



# Our 21 Favorite Podcast Episodes of 2014

Thursday, December 18, 2014

We asked WNYC staffers to pick their single favorite podcast episode of the year, whether it came from inside our building or across an ocean. These are our chosen ones. Tell us yours!

## [The Truth: It's Your Funeral](#)

I love a great caper about real life, but there are stories that can only be captured in fiction; this ultimate revenge-fantasy-gone-wrong is a perfect example.

-[Hillary Frank](#), host of The Longest Shortest Time

## [Professor Blastoff: Social Networks](#)

I love podcasts where funny people who are good friends sit around making each other laugh. Bonus points for long-running jokes. Professor Blastoff is my favorite version of that, and it's hosted by Tig Notaro, my favorite stand-up comedian. On this episode, the gang talks about social groups, what makes someone interesting, comedian networking, and friendship – and they get lost in a number of hilarious tangents.

-[Julie Whitaker](#), Social Media Editor

## [Sideshow: Mike D Sets the Record Straight](#)

An exclusive interview with a Beastie Boy who finally clears up what the heck they were singing about on “Brass Monkey.”

-[Sean Rameswaram](#), Host of Sideshow, who chose his own podcast, was the first to respond to the request for choices, and won an (unused) toothbrush for doing so.

## [BBC Radio 4's In Our Time: Mrs. Dalloway](#)

The conversation immediately evoked college and grad school discussions about its complexity, tone and voice. I know now that I am 25 years older, that it will be a different and even more rewarding read when I pick it up next.

-[Chris Bannon](#), VP of Content Development and Production

### [The Longest Shortest Time: The Missing Chapter to Ina May's Guide](#)

When Hillary confronts natural childbirth guru Ina May Gaskin about why her Guide to Childbirth ignores those mothers who strove to have a natural birth but couldn't for various medical reasons, Hillary gets a genuine and thoughtful response: Ina May says she'd consider amending her book.

-[Leital Molad](#), Senior Producer, Studio 360

### [This American Life: A Not-So-Simple Majority](#)

This is an obvious pick, but I couldn't quit listening to this piece - I listened to some part of it at least once a day for the next 10 days after it aired. Calhoun's on-the-ground reporting takes this seemingly hyper-local matter and turns it into a universally palpable struggle.

-[Kelsey Padgett](#), Production Assistant, Radiolab

### [Meet the Composer: John Luther Adams, Bad Decisions and Finding Home](#)

John Luther Adams is just such a source of powerful, slow-burning inspiration – a living lesson that being brave and following your instincts will get you to where you need to be.

-[Alex Ambrose](#), Managing Producer, Q2

### [LIES: Jim Gaffigan Got Cut Like an Abercrombie Model](#)

It was the first episode that came out of this new show — I didn't really know what the show was about. I was (pleasantly) surprised by the boldness of the content. It's refreshing. I laughed out loud and had to listen to it a second time. And then a third time.

-[Marine Boudeau](#), Director of User Experience and Product

### [Radiolab: Translation](#)

I loved Radiolab's Translation episode, about 95 percent because Gregory Warner's installment from Ethiopia was just so tremendous, but also because of how unified it felt while still covering a lot of ground.

-[Emma Jacobs](#), Reporter

### [Serial: Leakin Park](#)

It was in this episode the story line totally hooked me because I really had no idea who did it, and I still don't (Jay, Don, Adnan, Mr. S—gosh!).

-[Lauren Morris](#), Data Analyst

### [Sideshow: Howard Kremer Is a One-Joke Comedian, And Proud Of It](#)

If we're allowed to toot our own horns, I hold a special candle for this episode of Sideshow.

-[David Krasnow](#), Senior Editor, Studio 360

### [Radio Cherry Bombe: Ruth Reichl](#)

Radio Cherry Bombe lets you eavesdrop on conversations with and about the most amazing women in food, and in this episode in particular you get to zen out with the earthy and extraordinary Ruth Reichl, whose voice is pretty much a note-for-note translation of her twitter haikus.

-[Caitlin Thompson](#), Executive Editor, WNYC.org

### [Bullseye with Jesse Thorn: DJ Quick](#)

This may be very lame to admit but I don't really get hip hop. Apparently I missed something in my musical and cultural education. I'm probably just a little bit too old and got marooned with the limited pop/indy musical influences of my early 20s. It's been something of a personal failing to me that I can't seem to navigate what is clearly the most important musical development of our time. I understand that it is super important culturally. But I've been put off by misogynistic lyrics and what has felt like a very steep learner curve and barrier to entry. So this year, I was THRILLED to hear two programs--I feel a little less out of touch after hearing DJ Quik's story of coming up through the early days of Death Row Records. And [Straight Outta Chevy Chase](#) did what many great Radiolab episodes do: dropped me deep into the heart of a story raising all kinds of questions...in this case about race and authenticity.

-[Ellen Horne](#), Executive Producer, Radiolab

### [The Moth: Listen Here, Fancy Pants](#)

It's a sweet and funny story about masculinity and culture clash.

-[Fiona Carswell](#), Product Designer

### [LIES: Michael Ian Black Started Beef with Michelle Obama](#)

I got this LIES podcast as part of my Discover playlist and since it was out of context, I had forgotten that it's all a lie. I finally figured it out when Michael Black explained to Sara deadpan that he had sex with his wife in front of his two young kids as a lesson of how children are really made.

-[Valentina Powers](#), Director of Digital Operations

### [Father's Day from Radio Rookies: Trying to Do it Right and Not Repeat a Father's Mistakes](#)

As a dad it resonated with me, despite the socioeconomic gap. It moved me.

-[Marcos Sueiro Bal](#), Senior Archivist, New York Public Radio

### [This American Life: Death and Taxes](#)

In Nancy Updike's piece on what the professionals at a hospice know about death that the rest of us don't, she talks about her own fears and confusions about death with zero melodrama and real honesty.

-[Jim O'Grady](#), Reporter

### [Intelligence Squared: Is Death Final?](#)

A high-brow debate show takes on the afterlife. That about says it.

-[Paula Szuchman](#), Senior Director, Digital Content

### [Studio 360's American Icons: I Love Lucy](#)

I've been really loving Studio 360's "American Icons" series. One of my favorite episodes digs into "I Love Lucy," celebrating the woman who broke the mold of a 1950s housewife by being ridiculous and improper, and refusing to hide her real-life interracial marriage or pregnancy.

-[Isabel Kim](#), Assistant Producer, New Sounds

### [BBC Soul Music: Baker Street](#)

"Baker Street" has the cheesiest sax riff of the entire 1980s. You will never hear the song the same way after you hear the poignant backstory.

-[Ilya Marritz](#), Reporter