

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. This week: "Occam's Frasier."
			Emily files suit against her friend Aaron. Emily and Aaron are regulars at a bar which they affectionately refer to as <u>their</u> "Cheers." Recently they tried to decide which <i>Cheers</i> characters they are. Emily wants to be Martin Crane. Aaron believes that Emily <u>cannot</u> be Martin Crane, because he is a character from <i>Frasier</i> . Emily disagrees, and asks the court to rule that Martin Crane exists in the world of <i>Cheers</i> .
00:00:37	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	<i>[As Jesse speaks below: Door opens, chairs scrape on the floor, footsteps.]</i>
00:00:38	Jesse	Host	Who's right? Who's wrong? Only one can decide. Please rise as Judge John Hodgman enters the courtroom and presents an obscure cultural reference.
00:00:47	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	<i>[Door shuts.]</i>
00:00:48	John Hodgman	Host	<i>[Singing to the tune of "When the Saints Go Marching In"]</i> Albaniaaaa! Albaniaaaa! You border on the Adriiatiic! Your terraaain is mountainous and rockyyy! And your chief export is chrome!
			<i>[Speaking]</i> Bailiff Jesse Thorn, swear the litigants in.
00:01:03	Jesse	Host	Emily, Aaron, please rise and raise your right hands. Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing <u>but</u> the truth, so help you God or whatever?
00:01:11	Emily	Guest	I do.
00:01:12	Aaron	Guest	I do.
			<i>[Emily laughs quietly.]</i>
00:01:13	Jesse	Host	Do you swear to abide by Judge John Hodgman's ruling, despite the fact that if <u>he</u> were a <i>Cheers</i> character, he would be Harry Anderson?
			<i>[The litigants laugh.]</i>
00:01:23	Emily	Guest	<i>[Laughing]</i> Yes.
00:01:24	Aaron	Guest	Yeah, I do.
00:01:25	Jesse	Host	From <i>Dave's World</i> ?
			<i>[The litigants laugh harder.]</i>
			Okay, Judge Hodgman, you may proceed!
00:01:30	John	Host	Harry The Hat! Deep cuts! Deep cuts from season one of <i>Cheers</i> , were we ever so young.
00:01:36	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	<i>[As John speaks below: Chairs scrape on the floor.]</i>
00:01:37	John	Host	Emily and Aaron, you may be seated. For an immediate summary judgment in one of yours' favors, can either of you name the piece of culture that I referenced as I entered this courtroom? Emily, will you start?
00:01:47	Emily	Guest	I originally was gonna go with another deep cut spinoff, but nothing is

coming to mind. So I am gonna say *Medallion Status*.

*[Multiple people laugh.]*

00:01:57 John Host

*Medallion Status: True Stories from Secret Rooms—*

*[Emily laughs.]*

—the new book by me, John Hodgman, available now wherever you buy books in all electronic, audio, and printed forms. [Bit.ly/MEDALLIONSTATUS](http://Bit.ly/MEDALLIONSTATUS), all capital letters, all one word, [#AlwaysBePlugging](https://twitter.com/AlwaysBePlugging).

00:02:15 Emily Guest

What was the obscure spinoff that you wanted to reference?

*Booker*, which is a spinoff from *21 Jump Street*.

00:02:18 John Host

Ohhh! That is an obscure spinoff. Wasn't there gonna be a Rhea Perlman—there—no, there was a—*The Tortellis* was a spinoff of *Cheers*.

00:02:27 Crosstalk Crosstalk

**Emily:** Yes.

**Jesse:** Yeah.

**Emily:** Yeah.

00:02:28 John Host

Yeah. That's right. I knew that there was an obscure spin—and did that actually—I know they shot a pilot. Did that go to series at some point?

00:02:35 Emily Guest

I am not sure. It's listed on Wikipedia, so...

*[Someone snorts.]*

...that's enough!

00:02:39 John Host

Well, then—

*[Emily laughs.]*

Literally this coming from someone who sent me in the evidence a link to a definition of "retcon."

*[Emily laughs.]*

This is gonna get deep.

00:02:46 Emily Guest

Yeah.

00:02:47 Jesse Host

It aired for four months, John. In 1987.

00:02:52 John Host

That's gotta be several episodes! Alright!

Aaron, what's your guess?

00:02:57 Aaron Guest

I had, you know, something up my sleeve for—to inject some Canadian content into this podcast.

00:03:03 John Host

Right! 'Cause you are British Columbians, is that correct?

00:03:06 Crosstalk Crosstalk

**Emily & Aaron:** Yes.

**Aaron:** Correct. Yeah.

00:03:07 Aaron Guest But, that really strikes me as like a They Might Be Giants kids song. One of their, like, pop songs about—you know, Albania, I guess.

*[He and Emily laugh.]*

00:03:18 John Host Like from one of their many kids albums, like *No!*

00:03:21 Aaron Guest Yeah. Yeah. Or *Here Come the 123s*.

00:03:23 John Host Or *Here Come the 123s*, right, mm-hm, interesting, yeah!

00:03:26 Aaron Guest Yeah.

00:03:27 John Host And Emily and Aaron, I wasn't listening when Jesse introduced the case. What is this about?

*[The litigants laugh.]*

00:03:34 Emily Guest It's about *Cheers* and—

00:03:37 John Host *Cheers!*

*[They laugh again, and continue at various intensities until noted otherwise.]*

Oh! Interesting! Hm! Any of you wanna guess *Cheers*? Yes? No? Good. No. 'Cause if you did, then that answer would be right!

00:03:47 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** Come on, you guys!

**Emily:** *[Laughing]* Oh my god.

00:03:49 John Host What if one of you had said, "Uh, I think it's *Cheers*," 'cause like, you knew it, right? 'Cause you watch *Cheers*, you love *Cheers*, or at least one of you loves *Cheers*. One of you loves *Cheers* enough not to degrade it.

*[The laughter swells and then stops.]*

You're talking about *Cheers* in the bar all the time 'cause it reminds you of *Cheers*, and you're like, "I've seen every episode—"

*[Aaron or Emily snorts.]*

—and specifically you've seen episode number 16 in season 3, "Teacher's Pet."

*[Aaron laughs.]*

Where Coach Ernie Pantusso—played of course by the late Nicholas Colasanto—explains to Sam Malone *[stifling laughter]* that the way he learned geography was by making up songs about it.

00:04:24 Emily Guest Augh.

00:04:25 Aaron Guest Yeah.

00:04:26 Emily Guest That's good.

00:04:27 John Host If you had said all of those things...

*[Aaron laughs.]*

Do you know what I would have said to you? Aaron, Emily, I would have said "You're still wrong."

*[They laugh.]*

*[Stifling laughter]* Because I changed a line.

00:04:36 Aaron Guest

Oh.

00:04:37 John Host

I have sung that song to myself probablyyy once a month, *[stifling laughter]* since I was 19 years old.

*[The litigants laugh.]*

Since the day my dear friend and perhaps yours, Jonathan Coulton, in college, said that that was his favorite joke from *Cheers*. When Coach sang about Albania, and it closed with "And your chief export is chrome."

*[The litigants and Jesse laugh.]*

And I had not realized until this moment that Jonathan Coulton had punched that song up. Because the original line was "Your land is mostly mountainous." He realized that that did not track with "The Saints Go Marching In."

*[The litigants laugh quietly.]*

So he changed it, whether knowingly or not, to a much better line:

*[Half-singing]* "Your terrain is mountainous and rockyyy, and your chief export is chrome."

*[They laugh again.]*

*[Speaking]* I think about it at least once a month. I laugh to myself every time. Do you know why? 'Cause *Cheers* is a wonderful television show. It is unstopably great.

*[They laugh again.]*

One revisits it from time to time, wondering, "Do I misremember? Perhaps this has aged." And certainly it has aged in certain ways, in terms of the fashions people are wearing. *[Laughing]* In terms of the wild lack of diversity in the cast, which is astounding.

*[The others also laugh.]*

00:05:48 Emily Guest

Yeah.

00:05:49 John Host

And yet, comedically? It stands up! It's beautiful. It's a thing of beauty. It's something you want to keep precious in one's life.

*[Sharply]* By not making provocative claims about it!

Emily, you brought this case before the court. What is the issue?

00:06:03 Emily Guest

I brought this issue to the court because we spend a lot of time at a

bar in Victoria called Sherwood—Sherwood Cafe & Bar.  
00:06:11 John Host It's kind of the Cheers of Victoria, British Columbia.  
00:06:14 Jesse Host Yeah, I'm glad that you clarify that it was Sherwood Cafe & Bar—  
*[Emily laughs.]*  
—for people who thought it was Sherwood Forest & Robbers?  
*[Multiple people laugh.]*  
00:06:23 Emily Guest Yeah. I mean, it's a common confusion.  
We spend a lot of time there. We know a lot of the regulars. And the day that we had this discussion was one particular day where a lot of people we knew—  
00:06:33 John Host Hang on. Hang on. I just wanna verify: Does everyone know your name?  
*[She and Jesse or Aaron laugh. Beat.]*  
00:06:37 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Emily:** Oh, I get—*[laughing]* yeah—*[laughs]*. It took me—*[laughs]*.  
**Jesse:** At your local hangout!  
**Emily:** Yes.  
**Jesse:** Sherwood Brad and Ray Romano.  
00:06:43 Emily Guest Yes. Yes.  
*[Multiple people laugh.]*  
Many, many people there know my name.  
00:06:46 John Host When you walk in do they go, "Emily!"?  
00:06:48 Emily Guest *[Laughs.]* Sometimes.  
00:06:50 Aaron Guest It's—it has happened.  
00:06:51 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Emily & Aaron:** It has happened.  
**Emily:** Yeah.  
00:06:52 John Host This is your local place where you like to hang.  
00:06:54 Emily Guest Mm-hm.  
00:06:55 John Host And you like to hang around with Aaron, who is your... friend?  
00:06:58 Emily Guest Yes.  
*[Someone laughs quietly.]*  
My best bud.  
00:06:59 John Host Your beeest buuud in Canada.  
*[The litigants laugh.]*  
And maybe the world!

00:07:04 Emily Guest Yeah! Yeah, I'd say that's true.

00:07:06 John Host A bar is a place where people hang out and they make bar bets. They make proposition bets like "Can I balance this match on my nose?" They come up with like, weird things to discuss; "Does a—does a machine gun count as a robot?" I mean, this is where—what bars are for. And you got into a discussion, and what was the nature of this discussion?

00:07:21 Emily Guest We were sitting there and a lot of people were saying hello to us that day, so we...

00:07:25 John Host By name, it has been established.

00:07:27 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Emily:** Yeah.

**John:** Yes.

00:07:28 Emily Guest And—*[laughs]*. We were saying "Man, this feels a lot like *Cheers*," because in *Cheers*, it's a place where everybody knows your name. So we decided to have a conversation about "what *Cheers* character would you be?" and so Aaron asked me, "What *Cheers* character would you be?"

00:07:41 John Host This sounds like a great thing to do with friends. A great game to play. I don't see how it could go wrong.

*[The litigants laugh.]*

Aaron, how did it go wrong?

00:07:52 Aaron Guest Well, yeah. Almost immediately. Emily decided that she wanted to me Martin Crane, who is Frasier's dad from the TV show *Frasier*.

*[Emily and Jesse laugh.]*

Who—*[laughs]*. So I had a bit of a problem with that.

00:08:08 John Host Okay. Now, people who are listening who don't understand Canadian—

*[The litigants laugh.]*

"I had a bit of a problem with that..."

*[They laugh again.]*

00:08:16 Aaron Guest Yeah.

00:08:17 John Host ...means that Aaron flipped the table over. Or should have. Why, Aaron?

00:08:21 Aaron Guest The analogy of the bar being our Cheers—Martin Crane being a character that has never been to Cheers? Doesn't work.

00:08:28 John Host We will touch on that later.

*[The litigants laugh.]*

The point you wish to make for those of you who do not know—and which you are characteristically too polite and roundabout to make...

*[John pronounces "roundabout" with a stereotypical Canadian accent, "roundaboot." The litigants laugh.]*

...is that Martin Crane, the character of Martin Crane who plays Frasier's Crane's dad... on Frasier...

*[They laugh again.]*

...did not originate on the show Cheers. Frasier Crane, the character of the stuffy, uppity, cardigan-wearing Bostonian professor—my role model—

*[The litigants laugh.]*

00:09:04 Crosstalk Crosstalk

**John:** The character. The character, not the actor.

**Aaron:** Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

*[The litigants and John laugh.]*

00:09:08 John Host

Lot of appreciation, fascination with, sadness for, empathy with... political disagreement with, Kelsey Grammer. Think he's very talented. I'm talking about the character Frasier Crane. Saw a lot of myself in him, growing up in Boston. He... was definitely on Cheers. But Martin Crane, definitely not on Cheers.

Emily... you know this.

*[The litigants laugh.]*

You know this! To quote Paul F. Tompkins, you know this! That's not a king hat, it's a crown!

*[Someone laughs quietly.]*

A crooown!

*[Jesse and Emily laugh.]*

Why—what are you doing here, Emily?! First of all, why are you—let's just say for a moment that Martin Crane is on Cheers. Let's just create a fantasy world. Let's step into—through this wardrobe into this Narnia that you've fashioned for us.

*[The litigants laugh.]*

00:09:52 Jesse Host

The Cheersiverse.

*[Emily laughs.]*

00:09:54 John Host

Yeah. The Cheer—*[laughs]*. The expanded Cheersiverse, in which Martin Crane is part of this universe. Which I think is the case you're going to try to make, but let's not even try to—let's not even get there yet. That's why I'm getting weird spreadsheets about, you know, the history of retconning and stuff.

*[The litigants laugh. Aaron sighs.]*

00:10:10 Emily Guest

Yeah.

00:10:11 John Host A lot of homework came in the evidence, do not appreciate it.  
*[They laugh again.]*

00:10:16 Emily Guest Tell me, though, why you are Martin Crane.  
I feel like I identify with Martin Crane 'cause I think that he's pretty unpretentious. He's down-to-earth. He doesn't want people to fuss over him. And he pretends to be tough but he's actually soft deep down inside, which I feel like is a trait that I share as well.

00:10:31 John Host And Aaron, Emily's your best bud. I mean, setting aside this obvious dispute, do you think that her identification with Martin Crane has some... some truth to it?

00:10:40 Aaron Guest Sure, yeah. Yeah. By that criteria, yeah, for sure.  
*[John laughs.]*  
I think—*[he and Emily laugh]*.

00:10:45 John Host By that criter—by the criteria of knowing your friend and seeing her and letting her identify herself the way she sees fit?

00:10:52 Aaron Guest Yeah, absolutely that! And also just the things she laid out, I think, are traits that she definitely shares with Martin Crane, yeah.

00:10:58 John Host You don't have any beef with her self-identification with Martin Crane—

00:11:01 Aaron Guest No!

00:11:02 John Host It is merely this issue of whether Martin Crane belongs in the *Cheers* 'verse.

00:11:05 Aaron Guest Mm-hm. Yeah. Yeah.

00:11:06 John Host Yeah. Right. Mm-hm. Just out of curiosity, Aaron, did you get around to choosing your *Cheers* character before you stormed out of this place in a huff and set Victoria, British Columbia on fire?  
*[The litigants laugh.]*

00:11:18 Aaron Guest Not in that conversation, no. It pretty much begun—like, started and ended with Martin Crane.  
*[Emily laughs quietly.]*  
Nothing else could continue past Martin Crane.

00:11:26 John Host Were there other people here? I mean, were—how many people were in this group when this happened?

00:11:30 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Aaron:** It was just the two of us. Yeah. Yeah.  
**Emily:** Yeah. It was just us.

00:11:32 John Host So what happened when she said this? Did you walk out on her?

00:11:34 Aaron Guest No, no! I just—I think I just was taken aback and just kind of, like, was like "Absolutely not." *[Laughs.]*

00:11:39 Emily Guest Yeah—

00:11:40 Aaron Guest I just denied that it—that that was a... acceptable choice.



*[The litigants laugh.]*

00:11:44 John Host If she had not totally derailed the conversation with this obviously provocative choice...

*[Emily laughs.]*

00:11:48 Aaron Guest Mm-hm.

00:11:49 John Host What *Cheers* character would you say you relate to?

00:11:51 Aaron Guest I think I also relate to Frasier, in a way.

00:11:54 John Host *[As a noise of enlightenment/revelation]* Ahhh.

00:11:55 Aaron Guest I think I have a bit of that, like—I don't wanna say pretentious, but you know, I like the finer things.

*[The litigants laugh.]*

I do actually find myself in situations like, at a bar, listening to people's problems. You know. Trying to help them through stuff. So I feel like I identify with Frasier in that way.

00:12:13 John Host Yeah. And here you are, presented with a psychological case that is beyond your understanding.

It says here, Aaron, that you work as a freelance software developer. You're 31 years old. You live in Victoria, British Columbia. You love to ride your bike but not so much that you need spandex; fantastic. And you also go by "Sweetie." Is that true?

00:12:28 Aaron Guest *[Laughs.]* Yes. Yeah.

00:12:29 John Host Well, Sweetieeee, tell me about all the finer things. *[Laughs.]*

00:12:33 Jesse Host Wait, "Sweetie" like you would call a child beauty pageant contestant?

*[The litigants laugh.]*

Or "Swee-Dee" with a D, *[stifling laughter]* like you would call a turn of the 20th century baseball player?

00:12:45 Aaron Guest Oh, wow. Uh, no, it's with a T. It's technically, uh, Lil' Sweetie, L-I-L-apostrophe.

00:12:50 John Host Why do they call you Sweetie?

00:12:52 Aaron Guest Short version, friends went on a road trip. They came back as a rap group. I wasn't on the road trip and I wanted to be included.

00:12:58 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** *[As a dismayed groan/sigh]* Oh.

**Aaron:** And, uh—

**John:** I don't wanna hear—I don't wanna hear about a Canadian road trip fake rap group.

*[Emily laughs.]*

**Aaron:** Yeah.

**Jesse:** Yeah.

**John:** Come on, I wanna like you guys.

**Jesse:** Which of your friends is... Snow?

*[John and Aaron crack up.]*

00:13:10 Jesse Host

Let's take a quick recess. We'll be back in just a moment on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

00:13:15 Sound Effect Transition

*[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:13:17 John Promo

Hey, it's me, your judge, John Hodgman. You know this podcast; you're listening to it! I throw the book at creeps. Well now Firefox throws the book at creepy trackers that follow people online. Trackers are what some companies use to find out what sites you visited, and what you clicked on, without your consent.

Firefox says that's an invasion of your privacy, and guess what? I also say it! That's why Firefox blocks ten billion trackers for users every day, automatically. When you're using Firefox, your privacy is protected. So go to [Firefox.com/privacy](https://www.firefox.com/privacy) to learn more about how Firefox is keeping trackers in check.

Look. You owe it to yourself just to learn more! [Firefox.com/privacy](https://www.firefox.com/privacy).

00:14:02 Sound Effect Transition

*[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:14:03 Promo Clip

*[A telephone rings.]*

**Hotshot Hollywood Producer:** Listen, I'm a hotshot Hollywood movie producer.

**Music:** Fun, grooving music begins to play quietly in the background.

**Producer:** You have until I finish my glass of *[articulating]* kom-bu-cha to pitch me your idea. Go.

*[Slurping sounds.]*

**Ify:** Alright! It's called *Who Shot Ya*: a movie podcast that isn't just a bunch of straight, white dudes. I'm Ify Nwadiwe, the new host of the show and a certified BBN.

**Producer:** BBN?

**Ify:** Buff Black Nerd.

**Alonso:** I'm Alonso Duralde, an elderly gay and legit film critic who wrote a book on Christmas movies.

**Drea:** I'm Drea Clark, a loud, white lady from Minnesota.

00:14:29 Promo Clip

**Ify:** Each week, we talk about a new movie in theaters and all the important issues going on in the film industry.

**Alonso:** It's like *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* meets *Cruising*.

**Ify:** And if it helps seal the deal? I can flex my muscles while we record each episode.

**Producer:** I'm sorry, this is a podcast?! I'm a movie producer. *[Disdainfully]* How did you get in here?

**Drea:** Ify, quick! Start flexing!

**Ify:** *[Dramatically]* Bicep! Lats! Chest! *Who Shot Ya*, dropping every Friday on [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org), or wherever you listen to podcasts.

*[Music ends.]*

00:14:56	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
00:14:57	Jesse	Host	Court is back in session! Let's return to the courtroom for more justice.
00:15:02	John	Host	They made you a honorary member of their fake road trip rap group, and they gave you the name Lil' Sweetie?
00:15:08	Aaron	Guest	Yeah. My friend actually did it in kind of an ironic meaning.
00:15:11	John	Host	<i>[Faking surprise]</i> Oh, really!
			<i>[Jesse laughs.]</i>
00:15:12	Aaron	Guest	Yeah, he thought I was kinda cranky all the time and he called me Lil' Sweetie.
00:15:14	John	Host	Emily, is he a little sweetie?
00:15:16	Emily	Guest	I think that it's accurate in that he <u>is</u> cranky sometimes. And so it's funny to call him Sweetie. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:15:22	John	Host	Emily, if he <u>were</u> a <i>Cheers</i> character, which would he be? And I beg you to choose a <i>Cheers</i> character. Just 'cause I just don't wanna go off on another tangent yet.
00:15:29	Emily	Guest	I do think that <i>Frasier</i> is an accurate choice for him.
00:15:32	John	Host	And Emily, you work in the tech industry and you play trumpet in a band, and you love reality television.
			<i>[She laughs.]</i>
			I love these little bios that I've been getting. This is fantastic. It's like, what a life! What a life up there in—and you're both 31 years old. Just hanging and playing trumpet and giving each other nicknames, and—! You're having a good time! But you're young. How did <i>Cheers</i> come into your life and how long have you been watching it? And what does it mean to you?
00:15:51	Emily	Guest	I would say that <i>Cheers</i> is relatively new in my life. I've only watched it in the last year, since it came onto, like, TV streaming service here we have called Crave. Which is like Netflix but just different stuff that Netflix doesn't have. So I've been watching it, yeah, in the last year.
			Yeah! I think, like, my association with it is really kind of... just the good vibes of like, a cool community of people who aren't—who are just like, friends in that <u>space</u> , which is very relatable, like, in the

Sherwood kind of space that we spend time in, but also Aaron and I know each other from working at a coffee shop before. We worked together for three years as baristas, and it was a very similar kind of environment, and it was just nice having people kind of roll through that you would see for like brief periods of the day, and sometimes they would come back a couple of times. So I just love that environment, I guess.

- 00:16:44 John Host Would you say that Sherwood has the quality of being sort of a smaller city with a kind of an underdog baseball team, and a weird sort of clash of a long-standing working class culture but also a strong and very snobby university culture?
- [The litigants and possibly Jesse laugh during the above.]*
- 00:17:04 Jesse Host Would you say that Wade Boggs ever visit, and does—
- [Someone muffles laughter.]*
- visits, and does a surprisingly credible job for a third baseman?
- [The litigants laugh.]*
- 00:17:13 Emily Guest I think you could say that. *[Laughs.]*
- 00:17:14 John Host Yeah, would you say that Sherwood might be the provincial capital of a commonwealth in an area commonly known as New England?
- [More muffled laughter.]*
- [Stifling laughter]* In the Northwestern part of the American continent known as Canada?
- [They laugh harder.]*
- 00:17:27 Emily Guest Yeah. Sure. *[Laughs.]*
- 00:17:29 John Host Okay. I mean, you've watched *Cheers*. Have you watched *Frasier*? You had to have! Or else you wouldn't have come up with this calumny.
- 00:17:36 Emily Guest Right. Sweetie has watched more *Frasier* than I have. I think he claims that he's seen every single episode of *Frasier*. I have not seen every single episode *Frasier*, but I've seen... *[laughing]* many episodes.
- 00:17:48 John Host Enough to know that you feel like Martin Crane.
- 00:17:50 Emily Guest Yes.
- 00:17:51 John Host The great character actor John Mahoney. Well, there is someone who has seen—I dare say—every episode of *Frasier*. She is our expert witness to help cast some light on this case. She hosts a *Frasier* podcast; it is the popular podcast called *I'm Listening: A Frasier Podcast with* name-of-the-host—I'm about to say it—I really enjoy her; I loved being on the podcast. It's in its third season, and the host of that podcast is named Anita Flores! Anita, how are you?
- 00:18:19 Anita Flores Guest I'm good! I'm honored to be here as your expert.
- 00:18:23 John Host So Anita, you host a podcast that is all about *Frasier*? Tell me about it. I'm listening.

00:18:28 Anita Guest *[Laughs.]* It is all about *Frasier*. However, not an episode-by-episode podcast. It could be a whole episode about—and there has been an entire episode about—best episodes of *Frasier* that take place at dinner parties. But then separately, I did an episode where I reviewed Kelsey Grammer's autobiography, *So Far....*

And I had somebody named Dan Chamberlain, who's very—a talented writer and comedian, pretend to be Kelsey Grammer and read my—the—my favorite excerpts from *So Far....*, and then I went through them passage by passage.

00:19:07 John Host He was on the show that I was on, right? He's the *Frasier* impersonator?

00:19:10 Anita Guest That's correct, yes.

00:19:11 Crosstalk Crosstalk *[Multiple people laugh quietly.]*

**John:** It's—incredible job. Does an incredible job. Like, I—*[appreciative noise]*.

**Anita:** He does an in—absolutely. Absolutely incredible job.

00:19:15 Anita Guest And then more in the future, in this season of my podcast, I'm doing an episode where—in my apartment, that I already recorded with my oldest friend, who's a *Frasier* fan. We get drunk off of sherry and eat tossed salad and scrambled eggs, *[laughing]* and then talk about the origins of the song "Tossed Salad and Scrambled Eggs." So it's really—

*[Multiple people laugh.]*

00:19:37 John Host It's themed; it's themed to *Frasier*.

00:19:39 Anita Guest Sure!

00:19:40 John Host It is—

00:19:41 Anita Guest But there's no true rules other than there's—there's just gotta be something about the show or somebody in *Frasier*. I'm gonna do an episode best of Eddie episodes, that's coming, but—

*[Emily laughs.]*

00:19:49 John Host Yeah.

00:19:50 Anita Guest —*[stifling laughter]* I need to find—I need to find, like, a real Eddie fan.

00:19:55 John Host So Anita, people who wish to find you and find your podcast, they can find you on Twitter very easily. You are [@anitajewtina](#), A-N-I-T-A, J-E-W-T-I-N-A, because—in part; you are a whole human being with a whole life to you, but—you are Jewish and Latinx, correct?

00:20:10 Anita Guest That's correct! And so Jewtina rhymes with my na—no it doesn't.  
*[Laughs.]*

00:20:15 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** *[Laughs.]* It's pretty close!

*[Someone laughs.]*

**Anita:** *[Laughing]* I was gonna say Anita rhymes with my name; no it doesn't.

00:20:18 Anita Guest But the—you know, almost. It's got a ring to it, and nobody else I know online is—has a handle Anita Jewtina.

00:20:27 John Host But I asked you this when I was on the show. Like, you know, when *Frasier* came on television there was a lot for me to look at and relate to as a straight white male, Ivy League—educated, who lived in Boston for a period of time.

00:20:48 Anita Guest What did this show, about this effete snob in Seattle who interacted only with white people—how did that speak to you growing up?  
I did grow up in Connecticut during my formative years, so there's my first connection, all the white people.  
*[John and/or Jesse laughs quietly.]*  
Uh—*[laughs]*.

00:20:55 John Host Uh-huh.

00:20:56 Anita Guest And then separately from that, more recently I would say it is a fun show to watch to—that doesn't really make me stressed out. I'd say it's a very relaxing show, that in a way I like because I can't relate to it. Except for the weird stuff, like just the fact that I'm really into *Frasier*, which already weards some people out, and then it makes me just—  
*[John laughs.]*  
You know, it makes me feel like I can relate to Frasier and Niles, *[stifles laughter]* who people think are weird and, you know, speak with a weird Transatlantic accent. Yeah.

00:21:33 Jesse Host You know, John, the person in my life who loves *Frasier* the most is a woman who, with her family, was a refugee from Peru and grew up, like... grew up, you know, as an actual refugee in the United States, and living largely in motels for a big chunk of her life. And the reason she loves *Frasier* so much is that very same thing that because of its nature—not just as a sitcom, but sitcom that's like, not that zany or like, crazy—because it has such a gentle tone, it was the thing that she—and remains, actually—the thing that she used to fall asleep.  
It was—it—

00:22:17 John Host Yeah!

00:22:18 Jesse Host It's like the thing that comforted her.

00:22:20 Anita Guest I must ask you—you must connect me to her. I—I am Peruvian; *[stifles laughter]* my dad is from Peru. I actually—I'm doing an episode of my podcast called "*Frasier* Fans Around the World," and I just went to Mexico on vacation and I met my first Spanish-speaking Native Oaxacan friend named Armando, who I'm going to have on my podcast on that episode, and we're gonna talk about why he loves *Frasier*.  
But, *[stifles laughter]* uh, that would be a dream to meet somebody from the country that my dad is from who also loves *Frasier*.

00:22:50 Jesse Host *[With false authority]* I mean, *Frasier* is a typical Oaxacan thing! Like—

*[Anita and multiple people laugh.]*

Like chapulines or eating grasshoppers, or, uh, or moles, you know?

00:22:59 Crosstalk Crosstalk

**Anita:** That's right. *[Laughs quietly.]*

00:23:01 John Host

**John:** Yeah! No, I think you put it—

You both put it very well, which is that, you know, while *Cheers* is comforting because it reminds you of community, *Frasier* is comforting in its own way because it is—its tone is gentle. It is almost like, outside of its specific reference to Seattle or whatever else, this is like this pure gentle comedy of manners that is kind of like, you know, family dynamics that are pretty universal and it is just, like, comedy created in a lab to be perfect.

There is just something very charming and lovely about it, and I really enjoy the podcast. So everyone should go follow Anita at [@anitajewtina](#) and listen to the podcast. But meanwhile, Anita, you've been listening to our two litigants, and I wonder if you have some observations. I mean, you have seen every episode of *Frasier*, have you not?

00:23:44 Anita Guest

I absolutely have, yes.

00:23:46 John Host

And with regard to *Cheers*, uh, have you dipped into every season? You know more or less the storyline? Or have you seen every episode of that show as well?

00:23:54 Anita Guest

I know the storyline. *[Stifling laughter]* But I definitely have not seen nearly as many episode of *Cheers* as I have of *Frasier*.

00:24:02 John Host

That's fine. There are a whole bunch of 'em, right?

00:24:04 Jesse Host

They're all about the same. *[Laughs.]*

*[Multiple people laugh.]*

00:24:07 John Host

Yeah!

00:24:08 Jesse Host

*[Stifling laughter]* It's the nature of the sitcom.

00:24:09 John Host

That's the nature of the sitcom; that's what makes having a show in a bar frequented by regulars so comforting, is like, that's what it feels like to be able to go into the Sherwood Cafe & Pub and see Lil' Sweetie there—

*[Someone snorts.]*

—and be like "Lil' Sweetieeee!"

*[Multiple people laugh.]*

But Anita, would you agree with me that the case has not yet been made that Martin Crane—one of the great characters in all of sitcoms—is a character from *Cheers*?

00:24:36 Anita Guest

I think I would agree that the case has not been made. I mean, I have some notes. But, uh—

00:24:42 John Host

Please!

00:24:43 Anita Guest *[Laughing]* Okay.

00:24:44 John Host Share your notes with us, won't you?

00:24:46 Anita Guest So here are the notes. Essentially, you know, I'm definitely a TV nerd, not just about *Frasier*. And I love the idea of worlds colliding. You know, any time there's talk of *The Good Place* being connected to *Parks and Rec*, etc.

Now, in the case of Martin Crane, I have definitely watched episodes of *Cheers* that are connected to *Frasier's* storyline. So I watched the episode that John Mahoney is on of *Cheers*.

00:25:15 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** Oooh.

**Anita:** And his character in *Cheers*, who has a one-episode arc, is named Sy Flembeck.

00:25:24 Anita Guest "Sy" spelled S-Y. And he plays an executive for an ad agency who creates jingles.

00:25:31 John Host So you're saying John Mahoney before *Frasier* did a guest spot on *Cheers* as a different character. Do I understand that correctly?

00:25:38 Anita Guest That is correct, yes.

00:25:39 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** Mmm!

**Jesse:** During the Diane years!

*[Beat.]*

*[Multiple people laugh.]*

00:25:43 Anita Guest It was actually during the Kirstie Alley years, yes.

00:25:46 Jesse Host Oh, I guess that's just a different—oh, that's Kirstie Alley in profile. She just had a lot of, uh, light on the back of her head.

*[Multiple people laugh.]*

00:25:56 Anita Guest Yeah, so he—and you know, spoiler alert—he claims to be this great, you know, jingle guy. And it turns out he just rips off already well-known songs and then changes the words to match.

00:26:09 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** Like "Albaniaaaa, Albaniaaaa—"

*[Someone laughs quietly.]*

**Anita:** Yes. Exactly.

*[John and/or Aaron laughs.]*

00:26:13 Anita Guest Now, here is my biggest qualm. In this episode there is a very brief exchange between *Frasier* and Sy. It's very brief. But separately, there are episodes of *Frasier* in which Martin Crane's musical talent is focused on. There is an entire episode where he writes a jingle—

*[John gasps.]*

—and sends it to Frank Sinatra.



*[Someone snorts, someone else laughs quietly.]*

*[Stifling laughter]* Because he wants to see if Frank Sinatra will sing it. And he—it's called "Groovy Lady." *[Laughing]* That's the song he writes.

*[Emily and John crack up.]*

Okay? Separately—separately, there's an episode of *Frasier* where Frasier has to write a jingle for his radio show. His father comes up with a great original jingle that he does not use. *[Laughing]* The point is, with—with—with—

*[Someone snorts, Emily laughs.]*

00:26:56 Crosstalk Crosstalk

**John:** So you're saying...

**Anita:** I—*[laughs]*.

**John:** ...that John Mahoney's character Sy Flembeck...

**Anita:** Yes.

**John:** ...was actually Martin Crane in disguise; *[stifling laughter]* Frasier didn't recognize him.

*[Multiple people laugh.]*

00:27:08 Anita Guest

Absolutely not! I am saying—*[stifles laughter]* that for the purposes of personality and musical talent, these two characters are two different characters.

00:27:18 Crosstalk Crosstalk

**John:** Oh, I see.

**Anita:** As in Martin Crane, also a very nice and genuine guy.

00:27:23 Anita Guest

Sy is a bit of a scam artist, *[stifling laughter]* and not a talented jingle writer.

And for those reasons, I would say they are in two different universes.

00:27:35 John Host

Definitely. So the John Mahoney in *Cheers* is different from John Mahoney in *Frasier*. And indeed, and I'm sure that—well, I know that this was brought up in some of the evidence—Frasier in *Cheers*, before *Frasier* was a TV show, Frasier the character described his father very differently from Martin Crane! Tell me about that, Anita.

*[Anita laughs quietly.]*

What did your research turn up there?

00:27:56 Crosstalk Crosstalk

**Anita:** *[Stifling laughter]* My research on Wikipedia.com, uh, turned up—

*[Emily laughs quietly.]*

**John:** Yeah. That's all—that's where I go, too.

00:28:02 Anita Guest

*[Laughs.]* Frasier, when speaking about his father on *Cheers*, said

that his dad was dead, and that he was a former research scientist. Now, on the show *Frasier*, they do bring that up and reference it, in front of Martin. And you know, I think it's when Woody comes to town. It's either Woody or Sam Malone come and visit Frasier, and one of them says "Oh, you said your dad was dead," and yeah, and Martin's mad.

So they do recognize that there is a weird crossover there, and that part is confusing.

00:28:35 Jesse Host They repair the continuity.

00:28:36 Anita Guest Yes, he has a very different profession in *Cheers*. Not a cop. Yes.

00:28:42 John Host Yeah. In *Cheers* he's referenced as being a research scientist who—that Frasier could never please, and he was—and quote, I'm getting this from the homework evidence Emily sent in. I think this was you, Emily, who sent this in, right?

00:28:52 Emily Guest Yep. That's right.

00:28:53 John Host Right, this piece of dialogue. "He died before I had a chance to realize he was right, and I never got to tell him. It's funny, isn't it?" And Woody goes, "Yeah, that's a good one alright, Dr. Crane."  
*[Laughs.]*

*[Multiple people laugh.]*

00:29:05 Jesse Host John, I think you've just unlocked a whole new career path for yourself. You've been playing all these smarty mustache creeps, and you should be playing Indiana dummies!

*[John and Emily or Anita laugh.]*

00:29:15 John Host Should I? Oh, boy, oh boy.

*[He and Emily laugh.]*

I'll do anything to be on *Cheers*, you guys.

*[Emily laughs.]*

Or *Fra*—like, what I was to—I'll save this for the verdict. I'll save it for the verdict!

*[Someone snorts. Emily laughs.]*

I just have a whole—I have a whole feel about it!

*[Emily laughs.]*

00:29:31 Jesse Host John, all I want in the world is to be Paul on *Cheers*.

00:29:35 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** Yeahhh! Background character!

**Jesse:** Just the guy that they use when they need to throw—they've got a line that they need to have, but a few too many characters are off screen at that moment. They need somebody at the bar to say something. That's what I wanna be. The rest of the time—*[laughs]*.

**John:** Like "Yeah, Sam! Why aren't we doing this?"

00:29:52 Jesse Host *[Stifling laughter]* The rest of the time I'm just sitting there, possibly drinking a real beer.

*[Multiple people laugh.]*

Just hanging out.

00:30:00 John Host *[Laughs/sighs.]* So people who don't know, like, there are many famous characters on *Cheers*! You got Sam, you got Diane, you got Coach, you got Woody. *[Deep breath.]* You got Cliff, you got Norm, uh, you got, uh, who am I missing? A big one.

00:30:12 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Jesse:** You got Frasier. *[Laughing]* You got—

*[Aaron and Emily and/or Anita laugh.]*

**John:** Frasier. Frasier. Right.

00:30:15 Jesse Host Lilith.

00:30:16 John Host Lilith. Main ch—Carla, obviously. Very briefly Eddie.

00:30:22 Jesse Host Yeah. Diane.

00:30:23 John Host Right. But there was this guy named Paul, who just kinda like... hung around in the background in almost every episode, and only every now and then had a line. And when I learned that he had a name, I was like—my world was shattered.

*[Jesse laughs.]*

Like, when they said "Hey, let's get Paul!" I'm like, "Who's Paul—oh, that's Paul!?" *[Laughs.]* "Why are you hanging around with that guy?"

00:30:40 Jesse Host *[Through laughter]* He has a different name in one episode.

*[Multiple people laugh.]*

*[Through laughter]* I think just like, they just forgot was his name was or something.

00:30:48 John Host So Emily, what Anita and Jesse have brought up actually brings, frustratingly, some possibility of arguing that you're not wrong. Insofar as we have John Mahoney playing different characters in the legit *Cheers*verse and the expanded *Cheers*verse. We have Frasier Crane himself, obviously speaking the initial story of his father, written by the writers of *Cheers* that was then changed, or as you will explain to the audience retconned later after they decided to give him a dad who is completely different than the one they established in the *Cheers*verse.

Television is a kind of a messy thing, and sitcoms are written and created on the fly. Changes happen. How does this messiness enhance your argument that you can be that famous character from *Cheers*, Martin Crane?

00:31:43 Emily Guest Yeah. So I included in my evidence a reference to retroactive continuity, which I believe they're using in this case. In the episode of *Cheers* where he references—where Frasier references his dad being dead, they later explain in *Frasier*—to Sam, I believe, who comes to visit, who brings up and says "I thought your dad was

dead." He uses it to explain that they were not on speaking terms at the time, so he used that in conversation at the bar. And then that's kind of how they explain it in *Frasier*.

So I included that in my evidence because I believe it backs up my argument, *[laughs]* that they are in the same universe. And that's also what they use to explain why John Mahoney played a different character in *Cheers*.

00:32:29 John Host Oh, did they explain that?

00:32:30 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Emily:** Ah, well, no—

**John:** Or did they just let it be?

00:32:32 Emily Guest No, they just—yeah, they just let it be. But that's—retcon is—

00:32:35 John Host As one of the most famously messy television shows of all time—

*[Emily laughs.]*

—*The Leftovers* would say, "Let the mystery be."

00:32:41 Emily Guest Yeah.

00:32:42 John Host Aaron, what do you think about this retroactive continuity argument?

00:32:46 Aaron Guest Well, I don't really have a problem with Martin being in the expanded *Cheers* universe. That's, like—

00:32:52 John Host Okay, great! Let's go home!

*[The litigants laugh.]*

Sorry! Sorry, I thought we had a podcast! Sorry, Jesse, I apologize. Can we erase the tape? Can we erase the tape and re-use it? Great. Thank you.

00:33:01 Jesse Host *[Stifling laughter]* I already canceled the podcast.

*[The litigants laugh.]*

00:33:03 John Host *[Through laughter]* Oh, hooray!

00:33:05 Jesse Host Yeah.

*[John's and the litigants' laughter runs its course.]*

00:33:08 Aaron Guest I think the real issue for me is that it's... which Emily actually brought up, is that *Frasier* and Martin weren't on speaking terms during the *Cheers* years. So to me, that means that Martin would never have set foot in the bar *Cheers*. And that defeats the whole purpose of our analogy, of being like, if this is our *Cheers*, this bar is our *Cheers*, this place we like to hang out, this is where our friends are. You know, everyone knows our name.

They're not gonna know Martin's name.

00:33:37 John Host But how do you respond to this? Since—do you include this in your homework evidence, Emily? The episode "Cheerful Goodbyes"?

00:33:45 Emily Guest I would say that in—if I recall correctly, there is an episode in *Frasier* where they visit Boston, and they do attempt to go to *Cheers*, but the bar happens to be closed that day because Sam's hosting a private

event for his baseball team.

*[Someone snorts.]*

So I think that—

*[John snorts.]*

—it still counts, because he made the effort to go there. And I do think that in this universe, it seems like the kind of bar that Martin would hang out at anyway. Like, it—

00:34:18 John Host Stand by for a moment, before you make your specious speculations.

*[Multiple people laugh quietly, including Emily.]*

00:34:22 Emily Guest Okay.

00:34:24 John Host Because I thought that this was established. Anita, of the *I'm Listening* podcast, "Cheerful Goodbyes." I've not seen this episode of *Frasier*. Have you? Season nine.

00:34:33 Anita Guest I have. I will be honest, *[stifling laughter]* I tend to drop off more after season seven.

00:34:39 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** *[Stifles laughter.]* Sure.

**Anita:** Given certain romantic events.

00:34:41 Anita Guest I don't wanna ruin—*[laughing]* or maybe should I say? I don't—I'm talking as if I don't—I don't wanna spoil it for anyone.

*[Multiple people laugh.]*

But yes, I have seen the episode.

00:34:53 John Host Does Emily describe it faithfully? Do they get into Cheers or not?

00:34:56 Anita Guest They do not. They end up all meeting at the airport, and like, I will be honest, it's a bit fuzzy for me. But I believe they're drinking at the airport, and they basically try and like, re-create and do like a little homage to Cheers at the airport.

00:35:13 Jesse Host It's the airport from *Wings*, right?

*[Multiple people laugh.]*

00:35:18 John Host Right, that was set innn Nantucket, I believe. That was a Massachusetts airport. There was—when I was growing up—in Logan Airport, a fake Cheers in the airport. With a fake Cliff and Norm sitting at the bar.

*[Multiple people laugh.]*

If they had done that...

*[More laughter.]*

That would have been so—I mean, this episode came out 2002, it's season nine of *Frasier* when they go. That would have been right in

the heart of meta TV.

But based on my wiki that I'm looking at right now, John Mahoney does go and meet Carla and Cliff and Norm. And Paul! Paul's there, too! Paul's everywhere!

*[Someone snorts, Anita and Emily laugh quietly.]*

Just because they did not set foot into Cheers, Aaron, I do not see why that does not place John Mahoney's Martin Crane firmly in the *Cheers*iverse.

00:36:03 Aaron Guest I think my main sticking point here is that the reason that we refer to Sherwood as our Cheers is because, you know, one, we're there all the time, like many of the Cheers regulars. We've made friends with the staff. We are definitely regulars. And I don't think you can say that Martin Crane is a regular at Cheers. He doesn't—he may exist in the universe, but he doesn't participate in the bar in the same way that we participate in the bar Sherwood.

00:36:33 John Host For a moment I thought you were doing this incredible thing here, Sweetie.

*[Multiple people laugh.]*

I thought you were taking this whole discussion which had been up, up in the air, of pure metacultural commentary, and you were like "Let me bring this back home... to Sherwood."

*[The litigants laugh.]*

"Let me explain—let me explain to you the feelings I have when my friend says she is Martin Crane. Let me explain to you what it's like in our real world." I thought that's where you were going, but instead you were like, *[pretentiously]* "Technically she broke the rules."  
*[Laughs.]*

*[The litigants laugh harder.]*

*[Still pretentiously]* "Because even if it could be established that Martin Crane was part of the *Cheers*iverse, he was not a regular, and the premise was 'which regular of *Cheers*—which regular cast member of *Cheers* would you be?'"

*[Dropping the tone]* Is that pretty typical of Aaron, Emily? Is he a rules follower?

00:37:21 Emily Guest Yes, actually. I submitted another piece of evidence that supports this exact kind of argument, in that he's a rules follower. There's a screenshot of a text messages that were exchanged between Sweetie and I where I was explaining to him that I have a foot injury and I am on a waitlist to get an MRI. And there's kind of—

00:37:42 John Host Right. I have the text message in front of me. Do you have it in front of you?

00:37:45 Emily Guest I do, but you can read it if you'd like. *[Laughs.]*

00:37:47 John Host Please, I will perform this scene with you.

*[Someone laughs quietly.]*

00:37:49 Emily Guest Oh, okay. *[Laughs.]*

00:37:50 John Host In this scene, you shall assay the role of you, and I shall assay the role of Lil' Sweetie. Start with the text that ends "orthopedic surgeon," please.

00:38:00 Emily Guest "Yeah, so I'm on the waitlist and I have to go visit an orthopedic surgeon."

00:38:04 John Host *[John's portrayal of Aaron is dramatically deep-voiced and self-important.]*

"Whoa! Getting an MRI is kind of cool."

00:38:08 Emily Guest "Yeah, slide me into that laser chamber!"

00:38:10 John Host "It's magnets, but, uh... yeah."

00:38:14 Emily Guest "Who cares? I'm gonna come out radioactive. I wonder what my superpower will be."

00:38:18 John Host "MRIs don't use radiation." *[Stifles laughter.]*

00:38:21 Emily Guest "I know that."

00:38:22 John Host *[Defensively]* "Okay."

00:38:23 Emily Guest *[Stifling laughter]* "God, stop correcting me!"

00:38:25 John Host "Fine!"

*[He and Emily laugh.]*

End scene.

*[More laughter.]*

I don't know what voice I was doing there. Anita, your friend—who's the name of your friend who does the great Kelsey Grammer impersonation?

00:38:35 Anita Guest Dan Chamberlain.

00:38:37 John Host I'm no Dan Chamberlain. I did a pretty good Niles Crane on your show. And then I was like, failing—look, it was terrible. My—and I wasn't even doing the mocking version of Lil' Sweetie that I was doing before. There was no consistency in my performance, but I think the point was made.

*[He and others are laughing.]*

Aaron, you're a stickler for the rules.

00:38:54 Aaron Guest Yeah. I would like to say that I'm practical.

*[Beat. Two people burst into quiet laughter.]*

00:38:58 Anita Guest Can I add something?

00:38:59 John Host Please.

00:39:00 Anita Guest I won't use his last name, *[stifling laughter]* but let's just say that I recently got into an online fight with somebody in a *Frasier* fan club

named Galileo.

*[John snorts.]*

And—*[laughing]* just so you know how I spend my free time.

*[Someone laughs.]*

And I will be honest. I'm starting to be more open to Emily's point of view, mostly because I'm being reminded of the fight I got in with Galileo. And it was over a separate issue, but he too was a stickler for the rules, and I would like to say that I am an open-minded person. Therefore, I feel as if the more I think about Martin Crane, the more I like the idea that his character would hang out at Cheers, because there is a bar that he frequents throughout *Frasier* that is his Cheers.

00:39:44 John Host

Duke's!

00:39:45 Anita Guest

Duke's, exactly. I like the idea of breaking down some of these barriers. *[Laughing]* These—

*[Multiple people laugh.]*

*[Laughing]* These barriers of—of this universe that exists. And I don't wanna be as closed-minded as Galileo and—no offense to Sweetie, I'm starting to side with Emily right now.

*[Emily laughs.]*

'Cause I like the idea of Martin Crane in another life hanging out with everyone from *Cheers*.

00:40:11 John Host

With all due respect to the person who named this case, can we change this to, uh, "No Offense to Little Sweetie"?

*[Multiple people laugh, including Lil' Sweetie.]*

I think I've heard everything that I can possibly hear on this subject. I'm about ready to make my verdict, but Jesse Thorn, you came into this hot! You were like, ready for a fight. You did not believe that Martin Crane belonged in the *Cheers*iverse, if I understood your position correctly. How has your opinion changed or stayed the same?

00:40:36 Jesse Host

I have strong opinions about every piece of this, John. I am a very deep *Cheers* partisan in the imagined war that I have imagined between *Cheers* partisans and *Frasier* partisans. I think it's because I have deep emotional connections to *Cheers* from watching it on our ten-inch black and white television with my dad after school, in our apartment that we shared in which we did not have beds. *[Laughs.]*

*[Anita or Emily laughs quietly.]*

00:41:04 John Host

Yeah...

00:41:05 Jesse Host

*[Stifling laughter]* We didn't—we literally didn't have beds, we just had like, blankets on the floor.



And I think also that as wonderful as *Frasier* is, I think that during its time in the sun, I resented it because it would always win all of the awards because its trappings of fanciness would lead people to think of it as like, an intellectual show, when in fact it was just a very well-executed regular sitcom. And in the world of very well-executed regular sitcoms, there can be no king other than *Cheers*.

00:41:37 John Host

Mm-hm!

00:41:38 Jesse Host

And I also have deep and passionate feelings about all the many *Cheers* characters that could have been chosen, given the opportunity to choose between all of the characters in *Cheers*! I mean, the remarkable thing about *Cheers*—above all else—is that there are so many main characters, and that each and every one of them is perfectly portrayed. Both by a brilliant writing staff over many years, and by an even more brilliant cast.

There are so many choices, and if you wanna say that your favorite *Cheers* character is Paul, as I just did, or you wanna say it's Harry Anderson, or you wanna say it's Dan Hedaya, or whatever... I think that's great! This is a bridge too far. From my perspective. I think it is a disrespect. I think it is a thumb in the nose—or a thumb in the eye or whatever the expression is—to *Cheers*, that you would choose a *Frasier* character as the best character from *Cheers*.

00:42:44 John Host

Well!

*[Emily laughs.]*

Since we understand the stakes are extremely high... I wanna ask Aaron. Aaron, these stakes are extremely low. Who cares?

*[Someone snorts. Emily laughs.]*

Why does it matter to you? Why does it damage you for Emily to make this claim?

00:43:01 Aaron Guest

I think ultimately—like a lot of disagreements that Emily and I get into from time to time about this level of, you know, importance—a lot of it is just about being right. *[Laughs.]* I know that ultimately this won't make a big difference in our friendship, whichever the way this goes, but—

00:43:21 John Host

You're saying that it's important to you to be right?

00:43:23 Aaron Guest

Yes.

00:43:24 John Host

When you know you're right and the other person can't accept it, that is distracting to you?

00:43:29 Aaron Guest

Yeah. I think that's fair to say.

00:43:30 John Host

Great! Thank you, by the way, for finding the crux.

*[The litigants laugh.]*

And revealing the deeper emotional undercurrent behind this dispute. It is the trademark of the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

*[Aaron or Jesse laughs.]*

I basically had blown it off for the past hour, 'cause I just like talking about television, too. *[Laughs.]*

00:43:45 Aaron Guest

Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

00:43:46 John Host

So I appreciate your keeping me on brand—

*[He and the litigants laugh.]*

—while you were also trying to protect the brand of *Cheers*. If I were to rule in your favor, Aaron, what would you have me rule?

00:43:55 Aaron Guest

I would want Emily to pick a *Cheers* character. And say definitively that she is that *Cheers* character. I think we originally set out that we would—whichever wins buys the other a drink. *[Laughs.]*

00:44:05 John Host

Without saying it, do you have a character in mind?

00:44:07 Aaron Guest

Yeah, I do.

00:44:09 John Host

Don't say it. Emily, if I were to rule in your favor how would you want me to rule?

00:44:12 Emily Guest

I would want you to rule that Sweetie has to allow me to identify with Martin Crane because they are in the same universe, and he would have to buy me the drink at the bar. But also to be a little bit more... open-minded and accepting of my playful, creative brain. *[Laughs quietly.]*

00:44:33 John Host

Yeah! Okay. And just—and this is truly speculative and hypothetical. If I were to rule in Aaron's favor and compel you, under order of fake Internet court...

*[Emily laughs.]*

...to name a main recurring character of *Cheers*—and you know who I'm talking about. All of our friends in the *Cheers*—

*[She laughs again.]*

In Cheers.

00:44:56 Emily Guest

Mm-hm.

00:44:57 John Host

To identify with. Do you have someone in mind?

00:45:00 Emily Guest

Yes.

00:45:01 John Host

Okay. So hold on that while I go into Sam's office—

*[Emily laughs quietly.]*

—and think this over a little bit more, and I'll be back in a moment with my decision.

00:45:09 Sound Effect Sound Effect

*[As Jesse speaks below: Door opens, chairs scrape, footsteps.]*

00:45:10 Jesse Host

Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom.

00:45:14 Sound Effect Sound Effect

*[Door shuts.]*

00:45:15 Jesse Host

Emily, how are you feeling?

00:45:16 Emily Guest

I'm feeling pretty confident, to be honest. I didn't feel confident coming into it, but I think the evidence kind of speaks in my favor. So

I feel pretty good. *[Laughs.]*

00:45:26 Jesse Host Did you not feel confident going into it because you knew your argument was almost entirely specious?

*[Emily and Jesse or Aaron laugh.]*

00:45:33 Emily Guest No, I would say more just that I felt nervous and that I wouldn't be able to speak to my case. But I think the evidence speaks for itself, so—*[laughs]*.

00:45:44 Jesse Host Lil' Sweetums brand tangerines—

*[The litigants laugh.]*

—how do you feel about your chance in the case?

00:45:50 Aaron Guest Uh—*[sighs]*. I am almost the opposite. I came in feeling quite confident, and now seeing the direction it's taken, I'm unsure now what way it's gonna go.

00:45:58 Jesse Host How do you feel about the fact that, frankly, *[stifling laughter]* my future participation in this podcast may hinge on the results?

*[The litigants laugh.]*

00:46:07 Aaron Guest I hope for both of our sakes, then, that it's in my favor.

*[Aaron and Emily laugh.]*

00:46:10 Jesse Host I hope you didn't mess this up for everybody, Aaron.

*[Emily laughs.]*

00:46:13 Aaron Guest *[Wincing inhale.]* Ooh, sorry, Jesse.

*[Emily laughs.]*

00:46:15 Jesse Host We'll see what Judge John Hodgman has to say when we come back in just a second.

00:46:18 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:46:19 John Promo Hey again, it is me, Judge John Hodgman. Bailiff Jesse Thorn has stepped out for a moment to get some air. I'm here alone in my chambers, just thinking to myself about some of the fun things that are coming up in my life. Thinking about what I might have for dinner. Thinking about what I might wear tomorrow.

I'm also thinking about... January 2020! When *Judge John Hodgman: Live Justice* takes to the road again! Yeah, we've added new shows! We're gonna go to Brooklyn, New York, at the Murmur Theatre on January 13<sup>th</sup>! And then the very next day we're taking the train to Boston, returning to the Wilbur Theatre on January 14<sup>th</sup>.

These are gonna be two great shows. They're gonna sell out really quickly. So I hope that you go to the MaximumFun.org events page right now—or JohnHodgman.com/tour; it doesn't matter to me—and find the details and get your tickets right away. You know, we love doing these shows, but I have to say, it's better when you're there. So check 'em out! Brooklyn, Boston, *Judge John Hodgman*.

Alright. Let's get back to the case.

00:47:18 Sound Effect Transition [Three gavel bangs.]

00:47:19 Sound Effect Sound Effect [As Jesse speaks below: Door opens, chairs scrape on the floor, footsteps.]

00:47:20 Jesse Host Please rise as Judge John Hodgman re-enters the courtroom and presents his verdict.

00:47:24 Sound Effect Sound Effect [Door shuts.]

00:47:25 John Host So you know, I grew up watching *Cheers*, and I grew up in Brookline, Massachusetts, a region of... British Columbia. It's a—I'm not sure if you know that, Jesse. It's part of the western part of Canada.

[The litigants laugh quietly.]

I loved watching *Cheers* with my family. I loved that my family in Philadelphia loved watching *Cheers*. I realized that it wasn't just a Boston thing. [Stifling laughter] Two Northeastern cities could relate to it.

Maybe it was even more universal to see these friends from different walks of life coming together and being in a place where they could make fun of each other and comfortably live together. They had more alike than they had, uh, different, [laughs] that's for sure. You just look at that show now; you're like, "Woow, how is it possible they got away with that particular Caucasian cast?"

But it still, like *Frasier* itself, presents a kind of universal humanity that people can really attach to. And I thought got something really right about Boston: that Boston is this—it's a fairly sizable town that imagines itself a city, but is densely occupied by this long tradition of working-class people and this long tradition of snooty, upperclass people. Two worlds that I kind of grew up between, with my—my being a really snooty upperclass person, and my parents being the first in their families to go to college, and my grandparents being working-class people. So it was very meaningful to me.

But all of that meant nothing until—I mean it meant something, but it didn't really click in until the show was ending and I watched the cast, who had, you know, lived and worked together essentially for—you know, a decade or however long it was. And just how much fun they had with each other. And for me, I was like "If I ever have a job, that would be the greatest job to have. To just be working with people who really inspire and delight you, and you get to be with them all the time."

00:49:05 John Host And I despaired, 'cause even though I liked my job at—literary agency at the time, I didn't have that. And I thought I would never have it. And then very unexpectedly, I did have it in two ways, both at *The Daily Show* and the Apple ads. I was on television, and doing the job that I loved the most with people who constantly made me laugh and inspired me. I felt so—of the many—I often feel like—I got lucky 'cause I got to have a *Cheers* job.

Honestly, if I think of who I would be in that bar, if I had to pick my own person, I kinda feel like Paul! Like, I feel like I'm just happy to be

there. *[Laughs.]* You know? Like, I don't need to be a main character. As in my entire career, I just felt lucky to be there, and I felt happy that I could just throw in a line or two. In part because I just felt so lucky to be there, and part because I don't like working that hard.

And indeed, that's what I got to do on lots of different shows! Like *Bored to Death*, where I worked with Ted Danson! I got to do it! I got to be on the—I worked in—at the old town bar with Ted Danson! In New York City, a bar that I used to go to as—! Oh, forget it, it's just too—means too much to me. I feel so happy that I got to have been a Paul. A fly on the barstool of this experience. *[Quietly, rapidly]* And you can read all about it in *Medallion Status*, a new book by me, John Hodgman.

*[Normal volume/speed]* So. Here are my rulings, having listened to Anita Flores, host of *I'm Listening : A Frasier Podcast*. Having listened to my bailiff, Jesse Thorn. Having listened to our litigants, Aaron and Emily, and their own arguments. Having looked into my own expertise as obviously, uh, by extension, a—obvious member of the *Cheers*iverse. *[Laughs.]* I worked with Ted Danson. Right? That's gotta count.

*[Multiple people laugh.]*

00:50:42 John

Host

I worked with Bebe Neuwirth. I sat on a—different situation, I sat on a barstool next to George Wendt! *[Stifles laughter.]* At a charity event! At a bar, I sat next to him! In the Clavin position!

*[A couple people laugh quietly.]*

I didn't say anything, 'cause that poor guy can't sit at any bar without ever getting it, you know? And I can say this. Martin Crane is in the *Cheers*iverse. Sorry, Jesse. It's obvious.

*[Someone, presumably Jesse, inhales and exhales deeply.]*

It was established by retroactive continuity by the writers of *Frasier*. It was established by the fact that he—that character went to Boston to go to *Cheers*. He entered the *Cheers*iverse at the end of *Frasier*. Even though that retroactive continuity is somewhat inelegant and unbelievable, that is an established way of shoehorning characters into existing properties, and every—you know. I—you can't read comic books without believing in retcons.

Anita so expertly pointed out the messiness of how character actors appear in one thing and the other, and there aren't strict lines between it. We also know that the cast of *St. Elsewhere* visited *Cheers*, and everything exists in the Tommy Westphall-iverse. Look it up on the Internet.

*[Emily or Anita laughs quietly.]*

And most of all I know this because I texted someone during the course of this podcast. I didn't know if I would hear anything back. But I texted someone I know and I said "I have a question. Someone on my podcast is maintaining that Martin Crane counts as a *Cheers* character. Do you have an opinion on this?" And this person wrote

back, "I agree. I just watched the clip of his episode. How wonderful he is on the show." That person was Ted Danson.

00:52:09 Jesse Host *[Distracted, gurgling scream.]*

00:52:10 Crosstalk Crosstalk *[Anita and Emily gasp and laugh.]*

**Emily:** Yes!

*[John laughs quietly. Emily or Anita laughs at full volume.]*

00:52:17 Jesse Host *[Shrilly]* I am appealing to Steenburgen!

*[Laughter continues. Not from Jesse, though...]*

00:52:23 John Host So, I mean, honestly Ted's answer was a little bit... not... clear.  
*[Laughs.]*

*[Multiple people laugh.]*

I asked "Do you have an opinion on this" and he said "I agree."  
*[Laughs.]*

*[Multiple people laugh.]*

That's kinda having it both ways. Not really clear what episode it was he was watching. *[Laughs.]*

*[Emily or Anita laughs.]*

But I think all signs point to yes, that you can say that Martin Crane is a member of the *Cheers*verse. So if that is what you are asking me to rule, then I have to rule in Emily's favor. However, I will also say... that Aaron, you're not a Frasier Crane.

*[Emily laughs.]*

Because Frasier Crane could deal with ambiguity. Frasier Crane had been so tortured in life, and had caused so much emotional damage and had so much more visited back upon him, that the reason Frasier Crane is the star of the show is that his belief in order and rules has been already shaken to a degree that he's able to surrender from time to time to chaos. You know who isn't? Niles.

00:53:19 Crosstalk Crosstalk *[Emily laughs for several seconds as John elaborates.]*

**John:** Niles would be the one saying—

**Aaron:** Yeah...

**John:** "Well, Frasier, you didn't properly follow the rules!"

*[Emily is still laughing.]*

00:53:27 John Host *[Stifling laughter]* So what's weird is... that you're not a part of the *Cheers*verse, either.

Or at least, your identification is more in the *Frasier* universe, just like your friend Emily.

*[The litigants laugh.]*

Emily, you didn't follow the rules. You broke the rules, and I like that! I like your creative thinking! I think Aaron should appreciate that about you.

00:53:45 Emily Guest

Thank you.

00:53:46 John Host

But just as a thought experiment, let's all say who we think Emily is in the *Cheersiverse*. In the main cast.

*[The litigants laugh.]*

We'll say it on three, all three of us.

*[They laugh again.]*

You ready? This is not binding.

00:53:59 Emily Guest

Yeah.

00:54:00 John Host

I'm gonna—I'm gonna say "One, two, three," and after three we all say the—our characters that we think. This is an homage to the Doughboys; they're part of the *Judge John Hodgman-iverse*.

00:54:08 Crosstalk Crosstalk

**John:** One, two, three: Carla.

**Aaron & Emily:** Norm.

*[Emily laughs.]*

00:54:11 John Host

I guess the Norms have it. This is the sound of a gavel.

00:54:13 Sound Effect Transition

*[A drink is popped open and poured into a glass.]*

00:54:18 John Host

Judge John Hodgman rules; that is all.

00:54:19 Sound Effect Sound Effect

*[As Jesse speaks below: Door opens, chairs scrape, footsteps.]*

00:54:20 Jesse Host

Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom.

*[Sighs.]*

00:54:25 Sound Effect Sound Effect

*[Door shuts.]*

00:54:26 Jesse Host

It is with a heavy heart...

*[Emily laughs.]*

...Aaron and Emily, that my—I submit my resignation.

*[The litigants laugh.]*

As bailiff on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. *[Stifling laughter]*  
Having disrespected the memory of my still-living father—

*[The litigants laugh; Jesse pulls it together and speaks solemnly.]*

—and our apartment on Godia Street that didn't have beds, I must separate myself here and forever from *Judge John Hodgman*.

*[Someone snorts.]*

That said, I've got a few things to handle here.

00:54:57 John Host Hey, everyone! Please welcome our new bailiff, Kirstie Alley!

*[Multiple people laugh.]*

00:55:04 Jesse Host Aaron, how do you feel?

00:55:06 Aaron Guest Not great, Jesse. But I can handle it. It's okay. I feel like I'm not the pedantic jerk that I may have come across as.

*[Aaron and Emily laugh.]*

But I can accept this ruling, and I will abide by it.

00:55:19 Jesse Host Yeah, yeah, yeah. Tell it to my new boss, Judge Mary Steenburgen.

*[The litigants laugh.]*

Emily, how do you feel?

00:55:27 Emily Guest I feel amazing. *[Stifling laughter]* I feel on top of the world. Um...

*[Jesse laughs.]*

I feel great. *[Laughs.]*

00:55:35 Jesse Host *[Laughs; recovers.]* Looking down on creation, huh?

00:55:37 Emily Guest Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

*[Aaron or Jesse laughs.]*

Um, but I'm sorry for the loss of your job. *[Laughs.]*

00:55:42 Jesse Host It's okay. Thank you for apologizing to me in that funny Canadian way.

*[The litigants laugh.]*

Aaron, Emily, thank you for joining us on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

00:55:50 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:55:51 Promo Clip **Music:** Upbeat, simple electronic music.

**Janet Varney:** Hey! I'm Janet Varney, and like many of you—some more recent than others—I used to be a teenager. In fact, just about all of my friends were, too! Including wonderful women like Alison Brie.

*[Into interview.]*

**Alison Brie:** I'm dead center on the balance beam. And this is like, a big gym. All the kids' parents are there watching. I have to stop, like, you know when you have to pee so bad and you can't even move?

*[Janet makes a sympathetic sound.]*



And then I just go. I just pee right in the middle of the high balance beam. *[Laughing]* And—

**Janet:** Ohhh nooo! *[Laughs.]*

*[Out of interview.]*

**Janet:** So join me every week on the *JV Club* podcast where I speak with complicated, funny, messy humans as we reminisce about our adolescences and how they led us to becoming who we are. Find it every Thursday on Maximum Fun.

*[Music fades.]*

00:56:34 Sound Effect Transition

*[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:56:36 Jesse Host

Another *Judge John Hodgman* case in the books. In a moment we'll have Swift Justice. First, our thanks to Anita Flores. Everybody should check out her podcast. Anita, you also have a show coming up in New York, right?

00:56:50 Anita Guest

Yes, I do! It's called *Party of Two*. It's at the Pleasure Chest. Uh, *[laughs]* I know this is a family friendly show. It's a—it's a sexy shop. Let's just put it that way. It's comedians and storytellers talking about the absurdity of dating in New York. So that show is on November 16th at 7:30 PM at the Pleasure Chest in the Upper Eastside.

00:57:11 Jesse Host

Wow, that's great! And by sexy shop we specifically mean that they sell Ted Dansons?

00:57:15 Anita Guest

That's right. Exactly. Cardboard cutouts, yes.

00:57:18 Jesse Host

Anita's on [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) at @anitajewtina. Anita, it's been a joy to have you on the show! Thank you so much!

00:57:25 Anita Guest

It's been a pleasure; thank you so much.

00:57:27 Jesse Host

Our thanks to Yipee Kiyay for naming this week's episode. Oh, I do so hope that that's a legal name.

*[John laughs.]*

If you'd like to name a future episode of the show, like *Judge John Hodgman* on [Facebook](#). We regularly put out calls for submissions there. You can follow us on Twitter. John is [@hodgman](#). I am [@JesseThorn](#). Hashtag your *Judge John Hodgman* Tweets [#JJHo](#) to get in on the conversation. You can also chat about this episode at [MaximumFun.Reddit.com](#) if you're a redditor.

Our show is on Instagram at [@judgejohnhodgman](#). I think, uh, we'll just be having Hannah post a lot of pictures of Paul this week.

00:58:08 John Host

*[Laughing]* Yes! Yes!

00:58:10 Jesse Host

Make sure to follow us there. This week's episode recorded by Justin LaPointe at Electric City Sound. Our producer is Hannah Smith. Our editor is Jesus Ambrosio.

Now, Swift Justice! Your small disputes, our quick judgment. Ruby asks:

"What's the best milk spot in the fridge? I grew up putting milk in the door. My partner Liv says milk belongs in the middle shelf of the main fridge. HELP!"

00:58:36	John	Host	I have put it in the door, and I have put it in the bottom shelf, and I put it in the middle shelf. My only rule is it's gotta be on the right-hand side, 'cause that's my go-to. I'm right-handed, and I gotta get that milk! Put it wherever you want. That's not gonna solve your problem, but I don't care about any problems anymore. I just realized I'm part of the <i>Cheers</i> iverse.
00:58:57	Jesse	Host	<i>[Stifling laughter]</i> That's about it for this week's episode.  Submit your cases at <a href="https://MaximumFun.org/ijho">MaximumFun.org/ijho</a> or email <a href="mailto:hodgman@maximumfun.org">hodgman@maximumfun.org</a> . No case is too small. We'll see you next time on the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast.
00:59:09	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
00:59:10	Music	Transition	A cheerful guitar chord.
00:59:11	Speaker 1	Guest	<a href="https://MaximumFun.org">MaximumFun.org</a> .
00:59:13	Speaker 2	Guest	Comedy and culture.
00:59:14	Speaker 3	Guest	Artist owned—
00:59:15	Speaker 4	Guest	—audience supported.