perhaps you don't know—all ten episodes of the short form animated comedy show I made with our friend David Rees are available on Hulu for your viewing pleasure. I hope. You can go check them out, and I hope you will if you haven't already, at [Bit.ly/dicktown](#). [Bit.ly/dicktown](#). That's D-I-C-K-T-O-W-N, all small letters, all one word. If you have checked it out, and you haven't told someone about it, would you please? We'd really love to make some more of them.

But here is something that I also hope you know, but maybe you don't. *Medallion Status: True Stories from Secret Rooms*, my most recent book of funny essays—except for the one about Petey the cat, which is sad, but also good—is now available in paperback, as of yesterday! The paperback edition is out. Obviously, I cannot go out on the road to breathe in your face and talk about it right now, for reasons that you understand. But I'm doing two very fun virtual events this week, that I hope you will join me for.

Tomorrow, Thursday, the 15th of October, I will be in virtual conversation at the Mark Twain House and Museum. Mark Twain doesn't live there anymore. He sold it, I think, when he died.

[Jesse laughs quietly.]

But now it's a museum to Mark Twain-ology. And I'll be in conversation with Benjamin Click, a real deal professor of Mark Twain-ology at St. Mary's College of Maryland. Now, you don't know him by that name. You might know him by the name—the pseudo name—Professor Mark, from *Vacationland*, and the chapter "Daddy Pitchfork," where I go down to a, uh, unnamed version of St. Mary's College of Maryland and have some misadventures.

This is the first time that I will be seeing Ben Click, and talking to him, since *Vacationland* came out, and I don't think he's mad at me? But let's find out together by joining me, and he, at the Mark Twain House and Museum tomorrow night, Thursday, October 15th, at seven PM virtually. And you can get the details for that at [JohnHodgman.com/tour](#).

00:54:33 John Promo

When you go over to [JohnHodgman.com/tour](#), you will also see that Friday night, October 16th, I'll be virtually returning to my real hometown, Brookline, Massachusetts, to have a fun virtual conversation with our good friend, Jesse Thorn, Aimee Mann.

00:54:53 Jesse Promo

Oh!

00:54:54 John Promo

The incredible—and arguably best—person. *[Laughs.]*

00:54:56	Jesse	Promo	Yeah.
00:54:57	John	Promo	Uh, musician—musician, podcaster, co-host of <i>The Art of Process</i> with Ted Leo, and just one of the greatest conversationalists of all time. Also, by the way, a former—as you may know, a former resident of the Boston area in New England, a region of the Southeastern Maritime Provinces of Canada.
00:55:17	Jesse	Promo	Yeah, I'm not familiar with the place, but I certainly know Aimee Mann.
00:55:20	John	Promo	Yeah, that's right. And that, again, will be happening at seven o'clock online, virtually, and you can register for one or both of these events, won't you please? By following the links at JohnHodgman.com/tour . You will also see there a reminder that you can get the paperback of <i>Medallion Status</i> wherever books are sold or loaned.

If you would like me to inscribe a copy to you, to personalize a copy and sign it, or just get a signed copy, you can always call up our friends at Books Are Magic in Brooklyn. Books Are Magic bookstore in Brooklyn, New York. Go to their website. You can call or order and have it be personalized, and I'll be going there throughout the holiday season to sign and inscribe books for anyone who wants them. And they do ship!

Now, just one more thing. I continue to phone bank and text bank, and be active and engaged in this very important election. As always, on Sunday, I will be meeting up with the democrats of Somerville and listener Zach, to make phone calls to battleground states, starting at three PM. If you'd like to join us, and watch me on Zoom while I do this, and make a few calls yourself, it's a very friendly group. They offer a training at the every—at the beginning of every session. And you can join us by signing up for a shift at Bit.ly/gogetemzach.

On Monday, as always, I will be meeting up with listener Kelsey and her phone bank group that's calling voters in Wisconsin to recruit poll workers and poll observers. That's at 5:30 PM central. And you can sign up for that session at Bit.ly/gogetemkelsey. That's "Go get em," G-O-G-E-T-E-M-K-E-L-S-E-Y. And again, it's a very friendly group. You get online with them. You say hi to everybody. They give you a short training if you've not done this before. You start doing it, and afterward, you all kinda decompress with each other and say, "Hoo, that was fun," or, "Ah, that was amazing," or, "Eh, the people hung up, but I'll—better luck next time."

00:57:26	John	Promo	Finally, we have a new bank that I'm gonna be joining. I'm gonna be joining listener Melissa this Saturday, the 17th, at noon. Normally I take Saturdays off. I take Saturdays off from <u>everything</u> . We all need some time to decompress. But listener Melissa wrote me, and she's working with a phone bank that's calling voters in Pennsylvania to recruit poll workers and poll observers. And this is really important. Really important work to get poll workers and poll observers out there, to keep as many polls open as possible, so that people can vote safely, and as early as possible.
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So that's noon on Saturday the 17th. I'll be joining Melissa and her phone banking group, calling voters in Pennsylvania, and if you'd like

to join up with us, go to [Bit.ly](https://bit.ly/gogetemmelissa)—guess what?—[gogetemmelissa](https://bit.ly/gogetemmelissa). [Bit.ly/gogetemmelissa](https://bit.ly/gogetemmelissa). G-O-G-E-T-E-M-M-E-L-I-S-S-A.

[As a relieved exhale] Hoo!

Jesse Thorn! It's a busy season! What have you got going on?

00:58:21 Jesse Promo Well, of course, our listeners are expecting me to mention that if they use the code "Justice" in my shop, the Put This On Shop, at PutThisOnShop.com, they can get free shipping the United States on almost everything in there. Um, not just, for example, the little **bug and creature stick pin pack**. Or—from the sixties. Or maybe the **cufflinks** with a white star liner on them. But everything.

But that's not what I'm here to talk about today, John.

00:58:54 John Promo Oh!

00:58:55 Jesse Promo I'm not here to talk about the [pennant](#) that says "Quebec," or the one that says "[Boston Beans](#)," that are on stick pins.

[John laughs, Jesse stifles laughter.]

00:59:03 John Promo I want those...

00:59:05 Jesse Promo I'm not here to talk about those things. I just thought I would mention that our friend Elliott Kalan from *The Flop House* has a new book out.

[John gasps.]

It's called *Sharko and Hippo*.

00:59:12 John Promo *Sharko and Hippo!*

00:59:14 Jesse Promo It is a children's picture book that is a riff on the Marx Brothers, that is really hilarious and charming. I bought myself a copy. I—that's right! I'm not a freeloader! Sure, I'll freeload on Elliott's backyard pool. I've done that a lot this summer. But I won't—

[John and Jesse laugh.]

I paid cash money for my copy of *Sharko and Hippo*. It's available in bookstores. You can call your local independent bookstore and order it, or you can order it online from your favorite bookstore. It's called *Sharko and Hippo* by Elliott Kalan. It's really funny. If you're looking for a gift for a kid in your life, you could do a lot worse.

00:59:49 John Promo You know, I—I'm glad you mention it. 'Cause I did use my money to buy two copies of *Sharko and Hippo* to send to some little friends in Maine. And I'll just mention that I did so by calling up [Print Bookstore](#)—our friends at Print Bookstore, a bookstore in Portland, Maine—and they will also ship books to wherever you may wish them to go. So that's a way you can do it!

01:00:14 Jesse Promo Awesome. Let's get back to the case!

01:00:16 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

01:00:18 Jesse Host Welcome back to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. We're clearing the docket. Here's something from Jeremy. He says:

"My girlfriend gets mad at me when we look at my phone's map for directions while walking around. She insists the phone should be oriented with north on the top, the way you might normally look at a map, so you can get a sense of where you are within a neighborhood.

I orient the map so that it reflects the direction we're currently facing, allowing me to more easily plan left and right turns. Who's right? Who's wrong?"

01:00:45 John Host Alright. For clarity here, Cory Doctorow, you should know—*[stifles laughter]*—that this isn't just some any Jeremy. This isn't some regular Jeremy. This Jeremy is a big Maximum Fun supporter. He's the Mayor of Maximum Fun Town, New York City, and he—he's slowly trying to take over this podcast by submitting cases five to ten times a day. And we've already heard one from him—*[laughs quietly]*—I think also between him and his partner, with regard to, he would go into grocery stores and trim the vegetables before he took them to pay.

01:01:25 Cory Guest Mmm.

01:01:26 John Host And leave the trimmings behi—like, so he would grab a bunch of radishes, right? And trim off all the radish leaves, and just leave them for someone else to clean up, and then weigh that, and then pay that amount. Obviously very wrong on many, many levels, and he was judged extremely harshly. Maybe not even harshly enough. So you can tell that this court is somewhat prejudiced. I should recuse myself.

[Cory and maybe Jesse laugh quietly.]

So I'm gonna let Cory Doctorow judge this one solo.

01:01:56 Cory Guest It's a no-brainer. He's right. He's right because you do you. He's right because all of us have different navigational capabilities. I, uh, often get lost in hotels—

[John laughs.]

—that I've stayed in for multiple days, and I get out of the elevator, and I still go the wrong direction when I get out of the elevator like six times in a row. I have no sense of direction. I have no spatial sense. I knock things over. I trip over things, and I drop things, all the time.

And my wife has the most incredible spatial sense of all. She can, like, look down a corridor, at a picture at the end of the corridor a hundred yards away, and say, "That picture is two degrees off true."

[John exclaims in shock.]

And she will be absolutely right. It's a crazy superpower. And she—

01:02:36 John Host Did you marry an AI?!

01:02:39 Cory Guest I—I married a former *Quake* champion! She was on the British *Quake* team!

[John laughs.]

She has this incredible gamer sense! And, you know, and she's brilliant! And she's always in charge when we go out, and I have learned the hard way that every time I feel—no matter how strongly I feel like we're going in the wrong direction, I'm wrong. And so like, now I say things like, "It feels like we should turn left, but you think we should turn right, so we're going to turn right, because even though I feel that, I'm gonna turn right. Okay?"

And she's like, "Yes, you're wrong again!"

[John snorts.]

So this person is clearly married to someone who is much better at orienting themselves in space than he is. Or partnered with. And so that person, when they're controlling the map, should orient the map in ways that make sense to them. Because they're able to orient themselves around an abstract like "north." Whereas if you are a poor and shrunken thing like me—

[John snorts.]

—with a debilitating geospatial deficit, then you need your map pointing in the direction that you're going! I also need to make the L and the R with my fingers to know which one is left and right, so, you know, there you go.

01:03:43 John Host

[Laughs.] Well, I'll tell you what. That's a very, very reasoned judgment. And it's hard to find a single flaw with it. Spatial relations and how you relate and perceive space in your own body is very highly personal. I cannot imagine personally using a GPS on a phone while walking around, or in a car while driving, with it oriented north. As opposed to having it oriented towards the direction in which I am going. I can't—that—the whole thing makes me nervous.

I think you're absolutely right except for one small problem with your judgement, Cory. And that is that if we were to follow your judgment, Jeremy would be correct.

[Cory laughs.]

And I'm not sure that I can allow that in this courtroom. Jesse, you're the tiebreaker in this literal tribunal. Do we give this one to Jeremy? Or no?

01:04:36 Jesse Host

Honestly, I don't even know how you would even get your phone to always show the map pointing due north. It has a little sensor in it to tell what direction you're walking, specifically so it won't do that. So I gotta—I—I'm in—it's a noble impulse, John. To rule against Jeremy.

[Jesse stifles laughter, Cory and maybe John laugh.]

And I—every fiber of my being wants to rule against Jeremy.

01:05:00 John Host

Yeah.

[Multiple people laugh quietly.]

01:05:02 Jesse Host But it's his phone, it's how the phone is designed to work... I think I gotta go with Cory, and say—

[John audibly winces, Jesse's voice rises on a question]

—Jeremy's right?

01:05:12 John Host Well... I gotta say, you know, I recused myself for a reason, and now I regret it. Uh, what about you, Jennifer Marmor? Is there any way I can get outta this, or do we gotta rule for Jeremy?

01:05:23 Jennifer Marmor Producer Yeah, you gotta go with Jeremy.

01:05:25 John Host *[Sighs.]* Even though I think this sets an extremely dangerous precedent—

[Jesse laughs.]

—and an extremely slippery slope... I find in Jeremy's favor.

01:05:35 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Three gavel bangs.]*

01:05:36 John Host Ugh.

01:05:37 Jesse Host Here's a final question from Jess:

"My wife loves spoilers."

[John snorts.]

"For example, she will stop the movie and say, 'I need to know! Does Gandalf survive?'

I've seen the studies that say spoiling things doesn't actually reduce the enjoyment of them. So I shouldn't really care. But here's what I see as the crux." Oh, wow. Jess nominating themselves to be—
[laughs]—the crux-finder here!

01:06:02 John Host New crux-finder!

01:06:03 Jesse Host "I like to suspend my disbelief during a re-watch. 'Maybe this time—spoiler alert—Gandalf doesn't survive.' When I have to take myself out of the artist's own narrative and explain what happens, it hurts my own enjoyment of the piece, and does a disservice to the work.

My wife says that if I know the answer to a question she asks, I should just tell her. But why should we stop a piece of culture in order for me to explain what is going to happen five minutes later?"

01:06:33 John Host Uh, alright. Well, before we dig into Jess's issue with their wife... Cory, quick question. And this is a—what—name one of your favorite books, or movies, or pieces of culture. Not your favorite favorite, but just something you really love. And have seen many—or read many times.

01:06:51 Cory Guest Uh, Neal Stephenson's novel *Interface*, about election shenanigans.

01:06:56 John Host Yeah!

01:06:57 Cory Guest Great—great, seasonal book.

01:06:58 John Host That's a timely one. Would you rather read a new book, that has

got—that gets you as excited as when you read Neal Stephenson's *Interface* for the first time, or would you rather take—this is science fiction-y, so you'll like it. Would you rather take a pill that would erase the memory of that book every time you read it, so you could read it new over and over and over again?

01:07:24 Cory Guest Oh my goodness. Yeah, I don't like either of those options! I re-read that book because as a writer, I'm really interested in how he does it!

01:07:32 John Host Right.

01:07:33 Cory Guest So I like the spoilers! And I—and you know, as everyone knows, the world has ten kinds of people in it. People who understand binary, people who don't, and people who understand ternary.

[John snorts.]

And I—I am one of those people who, when I see a magic trick done really well, the thing I wanna know is how it's done, and that makes me happier.

01:07:51 John Host Right.

01:07:52 Cory Guest And when—you know, I worked for Imagineering for a while, and the best night of my life was the overnight in the Haunted Mansion!

01:07:57 John Host Hoo!

01:07:58 Cory Guest 'Cause even though I knew, like, intellectually how it was all done, I think that there is a kind of enjoyment that you get from knowing what's coming, and going, "Hey, look at how they're foreshadowing it! Look at how they set that up. Look at how they fake you out!" All of that stuff actually, for me, really enhances the enjoyment of it.

01:08:14 John Host Would you enjoy a magic trick—I mean, I understand when you see the magic trick, you then wanna see how it works.

01:08:20 Cory Guest Uh-huh.

01:08:21 John Host When you enjoy the Haunted Mansion, then you do—then you then wanna sleep over. I don't want to sleep over in the Haunted Mansion ever; that's scary to me. That's a scary idea. That's as scary as swimming in the, uh, former 10,000 Leagues Under the Sea lagoon. With the robit underwater monsters in it.

[Jesse or Cory laughs quietly.]

But I understand the—that impulse. But for example, would you want to be like, "I'm gonna show you a magic trick. But before I show you the magic trick, I'm gonna show you what the gimmick is. I'm gonna show you how it works." Is that—would that be enjoy—

01:08:46 Cory Guest Yeah, that—! Penn and Teller doing the cup and balls with the—

01:08:49 John Host Yeah.

01:08:50 Cory Guest —with the transparent cup? A hundred percent. I love seeing the praxis. The artistry. I—it's great.

01:08:59 John Host Yeah. So, here's the thing, though. I don't know—I don't know—Jess, the letter writer, the complainant, is stating that they have this ability to turn off their memory of a thing. *[Laughs.]* To literally suspend their disbelief again, and pretend they are watching it for the very first time.

Now, if that's true, Jess, don't hide your light under a bushel. That's a superpower. If you—*[laughs]*. If you have a switch in your head to erase your memory of a thing that you love, that's something science should study. Don't be like Daredevil, and hide your radar sense from the world so you can climb up and down buildings and punch people. Help solve a problem call blindness! *[Stifles laughter.]* By sharing your superpower with the world!

I guess what I'm saying is that if Jess does have this superpower, this ability to turn off their literal memory and re-enjoy, say, the *Lord of the Rings* movie fresh, that it would be unenjoyable to have that spell broken by her wife asking what's about to happen. You know, you're down there in the Mines of Moria, and all of a sudden your wife makes you remember, "Oh, right. Maybe this Balrog shall not pass!"

But I think that maybe what's really happening here—'cause I'm not sure that you can really turn off your memory of a piece of work—that frankly, Jess simply is annoyed by the interruption of the moment. Of Jess's wife saying, "Ah, ah, ah! Stop. Is he gonna live or die?"

01:10:25	John	Host	And by the way, I—now I can't even remember! Gandalf <u>does</u> live, but also dies! <i>[Laughs.]</i> I don't even know—I don't—I—maybe I have this superpower!
01:10:33	Cory	Guest	No, you're thinking of Jesus.
01:10:34	John	Host	I think there's some parallels—uh, on-purpose parallels, perhaps. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
01:10:38	Cory	Guest	The hair, the tablets.
01:10:39	John	Host	Yeah. That's right. The blowing of, uh, smoke rings?

[John and Cory laugh.]

Famous part—famous part of the Sermon on the Mount.

I think that Jess is throwing up all kinds of interference. Like, "This is a disservice to the work for me to explain what's about to hap—" The work doesn't care. The work doesn't care what you think. I was trained in literary theory at Yale University. The author is dead. All that remains is the text, and the text lives without you. It does not care if you are spoiling it for your wife, Jess. You are not probably able to actually erase your memory. Your wife is not ruining your enjoyment of this by making you—bringing you out of the story.

The wife—your wife is annoying you 'cause she's making you stop this thing and tell what's gonna happen. And in this, and this point only, I have great sympathy. I see there's no problem with Jess's wife wanting to know what's gonna happen ahead of time in the story, but that is not Jess's burden to inform her.

There is a thing. Wikipedia. If you wanna know what's gonna happen in the story because you wanna know how the *Lord of the Rings* sausage is made, or you wanna know—now I'm trying very hard—now the back of my head is trying to remember what's the name of

that special fancy traveling bread that they ate. *[Laughs.]* 'Cause that's what I wanna say. What's the name of that bread? That elf bread? That they raised in leaves?

01:11:54 Cory Guest That was Montreal bagels.

01:11:55 John Host Yeah, if you wanna know how the elfin Montreal bagels are made, go read the Wikipedia page before you see the movie! If you wanna admire the film craft, read how the movie was made! But don't put it on your partner, Jess's wife, to explain it for you. Especially not in real time. 'Cause that's not a fun way to experience that movie.

01:12:14 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Three gavel bangs.]*

01:12:15 Cory Guest That is an excellent ruling.

01:12:16 John Host Yeah. Thank you.

01:12:17 Cory Guest Look it up for yourself. Don't—don't subject someone else to your... to your weird way of enjoying stuff.

01:12:22 John Host That's right.

01:12:23 Cory Guest As someone who enjoys stuff in weird ways.

01:12:24 John Host That's right. So Cory, before you go, just wanna remind everybody *Attack Surface* is out now. As a print book, as an audiobook, as an electronic book I would imagine?

01:12:35 Cory Guest Certainly. Absolutely.

01:12:36 John Host And are you doing any events associated with this?

01:12:41 Cory Guest There are eight nights of bookstore-sponsored events, from the 13th to the 22nd of October, the *Attack Surface* Lectures, each with different guests. Ranging from Amber Benson and John Rogers to Sarah Gailey and Chuck Wendig, Runa Sandvik and Window Snyder, and many other amazing guests. Bruce Sterling's doing a cyberpunk night with me. And you can get the whole schedule at TinyUrl.com/gogetemcory. G-O-G-E-T-E-M-C-O-R-Y.

01:13:07 John Host That shortened website again is...

01:13:10 Cory Guest TinyUrl.com/gogetemcory.

01:13:14 John Host TinyUrl.com—T-I-N-Y-U-R-L.com/G-O-G-E-T-E-M-C-O-R-Y. *[Stifling laughter]* Just rolls right off the tongue.

01:13:23 Cory Guest It sure does.

01:13:25 John Host These shortened URLs sure are handy. *[Laughs.]* Unforgettable, every one of them. *[Laughs.]*

Thank you very much! I'll look forward to seeing you and following you on the road! The virtual road!

01:13:36 Jesse Host The docket is clear. That's it for another episode of *Judge John Hodgman*. Our thanks to Cory for joining us today on the show. Thank you, Cory!

01:13:46 John Host Thanks, Cory!

01:13:47 Jesse Host Cory's new book is called *Attack Surface*. It's the third *Little Brother* novel. It is out now. You can visit Cory's website Craphound.com for more information on where to buy it. John, did you know that that website is named after a short story that Cory wrote?

01:14:04 John Host Oh!

01:14:05 Jesse Host And in the dawning days of podcasting, when I basically didn't know Cory—I may have emailed with him once—I read it for a still extant science fiction story podcast called *Escape Pod*.

01:14:18 John Host Oh!

01:14:19 Jesse Host It was one of the first professionally produced podcasts.

01:14:22 John Host Yeah, they had to make *Escape Pod*. That was—it was written! Written in the stars!

01:14:25 Jesse Host Yeah.

01:14:26 John Host Yeah.

01:14:27 Jesse Host Yeah. Exactly. In more ways than one.

01:14:29 John Host Right.

01:14:30 Jesse Host While you're at Craphound.com, you can check out Cory's August 2020 book about tech monopolies, *How to Destroy Surveillance Capitalism*, and *Poesy the Monster Slayer*, Cory's new picture book about a little maker girl who turns her toys into monster-hunting weapons.

01:14:46 John Host What a delight.

01:14:47 Jesse Host Our producer is Jennifer Marmor. You can follow us on Twitter at [@JesseThorn](https://twitter.com/JesseThorn) and [@hodgman](https://twitter.com/hodgman). We're on Instagram at [@judgejohnhodgman](https://www.instagram.com/judgejohnhodgman). Make sure to hashtag your *Judge John Hodgman* Tweets [#JJHo](https://twitter.com/hashtag/JJHo), and check out the Maximum Fun subreddit—that's at MaximumFun.Reddit.com—to chat about [this week's episode](#). You can submit your cases to *Judge John Hodgman* at MaximumFun.org/jjho, or just email hodgman@maximumfun.org.

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

01:15:18 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

01:15:20 John Promo Hi. John Hodgman here again, with a very special message. I apologize for not remembering that the special elvin energy bar that Galadriel gives Frodo and company wrapped up in leaves is called lembas bread. There was a time when I knew all of this, cold. But I'm getting older now, and I can't remem—I don't even remember if Gandalf lives or dies, or what's going on with him. Lembas bread! Save your time. Don't write me a letter. *[Stifles laughter.]* But thanks.

Also, don't write me a letter about this! Um—*[laughs]*—yeah, we should have called this the Doctorowate. Or we should've—you know, we were making so many jokes about Cory Doctorow's doctoral school. At no point did we ever make a Doctorow docket joke. Sooo... now I did. So you don't have to write me a letter about that, either!

But of course, if you wanna write me a letter about anything under the sun, you're always welcome to. [Hodgman@maximumfun.org](mailto:hodgman@maximumfun.org). Maybe this is a new segment! *[Stifles laughter.]* "Don't write me a letter, but you can still do it anyway."

Alright, thanks. That's our show.

01:16:23 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

01:16:26	Music	Transition	A cheerful guitar chord.
01:16:27	Speaker 1	Guest	MaximumFun.org .
01:16:28	Speaker 2	Guest	Comedy and culture.
01:16:30	Speaker 3	Guest	Artist owned—
01:16:31	Speaker 4	Guest	—audience supported.