

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. We're in chambers this week, clearing the docket, and with me as always is the cleanest man in podcasting: Judge John Hodgman.
00:00:13	John Hodgman	Host	You don't know that at all. You have—you can't see me. We are not in the same place. As we always record! I mean, I'm always here in my home office in Brooklyn. But you're now in <u>your</u> home office in Los Angeles. Quick question—a little bit inside audio baseball—what are you using to prevent bounce-back in your home office there, Jesse?
00:00:32	Jesse	Host	<i>[Laughs.]</i> I have— <i>[laughs]</i> I have an extra wide monitor; I don't need all the width.
00:00:38	John	Host	Uh-huh?
00:00:39	Jesse	Host	<i>[Stifling laughter]</i> Uh, to read the script for this show.
00:00:41	John	Host	Uh-huh. Uh-huh.
00:00:42	Jesse	Host	But my microphone faces it. Like, I face it when I'm speaking into my microphone.
00:00:45	John	Host	Right.
00:00:46	Jesse	Host	And so I have draped a down vest over my monitor. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:00:50	John	Host	A down vest!
00:00:52	Jesse	Host	<i>[Laughing]</i> A down vest, yes.
00:00:55	John	Host	Well, let me tell you how I do it. Look. You're the master of podcasting, you brought me into this world. You raised me up in this world. I'm not gonna be like "Now the student is the master" kind of deal. But I've been doing it from <u>home</u> a lot longer than you have. You have a nice studio out there at MaxFun HQ, which I hope and trust you'll return to soon.

But over here in Hodge Central... like, uh, I don't have an extra wide monitor. I've got all kinds of egg crate baffling that I bought in shame after you told me that I sounded like I was recording from a... Bat Cave. And—

*[Both laugh.]*

And I don't have a down vest. I don't need it to control the bounce-back from my extra wide monitor, 'cause I do this show entirely from reading off... of my Apple Watch.

*[Jesse laughs.]*

That's not true. Not true, I got a laptop. It's an Apple, though. I still stan—I still stan a legend. Apple. Hey, App, here's an idea! Uhhh, Apple... um, put me on your commercials again. Please.

*[Both laugh.]*

I was gonna say "Sponsor the podcast," but that would be a waste of my breath. I don't care about that. Put me on your commercials,

please.

00:02:03 Jesse Host Yeah, I can play your, uh, competitor or whatever. John is now the Apple. This is how it works.

00:02:09 John Host No—

00:02:10 Jesse Host John's the Apple. And I'm a Motorola Razr or whatever.

00:02:13 John Host *[Laughs.]* I won't do it without Justin Long. I'm sorry, Jesse Thorn. You can get a part in it, for sure.

00:02:19 Jesse Host Justin can be in it! Justin Long, who I'm on first—a first-name basis with, apparently—

00:02:24 John Host Sure.

00:02:25 Jesse Host Justin Long can be one of those Nokias.

00:02:28 John Host You're—*[laughs]*.

00:02:29 Jesse Host You know what I mean? *[Laughs.]*

00:02:30 John Host He's one of those guys you're on a first-name basis with but you still say his full name. I gotcha.

00:02:33 Jesse Host *[Laughing]* Yeah. I said "Justin can" originally!

He's one of those Nokias. You're an Apple phone—uh, which is what they're called. That's the brand name. I'm—I'm a Motorola Razr. And he's playing, uh, that Snake game!

00:02:49 John Host I don't need to re-invent this wheel, Jesse Thorn. We had a good thing going. You know how I always say on the podcast that nostalgia is a toxic impulse?

00:02:55 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:02:56 John Host I take it back. Let's go back. Let's go back!

*[Jesse laughs.]*

Let's go back in tiime! *[Laughs.]* Ten years, 2009!

00:03:03 Jesse Host Jennifer can be in it, too. I'm putting Jennifer Marmor, our producer, in this too. As long as I'm casting. I'm throwing her in there, 'cause she needs some residuals, too. Uh, I'm gonna make her a Texas Instruments graphing calculator.

00:03:15 John Host Chuck Bryant, co-host of *Stuff You Should Know* and also host of *Movie Crush* on *[darkly]* another network...

*[Regular voice]* But our friend! Once took me to task for saying nostalgia was a toxic impulse, because he—it had been shown scientifically that looking at old beloved culture from the past—comic books, TV shows, or whatever—makes you feel real good.

And I was like "Yeah! That's fine! That's why it's so seductive. It makes you feel good, but you gotta move forward." I take it all back. Forget it. *[Laughs quietly.]* You know how I fell asleep last night, Jesse Thorn?

00:03:47 Jesse Host How?

00:03:48 John Host I found a YouTube which was just a reel of commercials that showed on channel 56 in 1981.

*[Jesse cracks up.]*

And just watched 'em! Just watched TV commercials from my hometown UHF channel, 1981. It was... it was pure serotonin. I loved it. Do—everyone do what you need to do, in order to feel calm in these uncertain times. And we're so glad to be with you here, clearing the docket!

That's what we're doing. Correct, Jesse?

00:04:14 Jesse Host Whatever you need to feel good. Whether it's nostalgia, or... in the case of Ray Parker Jr.... busting.

00:04:23 John Host Yeah! Busting makes him feel good!

*[Jesse is quietly cracking up.]*

That's why he was a volunteer Ghostbuster. He's like—

00:04:29 Jesse Host *[Laughing]* Yeah.

00:04:30 John Host They offered to pay him! He was like "No, it just makes me feel good."

And they're like "If we're—we gotta have you on the books for something, or else we're gonna get in even more trouble with the DEA." So he took an—he was a one-dollar-a-year man for the Ghostbusters, Inc.

00:04:43 Jesse Host *[Laughs.]* Let's get into some justice. Here's something from Holly. She says:

"My husband Ben puts on his socks and shoes in the following manner: sock, shoe, sock, shoe. *[Stifling laughter]* Which he claims is perfectly normal."

*[John snorts.]*

"He also puts on our two-year-old daughter's shoes in the same manner. I don't want her future buddies to ridicule her for this bizarre behavior! Like when I was a child and had been trained by my parents to eat pizza with a knife and fork. I would love an injunction that says that my husband must put on his and any future child's socks and shoes in the sock-sock, shoe-shoe order."

00:05:19 John Host *[Sing-song]* Sock-sock, shoe-shoe... oh, what a relief it is!

*[Speaking]* That was one of the commercials I watched!

*[Jesse laughs.]*

First of all, you can eat pizza with a knife and fork. Everybody stop it. It's fine. Lots of pizzas are traditionally eaten with a knife and fork! *[Sighs.]* I came across this huge list of regional pizzas. I don't have it at my fingertips now. I'll find it during the break and I'll give it to everybody, 'cause it was incredible to read... the list of regional pizzas. St. Louis regional pizza is like served on matzah bread? Who knew. Anyway!

00:05:49 Jesse Host Provel! Isn't St. Louis pizza made with Provel cheese?  
00:05:53 John Host Provel, which is like provolone and mozzarella, and cheddar blend of some kind? We'll get to it after the break.  
00:06:00 Jesse Host Yeah.  
00:06:01 John Host I'll find it and we'll go through a few pizzas. That's another thing that's pure serotonin, just—even thinking about pizza! It's a good feeling.

But let's get to this, uh, sock-sock shoe-shoe. So there was an episode—speaking of nostalgia—I believe that there was an episode of *All in the Family* where Carroll O'Conner, AKA Archie Bunker, finds Rob Reiner—Meathead—putting his shoes on, quote-unquote, "The wrong way."

And I think it was that Meathead—uh, was putting on a sock and a shoe and a sock and a shoe. I think Archie Bunker was correct in this one, or at least on the side of Holly. And the argument was—*[stifles laughter]* Archie Bunker's argument was if you get interrupted... and this is all from memory. This is all off the dome. I could be wrong here. If you get—*[laughs]* if you only get your sock—you could put your socks on first. 'Cause if that's all you have time to do, at least your feet are partly covered. Like—

*[Jesse laughs quietly.]*

Like, if some—if an emergency happens, at least you have both socks on. And I remember that made a lot of sense to me! And then later, on *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*—a show I used to be on—I watched Rob Riggle do a thing that I had never seen before in my life. He was getting dressed to go on camera, so he was putting on his—you know, his nice suit, his correspondent's suit and shoes. Head to toe. Even though you would never see those feet, Rob Riggle isn't gonna wear sneakers out there.

And he put on a sock and a sock, and a shoe and a shoe, and then he put on his... pants.

00:07:35 Jesse Host WHAT?! ...WHAT?!  
00:07:37 John Host Yeah! And he's not a—a—a Slenderman.  
00:07:41 Jesse Host Rob Riggle is a beefy boy!  
00:07:43 John Host He's a big beefy boy, very muscular, former Marine. And he very delicately and expertly pointed his toe and pulled his suit pants up over one shoe and then the next! And I seem to recall saying to Rob "That's amazing," and he said... "That's what I learned in the Marines."

That can't be true, though. All of my memories must be false.

00:08:03 Jesse Host How could that possibly be so? And it must be Marine-specific! My father is a Navy veteran!  
00:08:09 John Host Well, yeah!  
00:08:10 Jesse Host *[Laughing]* I don't remember him doing this nonsense!  
00:08:12 John Host And also you're—you know, unless you are in dress uniform, you're not gonna be wearing dress shoes in the Marines; you're gonna be

wearing boots! You can't get fatigues on over boots! Or maybe you can. But I re—I feel like I remember him saying... that it was the same argument. Like, that it was like, if there's an emergency, you wanna have your feet covered first. So you can jump outta that tent and start... scrambling in your underwear. I don't know. This could all be wrong. I should have looked all of this up. But I figured I would go off of my perfect memory and take us on a little nostalgia trip into the back recesses of my addled mind.

Write me if you know the *All in the Family* episode I'm talking about, and know what was really happening in that episode, or if you're Rob Riggle and I'm wrong. [Hodgman@maximumfun.org](mailto:Hodgman@maximumfun.org). But let's get back to this.

Jesse Thorn, you seem to be under the—not impression, but conviction, that it should be sock-sock shoe-shoe. Correct? Does Ben have... a leg to stand on, so to speak?

00:09:08 Jesse Host I mean... *[sighs]*. Far be it from me to disagree with Rob Reiner. I didn't direct *The Princess Bride*.

*[John snorts.]*

And you know, far be it from me to agree with Archie Bunker on something. *[Laughs.]*

00:09:20 John Host

Right.

00:09:22 Jesse Host

But, uh, yeah, seems pretty bonkers to me. I mean, what... do you just galumph around if something happens in the middle?

00:09:32 John Host

It really does come down to the sense of "An emergency could happen as I'm putting on my shoes." *[Laughs quietly.]*

00:09:38 Jesse Host

I also have cold toes.

00:09:39 John Host

Yeah.

00:09:40 Jesse Host

And I would hate to go through the whole process of putting a shoe on while my other foot's toes were completely exposed to the elements.

00:09:50 John Host

Yeah! It seems very uncomfortable to, you know, go—because basically... putting on clothes is an act of civilization. It—you are civilizing, for good or for ill, your feet, as you put on socks and shoes. You are de—you are moving from a natural state to an unnatural state of clothed-ness. No offense—

00:10:16 Jesse Host

You don't have to explain it to me, I've read *Babar!*

00:10:18 John Host

*[Laughs.]* I don't think he—oh, he wore shoes over those big elephant feet, didn't he?

00:10:24 Jesse Host

Yeah, he wears a beautiful suit! He goes and gets it in town. *[Stifling laughter]* It's a very colonialist story.

00:10:29 John Host

I know. But—but it's not just a beautiful green three-piece suit that he buys. But he also—

00:10:34 Jesse Host

No, he's got shoes.

00:10:35 John Host

—he also has elephantine shoes.

00:10:37 Jesse Host

Yeah.

00:10:38 John Host But yes, it is an act—for good or for ill—of moving away from nature. And therefore it feels to me... well. I—it's complicated to say it, but it feels more natural to make that transition more gradual. In other words, I civilize this foot part-way with one sock. I civilize this foot part-way with one sock. And then I add this shoe, and then I add this shoe. And then if I'm Rob Riggle, then I go ahead and add pants!

Maybe he just doesn't like wearing pants. That actually makes a lot more sense. Like, he'll wait 'til the very last second to put on pants. That feels like a Riggle thing to me.

*[Jesse laughs quietly.]*

There is something a little unnerving to me as I sit here and think about it. Of like, having a sock and a shoe on one foot, and just a bare foot, and then looking down and seeing the—the fully de-naturalized foot, the fully man's-world foot, and then—on the one hand—or actually on the one foot, literally. On the lefthand side. That's what I'm picturing. And then the bare proto-foot on the other side. That just feels like a poster that shows evolution. I don't—I don't like one foot being that far behind the other. Because it's unnatural! Or uncivilized. Or both.

I guess I should rule in favor of preference, because... even though there does seem to be this species-wide sense of like, "I gotta get these shoes and socks on as quickly and efficiently as possible because an emergency could happen at any moment!" That's—it rarely does. So really, I should rule in favor of Ben's preference.

But I feel like Holly is right. That's just weird. It's just... weird! Am I wrong to rule against a person's preference in this regard, Jesse?

00:12:26 Jesse Host I don't think so.

00:12:27 John Host *[Snorts.]* Yeah! Ben—

00:12:29 Jesse Host We're protecting the children.

00:12:32 John Host Ben, you're doing it wrong! If that kid—by the way, that two-year-old's never gonna have more than one sock on at any time anyway, so it doesn't matter. Doesn't matter for now.

But Holly, you can eat pizza with a knife and fork. Ben, don't let one foot freeze in the past of pre-civilization while the other foot is fully shod.

00:12:51 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:12:52 John Host That's my ruling. Like it or leave it.

00:12:55 Jesse Host Drew says:

"My wife Samantha begins conversations with me while I am engaged in another activity, such as doing the dishes or changing a diaper. She—"

00:13:05 John Host Ohhh, what brag! Go on, Drew!

00:13:08 Jesse Host "She often does this from across the room or facing away from me, or while she's actually in another room. I often miss the first line, and ask her to repeat herself. She finds this irritating. I've suggested she

get my attention by saying my name first, but she finds this irritating. I request that Judge John Hodgman order my wife to only initiate conversations from within 15 feet of me, while physically facing me, and from within the same room as me.

*Or—[laughs quietly]* she should be prepared to repeat herself without being annoyed."

00:13:42 John Host

Ugh.

00:13:43 Jesse Host

And I, Jesse, interject to ask you, uh, issue the same order to my six-year-old and my eight-year-old.

00:13:50 John Host

*[Laughs.]* "My wife, Samantha, begins conversations with me while I'm engaged in another activity, such as doing the dishes, or changing a diaper, or emptying the dishwasher, or making a home-cooked meal, or rehabilitating a wounded swan..."

*[Both laugh.]*

Yeah, we get it, Drew! You're enlightened! Good for you.

00:14:15 Jesse Host

"CPR on one of those pandas at the National Zoo that everyone loves so much."

00:14:20 John Host

*[Laughs.]* Yeah.

Yeah, we have a real problem in our house, though, Jesse, also, with people yelling from room to room. It's a really—I mean, and it's—I mean, I—you've always lived in homes as opposed to apartments, so—but it sounds like you have the same deal. People—

00:14:38 Jesse Host

Well, I haven't always lived my entire life in homes as opposed to apartments.

00:14:43 John Host

No, but I mean—

00:14:44 Jesse Host

I grew up in apartments.

00:14:45 John Host

Of course, yeah.

00:14:46 Jesse Host

But with—since I've had children, uh, we've lived in homes or what you might call flats, multi-unit buildings that aren't apartments.

00:14:54 John Host

Right. Do you have a problem with a lot of yelling from room to room? People starting conversations?

00:14:59 Jesse Host

Makes me feel completely insane, but, to be fair, so does all communication with other people while I'm in my home. *[Laughs.]*

00:15:09 John Host

I understand.

00:15:10 Jesse Host

*[Laughing]* Which, as—

00:15:11 John Host

Yeah!

00:15:12 Jesse Host

—as someone who grew up without peer-aged siblings, uh—*[laughs]* I see as an unbearable invasion of my at-home privacy. *[Laughs.]* As far as I'm concerned, as soon as I walk through the door of my home, no one should speak to me until I leave my home again later.

*[Both laugh.]*

00:15:33 John Host

Well, your whole career is so communication-based! It—when you get home, you wanna leave work behind, and therefore you wanna

be silent. Is how I would feel.

00:15:44 Jesse Host Thank you, that's a generous way of looking at it. I'm—I would also add to that that I'm a—probably a bad person.

00:15:49 John Host No, you're not a bad person. Come on. We all have to go easy on ourselves. But that doesn't mean I have to go easy on Drew's wife Samantha!

*[Sighs.]* Samantha, I don't know what you're doing when Drew is in there... churning butter, or writing thank-you cards—

*[Jesse laughs quietly.]*

—to all of your friends and relatives for all the holiday gifts, or wrapping presents, or mending a bat's wing.

00:16:15 Jesse Host *[Laughing]* That got in through the hole in the wall of your bathroom.

00:16:24 John Host Shout-out to Bat Brothers! One of the great *Judge John Hodgman* episodes.

Samantha's probably in there with her friends, having a beer, or watching the game, or like... I don't know what! Digging a ditch. Whatever.

Starting conversations from other rooms and expecting to be listened to is NG. At this point you're probably... you're probably really extra sick of each other, because you're probably all living very close quarters together. But absolutely. That's all the more reason to be a little bit more respectful of what people need in order to get through this period of time where we're all stuck with each other.

I grant Drew his request that Samantha only initiate conversations from within 15 feet of him. I will add that it should be within a boundary of 15 to 6 feet. A maximum to a minimum. While physically facing you, and from the same room, yeah! Calling from room to room is bad for people's nerves, and bad for people's communication. And this is a time when we need to be a little bit more forgiving, and a little bit more communicative, and... won't you help Drew change a diaper once, Samantha?! Get in there! Come on, it's nappy time.

00:17:35 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:17:36 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.

00:17:42 John Host I'm gonna look up that list of pizzas and forget about what a braggus Drew is.

00:17:47 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:17:49 Promo Clip *[Radio interference followed by laidback music with a snare drum beat. A phone rings as the DJ speaks.]*

**Radio DJ:** Welcome back to *Fireside Chat* on KMAX. With me in-studio to take your calls is the dopest duo on the West Coast, Oliver Wang and Morgan Rhodes.

*[Click.]*



Go ahead, caller.

**Caller:** Hey. Uh, I'm looking for a music podcast that's insightful and thoughtful, but like, also helps me discover artists and albums that I've never heard of.

**Mordan Rhodes:** Yeah, man. Sounds like you need to listen to *Heat Rocks*. Every week, myself—and I'm Morgan Rhodes—and my co-host here, Oliver Wang, talk to influential guests about a canonical album that has changed their lives.

**Oliver Wang:** Guests like Moby, Open Mike Eagle, talk about albums by Prince, Joni Mitchell, and so much more.

**Caller:** Yooo! What's that show called again?

**Morgan:** *Heat Rocks*. Deep dives into hot records.

**Oliver:** Every Thursday on Maximum Fun.

*[Music suddenly gives way to static and a dial tone.]*

00:18:36 Sound Effect Transition

*[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:18:38 Jesse Host

Welcome back to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. This week, we're clearing the docket... and listing pizzas. *[Stifles laughter.]* Detroit style! It's square!

00:18:47 John Host

Maybe you don't need a list of pizzas like I did, but I did. Oh, and of course it's from our friends at Serious Eats, one of our favorite websites! [SeriousEats.com](#). Just type in "[Serious Eats Gallery: Do You Know These Regional Pizza Styles?](#)"

Neapolitan. Philadelphia tomato pie. Roman pizza al taglio. Schiacciata. Sfincione. Pizza di sfrigole. Pizza bianca. French bread pizza.

Ugh, it's so good. I just read this all day long. New Haven style, grilled pizza, bar pizza, Trenton tomato pies, Old Forge pies, Detroit style. There you go! You already knew about Detroit style. What do you—what do you got on Detroit style pizza, Jesse? I had never heard of it before.

00:19:31 Jesse Host

Well, it's very close to the Sicilian style pizzas. Or is also known in other places as Italian bakery style pizza. It's square with a thick deep dish crust, sometimes twice-baked, and with sauce put on the pizza last.

00:19:47 John Host

Oh! Wikipedia says some parlors will apply melted butter with a soft brush to the dough prior to baking. Mm. Sounds delicious.

00:19:57 Jesse Host

Mm. Yeah, that sounds great. But I see the sauce is kind of drizzled on top!

00:20:00 John Host

Oh! I'll have to give that a try. And St. Louis style pizza is—this is the Provel that we were talking about earlier. And I quote the author of this article, Adam Kuban (*kyew-bihn*), or Kuban (*ku-bahn*)—K-U-B-A-N. I apologize if I'm mispronouncing it. But it say—he writes, uh, "This style's very thin, cracker-like crust is unleavened." Like matzah!

"And it's topped with a special three-cheese blend. Provolone—" Oh! This is the Provel. What are the—what do you think the three cheeses in Provel are, according to this article? Provolone is one of them. What's another?

00:20:36 Jesse Host

*[Inhales and exhales thoughtfully.]* Cheddar.

00:20:39 John Host

You got it. White cheddar. And there's a third out there. I'm gonna give you a hint: it's not mozzarella. This is a wild card, a real wild card.

00:20:46 Jesse Host

American?

00:20:48 John Host

Swiss. Weird.

00:20:50 Jesse Host

Oh, wow.

00:20:51 John Host

St. Louis style pizza. Well there you go, everybody. Go to [SeriousEats.com](http://SeriousEats.com). This is probably a time when you're having to cook for yourself more than you might have, if you live in an urban area and you're not able to support your local restaurants by taking in all the time. You're probably, you know, stoking the home fires and cooking some new recipes, and we get nothing from saying this, but our friend J. Kenji López-Alt has helped us out with so many episodes of *Judge John Hodgman*, and he and the team at Serious Eats put together some good recipes. [SeriousEats.com](http://SeriousEats.com)! We get no money for it.

*[Stifling laughter]* End of break! Let's go on.

00:21:26 Jesse Host

Issau (*ee-sow*) says...

00:21:28 John Host

Mm.

00:21:29 Jesse Host

Hope I got that right.

"My significant other and I love to cook and bake. I believe cupcakes are just small personal versions of cake. She disagrees. She says cupcakes are their own separate things from cake, and do not have any similarities to cakes other than the fact that they share similar ingredients. Can you help make a ruling on this?"

00:21:51 John Host

Uhhh, yeah. Issau, your—your wife is, uh, wrong, I think!

00:21:56 Jesse Host

Yeah!

*[Both laugh.]*

They're literally just cakes in cups!

00:22:00 John Host

I am someone who believes that distinctions have meaning. That because a hotdog, in many structural senses, resembles a sandwich, that does not mean that it is a sandwich. And it is okay for it to be its own thing.

So I was inclined, before judging, to maybe lean towards the side of Issau's wife. But I am not a baker. And so I consulted *Better Homes and Gardens*, and I consulted King Arthur Flour, which is one of the great baking resources on the website. *[Stifling laughter]* The website called the Internet.

*[Jesse laughs.]*

There's more than one website, but you know what I mean. And at—looking for some distinction, some chemical or structural distinction, that would invalidate my basic feeling that like, yeah, it's just a small version of a cake.

And the truth is, there's no difference between the batter. Usually, according to King Arthur, you would use a creamed butter batter. Which is sort of your basic white cake or chocolate cake style crumb batter. A poundcake batter would not work quite properly in a cupcake form. Doesn't raise the same way. But in making cupcakes, between a classic birthday cake and a cupcake? Same batter. The only difference is... cupcakes cook faster!

Now, obviously a cupcake is a personal cake. A birthday cake, a regular-size cake, is something to be shared and enjoyed with a group of people. Whereas a cupcake is something to be hoarded and enjoyed privately in a corner somewhere by yourself. But they are essentially physically the same thing. And I can't—I think the name says it all! One is a cake, and one is a cupcake. And that is all the distinction they need; they need no further distinction. I think Issau is right in this one.

00:24:01	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
00:24:02	John	Host	Jesse, have you been doing any baking? Do you bake?
00:24:05	Jesse	Host	I do. I don't bake bread, and I don't bake cake, 'cause I don't like cake. But I do bake a fair amount of cookies, particularly chocolate chip cookies, which are my favorite type of cookie.
00:24:17	John	Host	Right.
00:24:18	Jesse	Host	Because they're the best cookie, by a very wide margin.
00:24:21	John	Host	Yeah, I can't think of a better cookie than a chocolate chip cookie.
00:24:24	Jesse	Host	And there's other kinds of cookies that are good, and even very good. But the reason chocolate chip cookies are so popular is because they're spectacularly good.
00:24:33	John	Host	Yeah. There's a certain alchemy there that can't be beat, certainly not by a peanut butter cookie. I'm trying to think of any other cookie that is as good as a chocolate chip cookie. And I don't eat a lot of cookies, you know?
00:24:44	Jesse	Host	Yeah.
00:24:45	John	Host	I like a shortbread, but that's not a cookie. There are distinctions. But that's my feeling. Cupcakes—they're just little cakes, in cups! That's why they're called that.
00:24:52	Jesse	Host	Here's something from John:

"My wife says the phrase 'bull in a china closet,' a habit that she may have inherited from her family. The correct form, 'bull in a china shop,' is attested in many sources, *[stifles laughter]* notably the lyrics to Radiohead's 'Punch Up at a Wedding.'"

*[John snorts.]*

00:25:15 John Host It's the first—it's the first citation in the Oxford English Dictionary.  
Yeah, that's right.

*[Both laugh.]*

00:25:17 Jesse Host "I ask you to order her to revert to the correct form."

00:25:20 John Host Uh, sure. These are easy ones!

*[Both laugh.]*

Look, I did a little poking around, and I have not been able to find a definitive origin of the term or a first citation of the term "bull in a china shop." But it is definitely the saying. Whereas "bull in a china closet" is completely alien to my ears. And when I Google that phrase, it only leads to people fighting about "Why is anyone saying 'bull in a china closet'? It's called bull in a china shop."

"Bull in a china shop" makes sense. It is a—how you describe a boorish, un-delicate person smashing their way through a situation that requires delicacy. That is, navigating a china shop. "Bull in a china closet" is a metaphor for what? An imprisoned bull? I don't get it.

*[Both laugh quietly.]*

00:26:21 Jesse Host Well, in—in the closet that people have specifically for their china.

00:26:26 John Host Yeah, "china cabinet" you would say, right?

00:26:29 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:26:30 John Host Right. Yeah.

00:26:31 Jesse Host You wouldn't have a—it's not like you fill your pantry with china.

00:26:33 John Host There's enough fighting about this on the Internet that I am not going to say that John's wife is alone in the world. Who has started to use this evolution of the term. But the term is clearly "bull in a china shop," and that is the original term. And if you know or can cite where that term was first used in print—should be easy to find out; I'm a bit of a failure for not finding out myself—let us know! Write us at [hodgman@maximumfun.org](mailto:hodgman@maximumfun.org).

I don't think it was Radiohead's "Punch Up at a Wedding."

*[Jesse laughs quietly.]*

But at least John offers some textual support for his argument. As opposed to John's wife, who just probably... heard it through a game of Telephone, over the years.

00:27:17 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:27:18 Jesse Host Let's take a quick break. When we come back, we'll hear a case about cat-napping, and a letter about hat types.

00:27:25 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:27:27 Promo Clip **Music:** Upbeat, simple electronic music.

**Janet Varney:** Hey! I'm Janet Varney, and like many of you—some

more recent than others—I used to be a teenager. In fact, just about all of my friends were, too! Including wonderful women like Alison Brie.

*[Into interview.]*

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

*[Janet makes a sympathetic sound.]*

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

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

*[Out of interview.]*

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

*[Music fades.]*

00:28:12 Sound Effect Transition

*[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:28:13 Jesse Host

Welcome back to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. We're clearing the docket. Here's something from Gabriela.

00:28:20 John Host

I just want this pizza so bad.

*[Jesse laughs.]*

Look at all these pizzas! Any of them!

00:28:26 Jesse Host

I know. I—I'd take any pizza right now.

00:28:29 John Host

Right? It's—like, pizza is the chocolate chip cookie of... pizza!

*[Both laugh.]*

00:28:36 Jesse Host

It really is. I would say pizza is the chocolate chip cookie of overall!

00:28:42 John Host

Oh, wow! Pizza is the chocolate chip cookie of foods?

00:28:46 Jesse Host

I think pizza is the greatest food that the most people agree on. Uh, I think it's basically perfect. And... there's no doubt about it in my mind. I love lots of fancy foods. I love steaks. I love all kinds of things. I love cheeseburgers. These are all really great foods. But nothing beats pizza!

00:29:12 John Host

Yeah... I think I've gotta go with you. Let's put it this way. There is no dispute. In the world of round foods... chocolate chip cookies are the best cookies, and pizza is the best of all food that is round.

00:29:29 Jesse Host

Mm-hm.

00:29:30 John Host

I'm a—you know what I mean? Like, that's easy.

00:29:32 Jesse Host

Tip of the hat to pies.

00:29:34 John Host Tip of the hat to pies. Yeah. Close runner-up!

00:29:37 Jesse Host But yeah, I think you're absolutely right.

00:29:40 John Host Yeah. Pizza may be the chocolate chip cookie of all savory foods.

*[Beat.]*

Wellll, I look forward to your letters! Boy oh boy, I've got nothing else to do.

*[Jesse laughs quietly.]*

Send 'em in, hodgman@maximumfun.org. Tell me why I'm wrong! I always en...joy it? Let's go on.

*[Both laugh quietly.]*

00:29:59 Jesse Host Here's something from Gabriela:

"My friends Silvia and Fernando have a neighbor with a cat that likes to roam onto their terrace. They've started welcoming it into their home and buying cat food to encourage it to come over. More recently, Silvia took her neighbor's cat to the vet without her neighbor's permission."

00:30:18 John Host Wha—!

00:30:19 Jesse Host "Are my friends cat-nappers?"

00:30:21 John Host Wha—?! Silvia! Fernando! How dare you?!

*[Both laugh.]*

First of all, this sounds like a romantic ballad, of Silvia and Fernando and... The Cat.

00:30:33 Jesse Host *[Laughs.]* Just incorporate a Spanish guitar, and we're in business.

00:30:37 John Host Yeah! And "Silvia y Fernando y El Gato... Estraño."

*[Both laugh quietly.]*

00:30:44 Jesse Host You know what? I say we move it to Mexico and make this a guitarrón.

00:30:48 John Host I think so, too! I mean, it's just—there's something of a fable to this.

00:30:52 Jesse Host John, I saw a guitarrón at the thrift store—uh, back when thrift stores were still open.

00:30:58 John Host Yeah.

00:30:59 Jesse Host And you know, I've recently learned to play some chords on the ukulele.

00:31:04 John Host Yeah, quite a few, and you do a good job.

00:31:06 Jesse Host Thank you. And my desire to buy and learn to play a guitarrón... was so overwhelming that I had to just leave the store immediately. *[Laughing]* Lest I purchase a—a 12-foot beast of a musical instrument.

00:31:22 John Host For those who may be listening and who do not know what a guitarrón is... or for those who are listening and don't know what a

guitarrón is but don't wanna pretend like they do know what a guitarrón is, like me, will you explain what one is?

- 00:31:34 Jesse Host A guitarrón is a giant guitar. It's the kind—it's the type of guitar that is typically played in a mariachi ensemble. Among other types of—I've mostly seen them in Mexican music. But I'm sure that they—
- 00:31:50 John Host Oh, yeah, one of those biggies.
- 00:31:51 Jesse Host Yeah, they're—big—the big giant ones with the big bellies on them.
- 00:31:54 John Host Yeah.
- 00:31:55 Jesse Host Those things are real monsters. And I just thought "Man, I'd love to alternate between a ukulele and—*[laughs]* and one of these beasts."
- 00:32:04 John Host I'll tell you something. I don't know when we're gonna be able to get back on the road to do live *Judge John Hodgman* shows... but when that happens, it's gonna happen because we all stayed home. We were prudent. We practiced social distancing. We supported our healthcare workers. We waited it out. We hopefully minimized the real life damage, and got through this.

And Jesse, I make this promise to you and the listeners of *Judge John Hodgman*. The next time we are live and can be together again in person... I'm getting you a guitarrón, and you're gonna play it on stage.

*[Jesse bursts out laughing.]*

It's a promise. A Judge John Hodgman promise. An oath! I daresay.

- 00:32:54 Jesse Host As long as you're flying it in and out. *[Laughs.]*
- 00:32:58 John Host Yeah, I'm gonna have to buy an extra seat on the airplane. It's gonna be a mess. I'm not saying on every show! Let's say at the Los Angeles show.

*[Jesse laughs.]*

At a bare minimum the Los Angeles show. And I'll get it to you in time so that you can practice a few guitarrón songs.

- 00:33:15 Jesse Host You know, I have a friend named Camila Landau. Good buddy of mine from high school who plays in a Latin rock band called Carne Cruda. And I'm sure—
- 00:33:25 John Host Great name for a band.
- 00:33:26 Jesse Host I'm sure that Camila Landau knows—owns and knows how to play a guitarrón. So we'll get him to come down from the Bay Area, and, uh, he can show me a few sweet licks.
- 00:33:39 John Host Give you some lessons. Yeah, of course! But meanwhile, we have the fable of Silvia and Fernando. Who I imagine—uh, there's so much about this that feels fabulistic. Like, they have a terrace. I imagine them as a childless couple, wondering when they will have a child, if they will have a child. And then a cat wanders onto the terrace, and the cat becomes their special friend, and they start feeding the cat and imagining that they are building this little family with this little strange cat. El gato extraño. I don't know if my Spanish is correct there, but... leave me alone.

And then they care so much for this little kitty that they decide to get it a little check-up from the vet, and they go there as a little family, and the vet gives little Fake Baby—that's the name of the cat now, Fake Baby—a clean bill of health, and they go home as a good family. And what they don't see is the cat's actual person crying at home, because she or he or they doesn't know where their cat is!

You can't take a stranger's cat to the vet, Silvia and Fernando! I mean, I guess if there was clear and obvious evidence of abuse, or horrible neglect, there might be a moral imperative. But... nothing in here from Gabriela—and you know, Silvia and Fernando, defend yourselves! If you wanna write us a letter. But nothing in here suggests anything that—other than Silvia and Fernando just like this cat and wanna make it theirs. They're cat-nappers! They napped a cat. That makes 'em cat-nappers.

*[Jesse laughs.]*

You know? Words have meaning. You nap a cat, you're a cat-napper. That's how it goes.

00:35:26 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:35:28 Jesse Host A listener named Michael wrote in with some feedback on the episode "Tattoos of Limitation." (*Statute of Limitations.*) Here's what he had to say:

"As it happens, one of my little weirdsies—" copyright Linda Holmes, *Pop Culture Happy Hour*—"—is that I like to be very precise about hat types."

00:35:44 John Host Ugh.

00:35:45 Jesse Host "I'm annoyed when someone says 'fedora' when they mean 'trilby,' or 'top hat' instead of 'porkpie hat.' Your bailiff—"

00:35:52 John Host Can you just be annoyed when someone says "fedora"?

*[Both laugh.]*

Sorry.

00:35:57 Jesse Host "Your bailiff is something of a fashion expert, and as a fake legal professional I'm sure you can appreciate the importance of precise language. You can imagine my dismay, then, when Your Honor referred to the photo of Scott's doctoral hooding as a mortarboard. Because it is, in fact, a doctoral tam."

*[John snorts.]*

"I also have a PhD, and I'd be lying if I said getting to wear a tam instead of a mortarboard didn't factor into my decision to spend all that time in school."

00:36:26 John Host "The square academic cap, graduate cap, cap, mortarboard, or Oxford cap, is an item of academic dress consisting of a horizontal square board upon—fixed upon a skull-cap, with a tassel attached to the center. In the UK and the US, it is commonly referred to informally in conjunction with an academic gown as 'cap and gown.'



It is also sometimes termed a square, a trencher, or corner-cap. The adjective 'academical' is also used.

Doctorate holders of some universities wear the mortarboard, although the round Tudor bonnet is more common in Britain. The four, six, or eight-cornered 'tam' is gaining popularity in the US, and in general a soft square tam has some acceptance for w—"

Look. It's Wikipedia. I know this is all crowdsourced by... well, frankly, know-it-all's like you.

*[Both laugh quietly.]*

Michael. But you're not doing your job as a know-it-all if you're letting this Wikipedia article contradict every statement that you made in your letter! I don't see anything about a doctoral tam here. And "mortarboard" is common sense and common usage description of an academic square pie hat, or whatever the heck you wanna call it. Don't come at me and premise this by saying "It's not a fedora, it's a trilby."

*[Stifles laughter.]* Which of course is itself its own disgusting meme on the Internet; go look it up. Not disgusting like gross, but it's just, um—loaded. Let's put it that way. And then come at me and say it's called a doctoral tam. *[Scoffingly]* Doctoral tam...

Jesse Thorn, what do you think?

- |          |       |      |   |
|----------|-------|------|---|
| 00:38:09 | Jesse | Host | Did you ever decorate your mortarboard when you were graduating from college or high school?  |
| 00:38:14 | John  | Host | Uhhh, doctoral tam isn't even a mortarboard! That's not even what I'm talking about! Now I'm looking up at—looking it up! It's this soft, like, one-two-three-four-five-six-seven—like, octagonal thing! Different thing! It's not a fedora, it's a doctoral tam! |
| 00:38:29 | Jesse | Host | My friend Max Ritzenberg decorated his mortarboard—and you know I went to arts high school, so everybody decorated their mortarboard. He used pipe cleaners, yellow pipe cleaners, to recreate his spiky hair on top of his mortarboard.                          |

*[John laughs.]*

It looked really great. It was really awesome. I just took a—you know, like a hunting lure duck?

- |          |       |      |   |
|----------|-------|------|---|
| 00:38:53 | John  | Host | Uh-huh.   |
| 00:38:54 | Jesse | Host | And glued it to my hat.   |
| 00:38:56 | John  | Host | Yeah, a doctoral tam is a soft—it's a tam! It's like a tam o' shanter. It's like a tam. It's a soft, flat cap. It's not a stiff board, mortarboard, that kids use to create dioramas and— |

*[Jesse laughs quietly.]*

—for their graduations! Now—I get where you're coming from now. I'm glad—look. I'm gonna offer you this... this olive branch. "Well, technically it was not an olive branch, but an olive leaf." Ugh.

Whatever.

*[Both laugh quietly.]*

I'll offer you this olive branch, Michael. I bet you're right. First of all, thank you for introducing me to a new term, "doctoral tam." Never heard of it before. Glad to know it. Thanks for getting me all riled up. Frankly I need it. It's the best form of exercise I have these days, that I'm inside most of the day. And probably if I go back and look at the photo of Scott, the person with tattoos in the "Tattoos of Limitation" episode, what I would see is not a mortarboard but a doctoral tam, and I'm looking at it right now and god... or whatever damn it, Michael. Ughhh, you're right, it's a doctoral tam!

*[Something slams.]*

Ugh. I see it now. I see the photo. It is that weird octagonal soft thing. There's no way you could put pipe cleaners on there. You couldn't mount anything on there. It's a soft, octagonal or septagonal, velvety, doctoral tam.

00:40:22 Jesse Host The folks at Cole Hardware on Mission Street in San Francisco were kind enough to hook me up with industrial-strength adhesive Velcro to attach it. That was their recommendation.

00:40:34 John Host *[Stifles laughter.]* Technically it's not adhesive Velcro. It's duct tape. And technically it's Duck Tape.

*[Jesse laughs.]*

Anyway, look. Surely they recommended—

00:40:44 Jesse Host Booo.

00:40:45 John Host Yeah, I know, well...

*[Jesse laughs.]*

Look, I'm flailing here! My—I went off on Michael. This has been a real—a real emotional rollercoaster. And when I put it together that he was probably referring to that actual photo, I should have done my homework and I didn't, and, um—and—look. My humiliation is entertainment enough for you, and it is important to admit when we're wrong. Michael, I was wrong. "Doctoral tam" is correct.

Ugh.

Let's get outta here, Jesse. And let's eat some pizza.

00:41:15 Jesse Host You know, a trilby is actually kind of a... a sub-type of fedora.

*[John snorts.]*

It's like a short-brimmed fedora, typically. It's not even really—like, I—I've—I often have the impulse to correct people talking about fedoras, back in the days when every annoying doofus was wearing a thirty-dollar, mall hat store trilby.

00:41:38 John Host Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

00:41:39 Jesse Host And then they'd be like "Oh, every—" and then it's people would be like "Oh, every annoying doofus is wearing a fedora these days," and I wanted to be like "Well, it's actually a trilby." But... eh, it's sort of a sub-type.

00:41:49 John Host But that was what I'm refer—that's what the annoying doofuses would say back to the fedora people online.

*[Jesse laughs.]*

And it became a cliché. If you were an annoying doofus wearing a fedora, and someone said "You're an annoying doofus wearing a fedora," the annoying doofus would say "Actually, Madam, it's a trilby."

*[Both laugh quietly.]*

As though that was going to save them from doofism!

00:42:08 Jesse Host *[Laughs.]* Doofism will consume you!

00:42:13 John Host *[Whispering]* It's true.

*[Regular volume]* Hyper-correctional doofism will consume you. But it'll eat me alive first.

I look forward to your letters. [Hodgman@maximumfun.org](mailto:Hodgman@maximumfun.org). I think that's it! Right, Jesse? Can we eat some pizza now?

00:42:25 Jesse Host The docket's clear. That's it for another episode of *Judge John Hodgman*. Our producer is the ever-capable Jennifer Marmor, who right now is, uh, wearing a homburg!

*[John snorts.]*

She's not really wearing a homburg. *[Laughs.]*

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

00:43:02 John Host Send me your memories of Rob Riggle putting his pants on!

00:43:05 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:43:06 Music Transition A cheerful guitar chord.

00:43:08 Speaker 1 Guest [MaximumFun.org](https://MaximumFun.org).

00:43:10 Speaker 2 Guest Comedy and culture.

00:43:11 Speaker 3 Guest Artist owned—

00:43:12 Speaker 4 Guest —audience supported.