

00:00:00	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
00:00:02	Jesse Thorn	Host	Welcome to the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast. I'm Bailiff Jesse Thorn. We're in chambers this week, clearing the docket. With me, the only judge that matters—until you die—Judge John Hodgman. And possibly after you die! Depending on your beliefs.
00:00:17	John Hodgman	Host	<i>[To the tune of "Auld Lang Syne"]</i> Meow, meooow, meow, meooow, meooow, meooooow, meow, meow—
00:00:20	Jesse	Host	<i>[Laughing]</i> Oh no!
00:00:22	John	Host	—meo-ow, meow...
			<i>[Speaking]</i> I haven't stopped partying, Jesse.
			<i>[Jesse laughs.]</i>
			Even though it's New Year's Day. I'm <u>still</u> singing "Auld Lang Syne" in meow-meow talk!
			<i>[Jesse laughs.]</i>
			<i>[Singing]</i> Meow, meowwww!
00:00:33	Jesse	Host	<i>[Laughing]</i> Please stop...
00:00:34	John	Host	<i>[Speaking]</i> Jesse Thorn, what are your New Year's resolutions. Do you have any?
00:00:37	Jesse	Host	Oh, wow! You know, I am not a big New Year's resolver. I tend to— <i>[laughing]</i> I live an unexamined life, John.
00:00:45	John	Host	Oh no!
00:00:47	Jesse	Host	My life is just a maelstrom that I'm flopping through, like the beginning of <i>The Wizard of Oz</i> . <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:00:52	John	Host	Mm-hm, mm-hm.
00:00:54	Jesse	Host	My plan is just <u>not</u> to be a pair of stocking-clad feet sticking out from underneath a house.
00:00:59	John	Host	<i>[Laughs.]</i> And also not to have your ruby slippers stolen from you!
00:01:04	Jesse	Host	<i>[Growling through clenched teeth]</i> Ughhhhh, people are trying to— out here trying to steel my slips!
			<i>[Back to regular voice.]</i>
00:01:07	John	Host	Well, as for <u>my</u> New Year's resolutions, Jesse, of course I'm trying to... pour less poisonous Twitter into my eyes at three o'clock in the morning. You know, just try to take care of my body, be more mindful, and naturally, continue to try to learn how to make and refine aluminum oxynitride!
00:01:23	Jesse	Host	What's that, John?
00:01:24	John	Host	Oh, sorry, I figured you would know. As you know, November 1st of this year, 2020, that is just starting today—November 1st is the tenth anniversary of the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast!
00:01:34	Jesse	Host	Oh, wow!
00:01:36	John	Host	And of course, the two traditional tenth anniversary gifts are tin <u>and</u> —less traditional, more modern—aluminum. So I'm trying to

learn how to make aluminum oxynitride! Well, you know, Jesse, what aluminum oxynitride's main property is, don't you?

00:01:53 Jesse Host

Transparency?

00:01:54 John Host

Yes, it's transparent!

[Jesse cracks up, John laughs.]

It's a real-life thing that I found out about on Wikipedia today.

00:02:00 Jesse Host

[Laughing] Wait!

Transparent aluminum from *Star Trek IV* is a real thing?!

00:02:04 John Host

It's a real thing! They figured out how to do it. It goes by the commercial name of ALON, and they use it to make bulletproof glass—*[laughs]* for the windows of the limousines of oligarchs, I suppose. But of course what I'm doing is I'm gonna get enough of this stuff and make a whale tank for my friend Jesse for a tenth anniversary present!

00:02:22 Jesse Host

[Laughs.] It's easy enough to make! You just pick up that computer mouse and say, *[Scotty voice; Scottish accent]* "Hello, computer!"

[Back to regular voice.]

00:02:27 John Host

[Laughs.] "Please make... alumin-ium ox-y-niii-triide."

[Jesse laughs.]

I think I'm saying that right, anyway.

00:02:33 Jesse Host

John, we have a lot of judgment to dispense here on the program. Why don't we get into it? Here's something from Joe. He asks:

"After shoveling the latest round of snow, I remarked to my friend Kevin that there's absolutely nothing I enjoy about winter. Not one thing! He countered by asking 'Well, what about Christmas?' I rejected this argument, 'cause Christmas is not necessarily a winter holiday. Can you have Christmas without winter? Sure! The fact that it occurs during the North American winter is merely a coincidence.

Is Christmas a winter holiday? I say no, he says yes."

00:03:12 John Host

Oh! You're a mean one, Mr. Joe!

[Both laugh.]

You do not like winter! And you refuse to acknowledge that Christmas... is a winter holiday. Interesting. Jesse Thorn, what do you think?

00:03:25 Jesse Host

Well, first of all, as a native Californian and a resident of the great state of California—and specifically the coastal lowlands of California...

00:03:33 John Host

Mm-hm.

00:03:34 Jesse Host

...I love winter because it's a break from the relentless discomfort of summer. Especially here in Southern California. There is nothing I dislike more than... a hot summer's day.

[Both laugh.]

You know, I think if I lived in a less temperate climate, I would be a stereotypical autumn man.

00:03:51 John Host

Yeah.

00:03:52 Jesse Host

I would probably be sipping a hot apple cider rather than a—from a mug of coffee, since I don't drink coffee, but besides that, the layering and so on and so forth—

00:04:01 John Host

Yeah!

00:04:02 Jesse Host

—are what I really look forward to all year long.

00:04:04 John Host

You love a layer!

00:04:05 Jesse Host

I love a layer. So that's my first thing. I just wanna get that outta the way, in case Dave Shumka from *Stop Podcasting Yourself* hears this, or Graham Clark, and they worry that I'm no longer on team autumn/winter. That I've turned to a... summerman.

00:04:18 John Host

You must have at least one Cowichan sweater, right?

00:04:21 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Jesse: *[Laughing]* Yeah, I have multiple.

John: The traditional zip-up sweater of the—of Vancouver and British Columbia in general?

Jesse: *[Laughing]* Yeah, I have multiple Cowichan sweaters—

John: Yeah. Yeah.

Jesse: —that are actually made by Cowichan people.

00:04:32 John Host

Right.

00:04:33 Jesse Host

Which is how you should refer to Cowichan sweaters. If they're not made by Cowichans, they should be called Cowichan-style sweaters.

That said, I acknowledge, from my own perspective, that Christmas can take place during the summer season. There are plenty of folks in the Southern Hemisphere who celebrate Christmas. Certainly many, many people in Australia celebrate Christmas. There are... fair number of people in South America who celebrate Christmas. I bet there are folks in the research station in Antarctica celebrating Christmas right this very moment, or at least, uh, a week or so ago when it was Christmas.

That said, Christmas has a specific role in the calendar. It is... substantially, I think, a European holiday in its current conception? And has its roots in the Northern Hemisphere, in the Middle East.

00:05:27 John Host

Yes!

00:05:28 Jesse Host

And it is a hybrid of Christian celebrations and various pre-Christian celebrations. All of which are centered on a time of year when A), there is some time to re-evaluate, think about family, think about the community, give, and so on and so forth. And B), it is very important to do so, so that you don't lose hope before the spring comes. It is, in

its function, a holiday for the depths of winter. And I think that's why it's a celebration of the birth of Christ, even though there isn't any particular evidence that suggests that Christ was born, you know, on December 25th or whatever.

It really is something that was fixed at that time of year for a specific reason.

00:06:20 John

Host

Yeah. You know, this is what I'm gonna say to you... Joe. Your heart is full of unwashed socks. Your soul is full of gunk.

[Jesse laughs.]

The three words that best describe you are as follows, and I quote: stink, stank, stunk!

[Both laugh.]

And here's why! *[Stifles laughter.]* As my bailiff so aptly points out, it is true that if you celebrate Christmas in the Southern Hemisphere, in Buenos Aires, or Australia, it will not be very wintery. Nor would it be particularly snowy if you were celebrating Christmas in Bethlehem! The birthplace of historical Jesus! As of this recording the current Weather.com prediction for Christmastime in Bethlehem? Sunny with a high of 60. But that is not the point!

The association of December 25th with the birth of historical Jesus, that is a... a date of convenience. And in fact it was not until the third century that the birthday of Jesus was associated with December 25th. And that was because that date corresponds with the winter solstice in the Northern Hemisphere, and its associated partying and gift-giving festivals of which there were many! Including Saturnalia, and the Feast of Sol Invictus, and Brumalia, in Ancient Rome.

Certainly the Pagan holiday known as Yule in the Germanic world was associated with the winter solstice, and no coincidence. 'Cause solstice is mid-winter. It is the longest night of the year in the Northern Hemisphere. Whether there's snow on the ground or not, all of these rituals and festivals and feasts mark the figurative death and then rebirth of the sun. What we in North America, and the Anglo diaspora, call "Christmas" is a fusion of early Christian Roman feast traditions as they fused with Pagan Yule log and Christmas tree worship via Germany and Scandinavia, and the Christmas tree tradition then came to England via Prince Albert, who was Queen Victoria's German husband.

Christmas had been scorned by the Puritans in this country! You were not supposed to celebrate Christmas in any way. But eventually the English tradition of celebrating Christmas with a Christmas tree was adopted here in the Victorian era as images of Victoria and her weird German consort and their druid tree were circulated and emulated among middle and upperclass Americans.

00:08:26 John

Host

The point is, whether you're celebrating the birth of the son S-O-N or the sun S-U-N... I hate a pun, but there it is. The solstice holidays represent, as you so elegantly put it, Jesse, a time of reflection and a kindling of light against the darkness. It is associated historically with

winter because it is a moment of faith in the longest night of the year. A faith that we will come out of this cold and dispiriting time alive, and together, and eventually step into new, warm, good days to come. And I certainly hope that that is what happens... with us. [Laughs.] In this society. So there we go.

So you're wrong, Joe. You nauseate me, Mr. Joe. With a nauseous super naus, you're a crooked, jerky jockey, and you drive a crooked hoss, Mr. Joe! You're a three-decker sauerkraut, a toadstool sandwich... with arsenic sauce.

00:09:20	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	[Three gavel bangs.]
00:09:21	John	Host	But I love you!
00:09:22	Jesse	Host	Every year at Christmas, John?
00:09:24	John	Host	Yes?
00:09:25	Jesse	Host	I celebrate the birth of Sunn O))) (Sun)—S-U-N-N, space, capital O, close parentheses, close parentheses, close parentheses—the legendary drone, black metal, dark ambient, and noise rock band.
00:09:39	John	Host	[Laughs heartily.] Why do you <u>know</u> these things?
00:09:44	Jesse	Host	[Laughs.] Why else?! I read it in <i>The New Yorker</i> , John!
00:09:49	John	Host	[Laughing] Well, there you go!
00:09:50	Jesse	Host	[Laughs.] Not to be <u>too</u> on-brand, John, but <u>yes</u> , I read about my favorite metal band in <i>The New Yorker</i> !

Here's something from Luke:

"I work at a small tech company with about ten other employees, and we use Slack for our internal communication. My boss sometimes will take an informal poll, like 'Who's interested in going to lunch? Show of hands,' and uses the brown skin tone hand emoji.

My issue is this: If I'm late to respond, there will often be six or seven responses all using the brown skin tone hand emoji, indicated by a single hand with the number six next to it. Should I, as one of only two white guys in the office, just click the brown hand to indicate my interest? Or should I add a solitary white hand to the mix? Does the answer change if the other white guy in the office has already clicked the brown hand? Both responses make me feel pretty weird."

00:10:48	John	Host	Well, first of all, good for you for working in such a diverse workplace. That's cool. And now you know, I suppose, what I've only <u>conjectured</u> what it must feel like to be among a minority of people who look like me in any given workplace. It's not something I've had much experience with!
----------	------	------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

I got invited to be part of a Slack for an upcoming Jonathan Coulton Cruise, and I don't understand how it works, and I don't understand why it's better than anything else like email or whatever. Is that something that you have any experience with, Jesse?

00:11:15	Jesse	Host	My understanding is that it's better than everything else because my friend Matt Haughey works there.
00:11:20	John	Host	Well, sure.

00:11:21 Jesse Host Everyone in my office uses Slack. They love it. And for that reason, I do not participate, because I don't want to... talk to or interface with others.

00:11:31 John Host I don't mind buzz-marketing a place where Matt Haughey works. And I know that I should know this. So if you were to explain Slack to me, and to some of the listeners who may not know what it is, what is it?

00:11:42 Jesse Host It's a workplace communication system that incorporates elements of—broadly speaking—social media, a message board, email, and text messages. It's sort of an amalgam of all of those things. Uh, driven primarily through animated gifs. That's my understanding.

[Both laugh.]

00:12:05 John Host Okay. It brings all those things together in some way.

00:12:09 Jesse Host Yeah. Exactly.

00:12:11 John Host If you send an email to the group, everyone sees it also as a message or whatever. I don't know.

00:12:14 Jesse Host I think this question could apply just as well to communications on some social media platforms, or certainly via a group text message. And your choice can have consequences, culturally speaking. *[Stifling laughter]* Such as my wife's aunt, who once sent me a brown thumbs-up, and she's a white woman, and I was very confused.

00:12:35 John Host *[Laughs.]* Yeah, it would seem weird to me. I think you should just use your own skin tone! If people are doing it, you should use your own. Is there an element to this that I'm missing, Jesse, that I need to be aware of? Do I have a blind spot here?

00:12:47 Jesse Host I think the one thing that's missing from that equation—and it's something that makes me feel uncomfortable in text messages, which I use regularly, and sounds like it might be even more of a problem in Slack—is that you have to make an affirmative choice to choose the color of the hand. And this is also true for various kinds of emojis of, you know, faces and families and... so on and so forth.

And I think for many people of color, that is—making that affirmative choice is an assertion of identity, and their comfort with their identity—

00:13:26 John Host Sure.

00:13:27 Jesse Host —and is great for that reason. But I think that when you make that affirmative choice and you're a white person, for me, I have always felt a little bit like I was starting a white club at my high school. *[Laughs.]*

00:13:40 John Host Sure. You know? No, I understand! Yeah.

00:13:41 Jesse Host I'm not saying that they're comparable! I'm saying a lit—I felt a little bit like that.

00:13:47 John Host Yeah.

00:13:48 Jesse Host Now, the flip-side of that of course, is that these things often default to a cartoon yellow skin tone, which is, in itself, I think, a representation of whiteness. Which is why they added the other skin colors, you know?

00:14:01 John Host Right.

00:14:02 Jesse Host There is, of course—you can say that is an abstract cartoon skin tone, but it's not true. I mean, otherwise Dr. Hibbert from *The Simpsons* would also be yellow.

00:14:12 John Host Yeah, exactly.

00:14:13 Jesse Host But that said, for me personally, I generally stick with the default color. Unless there is a particular reason to do so. With the understanding that it—no matter what color I choose, it has—you know, it has racial subtext. But for me, the one I am most comfortable with, I tend to go with the default. Which is usually yellow.

00:14:35 John Host It's remarkably good and bracing and thought-provoking to be in an office situation where a Caucasian hand is not the default hand! I think that's really interesting. I think it is hard to strike the balance between accurate self-representation, and the worries of having—you know, the slightly sour undertones of what you suggest, of—the sort of saying, like, "white club." Versus the appropriation of the default, and presenting your hand as a brown hand.

I mean, I think since we're talking about six or seven responses total, it seems like it's a fairly small office, and it might be worthwhile having a conversation with your coworkers saying "You guys mind if I get on this default brown hand, or does that feel weird to you?" You know, and then hear what they have to say.

One of the things that has struck me at the end of last year and the beginning of this one is how many petitions to the court around social conventions are seeking advice from a distant podcast to set down a rule for how to interact with people, when the solution is just there in front of them: to interact with them, and to ask them their opinion.

So since this is an office of six or seven people, it would seem, anyway... you got a whole Slack channel to talk to each other! It might be worthwhile to say in that Slack channel, or maybe face to face with people, "Here's something that I'm thinking about. Am I overthinking this, or not? Since the default here, happily, is that most of the hands that come up in the Slack channel saying 'Yeah, I'll be there for lunch' are brown hands... is it okay for me to get in on that? Or would you rather that I represent myself in a different way?" And hear what people have to say.

00:16:08 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:16:09 Jesse Host So, Jesse here, checking in from the home office, because as we were recording this, I didn't know if we would have time to fit this in, but we do. My buddy Andrew Ti is the host of a great podcast called *Yo, Is This Racist?* with the also great Tawny Newsome. And this is exactly the kind of question that they answer on their podcast, so I thought it'd be fun to send it over to him and see what he had to say about it! So. Here is Andrew Ti.

00:16:38 Andrew Ti Guest Okay. So asked the question about whether specifically on Slack, uh, *[stifles laughter]* you should use the brown skin tone hand emoji as a white dude... Like, admittedly this is sort of a small place. This isn't quite the same as doing it in, I don't know, Twitter or public or something. But I feel like the general answer to this is that it's icky

to—if you're a white dude—to use the brown skin tone emoji? It kind of at best comes off as too familiar, and at worst is some sort of—kinda like a... you know. Brownface-y... *[laughs]* brown-hand-y kind of jam?

So—but it's specifically in this situation where you're one of two white dudes in the office. I assume this meant one of two white people in the office? And so if the other person's doing it, you definitely should not be on board. Be the good one. If you have the option between being the kind of vaguely icky white guy or the good one, be the good one. Go with white or go with the generic yellow. Which has its own problems in sort of implying that, you know, *Simpsons* yellow is, uh... normal? And the baseline for what a protagonist is. But I—I'm guessing that's a story for another day.

00:18:07 Jesse Host Let's take a quick break! More items on the docket coming up in just a minute on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

00:18:12 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:18:13 Promo Clip **Music:** Upbeat, sci-fi sounding music plays.

Dan McCoy: Hey! I'm Dan McCoy.

Stuart Wellington: I'm Stuart Wellington.

Elliott Kalan: And I'm Elliott Kalan. Together, we are *The Flop House*.

Dan: A podcast where we watch a bad movie and then talk about it!

Elliott: Movies like--*Space Hobos! Into the Outer Reaches of the Unknown and the Things That we Don't Know: The Movie*, and also--*Who's That Grandma?*

Stuart: *Zazzle-Zippers! Breakdown 2 and Backhanded Compliment.*

Dan: *Elvis is a Policeman!*

Elliott: *Baby Crocodile and the Happy Twins!*

Dan: *Leftover Potatoes?*

Stuart: *Station Wagon 3.*

Elliott: *Herbie Goes to Hell.*

Dan: New episodes available every other Saturday!

Elliott: Available at MaximumFun.org or wherever you get your podcasts.

Dan, Elliott, and Stuart: *[In unison]* Byeeee!

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

00:19:02 Jesse Host Welcome back to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. We're clearing the docket! Here is something from Becca:

"I've always been a bit of an anxious person, and I have trichotillomania, which causes me to pluck out my eyelashes. I've noticed that I often do it, without really thinking, toward the end of the day. It's an outlet for whatever stress or anxiety I experience in any given day. It's one of the only things I can control!

To spare my lashes, my partner Daniel, with whom I have been living for three years, *[stifles laughter]* offers me six plucks a day from his own bounty of eyelashes."

00:19:41 John Host

Wow! Daniel! Wow! Very generous! Okay!

00:19:45 Jesse Host

This is actually one of the—this is like a *Jurassic Park* situation, that's what I think. I def—I think this whole thing's a cover for some kind of cloning.

[John laughs.]

I don't know if you can make a man/dinosaur hybrid, but that's what I believe to be happening.

"I appreciate the six plucks, but I want free reign!"

00:20:04 John Host

Whoa.

00:20:05 Jesse Host

"Who's right? Should Daniel offer me endless plucks, stick to his six-per-day policy, or make me leave his eyelashes alone altogether?"

00:20:15 John Host

Hoo! Trichotillomania. I have to look that up on Wikipedia. Trich...o..till-o-mania...

00:20:23 Jesse Host

What's the one called where you're afraid of holes? 'Cause my wife has that one.

00:20:27 John Host

I think that's trypophobia.

00:20:29 Jesse Host

The holes one is trypophobia.

00:20:32 John Host

"Trypophobia is an aversion to the sight of irregular patterns or clusters of small holes or bumps," says Wikipedia. It is not officially recognized as a mental disorder, but may be diagnosed as a specific phobia. And this is basically like, sunflower pods. And let's face it! Those—those are—you know, things with a lot of little holes in it, that's pretty weird!

00:20:52 Jesse Host

Or those cameras on the new iPhones where there's a bunch of cameras next to each other. Those are deeply upsetting to people with trypophobia, which I can absolutely confirm is a real thing, because my wife has been telling me about hers since we were 17 years old. And I have mostly laughed in her face about it—although I'm generally very supportive of her—because it's not a huge problem in her life. But it is absolutely real. *[Laughing]* It is totally a real thing.

00:21:17 John Host

Oh, yeah! That's creepy stuff, for sure!

Trichotillomania—also called hair-pulling disorder—is an... and this is termed—I'm quoting from the Mayo Clinic web page here—"a mental disorder that involves recurrent, irresistible urges to pull out hair from your scalp, eyebrows, or other areas of your body despite trying to stop."

This is an interesting thing. Because it's unclear from Becca's letter whether she has been diagnosed by a mental health professional with trichotillomania, which I presume that mental health professional would be working off of some version of the Mayo Clinic's, which is you have a compulsion to pull your hair out and you would like to stop but you can't. Or whether she has self-diagnosed.

I'm going to presume—or hope—that this is something she does to self-soothe, that while certainly out of the ordinary realm of... behavior, is not intrusive upon your life, Becca. Because if it is, and you would like to stop but feel you can't, Daniel's offer of his own eyelashes—while generous—is not as good as some good therapeutic intervention.

00:22:25 Jesse Host Yeah, that kind of situation is absolutely 100% what cognitive behavioral therapy and other similar sort of results-oriented forms of therapy are for, and work pretty effectively. Along with, you know, in some cases, medication for the anxiety or unwanted thoughts or whatever. But I think it's worth being clear that if this really is interfering with the living of your life, it's worth seeking treatment, and the treatment can be pretty effective!

00:22:57 John Host And yet, nor do we want to diagnose from afar! Because I am not a mental health professional. *[Laughing]* I just looked at one Mayo Clinic web page.

00:23:05 Jesse Host That's at least—I don't think it's an MD, but I think that makes you a nurse practitioner.

00:23:09 John Host Bachelor of Doctordom.

[Jesse laughs.]

I'm a BD. *[Laughs.]* I'm a Bachelor of Science doctor, a BSD.

On the other hand, it might be Daniel's kink to get his lashes plucked, and you guys be having the time of your life. I don't know! The thing that make me a little bit worried about this letter is that Daniel is offering his lashes, and six is not enough. That Becca is expressing in this letter that she wants endless plucks. She wants all those lashes!

00:23:37 Jesse Host Six a day is a lot! How many do you have? Two hundred, maybe? Three hundred? That's—that means in a couple months, you're gonna be running outta lashes!

00:23:47 John Host Yeah, and then you're gonna have to turn to your friends and neighbors. She does mention that Daniel has a bounty of eyelashes, which—I really would love to see some photographic evidence of Daniel's luscious lashes.

That's the moment where in this letter I was like "Oh, that's too many plucks." That makes me feel like maybe... you have his six lashes in your grasp, but not—you do not have in hand this entire overall issue here. So you know, look, I hope you're doing well, and I hope you're thriving. But the fact that you wanna pull all of your boyfriend's eyelashes out—even if he is into it—that is a register of some friendly concern for me. And you might want to talk it over with Daniel and see if there's some therapy that you can get to help

soothe your anxiety.

00:24:30 Jesse Host I wanna say it's very sweet of Daniel to offer this to you, and I can see this kind of... cute thing happening—*[stifling laughter]* this cute/unusual thing happening—

00:24:44 John Host Yeah!

00:24:45 Jesse Host —between couples. I had a girlfriend in high school who always wanted to pop my zits! *[Laughs.]* I was not into it. I was—I was not on board. But I could see, in different circumstances, I could have been on board. It's sweet of Daniel.

That said, Daniel offered you six, and you're asking the judge to order that you be able to pluck out as many as you want, and that is Daniel's body. And the things that you do with his body, you have to do with his consent.

00:25:13 John Host Yes. That is the baseline here. This might be a fun thing for you guys to do together, and all of our concerns are for naught, and you're thriving in your life and you just love plucking lashes. But if he has set a limit to six, you have to respect the agency of his body. Those are his.

Now: I don't wanna buzz-market, but you know my Instagram. I put putty on top of old *Star Wars* action figures, and then I pull the putty off of those *Star Wars* action figures! That's a weird thing to do that I find very soothing, indeed.

[Both laugh.]

In no way am I prescribing anything, but I just decided to get out some putty right now, and I'm gonna be putting it on top of an Admiral Ackbar figure later today, and it helps me to feel calm!

Check in with yourself. Check in with the people around you. Make sure you're feeling and doing okay. And maybe add a little putty to your routine.

00:26:03 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:26:05 Jesse Host Okay, let's take a quick break. When we come back, a case about diner coffee and a case about cooking with garlic.

00:26:13 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:26:14 Promo Clip **Music:** “Baby You Change Your Mind” by Nouvellas.

Raleigh Smirl: I'm Raleigh Smirl.

Sydnee McElroy: I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Taylor Smirl: And I'm Taylor Smirl.

Sydnee: And together, we host a podcast called *Still Buffering*, where we answer questions like...

Raleigh: Why should I not fall asleep first at a slumber party?

Taylor: How do I be fleet?

			Sydnee: Is it okay to break up with someone using emojis?
			Taylor: And sometimes we talk about buuutts!
00:26:35	Promo	Clip	Raleigh: Nooo, we don't! Nope!
			<i>[Sydnee and Teylor laugh.]</i>
			Sydnee: Find out the answers to these important questions and many more on <i>Still Buffering</i> , a sisters' guide to teens through the ages.
			Raleigh: I am a teenager.
			Sydnee & Teylor: And I... was... too.
			Taylor: Butts, butts, butts, butts butts!
			Raleigh: No... <i>[Laughs.]</i>
			Music:
			<i>Baby, you change your mind Far too many times Over and over again Over and over again</i>
			<i>[Music fades out.]</i>
00:27:03	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
00:27:04	Jesse	Promo	Judge Hodgman, we're taking a quick break, and we are headed out on tour! Brooklyn, Boston, San Francisco... starting off 2020 right, John!
00:27:15	John	Promo	January 13 th we will be at the Murmrr Theatre in Brooklyn, New York. That's a big homecoming for me. January 14 th , another homecoming, going up to Boston, Massachusetts at the Wilbur Theatre, one of our <u>favorite</u> places to play. And then January 16 th a homecoming for <u>you</u> , Jesse Thorn! We're going to some place called... San Francisky! Is that right? Is that how you pronounce it?
00:27:36	Jesse	Promo	<i>[Laughing]</i> Yeah, that's a city in the region of New England, in the Northeastern United States.
00:27:41	John	Promo	No, it's San Francisco, California! For SF Sketchfest! We return to the Castro Theatre, where we've played for the past couple of years. It's been such a delight to see everybody there. It's <u>always</u> better when you're there, so won't you consider coming? Here's how you can find out where to get tickets!
00:27:55	Jesse	Promo	Go to MaximumFun.org/events or JohnHodgman.com/tour . And you know, John, if you wanna do the <u>full</u> San Francisco Jesse Thorn homecoming tour, just go hit the Harvey Milk Branch Library a few blocks from the Castro Theatre and ask them what I was like when I was a lonely child! <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:28:18	John	Promo	Will they give a whole PowerPoint presentation? <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:28:20	Jesse	Promo	<i>[Laughing]</i> Yeah, they got—they got a whole "history of Jesse Thorn

talking to librarians at the library where he's been dropped off by his mom" exhibit.

They've got the same thing down at the Columbia Park Boys Club! Now the Columbia Park Boys and Girls Club on Guerrero. That's just a few blocks past there! You can go check out the very foosball tables where I once called no spinzies!

00:28:43 John Promo Look. Our visits to San Francisco are always some of our best and most exciting shows. Boston is gonna be amazing. Brooklyn's gonna be amazing. Please come out for the shows if you will. And also, we need cases for the shows! Send 'em in to MaximumFun.org/ijho, or just email me. You know how to get me. hodgman@maximumfun.org. If you've got a case that you want to be considered for live adjudication at any of these events, just let us know which town you're submitting for—Boston, San Francisco, Brooklyn—and we'll consider it.

And if we choose you to be adjudicated on stage, your tickets are free, and we'll get to meetcha backstage before the show, and I—maybe even give you a piece of cheese or some water from... the, you know, catering. It depends on what they provide. It's gonna be a lot of fun! Come on, check it out.

00:29:25 Jesse Promo I would like to clarify; we welcome cases from across the spectrum of humanity—anyone within hailing distance of those places—except for my brothers.

[John bursts out laughing.]

My brothers cannot have disputes with me because they're both much bigger than I am. *[Laughs.]*

00:29:42 John Promo Oh, now I'm—now I'm nervous!

00:29:44 Jesse Promo *[Laughs.]* Yeah. My brothers are coming to the show to beat you up, John Hodgman!

00:29:48 John Promo Hodgman@maximumfun.org. If you're not Jesse's brothers, send your disputes in to me. Otherwise, go to MaximumFun.org/events or JohnHodgman.com/tour for tickets for Brooklyn, for Boston, for San Francisco Sketchfest. *[Emphatically]* It's always better when you're there!

00:30:04 Jesse Promo Let's get back to the docket!

00:30:06 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:30:07 Jesse Host Welcome back to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. This week, we're clearing the docket. Here's something from Charlie. He says:

"My girlfriend often asks for a sip of my coffee when we're at a diner that offers free coffee refills. She's not enough of a coffee drinker to order her own, so one or two sips will satisfy her minimal caffeine requirement. I'm hesitant to give her a sip because if our server were to see us 'sharing' the coffee, we could be accused of breaking Diner Law—" it's capitalized—"and be reprimanded, or worse: billed for two cups."

00:30:41 John Host Do you know why it's capitalized?

00:30:42 Jesse Host Uh, why's that?

00:30:43 John Host Because it's a thing that exists. Definitely.

00:30:46 Jesse Host *[Laughing]* Yeah.

00:30:47 John Host A thing that exists: Diner Law.

00:30:48 Jesse Host *[Stifling laughter]* It's—specifically it's a Dick Wolf series for NBC.

00:30:51 John Host *[Laughs.]* "Diner Law—"

00:30:55 Jesse Host *[Makes the Law and Order "dun dun!" sound effect noise.]*

00:30:56 John Host "—Hartford!"

00:30:57 Jesse Host "I believe when you pay for a coffee in a diner, you're also paying for access to refills, in the same way you pay for access to a buffet. I still occasionally let her take a sip, but only when I've established the coast is clear."

[Laughs.]

"When you consider the amount of coffee that goes to waste every day in the half-full mugs left on tables, her one sip seems trivial in the grand scheme of diner things."

By the way, "diner things," not capitalized, but I'd have capitalized that, too!

"Should I cut her off from my coffee altogether? Should she continue with her sneaky sips? Or should we both be thrown in Diner Jail for our crimes?" Diner Jail, capitalized.

00:31:34 John Host Look. I want you to imagine this scenario, Charlie. Alright? Let's say, hypothetically, I say that it's fine for you to give your girlfriend a sip of coffee. Now, I don't know what kind of diners you're hanging around in. I don't know what the Diner Laws are in your state, or commonwealth. But let's say the server is a gruff sort. A salty late-night worker, as a diner server might often be. And let's just say, hypothetically, they see you giving this sip. And they say "Don't do that! I'm throwing you in Diner Jail, a thing that does not exist!"

And you say back to them "Uh, but excuse me. I have permission from a podcast to do this." I don't think that's gonna keep you out of Diner Jail!

[Jesse laughs.]

If any—*[stifles laughter]* if anything, I think you're gonna be put in Diner Solitary.

[Both laugh.]

This is another one where it's like, I can tell you what I think, but... obviously my rule, and the rule of this fake Internet court with my friend and bailiff Jesse Thorn, is completely unenforceable! You know, out in the lawless land of diners! What happens in those diners—diners are their own fiefdoms. I appreciate why you're a little bit anxious, because diners can sometimes each seem to have their own specific rules and codes of conduct.

And for that reason, there's no way that a podcast ruling is going to help you from diner to diner to diner! This is simply a situation where it's like... if you really are concerned, just say to the server "Do you mind if I give my—" *[laughs]*—"my girlfriend a sip of my coffee?"

And the server's gonna be like "Why are you bothering me? Of course that's okay."

00:33:16 John Host Here's the thing, Charlie. You're living in fear. And I understand why. Because diners have their own rules and regulations, and customs, that are specific to those regions and sometimes to those very diners—and sometimes to just that particular server. It can be a little intense. But for the most part, if you just treat people... like other human beings, decently, everything's gonna be fine. There is no Diner Jail.

I mean, truthfully, she should get a cup of coffee and have a sip. The waste of four ounces of brown water is not a tremendous waste in the grand scheme of the world. And the benefit to the diner—*[laughs or coughs]* of the extra buck, buck-fifty, two dollars, while not huge, is at least showing the generosity of your patronage.

But if she really doesn't wanna get a cup of coffee and just wanted to have a sip, I think it's totally within your rights. And all you have to do, if you're really worried about it, is just say "This is cool, right?"

I don't know. Am I off-base here, Jesse? What do you think?

00:34:16 Jesse Host John, I think you are entirely... right. I think what Charlie is looking for is inoculation against the embarrassment of a waiter or waitress quote-unquote "catching" him and charging him a couple extra dollars. And we cannot provide that inoculation.

00:34:35 John Host

Right.

00:34:36 Jesse Host

There are two ways to inoculate yourself against that particular uncomfortable social interaction. One of them is to ask ahead of time. And one of them is to order two cups of coffee. Both of those are perfectly reasonable. That said... I also think it's perfectly reasonable for your girlfriend to sip from your cup of coffee a couple of times.

You're not trying to beat the system. You're not sharing one cup of coffee when you otherwise would have ordered two cups of coffee. You are doing something that is entirely within the spirit of the rule. The only part of that that you have to accept is that it is possible that the server will ask you to pay for two cups of coffee, and... you just need to accept that that uncomfortable social interaction could happen!

00:35:27 John Host

Sips are cool. Sips are cool. I think that is basically an unwritten rule for most restaurants. "Hey, have a sip of my coffee. Have a sip of my milkshake." Whatever. But leaving that maxim aside, the important rule here is that human interaction is not fatal. It's okay to get in a little bit of trouble 'cause you didn't know the rule. It'll be fine. It's unlikely to happen.

It's okay to go up to the counter person and say "Can I fill up my cup with water from that soda fountain? Is that cool, or is that not cool? Just tell me the truth." And hear what they have to say.

It's okay to navigate the world that you're in by talking to the people around you rather than having a podcast tell you what to do. I'm glad you listen, and I'm grateful and flattered that you want our opinion. Just get into the world and talk to people's faces!

00:36:18 Jesse Host

Yeah. And doing that more makes it easier.

00:36:20 John Host

It does! I grew up not feeling comfortable *[laughs]* interacting with other human beings—I had very little experience, as you know from my books *Vacationland* and *Medallion Status*, with any kind of baseline confrontation skills. Because I was alone a lot of the time! I didn't have siblings to wrangle with, physically or psychologically, I didn't play sports, such that I learned that conflict could be ritualized and gotten through and then enjoyed! For me, basic interactions from getting into an argument or expressing attraction or simply saying "Can I sit here or no?" like, were—all felt equally fatal to me.

There may be Diner Law, but I promise you there is no Diner Jail. It'll be fine.

00:37:07 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:37:08 Jesse Host

John, can I say an instance of personal interaction that I had that... felt great to me?

00:37:15 John Host

Yes!

00:37:16 Jesse Host

I was standing on the platform of the Gold Line at Union Station here in Los Angeles—the Los Angeles metro subway system.

00:37:23 John Host

Yes.

00:37:24 Jesse Host

And a woman made eye contact with me on the platform, and smiled gently, and I smiled and nodded, and I took my headphones out, and she said "Excuse me, are you Jesse Thorn?"

00:37:34 John Host

Oh!

00:37:35 Jesse Host

And I said yes. And she said "Oh, my husband and I are big *Judge John Hodgman* fans!" She stuck her hand out, introduced herself by name, said "My name is... such-and-such." We had a really nice conversation about Northeast Los Angeles and Pasadena that lasted a few minutes. And she excused herself to go do some other stuff!

And I was like... I would love—I'm not so famous that this would ever be an inconvenience to me of significant proportions. And it was so nice to have someone... not, like, *[laughing]* Tweet about seeing me later, and tag me in it, like they were following me like an undercover detective.

And she really, truly didn't ask anything of me other than to say hello and offer me a compliment, which was lovely! And it—it felt really great! It really made my long trip home—or actually, long trip to the shop where my car was being serviced—feel lovely! 'Cause this nice woman had said she listens to this show! So... I just wanted to compliment that nice interaction, *[laughing]* since people are often asking us how we would like them to interact with us.

That's an example of a really nice interaction!

00:38:49 John Host

Yeah! Offer me compliments.

00:38:50 Jesse Host

Yeah. *[Laughing]* Exactly.

00:38:54 John Host

I would just like to say to that woman, Such-And-Such—which is a great name—uh, you owe me one! I mean, I love Jesse too, but...

[Both laugh.]

I'll be out there for Sketchfest with Jesse on the 16th of January. *Judge John Hodgman: Live Justice* at the Castro. Get tickets at JohnHodgman.com/tour, and maybe I'll get on that Gold Line and just look for Such-And-Such, and I'll just be riding it until I get the compliment I'm owed.

00:39:20 Jesse Host

Speaking of lovely names, Avigayil says—that's Avigayil with a V.

00:39:26 John Host

Yeah!

00:39:26 Jesse Host

A-V-I-G-A-Y-I-L. Nice name!

00:39:29 John Host

Terrific.

00:39:31 Jesse Host

"I would like to issue an injunction to stop my boyfriend Brian from cooking with powdered garlic and onion. I would also like him to warn me before he uses more than half a clove of fresh garlic in his meal. I'm not allergic to garlic, but I must strictly limit the amount of alliums I consume to avoid stomach pain and heartburn.

I'm also very sensitive to the smell of garlic breath. Brian breathes through his mouth most of the time, *[stifles laughter]* increasing the amount of exposure I get to garlic breath. It makes talking face to face with him unpleasant, cuddles and kisses are avoided, and it makes our bedroom smell. I can also smell it when he sweats. This has been a long-standing issue in our eight-year relationship.

Judge, help protect my sensitive nose!"

I'm not gonna lie, John. That first sentence about powdered onion and garlic... made me think this was gonna be some kind of cooking snob question!

[John laughs.]

And I was ready to—I was ready to take down the cooking snob, and say powdered garlic and onion have their role. It's just different from fresh garlic and onion.

00:40:39 John Host

I would love to hear your thoughts on that, but go on.

00:40:42 Jesse Host

Yeah, I mean, that's basically my thoughts, is that I know that there are cooking snobs. There are real—"Anthony Bourdain enthusiasts" would be the broad category—who are of the opinion that you should never, ever use powdered onions and garlic because fresh onions and garlic exist. And I understand that, but I think they are different things for different purposes. I'd hate to try and make carne asada by sprinkling fresh garlic all over my flap steak.

So... I was really surprised that this was actually about sensitivity to the chemicals in foods, and sensitivity to the smells of foods. And actually, John, this is something I relate to! Because I can really only eat a limited amount of onions and garlic, especially fresh onions and garlic, because they are a migraine trigger for me.

00:41:29 John Host

Well, and thank you for making it relatable to me, too, Bailiff Jesse, because "Fresh Garlic On My Flap Steak" is my favorite ragtime tune.

00:41:35 Jesse Host

[Bursts out laughing.]

[Stifling laughter] Yeah, I particularly—I particular love Bessy Smith's bluesy take from the mid-1920s.

00:41:46 John Host

[Laughs.]

Avigayil and Brian, I'm astonished that you have been together for eight years. Because on the one hand, Brian sounds like a stinky monster.

[Jesse laughs.]

From Avigayil's point of view. *[Stifles laughter.]* Obviously Avigayil is profoundly sensitive to garlic, and onions. It causes her... discomfort, and displeasure, and it has been going on for eight years, and yet she still loves Brian.

And meanwhile Brian has been living with someone who cannot tolerate even the smallest amount of garlic, and garlic to me is a very important flavor in my life! It would be very hard for me to give up garlic in my cooking, either powdered or fresh.

Now, my rule of thumb with regard to that is... that in a long, slow braise, powdered garlic and powdered onion can be used to bring up flavors. If you need to add some garlic—in a slow-cooking environment, that powdered garlic rehydrates and builds a different layer of garlic flavor into something that is different from fresh garlic. In the same way that dried herbs, like dried thyme, you would put that at the beginning of a long, slow cook of a soup. But if you're adding fresh thyme, you would add that at the end. That's a different, brighter, fresher flavor.

00:43:15 Jesse Host

That's particularly true for garlic, the chemical profile of which—and the flavor and odor profile of which—change quite dramatically depending on how it is prepared. From the amount that the, you know, cell walls are smushed increases the sharpness of flavor, to the manner and length of heating and cooking.

00:43:38 John Host

Right. Is it a migraine trigger for you, is that why you are sensitive to alliums? Alliums meaning garlic, onions, shallots, leaks... any of those bulby, pungent little dudes that you get out of the earth.

00:43:50 Jesse Host

Yeah. If I eat particularly fresh garlic, or a lot of sharp garlic—and I really like all of those foods—but if I eat the fresh, sharp versions of them, it is a particular migraine trigger. And it's one of the ones where many years ago I went on a migraine diet, where I gave up everything that is a migraine trigger for everyone—*[laughs.]*

00:44:16 John Host

[Stifling laughter] I thought you meant you—you only ate migraines.

00:44:18 Jesse Host Yeah. *[Laughs.]*

00:44:21 John Host *[Smacks lips and makes "yum" sounds.]*

[Both laugh.]

00:44:24 Jesse Host It was one of the ones where when I reintroduced it to my diet after not having had it for six months—I really did go cold turkey on like 20 different things for six months; it really stunk—but it was one of those things where when I reintroduced it to my diet, I was like "Oh. Yeah, *[stifles laughter]* every time I eat this I get a migraine. I guess it's a migraine trigger."

But it's particularly significant in its sharpest form, so roasted garlic, I don't really have any problem with. You know, some well-cooked garlic, if I'm using it to—you know, cook frozen green beans, I don't have a big problem with. But if I put a bunch of fresh garlic on garlic bread and don't cook the living *[censor bleep]* out of it, it often causes me a headache.

The same with onions. So like a grilled onion on a burger, not really a problem, not a ton of onions. If I eat some... you know, a salad with a lot of fresh onions in it, it'll end up with a headache.

00:45:13 John Host Jesse, I'm not sure how familiar you are with the city of *[slightly over-enunciating]* San Francisco...

00:45:17 Jesse Host Never heard of it.

00:45:18 John Host That's a city in the Bay Area.

00:45:20 Jesse Host Is that in New England?

00:45:21 John Host No, no, no, no, it's almost the diametric opposite. It's on the other side of the country.

00:45:26 Jesse Host Got it.

00:45:27 John Host I first went to San Francisco... I think that I was about 19 years old. And I was in town—a friend of ours got married very young. He is no longer married. My girlfriend—now wife—at the time, we were all part of a big friend group. I hope, Charles, if you're listening, you will take this in the spirit in which it is meant, which is of deep affection and love.

But my girlfriend at the time was sad that she could not go to San Francisco for this wedding. I guess maybe I was in my early 20s. I had to have been, now that I think about it. Like 22. And she was sad that she couldn't attend this wedding. *[Laughs quietly.]* And her mom consoled her by saying "Oh, don't worry about it, dear. There'll be more Charles's weddings in the future."

[Jesse bursts out laughing.]

Uh, *[laughs]* both Charles and his bride found better lives apart than together. But they were getting married in the San Francisco Bay Area. And I went out with our friends from the friend group—those of us who could afford to go—and we all stayed together in a house. And Adam Sachs and I went to the Stinking Rose restaurant in San Francisco. Have you ever been to the Stinking Rose?

00:46:39 Jesse Host I haven't, but I'm familiar with the restaurant. It is a garlic-themed restaurant.

00:46:44 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** *[Stifling laughter]* Garlic-themed restaurant!

Jesse: Not unlike the Gilroy Garlic Festival in Gilroy, California.

00:46:48 Jesse Host Where everything is flavored with huge amounts of garlic.

00:46:51 John Host Right.

00:46:52 Jesse Host Or the famous garlic fries at the ballpark in San Francisco.

00:46:56 John Host I think Avigayil is probably weeping and puking at this moment, just hearing all this.

[Jesse laughs.]

I thought this was—everything there was garlic, garlicky, garlicky, garlicky, and it had paintings of garlic on the wall. *[Laughs.]* And I was like "This is the most sophisticated restaurant I've ever been in."

[Both laugh.]

And that's the first time I had ever had bagna càuda, which is a garlic and anchovy–infused warm olive oil that you dip bread and crudités into.

I love garlic, I love it. But you know, Avigayil obviously doesn't. Should I commend them for having stayed together despite this obvious difference in literal taste, and smell? 'Cause Brian obviously likes garlic fine. He's gonna breathe it all over the place, he's eaten it so much. Or do I point out the problem, that over eight years of Brian knowing that Avigayil cannot tolerate this... literally or figuratively, that he's still doing it such to the point that she is coming now to a fake Internet court to get relief?

I'm gonna have to presume... *[sighs]* that they love each other very much, and Brian just hasn't gotten the message yet. That despite it being an obvious—for someone who likes garlic, it's a huge sacrifice to cook without garlic. So many cuisines use garlic... *[laughing]* because it's so good!

00:48:21 John Host It's so good; it's such an important and interesting and irreplaceable flavor. And yet I—I like to think that if that woman who was my girlfriend and is now my wife just could not stand it... that I would not cook with it! And I would limit my eating to it! And then once or twice a year, I would go out to San Francisco, and go to the Stinking Rose by myself, and just go garlic all the way. Just have a garlic men's weekend. *[Laughs.]*

But I think, yeah, Brian, I think you gotta cut it out! I think you gotta cut out the garlic! Try some other weird flavors. Like try some anchovy! Try some other strong flavors. Fish sauce! If that doesn't have garlic in it. I bet that probably—yeah, Avigayil won't like that, either.

Try to replace garlic in your flavor profiles with like, um... Bragg's amino acids, and other big heavy umami flavors. Like miso, for

example! Use miso in marinades instead of garlic. Miso on a steak is an incredible marinade, and sort of after-grilling topping, which I just discovered is fantastic. Broaden your repertoire and see if you can find something else that gives you that same kind of deep, funky kick that garlic gives you.

You're in this relationship not just to eat garlic, but to occasionally hug and kiss one another. So you gotta respect Avigayil on this.

00:49:37 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:49:38 Jesse Host The docket is clear. That's it for another episode of *Judge John Hodgman*. This week's episode edited by Jesus Ambrosio, produced by Hannah Smith.

Follow us on Twitter at [@JesseThorn](https://twitter.com/JesseThorn) and [@hodgman](https://twitter.com/hodgman). We're on Instagram at [@judgejohnhodgman](https://www.instagram.com/judgejohnhodgman). Make sure to hashtag your *Judge John Hodgman* Tweets [#JJHo](https://twitter.com/hashtag/JJHo), and check out the Maximum Fun subreddit to discuss this episode. That's at [MaximumFun.Reddit.com](https://www.reddit.com/r/MaximumFun).

Submit your cases at MaximumFun.org/ijho, or email hodgman@maximumfun.org.

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

00:50:13 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:50:14 Music Transition A cheerful guitar chord.

00:50:15 Speaker 1 Guest MaximumFun.org.

00:50:16 Speaker 2 Guest Comedy and culture.

00:50:18 Speaker 3 Guest Artist owned—

00:50:19 Speaker 4 Guest —audience supported.