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| 00:00:00 | Sound Effect | Transition | <i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i> |
| 00:00:02 | Jesse Thorn | Host | Welcome to the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast. I'm Bailiff Jesse Thorn. We're in chambers this week, clearing the docket. With me as always is the king of all chefs—sorry, Raekwon!—Judge John Hodgman. |
| 00:00:15 | John Hodgman | Host | I'm the king of all chefs now? <i>[The as-yet-unannounced guest laughs.]</i> I don't deserve this. |
| 00:00:18 | Jesse | Host | 'Cause we're gonna do food stuff on this episode, I made you the king of all chefs! |
| 00:00:22 | John | Host | If anything I am the prince regent. If anything I am the dowager countess. <i>[Jesse and the guest laugh.]</i> If anything I am the— <i>[laughs]</i> . I mean, 'cause we have a special guest! We have an expert of all experts with us right now. |
| 00:00:37 | Jesse | Host | We have a man with us who is both a great cook <u>and</u> a great chef. He's the author of the James Beard Award–winning cookbook <i>The Food Lab: Better Home Cooking Through Science</i> , which I have at my home because I paid actual money to buy it— <i>[The guest laughs.]</i> —and it is my favorite cookbook. He also has a children's book coming out later this year called <i>Every Night Is Pizza Night</i> . He is <u>also</u> the chef behind the Bay Area restaurant Wursthall, which is currently preparing and delivering meals to hospitals and community centers. Friend of the court... Kenji López-Alt. Hi, Kenji! How are you, friend? |
| 00:01:15 | J. Kenji López-Alt | Guest | Good! How are you doing? |
| 00:01:16 | Jesse | Host | Good! I just watched a video of you making a steak using a GoPro camera. |
| 00:01:21 | Kenji | Guest | Oh, yeah, yeah. That's—that's like my new—my new—I'm apparently a YouTube creator now, so, uh... <i>[Kenji and Jesse laugh.]</i> That's what I've transitioned into now that I'm stuck mostly at home, is I strap a camera to my head and I cook every day. <i>[Chuckles.]</i> |
| 00:01:33 | Jesse | Host | I learned a lot about steak-cooking! |
| 00:01:34 | John | Host | I thought it was some kind of like, intense sous-vide technique. Where it's like, "All you do is you fill this baggy up with water, throw steak in there, throw a GoPro in there—" <i>[Kenji and Jesse laugh.]</i> |
| 00:01:44 | Kenji | Guest | No, it's kinda the opposite! You know? It's like, my book is very much about like, sort of precision, and "You do this for this reason, you do |

this for that reason."

- 00:01:50 John Host Right.
- 00:01:51 Kenji Guest *[Chuckles.]* And my actual home cooking is just like "Uh, it doesn't really matter." That's kinda the catchphrase of the show, is "It doesn't really mat—you can do this if you want. It doesn't really matter."
[Laughs.]
- 00:02:00 Jesse Host I think my favorite part of J. Kenji López-Alt's, uh, steak-cooking head video—which I watched all of. It's like a 20-minute long video with Kenji just narrating cooking his family lunch. And Kenji is—like, one of his greatest contributions *[stifles laughter]* to world cookery is something called the reverse sear, a method of cooking a steak that he developed for—I think for—what was it? For *Cooks Illustrated*?
- 00:02:28 Kenji Guest It was for *Cooks Illustrated*. Yeah, yeah.
- 00:02:30 Jesse Host Yeah, like 15 years ago. And it's something that has changed many a steak cooker's life. And Kenji was like "Yeah, well, I know I invented that one, but I'm just gonna cook it in the pan today."

[Kenji and John laugh.]
- It was great.
- 00:02:42 Kenji Guest Although I don't claim to have invented it, because I'm sure there were people doing—if you go to Meathead's AmazingRibs.com, I think there's like a full history of all the people who were doing that in various ways before I came and developed it in a different—slightly different way, and published it in *Cooks Illustrated*. But, uh—
- 00:02:58 John Host But you road-tested it, you stress-tested it. If people don't understand, the reverse sear method is a method of cooking a steak—or it could be a pork chop. Right? Or even—
- 00:03:09 Kenji Guest Yeah! Anything, really, yeah.
- 00:03:11 John Host Any kind of big slab of protein.
- 00:03:12 Kenji Guest Yes.
- 00:03:13 John Host And what you do is you cook it in a very—what they call slow oven, at a very low temperature, using a meat thermometer to get it precisely to the temperature that you want it to be, or maybe just below. And then finishing it over a hot fire or in a hot cast iron pan.
- 00:03:30 Kenji Guest Mm-hm!
- 00:03:31 John Host They call it the reverse sear because normally you would start by searing. Right? And then you might finish it in an oven. But this way, it's almost like a—a modified sous-vide technique, where you are cooking for temperature first, and then finishing it.
- 00:03:46 Kenji Guest Yeah. That's actually how I—the—how I came up with the technique. Because I had been working in restaurants where we were doing sous-vide, but sous-vide devices at the time were still like \$1500, \$2000.
- 00:03:54 John Host Right.
- 00:03:55 Kenji Guest And you know, the home devices didn't exist. So I was just thinking, "Well, like, what's a way we can sort of mimic this approach for home cook?" And that's how we landed on reverse sear. Although we didn't even call it "reverse sear" at the time. Someone came up with that

name on the Internet later.

- 00:04:10 John Host Right. So—and also that's how they—you know, the big—like the House of Prime Rib in San Francisco—
- 00:04:16 Kenji Guest Mm-hm.
- 00:04:17 John Host —all those big prime rib places, they are slow-roasting those prime ribs. It's the same—
- 00:04:22 Kenji Guest Oh, yeah. Low and slow.
- 00:04:23 John Host It's—low and slow. Even though it's not—I don't know. I could talk about cooking all day long.
- [Kenji laughs.]*
- But I don't want to, because I'm not the king of ch—oh, i do have to say this. Kenji, so happy you're here. Because it's just—it's totally coincidental that, uh, I just made this weekend your, quote, "the best chili ever recipe," unquote.
- 00:04:41 Kenji Guest Oh, okay!
- 00:04:42 John Host That you can find over at SeriousEats.com.
- 00:04:44 Kenji Guest Yeah! That's a recipe I haven't made since I wrote it down. *[Laughs.]* 'Cause it's very involved.
- 00:04:50 John Host It is very involved. And you approach cooking with a scientist's curiosity. And every—I know that everything is happening for a reason, but as I was going through this recipe...
- 00:05:01 Kenji Guest Mm-hm.
- 00:05:03 John Host I was like "Okay, then. I gotta... I gotta roast these cloves, and grind them..."
- [Kenji laughs quietly.]*
- "And then get the soy sauce and two—not one, not three, but two anchovy filets are going into this? And all this." I'm like "This guy is overthinking this quite a bit. Let's just get—"
- [Kenji laughs.]*
- But then I got to the part where it says "one teaspoon marmite."
- 00:05:24 Kenji Guest Right.
- 00:05:25 John Host And I was like "Oh, I'm making this."
- [Kenji and Jesse laugh.]*
- "This guy's putting marmite in his chili. I know he's onto something." 'Cause marmite is one of the most intensely beloved flavors, on Earth, by me.
- 00:05:37 Kenji Guest Oh, really! Okay, I didn't know that.
- 00:05:39 John Host And I completely saw where—

[Kenji laughs.]

Well, for people who don't know, I mean, marmite is this—it's like this fermented yeast product that British people put on toast.

00:05:46 Kenji Guest

Yeah.

00:05:47 John Host

Right?

00:05:48 Kenji Guest

Yeah.

00:05:49 John Host

And it's very funky and umami-ish.

00:05:50 Kenji Guest

Right.

00:05:51 John Host

And I was like "Oh, this is gonna add a ton of depth of flavor that I never thought—I gotta give this a try."

[Kenji chuckles.]

And I made it, and I served it to my family, and my wife said "Don't ever make chili any other way again."

00:06:04 Kenji Guest

Oh, well that's good!

[Jesse laughs.]

I was gonna say, you know, that the secret to that recipe, really—the secret to that recipe's success is to make it so difficult that no matter how good it is at the end, people feel like they have to like it because they've put so much work into it.

00:06:15 John Host

No!

[Kenji and Jesse laugh.]

No. And I can tell you that's not true, because my wife put zero work into it.

[All three laugh.]

00:06:24 Kenji Guest

Well, that's good to know. *[Laughs.]*

00:06:25 John Host

You know, we're all at home right now. You know what I mean?

00:06:28 Kenji Guest

Yeah. Yeah.

00:06:29 John Host

And I spent the afternoon—well, actually the morning and the afternoon—getting this thing together. Having a great time!

[Kenji laughs.]

But by the end of it, I—I kinda said to my wife "Look at me cooking over here! Why aren't you helping?!" *[Laughs.]*

00:06:44 Kenji Guest

Right. *[Laughs.]*

00:06:45 John Host

She's like "You wanted to do this!" and I'm like "You're right, I did..."

00:06:47 Kenji Guest

And she liked it! Which I—I'm sorry, I've now—I feel like I've now sentenced you to a life of overly fussy chili-making. *[Chuckles.]*

00:06:54 John Host

No! It's not—I mean, because the basics are there. I mean—

00:06:57 Kenji Guest

Yeah.

00:06:58 John Host

—the—and the way you lay out—I mean, one of the things about making really good chili is you wanna use actual dried chilis.

00:07:05 Kenji Guest Yeah. That's the most important part, yeah.

00:07:07 John Host And that's intimidating for a lot of people. Right?

00:07:08 Kenji Guest Yeah, like, lose the powder, use real dried chilis. Like, that's by far the most important thing.

00:07:12 John Host You know, if you're not from any sort of Mexican-American heritage, working with dried chilis is intimidating, 'cause... in fresh form they have a certain name, and then in dried form they have a certain name—

00:07:24 Kenji Guest Yeah, yeah.

00:07:25 John Host —and sometimes they have different kinds of names, and you gotta go get 'em... But once you get used to using them—and this recipe really lays out a really great sort of sequence of events for seeding the chilis, and then cooking them up in that chicken stock after you've browned off the meat. It's perfect. [The Best Chili Ever Recipe](#). Go get it, everyone. And that's our podcast! Thanks very much.

[Kenji laughs.]

We have more—*[laughs]*.

00:07:47 Jesse Host Look, we are—we're gonna have plenty of time with Kenji for me to address roast potatoes, and to ask him what's wrong with my chocolate chip cookies. But first, how about a question from a listener? Anna says:

"My boyfriend uses the word 'savory' as an antonym to 'spicy.' As in the question, 'Do you want something spicy or savory for dinner?'"

[Kenji laughs quietly.]

"The first couple times he said this, I was confused, because any meal we would make for dinner would probably be savory. But it might or might not be spicy. I'd argue almost all spicy foods are also savory. I ask you order him to find a better word to describe comfort foods that are not spicy."

00:08:32 John Host ...Yeah. Uh—

00:08:33 Kenji Guest Yeah. *[Laughs.]*

00:08:34 John Host Kenji, what do you think?

00:08:36 Kenji Guest I mean, that reminds me of the kinds of things like my daughter would say. It's like "Should we have a bubble bath or a warm bath?" It's like, it—it doesn't have to be either/or. Like...

[Jesse and John laugh.]

Uh, it could be—it could be both, or one or the other, you know? Um—yeah! I would say savory—*[stifles laughter]* savory and spicy are sort of orthogonal. They don't affect each other. You can have spicy foods that are not savory. Like if you go to Mexico, they have a lot of sweet foods—like the candies there, like tamarind candy with chili in it. Really tasty. Um—yeah, there're definitely parts of the world where they eat spicy and sweet at the same time. I would say sweet is the antonym to savory.

00:09:10 John Host Yes.

00:09:11 Kenji Guest But yeah, I think in the US, most of us are familiar with spicy foods that are always savory. So it does seem weird to—I mean, where—I would wonder where her boyfriend is from, or who raised him. Um... yeah! That—I'd say spicy and savory, that's a very strange dichotomy.

00:09:30 John Host Whoever raised Anna's boyfriend raised him... wrong.

[Kenji laughs.]

Sorry. Because—*[stifles laughter]*. I hate to do this. Kenji, I hate to go to the dictionary. For a couple of reasons. One, it's the worst way to open a school paper. "The dictionary definition of savory is 'blah blah blah blah blah.'" "

00:09:46 Kenji Guest Right.

[All three laugh.]

00:09:48 John Host Two, because a dictionary is sort of an arbitrary, frozen-in-time—

00:09:52 Kenji Guest Mm-hm.

00:09:53 John Host —picture of language, rather than truly a—I mean, ironically it's not—it is not definitive.

00:09:59 Kenji Guest Yes.

00:10:00 John Host It is constantly evolving. And three, because the dictionary of choice of the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast is of course Merriam-Webster, because we have our friend Emily Brewster come on from time to time, and she was—she's an editor there.

00:10:11 Kenji Guest Mm.

00:10:12 John Host And discovered a previously undocumented use of the word "a" that got in the dictionary! But Merriam-Webster is also my mortal enemy, because they... Merriam-Webster claims that a hotdog is a sandwich.

00:10:24 Kenji Guest Yes.

[Kenji and Jesse laugh.]

I was gonna bring that up—I was gonna say, you know, as soon as you bring in the dictionary, you know that you've already lost the hotdog debate. *[Laughs.]*

00:10:32 John Host Yeah. How do you feel—do you—just before we go on with this podcast...

00:10:35 Kenji Guest Yeah.

00:10:36 John Host Well, actually, save your response until we get through this question.

00:10:39 Kenji Guest *[Laughing]* Okay.

00:10:40 John Host But I did go to Merriam-Webster. And it says "Definition of savory: A, B, C, D, E." Five definitions. One, "Piquantly pleasant to the mind. 'A savory triumph.'" Mm!

"Morally exemplary. Pleasing to the sense of taste or smell, especially by reason of effective seasoning." That's a hard sentence to say. Maybe punch that one up, Merriam-Webster.

[Kenji and Jesse laugh.]

Indeed, "Having a spicy or salty quality WITHOUT SWEETNESS." Specifically defined. Without sweetness.

00:11:10 Kenji Guest Yes.

00:11:11 John Host So yeah, I would say savory and spicy are—I loved your term for it, Kenji. They are orthogonal.

00:11:17 Kenji Guest Yes.

00:11:18 John Host There is more Venn overlap between spicy and savory. They are not opposites by any means. Now, I have these questions for you. One, tell me more about the Mexican sweet-spicy candy.

00:11:31 Kenji Guest Okay.

00:11:32 John Host And two, is a hotdog a sandwich?

[Kenji laughs.]

I'll take the answers in whatever order you prefer.

00:11:38 Kenji Guest Well, the first one, um—so, you know, in Mexico—also in parts of Southeast Asia—so, it's common to have like, fruit with chili. So "tajín" is the name of the chili powder stuff that has—so it—I think it has like, powdered lime and chilis in it.

00:11:52 John Host Mm-hm.

00:11:53 Kenji Guest It comes in a little jar with a white top, and you shake it on. And you sprinkle that onto like, mango slices or pineapple slices. Um, green mango also really tasty. But—so at the Mexican market, the—actually it's a Salvadoran market near me, but they sell a lot of Mexican products, around the corner from my house. They have these tamarind candies that are... I don't know! They're kinda like chewy, and sweet, and really sour, but then they're coated in chili.

00:12:17 John Host Mm!

00:12:18 Kenji Guest And—yeah.

00:12:19 John Host So they're spicy.

00:12:20 Kenji Guest They're really good. Yeah, yeah! Spicy. Spicy chili. Yeah.

00:12:21 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** And is a hotdog a sandwich?

Jesse: What about the hotdog thing?

John: Yeah.

00:12:24 Kenji Guest Well—well, so... *[Sighs/laughs.]* I mean, I think a hotdog is a sandwich in the way that like a potato salad is a salad. You know? It's like, if there was no other section on the menu—if there's no specific saus—so at my restaurant, we have a sausage section on the menu, and we have a sandwich section on the menu. And the hotdogs go in the sausage section, not in the sandwich section. Even though they're served in a bun.

00:12:44 John Host *[Relieved sigh.]*

00:12:45 Kenji Guest But, if there's no other place on the menu to put a hotdog, I would

put it in the sandwich section. You know, same as like, if there's only one burger—

00:12:51 John Host Should have just left—you should have just left it there, Kenji. You should have left it with the menu at your restaurant.

[Kenji and Jesse laugh.]

00:12:55 Kenji Guest My argument has always been if I ask a—if a friend says to me "Hey, I'm going down to the corner to the deli. Can I get you a sandwich?" and I say yes, and then they bring me back a hotdog, I would think "...Wait a second. That's not what I—"

00:13:05 John Host "What's wrong with you?"

00:13:06 Kenji Guest Yeah. "That—that's—"

00:13:07 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:13:08 Kenji Guest "That's not a sandwich."

00:13:09 John Host What's the name of your restaurant again?

00:13:10 Kenji Guest Wursthall.

00:13:11 John Host Wursthall?

00:13:12 Kenji Guest Yeah. W-U-R-S-T.

00:13:13 John Host Look, let me—right. Let me say this. Even though—listeners, even though Kenji seems to be waffling a little bit on this—

[Kenji laughs, John stifles laughter.]

—that—that—Wursthall gets it right! Wursthall menu gets it right.

Jesse Thorn, I have this question for you. Have you ever put sriracha on a satsuma?

[Beat.]

[John or Kenji hums thoughtfully. Jesse laughs, and then Kenji laughs.]

00:13:38 Jesse Host That's a—that's a—that's a lot to ask of me, John. *[Laughs.]*

00:13:42 John Host This is the *Judge John Hodgman* challenge! Listeners—is it satsuma season yet?

00:13:46 Jesse Host It's—satsuma season's over, baby!

00:13:49 John Host Oh.

00:13:50 Jesse Host It ended a few weeks ago.

00:13:51 John Host Oh.

00:13:52 Kenji Guest Yeah, it won't be back for a while.

00:13:53 Jesse Host I'm eating the dregs of the Golden Nuggets right now.

00:13:56 Kenji Guest Is that a type or orange, also? A Golden Nugget? That's a citrus fruit?

00:13:59 Jesse Host Yeah, that's a—a Gold Nugget's like a tangerine, like—

00:14:02 Kenji Guest Oh, okay. Alright.

00:14:02 Jesse Host It's sort of—it's a big and lumpy one.

00:14:05 Kenji Guest Ohhh, alright, alright.

00:14:06 Jesse Host Like a slightly bigger satsuma.

00:14:07 Kenji Guest I think ours—our—we have a satsuma tree in our back yard, and I think it gave its last one like... probably a week ago. Maybe two weeks ago.

00:14:14 John Host Hm. Now I wanna try a sriracha satsuma! Listeners, go over to the [Maximum Fun reddit](#). On the discussion board for [this episode](#), give us your suggestions for fruits and hot sauce pairings. I'll try 'em!

00:14:29 Kenji Guest Watermelon with jalapeño. Good.

00:14:32 John Host Ooh.

00:14:33 Kenji Guest I like that.

00:14:34 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Jesse:** That does sound nice.

John: That sounds good.

Kenji: And feta cheese.

00:14:36 Kenji Guest Watermelon, feta cheese, and jalapeño.

00:14:38 John Host There we go!

00:14:39 Jesse Host I could imagine putting a hot sauce on a—on a sort of simply sweet fruit like a cherimoya or something.

[Beat.]

00:14:47 Kenji Guest You just made that word up.

00:14:48 John Host No, that's a—that's a—

[Kenji and Jesse laugh.]

00:14:50 Kenji Guest *[Laughing]* No, I know, I know what a cherimoya is.

00:14:53 John Host What's that—what's that—what's that goofy apple you're always trying to get me to eat? Cherim—what is it called?

00:14:57 Jesse Host Yeah!

00:14:58 Kenji Guest Yeah.

00:14:59 Jesse Host That's—that's what—*[laughs]* that's what it is! It's—

00:15:00 Kenji Guest "Custard app—custard apple" they call it, right?

00:15:02 John Host Custard apple!

00:15:03 Jesse Host The custard apple.

[Quiet laughter from Jesse and one or both of the others.]

Now, the cherimoyas have just started showing up at my farmers market.

00:15:08 John Host Alright.

00:15:09 Jesse Host They come down from—I think from the Santa Barbara area. Anyway! Here's something from Andrew:

"When my friends and I rent a cabin for a long weekend, I'm usually the one that wakes up first in the morning to make a pot of coffee for everyone. I like to pour a cup for myself before the pot is finished brewing."

00:15:23 John Host

Hmm!

00:15:24 Jesse Host

"Most modern coffeemakers automatically pause the brewing when you remove the pot to pour a cup. My friend John argues I'm diluting the coffee for the rest of the group, and I should wait until the full pot is complete. Please order that I am permitted to continue pouring my coffee, regardless of whether the coffeemaker has finished making a full pot."

00:15:45 John Host

Ugh. Kenji, what do you think?

00:15:47 Jesse Host

Well, I think given that he's the one who wakes up to make coffee for everyone else, he's allowed to do whatever he wants. I think that—that's the basic rule.

[John or Jesse claps several times.]

00:15:56 John Host

Wooow!

00:15:57 Kenji Guest

But—*[laughs]* if his friend John is saying that it's diluting, I—you know, I'm like, pretty famously not a coffee drinker, but that's...

00:16:05 John Host

Right.

00:16:06 Kenji Guest

Knowing how my parents—you know, how my parents' coffee machine works, uh, I would say you probably are diluting it, because... I don't know. That water at the beginning is dripping through all the fresh grounds, right? If—assuming it's a drip machine.

00:16:18 John Host

Right.

00:16:19 Kenji Guest

And even if it shuts off, even if it doesn't let it drip through, you're still getting the most extraction out of those first few drips. So I would say John is correct in that it is diluting the coffee for everyone else, but... he—I mean, he's the one making the coffee. He gets to choose.

00:16:33 Jesse Host

Kenji, I'm glad that you're not a coffee drinker.

[Kenji laughs.]

'Cause you need to leave one type of food nerdery alone. Like, you're already—you already have to lead—you have the responsibility on your shoulders of leading all the cast iron nerds...

[Kenji and John laugh.]

00:16:47 John Host

[Laughing] Yeah.

00:16:48 Jesse Host

...and all the sous-vide nerds, and then all the umami nerds.

00:16:53 Kenji Guest

I made Coffee Twitter angry once, because I suggested—oh, there was somebody—I'm not gonna say his name, but somebody was writing an article on Serious Eats who, um... who casually mentioned that blade grinders are worse than burr grinders, because they give you uneven grind sizes. And I—on Twitter I think I just asked, like, um, "Okay, like, that—that clearly makes sense, but do we—like—but like, are we sure that uneven grind size is necessarily a bad thing in coffee?" It's like, "I don't know." Like, "Can someone explain it to me?"

And then Coffee Twitter got very mad.

00:17:27 John Host

Yeah.

00:17:28 Kenji Guest

That I—that I would dare question that.

00:17:29 John Host

Yeah.

[Jesse and Kenji laugh.]

I'm gonna say this. This episode—we have not even finished recording this episode. Never mind sending it out into the world. And I am already getting angry emails from coffee people.

[Kenji laughs.]

About Andrew. Like, I just—like—I—I'm—I'm getting letters shoved underneath the door of my office right now.

[Kenji chuckles.]

Because—look. I, uh, am pretty... ecumenical about coffee. I like good coffee, I like bad coffee. I like hot coffee, I like cold coffee. I will drink the coffee that was sitting on my desk yesterday. I do not really care a lot. But I do know that there is a science to the extraction of coffee, in terms of water temperature, grind, etc., etc. More science than I care to know about.

00:18:15 Kenji Guest

[Chuckling] Right.

00:18:16 John Host

And I do—I do know that if you grab out that pot, and grab a cup, that that—the cup you're having is gonna be different than what it would have been if you had let the entire brewing process complete. That's why you measure the amount of grounds. That's why you measure the amount of water.

Andrew, modern coffeemakers don't pause the brewing when you pull the carafe out because it makes no difference to the brewing. They pause it so that it doesn't affect the counter and your dumb pants and shirt with coffee splattering everywhere when you do this thing.

[Kenji and Jesse laugh.]

Now look, I'll abide by the King of Chefs, J. Kenji López-Alt, and say that it is—it is royal privilege, apparently. It is your—it is your royal privilege to mess up the coffee for everyone else if you get up and make it.

[Kenji laughs quietly.]

You could be messing it up just by making it wrong, anyway. Sooo, I guess—I guess he's right. John, you gotta wake up early in the morning when you're out in a cabin with Andrew. But frankly, Andrew—frankly, I'm—I'm—I'm sorry that we're all having to stay at home these days. But I'm glad you can't rent a cabin anymore, because boy, oh boy...

[Kenji laughs.]

00:19:26 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:19:27 John Host You're messing it up.

00:19:28 Jesse Host I want an injunction against my wife, who's a *Judge John Hodgman* listener. Uh, I want her to make her coffee before she makes breakfast and breakfast drinks for our children. I have no standing in this, because I tend to get up after she and they have been up for 45 minutes.

00:19:47 Kenji Guest Mm.

[Kenji and/or John laughs quietly.]

00:19:47 Jesse Host But, um—uh, but I would love her to kind of, like, in the spirit of "put your own oxygen mask on first, before putting them on your children," uh, I would like my wife to take care of her own caffeine needs before she addresses the breakfast drink needs of our little ones.

00:20:07 John Host So ordered.

00:20:08 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[A single gavel bang.]*

00:20:09 Jesse Host Thank you.

00:20:10 John Host You're welcome.

00:20:11 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.

00:20:15 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:20:17 Jesse Promo The *Judge John Hodgman* podcast is of course always supported by the members of MaximumFun.org. This week we're also supported by our friends at Sun Basket. Now, John, I have to tell you something.

00:20:30 John Promo Yes?

00:20:31 Jesse Promo When I say "our friends at Sun Basket," I'm not speaking metaphorically. One of the co-founders of Sun Basket is one of my closest friends from college!

[Both suppress laughter.]

00:20:39 John Promo Wow!

00:20:40 Jesse Promo So shout-out to my friend Tyler! *[Laughs.]* He's a wonderful guy!

00:20:43 John Promo Sun Basket makes cooking easy and convenient with healthy, delicious, pre-portioned meals sent straight to your door. And I mean, this is a time when we're talking and thinking a lot about lessening the load, lessening interaction. If you're looking to reduce unnecessary trips out, you're trying to avoid sold-out grocery stores, or you're having difficulty finding stuff, or there's someone in your family—or you are someone who should not be leaving the house—this is a great and delicious solution... for these times that we're living in.

00:21:11 Jesse Promo I just ordered some tasty, tasty meal kits for my family. I'm—I am really excited about them. It was nice for me, because my wife has a wheat allergy, that I was able to order gluten-free options. But also, besides that, Sun Basket, I think even relative to their competitors,

has cool innovative recipes. And also, they really focus on clean food, you know, organic produce, and so on and so forth. It's a—it's really—they send you really nice stuff.

00:21:41 John Promo

And on top of that, Sun Basket facilities have the highest level of food employee safety, to protect you, and your family, and their employees!

00:21:49 Jesse Promo

Right now Sun Basket is offering \$35 off your order when you go, right now, to SunBasket.com/judge and enter the promo code "judge" at checkout. That's SunBasket.com/judge, and enter the promo code "judge" at checkout for \$35 off your order.

00:22:08 John Promo

That's SunBasket.com/judge, and enter promo code "judge."

00:22:14 Sound Effect Transition

[Three gavel bangs.]

00:22:16 Promo Clip

Music: Bouncy music.

Jackie Kashian: Hi, I'm Jackie Kashian.

Laurie Kilmartin: Hi! I'm Laurie Kilmartin.

Jackie: And we have a podcast called The Jackie and Laurie Show. Who are you, Laurie Kilmartin?

Laurie: Oh my god. So much pressure. Uh, I'd say I'm a standup, I've been doing standup since 1987. I'm a writer for Conan. I've written a couple books, have a couple CDs out, have a special out. Who are you, Jackie?

Jackie: *[Chuckles.]* Well, I too am a standup comic, since 1984. And I do the road like a maniac and don't have a cool writing job, but I have four albums out. Working on a new album. We talk about standup. We talk about all the different parts of standup comedy. So that's *The Jackie and Laurie Show*, and you should subscribe, on Maximum Fun if you wanna hear that!

Laurie: *[Laughs.]* And I would encourage you not to!

[Jackie laughs.]

[Music fades out.]

00:23:01 Sound Effect Transition

[Three gavel bangs.]

00:23:03 Jesse Host

Welcome back to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. We're clearing the docket with our guest J. Kenji López-Alt. Kenji is a cookbook author. You've seen him in *The New York Times*. You've seen him in *Serious Eats*. If you don't have a copy of his book *The Food Lab*, you should have a copy of his book *The Food Lab*. He's got a kids book coming out called *Every Night Is Pizza Night*.

And—Kenji, your restaurant Wursthall, which is, uh, just south of San Francisco? Where is it, San Mateo or something like that?

00:23:34 Kenji Guest

San Mateo, yeah.

00:23:34 Jesse Host

Wow, I nailed it!

[Kenji laughs.]

Uh—I haven't been there! *[Laughs.]* I'd love to go!

Your restaurant has been making food for hospitals and so on and so forth, during the COVID crisis. And you've been helped out in doing so by donations from people who love the restaurant, and people who know you from your work elsewhere, and so on and so forth, right?

00:23:59 Kenji Guest Yeah! Both direct donations to the—so like, on our website—or on our order—online order thing, you can buy boxes—meal boxes directly. Or you can donate to World Central Kitchen or Off Their Plate, who work with a number of restaurants. But we're—we do some stuff with—some work with them as well. Yeah! That's actually like—you know, that's sort of... the idea was that we could help the community while also helping to keep as many of our employees employed as possible. So that's how we're dealing with the COVID crisis right now.

00:24:33 Jesse Host Now Kenji, I mentioned earlier on the program the issue of potatoes. The other day, our friend—uh, John and my friend Nick Wiger from the *Doughboys* podcast—

00:24:44 Kenji Guest Mm-hm.

00:24:45 Jesse Host Mentioned that because he had been cooking at home more, he was looking for everyone's, like, special recipe that was not—not special by virtue of super-fanciness, but by virtue of utility. And what I told him to cook for his family—his wife Natalie—

00:25:00 Kenji Guest Mm-hm.

00:25:01 Jesse Host —was your recipe for crispy roasted potatoes.

00:25:04 Kenji Guest Mm-hm.

00:25:05 Jesse Host What is the central thing that separates your roasted potatoes from roasties the world over?

00:25:12 Kenji Guest Well, it's adding baking soda to the water when you boil it.

00:25:15 John Host Wow!

00:25:16 Kenji Guest So baking soda—I mean, it raises the pH of the water, and so the pectin, which is the carbohydrate glue that kind of holds plant cells together, it breaks down more rapidly under higher pHes. So you cut your potatoes up, you put a little baking soda in the water, you boil the potatoes in there. And then the outside of them get really kinda rough. And then after that it's—you follow the same sort of typical British roasty thing where you toss the potatoes, kind of rough up the surfaces as much as you can, and then, you know, toss 'em with oil or butter or duck fat or beef fat, whatever you want, and then roast 'em in the oven.

But the baking soda is what really makes those outsides sort of super—you know, gives them those like kind of micro-blisters, is I think—I think I call them "micro-blisters" in that thing. But you know, the like—the little micro-blisters that you get on like a good french fry or a good bagel.

00:26:01 John Host Mm. Mm!

00:26:02 Kenji Guest Like, the thing that adds surface area and extra crunch. That's, um—

that's the trick!

00:26:07 John Host And would this be with peeled potatoes, or could you do it with like, unpeeled fingerling potatoes?

00:26:11 Kenji Guest You can—uh, you—well, if you're using finger—so you do want to like, expose the flesh.

00:26:17 John Host Got it. So you'd wanna peel 'em.

00:26:18 Kenji Guest So if you're using fingerling potatoes, you'd—yeah. You do wanna either split them or use larger—you know, it works best with russet potatoes or—

00:26:25 John Host Peeled russet potatoes?

00:26:26 Kenji Guest Uh, russet potatoes that are cut. Into pieces.

00:26:28 John Host Gotcha.

00:26:29 Kenji Guest Yeah. So like, even if you cut the potatoes up and you boil them, then there's enough of this like, sort of mash potatoes paste that kind of sloughs off the cut surfaces that it ends up coating the peeled side—you know, the side with the peel as well.

00:26:43 John Host Right.

00:26:44 Kenji Guest So that that side gets enough surface area and crisps up as well.

00:26:46 Jesse Host I've always been a waxy potato man. I'm not even—I honestly, like—I'm not even a potato guy. I'm not a lover of potatoes the way that many people are. I'm fine with potatoes, but you know, I've—french fries, I'm like, "I'll take onion rings, thank you."

00:26:59 Kenji Guest Yeah.

00:27:00 Jesse Host But I've always been a waxy potato guy, 'cause I hate the—I don't like a—I don't like the texture of the inside of a potato all that much.

00:27:08 Kenji Host Mm.

00:27:09 Jesse Host Like, if I eat a baked potato often I just add a lot of dairy to it.

00:27:12 Kenji Guest Oh, yeah! For sure.

00:27:13 Jesse Host To make it smoother, and so on and so forth. When I—I—so I had started making this recipe of yours, Kenji, with waxy potatoes, and it works great! I mean, it was—it was revelatory! I was like "Wow, this is fantastic!"

And then one day, I had only been to a—like a small regular grocery store, and all they had was russets, and I said "Well, I'll just grab a few russet potatoes, and I'll—it said you could use waxy or russet in that roast potato recipe. I'll try these." The result was spectacular. And the crust that they develop when they're banging around because of the way the—the altered pH in the boiling, uh, gets 'em, is so delightful, and then you get that wonderful—you know, with russet potatoes, if you get it right, the inside is like a total dream!

00:28:01 Kenji Guest Yeah! Yeah, kinda moist and fluffy.

00:28:04 John Host So I have two questions. One, Kenji, where can I get this recipe?

00:28:08 Kenji Guest You can get the recipe on Serious Eats. I think it's called [The Best Roast Potatoes Ever](#). Or on my YouTube channel, where it's also called [The Best Roast Potatoes Ever](#).

00:28:15 Jesse Host I tend to Google "Kenji potatoes."

00:28:18 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** Yeah! That's a good one.

Kenji: That will work too. *[Laughs.]*

00:28:20 John Host And the second question is since, Jesse Thorn, you asked this and recommended this recipe to our friend Nick Wiger, co-host of *The Doughboys*, I'll ask you, Kenji, now: What is your favorite hot salad?

[All three laugh.]

00:28:37 Kenji Guest Um. I—I—I—

00:28:38 John Host What's the best—what—let me put it this way. What's the best way to heat up a garden salad so that Nick Wiger can enjoy it?

[Kenji and Jesse laugh.]

00:28:45 Kenji Guest I like a grilled potato salad. So like, grilled potatoes and grilled spring onions. So like—like a—fingerling potatoes that you boil, split, and then toss with olive oil and then throw in the grill. And then grill some spring onions or scallions next to that, and then also grill a lemon. And you toss that all together and you squeeze the lemon over it, and add some like, really good olive oil. I'd say that is my favorite... hot salad.

00:29:06 John Host Wow. That one goes out to Nick Wiger—

00:29:08 Jesse Host That sounds fantastic!

00:29:09 John Host —because that was an in-joke... pertaining to another podcast.

[Kenji laughs.]

In which Nick Wiger is constantly being teased that he likes hot salad, as though he microwaves his garden salads.

[Kenji and Jesse laugh.]

But you actually—and I apologize for roping you into this in-joke that you didn't know was an in-joke—but you answered it perfectly; that is a hot salad!

[Kenji laughs.]

That's a beautiful hot salad for you, Nick Wiger, my friend. Now let's—speaking of potatoes, I think we do have a potatoes-themed case.

00:29:37 Jesse Host Jeffrey says:

"Is it permissible to serve turnips alongside potatoes as a side dish? I say yes. Although they're both root vegetables, a turnip provides a greater range of nutrients and fiber. The potato is merely starch and calories."

Well, it also has the amino acids that kept the entire nation of Ireland alive until... they stopped having potatoes.

[Kenji laughs.]

"My wife argues they are too similar to share space on the same plate. Hogwash. You could have a rutabaga and a potato on the same plate. Carrots, beets, any other root vegetable! I argue her conflict simply boils down to color. Nothing else."

00:30:16 John Host Yeah. So, I would say that definitely the most important consideration that I have, Kenji...

00:30:22 Kenji Guest

Mm-hm.

00:30:23 John Host ...when planning a menu and thinking of what the plate is going to look like. My first thought is "Am I serving enough range of fiber?"

[John and Kenji laugh.]

No, seriously. Uh, Kenji, what do you think about this?

00:30:37 Kenji Guest

I'd say they're—they're quite different! I don't know. I mean, I think it's totally permissible. You know, although—though like, I generally tend to keep my meals at home simple, so it's like... you know, like, I probably wouldn't grab both a potato and a turnip—

00:30:49 John Host

Yeah, nothing so fancy as a turnip and a potato!

[All three laugh.]

00:30:54 Kenji Guest

I mean like, if I am gonna grab one—a root vegetable, I'd probably just grab one.

00:30:58 John Host

Right.

00:30:59 Kenji Guest

But you know, sometimes like at a—like at holidays, like, I'll roast a whole bunch of different root vegetables together, and I think that's fine. If I'm making, you know, like, mashed turnips or mashed rutabaga, adding a potato to that is great because the potato brings texture.

00:31:12 John Host

Right.

00:31:13 Kenji Guest

Whereas like, the rutabaga or the turnip bring flavor. Um, yeah! I'd say they're definitely different enough.

00:31:19 John Host

How would you describe the flavor of a turnip? Because I've had them, but I'm having a hard time... mouth-picturing them.

00:31:24 Kenji Guest

I would say they are like, vaguely—so they're a little sweet, and a little spicy, and the aroma is vaguely of like... feet, but good feet? ...You know? Um—

[John laughs, then Kenji laughs.]

Feet that have grown up in—grown in—that have been marinated in nice soil.

00:31:43 John Host

Yeah.

00:31:44 Kenji Guest

Yeah. They're a little... they're a little footy. And if you—you know, we do a lot of pickling at my restaurant. Like, we ferment a lot of things.

If you ferment radishes or turnips or rutabagas, those kinda like, sorta watery root vegetables, they—that kind of amplifies the foot-iness of them. Also in a good way, I think. But, um—but people might disagree on that.

- 00:32:04 John Host What would you do, Kenji, if you had to—say this were some kind of... cooking game show.
- 00:32:11 Kenji Guest Mm-hm.
- 00:32:13 John Host And you were forced to serve a meal that includes potatoes and turnips and a third item, what would be the balancing item for those three?
- 00:32:23 Kenji Guest Potatoes and turnips? Ummm...
- 00:32:26 John Host It really does feel like we're—like we're eating in the Middle Ages all of the sudden.
- [All three laugh.]*
- 00:32:31 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Jesse:** Yeah, I think it would be a blackbird pie.
- [John laughs.]*
- Kenji:** A chicken? I guess?
- 00:32:34 Kenji Guest I would roast some kind of—probably some kind of meat with them. Unless you're talking about like just—this is just gonna be a side dish, in which case... you know, it would—you know, honestly, it would be—it would be butter.
- [John bursts out laughing.]*
- 00:32:44 Jesse Host *[Laughs.]* Yeah.
- 00:32:45 Kenji Host You know, actually, thinking back on this, I think the main thing that differentiates a roasted potato and a roasted turnip is the texture. You know, where a potato is kinda dense and starchy, a turnip has a—you know, it—like, those—turnips and radishes, when you roast them, they get that kind of... sort of like—it's almost like mini water balloons. Like, they have like kind of a watery texture. But—
- 00:33:06 John Host Mm-hm.
- 00:33:07 Kenji Guest And again, like, "watery" sounds bad in the same way that like, "foot-smelling" sounds bad, but "watery" in a good way. Um, for a vegetable.
- 00:33:12 John Host *[Laughs.]* Watery and foot-smelling in a good way. Right.
- [Kenji and Jesse laugh.]*
- I would say, Jeffrey, that turnips and potatoes are different enough flavor profiles to be served together. But I would agree with you, Jeffrey, that putting a turnip and a potato on a plate demands... other foods that offer textural and flavor contrast. Lest you invite your guest to think that this is actually the 14th century. So...
- [Kenji and Jesse laugh.]*
- 00:33:45 Jesse Host I mean, that's my whole thing!
- 00:33:46 John Host *[Laughing]* That's right.

00:33:48 Jesse Host *[Laughs.]* There—there were no forks in Medieval Times, thus there are no forks at Medieval Times.

[John and Kenji laugh.]

That's the watchword of my dining table.

00:33:55 John Host But if you wish to dine as does the King of Chefs: potato, turnip, butter. That's all you need.

00:34:02 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:34:03 Jesse Host Here's something from Greg:

"Dear Judge Hodgman,

When cooking an already-written recipe for the first time, I believe it's important to experience the recipe as the creator intended. My partner Erin, on the other hand, alters published recipes to better suit our tastes without ever having made them as written. I'll concede Erin's an excellent cook. Her modified recipes rarely if ever turn out badly. However, I feel her insistence on modifications strips us of the opportunity to learn new things from the experts.

I ask you forbid Erin from recipe modifications except where necessary in the middle of the cooking process, and allow that changes be planned and agreed upon only before we begin cooking."

00:34:52 John Host Hm. Kenji, can I—this is confession time for me.

00:34:54 Kenji Guest Okay.

00:34:55 John Host Remember how I was talking about that chili recipe that you wrote?

[Beat.]

00:34:58 Kenji Guest *[Laughing]* Yes, correct.

00:34:59 John Host And how good it was? I didn't grind my own coriander. I'm sorry!

00:35:04 Kenji Host Oh my goodness.

[Jesse laughs.]

00:35:06 John Host I used pre-ground coriander AND cumin seed! And I didn't even put in the star anise.

[Kenji laughs.]

Look, we're not supposed to go outside. I didn't have those things.
[Stifles laughter.]

00:35:15 Jesse Host Any Texan will tell you, without star anise, it's not chili!

[John and Kenji laugh.]

00:35:21 John Host So I don't—I don't—I—I can't actually say that I have actually had your recipe, even though the overall directions steered me to something really, really good. What do you think about Erin's recipe-meddling and Greg's dislike of it?

00:35:37 Kenji Guest I am 100% on Erin's side here. So first of all, I don't think you learn

things from recipes, in the same way that you don't learn about a neighborhood by sort of following the turn-by-turn directions on your phone. You know? It's like—

00:35:50 John Host

Yeah.

00:35:51 Kenji Guest

—like, a recipe is there to get you from point A to point B. But if you wanna actually learn about the food, you need to like, you know, pull back and look at the bigger picture, do a little more research about where it's from, read the accompanying story unless it's about, you know, some individual person's grandmother. But you know, a recipe is there to just steer you from one place to another. It's not there to sort of teach you about the food, or teach you about the technique involved at all.

So I say I'm totally on Erin's side on this. Like, if she looks at a recipe and then pulls back and says "Hey, wait a minute." Like, "This is something that I don't particularly like. I'm gonna do it this other way," or like, "I understand how chicken cooks well enough to know that I can do it this way instead of that way to fit my own personal tastes and parameters," then I think she's taking everything that she should be taking from the recipe. So that—that would be my take.

You know, like, I write very sort of... what people would describe as sort of very prescriptive recipes, because they're very precise. And they're precise because I know there are people out there like Greg, who don't really care so much to learn about the externalities and to learn about the context, and just wanna be able to get into the kitchen and follow a process and get to a good end result. And then that's fine! You know, like, I'm not judging Greg for that. Um—

00:37:10 John Host

I am.

00:37:11 Kenji Guest

And you know, that—*[laughs]*. That's why I write my recipes that way. Because I wanna guarantee that if someone follows it, they're gonna get to the right end result. But, um, I don't think that's necessarily the best way to learn.

00:37:22 John Host

Yeah.

00:37:23 Kenji Guest

You know, and people of course learn in different ways! So maybe that is the best way to learn, for Greg. But—

00:37:27 John Host

I obviously—I agree with you—I mean, the only exception that I would point out on Greg's behalf is that... I am not a baker—

00:37:36 Kenji Guest

Mm.

00:37:37 John Host

—and baking, in—in—perhaps it's my lack of experience. I'd be a little bit more comfortable with free-style baking.

00:37:44 Kenji Guest

Mm-hm.

00:37:45 John Host

But baking recipes, I think, you need to follow—especially if you're not an experienced baker—you need to follow pretty closely to get the desired result. But everything else—I mean, that's the fun! Is getting in there, experimenting, seeing what works, seeing what doesn't work, figuring out how the food acts and reacts against the different ingredients. And then every time you make a little adjustment and see a little difference, you take new information to the next time you cook. And, uh—and that's the enjoyment of it! To a great degree.

00:38:20 Kenji Guest Yeah! You know, the one thing I would say is that if Erin strays from a recipe and then goes and complains about how it didn't work, she is clearly in the wrong.

[Jesse cracks up.]

00:38:29 John Host Right.

[Kenji laughs.]

Yeah.

00:38:31 Kenji Guest If you're gonna post a comment about a recipe online or complain that it didn't work, you had better have actually followed the recipe instead of just like taking whatever route you wanted to. But in all other cases, I think it's fine.

00:38:43 John Host Remind me, Jesse Thorn, before we wrap this session, to back onto Serious Eats and delete my one-star review—

[Kenji laughs.]

—of Kenji's chili recipe, for it not being star anise-y enough.

[Kenji and Jesse laugh.]

I guess now I realize that's on me.

00:39:00 Jesse Host "It was missing a certain licorice-adjacent flavor, in my opinion."

[Jesse and John laugh.]

Okay. Let's take a quick break. When we come back, we'll hear a case against our guest! Kenji!

[Kenji laughs.]

We'll be back in a moment on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

00:39:15 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:39:18 Jesse Promo We're taking a break from *Judge John Hodgman*. John, you're continuing to do your daily Instagram show! My pets made an appearance on your Instagram show, as did some, uh—some babies emus, with which I was very impressed!

00:39:33 John Promo *[Laughs.]* We've—yeah. So *Get Your Pets*—I started it—I think it was last—around last MaxFunDrive. Just as a fun way to interact with people on Instagram, and I discovered that people could request to join my Live video. And I approved the request, and all of a sudden I was talking to this stranger, and I got scared. But luckily, as when any time you're talking to a stranger, if they have a pet there, you have something to talk about! Look at that wonderful cat or dog! Or snake or lizard! And that became *Get Your Pets*, which was my every-now-and-then talk show, where I would talk to strangers' pets—and the strangers themselves—on Instagram Live.

And when we all were advised, rightly, to stay at home, I realized I wanted to see some pets! And since we were all home anyway, why don't I do—do it every week day? And so I usually do it around 4 PM

Eastern, although sometimes I do it earlier in the day, sometimes a little later. Whatever my schedule allows. I announce it on my Instagram page itself, at Instagram.com/johnhodgman. And I usually spend about 60 or 90 minutes—sometimes 120 minutes—*[stifles laughter]* talking to people's pets, and people all over the world and the country.

We have some baby emus on. We've had some baby quails on! Somebody was raising quails. Or qu—uh, I—if that's the plural of "quail." I don't know. "Quail"? Uh, we had some adult emus on! Kevin and Janet, the emus who live down in North Carolina with Catherine. Kevin loves Janet, and Janet is not that interested in Kevin. It's a sad story. But they're ridiculously cute. We've had Coco and Sissy on. Jennifer Marmor's dog George has been on. We've had Carrie Poppy's dog Ella on. All—and just all kinds of—and listeners, former litigants, and all kinds of people. It's just a lot of fun. It's a fun. That's all it is, it's a funzo.

And if you wanna know when I'm going live with it, check my Instagram. Follow me on Instagram, and it will tell you when I'm going live, and we can enjoy each other! But mostly I just wanna use this moment to say thank you to the listeners of *I, Podius*, which just wrapped up. That started, again, last year around MaxFunDrive, as a different kind of lark, a different kind of funzo, a different kind of... side thing to do with my friend and yours, Elliott Kalan. Ended up—finished recording it long before any of these troubles happened. It was a hugely fun experience to revisit the TV show *I, Claudius* and to share it with my friend Elliott Kalan, who had never seen it, then to get to know Jordan Kauwling, our producer, who's so talented, in putting it together. And Laura Swisher, who executive-produced it, was so great.

00:42:28 John Promo

The experience was really very meaningful to me, and... especially as the episodes started rolling out before and then into this period of historical anxiety that we're experiencing now, it was great to be able to share that, and hear people's responses to it, and have something else to pay attention to. So thank you, everybody, for listening and supporting it. All the episodes are archived, obviously, and *I, Claudius* is a wonderful thing to watch! If you—let's say you have a stretch of time at home for a while? And of course it never would have happened without the Maximum Fun listeners being so game and up for anything! And curious, and funny, and wonderful.

I mean, we still don't know when we're gonna do our MaxFunDrive. But you know, I—I don't mind saying that without all of you listeners out there, my life would be a... a lot less fun and interesting. And so thanks for hanging in there, and supporting us if you can at MaximumFun.org/join, or just by keeping the lights on in your hearts for us until we can all get back together to something resembling normal again. So thank you, everybody.

Jesse, what's going on with you?

00:43:50 Jesse Promo

If you're out there and you need a light in your heart, you need some lightheartedness, I will remind you that Judge Hodgman himself was just a guest on *Jordan, Jesse, Go!*, the comedy podcast that I host with Jordan Morris, the talented comedy writer and performer. You

can find that in your podcast app right now. Just search for *Jordan, Jesse, Go!*, listen to that great episode with Judge John, and get hooked! It is a show with no content at all.

[John laughs.]

You don't have to worry about—not only do you not have to worry about bummers, you don't have to worry about learning anything, you don't have to worry about how the story is gonna end. You really don't have to worry about aaanything at all, uh, except possibly at some point this one video game for the Sega Dreamcast called *Seaman* might come up, and you should basically just know that *Seaman* was a game for the Sega Dreamcast where a fish with a human head swam around inside your television, and you talked to it through the controller.

00:44:53 John Promo

Augh. I—I don't wanna worry about that.

00:44:55 Jesse Promo

That's about all you need to know for *Jordan, Jesse, Go!*

[John laughs.]

I hope you'll go subscribe to it.

And, everybody! *Judge John Hodgman* is nominated for a Webby Award!

00:45:06 John Promo

A Webby Award!

00:45:07 Jesse Promo

Voting ends tomorrow as this episode comes out. May 7th! So get your votes in now! Here's where you can do it. [Bit.ly/JJHOWEBBY](https://bit.ly/JJHOWEBBY). JJHOWEBBY is all capital.

00:45:22 John Promo

Let me tell you something right now. Right now we're running third in this race to the Webby. Behind two comedy podcasts that I have... never heard of, and I feel like I've heard of a lot of 'em. And I have a feeling that those podcasts are out there really organizing crowds of people to vote. Now, you know me. I'm typically above open campaigning. I find it to be unseemly! You do what you want! ...But would like to come in second, at least.

[John and Jesse both laugh.]

To these comedy podcasts I've never heard of before! You know who's running fourth or fifth, is Will Ferrell. That's not right. If Will Ferrell were lapping *Judge John Hodgman*, I'd feel good. But these two other things, they've got something going on. They're bussing voters to the polls. You know what I mean? Sooo, if you—if you felt inclined to go in there and just—it takes two seconds to just click. Just go to [Bit.ly/JJHOWEBBY](https://bit.ly/JJHOWEBBY), all capital letters, J-J-H-O-W-E-B-B-Y. Help us be number two, for once.

00:46:27 Jesse Promo

We're not gonna let them be Casey from Sports Night hiring Jeremy from Sports Night to rig the poll and prove that he's cooler than Dan. That's a little *Sports Night* reference. For people who enjoy references from 1998.

[Both laugh.]

00:46:41 John Promo

I guarantee you those two podcasts are not dropping *Sports Night*

| | | | |
|----------|--------------|------------|--|
| | | | references. Reward us! Make us number two for once! |
| 00:46:49 | Jesse | Promo | But you gotta do it now. 'Cause the deadline's here. Bit.ly/JJHOWEBBY. All capital letters. |
| 00:46:55 | John | Promo | There you go. |
| 00:46:56 | Jesse | Promo | Okay. Let's go back to the docket. |
| 00:46:58 | Sound Effect | Transition | <i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i> |
| 00:47:01 | Jesse | Host | Welcome back to the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast. We're clearing the docket this week, and we've got something from Jay. Jay says: "My dispute is with J. Kenji López-Alt. <u>At</u> Kenji López-Alt, who—full disclosure—I do not know in person. I seek an order to have him unblock me on Twitter." <i>[Kenji laughs.]</i> "The inciting incident came on December 18th, when I lightly admonished him on Twitter for amplifying a major spoiler for the latest <i>Star Wars</i> movie. In retrospect, perhaps the tone in my Tweet was not as polite as it could have been. But I don't feel that it matches the harshness of other people that he <u>justifiably</u> blocks! I'm a huge fan of Kenji's, and have had some positive interactions with him previously on Twitter, and I miss one of my favorite follows." |
| 00:47:55 | John | Host | So Kenji— |
| 00:47:56 | Kenji | Guest | Yes. |
| 00:47:57 | John | Host | We're not gonna reveal Jay's Twitter name on this episode. |
| 00:48:02 | Kenji | Guest | Okay. |
| 00:48:03 | John | Host | We're not gonna put Jay on blast. And I don't know how to evaluate Jay's complaint, because I... Jay has deleted the Tweet. |
| 00:48:13 | Kenji | Guest | <i>[Laughs.]</i> I think I—I'm pretty sure I know it. If it was about <i>Star Wars</i> , I'm pretty sure I know what the Tweet is. |
| 00:48:17 | John | Host | Do you remember this incident? |
| 00:48:20 | Kenji | Guest | Well—okay. I think we're past spoiler territory now, 'cause... you know, whatever. The movie's been out for a long time, and nobody's watching it anymore anyway. |
| 00:48:28 | John | Host | This is <i>Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker</i> . |
| 00:48:30 | Kenji | Guest | Correct. Yes. |
| 00:48:30 | Jesse | Host | Right. |
| 00:48:31 | Kenji | Guest | So—alright. So the—I'm gonna talk about this, because this is actually one of my—one of the things I'm most proud of in my life. When— |
| 00:48:38 | John | Host | Blocking this one person? Terrific. |
| 00:48:39 | Kenji | Guest | Nooo, no, no, no, no, no. The context. <i>[John chuckles.]</i> So, when <i>The Force Awake</i> —so I'm a huge <i>Star Wars</i> fan. |
| 00:48:45 | John | Host | Right. |

00:48:46 Kenji Guest When *The Force Awakens* came out, I remember when it first came out on—you know, I saw in theaters a bunch of times, and then I saw it in an airplane like... a few months later. You know how it always comes out on airplanes before it comes out at home?

00:48:57 John Host Yeah.

00:48:58 Kenji Guest And so I was watching it on an airplane, and I was watching and I was like... "Hey, you know what? I think Rey is a descendant of Palpatine."

00:49:07 John Host Mm.

00:49:08 Kenji Guest And I wrote an essay on Medium. It's published on Medium. It's still there, called "[Rey is a Palpatine.](#)" Where I sort of delineated all of my arguments for why Rey is a Palpatine.

00:49:18 John Host Wait, you wrote this back when *The Force Awakens* came out?!

00:49:21 Kenji Guest Yes. Yes. And then, *The Last Je*—uh, not *The Last Jedi*—*The Rise of Skywalker* came out, and I was like—and you know, and then *The Last Jedi* came out, and it's like "Oh, god." Like, you know, I kind of wrote it as a joke, and I was like "This is so stupid." Like, "Of course she's not." And then it turns out that that actually was the plot of the movie? So then I think I—I sent out a Tweet that simply said—uh, the day *Star Wars* came out, I guess, when I saw it, I think I sent out a Tweet that just said "Called it."

I don't think I even mentioned it was in reference to *Star Wars*, although people who follow me probably knew what I was talking about.

00:49:51 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Kenji:** I mean, people definitely knew what I was talking about, because—

John: You sub-Tweeted *The Rise of Skywalker*. You—when it came out and it was revealed that Rey was a Palpatine, you said "Called it," referring back to your Medium post.

Kenji: Yes. Correct.

00:50:04 John Host Which clearly gave JJ Abrams the idea to write the movie that way. Let's—

00:50:07 Kenji Guest *[Laughing]* Right. Right.

00:50:08 John Host Now we're gonna get into a time travel paradox that I don't wanna get into.

00:50:11 Kenji Guest *[Laughs.]* Anyway, I wrote "Called it," and I—and in the Tweet I didn't even mention *The Rise of Sky*—like I didn't mention *Star Wars*, I didn't mention anything.

00:50:19 John Host Right.

00:50:19 Kenji Guest I'm pretty sure. I don't know. Maybe—maybe I did. But anyhow, I think that's what he got angry about, saying I spoiled something. And I was like, you have to be in this very, very small, tiny subsection of the *Star Wars* audience that also follows me and also remembers this Medium post I wrote in 2017 or whenever it was, to have been—to be able to claim that that was a spoiler. And then he got—and then I said "This movie is not even out yet," or—oh, I guess it was before the movie came out that I said it.

00:50:49 John Host Right.

00:50:50 Kenji Guest Maybe I saw somewhere. I don't remember. *[Stifling laughter]* So I guess I must be wrong about telling this whole thing. But anyhow, I'm sure that's what the spoiler was.

00:50:55 John Host No, no, no, I'm looking—I'm looking at it here. You said "WTF, spoilers? This movie's not even out yet!"

00:51:12 Jesse Host And then Jay said "Then why are you replying to this person with 300 followers to spread to your 60,000 ones like me?" I don't understand what Jay is saying.

00:51:27 Kenji Guest Jay's concern there is that, uh, Kenji, by responding to Jay, is calling attention to Jay's Tweet for people who follow Kenji but not Jay. They might see that post because Kenji replied to it.

00:51:28 John Host Yeah. That's what it was.

00:51:29 Kenji Guest *[Inaudible.]*

00:52:00 John Host Oh, yeah! And I think it was when the trailer—maybe when the trailer came out? And the trailers kinda made it clear that Palpatine was in it? It was something like that. It had something to do with Rey and Palpatine, and I apparently spoiled it by saying something about the trailer.

00:51:29 Kenji Guest You know, I have a very, like, sorta itchy trigger finger on the block button on Twitter, because it's like... I have so many—you know, it's such a negative space. It's like I—if anyone gives me any kind of grief at all, I just block them, because it's like it's just not—it's not worth it, you know?

00:52:00 John Host Yeah.

00:51:29 Kenji Guest And I'm also one of those people that kinda lets it get to me more than I know I should. You know? So it's like, I kinda try and self-regulate on that by just... if someone's giving me any trouble, I just block them. And that's it. But you know what I'll do right—what I'll do right this second is I will unblock Jay.

00:52:19 John Host Oh! Oh, that's very gracious of you!

00:52:20 Kenji Guest And it is done. It is done! *[Laughs.]*

00:52:22 John Host Wow! I was gonna rule in your favor! I was gonna say, you know, rules of the road! Like, all we're left with right now is talking on phones and Zooms and Twitters and everything else. We gotta remember there are other humans on the other side. And we gotta remember everyone's different, and they have their own boundaries, and you gotta respect those boundaries. But that's very gracious of you to unblock Jay, and I can now reveal—since you have done so—that the Jay in this case is Jay Inslee, the Governor of Washington State.

00:52:51 Jesse Host *[Kenji laughs.]*
Wow!

00:52:52 John Host No, it's not. *[Laughs.]* I am following Jay now, and I'm gonna—I'll keep an eye on this situation.

[Kenji chuckles.]

Let me know if Jay gets outta hand.

00:53:01 Jesse Host We heard recently from a listener named Mary about a list of pizza types that we discussed in the episode "The Hammer of Distraction." Do you remember this pizza type list, John?

00:53:12 John Host I do! And it came from Serious Eats. It was a big fascinating [list of regional pizza styles](#) compiled by Adam Kuban. Many, many styles that I had never heard of, including the apparently very controversial Saint Louis–style pizza.

[Kenji laughs quietly.]

Which is on an unleavened, matzah-like crust, with a weird processed cheese called Provel. And we spent a lot of time enjoying this list of pizza on the podcast earlier, Kenji. Just to give you some context.

00:53:38 Kenji Guest Alright! Yeah. I like Saint Louis–style pizza, by the way.

00:53:41 John Host Really!

00:53:42 Kenji Guest The secret is to not think of it as pizza, and just think of it as pizza-flavored nachos.

00:53:46 Jesse Host Oh! *[Laughs.]*

00:53:47 Kenji Guest And then it's actually quite good.

00:53:48 John Host I, uh... Bailiff Jesse, I can't hear what he's saying anymore, 'cause I blocked him.

[Kenji and Jesse laugh over whatever John says next.]

Well, what does Mary have to say?

00:53:58 Jesse Host She wrote about Polish street pizza.

00:54:00 John Host Hm!

00:54:01 Jesse Host She says:

"I grew up in Warsaw, from 1987 to 1991. My dad was an American diplomat there. One of the culinary delights of the period was a street food called zapiekanka, which is French bread sliced lengthwise, topped with—in order—mushrooms, cheese, and ketchup."

00:54:24 John Host Oh!

00:54:26 Jesse Host "Does it sound gross? Maybe. But I still make it at home! Though nothing can recreate whatever ersatz cheese the Polish government sold at that time. Mushrooms and mushroom-foraging also play a huge role in Polish culture, so those were always good."

00:54:43 John Host Wow! Does she give a recipe for her home zapiekanka?

00:54:47 Jesse Host Yeah, well, here's the instructions. She says:

"I make it by topping the bread with sauteed sliced cremini mushrooms, then Emmentaler cheese, broil until the cheese is just starting to brown, drizzle on a good spicy-sweet ketchup, and if you still have it, dill, fresh or dried. Another quintessential Polish ingredient. Something about the ketchup, the dill, and the cheese is

unbelievably tasty.

Your friends at Serious Eats have no data related to zapiekanka, but I am sure you will find the Wikipedia article interesting. Especially the economic changes it heralded."

00:55:27 John Host I'll leave it to the listeners and our guest Kenji López-Alt to check out that Wikipedia article, 'cause it genuinely is interesting! It's a very—

[Kenji and John laugh.]

It was a poverty food that has been brought back!

00:55:38 Kenji Guest I actually did—I did some homework, and I read this. I read—

00:55:42 John Host Wow.

00:55:43 Kenji Guest I read that article.

00:55:44 John Host Good job! Have you ever had this before?

00:55:45 Kenji Guest I—no, I haven't! I'd never heard of it! You know? But it's—it sounds good to me! I can't imagine that the ketchup is like, Heinz, you know? And from looking at the Wikipedia article, the photos of the stuff in Poland doesn't look like it's... what we would think of as ketchup, per se.

00:56:02 John Host But it's a spicy sweet! The—we're coming full circle here! Mary specifically recommends a spicy sweet ketchup.

00:56:10 Kenji Guest Yeah!

00:56:11 John Host So, yeah. European ketchups are different, for sure.

00:56:13 Kenji Guest So can I tell you something? And this is maybe an embarrassing quarantine story. Something that I did the night that I read this article.

00:56:21 John Host Please!

00:56:22 Kenji Guest Okay. *[Laughs.]* I wanted to make some pizza. This was like at one in the morning. I think I had just gotten done editing some videos or something. I wanted to make some pizza. And normally what I do if it's one AM and I wanna make pizza is I use a tortilla, and I crisp it up in a skillet and I put tomato sauce and whatever on it. I did not have a tortilla, and I did not have tomato sauce. But, before the quarantine, I did go and buy a bunch of cans of Campbell's Tomato Soup.

00:56:47 John Host *[Stifling laughter]* Mm-hm. Yeah.

00:56:48 Jesse Host *[Stifling laughter]* Uh-huh.

00:56:49 Kenji Guest The condensed kind.

00:56:51 John Host Yeah.

00:56:52 Kenji Guest And so I made a dough with baking pow—and that—and just that day, actually, I'd posted a video about how to make no-knead bread! And somebody in the comments on YouTube asked me "Can you do this with baking powder?" and I was like "No, you cannot make this with baking powder." And then I was like "Wait a minute, did I jump too fast on that guy for suggesting that you can make this with baking powder?"

And so I was like "You know what, I'm gonna try to make pizza

tonight. It's one AM. I wanna make pizza. I don't have a tortilla, so I'm gonna make it with baking powder." So I made a dough with flour— all-purpose flour, salt, baking powder, and some milk. And then I rolled it out, and it took like all of ten minutes, and then I spread it— and I didn't have any tomatoes, so I—*[laughs]* I put some Campbell's Canned Tomato Soup on it.

00:57:33 John Host
00:57:34 Kenji Guest
00:57:35 John Host
00:57:36 Kenji Guest

Uh-huh. Yeah.
Condensed. I didn't dilute it first.
No.
And then I had a bunch of pickled chilis.

[John chuckles or murmurs thoughtfully.]

Spicy. So I was like "Alright. So the spiciness will balance out the, like, overt sweetness of this canned tomato soup."

00:57:45 John Host
00:57:46 Kenji Guest
00:57:48 John Host
00:57:49 Kenji Guest
00:57:52 John Host
00:57:53 Kenji Guest

Mm-hm.
And then I used Pepper Jack cheese.
Mm-hm.
And I baked it in a toaster oven, and it was delicious!
Wow.
It was also one AM, and I was like super hungry, and, uh—and I just had a Pliny, like a little... a very strong beer, so you know, I would say my taste buds might have been tempered by a few things. But—

[John laughs.]

But I can definitely see the appeal of like, sweet and spicy... tomatoey—processed tomatoey stuff with cheese on top of a bread-like product.

00:58:16 John Host

Yeah! I think it—I—well, listen. I wanna try this...

[Kenji laughs.]

...zapienkanka myself. I do think that's an interesting blend of sweet and spicy, and I'm very fascinated by the Wikipedia article. As far as what you made, your pizza, Kenji, your one AM quarantine pizza...

[Kenji laughs.]

This might earn me a block, but I'm gonna say—

[Kenji laughs.]

—it reminds me of that bread you described: No Need. (*No-knead.*) I no need it.

[Kenji and Jesse laughs.]

00:58:43 Kenji Guest
00:58:44 Jesse Host
00:58:45 Kenji Guest

No. *[Laughs.]*
[Laughing] Wow.
You know what's interesting, though, is that the history of the

zapienkanka, that it was a—it was a, you know, poor person's food. That it mirrors the history of the French bread pizza! Which—

00:58:57 John Host Yeah.

00:58:58 Kenji Guest Which was invented in, um, Cornell!

00:59:01 John Host Really!

00:59:02 Kenji Guest The—yeah, yeah! Cornell in the sixties. In fact, I know that there's [an article](#) up on Serious Eats by Adam Kuban—Adam Kuban, by the way, he was the founder of both A Hamburger Today and Slice, which were the—respectively the hamburger blog and the pizza blog that both got incorporated into Serious Eats like very, very early in its days. And he was the managing editor of Serious Eats for a while. But he's like—he's like one of the foremost authorities on pizza in the world, I would say.

But I know he wrote an article about when the fou—the guy who invented French bread pizza died, I think it was like 2007 or '8 or so, something like that?

00:59:36 John Host Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

00:59:38 Kenji Guest But yeah! It was known as poor man's pizza. And it was sold to students at Cornell University.

00:59:45 John Host Well, Kenji López-Alt, thank you so much for joining us and bringing so much good humor, uh, information, strange confessions...

[Kenji and John both laugh.]

...and, uh—and plain spicy-sweet good fun to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. I leave you with this final question.

01:00:04 Kenji Guest Alright.

01:00:05 John Host You say you like Saint Louis–style pizza made with Provel cheese, a processed cheese that is a—it claims to be a combination of Provolone, Swiss, and... something else.

01:00:17 Kenji Guest Okay.

01:00:18 John Host Would you order ten pounds of Provel off Goldbelly for \$80?

[Kenji and Jesse laugh.]

Is that a good deal? Or a bad deal? *[Laughs.]*

01:00:27 Kenji Guest *[Laughs.]* Um, so I would only order—ehhh, well, I would only order it knowing that I probably could re-sell it.

[Kenji laughs, Jesse or John cracks up.]

Or give it away to friends. Like, I have these food connections, so it's like I could—I could order it and split it with people.

01:00:42 John Host Okay.

[Jesse laughs.]

01:00:43 Kenji Guest Which I don't know that everyone could do. Or I could order it and serve it on some kind of ironic dish at my restaurant.

01:00:48 Jesse Host You're saying that you're a wholesaler, you've got street dealers.

[Jesse and Kenji laugh.]

01:00:52 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Kenji:** Yes.

John: You're gonna cut it—

Jesse: You're gonna chop the brick. *[Laughs.]*

01:00:54 John Host You're gonna chop it up, combine it with some Kraft Singles, and make it go.

01:01:00 Jesse Host Now we're getting back to Raekwon's style of chefery.

[Jesse and Kenji laugh.]

01:01:03 John Host Well, J. Kenji López-Alt, I—as a parting gift for playing the *Judge John Hodgman* game, uh, get ready to get ten pounds of Provel in the mail from me. Thank you so much.

01:01:15 Kenji Guest I can't wait. *[Laughing]* Thank you.

01:01:17 Jesse Host Wait! Hold on! We can't let Kenji go! I put a gun on the counter in the first act, and we have to shoot it in the final act! Kenji, how come when I make [your amazing recipe for chocolate chip cookies](#), they turn out too tall and smooth and cakey, like almost like a muffin? Because I see the pictures of people who've made your recipe—

01:01:36 Kenji Guest Mm-hm.

01:01:38 Jesse Host —on the [Serious Eats subreddit](#), which maybe I subscribe to, maybe I'm that dorky, it's possible.

[Kenji chuckles.]

And they look like beautiful chocolate chip cookies! So I know it's something that I'm doing.

01:01:47 Kenji Guest Mm-hm.

01:01:48 Jesse Host What makes chocolate chip cookies turn—I know that aging the dough in the refrigerator overnight—

01:01:54 Kenji Guest Right.

01:01:55 Jesse Host —or even for 48 hours helps the enzymes develop the flavors, and all these other things that are great about your recipe. Your recipe is really good. How come they turn out cakey, though?

01:02:07 Kenji Guest I'll give you three avenues to explore.

01:02:09 Jesse Host Okay.

01:02:10 Kenji Guest One of them could be that your oven is not calibrated.

01:02:13 Jesse Host Yeah.

01:02:14 Kenji Guest So if you have a—get an oven thermometer in there, make sure that it's at the right temperature. Another could be that you're using—potentially you're using a baking sheet that's not an aluminum rimmed baking sheet? Maybe you're using one of those, uh, insulated baking sheets, which I—which people sometimes use, or you're using some other metal, so the conductive qualities are different. So if that's the case, get an aluminum rimmed baking sheet

or an aluminum flat baking sheet.

The third thing I can think of is that potentially you are—sorry, there's gonna be four things. The third thing is that potentially you're using a unbleached flour, something like King Arthur or some fancy flour, as opposed to regular Gold Medal, Pillsbury flour? The bleaching process changes the way it behaves.

And finally, the last thing I could think of is that you're maybe letting your dough get too warm before you bake it. So those like, craggy tops, you make the dough balls and then you rip 'em in half, and you—

| | | | |
|----------|--------------|--------------|---|
| 01:03:06 | Jesse | Host | Yeah. |
| 01:03:07 | Kenji | Guest | —and you stick the smooth ends back together. And if your dough is too warm, then that process like, doesn't really work, because it all kinda melts before it starts to set in the oven. So you want your dough to be kinda cold as it goes into the oven. |
| 01:03:19 | Jesse | Host | I think it's gonna be my oven's fault. |
| | | | <i>[Kenji laughs.]</i> |
| 01:03:22 | John | Host | Jesse, I'm not King of Chefs. Right? I'm no Kenji López-Alt. But may I ask a question? That might help you underst— |
| 01:03:28 | Jesse | Host | Yeah. |
| 01:03:29 | John | Host | How much star anise are you putting in? |
| | | | <i>[Kenji laughs.]</i> |
| | | | Enough? <i>[Laughs quietly.]</i> |
| 01:03:33 | Jesse | Host | That was the other thing. When I reviewed the recipe, which I did, I had a comment, and I said—I did one star. "Not enough licorice-adjacent flavors. Uh, PS, I omitted the star anise." |
| 01:03:44 | John | Host | <i>[Laughs quietly.]</i> The docket is clear! |
| 01:03:46 | Sound Effect | Sound Effect | <i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i> |
| 01:03:47 | Jesse | Host | Kenji López-Alt! His restaurant is called Wursthall! In San Mateo, California. You can buy meal boxes for hospitals and community centers at ToastTab.com/wursthall , or on the Wursthall website . His children's book <i>Every Night Is Pizza Night</i> comes out September 1st, and you can find his writing on the Internet on Serious Eats and in The New York Times . |
| | | | Kenji, I'm such a fan of yours. I'm so grateful that you came on the show. Thank you very much. |
| 01:04:20 | Kenji | Guest | Thanks so much for having me! |
| 01:04:22 | John | Host | Don't forget to follow him on Twitter at @kenjilopezalt , and see how little it takes to get him to block you. |
| | | | <i>[Kenji and Jesse laugh.]</i> |
| 01:04:30 | Jesse | Host | Our brilliant producer is Jennifer Marmor! Safer at home with baby Ezra and husband Shane right now. You can find Kenji on Twitter @kenjilopezalt . You can find us on Twitter at @JesseThorn and |

[@hodgman](#). We're on Instagram at [@judgejohnhodgman](#). John is on Instagram at [@johnhodgman](#), where he has been interviewing pets for his daily weekday talk show!

Make sure to hashtag your *Judge John Hodgman* Tweets [#JJHo](#), and check out the Maximum Fun subreddit at [MaximumFun.Reddit.com](#) to discuss this episode. Submit your cases to *Judge John Hodgman* at [MaximumFun.org/jiho](#), or email hodgman@maximumfun.org.

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

| | | | |
|----------|--------------|------------|----------------------------------|
| 01:05:26 | Sound Effect | Transition | <i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i> |
| 01:05:28 | Music | Transition | A cheerful guitar chord. |
| 01:05:29 | Speaker 1 | Guest | MaximumFun.org . |
| 01:05:31 | Speaker 2 | Guest | Comedy and culture. |
| 01:05:32 | Speaker 3 | Guest | Artist owned— |
| 01:05:33 | Speaker 4 | Guest | —audience supported. |