

00:00:00	Sound Effect	Transition	Three gavel bangs.
00:00:02	Jesse Thorn	Host	Welcome to the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast. This week's episode, recorded live at the Sydney Goldstein Theater in San Francisco, at SF Sketch Fest.
00:00:12	John Hodgman	Host	This was the penultimate stop on our frontier justice tour of the west, but penultimate just means second to last. These were all epic shows.
00:00:21	Jesse	Host	Every single one of these was ultimate in that they took place in an alternate universe where we wore slightly different costumes.
00:00:29	John	Host	Let's go to the stage at the beautiful Sydney Goldstein Theater in my hometown, San Francisco, California.
00:00:36	Jesse	Host	Wait—oh!
00:00:37	John	Host	Ah! This time it's mine!
00:00:39	Sound Effect	Transition	Three gavel bangs.
00:00:42	Jesse	Host	<i>[Cheers and applause.]</i>

San Francisco, you've come to us desperate for justice. We're here at the Sydney Goldstein Theater to deliver it. Let's bring out our first set of litigants. Please welcome to the stage Nate and Chan. Nate brings the case against his partner, Chan. Nate and Chan live together in a building that was once a masonic lodge. One of the rooms in their apartment has a strange door that opens onto a dark and mysterious hallway. Nate wants to investigate the hallway. Chan wants him to leave that mystery door alone.

*[Laughter.]*

Who's right? Who's wrong? Only one can decide. Please rise as Judge John Hodgman enters the courtroom and delivers an obscure cultural reference.

*[Applause.]*

00:01:33	John	Host	Incredible architecture, historic building, oldest fraternity in history, wisdom of the ages.
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00:01:46	Jesse	Host	Bailiff Jesse Thorn, please swear them in. Nate and Chan, please rise and raise your right hands. Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God or whatever?
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*[They confirm.]*

Do you swear to abide by Judge John Hodgman's ruling, despite the fact that the only fraternal organization that would have him was the British novelty fraternal organization, the ancient order of the Froth Blowers.

*[Laughter. They confirm.]*

00:02:19	John	Host	Two can make obscure cultural references, John! Nate and Chan, you may be seated for an immediate summary judgement in one of yours favors. Can either of you name the piece of culture that I referenced as I entered this courtroom? Nate, why don't you go first?
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00:02:30 Nate Guest Well, it sounds like something masonic.  
00:02:34 John Host It sounds like something masonic.  
00:02:36 Nate Guest But I have no idea what that would be. So, I'm gonna go with something that just sounds like our case, which is the book *The Secret Garden*.  
00:02:45 John Host The book *The Secret Garden*.  
  
*[Scattered laughter.]*  
00:02:53 Chan Guest I'm writing that down. Chan, what is your guess?  
I don't know.  
  
*[Laughter.]*  
00:02:56 John Host You have to make a guess!  
00:02:57 Chan Guest Oh no! Alright.  
00:02:58 John Host And it can't be *The Secret Garden*. And nor should it be!  
  
*[Laughter.]*  
00:03:03 Nate Guest I agree.  
00:03:04 Jesse Host I will say, Chan, if you're ever in need of a catchphrase, "I don't knooow!" is not bad.  
  
*[Laughter.]*  
00:03:14 Chan Guest It's not a bad option for you.  
00:03:16 Jesse Host Just be honest, right? *[Chuckles.]*  
00:03:17 John Host What's your guess, Chan?  
00:03:20 Jesse Host You still need to make a guess. I'm sorry.  
00:03:25 John Host Doesn't have to be right, just has to be a guess.  
I'll give you a hint. It is something masonic. And you live in a—you live in a former masonic lodge. I mean, that's the whole premise of the case. That's why something is... so, maybe—I don't know, do you have books in your house?  
00:03:44 Chan Guest I have quite a few.  
00:03:45 John Host You have quite a few.  
00:03:46 Jesse Host What's one of them?  
  
*[Laughter.]*  
00:03:49 John Host Do you think it's—do you think it's possible that, to prepare for this case, I might have waited until you left your home? And went into it and found one of your favorite books and picked a quote from it?  
00:04:00 Chan Guest Which cookbook would that have been?  
  
*[Laughter.]*  
00:04:04 John Host I don't knooow!  
  
*[Laughter.]*  
00:04:11 Chan Guest What's your favorite cookbook? This is good. I like this. What's your favorite cookbook?  
00:04:14 John Host Right now, it's *Brown Sugar Kitchen*.  
*Brown Sugar Kitchen*.  
  
*[Cheers and applause.]*  
Terrific.

00:04:17 Chan Guest And I actually made a meal for today.  
 00:04:21 John Host Oh, really? What did you make?  
 00:04:22 Chan Guest Uh, it's fried chicken, homemade sweet, mashed potatoes, and homemade baked beans.  
 00:04:28 John Host Wooow! Well, Chan, guess what? You're ABSOLUTELY RIGHT! It is *Brown Sugar Kitchen*! Noooo, it's not. I'm afraid we have to hear the case. That, of course, I'm surprised you didn't know is the whole of the five-star review given by Nicholas Robinson on Google Maps to the masonic lodge in the city where you live.

*[Laughter.]*

Reviewed the lodge. I won't say the name of the city, 'cause I don't wanna—'cause this is about where you live. I don't wanna blow up your spot. But I can tell you, you do need to check your security in your building, 'cause I was able to get in there quite easily. It was almost as if there was a secret door into your apartment.

*[Laughter.]*

00:05:10 Nate Guest Who seeks justice in this court?  
 00:05:12 John Host I bring the case.  
 00:05:17 Nate Guest And Nate, was is the nature of the justice you seek? Does it involve a secret door in your apartment?  
 00:05:28 John Host Yes, well, we recently—well, a few months ago moved into what used to be a masonic lodge. We actually moved into what used to be the attic of a masonic lodge.  
 00:05:29 Nate Guest This all sounds very promising.  
 00:05:30 John Host It's been converted into a loft apartment.  
 00:05:34 Jesse Host I'm really upset that I didn't see this on Zillow before you did.  
 00:05:34 Jesse Host Nate, that's skeleton country.

*[Laughter.]*

00:05:40 Nate Guest Our converted masonic lodge is, of course, bolstered on one side by an even older masonic lodge that no longer is in action and a newer masonic lodge that is in action.  
 00:05:52 John Host Wait a minute, you're saying that your immediate neighbor—  
 00:05:53 Nate Guest Both sides. Sandwiched in between them.  
 00:05:55 John Host The immediate neighbor of your building on one side is an active masonic lodge, and then on the other side is an even more haunted, derelict masonic lodge than the one whose attic you live in currently.  
 00:06:06 Nate Guest I haven't gotten into that one yet, either.  
 00:06:08 John Host You haven't. Okay. And what do you have in your apartment that you want to explore?  
 00:06:12 Nate Guest Well, there is—in the back of one of the bedrooms, there is a door that you'd kind of almost miss it if you didn't pay attention, 'cause it's painted just the same color as the wall. There is no handle on this door. And uh, we became aware of its existence but never had access to getting sight of it except for me thinking I was going to have to buy a crowbar to find out the mystery of this door.  
 00:06:42 John Host So, it had no handle, and you could not open it.

*[Nate confirms.]*

I see.

00:06:45 Jesse Host But you became—I love the passive construction of “we became aware of its existence”.

*[Laughter.]*

00:06:56 Nate Guest Like just one day you woke up with that in your mind. Well, you clearly don’t live in the attic of a defunct masonic lodge.

*[Laughter.]*

00:07:03 John Host *[Stammering.]* Obviously, you are excited to live in this attic.

*[Nate confirms.]*

00:07:14 Nate Guest Tell me—tell me about your fascination with living in derelict masonic lodges. What about it sparks your imagination, Nate? Well, when we first came looking for a place—I like living in places that are odd, in general. And so, we came there and the first—it was literally the first apartment we looked at.

00:07:26 John Host It was literally the first masonic lodge we looked at, your honor.

*[Laughter.]*

00:07:29 Nate Guest And it just seemed right to me!  
The list was long, but we didn’t even have to see the others.

00:07:32 Jesse Host We’ve seen a few elk’s lodges and a moose lodge, but—

00:07:36 Nate Guest We have standards.

00:07:37 John Host *[Laughing.]* That’s right. I do enjoy HGTV *Lodge Hunters*. But I like *Lodge Hunters International* more.

00:07:44 Jesse Host Yeah. They’re all running from something.

00:07:45 John Host They’re all running from something. Yeah.

00:07:49 Nate Guest So, if the goal was a place that—first off, it’s a nice, large apartment. And also, it is certainly one of a kind.

00:07:56 John Host Do you have a preexisting fascination with the history of the fraternal organization and center of worldwide conspiracy theories known as the free masons?

00:08:05 Nate Guest I think you pretty much summed up my previous knowledge of it.

00:08:08 John Host Okay! *[Laughs.]* But you want to—in the tradition of the free masons—expand your knowledge. You are a seeker and a learner, and you wanna get into that secret door.

00:08:20 Nate Guest Who wouldn’t?

00:08:21 John Host Well! I would venture to say your partner, Chan, does not want to go through the door, nor does Chan want you to go through the door. Chan, what is the nature of your feelings on this matter?

00:08:34 Chan Guest Well, the evidence that we provided for you—Nate even told me, “Go get those pictures,” and I didn’t even feel comfortable doing that.

00:08:41 John Host You did send in some evidence, and you’re telling me that just taking the pictures—?

00:08:45 Chan Guest It did make me feel uneasy.

00:08:47 John Host It made you feel uneasy. Let’s take a look at the pictures. *Family Feud* style: show me the evidence!

*[Scattered laughter.]*

I have not—let the record show, I have not yet turned around and already the audience has given me a hint to how terrifying this might be.

00:09:05 Jesse Host Let the record show that if anyone doubted the authenticity of this photograph as coming from a *Judge John Hodgman* listener, the giant bookshelf full of boardgames confirms it.

[Laughter.]

00:09:15 John Host That's you, Chan?

00:09:16 Chan Guest That's me.

00:09:17 John Host That's you? Alright.

00:09:18 Chan Guest Yeah. This is taken in what I call my playroom, my craft room, and sometimes it's known as the laughing room.

00:09:25 John Host Except—the laughing room?!

00:09:27 Chan Guest Yeah. We have a neighbor down below who laughs very hysterically very often and very all throughout the night.

[Laughter.]

00:09:35 Nate Guest By the way, we only assume it's from down below.

[Chan laughs.]

00:09:39 John Host You're saying that the attic room in the haunted masonic lodge that has the secret door in it is plagued by maniacal laughter from unknown sources?

[Laughter.]

00:09:55 Chan Guest Is that—is that what you're saying?

00:09:56 John Host That's correct, your honor.  
I can't believe I missed out on this real estate opportunity.

[Laughter.]

00:10:01 Nate Guest This is my kind of place.

00:10:03 John Host A tale as old as time!

Alright. So, yes, I can see how this door—and obviously the photos will all be available online, on our Instagram and socials. But I can see how this door might “come to your attention” when you enter the room. Was that—was that bookshelf full of boardgames in front of it prior to that? As though, like *Rosemary's Baby* style, they're trying to keep someone out?

00:10:26 Chan Guest No, that's my personal effects.

00:10:27 John Host That's your—okay. So, yes, that's a very creepy looking door.

00:10:31 Nate Guest If I may point out that the—to the left of the middle of the door, that is a light switch that affects absolutely nothing, at least on our side.

[Laughter.]

00:10:44 Jesse Host Your side of the spectral divide?

[Laughter.]

00:10:50 John Host I also noticed that there is a—you know, one of those hotel door style manual locks on top of the door there. What's that for?

00:10:58 Chan Guest Well. I asked—I asked him to install that after coming home from work one day and he mentions about a nightmare he may or may not have had.

00:11:12 John Host Well, what—what was the nightmare that you may or may not have had, Nate?

00:11:17 Nate Guest Well, I was—I had fallen asleep on the couch, as is my wont. And I have—

00:11:23 John Host Sure. Is this happening inside the nightmare? You're dreaming of a dream of a dream?

00:11:26 Nate Guest Well, it's complicated. It's—

00:11:28 John Host Not really!

00:11:32 Nate Guest *[Laughter.]*  
Give it a second!

*[John affirms.]*

So, I fell asleep on the couch. I have a direct eyeline from that couch to this—to the secret door to nowhere in the next room. While I'm on the couch, I start to have a dream that I am sleeping on that same couch, but I wake up from the couch—in the dream—to look at the door to see it slowly opening and somebody's head looking in at me.

*[Upset from the audience.]*

And then, it slowly closes again as—and the head peeks back behind the door. Then, I woke up from that—

00:12:02 John Host We need a little campfire up here, Nate! These are scary tales!

00:12:08 Nate Guest And I woke up from that dream—what I think is a dream—to find myself waiting on the couch I was sleeping on in the dream, staring at the door.

00:12:16 John Host So, you're suggesting that maybe—you suspect that maybe it wasn't a dream at all?

00:12:21 Nate Guest I don't think—I think it was just very spooky, but it was certainly—it certainly came with feelings in the middle of the night when—

00:12:31 John Host *[Laughter.]*  
What did—what did the head of the—peering through the door look like? It's not someone you recognized. Not like a—not like a podcaster looking for a cookbook.

00:12:41 Nate Guest I think it—it kind of—it kind of felt like—it's hard to describe what it looked like 'cause, you know, dream logic. But it kind of felt like if somebody did that in a David Lynch movie to you.

00:12:50 John Host Right. Right. Looked like Bob from *Twin Peaks*, maybe.

00:12:54 Nate Guest Sure. Whatever.

00:12:55 John Host That's what I had in my head.

00:12:56 Nate Guest Any number of characters from Mulholland Drive.

00:12:58 John Host So, then you decided to put a lock on there to prevent your dream from coming through to the real world.

00:13:01 Nate Guest By her request.

00:13:03 Chan Guest Well. You know, I get home from work. He's sharing this disturbing story. And I tell him, "Well, that settles it. I would like for you to put a lock on it."

00:13:12 Nate Guest But before we got the lock—

00:13:14 Chan Guest So, I'm playing in my playroom.

00:13:16 John Host Listen to these two master storytellers!

*[Laughter.]*

00:13:22 Chan Guest This is fantastic! You've got this! Go on!  
Well, so, I'm playing in my playroom. And out of the corner of my eye, the door just seems different.

00:13:31 John Host Let me ask you—playing in your playroom. Were you playing with like a Ouija board?

00:13:36 Chan Guest *[Laughter.]*  
I actually don't own one of those yet.

00:13:38 John Host Oh, okay. Interesting! That's a good suggestion for the holidays.

00:13:40 Chan Guest So, up until we bring this case to you, we weren't able to actually open this door. But this one day, shortly after this dream, it looked different. And I—

00:13:50 John Host *[In horror.]* No. Stop it, Chan. Stop. No.

00:13:52 Chan Guest It just looked a little different off the corner of my eye.

00:13:54 John Host No, no, no. No.

00:13:56 Chan Guest So. *[Laughs.]* So, I did what any—

00:13:58 John Host Chan, no!

00:13:59 Chan Guest —rational person would do.

00:14:00 John Host Chan, no. No! No. Shut it down.

*[Laughter.]*

00:14:17 Chan Guest Everyone go home. Take care of your children. Goodbye. This is the end of the podcast forever. After the nightmare, the door changed appearance or seemed to be—?

00:14:19 John Host It looked like it's ajar, and it was.  
It looked—!? Augh!

*[Laughter.]*

00:14:42 Jesse Host So, this door that you couldn't open. I remember Nate was telling me about two years ago that he was gonna get a crowbar to open the door. And now you're telling me after he dreamed that a spooky Bob from *Twin Peaks* had poked his head out at him, that now it was left ajar.  
John, I have a riddle for you. When is the one door that protects you from the horrors of the spectral realm not the one door that protects you from the horrors of the spectral realm?

*[Laughter.]*

When it's a jar!

*[Laughter.]*

00:15:22 John Host I do—I have an architectural note about this photograph. Something that is fascinating me here is that this door has no door handle, which we've addressed. But it does have a ramp. Which suggests that they're concerned about mobility impairment in the ghost community.  
That's true. That's true. Yeah. That's true. ADA compliance is very important in the Twilight Realm. Okay! So, then you got the door open. I believe that we have a photo of that, too. Show me door open!

00:15:41	Nate	Guest	<i>[Horried screams.]</i>
00:15:44	John	Host	Now—oh, no, please. That was a genuine shriek from the audience.
			<i>[Laughter.]</i>
			First of all, nice dragon painting up in the upper right corner of that. Did you do that yourself, Chan?
00:15:53	Chan	Guest	That's mine.
00:15:54	John	Host	That's really nice work. I really like that.
			<i>[Applause.]</i>
00:15:58	Chan	Guest	What's—charcoal? Pencil? What are we talking about there.
00:15:59	John	Host	Mixed media. Mixed media. Yeah, I should've known. Sorry about that. I still got it. This is a steel door, it looks like to me. Or some kind of insulated door. How would you describe it?
00:16:10	Nate	Guest	It's—yeah, if you knock on it, you feel like some sort of metal. And you can see it obviously looks—
00:16:15	John	Host	Why are you knocking on this <i>[censored]</i> door?
			<i>[Laughter.]</i>
00:16:19	Nate	Guest	It knocked first! But it—
00:16:23	Jesse	Host	You can tell it's metal, because if you look into a mirror and say its name three times—
			<i>[Laughter.]</i>
00:16:28	John	Host	And it's got a slide bolt on it on the other side.
00:16:30	Nate	Guest	On the other side.
00:16:31	John	Host	There seems to be a certain amount of mutual distrust between you and the denizens of the dark hallway.
00:16:38	Nate	Guest	It's as though the other people on the other side have had the same wariness about us.
00:16:43	John	Host	And then, it's also full of calk and paint, which is fairly mundane but also fairly creepy. But I don't see the hallway that's being discussed or the corridor or the passage.
00:16:52	Nate	Guest	Uh, if you have that in your evidence, we did submit it.
00:16:56	John	Host	Alright. Show me the passage! Oh, wow.
00:16:59	Nate	Guest	Nope, that's a—that's a closeup of the lock. We wanted to make sure that was noticed. But there is—yes.
00:17:04	John	Host	But there's another—there's a photo over here as well.
00:17:06	Nate	Guest	But then there is the passage with weird, brick walls that I can narrowly slide down if I had the permission to.
00:17:12	John	Host	Right. Okay, so now I see. Go back to the previous slide for a second so I can get my bearings. So—
00:17:17	Nate	Guest	So, if you take a left.
00:17:19	John	Host	You take a left. So, you move—you're—what you're suggesting happened, Nate, is that you move those cans of paint and calk—
00:17:28	Nate	Guest	I can just step over them.
00:17:30	John	Host	Oh, okay, that's good.
			<i>[Laughter.]</i>
00:17:31	Nate	Guest	It's even easier.
00:17:33	John	Host	Yeah. <i>[Laughs.]</i> It's like they built the passage in a masonic lodge, but they didn't remove the cans of paint!

00:17:39 Nate Guest I don't wanna move somebody else's stuff.  
00:17:40 John Host Yeah, I know, especially ghost stuff. So, okay, if you—you're saying you can maneuver around those cans of paint to work your way into a crawlspace.  
00:17:49 Nate Guest Which, despite with flashlights, we cannot see how it ends or where it ends. It does look like it turns in another direction.  
00:17:56 John Host Say the words "despite flashlights" again.

*[Laughter.]*

00:18:02 Nate Guest Did you—did you shine a light down that passage?  
00:18:04 John Host Yes. And you cannot see where it ends.  
00:18:07 Chan Guest Chan?  
00:18:09 John Host True story.  
Are you just trying to scare me?

*[Laughter.]*

00:18:15 Jesse Host Alright. Let's go back to that next slide.  
I'm fascinated by the idea that he could just barely slide through the brick passageway. Which sounds to me almost certainly like what they call a self-*Cask of Amontillado*-ing.

*[Laughter. Nate agrees.]*

00:18:30 John Host Are there any other photos? Or can we move on from this nightmare? Okay. Oh—oh, that's—okay, that's the bolt.  
00:18:35 Nate Guest Close up of the lock, that I installed afterwards to compete with their lock.  
00:18:39 John Host And has it—

*[Laughter.]*

00:18:47 Nate Guest And has it—has it ever been tested? Like, do you ever see the door rattling? The lock being pushed?  
00:18:50 John Host Not yet, which is why it needs to be explored.  
"Housekeeping! Housekeeping." No? None of that? Okay.

*[Laughter.]*

00:19:06 Nate Guest And is that—? That's the final slide. Well, that's a terrifying journey into a dread nightmare of undeniable cosmic proportions. You wanna go in there?  
I think it's a moral imperative that I do.

*[Laughter.]*

00:19:10 John Host Alright, Immanuel Kant. Tell me why it's a moral imperative.  
00:19:14 Nate Guest Okay. First off, I think that very common dream that—or people dream that there's a secret door or something in their house. It's something to do with, I don't know—I'm not sure why. I'm not a psychiatrist or psychologist, but I know it's a common dream. We have one. I think everyone would say that it would be a terrible choice not to be the somebody who rarely has a secret door and you actually get to explore it in the real world.

*[Cheers of agreement and applause.]*

00:19:40 John Host I think that that's very interesting! It's true. I have often had the dream that there is a secret door in my home that I discover a lot more square-footage in.

*[Laughter.]*

00:19:57 Nate Guest What do you think is gonna be in there? Maybe it's like a cool, extra bedroom? Or maybe you can make an office in there.

00:20:00 John Host The masonic treasure room that's been hidden for years.

00:20:01 Jesse Host The masonic treasure room.  
Could be a treasure rooom!

*[Laughter.]*

00:20:05 John Host There is one person who does not want you to go in there. Chan, why not?

00:20:10 Chan Guest I think it's mostly my apprehension of I don't know the sturdiness or the safety. And should he fall through the floor—we're not talking ten feet. We're talking a whole level which could be 20 feet.

00:20:23 John Host What's below you? Aside from maniacal laughing ghosts.

00:20:26 Jesse Host Pit of snakes. Pit of live snakes.

00:20:28 Chan Guest I do know the neighbor below me lives in the ballroom. And I've seen the ballroom, and those are very high ceilings. And that would be a very far fall for him.

00:20:37 John Host At the very least, it would be an awkward moment for you to fall into your neighbor's living room.

00:20:43 Chan Guest But at least the fire department is right across the street if I needed to call EMS.

00:20:48 John Host I mean, honestly, I would be a little concerned too, Chan, that Nate might get stuck in there. Like, physically stuck and unable to get out.

00:20:55 Chan Guest Right, and that's also my point of concern.

00:20:56 John Host The way I was showing off at my uncle's house in Vermont that time, and I lowered myself into the laundry chute and I got stuck in there.

*[Laughter.]*

00:21:04 Nate Guest Well, that just sounds irresponsible.

*[Laughter.]*

00:21:09 John Host I thought it was a moral imperative, personally.

*[Laughter.]*

00:21:29 Chan Guest But I'll be the judge. Chan, have either of you made inquiries to whoever is responsible for this building to know what this access space—to guess at what the space might be?  
I'm glad you asked that. The answer is no, because then there'd be no mystery or friction.

00:21:35 Nate Guest I'm also afraid they'll take it away from us.

*[Laughter.]*

00:21:40 Chan Guest We need conflict in our lives, and this is conflict.

00:21:45 John Host You're afraid that they're going to take your apartment away from you? Or that the door will just disappear?

00:21:51 Nate Guest They'll drywall it up, and then we'll never know.

00:21:53	John	Host	It'll be straight up drywall the next time you walk in there, and it's gone.
00:21:56	Nate	Guest	I'm pretty sure, through that hallway, I'm going to end up finding an entrance into one of the other masonic lodges to explore them.
00:22:05	Chan	Guest	It's just thin drywall separating us from them.
00:22:09	John	Host	It looks to me a little bit, Nate—and I hate to say this. It looks to me to be a little bit just like a storage area. Just like an extra space.
00:22:17	Nate	Guest	That's where they put the paint cans, but that's just—they just don't want you to know.
			<i>[Laughter.]</i>
00:22:26	John	Host	Any other conspiracy theories you subscribe to before—before we go?
00:22:29	Nate	Guest	Thanks for asking.
			<i>[Laughter.]</i>
00:22:33	John	Host	Since we are livestreaming throughout the world, I just wanna make sure. Okay. So, Nate, obviously you would like me to rule that you are allowed to go in there as soon as possible, maybe even tonight.
00:22:44	Nate	Guest	Yeah, I would have an objection to one of her points, which is I think it's—it—despite the fact of what it looks like, I think the floor is gonna be as safe as any floor in a building. It's just this very strange looking area. So, I don't think safety from my opinion is really a concern.
00:23:01	John	Host	Flashlights will not penetrate the darkness of this corridor into another realm. Your words, not mine.
			<i>[Laughter.]</i>
			Though I did punch them up. <i>[Chuckles.]</i>
			<i>[Nate thanks him with a laugh.]</i>
00:23:15	Jesse	Host	John, it's completely safe. The fire department is across the street.
			<i>[Laughter.]</i>
			Their alarm goes off. They have a special alarm for <i>Amontillado</i> -ing.
			Let's take a quick recess and hear about this week's <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> sponsor. We'll be back in just a moment on the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast!
00:23:35	Sound Effect	Transition	Three gavel bangs.
00:23:37	Sound Effect	Transition	Three gavel bangs.
00:23:40	John	Host	Chan, <i>[stammering]</i> would you want me to rule that he's just not allowed to? And just live in perpetual curiosity forever?
00:23:48	Chan	Guest	I've been enjoying the curiosity.
00:23:50	John	Host	You—do you feel that it'll be sad if he finds the answer at the end of that tunnel?
00:23:56	Chan	Guest	Yeah, and then I'll be sad 'cause he'll be sad. And then, we don't have this conflict anymore, 'cause then we'll know.
00:24:01	Nate	Guest	I know what would make me sadder: not finding out at all.
			<i>[Laughter.]</i>

00:24:07 Chan Guest I don't know if we have any more secret doors, your honor. We just have the one. We don't wanna lose it.

00:24:19 John Host *[Laughter and scattered applause.]*  
Nate, aren't you afraid that you will go in there and you will find that it is not anything particularly scary or frightening or interesting or treasure-filled?

00:24:28 Nate Guest I don't think there's a bad solution to this. Obviously, you know, whatever ideas one might have in their head are—are going to be—

00:24:34 John Host I think there's a bad solution. Bricked in and devoured by rats.

*[Laughter.]*

00:24:45 Nate Guest That's the one that I just thought of right then! I could write a dozen more scenarios!

00:24:47 John Host That's more of a result than a solution.

00:24:51 Nate Guest You could step on a rusty spike! And then, die of tetanus alone.

00:24:53 Jesse Host Well. I'll wear the nice shoes.

00:24:55 John Host Could be gators, too!

00:25:00 Nate Guest Could be gators! Could be—could be some of those Bay Area wall gators that you hear about.

00:25:02 Jesse Host I've seen enough *Mr. Magoo* episodes. I know how that works!

00:25:04 John Host Watch out for *[inaudible]*!

Yeah. Some kid, a few years ago, got an alligator as a pet and got tired of it and flushed it into the walls.

*[Laughter.]*

00:25:17 Jesse Host True story. True story. That alligator eats light—eats flashlight light. That's what it lives on. Scary.

00:25:25 Nate Guest Nate. Nate, what would it be like for you if you went into the wall and you found that it was just a storage closet?

I think that would be—I'd be fine with it, because I would—I mean, obviously, it'd be way cooler to find other things and other passageways or whatever. But I'd be fine just knowing the answer. The thing I would be least happy with is having a secret door that never gets explored.

00:25:44 John Host That would make you unhappy, to have a secret door that never gets explored.

00:25:47 Nate Guest Yeah! I think it would make almost everyone unhappy.

00:25:49 John Host But you see—okay, I understand. Chan, what would be the ideal ruling—? Okay, you can applaud that.

*[Laughter and applause.]*

00:26:02 Chan Guest Chan, what would be the ideal ruling that you would offer or ask me to rule, in this case?

Obviously, no. But should you decide in his favor, I would like to stipulate that I should be home for this.

*[Laughter.]*

00:26:20 John Host Just in case. 'Cause if he tries to call me at work, I don't think he's gonna reach me if he falls in anywhere.

00:26:22 Nate Guest Do you have any problem with that, Nate? Or do you need to be—?

No, I was actually—

00:26:23 John Host —home alone and it has to be 2AM?

00:26:27 Nate Guest *[Laughter.]*  
Well, that would kind of make it spookier, but I assumed she would be there standing a safe distance away from the scary door while I can call back to her my reports on what I've found. I have no problem with doing it safely.

00:26:42 John Host How do you—how are you going to equip yourself?  
00:26:45 Nate Guest I assume a rope around the waist, so when I fall down into the ballroom—

00:26:52 John Host *[Laughter.]*  
Who's going to belay for you as you—?  
00:26:56 Nate Guest That's when the fire department gets called.

00:26:59 John Host *[Laughter.]*  
What else are you gonna get? Like a little—a lantern for your head?  
00:27:02 Nate Guest That sounds like a good idea, so I could have both hands free.  
00:27:04 Chan Guest He can borrow my headlamp.  
00:27:06 John Host Oh! Do you some caving?  
00:27:09 Chan Guest No, it's mostly for working on engines and sometimes it's dark.  
00:27:12 John Host You know, I don't think, Nate, you should be going into this hole.  
00:27:15 Nate Guest She should?  
00:27:16 John Host Chan should!

00:27:19 Chan Guest *[Laughter.]*  
00:27:20 Jesse Host Nooo! *[Laughs.]*  
00:27:23 John Host She has the practical skills.  
Chan, what—what do you think about Nate's proposed gear setup? A rope around his waist and your headlamp. Is there anything else that—? I mean, let's say—let's say—let's say that you were in my position, and you were advising him. Let's say you were, oh, I don't know, the manager of a hole exploring company and you were trying to help him out. What would make you feel better if you were to go in there?

00:27:50 Chan Guest Man, how else can he look ridiculous? Um.

00:27:55 John Host *[Laughter.]*  
Put on a hardhat.  
00:27:56 Nate Guest *[Delighted.]* Uh-huh! Keep going!  
00:27:58 Chan Guest You could have me wear your coveralls from work.  
00:27:59 Nate Guest He could wear my coveralls.  
00:28:01 John Guest Protect me from nails and such.  
00:28:04 John Host What about work boots?  
00:28:04 Chan Guest He can't fit in my work boots, so no.  
00:28:07 John Host No one can fill your work boots, Chan.

00:28:13 Jesse Host *[Chan agrees with a laugh.]*  
I think I've heard everything I need to in order to make my decision. I'll be back in a moment with my verdict.  
Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom.

00:28:20 Chan Guest *[Applause and cheers.]*  
Is that our cue?

00:28:21	Nate	Guest	I don't think so.
00:28:22	Jesse	Host	Chan, how are you feeling about the chances that you have in this case?
00:28:27	Chan	Guest	I'm really glad that we had this opportunity to be heard at a very fair platform. And you know, I'll be happy with it either way.
00:28:38	Jesse	Host	Nate, how are you feeling?
00:28:40	Nate	Guest	Ooooh, I've been surprised by some rulings before, but I think I've got the weight of justice and history and, uh—
			<i>[Laughter.]</i>
00:28:54	Jesse	Host	And human nature on my side. Nate, how are we supposed to trust your judgement about anything when I'm looking at your outfit and you can't even decide whether it's hot or cold?
			<i>[Laughter.]</i>
00:29:09	Nate	Guest	I like your outfit too.
			<i>[Laughter.]</i>
00:29:12	Jesse	Host	You look great. You look great, Nate. You look great. We'll see what Judge Hodgman has to say about this. Please rise as Judge John Hodgman reenters the courtroom and presents his verdict.
			<i>[Applause and cheers.]</i>
00:29:29	John	Host	Nate, there's nothing in there.
			<i>[Laughter.]</i>
			There's nothing in there. It's just a simple storage space. And the free masons are not the center of a worldwide conspiracy designed to create a one world government and control us—all of our thoughts. They're not lizard people. They're—they—sure, many of them are powerful figures in their community—politicians, world leaders, and so forth. But they're just a simple, fraternal order for people to get together and hold swords at each other's throats. And say things about a supreme being that only they can define for themselves and wear interesting aprons and have fun. It's just—it's nothing is—nothing—nothing that you've read about them is true. And that's just a storage closet. Now, you tried to make up a fun, scary story for old Judge John Hodgman, talking about your nightmare that may not be a nightmare—a door that becomes mysteriously ajar. And did you scare me? <u>Yeah</u> . You scared me.
			<i>[Laughter.]</i>
			The two of you are incredible storytellers. There's nothing there, Nate. There's nothing there. How does that make you feel? I have 100% confidence that you're gonna Geraldo Rivera this if you go back there. There's nothing.
			<i>[Laughter.]</i>
00:30:45	Jesse	Host	That one's for Gen X.
00:30:47	John	Host	That was for Gen X. That was for Gen X. Walker Percy, the novelist, wrote, "It's better to know than not to know." And honestly? <u>Wrong</u> .

*[Laughter.]*

I can think of many situations in my life where it would've been much better that I never knew. There is something I think beguiling about the question mark that is right there in your apartment, staring at you, making you wonder. Wonderment, something that we—is in short supply in this world. 'Cause right now, *[censored]*'s very real! *[Chuckles.]* It's not as wonderful as it might be. I really do sympathize with Chan's feeling that like why would you want to find out the boring, mundane truth about this thing that is obviously not a secret passage to the secret world government headquarters. And I'm therefore ordering that you move out of that apartment immediately.

*[Laughter.]*

You've gotten too close to the truth, and you need to be relocated. Various graduates of Yale University are waiting outside for you in a van painted with skulls and bones to take you to a new life where, I guarantee you, there will be no surprises. Nate, there's nothing back there. But you're going in that hole.

*[Cheers.]*

Because you're absolutely right! This is the—this is the stuff of dreams! An apartment that has a secret door! You might find a swimming pool in there! You might find a cat café! You might find a hotel where you were always the caretaker! In your apartment! You have to go through a secret locked door in your apartment, even though that story you told was very scary, and even though I actually am fairly confident that it's just gonna be a bunch of rusty nails, and you're gonna end up in the hospital. *[Chuckles.]* So! To counteract that bad outcome, I further order not only that you go into the hole, but that Chan, you have to outfit Nate. And I really appreciated what you said. How can I make him look as ridiculous as possible?

*[Laughter.]*

00:33:19 John Host

I really—look, you're a talented artist. Start doing some sketches of some of his exploring outfits. Do you know what I mean? I want—I wanna see like *Ghostbusters* type stuff times 1000. There needs to be a very special branded coveralls, some kind of proton pack has gotta be a part of this thing, so long as it doesn't get him stuck. I'm thinking, because it could—because there is sticking in there, that he needs to have, like that character in David Lindelof's *Watchmen*—the two bottles of oil that he can—that he can squirt on himself, in case he gets into a tight spot.

*[Laughter.]*

And he needs to get lubricated, needs to lube himself out of there or whatever. I need you to think—because obviously, Nate is a dreamer. Keep dreaming, Nate. You're the practical one with the boots and the knowledge and the skills. I need you to think of every eventuality, every tight corner, every bad outcome, and create

something that not only will help him be safe, but also will make him look dumb.

00:34:25 Chan Guest  
00:34:28 John Host

*[Laughter.]*  
I'll get him an Indiana Jones hat to top it off.  
*[Laughing.]* Sure! Whatever it is! Do you know what I mean? Like, I urge you to sketch it. You don't have to submit it to me for your approval. Whatever you decide is fine, but if you have different options—A or B—I mean, Jesse's a menswear expert. So, he probably has a good idea of what will work. And then, once that outfit is all set and ready to go—and absolutely, you have to have a rope around your waist and Chan has to be feeding it to you as you go into the other dimension or whatever. You need to have a GoPro on your head and film it for our—for our show!

*[Applause.]*

This could be a livestreaming event as well! You know what I mean? Not for you, camera A. Camera C, I love you.

*[Laughter.]*

Camera A, you know what you did. The point is, you're gonna go into that hole. You're gonna look like a fool, and you're gonna have the time of your life. This is the sound of a gavel.

*[Three gavel bangs.]*

Judge John Hodgman rules, that is all.

00:35:21 Jesse Host  
00:35:29 Sound Effect Transition  
00:35:31 Sound Effect Transition  
00:35:33 Jesse Host  
00:35:43 John Host

*[Applause and cheers.]*  
Nate and Chan, thanks for joining us on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.  
Three gavel bangs.  
Three gavel bangs.  
We're taking a break from the theater—the Sydney Goldstein Theater, that is, at San Francisco Sketch Fest. You have two television programs available for viewing, John.  
I'm not taking a break from the theatre. I was born for the theatre!

*[Jesse laughs.]*

00:35:53 Jesse Host  
00:35:55 John Host

The musical theatre of television, that is!  
The television show, *Up Here*, on Hulu?  
That is the one I am talking about. I play Tom, the weird dad in Bobby Lopez and Kristen Anderson-Lopez's brand-new musical romantic comedy, *Up Here*. If you haven't watched it yet, please check it out. It's a real toe-tapper, a real heart-warmer. It's a lot of fun. And of course, while you're over at Hulu, why not do a little rewatch of *Dick Town*. It's probably been a day or two since you watched that great cartoon that David Rees made, and I helped. Jesse Thorn, what do you have going on with you in your life, though?

00:36:24	Jesse	Host	Of course, you can shop from me in the Put This On shop at <a href="http://PutThisOnShop.com">PutThisOnShop.com</a> or on Instagram <a href="https://www.instagram.com/Put.This.On">@Put.This.On</a> . And there's a really cool interview this week on <i>Bullseye</i> , my NPR interview show, with Delroy Lindo, one of the most wonderful actors in America and just a brilliant, sincere, powerful dude. Just a really remarkable man.
00:36:50	John	Host	I love Delroy Lindo, and just a few weeks ago on the podcast I was like, "What's going on with Delroy Lindo? I haven't heard from him in a while." Now, I get to hear from him on the great interview show <i>Bullseye with Jesse Thorn</i> . Thank you, Jesse, for interviewing Delroy Lindo.
00:37:03	Jesse	Host	Let's get back to the Sydney Goldstein Theater.
00:37:06	Sound Effect	Transition	Three gavel bangs.
00:37:08	Jesse	Host	Please welcome to the stage Julie and John!
00:37:11	John	Host	Julie and John.
			<i>[Applause.]</i>
00:37:16	Jesse	Host	What's going on with Julie and John, Jesse? Julie brings the case against her partner, John. John made a recording of himself beeping every 20 seconds to help with his stretching routine.
			<i>[Laughter.]</i>
			He calls it a stretching app. Julie says that's not an app! Judge Hodgman, you may proceed.
			<i>[Laughter.]</i>
00:37:40	John	Host	Julie, John, you may be seated. What—? You recorded yourself beeping, John?
00:37:49	John	Guest	<i>[Chuckles.]</i> Yeah, so—well, so it wasn't like in regular intervals, so it couldn't just be 20 seconds over. It was 10 seconds, then 20. So, I had to manually beep.
00:37:58	John	Host	Woah, woah, woah, woah, woah, woah. You're explaining the wrong part.
			<i>[Laughter.]</i>
			You recorded yourself saying "beep"?
			<i>[John confirms.]</i>
00:38:11	Jesse	Host	Okay. Yeah, and he's getting his series C funding, right now!
			<i>[Laughter.]</i>
00:38:19	John	Host	He certainly does have the glasses and the evening shorts!
			<i>[Julie agrees.]</i>
			To be a tech pioneer! He's an app inventor! John, do you know what an app is? 'Cause this sounds to me like a voice memo. Julie, would you agree?
00:38:39	Julie	Guest	I would 100% agree.

00:38:40	John	Host	Thank you for—thank you for agreeing. Tell me about John and what’s going on in your lives.
00:38:46	Julie	Guest	<i>[Chuckles.]</i> Uh, so much.
00:38:47	John	Host	And you’ve met before?
			<i>[Julie confirms.]</i>
			You live together.
00:38:50	Julie	Guest	We do. We cohabitate with two children.
00:38:52	John	Host	Cohabitate with two children.
00:38:53	Julie	Guest	Yes. Mated successfully twice. So.
00:38:55	John	Host	Oh, well! Well done!
			<i>[Laughter.]</i>
			Mated successfully twice! Me too.
00:39:01	Jesse	Host	Is that what this show is now?
00:39:05	Julie	Guest	I don’t know. Relationship status is a hard thing to say.
00:39:08	Jesse	Host	Three times, baby!
			<i>[Laughter.]</i>
			Sorry, Mom. But also, you’re welcome!
00:39:13	Julie	Guest	So, John’s an exercise—oh!
			<i>[Laughter.]</i>
			So, John’s an exercise guy. And he decided he was gonna make this recording to help him with his stretching, which is fine. But he keeps referring to it as his exercise or stretching app, and I’m like, “Words have meaning.” And it’s a recording!
00:39:36	John	Host	There are apps that exist that will beep at you. And they offer the opportunity to buy things within the app. And then, they drain you dry. Why don’t you use one of those?
00:39:46	John	Guest	Well, it was getting that frequency I wanted. I couldn’t find it quick—the 20 seconds, 10 seconds, 20 seconds, 10 seconds.
00:39:52	John	Host	Right, no I’m sure there isn’t anything like that.
00:39:53	John	Guest	So, I made my recording into an app icon that I just touch it. It’s just like a regular app from the iStore.
00:40:01	Julie	Guest	From the iStore! <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:40:02	Jesse	Host	It’s just like a regular app from the iStore!
			<i>[Laughter.]</i>
			The initial public offering next month on Nasdaq— <i>[chuckles]</i> .
00:40:13	John	Host	John?
			<i>[John confirms.]</i>
			What is the name of your app?
00:40:17	John	Guest	Six-minute stretch.
00:40:19	Jesse	Host	They’re running busses down Valencia Street to John’s house to bring all the tech workers.
00:40:25	John	Host	Not a very zippy name.
00:40:29	John	Guest	It gets to the point.
00:40:30	John	Host	Yup, that’s true, and you’ve reached your target audience of one.

*[Laughter.]*

John, Julie points out that you've mated successfully twice. Your genetic material is out there. What do you care about stretching?

*[Laughter.]*

You're done. It's over. It's over for you. It's over for all of us. Why do you need to be in shape?

00:40:50 John Guest

I just have poor work ergonomics, so it's nice to be flexible so I can—

00:40:54 John Host

What does exercise do for you? What does this stretching routine do for you? Does it recenter you? Is it meditative? Does it help you feel limber and help you show off your legs?

00:41:04 John Guest

*[Chuckling.]* It does help me feel limber, and it definitely makes me feel less stiff. And I appreciate both those things.

00:41:12 John Host

And step-by-step, what is the stretching routine exactly?

00:41:16 John Guest

Quad stretch.

00:41:17 John Host

For how long?

00:41:18 John Guest

*[Chuckling.]* 20 seconds, each side. Then a lunge stretch, toe touch. Then, I—

00:41:24 John Host

But how much—how long for that?

00:41:25 John Guest

*[Chuckling.]* 20 seconds, 10 seconds off. Then, 20 seconds—

00:41:26 John Host

20 seconds. 10 seconds. Okay, I'm having difficulty visualizing.

00:41:30 John Guest

That's why you need the app!

00:41:31 John Host

Can you just do it?

00:41:32 John Guest

Like—I could! I could.

00:41:34 John Host

Could you just do it for us?

00:41:35 Jesse Host

Judge Hodgman!

00:41:36 John Host

I wanna see this app!

00:41:37 Jesse Host

If we were gonna make him do it, we would have to have the app installed into this theater!

00:41:43 John Host

Well, as it so happens.

*[Laughter and applause.]*

The app is free for download if you know Julie. John, would you mind doing the routine so we can see the process?

*[John agrees.]*

Okay. Why don't you step over here to camera A. And before we do this, just so you know Julie, I obviously I find in your favor.

*[Laughter.]*

But let's see how it goes before we—before we let you go. Okay?

00:42:29 Clip Clip

*[Beat.]* Let's do it. Can we hear the app?

*[Muffled.]*

**John:** Quad stretch one. Beep!

*[Laughter and applause.]*

00:42:42	Jesse	Host	He's doing—so, for the listener at home, he's got one hand on the top of his foot, and then he's doing a ridiculous hop that can't be part of the routine.
00:42:55	Clip	Clip	<b>John:</b> Beeeep!
00:42:56	John	Host	Oh! There it is!
<i>[Laughter and applause.]</i>			
For the listener at home, the look on Julie's face of disgust and defeat is priceless. But indeed, Julie, you are not defeated. You are victorious. I find in your favor.			
<i>[Cheers and applause.]</i>			
Julie and John, thank you.			
<i>[Four gavel bangs.]</i>			
Julie, you may leave. John, you stay there. Bring out the next litigants.			
00:43:20	Jesse	Host	Let's welcome Rebecca and Ceruse.
00:43:22	John	Host	Rebecca and Ceruse to the stage, please!
<i>[Laughter and applause. The recording continues in the background.]</i>			
00:43:29	Jesse	Host	Rebecca brings the case <i>[laughing]</i> against her husband, Ceruse.
<i>[John's stretching app "beeeep"s.]</i>			
Dang it! Ceruse calls himself a digital native. Rebecca says that's wrong! She says digital natives are much younger. Who's right? Judge Hodgman, you may proceed.			
00:43:49	John	Host	Ceruse, Rebecca, welcome to the courtroom. Rebecca, state your case.
00:43:52	Rebecca	Guest	He was born in 1982.
<i>[John's stretching app "beeeep"s.]</i>			
00:43:58	Rebecca	Guest	But says he is a digital native. And clearly, he is not. Yes.
00:44:04	John	Host	And so—
<i>[John's stretching app "beeeep"s.]</i>			
00:44:13	Ceruse	Guest	Ceruse, what does it mean to be a digital native? I would argue it means growing up with digital technology. Indeed, I was born in January 1982. I also—
00:44:19	John	Host	Sure. Two years before I got an Apple MacIntosh 128K.
00:44:24	Ceruse	Guest	Yes.
<i>[Beeeep.]</i>			
00:44:30	John	Host	I was fortunate— <i>[laughs]</i> I was fortunate enough to grow up in a household with this very same MacIntosh. My apologies. Pardon me, Ceruse. Now, I'm hearing some voices on your app. What's going on? Oh, that's you announcing the next thing. Okay, I understand. Continue.

00:44:39 Ceruse Guest *[Laughter.]*  
I was fortunate enough to grow up in a household with the very same Macintosh 128K in 1984.

00:44:43 John Host You lived in my house?!

00:44:46 Ceruse Guest *[Laughter.]*  
I think we lived in a cross-dimensional time warp.

00:44:49 John Host That door that we saw earlier?!

00:44:50 Ceruse Guest Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely.

00:44:52 John Host Very exciting. Why—

*[Beeeeep. Laughter.]*

00:45:03 Rebecca Guest Rebecca, why do you say that Ceruse is not a digital native and why does it matter?  
Right, well—

*[Beeeeep. Laughter.]*

00:45:23 John Host First of all, yes, he—I don’t dispute that he had a computer really early. I don’t dispute that he had access to anything early. But it was really like in his house. It wasn’t the whole culture. So, we have two children, as the previous litigants. And—

00:45:24 Rebecca Guest You’ve mated successfully.  
Yes, twice.

*[Laughter.]*

00:45:32 John Host And just seeing how they interact with technology, it’s so different than us.  
Yes. Actually, John—

*[Beeeeep.]*

I think I heard your child on the recording.

*[Laughter.]*

00:45:44 Jesse Host Is that true? Oh, I see. I think *[stammering]* your app is still in beta—just to be the kindest about it.  
When you say they interact with technology completely differently, you mean they don’t ever write a little program to make a turtle draw a picture of a sailboat?

00:45:52 Rebecca Guest Well, exactly. And they don’t know *Oregon Trail* and it’s not—you know—a touchstone for them because it’s just part of their life. Like, today my daughter—I was driving her home. She asked me, “How do you spell—”

*[Beeeeep.]*

“How do you spell abracadabra backwards?”

And I said, “Gosh, I don’t know!”

00:46:14 John Host And she’s like, “I’ll ask Siri.” Like. *[Laughs.]* It’s just—  
That’s how—they live in a completely digital world.

*[Rebecca agrees.]*

Right. All of information is at their fingertips. All 608 episodes of *Judge John Hodgman* are being played for them as they sleep.

00:46:24 Rebecca Guest  
00:46:27 John Host

*[Beeeeep.]*

And she has listened to some. She has opinions. Exactly, yeah. John, how much longer does this go on for?

*[Laughter.]*

00:46:31 John Guest  
00:46:32 John Host

What's that?

*[Off mic.]* Last two stretches.

Last two stretches? I'll allow it. Okay, so Ceruse—

*[Beeeeep. Laughter.]*

You do it—John, you got this. You got this, John.

*[Applause and whistling.]*

*[John struggles with laughter.]* What's happening? Okay.

00:46:56 Rebecca Guest

*[Beeeeep.]*

Like, they know what an app is for real. So. You know?

*[Laughter and cheers.]*

00:47:07 John Host

*[Beeeeep.]*

All I've ever wanted myself, as a parent, is to raise my children well enough that they could eventually replace me. That's the job. Do you know what I mean? I mean, I appreciate, Ceruse, that you may feel erased by your children who are genuine digital natives, because you claim—

*[Beeeeep.]*

You hold onto this status with the death grip of a dying man, but it's time to let go eventually.

*[Beeeeep.]*

And whether it's...

*[Laughter.]*

Being the parent of actual human children or the coparent with your friend of a podcast in live entertainment, I'm really glad to know that, Jesse, we're apparently no longer necessary. Because frankly, John's killing it.

*[Laughter.]*

And Rebecca made the funniest joke of the night. So!

*[Beeeeep.]*

Why is it important to you that you be a digital native?

00:48:04 Ceruse Guest *[Beeeeep.]*  
Um, *[laughs]*. I'm a tech journalist. I report on this stuff. I have been involved in—as you mentioned—the Mac 128K. I have with me a piece of firsthand evidence.

00:48:19 John Host Shouldn't it be more—oh! These are firsthand evidence!

*[Laughter.]*

Alright, I'll allow it.

*[John's recording ends with a beep and a "pew, pew, pew, pew!"]*

Woah, woah, woah, woah!

*[Cheers and applause.]*

00:48:40 Jesse Host John! John! Come back out here and take a—take a bow!  
00:48:43 John Host Friends, the star of the show! John!  
Beeeeep!

*[Enthusiastic cheering and "pew, pew, pew"s.]*

What was—? Was that the sound that was indicating that the routine was over? Alright. We gotta end our show that way from now on. Ceruse, I apologize. You came here with a bribe for the judge. So, let me see what it is.

00:49:09 Ceruse Guest I have with me a brochure that came with this original 1984, 128K Macintosh that has been saved in my childhood home and I framed some years ago, along with this autograph of Steve Wozniak.

00:49:22 John Host Yeah! It says, "To Ceruse, from Woz."

00:49:25 Ceruse Guest From Woz! Yeah. Yeah.

00:49:26 John Host Exactly! That's pretty intense.

00:49:27 Ceruse Guest In addition, my other evidence is that—you may know from the—so, my hometown is Santa Monica, California, which was fortunate enough to have—

00:49:36 John Host *[Interrupting.]* It's amazing that he was able to sign it so clearly, given he was surely riding a Segway at the time.

00:49:40 Ceruse Guest It's true. Yeah. It's true.

Santa Monica, California, has the world's first BBS: bulletin board system. This was an archaic—now archaic 1980s era online message board system that I used in elementary school. And I feel like I'm the only person who remembers that it even existed!

00:49:59 John Host Rebecca.

00:50:00 Ceruse Guest Uh-oh.

00:50:01 Rebecca Guest And that's the exact point!

00:50:02 John Host I mean, first of all, can we stipulate to what an incredible accomplishment it is for you to have been born and lived in a period of time.

*[Laughter.]*

00:50:13	Rebecca	Guest	I don't wanna take anything away from that.
			Right. And so, that's my exact point is that that's amazing how special, how unique, how novel, how not part of the entire culture that was. Like— <i>[laughs]</i> , our—
00:50:26	Jesse	Host	First of all, this is—this BBS story, universally relatable. Everyone here, not just me and Ceruse, would go to the coffee shop, get a copy of <i>Microtimes</i> , look in the back, find some phone numbers, use our mom's computer to dial in, and then hopefully—fingers crossed!—get to play an R rated text game.
00:50:51	John	Host	<i>[Laughter.]</i> When I—when I went to college, a very pale man came to my dorm room and said, “Do you want the internet?”  <i>[Laughter.]</i>  And I said, “Sure.” And he brought a wire in and connected it to what was then my Mac SE. I had moved on in time. Time does move on. And I opened up a BBS, and there were two conversations happening. One conversation was a debate over whether or not the character Deckard, in <i>Bladerunner</i> , was a replicant or not and the other conversation was just prose erotica. And it's exactly the same now!  <i>[Laughter and scattered applause.]</i>  Ceruse, did you have an answering machine growing up?  <i>[Ceruse confirms.]</i>  Right. Did you have a landline?  <i>[Ceruse confirms.]</i>  Did you have a touchtone or even a rotary phone? Uh, I used a rotary phone at my grandparents' house? Did you have a fax machine?!
00:51:48	Ceruse	Guest	
00:51:50	John	Host	<i>[Ceruse confirms.]</i>  Did you ever see a zine?  <i>[Ceruse confirms.]</i>  Yes. You lived in a special time! I don't know why—your children are creatures of the digital era. You are a crossover event between the analogue and the digital world. You should be celebrating that! I know you don't want to, because it means you're old.  <i>[Laughter and applause.]</i>  You're old. You're ten years younger than me, and you're oold! Look at me, your future. I find in Rebecca's favor. Sorry, Ceruse. Wooow!
00:52:28	Ceruse	Guest	<i>[Cheers and applause. Three gavel bangs.]</i>

00:52:30	Jesse	Host	Rebecca and Ceruse. Please welcome Sam and Laura! Sam brings the case against their partner, Laura. Sam and Laura share a table while they work from home. Laura likes to tell Sam to look at their pets when the pets do something cute.
			<i>[Laughter.]</i>
00:52:56	John	Host	Sam would like Laura to stop doing this, because it's too distracting. Judge Hodgman, you may proceed. First of all, welcome to the courtroom. You may be seated. And if you are more comfortable, you don't have to sit on—you know, I also choose not to sit on stools, because I'm gonna fall over. Sam and Laura, welcome. What do you think—what do you think Ceruse should call himself if he's not—? Like, you know, I'm just trying to give this podcast up to people who can make better jokes than me. And this is kind of a Willy Wonka type situation. And—do you have a suggestion for—? Like, he's analogue and digital, like anadig? Or Digi—diggalog? I don't know. You all workshop it. Come up—when we come to open court, let me know. Meanwhile, let's get to your case. You deserve to be heard. Who brings the case?
00:53:40	Sam	Guest	I do, Judge.
00:53:41	John	Host	And Sam, you and Laura work at home near to each other?
00:53:44	Sam	Guest	Yes. Most of the time, we work in our living room together.
00:53:47	John	Host	And Laura is distracting you or—?
00:53:50	Sam	Guest	Yeah, you could say that. Yeah.
			<i>[Laughter.]</i>
00:53:52	John	Host	Laura, what do you do?
00:53:54	Laura	Guest	I work at a nonprofit.
00:53:56	John	Host	Oh, okay. When you're—but I mean, when you're not working at the nonprofit and distracting Sam, how—? He's claiming that you're distracting him. How is this happening?
00:54:04	Laura	Guest	Oh, how am I distracting? Yes. I see the pets do something cute. We have three animals. And I just can't help myself. I have to get Sam to look! Especially when they do something that's time sensitive, like rolling and showing their belly or—you know, they have their tongue sticking out or they got something stuck in their face, on their nose, or when they—our dog and the cats are starting to get closer, if they're cuddling for the first time or closer than they've been, I don't wanna miss that moment or have Sam miss that moment.
00:54:35	John	Host	And I presume that you sent in some evidence.
00:54:38	Laura	Guest	Oh, of course.
			<i>[Cheers.]</i>
00:54:41	John	Host	Richard Robey, show me the pets!
00:54:43	Jesse	Host	Nooooo!
			<i>[The crowd "aw"s.]</i>
00:54:47	John	Host	I don't know, should I look? I don't wanna look. I'm really busy right now hosting this show. But alright. Oooh-ho-ho! Come on! Who are they?! What are their names, if I may ask?
00:55:01	Laura	Guest	The one with the white belly is Soba and the black one is Ro Laren. Any <i>Star Trek</i> fans out there?
			<i>[Applause.]</i>

00:55:09	Jesse	Host	No, there are no <i>Star Trek</i> fans here. No.
			<i>[Laughter.]</i>
00:55:13	John	Host	No <i>Star Trek</i> fans, no tabletop gamers. Not here. Um. They're very adorable. Do you have another—do you have another piece of evidence to submit?
			<i>[They confirm.]</i>
			Let's see it. Aaaaaw!
			<i>[The audience "aw"s.]</i>
00:55:30	Laura	Guest	What is the name of this dog?
00:55:31	John	Host	This is Cowboy.
00:55:33	Jesse	Host	Cowboy the dog!
			Follow-up question, <i>[sweetly]</i> can I eat him?
			<i>[Laughter.]</i>
00:55:37	John	Host	What does Cowboy have on his nose?
00:55:40	Sam	Guest	It's a little leaf.
			<i>[Laughter.]</i>
00:55:45	John	Host	Why did you answer, Sam? What do you care?
			<i>[Laughter.]</i>
			Why do you hate looking at these pets so much, Sam?
00:55:57	Sam	Guest	I'm not—I promise I'm not a monster. I look at them like <u>so</u> much. Like, Cowboy's—he's like my best friend. I—you know. And I do, throughout the day—like, I love being able to work from home with my partner and our pets, but you know, I think I've just gotten so used to how cute they are, it's like I don't need to see every single time they're cute.
00:56:16	John	Host	Oooh! You've gotten so used to how cute they are... that you stopped seeing how cute—you stopped appreciating them. You spend so much time in the same room with creatures that you love that you no longer appreciate or even see them, basically.
			<i>[Laughter.]</i>
			Is that right, Laura? Would that be correct?
00:56:41	Laura	Guest	It kind of feels like that. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:56:42	John	Host	Something like that? How often—how often does Laura ask you to look at the pets?
00:56:48	Sam	Guest	I think it depends on the day, how distracted they are. I would say like at max maybe like ten times a day.
00:56:54	John	Host	Ten times a day! Ten times a workday or—? A waking day.
00:56:57	Sam	Guest	Just the workday.
00:56:58	John	Host	Oh, in a work day! Well, that is quite a bit, Laura. Wouldn't you agree?
00:57:01	Laura	Guest	Yeeeah, but they're pretty cute. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:57:08	John	Host	I mean, I have to say that we have a very dumb cat in our house. And I say that only because I love that cat and it's very true. This is a dum dum cat. This—I've seen this cat sleeping under a coffee table and then stand up and hit her head.

*[Laughter.]*

00:57:32	Laura	Guest	The least amount of field awareness I've ever seen in an animal, especially a cat have. Just like bonk!
00:57:33	John	Host	Soba would do that.
			Yeah, right? And that's a fun thing to see when you catch it, but it's definitely the case in our family, because she just is so dumb and is often just staring off into space in the middle of a hallway. Just walking in, you see her, and you go <i>[screams incoherently]</i> . And it's just a cat staring off into space, which maybe isn't worth the interruption. I'm trying to say is maybe not all of—I mean, I appreciate the time sensitive cuteness. Definitely a tongue sticking out of the mouth and a leaf on the nose, for heaven's sake. Grab your camera. But don't you think, Laura, it might be too much from time to time?
00:58:10	Laura	Guest	Yeah, especially Sam's job requires a lot of focus and mine requires a lot less focus. So, I do wanna be respectful of their need to actually focus on work. <i>[Chuckles.]</i>
00:58:21	John	Host	What is the work that requires so much focus that you do, Sam?
00:58:25	Sam	Guest	I'm a transportation engineer for a city.
00:58:27	John	Host	For <u>a</u> city?
00:58:29	Sam	Guest	For this city.
00:58:30	John	Host	The city of San Francisco?

*[Sam confirms and the audience applauds and cheers.]*

Holy Moley, we really do have some infrastructure nerds in the house. I mean, that sounds good, but I wouldn't ever think to applaud it until I knew more.

*[Laughter.]*

00:58:48	Sam	Guest	What does that involve, exactly? I specifically do a lot of like traffic signal timing work. So, I—yeah. <i>[Chuckles.]</i>
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*[Cheers and applause.]*

00:59:01	John	Host	Thank you. May I?
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*[Sam confirms and the crowd laughs and applauds.]*

00:59:07	Jesse	Host	The judge is hugging the litigant.
00:59:11	John	Host	And that's sincere, 'cause you know I'm a former traffic counter. That was my job.
00:59:14	Sam	Guest	I did! I wrote in about it, actually.
00:59:15	John	Host	Yeah, I sat—you—oh, you wrote in about it?

*[Sam confirms.]*

We've corresponded?

*[Sam confirms.]*

Laura, you wanna take a break?

*[Laughter.]*

I think we have some—let's talk about traffic counting, just for a sec. Just for a—just a millisecond.

*[Laura agrees.]*

00:59:29 Sam Guest What did you write when you wrote in? 'Cause I regret that I don't remember.  
Well, I think you had mentioned on an episode that you were hired to count traffic, and you didn't really know why.

*[John confirms.]*

00:59:41 John Host So, I wrote in about like kind of why that data is needed and what we do with it.  
Yeah, no, you explained—now, I remember! You explained a deep mystery to me. 'Cause I would go out at 7AM to an intersection in New Haven, Connecticut with five different clickers and count which cars go straight, which cars goes left, which cars go right, and so on. And I never knew why I was doing it. I came—I mean, I got—I got paid \$12 an hour in 1990, which is \$1000 a minute now.

*[Laughter.]*

01:00:11 Jesse Host You know, that bought a lot—that bought a lot of bourbon and comic books, I'll tell you what.  
The ad in the newspaper just said, "Traffic company seeks Yale graduate to count."

01:00:18 John Host I was a student at the time! I'm not that old!

*[Laughter.]*

I was a first-year student, and I wanted to make a little extra money, and it was a great way to get to know the Paris of southern Connecticut, New Haven! But I had no idea why I was doing it. And as I mentioned, and I'll say it again, I would have to go and meet my handler once a week in a different location every time. She was the one who told me where to go, and I would turn in my numbers for that day. And one time, I said to her, "Why am I doing this?"

And she said, "I don't know."

*[Laughter.]*

01:00:54 Jesse Host John, are you 100% that you weren't working for the CIA?  
01:00:58 John Host I honestly thought that it might be like a psychological experiment.

*[Laughter.]*

01:01:21 Jesse Host To see just how far we can push him. How big of a rule follower is he? 'Cause there was no one checking up on me! I had no idea whether—like, I could have just put in any numbers I wanted! I thought maybe it was a psych experiment, but now I realize it was a recruiting experiment, and I failed apparently.  
Your handler is looking at the piece of paper like, "69 cars again?"

*[Laughter.]*

01:01:31 John Host "Oh, no, no, no. Saturday, there were 420."  
Laura, you mentioned you work for a nonprofit. I think it's only fair to ask what your nonprofit does.  
01:01:35 Laura Guest They work with the LGBTQ community.

*[Cheers and applause.]*

01:01:38 John Host Thank you very much for that. Almost as important as the timing of traffic signals.  
01:01:43 Laura Guest I'd say they're equally important.  
01:01:45 John Host So, what would you have me rule if I were to rule in your favor, Sam?  
01:01:48 Sam Guest I think like a limit to how many times or some kind of like—  
01:01:52 John Host What's the limit? What's the limit?! Set a limit!  
01:01:56 Sam Guest Maybe like three times a day. Or maybe—  
01:01:57 John Host Three times a day. So, you're telling me, Sam, that if Laura points out three cute things and then all of the sudden those two cats are riding Cowboy like a horse, you don't wanna know about it? What if there's an emergency cuteness situation?!  
01:02:18 Sam Guest Yeah, I would wanna know.  
01:02:19 John Host You would wanna know, wouldn't you? Laura, do you feel sometimes that the issue is not so much Sam won't look at the cats but that you would like his attention? And you're not getting it?  
01:02:32 Laura Guest A little bit. Like I said, I don't have to focus as much, and so any—  
01:02:38 John Host He doesn't need to focus that much. He's not timing the—!  
01:02:40 Laura Guest You should see! You should see. It's insane.  
01:02:42 John Host He's not turning—! He's not—he's not manning the stoplights himself! He's not like looking at a camera going, "Okay, this is gonna be red in five, four, three, two—go for yellow. Alright. Standby for red. Standby for red. Do we have the walk sign going? Okay, let's see it. Five, four, three—solid hand on—zero, go! Okay, go for solid hand."

*[Laughter.]*

01:03:10 Laura Guest "Standby for red. Standby for—and here we go! Red."  
01:03:11 John Host It's hard work.  
That's not what's happening. I don't know what he's telling you. He's playing a video game. But you know, how do you feel when Sam says, "I don't wanna look at the cats. I don't wanna—I don't wanna enjoy this with you."  
01:03:25 Laura Guest Well, for me the hardest part is that they just don't respond.  
01:03:28 John Host He doesn't respond? Oh, they. Excuse me. They don't respond?  
01:03:31 Laura Guest Yeah, they just—they're so focused. That's what I'm saying. Their focus is unbreakable. And I will say, "Oh! Look at the cat!" And they'll just keep working and then like three minutes later maybe turn around and go, "Oh." And then, they miss it. And that's why I get so frustrated. 'Cause I'm like if you looked right away, you would see the cute thing and it would be over in a second.  
01:03:49 John Host Right. First of all, I apologize for misgendering you. Did I do it any other time?  
01:03:53 Sam Guest Oh, it's okay.  
01:03:54 John Host Okay, I apologize. Are either of you vegetarians or vegans? It's—I mean, it's great if you are. I'm just—if you were, then you probably

01:04:16 Laura Guest had never been to a Brazilian BBQ restaurant. There's this chain of them around where they just keep bringing food to your table.  
01:04:17 John Host I've seen the sign on the freeway.

Yeah. It's gross. It's gross. Even as an omnivore, I find it to be a little bit gross. But they have one thing there that I think you could take advantage of. Which is you get—when you sit down, they just start bringing you food on skewers. And they will keep going, but you have some control. Because you get a little disk. With a green light—you'll like this, Sam.

*[Laughter.]*

I just realized! On one side, it's a green light, meaning bring me more. And on the other side, it's a red light, meaning I'm taking a break right now. I think you should go out to dinner. You don't have to eat there, just steal one of those things.

*[Laughter.]*

Bring it home and have it in a place where Laura can see it. And when you need to focus because you don't want cars to crash and such, you can put it on red. And Laura, do you think you could respect that?

01:05:14 Laura Guest I could, but we already have something like that.  
01:05:16 John Host Oh nooo!

*[Laughter.]*

01:05:19 Laura Guest And it's actually a traffic signal light that you can put each one.  
01:05:23 John Host Laura, that's even better! See Jesse! This is the last episode of the podcast ever. We're done. They're all doing it better than me.

01:05:30 Jesse Host It's for the best.  
01:05:31 John Host They got this! So, this isn't helping?  
01:05:35 Laura Guest We haven't used it for that purpose yet.  
01:05:37 John Host Oh, well, what purpose are you—? Well, never mind! It's not—

*[Laughter.]*

None of my business. If it is reasonable to repurpose your home traffic light and it won't send mixed messages or cause hilarious misunderstandings, then I would suggest, Sam, that you put the red light on. But be thoughtful about it. You know what I mean? Don't forget to put the green light on. You have a great—you know, it's wonderful to be able to be at home and work from home with the— with both the person and the animals that you love! And you wanna take advantage of that. So, make sure that there's a certain amount of green light. But I think it's reasonable to indicate to your partner, "I just need a little bit of focus time here." And you know, basically, I would say to you, Laura, is just—you know, rig up cameras throughout your apartment so that you capture everything.

01:06:35 Laura Guest We have one watching our dog right now.

*[Laughter.]*

01:06:37 John Host Really? Do—can—do you have a live camera that I can look at right now?

01:06:41 Laura Guest Yeah. It might take a sec to load though.  
01:06:43 John Host Yeah, I'll look at it in a little bit. But it get loaded.

01:06:46	Laura	Guest	It has night vision.
01:06:47	John	Host	Load it up, because Jesse's gonna sing a song in a second and I'll come take a look for you—with you. Alright. This is the sound of a gavel.
			<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
			Thank you. Judge John Hodgman rules. That is all.
			<i>[Cheers and applause.]</i>
01:06:56	Sound Effect	Transition	Three gavel bangs.
01:06:58	Jesse	Host	That's it for this week's episode of <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> . Our thanks to all of those litigants who joined us onstage at the Sydney Goldstein Theater. A very special thank you to the fine people at SF Sketch Fest for employing me when I was indigent out of college, in 2006 and 2007 I'm gonna say. 2008, maybe? Something like that.
01:07:19	John	Host	Beeeeep! Sorry, Jesse. I'm doing my stretching routine.
01:07:24	Jesse	Host	<i>[Laughs.]</i> Evidence and photos from our show are posted on our Instagram account at <a href="https://www.instagram.com/judgejohnhodgman">Instagram.com/judgejohnhodgman</a> . Follow us there. You can also find the photos at <a href="https://www.MaximumFun.org">MaximumFun.org</a> on the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> page for this episode.
01:07:38	John	Host	Beeeeep! Work on quads.
01:07:41	Jesse	Host	<i>[Sighs.]</i> Uh, join the conversation on Reddit. <a href="https://www.MaximumFun.Reddit.com">MaximumFun.Reddit.com</a> . Thank you to redditor Acone419 for naming this week's main case and for being, I'm gonna say, a pioneering graffiti artist in New York in the late 1970s. That's what that sounds like to me. A-Cone-4-1-9.
01:08:00	John	Host	Beeeeep!
01:08:02	Jesse	Host	Submit your disputes at <a href="https://www.MaximumFun.org/ijho">MaximumFun.org/ijho</a> . That's <a href="https://www.MaximumFun.org/ijho">MaximumFun.org/ijho</a> .
01:08:13	John	Host	Hang on, Jesse. Beeeeep! Time to do my hammies!
01:08:15	Jesse	Host	Okay. Dadgummit! <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> , created by Jesse Thorn and John Hodgman. This episode, recorded by Matthew Barnhart, produced by Valerie Moffat, Richard Robey, and Jennifer Marmor. We'll talk to you next time on the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast.
01:08:30	John	Host	Beeeeep!
01:08:31	Sound Effect	Transition	Three gavel bangs.
01:08:33	Sound Effect	Transition	Cheerful ukulele chord.
01:08:34	Speaker 1	Guest	<a href="https://www.MaximumFun.org">MaximumFun.org</a> .
01:08:36	Speaker 2	Guest	Comedy and culture.
01:08:38	Speaker 3	Guest	Artist owned—
01:08:39	Speaker 4	Guest	—audience supported.