

00:00:00	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
00:00:01	Jesse Thorn	Host	Welcome to the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast. I'm Bailiff Jesse Thorn. This week: "Edict of Worms."
			Evan files suit against his wife Anne. Anne wants to get a vermicompost bin for their apartment. Evan claims the apartment is too small and the compost bin is too messy. He seeks an injunction prohibiting worm bins in the apartment. Who's right? Who's wrong? Only one can decide.
00:00:28	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	<i>[As Jesse speaks below: Door opens, chairs scrape on the floor, footsteps.]</i>
00:00:29	Jesse	Host	Please rise as Judge John Hodgman enters the courtroom and presents an obscure cultural reference.
00:00:35	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	<i>[Door shuts.]</i>
00:00:36	John Hodgman	Host	Hi. I'd like a, uh... a large podcast and a glass of water, please.
00:00:41	Jesse	Host	I've got water, but... what did you say? A... a pod... <u>cast</u> ?
00:00:45	John	Host	<i>[Chuckles.]</i> Uh, a podcast. It's just a—the Internet! With some microphones, and usually two or three white guys talking.
00:00:52	Jesse	Host	Oh, a public radio show?
00:00:53	John	Host	<i>[Chuckles.]</i> That's it. But, uh, just a little shot of Internet. You know, to give it a head.
00:00:58	Jesse	Host	<i>[Hesitant noise.]</i> Okay. Uh, let's see. Uh, how's that, honey?
00:01:03	John	Host	<i>[Slurping noises.]</i> Hey! Hey, there's a <u>worm</u> in my podcast!
00:01:09	Jesse	Host	Hey, if you didn't like the public radio show, all you had to do was say so! I got enough problems around here without <u>comedians</u> !
00:01:16	John	Host	Bailiff Jesse Thorn, please swear the litigants in.
00:01:18	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	<i>[As Jesse speaks below: Chairs scrape.]</i>
00:01:19	Jesse	Host	Evan and Anne, please rise. Raise your right hands. Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God or whatever?
00:01:27	Anne	Guest	I do.
00:01:28	Evan	Guest	I do.
00:01:29	Jesse	Host	Do you swear to abide by Judge John Hodgman's ruling, despite the fact that... he served <u>me</u> a plate of fried worms the other day?
00:01:39	John	Host	<i>[Ugh/oof sound.]</i>
00:01:40	Evan	Guest	Absolutely.
00:01:41	Anne	Guest	I do.
00:01:42	Jesse	Host	Judge Hodgman, you may proceed.
00:01:44	John	Host	Ughhhh. I know <u>that</u> cultural reference. <i>How to Eat Fried Worms</i> , a book that traumatized me!
			<i>[Jesse and possibly someone else laugh. John makes another, more prolonged sound of disgust.]</i>

Evan and Anne, you may be seated.

00:01:53	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	<i>[Chairs scrape.]</i>
00:01:54	John	Host	And you may rest comfortably knowing that the cultural reference is <u>not</u> <i>How to Eat Fried Worms</i> . That middle grade book about actually eating worms. <u>Gross</u> .
			I think there was a scene in that book, Jesse, where the main character who's been challenged to eat a worm a day for like 50 days to get 50 dollars... He has a dream that he's eating a <u>giant</u> worm that's like the size of a couch cushion.
			<i>[Jesse laughs.]</i>
			<u>Really</u> grossed me out in seventh grade. Maybe sixth. I don't remember. Ugh.
			But of course, you know what? If we are going to survive as a globe and as a climate, we have to be finding alternate sources of protein! Bugs and worms! Right, Anne?
00:02:36	Anne	Guest	That's right.
00:02:37	John	Host	For immediate summary judgment in one of yours' favors, can either of you name the piece of culture that I <u>did</u> reference when I entered the courtroom? I'm gonna give you a hint, Evan. That dialogue is from... a movie or a play. And when I said "podcast," and described what a podcast was in there, that is not from the actual movie or play.
00:02:57	Evan	Guest	Hmm.
00:02:58	John	Host	I'll even give you <u>more</u> of a hint. That when the character requests a <u>podcast</u> and a glass of water, in the source material, this character asks for an <u>egg cream</u> and a glass of water. Does that do it for you, Evan? Can you guess?
00:03:15	Evan	Guest	Is there a worm in that reference as well, or is that also...?
00:03:19	John	Host	No, there is a worm... in this character's egg cream.
00:03:23	Evan	Guest	Mm.
00:03:24	John	Host	The character goes into a diner, asks for an egg cream and a glass of water. The person behind the counter had never heard of an egg cream. She makes an egg cream according to his specifications—an egg cream of course being chocolate syrup, seltzer water, and a little bit of milk, stirred up. And when he drinks from it... there's a worm in his egg cream. And he says so.
00:03:47	Evan	Guest	Mm.
00:03:48	John	Host	Alright. Now I've <u>really</u> given you a lot of hints. Any other further follow-up questions, Evan?
00:03:54	Evan	Guest	<i>[Laughs.]</i> No. I've never seen a movie or a play that features an egg cream. So... never mind one with a worm in it. I know this is wrong because I—but I'm just gonna say <i>Glengarry Glen Ross</i> because that seems like fun.
00:04:07	John	Host	<i>[Laughing]</i> Sure. There's nothing— <i>[breaks off laughing]</i> . Total—total fun.

We just missed the holidays, Evan. And I realized that holiday tradition of sitting down with my kids and watching *Glengarry Glen Ross* passed this year!

[John, Jesse, and one or both litigants laugh quietly.]

Alright, well, we're putting it in the books! *Glengarry Glen Ross*. I mean, that's set I think in Chicago, right?

00:04:29	Evan	Guest	Mm-hm.
00:04:30	John	Host	An egg cream is very New York-y. But is very urban. So I'll put it in. Anne, it's your turn. What's your guess?
00:04:36	Anne	Guest	Well, I can only recall two mentions of egg creams in my media consumption life. And one is on <i>The West Wing</i> , but I don't think that's right. So I'm gonna go with <i>A Tree Grows in Brooklyn</i> .
00:04:49	John	Host	<i>A Tree Grows in Brooklyn</i> , because an egg cream is from where?
00:04:52	Anne	Guest	From New York.
00:04:53	John	Host	Yeah. Specifically?
00:04:54	Anne	Guest	Brooklyn?
00:04:55	John	Host	I wouldn't have even known that an egg cream was from Brooklyn if I had not, Anne, been staring at this Wikipedia page about egg cream media references. [Laughs.]
00:05:05	Jesse	Host	John, is it a Wikipedia page, or just a picture of Billy Crystal?
			[John and Jesse laugh.]
00:05:11	John	Host	It's a Wikipedia page! Because Evan said "I don't know <u>what</u> movies or plays an egg cream might have been mentioned in." So I'm like "I bet there are a lot of them!" And you're right, first of all, Anne, that it was—egg creams are mentioned in the <i>West Wing</i> episode "The Midterms."
			President Bartlet says "I'm drinking the most fantastic thing I've ever tasted in my life." Toby Ziegler says "It's called an egg cream; we invented it in Brooklyn." President Bartlet says "In Brooklyn? Not New England?" And Toby Ziegler says "There are <u>some</u> good things in this world <u>not</u> from New England, sir." And President Bartlet says "Toby, don't ever let me hear you say that again."
			Egg creams are also mentioned in the <i>Seinfeld</i> episode "The Dog." Mentioned in <i>Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse</i> . Spider-Man Noir says "I like to drink egg creams and I like to fight Nazis." It's apparently mentioned in several episodes of <i>The Golden Girls</i> , it's mentioned in <i>Kramer vs. Kramer</i> , it's mentioned in <i>Touched by an Angel</i> episode "Cry, and You Cry Alone..."
00:06:00	Jesse	Host	It's mentioned by <u>me</u> every time I go to Langer's, the delicatessen across the park from Maximum Fun HQ where I order a <u>vanilla</u> and egg cream. Because I'm not allowed to have chocolate, 'cause it's a migraine trigger.
00:06:12	John	Host	And even if you had guessed Jesse Thorn, or <u>any</u> of those things, I would be here telling you all guesses are wrong! Because I was quoting a 1976 horror film called <i>Squirm</i> . [Stifles laughter.] You guys

00:06:30 Anne Guest ever see *Squirm*? You're probably too young to have seen *Squirm*. No, but I think we lived it.

[Evan and/or Jesse laughs.]

00:06:35 John Host It says here that you're in the Boston area. Is that correct?

00:06:37 Anne Guest We are.

00:06:38 John Host Oh boy, are you gonna come see us at the Wilbur Theatre on the, uh... on the 14th of January, this very month?

00:06:43 Anne Guest Yes, we are!

00:06:43 John Host I'll look forward to seeing you there and congratulating the winner of this case and studiously avoiding the loser.

[Evan laughs quietly.]

00:06:49 Anne Guest We understand.

00:06:50 John Host You're younger than me, so you did not grow up in the Boston area watching channel 56 creature double feature.

00:06:55 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Anne & Evan:** No.

00:06:56 John Host Saturday afternoons, you'd get a double dose of really shoddy—*[laughs]* off-brand horror movies that they got at a—off the back of a truck, including *Squirm*. 1976, directed by Jeff Lieberman, about a town in Georgia where the power lines go down, they electrify the ground, *[stifles laughter]* and turn all the earthworms in town into hungry monsters that will burrow into your skin! Or sneak into your egg cream.

I remember this movie *Squirm* 'cause it has a very famous sequence—early Rick Baker makeup design—that showed these worms burrowing into a guy's face, and it's really gross. And I remember seeing this as a kid and getting really freaked out.

Seeing that movie whenever it was was the first time I ever heard of an egg cream, and I've associated it with carnivorous worms ever since. That's why I don't eat 'em. Or drink 'em. I don't eat—I don't drink egg creams and I don't eat fried worms, and that's just me.

But that said, you want to have worms in your kitchen. Is that correct, Anne?

00:07:51 Anne Guest Yeah, that's right.

00:07:52 John Host By worms, you don't wanna just have them... like, hanging around in your soda drinks! You wanna have 'em in a special bucket, correct? Vermicompost. Tell me what that is.

00:08:01 Anne Guest So vermicompost is a form of composting that you can do indoors, and basically what you do is create an environment where you can add food scraps. Typically you would not add anything carnivorous, because it would get kinda rancid in your apartment. But you can add food scraps, and the worms will digest them and turn them into kind of a concentrated form of compost that you can mix with other soil or amend in your garden. And it's a way of taking your household scraps and kind of having total control over what happens to them and where they go.

And another benefit to worm composting is that until the compost is fully completed, you don't actually have to remove it from your apartment, because it doesn't smell. So—which is a common kind of misinformed point, that compost in your apartment would smell, and certainly it would if it were not being treated.

00:08:46 John Host Even though I cannot see you, when you said "It is a common misinformed point," I could hear you looking at Evan.

[Jesse laughs.]

00:08:54 Anne Guest Yeah.

00:08:55 John Host Accusingly.

00:08:56 Anne Guest So... I don't know at what point you wanna go into this, but we've had a worm bin before.

00:09:01 John Host I will go into your worm bin history, but I just wanna—I wanna clarify some issues about worm binning in general, here.

00:09:07 Anne Guest Please.

00:09:08 John Host Since you have some experience, you can tell me. How big is the bin?

00:09:12 Anne Guest The bin that we've had previously was probably about 20 inches by 30 inches, 18 inches deep.

00:09:20 John Host What's your starter situation?

00:09:21 Anne Guest Sure!

00:09:22 John Host You got a bin, and you got some worms. What kind of worms are we talking about? Nightcrawlers?

00:09:26 Anne Guest No, you use red wigglers.

00:09:28 John Host So you get some reg wigglers out of the Fedex?

00:09:30 Anne Guest Yep. Yep. So you can buy, like, 500 to 1,000 and a time. And you put them in your bin, which has some holes drilled in the bottom and in the top so that the worms can breathe. And then you add newspaper scraps you tear up, and then your food scraps. And then the worms get to it.

00:09:48 John Host I'm sorry, I, um... I missed a lot of that, because I stepped outta the room to get some fresh air when I heard "five hundred to a thousand worms." *[Stifles laughter.]* Just walked away. Just walked away.

Okay! I think I understand. You put 500 to 1,000 worms into a box... with newspaper scraps, just to get 'em settled. And then you start throwing food scraps in there, and they eat the food scraps, and they poop out worm castings. Right? That's worm feces. That is nature's greatest fertilizer, correct?

00:10:16 Anne Guest We call it liquid gold.

00:10:17 Evan Guest *[Quiet disgusted noise.]*

00:10:18 John Host *[Laughs.]* Ew.

00:10:19 Evan Guest Ugh.

00:10:20 Anne Guest *[Stifling laughter]* I mean, gardeners do.

[The litigants and John laugh.]

00:10:23 Jesse Host But that's because they feed the worms gold.

00:10:25 John Host It's gross, but I'm—I wanna hear you out. Alright. So the worm castings and the food scraps and the worms all live together for a period of time, and create this beautiful compost. Which is... very high in nutrients, very high in enzymes, what else is good about it?

00:10:44 Anne Guest It's organic if you fed them with organic scraps.

00:10:47 John Host What if you just feed them Velveeta cheese?

00:10:50 Anne Guest I think that would probably smell in your apartment.

00:10:51 John Host So how long does it take for the compost to mature?

00:10:55 Anne Guest I would say probably like, you could get some out in three months. It depends how many scraps you put in, and kind of like, what you need to get out. You don't have to take it all out at once. So you could just kind of like, do it based on your gardening cycle, or like, when your houseplants need some love.

00:11:10 John Host It's gonna be an ecosystem of these worms eating and pooping in this box on your countertop all the time. That's what you're gonna have in there. It's just gonna be a churn.

00:11:17 Anne Guest Yeah.

00:11:18 John Host Of worm gold and diarrhea and scraps and everything else.

Now let me make it clear, Anne, that I'm describing this in a humorous way to emphasize the grossness, because... it's gross! But I appreciate that it's natural, and gardeners love it! And I've done a little bit of research, and I know that you should not throw any Velveeta cheese or any dairy products or any meat in there, 'cause the worms don't digest that properly, and that will stink up the joint. But almost anything else can go in there. And when you get this mature compost, what do you do with it then? What's the benefit?

00:11:53 Anne Guest Yeah, so, you can mix it into other soil. So like, if you have a houseplant, you could mix it in as a fertilizer, or if you have an outdoor garden, or especially if you have raised beds, then you can amend your soil periodically to kinda make sure it has the proper nutrient balance. And it can reduce dependence on chemical fertilizers, or going out and buying commercially made compost.

00:12:15 John Host And do you have houseplants, or raised-bed gardens, or an outdoor garden?

00:12:20 Anne Guest Yes. We have both houseplants, and raised beds in a local community garden.

00:12:25 John Host Oh, okay. So you would take your liquid gold over to the community garden and just spread it around. What do you grow?

00:12:31 Anne Guest Tomatoes, a lot of cucumbers. I had a very shady plot this year, so I have to admit I didn't manage to grow all that much. But I'm hoping I move up in the food chain, so to speak, in the garden.

00:12:43 John Host I thought you meant your plot was suspicious. "I had a really shady plot this year. Didn't—"

00:12:47 Anne Guest Yeah. Yeah...

00:12:48 John Host And I was only thinking about that because you mentioned tomatoes,

and you may not have listened to a recent episode of *Judge John Hodgman* where it was a settled law that tomatoes are [censor bleep]. Are very finicky and difficult to grow. Fruit of the poison nightshade, they are nightshade-y themselves.

I love a good tomato, but I would never grow one in a million years. It's hard!

00:13:04 Anne Guest Yeah. It is. So—I mean, I think it's made better when you have quality compost.

00:13:09 John Host Pshhhh, you brought that right around, that argument! You know what you're doing. Are you an attorney?

00:13:14 Anne Guest I'm not, but I was an English major.

00:13:15 John Host Ohhh, alright! Well, it sounds like you've really got the whole cycle of life going. Or you did for a while. You had one of these worm bins, right?

00:13:22 Anne Guest Yeah. I've had two previously.

00:13:24 John Host And so are—you and Evan are in a relationship?

00:13:26 Anne Guest We're married.

00:13:27 John Host You are married, and also in a relationship. Okay. And did you have a worm bin with Evan before, or in a different situation?

00:13:35 Anne Guest I had one with a roommate before Evan and I met, and then when Evan and I moved in together I got a worm bin again.

00:13:41 John Host Alright. Now, Evan. You've had this worm bin in your life before. What happened to that worm bin, and why don't you want another one?

00:13:49 Evan Guest So a couple things happened with that worm bin before. One is that it got infested with grubs, which then... grubbed all over—

00:13:57 John Host Goodbye.

00:13:58 Evan Guest —our kitchen.

00:13:59 John Host Goodbye! I'm done. I'm done, Jesse.

[Jesse and/or someone else is quietly stifling laughter.]

That—you know, they gave me a thousand worms to chew on first, and now I'm infested with grubs?

[Jesse laughs almost delightedly, John laughs.]

I'm watching people unsubscribe from the podcast right now.

[One or both litigants laugh.]

Even it hasn't—it hasn't even come out yet! *[Laughs.]* But people are getting the message psychically!

00:14:16 Anne Guest You haven't even seen the evidence.

00:14:18 John Host Ugh.

00:14:19 Anne Guest **Evan:** Yeah—

Jesse: Oh no...

[The litigants laugh.]

00:14:21 Jesse Host This is gonna be the reverse of a dog wearing a hat!

00:14:27 Anne Guest *[Laughing]* Yeah, sorry, we don't have any pets!

00:14:29 John Host It's gonna be a picture of an animal that doesn't make Jesse laugh, it just makes him cry.

00:14:33 Anne Guest Yeah, it might be.

00:14:34 Evan Guest In my evidence I included a photo—an example photo of a grub. This wasn't actually one of the grubs crawling across our kitchen, but... it's—I think it's representative.

00:14:43 Jesse Host Let's take a quick recess. We'll be back in just a moment on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

00:14:47 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:14:49 John Promo Hey, everybody! It's your judge, John Hodgman. Does my voice sound different to you? It could be because I'm using a different microphone. Or it could be because I am not recording from a studio, but actually a clothes closet in Maine, where I am hiding from real life. But as far as you can get away from your regular life, guess what always finds you? Online! The Internet! You need it to live. You need it to work. You need it to recreate.

But luckily, our friends at Dashlane make everything you do online easier! It remembers all your passwords, securely! It stores payment information, and it keeps your online data accessible and safe with an all-in-one app. Dashlane safely remembers and autofills in all your logins across all your devices, so you're not gonna get slowed down by forgotten or misspelled passwords. You can safely send passwords and secure notes to people you need to send these things to! You know how you feel nervous every time you send someone your password for your Wi-Fi?

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00:16:21 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:16:23 Promo Clip **Music:** "War" by Norman Whitfield and Barrett Strong with lead vocals by Edwin Starr plays in the background.

John Roderick: *Friendly Fire* is a podcast about war movies, but it's so much more than that.

Adam: It's history!

Speaker 1 (Film clip): Was just supposed to be another assignment.

Ben: It's comedy.

Speaker 2 (Film clip): Under no circumstances are you to engage the enemy.

Adam: It's... cinema studies.

Murdock (*Rambo: First Blood Part II*): That's a hell of a combination.

John: So, subscribe and download *Friendly Fire* on your podcatcher of choice.

Ben: Or at MaximumFun.org.

Adam: And also, come see us at San Francisco Sketchfest on January 16th.

Ben: You can get tickets at SFSketchfest.com.

Speaker 3 (Film clip): *[A strained whisper]* Mission... accomplished.

[Music fades out.]

00:16:57 Sound Effect Transition

[Three gavel bangs.]

00:16:58 John Host

Let's go to the evidence. These photographs will all be available on the [Judge John Hodgman](#) page at MaximumFun.org, and as well on our Instagram page, [@judgejohnhodgman](#) on Instagram. We have submitted by Evan Exhibit A, a convenient compost bin provided by the city of Cambridge. I presume that you are presenting this as counter-evidence, that there is some other kind of bin you can have on your counter that does not require a thousand worms to work.

00:17:23 Evan Guest

That is very correct.

00:17:24 John Host

And now here's Exhibit B, "an example of the type of grub that was emerging from our compost bin." Not an actual photo from your kitchen, but an example of the type of grub. Bailiff Jesse Thorn, would you please look at Exhibit B? Is that possible?

00:17:38 Jesse Host

Yeah, I'm looking at the evidence now.

[Anne or Evan laughs.]

00:17:43 John Host

It's funny, you're not bursting into peals of laughter the way you normally do when you see an animal.

00:17:49 Jesse Host

Well, the first picture is a picture of a compost bin provided by the city of Cambridge. And it's a—looks like a handsome and functional bin. Table-sized. It's on a nice countertop. Uh, looks like it aerates but also has an opening and closing top. It's not that bad.

That said... this grub is pretty gross.

[John laughs.]

I got to the grub picture and I'm not nuts about it. John, I think the

evidence suggests that I don't like looking at grubs? And, uh, this is a gross grub. And, uh, get outta my kitchen, buddy!

00:18:22 John Host I don't wanna speak too harshly here.

00:18:24 Jesse Host Yep.

00:18:26 John Host But this grub looks like a poop.

[The litigants laugh.]

00:18:29 Jesse Host I think this grub—I don't know what species it is, but I'm gonna say "brown wriggler."

00:18:33 John Host *[Bursts out laughing.]* Oh, god. Eugh.

00:18:42 Evan Guest Evan, tell me about the grubs that infested your worm bin!

We'd set up the compost in the early—like, late winter, early spring. And I helped Anne build it. We used—took a couple of Rubbermaid totes and you plug it—and you drill holes and do all that stuff. It then went to live with one of Anne's grad school classmates for a summer, and the worm bin lived outside for the summer. And it got infested with grubs, and then so we—

00:19:04 John Host *[Laughs.]* You keep saying that. *[Laughs.]* As though I know what you mean. What are the grub—what kind of grubs are these?

00:19:10 Evan Guest You know, honestly, I—

00:19:11 Anne Guest I have an answer.

00:19:12 Evan Guest You have an answer? Really?

00:19:13 Anne Guest I do.

00:19:14 Evan Guest Oh, okay!

00:19:15 John Host Thank you!

00:19:16 Anne Guest Yeah, so—

00:19:17 John Host Thank you.

00:19:18 Anne Guest They're actually larva of flies.

00:19:19 Evan Guest Aughhh.

00:19:20 Anne Guest And so—

00:19:21 Evan Guest Gross.

00:19:22 Anne Guest *[Laughs.]* The reason that we were having issues with them is that the flies laid their eggs in the compost bin, and normally when they lay their eggs in like an open air compost, then the... like, you would never really see the larva. They would just like, hatch and be the flies. But because of the com—like, because the compost bin has a lid, the flies couldn't fly off. And so the grubs were basically jailbreaking the compost bin and...

00:19:43 John Host They wanted to get outta there.

00:19:44 Anne Guest Yeah...

00:19:45 John Host Or do you think maybe the worms were kicking them out? Like, the worms were like "Get outta here, grubs!"

00:19:49 Anne Guest Yeah. I mean, either/or. I will admit it was very gross.

00:19:52 John Host When did you discover the grubs had infested your worm bin?

00:19:56 Evan Guest Something was amiss as soon as the worm bin came back into our apartment after our summer away.

00:20:01 John Host So it wasn't until it came back inside that you discovered... grubfest.

00:20:05 Evan Guest Yes.

00:20:06 John Host Eughhh, and what happened? Tell me the whole story.

00:20:07 Evan Guest They really just wriggled everywhere. You know, a—they crawled up countertops. They were on the floor.

00:20:14 John Host Oh my god.

00:20:15 Anne Guest They were in the shoes.

00:20:16 John Host In the shoes?!

00:20:17 Anne Guest Yeah...

00:20:18 Evan Guest You know, we'd be gone for the day. I guess what does a grub like if not a compost bin, is a, you know, dark shoe. So they'd find their way there.

00:20:28 John Host Look. Let me tell you this right now. I find against both of you.

[The litigants laugh.]

00:20:33 Jesse Host And I find against grubs in shoes!

00:20:35 John Host If you bring in a worm bin, and you realize "Oh, it's infested with grubs..."

[One or more people laugh quietly.]

You have two options. *[Laughs.]* You don't leave the house until the grubs are dealt with. Or you do leave the house, and never ever come back. *[Stifles laughter.]* What you don't do is leave the house until it can get in your shoes! 'Cause I don't think you're storing your shoes on your kitchen countertops, right?

00:21:02 Evan Guest So the worm bin sat on the floor.

[John sighs deeply.]

Because of the size.

00:21:07 Anne Guest Yeah.

00:21:08 John Host Everything went wrong. Everything went wrong!

00:21:12 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Evan:** It sure did.

Anne: Yeah.

00:21:13 John Host How big were the grubs?

00:21:14 Anne Guest They were not that big.

00:21:15 Evan Guest Like thr—two, three inches?

00:21:16 Anne Guest No, I would say like one to two inches.

00:21:18 John Host Yeah, that's huge.

00:21:19 Anne Guest They were not three inches. I would—I would—

00:21:21 John Host That's not a housefly larva, three inches long! That's a demon worm

from *Squirm!*

- 00:21:25 Anne Guest Basically when we realized it was infested—or that the grubs were coming from the bin—which, like, yeah, it didn't take us—
- 00:21:32 John Host Oh, it—initially you didn't know.
- 00:21:33 Anne Guest Well, like, the first one or two you see, you're not like "That's definitely coming from the worm bin." But then we figured it out.
- 00:21:39 Jesse Host Yeah, you figure that's just probably coming out of the sole of the shoe somehow.
- 00:21:43 John Host Yeah, that's right. Spontaneous generation.
- 00:21:45 Anne Guest Yeah.
- 00:21:46 John Host Like the ancient Greeks thought that's how flies were born from rotting meat. It's not like your first thought when you see grubs running around, like, "Hm, maybe that has something to do with my bucket of worms."
- 00:21:54 Evan Guest You know, we wanted to make sure that—you know, we had exhausted all other possibilities until—you know, before... disposing of the worm bin. But upon realizing that that was the only feasible option, uh—
- 00:22:05 Anne Guest Well, there was an intermediate step. Which you may or may not keep in here, but like, I did a lot of research to kind of figure out like, what had happened. Because I was confused; the bin had a lid, and I was like "How did the grubs get in? This is very distressing for everyone, myself included." And so basically the answer was like, you could—to fix the bin, you could spread out all of the contents on a tarp and basically like, *[laughs]* wait for the worms to go to the bottom of the pile, and then remove... like, the grubs. And then put it all back in the bin.
- And so I was researching that, because—like, you know, they're worms, but like, it's still 500 to 1,000 worms.
- [John laughs.]*
- And that's like, a lot of lives to put into the landfill.
- 00:22:47 John Host Have you heard of the sunk cost fallacy?
- [Jesse and/or Evan laughs.]*
- 00:22:50 Anne Guest Yeah. My husband cites it often.
- [John laughs.]*
- I think that—*[laughs]* I think that's literally what he told me when we—when he said we had to get rid of it.
- 00:22:57 John Host I learned about the sunk cost fallacy from you, Jesse Thorn! I had never heard of it before. Can you remind our listeners what the sunk cost fallacy is?
- 00:23:06 Jesse Host Once the money is spent, it cannot be unspent. So what you must weigh is potential future benefits against potential future costs. So if you've spent \$50 building a house, and to finish it would cost \$100, and in the end its value would be... \$80, it doesn't matter that you've

spent the \$50 already. You'd have to spend another \$100 to get something worth \$80, and it's not worth doing.

We tend to overvalue things that we already have, and we tend to overvalue expenditures that we've already made.

00:23:42 John Host And expenditures of time and effort, as well. 'Cause it took some time to get this worm compost going.

00:23:47 Jesse Host Exactly.

00:23:48 John Host Anne, how much does 1,000 worms cost?

00:23:50 Anne Guest About \$40.

00:23:51 John Host *[Stifling laughter]* And how much was a tarp gonna cost? Did you already have a tarp?

00:23:54 Anne Guest Yeah, we already had a tarp.

00:23:55 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** Oh, alright.

Anne: But we didn't have a back yard.

Evan: Yeah, we don't—

Anne: That was the challenge. *[Laughs.]*

00:23:58 Evan Guest We don't have a back yard.

[John and Anne are laughing.]

This was—this action was happening in the living room.

00:24:02 John Host You were gonna lay out your vermicompost in the living room to get the grubs out?!

00:24:06 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Evan:** This happened.

Anne: Well, I—*[laughing]* yeah, actually did—

00:24:08 John Host Oh, it happened!

00:24:09 Anne Guest I did do it, yeah.

00:24:11 John Host How successful were you?

00:24:13 Anne Guest Like, incredibly unsuccessful. I thought I could do it while Evan was like at a haircut or something so that he wouldn't... *[stifles laughter]* kinda be involved in it. And when he came back I was just sitting in a pile of mud and like, eggshells, and he—

00:24:28 John Host Wow!

00:24:29 Anne Guest —just kind of looked at me and was like "It needs to go in the trash. I'll help you." And he did, 'cause he's a wonderful husband.

00:24:33 John Host Well, it could have also just gone out into like a—I don't know... I mean, it's not landfill. It's active compost, right?

00:24:41 Evan Guest So at the time, Cambridge didn't have composting. Which was part of the reason we did the worm bin. They do now. Also, part of the problem with the worm bin is it didn't really compost that much? Like, I mean, you didn't get that much compost out of it.

00:24:54 Anne Guest I would say that it was more like that particular time was not a time

when we needed to harvest the compost.

- 00:25:01 John Host Are you a more active gardener now than you were then?
- 00:25:04 Anne Guest Yeah, I didn't have the community plot then. So that's like one reason this has come back up.
- 00:25:08 John Host Let me ask you this question. Are you a more active gardener now because you have more access to gardening space and your interest has grown, or are you just gardening more now in order to justify getting that worm bin back?
- 00:25:21 Anne Guest I mean... It's the former, but I can't deny that the latter is appealing.
- 00:25:25 John Host You love that worm bin and you wanna have it going in your kitchen so much.
- 00:25:29 Anne Guest Yeah, we don't have any, like—we're not allowed to have cats or dogs in our apartment—

[John bursts out laughing.]

—so I think this is a way to have like, um... like, 500 to 1,000 very low-level pets.

- 00:25:38 John Host I love the way you're thinking, Anne!
- 00:25:39 Anne Guest Thanks!
- 00:25:40 John Host And I appreciate your honesty.
- 00:25:42 Anne Guest You're welcome.
- 00:25:43 John Host I—yeah! I mean, look. That was a traumatic experience. And I can appreciate why Evan, you would have some trepidation about going back to the worm bin and trying again. Tell me about your trepidation.
- 00:25:57 Evan Guest The grubs are a big part of that trepidation.
- 00:26:00 John Host The grubs aren't gonna happen again.
- 00:26:01 Evan Guest Well, you never know. Part of my whole trepidation with this is the uncertainty with which this could happen again.
- 00:26:09 John Host Anne, do you know what you did wrong last time?
- 00:26:10 Anne Guest Oh, yeah. I put it outside.
- 00:26:12 John Host See, the answer's simple, Evan. Your box of worms will never leave your home.
- 00:26:17 Evan Guest Mm-hm. So I guess there's other sources of trepidation. Worm bins are large, and we live in a pretty small apartment. So there's really not a whole lot of room for these... 500 to 1,000 little wrigglers to live.
- 00:26:29 John Host Mm-hm.
- 00:26:30 Evan Guest I think part of it also is just that there now is a very convenient and accessible way to compost, which is through the city-wide composting program. Which as the bailiff noted comes with a convenient green plastic tote that is aerated. You can just take that little bit of compost in a green compostable bag down to a larger compost receptacle, and the city picks it up! And the way that they do it is, uh, it's anaerobic digestion. So it's highly efficient, and it also produces fertilizer that people can use across the commonwealth of Massachusetts.

00:27:07 John Host And where do the commonwealthians get that fertilizer from? If they wanna use that mutually collected compost from all over Cambridge, where do they go to get it?

00:27:15 Evan Guest So I believe what happens is Cambridge sends the compost up to the Greater Laurence Sanitary District, and they process it at their plant, and then they have some sort of supply chain where they sell the compost.

00:27:28 Anne Guest Sorry, you guys got like maximum pedants on your show this week.

[The litigants laugh.]

00:27:32 John Host No, it's great! I understand better now that Ev—you know, Evan is a straight-up socialist. He wants the government to have its hands in all of the composting that happens in the commonwealth. It's all collected directly from you, and it's a centralized decomposition economy. And then it sells it back to everybody and it's—and—but whereas Anne is like a frontiersperson, who wants to be making her own compost in her own kitchen with her own worms that she has all named, her own pet worms. She's come up with 500 to 1,000 little names for them. She's got her own worm herd, of her own. And they all bear the little brand of Anne. And then the compost that comes outta that bin goes directly into her community plot.

She wants to benefit from her own labor. Doesn't wanna give this all up to the government. Right, Anne?

00:28:19 Anne Guest Yeah!

00:28:20 Evan Guest Real—real John Galt sort of attitude.

[Evan or Jesse laughs quietly.]

00:28:23 Anne Guest I never read anything, uh, by Ayn Rand.

00:28:26 John Host *[Laughs.]* Yeah. It's—it's good to plead the fifth.

00:28:28 Anne Guest Yeah.

00:28:29 John Host *[Laughs.]* To any Ayn Rand references, for sure.

You know, the project that Anne wants to undertake is not "Let me get some compost for the community garden." The project is "I want to have 1,000 worms in a box that are my friends, and listen to them munch all night long." Can you hear them? Can you hear them doing their work in there?

00:28:48 Anne Guest I would say if you like, listen closely and use your imagination, you could hear some quiet rustling sounds.

00:28:54 John Host Evan, when you had the worm bin before, did you ever wake up in the middle of the night and discover Anne listening to the worm bin with a stethoscope?

00:29:02 Evan Guest *[Laughs.]* No, but I'm a pretty sound sleeper, so it could have happened.

00:29:06 John Host She likes this idea of having a box of worms... in your kitchen. Aside from the obvious alternative, which is city-provided composting service, how do you just—on a gut level—feel about... box of worms, Evan?

00:29:22 Evan Guest If we had more space—you know, if it wasn't gonna be directly in our

kitchen, or our—really we have like, four rooms in our apartment. We have a kitchen. We have a dining room. We have a living room, and we have a bedroom.

00:29:34 Anne Guest And a bathroom.

00:29:35 John Host Where do you live?

00:29:36 Anne Guest In Cambridge.

00:29:37 Evan Guest In Cambridge.

00:29:38 John Host Oh, nice!

00:29:39 Evan Guest So if we're gonna have a worm bin, it's gotta be in one of those four rooms. I don't think, for obvious reasons, the bedroom or the living room or the dining room are good locations. And I would also just—I would posit that the kitchen is not a good place for worms. And could I also just note that the worm bin will smell probably a bit more than the city-provided compost bin, because you're not taking it out frequently.

00:30:03 John Host I had read that it was odorless.

00:30:05 Anne Guest Yeah, if I can direct you to the evidence I submitted—

00:30:07 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** Thank you.

Anne: I submitted testimony from a roommate who lived with a prior worm bin.

00:30:12 John Host Right. So this is a series of text exchanges, submitted by Anne, between herself and her former roommate Kathryn. "Kathryn lived with me in my first apartment out of college, where I had my first worm bin." That must have been fun for Kathryn to discover once she moved in with you.

00:30:30 Anne Guest Yeah, well, she signed the lease!

[Anne and John stifle laughter.]

00:30:32 John Host Right. She couldn't get out of it. Here's the back and forth:

"Anne: What did you think when I got the worm bin?"

Kathryn: I thought it was a little weird. My family didn't grow up composting, so I was new to the idea, and I definitely hadn't heard of indoor worm composting before. But I also knew that you very likely did extensive research about worm composting before suggesting it seriously, making me think it probably wasn't as weird as it initially sounded.

Anne: Were there any issues with smells or infestations?

Kathryn: No issues whatsoever.

Anne: Did you find it overall innocuous, or even fun?"

00:31:07 John Host "Kathryn: I honestly forgot it was even there. You likely found it more fun than me, but it did offer a good topic for parties. And I just remembered that I taught 'how to start your own worm composting bin' as my audition to be an SAT tutor in 2010 during the economic downturn. So it was at least useful.

[Beat.]

Anne: Thank you.

Kathryn: Have I said enough yet? Will you please call your worms off? This is terrifying. Please, get the worms off me, Anne!"

I made up that last part. *[Laughs.]*

00:31:35 Jesse Host Judge Hodgman, I move to dismiss this evidence on the grounds that there's no credibility in anyone who claims that a worm bin makes for a good topic at parties.

00:31:45 John Host *[Laughs.]* I'm—I think it's a great topic! I think that the story of Anne getting down and dirty in the garbage in the middle of the living room trying to get those grubs out before Evan can get back from his haircut and then getting caught? And how the—*[stifles laughter]* and how their marriage survived that? That's a terrific story!

00:32:03 Jesse Host Everybody's sitting around the dinner table and enjoying a beautiful meal. And someone says "Okay! Classic conversation starter: where do you keep your red wrigglers?"

00:32:14 John Host *[Laughs.]* The—you also sent in a picture of the worm bin, Anne, that you plan to buy. No more DIY for you. You've got a kit in mind, right? Describe this kit.

00:32:23 Anne Guest So this is like a more professional-grade worm bin, and by professional, it's still for the home composter. But it really kind of streamlines the sifting of the compost that you like—that you would have to do with a DIY bin, because the worms will travel upward or downward between the layers depending where the food source is.

00:32:40 John Host Mm-hm.

00:32:41 Anne Guest So it's easier to remove basically one of the four trays of finished compost and, you know, kind of do what you need to with it.

00:32:47 John Host So I'm seeing a picture here. It looks like a stacked series of green bins, one two three four...

00:32:53 Anne Guest Yep.

00:32:54 John Host And you're suggesting that as the worms work their way through each layer, you can just sort of remove a layer, dish out the liquid gold to your plants, reset, and then it kinda cycles through. Is that right?

00:33:04 Anne Guest That's right.

00:33:06 John Host I don't see any amateur grub holes in here.

00:33:08 Anne Guest Uh, yeah! I mean, not as far as I know.

00:33:10 John Host Would you be able to guarantee to Evan that this is grub-proof?

00:33:14 Anne Guest I mean... there are no guarantees in life.

[Someone laughs quietly.]

But I believe that if I keep it indoors, that we won't have any further problems.

00:33:22 John Host This also seems to have windows on the side of the worm bin? Is

that just for illustration?

00:33:27 Anne Guest I think that's an illustrative cross-section.

00:33:29 John Host Alright. So the—you won't actually be seeing—this is not like a terrarium-type situation where you're seeing the worms do their job.

00:33:36 Anne Guest I mean, I encourage worm bin manufacturers to pursue that model, but I don't think worms like light, so... I think that it is purely illustrative.

00:33:44 John Host And what is this spigot down at the bottom here?

00:33:47 Anne Guest I don't know if you really wanna know.

00:33:49 John Host ...I really do now.

00:33:52 Anne Guest *[Laughs.]* So basically like, the compost, as you know, is decomposing, and it gives off some liquid. So that's like a spout—they call it worm tea. *[Laughs.]* And so you can like, drain it off and mix it with water and use it as a liquid fertilizer.

00:34:07 Jesse Host *[Faux-patronizing]* It's called kombucha.

00:34:09 John Host *[Bursts out laughing, then sighs/shudders.]* And where would this worm bin go? If I were to find in your favor?

00:34:18 Anne Guest I would put it by the back door. Like, next to the recycling bin.

00:34:22 Evan Guest Tower of terror.

00:34:23 John Host *[Laughs.]* It's not a very attractive-looking thing, that's for sure. Is there adequate space next to the recycling bin by the back door?

00:34:33 Evan Guest It kinda blocks off the emergency exit for the fire escape.

00:34:36 Anne Guest I would say, you know, I don't know if we're really here in the business of issuing compromises, but I would like to have the worm bin when we buy a house this year. And keep it inside.

00:34:47 John Host Oh! Okay. I have a question for you.

00:34:50 Anne Guest Sure.

00:34:51 John Host Keeping it by the back door in your current living situation, that would be outside?

00:34:57 Anne Guest Inside.

00:34:58 John Host That would be inside. It's all—it has to be inside. That's how you keep the grubs out. Right?

00:35:00 Anne Guest Yeah, I don't want any more grubs, either.

00:35:02 Jesse Host I demand grubs.

00:35:04 John Host *[Laughs.]* It usually—usually around this time of day he does.

[Someone laughs quietly.]

We'll get you some grubs soon, Jesse. It's a migraine thing. He needs to have grubs. Five PM. *[Laughs.]*

Um, you mentioned buying a house! So now you're thinking about moving.

00:35:18 Anne Guest Yeah! We'd like to get a little more space.

00:35:20 John Host And is this a 100% plan, or a 1000% plan, or a 50% plan?

00:35:26 Anne Guest It's like 100% in 2020, but the bounds of uncertainty are kind of in the timing within that.

00:35:32 John Host Are you comfortable waiting until you have a house with more room? And maybe—you know, maybe you'll find a little place in Brookline or whatever where there's already a—a worm bin nook already there, you know what I mean? Those are pretty common.

00:35:46 Anne Guest Yeah. Well, so I think that this actually kind of, like, came up in our marriage because I was talking about things that I wanted to get when we moved. And Evan basically said like "I don't think that we should have another worm bin." So it is a question of like, what we have now, but I would be willing to wait, but I'm not willing to never have one again.

00:36:06 John Host So Evan, you don't want a worm bin even in the new house.

00:36:08 Evan Guest I... *[sighs]* feel concerned about smells, and... if I could repeat, grubs, and then—

[John laughs.]

—and, uh, more grubs.

00:36:20 John Host Was there smell involved in the old worm bin?

00:36:22 Evan Guest I—I mean... it wasn't the worst-smelling thing in the world, but there were occasionally smells.

00:36:27 Anne Guest I would describe it as earthy.

[Multiple people laugh quietly.]

00:36:32 John Host That usually does sound like a code word for "bad."

[Anne and Evan laugh.]

00:36:35 Evan Guest No—no spin zone over here!

I would be comfortable with worms in, like, a detached garage if we had one. You know, that would seem like a place where the worms can do their thing. The—there's no chance of grubs infesting our house.

00:36:50 John Host I see. And Anne, a detached garage in your next living situation... is that feasible for you, and more importantly, is that feasible for the worms?

00:37:00 Anne Guest I hope that we have a detached garage, because, you know, Massachusetts does have a very snowy climate. But I think I do have concerns for the worms' welfare because it does get quite cold here in the winter, and the worms are mostly made of water. I think they would freeze to death.

00:37:15 John Host Yeah, you wanna have your little buddies inside with you!

00:37:18 Anne Guest Yeah! I mean, that is kind of the fun, right?

00:37:22 John Host The problem is it's not fun for Evan.

[Pause.]

00:37:26 Anne Guest I think that it's... neutral for Evan.

[Evan laughs quietly.]

00:37:30 John Host Well, luckily Evan—Evan can't speak for himself.

00:37:33 Anne Guest **Evan:** Yeah.

John: So we'll never know.

[The litigants laugh.]

00:37:35 Evan Guest I—I...

00:37:36 Anne Guest It's not usually the wife that comes across as controlling.

[The litigants and possibly John laugh.]

00:37:42 John Host It's not usually the wife who says "I wanna keep a box of worms in my house!"

[Jesse laughs.]

"Because I've got a plan for a new way of life!"

00:37:46 Evan Guest Right.

00:37:47 Anne Guest You know, we thought that you were welcoming wives with schemes.

00:37:50 John Host I'm impartial until I come back with my verdict.

00:37:52 Evan Guest I would say that I want Anne to be happy. I want her to be able to—you know, to find fulfilling friendships and, you know, and all sorts of things. I don't... 500 to 1,000 worms? You know, if that's what makes her truly happy, then, you know, I will support her. I would just say that, you know, in a world in which we have a house, we also would be able to get real pets, like a dog or a cat, or both.

00:38:19 John Host I was going to ask that question! I mean, Anne, you had suggested that worm-binning was a pet substitute because you had too small space to get a cat or a dog. If you moved into this house and got a cat or a dog, do you feel like you would no longer look to the worms as your little friends?

00:38:36 Anne Guest I think I would shift my paradigm on them to be more of like, something that... works for me. So, you know, like, less of a like, friendly, cuddly idea—not that I was... really cuddling with the worms. But you know, like, then they would become like my... my workers.

00:38:53 John Host I have one more question. We know that worm bin 2 ended in... grub apocalypse. What happened with worm bin 1?

00:39:08 Anne Guest I moved out of the city that I was living in, and kind of realized that I was not gonna be able to check the worm bin on my flight to New York.

00:39:17 John Host Why didn't you bring it on your flight to New York? They're your friends. They're your service animals.

00:39:21 Anne Guest Um, you know, it's 75 bucks a pop to fly with a pet. That would have been really expensive.

00:39:26 John Host *[Laughs.]* Okay. So you moved. And you abandoned your herd.

00:39:29 Anne Guest I gave the worm bin to another friend, who was very excited about it.

00:39:33 John Host And have they been happily composting since then?

00:39:38 Anne Guest As far as I know!

00:39:39 John Host So Evan, if I were to rule in your favor, what would you have me rule?

00:39:41 Evan Guest No worms in the apartment, no worms in a place where I sleep. As long as they're in a separate structure, I'm comfortable with that.

00:39:49 John Host A separate structure like a detached garage.

00:39:52 Evan Guest For example. Or a shed, or anything that isn't a place where a grub could crawl and... lie upon my pillow.

00:40:01 John Host Anne? If I were to rule in your favor... obviously worm bin, yes. Where does the worm bin go?

00:40:08 Anne Guest I mean, I think the worm bin goes where the action happens, in the kitchen.

00:40:12 John Host The vermicompost websites that I'm looking at suggest that you keep that thing right in the kitchen! You want it right there in the kitchen. Countertop?

00:40:19 Anne Guest No, it doesn't need to be—it's kinda big to be on the countertop. So... it's a free-standing worm bin. I would put it on the floor.

00:40:25 John Host Question: how wedded are you to this particular style of worm... bin?

00:40:33 Anne Guest I guess I haven't really considered alternatives, and it does seem to be the state of the art structure. So... I don't see why I shouldn't have it.

00:40:41 John Host Alright, I'm gonna text a link to Hannah Smith, our producer, to send to you while I dig deep into my big bucket of food scraps here in my chambers and chew this over. And I'll come back and poop out a verdict in moment.

00:40:57 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[As Jesse speaks below: Door opens, chairs scrape, footsteps.]*

00:40:58 Jesse Host Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom.

00:41:02 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Door shuts.]*

00:41:03 Jesse Host Anne, how are you feeling about your chances right now?

00:41:07 Anne Guest I feel extremely good.

00:41:09 Jesse Host You love those little creepy crawlers.

00:41:12 Anne Guest Yeah, I mean, you don't have to touch 'em!

00:41:15 Jesse Host How do they come—do they come in like a... a jug, or...?

00:41:20 Anne Guest I don't remember what the bag was like, but in kind of like a warm box? And...

[Someone (or multiple someones) stifles laughter.]

Yeah. Dump 'em out. They come with like overnight shipping.
[Laughs.]

00:41:35 Jesse Host *[Stifling laughter]* So they just come in a worm box that says "Dump 'em out."

00:41:39 Anne Guest *[Bursts out laughing.]* Yeah. You can't like, order them in the winter, 'cause they'll freeze.

00:41:44 Jesse Host Evan, how are you feeling about your chances?

00:41:47	Evan	Guest	Well, my tactic of scaremongering and, uh, relentlessly referring back to grubs, I think the judge was getting a little tired of. But I'll be okay either way. <i>[Someone laughs quietly.]</i> Just as long as there's no grubs on my pillow.
00:42:00	Jesse	Host	<i>[Laughs.]</i> <i>[Singing]</i> Gruuubs on my pillowww, pain in my hearrrt... <i>[Evan laughs quietly.]</i> <i>[Speaking]</i> Well, Anne, Evan, we'll see what the judge has to say about this when we come back in just a second.
00:42:16	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
00:42:17	Jesse	Promo	Judge Hodgman, we're taking a quick break from the case, because... we are headed out on tour! Brooklyn, New York! Boston, Massachusetts! And San Francisco Sketchfest!
00:42:29	John	Promo	That's right! We'll be at the Murmrr Theatre in Brooklyn, New York on January 13th. A new theater for me, really looking forward to checking that out! And then going back to the old hometown of Boston, Massachusetts the next night, January 14th, at the good old Wilbur Theatre, one of my very favorite places to perform! And then of course another homecoming! We go over to the Bay Area, Jesse Thorn's—what do you say? Hometown?
00:42:50	Jesse	Promo	Yeah. Hometown. <i>[Laughs.]</i> I— <i>[laughs]</i> I grew up like six or eight blocks from the Castro Theatre in the Mission District. Castro of course is in the neighboring Castro District. And we're gonna have the Castro organist on the mighty Wurlitzer at the Castro Theatre! Very excited about <u>that</u> .
00:43:09	John	Promo	The return of the live organ! We didn't have it last year, but we're having it again this year. It's gonna be amazing.
00:43:14	Jesse	Promo	<i>[Singing]</i> San Franciscoooo, open your goolden gates!
00:43:18	John	Promo	What's that song about?
00:43:19	Jesse	Promo	<i>[Speaking]</i> Uh, it's about San Francisco and, uh, how great it is. It's the song that the Castro organist closes every set with as he descends into the floor!
00:43:27	John	Promo	Well, listen, San Francisco! Open your golden <u>wallets</u> ... <i>[Both laugh.]</i> ...and buy some tickets to this thing! 'Cause it's a <u>lot</u> of <u>fun</u> !
00:43:34	Jesse	Promo	Brooklyn, New York, January 13th! Boston, Massachusetts, January 14th! SF Sketchfest, January 16th! I will also be doing <i>Jordan, Jesse, Go!</i> at SF Sketchfest with my friend Jordan, <u>and</u> both Glen Washington from <i>Snap Judgment</i> and Tony Hale, who plays Forky the Fork Man from the movie <i>Fork Story IV</i> .
00:43:55	John	Promo	And I will also be performing at San Francisco Sketchfest with <i>The Thrilling Adventure Hour</i> ! That's right, we're all getting back together

and doing a wild interactive, like, *Sleep No More*—style immersive theatre experience at The Speakeasy on Friday and Saturday night.

San Francisco Sketchfest is one of the great things in the world. It is always my great happy joy and privilege to be invited to return, and of course there's some of our best *Judge John Hodgman* live shows every year. So please, find out more and buy your ticket by going to MaximumFun.org/events or JohnHodgman.com/tour—and by the way, Brooklyn, Boston, San Francisco, surrounding areas, we're still looking for cases for these shows!

If you've got a dispute, and you'd like us to consider hearing them on stage, won't you write me? At hodgman@maximumfun.org, or of course you can fill out the form at MaximumFun.org/jjho. Make sure to put in the subject heading or anywhere I can see it, real big letters, that you're in Boston or Brooklyn or San Francisco, so that I know that you want it to be considered for the live show.

If we choose your show to hear live on stage, guess what? Your tickets are comped, and I'll say hello to you backstage! So again, that's hodgman@maximumfun.org, MaximumFun.org/jjho.

00:45:07	Jesse	Promo	And you know what, John? I'm willing to accept cases from Long Island City or Newton, Massachusetts! Or Valejo, California! If you're <u>proximate</u> to those cities, let us know!
00:45:18	John	Promo	No, nothing from Newton. No. Sorry, Newton. No. No way.
00:45:21	Jesse	Promo	<i>[Laughs.]</i> Okay. Draw the—gotta draw the line somewhere.
00:45:23	John	Promo	Yeah, that's a—that's... I don't—I'm a little upset right now. Okay.
00:45:28	Jesse	Promo	<i>[Laughs.]</i> Let's get back to the case.
00:45:30	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
00:45:31	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	<i>[As Jesse speaks below: Door opens, chairs scrape on the floor, footsteps.]</i>
00:45:32	Jesse	Host	Please rise as Judge John Hodgman re-enters the courtroom and presents his verdict.
00:45:36	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	<i>[Door shuts.]</i>
00:45:37	John	Host	We live in perilous times on this... Earth. Obviously, climate change is affecting water, agriculture, human sustainability, migration. Obviously, diet and nutrition are part of how we are going to—I hope!—continue to survive on this planet. I am well aware that aside from composting and sustainability on the agricultural side, as we discussed earlier with Anne, and needing to look towards new, more sustainable forms of protein, which <u>include</u> ... eatin' bugs.

And I went to the Museum of Natural History to eat some bugs some years ago. It was a seminar on different cuisines that include bugs. I think it's Oaxacan cuisine, or areas of Mexico, anyway—you know, grasshoppers are eaten regularly. I haven't had those, but I have eaten crickets. I have indeed eaten grubs! I've eaten mealworms that had been fried. Even though I hate that fried—*How to Eat Fried Worms* book, I did it! I ate the fried worms! And you know what? They were good. You know what they didn't look like? Poop.

[Laughs.] I've never been more grossed out than that photo that you sent me, Evan.

[Someone laughs.]

That poop grub is gross. I can understand completely why having an infestation of anything that looks like that in your home—that you have not invited into your home on purpose *[stifles laughter]* by mailing away for it, or by going to the Museum of Natural History and getting a bunch of takeout fried mealworms to bring home—if you have things crawling into your shoes? That is a nightmare scenario to rival the 1976 film *Squirm*.

Only to be rivaled by the double nightmare scenario of going out to get a simple haircut and coming home to find... *[stifles laughter]* your wife on the floor with a tarp, emptying out—

[One or both litigants are stifling laughter.]

—rotting food, worms, and grubs, *[stifles laughter]* and trying to separate the three things from each other. I appreciate that this was trauma. And it's interesting, 'cause it's almost—it's Cronenbergian body horror trauma.

[The litigants and John laugh.]

Of a sort that—you don't have kids, right?

00:47:53 Evan Guest

No, we don't.

00:47:55 John Host

Yeah. And you don't have pets.

00:47:57 Evan Guest

Correct. *[Laughs.]*

00:47:58 John Host

Yeah.

00:47:59 Anne Guest

Not anymore.

[Evan laughs.]

00:48:00 John Host

You mean not since you lost the worms, or you had a dog or a cat or something before?

00:48:04 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Evan: No, no, it's a—

Anne: Oh, no, I meant the worms.

00:48:05 John Host

Yeah. How long have you been married?

00:48:07 Anne Guest

Year and a half.

00:48:09 John Host

So your marriage is young. And I can appreciate why finding your wife pawing through...

[Anne laughs.]

...literal garbage in the middle of the floor, trying to save her little worm friends and get rid of these invasive grubs which are worms by another name, is gross and horrific. And as I say, almost, like, that deep Cronenbergian body horror.

Should you go on to have... pets, or children, this will become routine in your marriage. Pawing through the leavings of other creatures—be they animal or human—horrible, disgusting secretions, vomits, diarrheas, all kinds of emanations that will make worm tea look like the sweetest kombucha you ever did drink.

You may choose to be childless, which is a wonderful choice for lots and lots of people, and ecologically a very sustainable choice. You may choose to never have pets. But if pets or children are in your future, a box of worms is just the beginning. And maybe a good training wheel! *[Laughs.]* For what's to come!

But setting aside that, what I see here is evidence of a clear fascination on Anne's part. She has had two worm farms so far. One that ended in disgusting tragedy, and the other which she abandoned due to circumstance. I have done some research into this, and while I think—and I appreciate, Evan, that not only are you traumatized appropriately, but also that you may have some instinctive repulsion to the idea of keeping a box of writhing grave dirt in your home.

00:50:06 John Host For Anne, this is not a repulsion, it is an attraction. And it is an attraction, I think, that will not cease. It is a hobby that I think she must see her way through at least to the third iteration. Because one iteration was abandoned, and one iteration failed. And I think that in a classic three-strikes-you're-out scenario, Anne deserves a third time at bat.

That's a baseball metaphor, Jesse. Not sure you're catching this. Doing this for you.

So I definitely rule in Anne's favor. Evan, this presents you with a challenge. I don't want a box of worms on my counter any more than you do, Evan. But Anne really wants that. And now that I've done some research, *[laughing]* I really want Anne to have that box of worms! I don't wanna have to do it!

00:50:55 John Host I did some research, and I discovered a number of different styles of worm bins. Including one that I texted to Hannah. Hannah, were you able to get that to Anne and Evan?

00:51:06 Evan Guest Mm-hm.

00:51:07 Anne Guest Yeah, it's very elegant.

00:51:08 John Host *[Stifles laughter.]* Yeah! Looks great, doesn't it? We'll put this up on the *Judge John Hodgman* show page and the Instagram. I don't take advertising from this company! And I don't tend to do a lot of buzz-marketing. You know, in my research, I did a little—looked at a lot of different styles of bins. They all look like disgusting... like, rubbish bins that would be full of garbage and worms, but this thing looks like—like sculpture!

It's like, white, and for the people who haven't had a chance to look at it yet, it's this white natural-formed piece of ceramic sculpture that's got a cork top with three holes in it. What do you think about that, Evan? What do you think about that thing?

00:51:45 Evan Guest It's attractive, I'm not gonna lie.

00:51:46 John Host Yeah.

00:51:47 Evan Guest This actually is changing my mind about, uh... what one of these things could look like.

00:51:53 John Host What do you think about it, Anne? Does that—I mean, this is your hobby. What do you think about this thing?

00:51:58 Anne Guest I mean, I will say it definitely makes me think about the density of 500 to 1,000 worms in a different way.

00:52:04 John Host This may not be a 1k worm... situation.

00:52:07 Anne Guest It is lovely, straight out of MOMA.

00:52:09 John Host Yeah, exactly. *[Laughs.]* Straight outta MOMA! Well, this is what I'm saying. I'm buying it for you. Have a great time. This is the sound of a gavel.

00:52:15 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Dirt being shoveled.]*

00:52:17 John Host Judge John Hodgman rules; that is all.

00:52:19 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[As Jesse speaks below: Door opens, chairs scrape, footsteps.]*

00:52:20 Jesse Host Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom.

00:52:23 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Door shuts.]*

00:52:24 Jesse Host Anne, are you excited about this new countertop appliance?

00:52:27 Anne Guest Oh, absolutely. I'm always looking to elevate our design choices.

[Jesse laughs.]

00:52:33 John Host But you understand, Anne, I'm buying it for you, I want reports. I don't want a box of worms on my counter—you and me, we're gonna be worm penpals on this.

00:52:40 Anne Guest Alright! I can send you some of the finished compost.

00:52:43 Evan Guest We're coming to the show in Boston. Should Anne bring some of the worms or some of the compost to the show?

00:52:47 John Host That's—you know what? That's a good point.

[John and Anne laugh.]

00:52:49 Anne Guest I don't think it'll be ready by then.

00:52:51 John Host Look. If you're within the sound of my voice, go to JohnHodgman.com/tour to get tickets for this Wilbur show on January 14th if you're in the Boston area so that you can hear this report from Anne and Evan after they get this product. Maybe this product is terrible! And if it is, just tell me. I'll give you a—I'll give you another shot at a worm bin of your choice, but like, I really like this thing, and I wanna hear—see how this goes, so much that I don't care what Evan thinks at all.

[Evan or Jesse laughs quietly.]

Anne, this is you and me all the way here.

00:53:17 Anne Guest I love it.

00:53:18 John Host Alright.

00:53:19 Evan Guest Thank you.

00:53:20 Jesse Host Evan, you feeling good?

00:53:21 Evan Guest I mean, yeah! I—I guess... this seems like a reasonable compromise. Uh, you know, I will support my—I'll support Anne and not try to wriggle out of my responsibilities.

00:53:31 Jesse Host Shut your piehole.

[John and the litigants laugh.]

00:53:33 John Host Oh no!

00:53:34 Evan Guest We'll see what happens!

00:53:36 Jesse Host Worm puns are a bridge too far for me. I'm gonna cut this thing off here. *[Laughs.]*

Evan, Anne, thanks for joining us on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

00:53:44 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:53:45 Promo Clip **Music:** Upbeat, cheerful music plays in the background.

Allie Goertz: Hi, I'm Allie Goertz!

Julia Prescott: And I'm Julia Prescott. And we host—

Both: —[Round Springfield!](#)

Julia: *Round Springfield* is a new *Simpsons* podcast that is *Simpsons-adjacent*—

Allie: Mm-hm.

Julia: —um, in its topic. We talk to *Simpsons* writers, directors, voiceover actors, you name it, about non-*Simpsons* things that they've done. Because, surprise! They're all extremely talented.

Allie: Absolutely. For example, David X. Cohen worked on *The Simpsons*, but then created a little show called *Futurama*!

Julia: Mm-hm!

Allie: That's our very first episode.

Julia: Yeah!

Allie: So tune in for stuff like that with Yearly Smith, with Tim Long, with different writers and voice actors. It's gonna be so much fun, and we are every other week on [MaximumFun.org](#) or wherever you get your podcasts!

[Music fades out.]

00:54:26 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:54:28 Jesse Host Another *Judge John Hodgman* case in the books. Coming up in just a second, Swift Justice. First, our thanks to Maren Williams for naming this week's episode "Edict of Worms." If you'd like to name a future episode, like *Judge John Hodgman* on Facebook.

Follow us on Twitter! John is [@hodgman](#), I am [@JesseThorn](#). You can also find us on Instagram at [@judgejohnhodgman](#). John is also on Instagram at [@johnhodgman](#). I am [@put.this.on](#). Hashtag your *Judge John Hodgman* Tweets [#JJHo](#), and check out the Maximum Fun subreddit, [MaximumFun.Reddit.com](#).

This week's episode recorded by Chris Billias at Bristol Studios. Edited by Jesus Ambrosio, and produced by Hannah Smith.

Now! Swift Justice, where we answer your small disputes with quick judgment. Bradley asks:

"When someone says they are 1000% certain, is it wrong to point out that you can't be more than 100% of anything?"

00:55:29 John Host I'm sorry, Jesse, I wasn't listening. I'm just watching this instructional video on a loop of this very attractive person in a beautiful kitchen feeding her worms! It just goes on and on and on!

00:55:40 Jesse Host Don't worry, I'll handle it. Bradley, crack a dictionary and turn to the page that contains the word "hyperbole." It's settled.

00:55:47 John Host I'm 1000% in for this.

[Both laugh.]

00:55:50 Jesse Host That's about it for this week's episode. Submit your cases at [MaximumFun.org/jjho](#) or email hodgman@maximumfun.org. No case is too small. We'll see you next time on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

00:56:04 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:56:05 Music Transition A cheerful guitar chord.

00:56:06 Speaker 1 Guest [MaximumFun.org](#).

00:56:08 Speaker 2 Guest Comedy and culture.

00:56:09 Speaker 3 Guest Artist owned—

00:56:10 Speaker 4 Guest —audience supported.

00:56:12 John Host Worms in the—scraps in this beautiful thing! It's like a work of art! *[Laughs.]* Look at these worms go! *[Laughs.]*

I'm gonna say it! Worms are better than grubs. Better than grubs.