

|          |                |            |   |
|----------|----------------|------------|---|
| 00:00:00 | Sound Effect   | Transition | <i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>   |
| 00:00:02 | Monte Belmonte | Host       | Welcome to the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast. I'm summertime... <u>less</u> fun-time guest bailiff, Monte Belmonte, filling in for the <u>actual</u> bailiff, Jesse Thorn. We are in chambers this week to clear the docket! And now, the Webby Award–winning host of the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast, Judge John Hodgman.  |
|          |                |            | What a thrill it was, Judge John Hodgman, when you included me in that Tweet!   |
|          |                |            | <i>[John chuckles.]</i>   |
|          |                |            | To tell me that this podcast had won a Webby! And then I go online and watch the Zoom Webby Awards, and there is none other than Monica Lewinsky giving you the award.  |
| 00:00:44 | John Hodgman   | Host       | Yeah.   |
| 00:00:45 | Monte          | Host       | It was really—it was fantastic.   |
| 00:00:49 | John           | Host       | Yeah, Monte, thank you. That—that I did <u>not</u> predict. I did <u>not</u> know that Monica Lewinsky would be... virtually presenting me with the Webby Award. But! The name of the show is <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> , but as you know, Monte, there are a lot of people on Team <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> . Obviously Bailiff Jesse Thorn, who can't be with us today. Obviously you, Monte Belmonte, and Jean Grae, and all the other great guest bailiffs over time. Of course Jennifer Marmor. |
|          |                |            | I can see you guys! We're in this new era where—  |
| 00:01:20 | Monte          | Host       | This is weird!  |
| 00:01:21 | John           | Host       | Yeah! Where we're podcasting and we can <u>see</u> each other. We could have been doing this the whole time!  |
| 00:01:25 | Monte          | Host       | I know!   |
| 00:01:26 | John           | Host       | But I see Monte. You're up there in Northampton, Massachusetts. Well, Turners Falls, right?   |
| 00:01:29 | Monte          | Host       | Right. It reminds me of when we would do this in the studios of WRSI.   |
| 00:01:34 | Crosstalk      | Crosstalk  | <b>Monte:</b> And could see each other.   |
|          |                |            | <b>John:</b> That's right! We could see each other.   |
| 00:01:37 | Monte          | Host       | And that was really fun.  |
| 00:01:38 | John           | Host       | And you're sporting, I noticed, your Wagon Wheel T-shirt. The Wagon Wheel being a great, uh—a great drive-in restaurant and ice cream place up there in Gill, Massachusetts. How's the Wagon Wheel doing, Monte?  |
| 00:01:51 | Monte          | Host       | Doing takeout. Ice cream—   |
| 00:01:52 | John           | Host       | Doing takeout?  |
| 00:01:53 | Monte          | Host       | Yep.  |
| 00:01:54 | John           | Host       | Yep.  |
| 00:01:55 | Monte          | Host       | They're figuring out how to do it as safely as they can. They weren't   |

one of the first adopters of the new model of eating out, but they have made that transition, and it's going great. I—as far as I know. It's too crowded for me to go there most of the time, so I guess that's a good sign.

00:02:12 John Host And you're still broa—first of all, they make a very good black bean burger. Tell you that.

00:02:15 Monte Host Yes. And they make their excellent homemade ice cream.

00:02:18 John Host Yeah, that's right! And by the way, how are things up there at WRSI, the River? 93.9 The River, in Northampton? Are you still spinning the wheels of steel every morning, giving the news?

00:02:31 Monte Host I am! And it has become this strange dystopian future that I've read so much about—

00:02:38 John Host Yeah.

00:02:39 Monte Host —in years previous, where I continue to wake up at two o'clock in the morning, continue to go in and do my show, and now people's listening habits have changed—

00:02:48 John Host Right.

00:02:49 Monte Host —and also, people have really made it well-known how important having this kind of communal... campfire of a radio—

00:02:57 John Host Mm-hm.

00:02:58 Monte Host —how important that is to them in a time like this. And I've adapted to that, and changed the way that I do the show. I'm doing a lot more call-in/request-type stuff. I've developed these quaran-themes (*quarantine + themes*), like every day of the week, to help remind us what day of the week it is. As a—

00:03:15 John Host Yeah, that's the hard—that's one of the hard ones.

00:03:18 Monte Host So it's like Michigoss Monday, where I play like, a lot of Weird Al stuff! And then it's like, Tear It Up Tuesday, a punk and soul dance party. And then like, it goes on from there, where... uh, it's a gravitational force that I think people are used to, and usually our slogan is "Different is Good," but we've kind of jokingly said—*[laughs]*—"Same is Good!" In the midst of all this, where it's like, it gives people this sense of familiarity and community.

00:03:44 John Host Right. Right.

00:03:45 Monte Host When they can't have that in the same way that they've been experiencing it previously.

00:03:50 John Host You don't do weekends, right? You're only Monday through Friday.

00:03:53 Monte Host Only when I have to. Yeah.

00:03:55 John Host So you can't do... Skaturday. (*Ska + Saturday*.)

00:03:57 Monte Host Well—

00:03:58 John Host The all-day ska programming.

00:04:01 Monte Host If you wanna do it with me on one of these days in the stay at home order, John Hodgman, I would do Skaturday with you.

00:04:09 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** I'm—I'm afraid that—

**Monte:** As somebody who went to go see the Mighty Might

Bosstones at every opportunity I could at an under-18 show when I was a kid—

**John:** Right.

**Monte:** I—yeah. Let's do it.

|          |       |      |  |
|----------|-------|------|--|
| 00:04:16 | John  | Host | I'm afraid 24 hours of ska would push even Northampton over the edge.  |
| 00:04:19 | Monte | Host | I think probably.  |
| 00:04:21 | John  | Host | And there is Jennifer Marmor, super producer Jennifer Marmor up top, silent as always. Or are you—are you hooked up to your mic? I can't remember now. |
| 00:04:28 | Monte | Host | She's muted, I believe.  |
| 00:04:29 | John  | Host | Nope, silent.  |

*[John and Monte laugh.]*

Purely muted. You're wearing a lovely linen shirt you mentioned. And speaking of the news, of course, uh, we recorded this a week ago. This is coming out June 10th, 2020. And of course, a week ago we are in the midst of now several nights of coast-to-coast protests against police violence, specifically against people of color, specifically Black people, in this country and around the world. And, um, it's upsetting. And we're not gonna dwell on it dramatically in this episode. And who knows what the situation will look like when you actually hear the sound of our voices? But... I have been sharing a couple of links that you might find useful, and we'll have links for them in the show page at [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org), and on the *Judge John Hodgman Instagram*.

One is—uh, I created a custom Bitlink for it, I didn't make it up. It's [Bit.ly/GETYOURFRIENDS](http://Bit.ly/GETYOURFRIENDS). All capital letters, GETYOURFRIENDS. And that's just a link to a *Rolling Stone* compilation of links to various—it's a really—uh, I just happened to find it in *Rolling Stone*, a really great collection of links to various bail funds, various local protestor support organizations, various policing reform organizations, including Reclaim the Block in Minneapolis, and they're places that you can donate money to if you have the means to do so. And they also offer you lots of opportunities to support those organizations in other ways. It's important that we all be part of this... struggle, one way or the other.

And as well, another link that I've been handing out is a link to—on Medium, that came out a couple of years ago, [75 Things White People Can Do for Racial Justice](https://medium.com/@corinneshutack/75-things-white-people-can-do-for-racial-justice). This was put up on Medium by Corinne Shutack. And it's an incredibly thoughtful list about all sorts of—if you are a non-non-white person—that's to say a white person—and you want to support, and get engaged, and be—and make anti-racism part of your life, lots and lots of concrete ideas of how—of books you can read, activism that you can train in, and organizations you can reach out to. And it's a lot of valuable stuff.

So that said, I just wanted to put that out there before we move and settle some really... petty, silly disputes. *[Stifles laughter.]* Because

like all of us, we deserve from time to time just wear—what are you wearing, Jennifer Marmor? Just a simple linen... top? For yourself? Yeah! We all need to wear a simple linen top for ourselves sometimes. Take a little break, and wrap our minds around... the bad ideas of weird dads. And what things are sandwiches and what aren't sandwiches. And in this episode—*[laughs]* truly one of the most puzzling conundrums about playing the game of Twenty Questions that I've ever come across.

So, Summertime Guest Bailiff Monte Belmonte... Why don't you start us off?

00:08:01 Monte Host Speaking of sandwiches—which, I think you are now the arbiter of everything sandwich-oriented—here's something from Katie May.

00:08:09 John Host I wish that—if only that were true. If only that were true.

00:08:12 Monte Host *[Laughs.]* You're the Mayor of Sandwich, Massachusetts, which is not Hotdog, Massachusetts.

00:08:18 John Host No, I am not—I am not—I'm not the major, I'm not even the selectperson of Sandwich, Mass—

00:08:23 Monte Host You're the judge of Sandwich, Massachusetts?

*[Pause.]*

00:08:25 John Host No—oh! *[Laughs.]* Yeah, there is a town in Massachusetts called Sandwich! I forgot that!

*[Monte laughs.]*

No. The—I wish I could get the BLT to the city in Sandwich, Massachusetts. But I am not so honored. It is still—the debate over the sandwichness of hotdogs... *[exasperated]* continues! Even though I fully settled it on this podcast years ago! [Bit.ly/...JJHOTDOG](http://Bit.ly/...JJHOTDOG) (*JJHo + hotdog, "JJ Hote-dog"*)—

*[John laughs, Monte cracks up.]*

—J-J-H-O-T-D-O-G, all capital letters, if you wanna hear my final ruling on why a hotdog is not a sandwich. But I do love sandwiches, and I love thinking about 'em and talking about 'em! So tell me, what's the dispute?

00:09:05 Monte Host This comes from Katie May. She has a dispute with her husband about sandwich-making. And she says:

"One of us thinks mayo and lettuce go on the sandwich before grilling. The other things hot mayo and wilted lettuce are an affront to all that is holy. Please help."

And you have asked for clarification on what type of sandwiches are in question, and Katie May said—

00:09:29 John Host Yeah.

00:09:30 Monte Host "I'm a vegetarian, so for me it's cheese and veggies. For him, it sometimes includes sliced ham or turkey."

00:09:39 John Host So I also dug a little deeper into this question with Katie May, and

determined that the grilling they're talking about, Monte, for your clarification, 'cause I want your take on this—

00:09:48 Monte Host Okay.

00:09:49 John Host I believe it is a panini press.

00:09:52 Monte Host Not grilling.

00:09:53 John Host Well, in New England, a grilled cheese is not something that's been pressed in a panini.

00:09:58 Monte Host Oh, yeah.

00:09:59 John Host It's been—something that's been buttered on both sides, and... and, you know, cooked in a skillet. You know what I mean?

00:10:05 Monte Host Right.

00:10:06 John Host But this is a panini press situation. And... would you put mayonnaise... on a panini that you are grilling? And would you put lettuce on a panini you are grilling?

00:10:19 Monte Host Mm.

00:10:20 John Host And while I can see you—

*[Monte laughs.]*

—and I can see the utter disdain on your face, I'm—I will remind you this is a audio-only podcast.

00:10:26 Monte Host And audio-only court. Um, absolutely not.

00:10:29 John Host Yeah.

00:10:30 Monte Host I am a huge proponent of mayonnaise. I—

00:10:33 John Host Well...

00:10:34 Monte Host You wanna put mayonnaise on your cereal—

00:10:35 John Host Right.

00:10:36 Monte Host —I'm gonna back you on that.

00:10:37 John Host We're two white guys from New England, of course mayonnaise is *[inaudible]*.

00:10:39 Monte Host Yeah. We are mayonnaise! We are the living embodiment—you are what you eat! And we are mayonnaise. Maybe I am Hellmann's. 'Cause you reach for the Hellmann's, you reach for the best. *[Laughs.]*

00:10:50 John Host There is very—very little distinction from my midsection right now, and what it looks like when you open a fresh jar of Hellmann's. That little—that pasty-white swirl of fresh mayonnaise.

00:11:01 Monte Host Right. If you could take the mayonnaise jar and burn a very small portion of the back of it, that's how I look right now. Because I went and sat by the Connecticut River over the weekend, so... I'm like burned mayonnaise.

00:11:15 John Host Are you saying mayonnaise burns red like your skin?

00:11:17 Monte Host No, it doesn't, but... you know.

00:11:19 John Host *[Inaudible.]*

00:11:20 Monte Host No analogy you can take so far. At any rate, you put mayonnaise—

00:11:22 John Host Alright, you love—you love mayonnaise.

00:11:24 Monte Host Put mayonnaise on things, yes. Not before grilling, no.

00:11:29 John Host Right. There shouldn't—so, if you're making a panini, mayonnaise should not—never be a part of it. If you're—

00:11:34 Monte Host Right. I question whether you should call that "grilling" in the first place.

00:11:38 John Host Well, now—

00:11:39 Monte Host Like, I give you grilled cheese. But if you told me you were gonna make a grilled, like, turkey sandwich? Immediately I would think like, "Oh, you're gonna put it on an open flame on like a—a back—"

00:11:47 John Host Who would ever do that?

00:11:48 Monte Host I don't know.

00:11:50 John Host You're making up a new thing!

00:11:51 Monte Host Alright. Eh...

00:11:54 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Monte:** Nobody puts turkey sandwiches—

**John:** Making a turkey sandwich, but putting it on a grill?

00:11:59 Monte Host No. But when—

00:12:00 John Host You would never do that, Monte.

00:12:01 Monte Host No, I wouldn't. But I gr—I do grill a lot! Like, I grill everything on an actual flame grill in my back yard.

00:12:07 John Host Mm-hm.

00:12:08 Monte Host And then yet, at the same time, my children make grilled cheeses, and I—I never do that.

00:12:13 John Host Just as east of the Mississippi, Hellmann's Mayonnaise is called Hellmann's Mayonnaise, and west of the Mississippi it is called Best Foods.

00:12:21 Monte Host Oh!

00:12:22 John Host You know—Jennifer Marmor, nodding in solemn assent of that knowledge.

00:12:26 Monte Host Nice to know this!

00:12:28 John Host So there is still regionalism within this country, so some people will say "grilled cheese" when others would say "toasted cheese," for something that is cooked in a skillet. And I am perfectly willing to allow Katie May and her husband to call panini-grilling "grilling."

00:12:45 Monte Host Okay.

00:12:46 John Host Panani-pressing "grilling." Just so long as they do not call grilling "barbecue."

00:12:51 Monte Host No.

00:12:52 John Host In which case, get off my podcast.

00:12:54 Monte Host Absolutely.

00:12:56 John Host Okay. So... you say no. Katie May is right, husband is wrong.

00:13:01 Monte Host Yes, but if you wanna put mayonnaise on it after the fact, I'm not gonna stand in your way.

00:13:07 John Host But how are you gonna do that if you're grilling cheese into the panini? You see what I mean?

00:13:11 Monte Host If you—*[laughs]* if you love mayonnaise so much that you wanna put it on the top of the—*[laughs]* of the grilled panini?

00:13:18 John Host Right.

00:13:19 Monte Host Again, I'm not—I'm not gonna stand in your way.

00:13:22 John Host Here—alright, so here's a solution. And I—again, I'm not making a ruling yet.

00:13:26 Monte Host Okay.

00:13:27 John Host But if you wish, Katie May's husband—if you wanna follow the Monte Belmonte way, and you are making a sliced ham or turkey panini, and you're adding cheese to it, because why wouldn't you if you're grill—if you're putting anything in a panini? Come on.

00:13:43 Monte Host Absol—why—you don't even need to grill it if you're not putting cheese on it!

00:13:47 John Host Right. But you have to keep one of the sides of the panini un-cheesed, so that it—so that you can take off that bread and add fresh, cool, Monte Belmonte—style cold mayonnaise.

00:13:59 Monte Host What about this?

00:14:00 John Host With the hot hot, and the cool cool. Yeah.

00:14:02 Monte Host What if you grill the whole sandwich, both sides—again, I use "grilling" loosely here. And then you have—you've made your own fake aioli, which means... mayonnaise that you bought at a store—

00:14:14 John Host *[Stifles laughter.]* Yeah.

00:14:15 Monte Host —and truffled olive oil that you bought at a store.

00:14:17 John Host Mm.

00:14:18 Monte Host And then you dip the grilled sandwich into a bowl of the cold mayonnaise and truffled aioli. And then you bite it, and then maybe... I want that sandwich.

00:14:31 John Host How about this? This is called the John Hodgman Special. How about you make a ham and cheese sandwich, get a bowl of cold mayonnaise, throw the sandwich away, and just get a spoon and eat that mayonnaise? ...I think that just—a lot of people just threw up.

00:14:46 Monte Host Nope! Not this person!

*[John laughs quietly.]*

Because you are what you eat!

00:14:50 John Host I have to send a message to... my wife. Because there was a panin—there was a legit panini that we had in a foreign country that blew our minds. And I wanna know whether it had mayonnaise on it or not.

*[Faint clicking as John types out a message. He reads it out, somewhat stilted as he's making it up and typing it on the spot.]*

"What was in that panini we liked so much? Did it have mayonnaise?"

*[Some more typing, ending with a decisive final tap, presumably sending the message.]*

I'll let you know what was in that—this is a little tease! Little podcast tease! Stay tuned!

00:15:16 Monte Host Yeah! If you wanna know what was in the panini, you'll have to listen to the end of the podcast! And also... have you tried this timeshare in the Cape of Cod?

00:15:26 John Host We don't have—we're not doing any timeshare ads, Monte!

00:15:28 Monte Host Okay. Fine.

00:15:30 John Host I don't know what's going on there at WRSI.

*[Monte laughs quietly.]*

No timeshare—no timeshares.

00:15:33 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Monte:** We're really scraping bottom of the battle for—at the—

**John:** Alright! Here's—here's what I'm gonna say. Here's what I'm gonna say, Monte.

00:15:37 Monte Host Okay.

00:15:38 John Host I agree with you... 99.99999%.

00:15:43 Monte Host *[Sighs quietly.]* Okay.

00:15:45 John Host But... you have overlooked one of the greatest sandwiches in the world. That specifically involved hot mayonnaise. Tuna melt!

00:15:58 Monte Host Damn. Okay.

00:16:00 John Host Tuna melt!

00:16:01 Monte Host Can I say that?

00:16:02 John Host Yeah, you can say "damn."

00:16:03 Monte Host Okay.

00:16:05 John Host These are challenging times. We need to be able to express ourselves.

00:16:07 Monte Host Damn. You're right. Hot... tuna.

00:16:10 John Host Tuna melt—Hot Tuna is a band. It is also an ingredient. *[Laughs.]* In a tuna melt. And how does it get hot? You grill it! And it's—there's mayonnaise in there, man. There's mayonnaise in that tuna. Do you like a tuna melt? Or what you would call a tuner melt?

00:16:29 Monte Host Tuner melt! I do. Maybe the—your ruling should say that like, if they would like to hot-grill mayonnaise with turkey, that they have to then start a commensurate band with the same name.

*[John laughs.]*

So like, "We're the new band Hot Turkey!"

00:16:45 John Host Hot Turkey? Yeah. No. I don't wanna hear Katie May's and her husband's band Hot Turkey.

00:16:49 Monte Host Hm.



00:16:50 John Host I just want them to enjoy themselves.

00:16:51 Monte Host Right.

00:16:52 John Host Um, yeah! I—I have to say... that while I agree with Katie May, that grilling either in a panini or skillet environment lettuce is gross...

00:17:12 Monte Host Yeah.

00:17:13 John Host ...I would admit mayonnaise on a grilled sandwich.

00:17:17 Monte Host Okay. It seems fair.

00:17:19 John Host The other day, I—I grilled a sandwich. One of the classic grilled sandwiches, or what we say "pressed" sandwiches.

00:17:27 Monte Host Mm. I prefer that.

00:17:28 John Host I did a—I did a Cubano sandwich. Which is a cl—the classic South Florida sandwich of... roast pork, ham, Swiss cheese, mustard, pickles. And I pressed that—because I don't have a sandwich press—I put it in a skillet, and I put a piece of parchment paper on top, and I slammed a cast iron pan on top of that.

*[Monte laughs.]*

And then I put a kettle full of water on it.

00:17:55 Monte Host *[Laughs.]* I love it.

00:17:58 John Host And it worked really well. And you know what—you know... what I also did? ...I added mayonnaise.

00:18:04 Monte Host When it was grilling?

00:18:05 John Host Yeah.

00:18:06 Monte Host Wow. *[Hissing intake of breath.]*

00:18:07 John Host And you know what? It—you know what? Worked. Worked good.

*[Beat.]*

I don't mind hot mayonnaise! I getcha. If it's not for you, Katie May, that's fine. But I think that there is—I think the tuna melt invalidates your argument that it is never allowable.

One more thing before we move on, with regard to the grilling of sandwiches, which... during, uh, pandemic, uh, stay-at-home, I have been doing a lot of, obviously, and thinking a lot about sandwiches... Do you know the trick, Monte, of making a grilled cheese with mayonnaise instead of butter?

00:18:44 Monte Host No!

00:18:45 John Host Yeah, Jennifer Marmor is nodding her head.

00:18:46 Monte Host Well, well, well!

00:18:47 John Host Knowingly!

00:18:48 Monte Host My children grill a lot of cheeses.

00:18:52 John Host Yeah.

00:18:53 Monte Host So I'm eager to hear this.

00:18:55 John Host I think I picked this up from Ken Reid, also a Massachusettsian.

*[Monte applauds briefly.]*

Host of the *TV Guidance Counselor* podcast. But there is a tradition, and perhaps it's a New England one or perhaps he picked it up just from the Internet, of instead of taking your bread and putting butter on the exterior of the bread and then grilling it with your cheese in a pan, use mayonnaise instead. And it browns really well! And it tastes—it does not taste mayonnaise-y. It tastes super crispy.

00:19:28 Monte Host Wow!

00:19:29 John Host When you get that out.

00:19:30 Monte Host So instead of butter, you just put mayonnaise in the pan.

00:19:32 John Host Yeah. Yeah.

00:19:33 Monte Host That seems very easy. It seems dangerous... for somebody who hasn't tried it.

00:19:38 John Host No—no—

00:19:39 Monte Host But I'm willing to take that risk.

00:19:41 John Host You wanna heat up the pan for a while at low heat. And then I know normally you would put a big lob of butter in there, and it would sizzle around, and you flip the sandwich—

00:19:48 Monte Host Yeah. You know how butter's gonna react in there. What's gonna happen if I put mayonnaise in here?

00:19:52 John Host It's—no. This is what you do—

00:19:53 Monte Host Am I gonna set the house on fire?!

00:19:54 John Host Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, Monte. Calm down. Heat up your thing—heat up your pan.

00:19:58 Monte Host Okay.

00:19:59 John Host Low—you know, low-to-medium heat. Get it reasonably hot. It's clean. Take your piece of bread. You mayonnaise one side of it. Put it mayonnaise-side-down in the pan. Put your cheese on that bread. Mayonnaise another slide of bread. Put that mayonnaise-size (*sic*) up. And walk away. And then come back, flip it. You're done!

Oh. One last thing. Can this podcast be five hours long and only about mayonnaise, Jennifer?

00:20:30 Monte Host YES!

00:20:32 John Host *[Laughs quietly.]* I learned this—speaking of Team *Judge John Hodgman*...

00:20:36 Monte Host Yeah.

00:20:37 John Host ...from expert witness Kenji López-Alt! The great food writer, the author of Food Lab. He's got a YouTube channel, he's got recipes all over the place. This is the guy who invented the concept of the reverse-sear steak. You know what that is, Monte?

00:20:54 Monte Host No, but this is a cooking podcast now, so I'm all ears.

00:20:57 John Host Go—no, you have to go back and listen to, uh, *Judge John Hodgman* verdict number 465, "Licorice-Adjacent Flavor." That's a good one. Kenji López-Alt. Really, really smart, science-based food

writer. But not like, wonky science. Not pure science. Like, he is fun. He mixes things up. And speaking of mixing things up... and speaking of mayonnaise, and speaking of—of hot...

Kenji López-Alt has a recipe for chicken breasts marinated in chimichurri, which is a parsley, garlic, onion, olive oil sort of pesto that is used as a steak seasoning in Argentina. And mayonnaise. That's it. Go find [this recipe](#), because it has changed my life.

00:21:46 Monte Host Is it on the podcast?

00:21:49 John Host No, that's not on that podcast, but it's on—it's on the Internet. I've—I discovered it since we recorded. Kenji López-Alt held that back from me!

00:21:55 Monte Host Damn him.

00:21:56 John Host Which I consider to be a crime. You pound your chicken breast into the quarter-inch even thickness. You get your chimichurri, you whip it up. Then you take like a quarter cup of mayonnaise, whip that into it, and then you just let it sit in that mayonnaise-y, garlicky, parsley marinade, for like up to... an hour? Or a day! And then you just pull it outta there. You don't do anything. You just throw that right on the grill. Ho—you know. Whatever. Three—three, five minutes total? Depending on the thickness? Maybe six?

I've never had a better food, almost, pretty much. And I—you know what it's all thanks to? Mayonnaise. If you don't like mayonnaise, don't send me letters.

What did I say? Okay, so, Katie May. Hot mayonnaise, okay. Hot lettuce, no good.

00:22:45 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:22:46 Monte Host Maddie says:

"My husband Nick and I just bought a house next-door to a church with a public Wi-Fi network. Nick wants to use the church's network instead of purchasing our own Wi-Fi. I'll also add we've been splitting the cost of Wi-Fi with various neighbors for almost seven years, so we have never owned our own Wi-Fi. I believe that what Nick wants to do... is stealing. It's time for us to be adults, and have our own network. I ask that you issue an injunction against Nick's use of the public church Wi-Fi."

00:23:24 John Host Monte, I just want you and the listeners to know that I have received the information back from my wife with regard—

00:23:30 Monte Host *[Audible exclamation point]*

00:23:31 John Host —to the panino that we had!

00:23:33 Monte Host Panino? Good use of Italian! *[Claps once.]* Hodgman.

00:23:35 John Host That's right. 'Cause it's one of—it's one panino. It's many panini.

00:23:39 Monte Host One graffito. Many graffiti.

00:23:41 John Host Right. And it was one of the greatest sandwiches I ever had in my life, and I will reveal the details after the break! But first—

*[Monte bursts out laughing.]*

—here's what I have to say to Maddie! Uh, Monte, what do you think? *[Laughs.]*

|          |       |      |   |
|----------|-------|------|---|
| 00:23:54 | Monte | Host | I think, um, given a pandemic, you can steal the Wi-Fi until the pandemic is over.  |
| 00:24:01 | John  | Host | Whoa.   |
| 00:24:02 | Monte | Host | And then you need to get back to real life and be a grown-up. Right now, we are in—   |
| 00:24:06 | John  | Host | Mm.   |
| 00:24:07 | Monte | Host | We are in, like, <i>Beyond Thunderdome</i> land right now. So it's like, every person for themselves, and also Tina Turner.   |
| 00:24:14 | John  | Host | <i>[Dismayed]</i> No. No, Monte, no.<br><br><i>[Laughs quietly.]</i>  |
| 00:24:16 | Monte | Host | Okay? No? So, that's why I'm the bailiff.   |
| 00:24:20 | John  | Host | It's not every person for themselves. We have to be together on this!   |
| 00:24:23 | Monte | Host | Oh, yeah, right! We're all in this together! Even—yeah.   |
| 00:24:25 | John  | Host | Yeah. This isn't—this isn't Bartertown! <i>[Laughs quietly.]</i>  |
| 00:24:28 | Monte | Host | Okay. Alright.  |
| 00:24:30 | John  | Host | You know? This is—this is like, we all have to—   |
| 00:24:31 | Monte | Host | Two men enter, one man leaves!  |
| 00:24:34 | John  | Host | <i>[Fighting laughter]</i> No!!! It's not a Thu—  |
| 00:24:35 | Monte | Host | That's not it?  |
| 00:24:36 | John  | Host | It's not a Thunderdome!   |
| 00:24:37 | Monte | Host | I've been operating <i>Beyond the Thunderdome</i> principles this whole time!   |
| 00:24:39 | John  | Host | What has been happening in Northampton?!  |
|          |       |      | <i>[Monte laughs.]</i>  |
|          |       |      | No wonder you're wearing that suit of armor made of chicken bones, and a weird doll's mask! Have you become a lawless raider up there in Northampton?   |
| 00:24:53 | Monte | Host | Yes!  |
| 00:24:54 | John  | Host | It's not the one I remembered.  |
| 00:24:55 | Monte | Host | You know. These are difficult times.  |
| 00:24:59 | John  | Host | It's all about doing our best practices, wearing our masks, keeping our distance, following the science news, learning about anti-racism, supporting each other. It's not about all—getting as much free Wi-Fi as you can, Monte! |
| 00:25:15 | Monte | Host | But here's the thing! Nobody's going to church right now! So—   |
| 00:25:19 | John  | Host | NO!   |
| 00:25:20 | Monte | Host | —when people start going back to the church... then yes. You need to get your own Wi-Fi. But right now—   |

00:25:28 John Host See—look. You're counting on a return to normalcy of some kind. What I'm saying is we need to forge a new, better normal together. Based on principles.

00:25:40 Monte Host *[Grudgingly]* Alright...

00:25:41 John Host Now, if you wanna eat—*[laughs]* three tuna melts a day...

00:25:45 Monte Host With mayo!

00:25:47 John Host That's your business. Self care. And I understand your argument! That no one's at that church right now, the Wi-Fi's just sitting there. It's pooling. It's pooling around the pews, they've got more than they can use.

00:25:55 Monte Host Right! It wants to be used!

00:25:58 John Host Yeah. And maybe the church doesn't mind if you use that Wi-Fi! It's church!

00:26:03 Monte Host Right!

00:26:04 John Host *[Sing-song]* But there's a very easy way to find out! And that's... to ask! *[More sternly]* The church!

00:26:12 Monte Host Not hack the church?

00:26:14 John Host Ask—*[laughs]* don't hack the church! Ask the church!

00:26:17 Monte Host The password is "Jesus"! Because I read a bumper sticker that said "Jesus is the answer." So if you're looking for the Wi-Fi password...

00:26:24 John Host No...

00:26:25 Monte Host Jesus is the answer.

00:26:27 John Host No. Here's—here's the thing, Maddie and Nick. Maddie knows what's right. This is the Parable of the Soda Fountain. This has come up on *Judge John Hodgman* many a time, and it shall come up many a time again. It is one of the great teaching tools in the liturgy of the church of *Judge John Hodgman*. Monte...

Two pilgrims go—I mean, this is happening in olden times, right, 'cause people could go to restaurants then.

00:27:00 Monte Host Right.

00:27:02 John Host Two pilgrims go to an In-N-Out Burger in California. There is a soda fountain there, offering lo these many sodas. And then there is a button for water, and then there is a button for seltzer. Is it acceptable to fill up your cup with seltzer or water without paying for it? "Because after all," sayeth one pilgrim, "the cost incurred by the In-N-Out is the soda syrup! Your Doctors Pepper. Your Cokes and Cherries, and all the rest."

And lo, Judge John Hodgman sayeth unto the pilgrim... "Maybe! It depends! Just ask them!" *[Laughs quietly.]* "Don't ask me! I don't run an In-N-Out! There are more costs associated than you think of in a soda fountain than just the cost of the syrup! There is electricity, there is maintenance, etc., etc., etc. And yeah, it's just water, or just seltzer water. And maybe they're like 'Go for it.' Maybe they're like 'Here's a cup for you to filleth and slaketh your thirst from my soda fountain with just plain seltzer, if you wish. For I am a Good Samaritan.'

Or maybe they will say, 'No, but you can buy a cup for a dollar and have as many free refills as you want,' or whatever!"

The lesson of the Parable of the Soda Fountain, Monte, is that there is no reason to talk yourself into taking something that you want for free, when the proper thing to do is to simply... ask. There is no reason to come up with a system, or a scheme, or an explanation, as to why it is okay to take a thing for free, when the avenue is available to you to simply ask and be told yes or no! Especially if the answer's probably yes! It's church! They'll probably say "Fine."

Being a grown-up, Maddie—I appreciate that you're wanting to grow up, Maddie. But being a grown-up does not mean... buying your own Wi-Fi. A lot of people try to define grown-up-ness by the fact that they can buy stuff. Like, "I'm a grown-up 'cause I bought a car!" No. Being a grown-up means not being a sneak! Not trying to cheat the system! Means going up to the people in the—your world and say, "May I have this for free?" *[Stifles laughter.]*

00:29:49 John Host

And if they say "No—no, it's mine," then you go, "Oh, I get it. No problem. Thought I'd ask."

We're trying to have a civilization here. We're trying. We're trying really hard. And part of this time is having conversations that are not always comfortable face-to-face with our neighbors. And to a lot of people—including me!—having a simple face-to-face conversation such as "May I steal Wi-Fi here?" can feel a little, like, uh, hard to do! But I'm telling you, the more you go up to the people in your world, no matter who they are, no matter what they look like, no matter what their background is, and just have the conversation you need to have, even if it does not end with the result that you want, even if they tell you things that are hard for you to hear, you grow as a person from having direct contact with other people. At a safe distance! That's the other complicating factor. Don't go the way... of Northampton.

*[Monte cracks up.]*

Don't go the way of a dystopian Thunderdome, *Fury Road*-type situation like Northampton, Massachusetts.

00:31:06 Sound Effect Sound Effect

*[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:31:08 John Host

Now let's move on, Monte, 'cause I know you gotta—*[laughs quietly]* you're taking a run down the *Fury Road* to the gas farm later, so...

00:31:16 Monte Host

*[Singing, high-pitched]*

*We don't need another heeerooo!*

*[Speaking]* Let's take a quick break. More items on the docket coming up in just a minute on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

00:31:27 Sound Effect Transition

*[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:31:29 John Promo

Hi, everyone. It's your judge, John Hodgman. As always, the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast is brought to you by... you. Our beloved—that's right, I said "beloved." Could've said "beliked"! But I mean it, I love you—Maximum Fun members. But this week, we are also

supported by Babbel.

Look. We here in the United States have not been keeping up with the world in many ways, language being one of them. None of us have been traveling a lot lately, but if you get out there in the world, you will notice—*[stifles laughter]* that lots and lots and lots of people across Europe, Asia, Africa, South America—*[stifles laughter]* and Canada—speak English! I mean, Canada, you know, half the population or more speaks English. But you know what I'm saying. But you look at Canada, they're like, "Uh, yeah. But we have a substantial French population. We all need to learn to speak French, too."

Frankly, the rest of the world has been making it too easy for us! Because they're learning English! And I live in a multilingual city called New York, where I am embarrassed that I cannot offer communication to my Spanish-speaking neighbors in their own language. So I turn to Babbel.

Babbel is a website, and an app, and a suite of tools, that makes it fun and easy for you to start having conversations en español, or whatever your preferred language, right now. It is designed to quickly get you speaking your new language within weeks, with daily 10-to-15-minute lessons. It teaches real-life conversations, so you're not learning words and phrases out of context. You learn through these interactive dialogues. And their speech recognition technology is amazing, and it helps me to improve my pronunciation and accent (*ax-ENT*).

00:33:20 John Promo

Look. What do you wanna learn? Spanish, French, German, Italian, Russian? Portuguese? More? What are the "more"?

*[Pause.]*

Dutch? Polish? Indonesian, Danish, Swedish, Turkish? Babbel's got it! Does Babbel have Esperanto, so you can finally watch that weird Esperanto-only language movie that William Shatner made? ...No, Babbel doesn't have Esperanto. But it has a really cool [article about Esperanto](#). *[Chuckles.]*

[Babbel.com](#) is where you go to start. Right now, Babbel is offering our listeners three months free with a purchase of a three-month subscription, with promo code "Hodgman." You can go to [Babbel.com](#) and use promo code "Hodgman" on your three-month subscription. That's [B-A-B-B-E-L.com](#). Promo code "Hodgman," H-O-D-G-M-A-N. No "E" in "Hodgman." Don't make me tell you again.

Babbel. B-A-B-B-E-L. Language for life.

00:34:20 Sound Effect Transition

*[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:34:22 Promo Clip

**Music:** Faint, suspenseful violin music in background.

**Justin McElroy:** We're the hosts of *My Brother, My Brother and Me*, and now—nearly ten years into our podcast—the secret can be revealed. All the clues are in place. And the world's greatest treasure hunt can now begin.

**Griffin McElroy:** Embedded in each episode of *My Brother, My Brother and Me* is a micro-clue that will lead you to 14 precious gemstones, all around this big, beautiful blue world of ours.

**Travis McElroy:** So start combing through the episodes—uh, let's say starting at episode 101 on.

**Griffin:** Yeah, the early episodes are pretty problematic, so there's no clues in those episodes.

**Travis:** No. No, not at all.

**Griffin:** The better ones—the good ones? Clues ahoy.

**Justin McElroy:** Listen to every episode repeatedly in sequence. Laugh if you must, but mainly, get all the great clues. *My Brother, My Brother and Me*: it's an advice show, kind of, but a treasure hunt, mainly. Anywhere you find podcasts or treasure maps, *My Brother, My Brother and Me*—the hunt is on!

*[Music fades out.]*

00:35:16 Sound Effect Transition

*[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:35:17 Monte Host

Welcome back to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. This week we're clearing the docket, and Leslie says:

"My partner spends a lot of time listening to comedy podcasts like yours," and I will add the Webby Award–winning *Judge John Hodgman* podcast, "and laughing hysterically. While it's a minor annoyance at home, it's become a point of debate in public. I've shushed his cackling on every form of transportation imaginable. Cross-country flights, overnight bus rides in foreign countries, quiet train cars, the list goes on.

Am I right that he needs to clam up and stop embarrassing me, or is this acceptable behavior that I just happen to find annoying? How do you tell your loving partner of six years that his face is cute, but not when hyena sounds come out of it? I'm seeking an injunction to end this behavior for good, and save hundreds of innocent people from disruptive giggles."

00:36:16 John Host

*[John starts laughing, which builds into cartoonishly over-the-top evil cackling.]*

00:36:22 Crosstalk Crosstalk

**Monte:** I have—I think—

00:36:25 Monte Host

**John:** Is he laughing like that, do you think? Is it a villain laugh?

I imagined he's laughing like me, and I have a Wicked Witch of the West laugh.

00:36:31 John Host

Really??

00:36:32 Monte Host

Like, there are people that can recognize me no matter what the circumstances, because they hear this—

*[High-pitched cackle, a somewhat exaggerated version of how Monte has cracked up a couple times during this episode.]*



—kind of cackle.

00:36:39 John Host Wow!

00:36:40 Monte Host And that's like, my legitimate laugh.

00:36:43 John Host I don't like that.

00:36:44 Monte Host And there's another person that I know that has a very similar laugh, and so we have actually been confused in public spheres because our cackles are so similar.

00:36:53 John Host I don't like that, Monte. That's—that brought me right back to when *Wizard of Oz* was on television once a year.

*[Monte does a more theatrical cackle.]*

Stop it! What are you gonna do? You're gonna—I feel like Monte's—I can see you, but I still, in my mind's eye I'm picturing you on top of a thatched hut, throwing fireballs at me! Trying to set me on fire, like a scarecrow! That's—I don't like that! It's scary!

Which is more—I'm gonna answer Leslie's question in a second.

00:37:19 Monte Host Right.

00:37:20 John Host 'Cause we actually do have a recording of her partner's laugh.

00:37:23 Monte Host Oh!

00:37:24 John Host I think will—I think will make a lot of difference.

00:37:27 Monte Host Okay.

00:37:28 John Host But when it comes to traumatic childhood movies, which is worse? *Wizard of Oz*, or *Watership Down*?

00:37:38 Monte Host I—

00:37:39 John Host The Wiz, or the Wat?

00:37:40 Monte Host I know for you it's *Watership Down*, 'cause literally any time I see a picture from *Watership Down* on social media, I know it is John Hodgman that has posted it. *[Laughs.]*

00:37:49 John Host I'm talking about the animated film—

00:37:51 Monte Host Oh, yes.

00:37:52 John Host —from 1979 or so. Not the Netflix remake, which I have not seen, because it seems unnecessary, but if people like it, let me know. If you're of an age to know what movies I'm talking about, tell us in the Reddit, the *Judge John Hodgman* [Reddit discussion for this episode](#), which was more traumatic for you? As a child of the seventies and eighties. *Wizard of Oz*, *Watership Down*, or the miniseries *I, Claudius*.

Alright. Now—

00:38:24 Monte Host Oh! I thought you loved that one. I just assumed, 'cause of [the podcast](#), but—

00:38:28 John Host I do! I do, but—but if you're a kid who accidentally watches it—*[laughs]*.

00:38:32 Monte Host Right.

00:38:33 John Host It's—it's got some heavy stuff. It's got some—it's got some intense—intense scenes.

Alright. I don't want you to ever laugh that way at me ever again, Monte. But can I stop you from laughing that way? That's the crux of this issue. I don't like it... but do I—even if I were your partner, your romantic partner in life, your husband, which would be a lovely outcome to an alternate timeline...

00:38:58 Monte Host Absolutely.

00:39:00 John Host Would I have the right to say that that laugh—because it scares me so much, causes me damages—that you must not do it? Is it that disruptive? Because that's really what this comes down to. In many ways, you know—Leslie sent this in, obviously, when travel was still a possibility.

00:39:19 Monte Host Right.

00:39:20 John Host When ideas like, um... you know, cross-country flights, and overnight bus rides in foreign countries, and quiet train cars—boy—boy, oh boy! Who is—who—who's Leslie? Hercule Poirot? Planes, trains, and automobiles, solving—anyway.

Everywhere they go together, Leslie's partner laughs. But that's all done now. However, we are working together. Face-to-face, person-to-person, safely, to build a new and better normal. And will Leslie's partner's laugh be part of that new normal? Let's take a listen.

00:40:00 Clip Clip *[Leslie's partner progresses from quiet giggles to several loud, distinct peals of laughter, back down to giggles. Someone says something indistinct at the end.]*

00:40:15 John Host And, uh, we'll listen to it one more time.

00:40:17 Clip Clip *[Clip repeats.]*

00:40:32 John Host Now, see, that laugh does not scare or disturb me. It's—it's loud. I'll give it that. But what I find—the laugh is not the problem. It's the weird under-mutter. Did you hear that?

*[Monte laughs.]*

I'll do my imitation of Leslie's partner.

"Huhh?? Hua—["H"-noises turn into laughter, and then back into indistinct laugh-mumbling, which seems to represent the giggles bookending the louder laughter in the clip.]"

That was the non-laughing, but weird, kind of like, "*indistinct murmur*", talking to yourself kind of thing that gave it a—a kind of Joker-style menace. Monte, if you were on... I don't know, a cross-country flight, an overnight bus ride in a foreign country, or a quiet train car, and Leslie's partner was over there with earbuds in, making that noise? How would you feel?

00:41:29 Monte Host I didn't notice the kind of under-murmur. But that now is all of a sudden disturbing to me. So the out—initial outburst of laughing, to me, seemed very joyful.

00:41:40 John Host Mm-hm.

00:41:41 Monte Host But you gave it a dark twist. And now I can't un-hear that under-murmur.

00:41:47 John Host Right.

00:41:48 Monte Host Where... they seem like they have reeled in the legitimate expression of joy, and—

00:41:53 John Host So I've poisoned the well of your judgment—

00:41:56 Monte Host Yes.

00:41:57 John Host —with my insight, obviously.

00:41:59 Monte Host So the laugh itself, I'm fine with.

00:42:00 John Host You're fine? You would be fine if you were in a quiet train car, or an overnight bus in a foreign country, with a guy listening to even the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast, going—

*[John and Monte both cackle. John keeps it up for several seconds, hooting cartoonishly.]*

Like—like—like, uh, Christopher Lloyd in *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* at the end?

00:42:23 Monte Host Oh, yeah.

00:42:25 John Host No.

00:42:26 Monte Host Um, no. Actually, no.

00:42:27 John Host Would not be cool. That would not be cool.

00:42:28 Monte Host In normal circumstances—like, that's, like, you're at home. You're on a car ride. All of that. I think, yes. Let that bubble up and express itself in the way that it will in your body.

00:42:40 John Host Right.

00:42:42 Monte Host But you do need to know your surroundings. So even when I am like, in bed watching something funny and my wife is sleeping next to me, and I know she's sleeping—

00:42:49 John Host Right. Right.

00:42:51 Monte Host You gotta reel that in. You gotta try. *[Laughs.]*

00:42:53 John Host Yeah! Yeah, I mean—

00:42:55 Monte Host I'm not always successful. Perfectly honest.

00:42:57 John Host We have had—we have had partners who had difficulty with their partners' sneezes, which you think are an involuntary noise, but you can reign in your sneeze in certain public situations.

00:43:08 Monte Host I can't, actually. My children have deemed my sneeze the Hamilton sneeze, because it sounds like I'm saying "The issue!"

*[John snorts.]*

Like when he says "The issue on the table"? That is how I sneeze every time, totally without thinking about it.

00:43:24 John Host You can—you can—look. You don't—

00:43:27 Monte Host I could—I could stifle it, but I might blow my eardrums out.

|          |              |              |   |
|----------|--------------|--------------|---|
| 00:43:30 | John         | Host         | They're not gonna blow your eardrums out.   |
| 00:43:32 | Monte        | Host         | I might.  |
| 00:43:33 | John         | Host         | You don't have to laugh like the Wiz—the Wiz—Wicked Witch of the West.  |
| 00:43:37 | Monte        | Host         | I do.   |
| 00:43:38 | John         | Host         | But I love you, and I allow you to do it.   |
| 00:43:40 | Monte        | Host         | Thank you.  |
| 00:43:41 | John         | Host         | When you're around friends, Leslie's partner—including Leslie, who frankly... you know, you're presumably your partner's <u>best</u> friend—you laugh... laugh the way you want! I'm never gonna try to stifle laughter, especially not in this time. But when you're in public, laughing uproariously—especially with a creepy under-mutter—in a closed cabin of a cross-country flight, overnight bus in a foreign country, or quiet train car, is not only impolite, but bear in mind, droplet city. |
| 00:44:19 | Monte        | Host         | Oh, yeah.   |
| 00:44:21 | John         | Host         | Listen to something else! Listen to <i>The Fifth Season</i> by N. K. Jemisin. Listen to a novel. Listen to a podcast. Listen to <i>So You Want To Talk About Race</i> , by Ijeoma Oluo. Or listen to <a href="#">Minority Korner</a> on Maximum Fun! That's funny, though. That's funny. But, you know—   |
| 00:44:40 | Monte        | Host         | Can I make—can I make a recommendation?   |
| 00:44:41 | John         | Host         | Take some time, then, to think and—and think and not laugh so much. What? Yeah, you can make a recommendation.  |
| 00:44:46 | Monte        | Host         | There's a book called <i>This Book Is Anti-Racist: 20 Lessons on how to Wake Up, Take Action, and Do the Work</i> , by Tiffany Jewell, who happens to live in Northampton, Massachusetts. And I think it might be an excellent addition to the not-laughing-out-loud—   |
| 00:45:01 | John         | Host         | Yeah.   |
| 00:45:02 | Monte        | Host         | —and really taking some important self-assessment in these times when we need to be together apart.   |
| 00:45:08 | John         | Host         | Yeah! That sounds appropriately un-hilarious.   |
| 00:45:11 | Monte        | Host         | Right!  |
| 00:45:12 | John         | Host         | Or, you know, listen to something just... fun and low-key, but not comedic. Unless you can get that laugh under control, Leslie's partner. You have an obligation to people in closed spaces around you who are not Leslie, and your close friends. Do not scare them the way that Monte scared me.   |
| 00:45:30 | Sound Effect | Sound Effect | <i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>   |
| 00:45:31 | Monte        | Host         | Sorry.  |
| 00:45:32 | John         | Host         | Alright. Let's move on.   |
| 00:45:34 | Monte        | Host         | Let's take a quick break. And when we come back, we'll hear a case about the game Twenty Questions.   |
| 00:45:40 | Sound Effect | Transition   | <i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>   |
| 00:45:42 | John         | Promo        | Biryani-style tofu fried rice with ginger chutney? Yes. Click. Mushroom tostadas with pinto beans and cabbage slaw? Mm-hm!  |

Click. Sweet and spicy steaks with Hasselback potatoes and braised leeks? Total click! Hassel—I like a Hasselback potato, and it never would have occurred to me to braise a leek.

Oh, hi, it's me, your judge John Hodgman. I'm over here checking out the Sun Basket website. Clicking on some meals. As you know, the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast is brought to you by you, our MaxFun members, and we're also very happy and grateful to have the support, this week, of Sun Basket.

If you are looking to reduce unnecessary trips out, trying to avoid sold-out grocery stores, or you just wanna eat some good food and learn how to braise a leek—never would have occurred to me—try Sun Basket. It's great, and a delicious solution for the times we're living in. Sun Basket makes cooking easy and convenient, with healthy, delicious, pre-portioned meals sent straight to your door.

Sun Basket has delicious recipes for all kinds of dietary preferences, including paleo, gluten-free, Mediterranean, vegetarian, and more. I really enjoyed getting into these Sun Basket boxes when they arrive at my home in their sustainable packaging. The ingredients are top-notch. The recipes are super clear. The only thing, uh—the only thing missing is my skills! But, uh, now I'm gonna know how to braise a leek, and I'm gonna be a better person as a result.

00:47:16 John Promo

Plus Sun Basket facilities have the highest levels of food and employee safety, to protect you and your family. And right now, Sun Basket is offering \$35 off your order when you go right now to [SunBasket.com/judge](https://SunBasket.com/judge) and enter promo code "Judge" at checkout.

That's [SunBasket.com/judge](https://SunBasket.com/judge), and enter promo code "Judge" at checkout for 35 bucks off your order! Wanna hear it again? I do. [SunBasket.com/judge](https://SunBasket.com/judge), and enter promo code... "Judge"! Braise a leek, everyone!

00:47:53 Sound Effect Transition

*[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:47:56 Promo Clip

*[Cheering crowd.]*

**Danielle Radford:** Mmmacho man, to the top rope!

*[Thump!]*

**Danielle:** The flying elbow! The cover!

*[Crowd cheering swells.]*

**Speaker 2:** *[Distant; impact on each word]* One! Two! Three!

*[Ding ding ding!]*

**Danielle:** We've got a new champion!

**Music:** Excited, sweeping music.

**Lindsey Kelk:** We're here with Macho Man Randy Savage after his big win to become the new world champion! What are you gonna do now, Mach?!

|          |              |            |  |
|----------|--------------|------------|--|
| 00:48:15 | Promo        | Clip       | <p><b>Hal Lublin:</b> <i>[Randy Savage impression]</i> I'm gonna go listen to the newest episode of the <a href="#">Tights and Fights</a> podcast, oh yeah!</p> <p><b>Lindsey:</b> Tell us more about this podcast!</p> <p><b>Hal:</b> <i>[Continuing impression]</i> It's the podcast of power, too sweet to be sour! Funky like a monkey! Woke discussions, man! <u>And</u> jokes about wrestlers' fashion choices, myself excluded! Yeahh!</p> <p><b>Lindsey:</b> I can't wait to listen!</p> <p><b>Hal:</b> <i>[Continuing impression]</i> Neither can I! You can find it Saturdays on Maximum Fun! Oh yeahhh! Dig it!</p> <p><i>[Music fades out.]</i></p> <p><i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i></p> |
| 00:48:42 | Sound Effect | Transition |  |
| 00:48:45 | Monte        | Host       | Welcome back to the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast. This week we're clearing the docket. Here's something from Josh!  |
| 00:48:51 | John         | Host       | Okay, here it comes. This is payoff number one of tease number one. Top of the show, I teased a conundrum regarding Twenty Questions. At the end of the first third of the show, I teased the best panino I ever had. Here comes payoff one! Stand by for payoff two. Go ahead.  |
| 00:49:06 | Monte        | Host       | You—any time you wanna do a show on any of our radio stations in Northampton, Judge John Hodgman, you are more than welcome. Here is something from Josh:  |
|          |              |            | "I'm—"   |
| 00:49:14 | John         | Host       | Wow. They call me Chef Tease, of Sandwich, Massachusetts.  |
| 00:49:19 | Monte        | Host       | <i>[Laughs.]</i> I'm sorry, that's a—  |
| 00:49:20 | John         | Host       | Cooking up them teases!  |
| 00:49:21 | Monte        | Host       | There was a little bit of the cackle right there.  |
| 00:49:23 | John         | Host       | I know, I gotcha. It's fine. But see? You got it under control. You're a professional.   |
| 00:49:27 | Monte        | Host       | Right, I—I reeled it in.   |
|          |              |            | "I'm seeking the judge's wisdom on a semantic—"  |
| 00:49:30 | John         | Host       | You wouldn't laugh that—you wouldn't laugh that way on the radio!  |
| 00:49:33 | Monte        | Host       | Oh, I do it all the time.  |
| 00:49:34 | Crosstalk    | Crosstalk  | <b>John:</b> Do you now?   |
|          |              |            | <b>Monte:</b> I cry on the radio. I'm <u>so</u> unprofessional.  |
| 00:49:36 | John         | Host       | Well, I know you <u>cry</u> . But you do the Wicked Witch laugh on the radio??   |
| 00:49:40 | Monte        | Host       | Sometimes.   |
| 00:49:41 | John         | Host       | Yeah, and you reel it in. You let it go for the podcast. You reel it in for the radio. I know you, Monte Belmonte. You are professional.   |
| 00:49:47 | Monte        | Host       | I do my bel—best to be professional, but I don't always succeed.   |

00:49:50 John Host Alright. Let's hear—let's hear from Josh. I apologize.

00:49:53 Monte Host "I'm seeking the judge's wisdom on a semantic issue. My wife and I were playing Twenty Questions. My answer was 'Amazon River.' And my wife asked me 'Is it on land?' And I answered 'Yes.' But that didn't go over very well. How should I have answered?"

00:50:09 John Host Now—

00:50:10 Monte Host I love this question so much.

*[Both laugh. Monte cackles a little more freely this time.]*

There it is again.

00:50:16 John Host Yeah. There it is. That's good. That was good. That wasn't the same as the one that really scared me, where it—

00:50:21 Monte Host Sorry.

00:50:22 John Host Your whole face turned green, too. That was weird.

00:50:23 Monte Host Yeah, I know.

00:50:25 John Host So he was playing with his wife, Twenty Questions. The answer that he had prepped in his mind was "the Amazon River."

00:50:32 Monte Host Right.

00:50:33 John Host And she's asking, like, "Is it a famous person?"

"No." Obviously.

Uh, "Is it a, uh, fictional character?"

"No." Obviously.

"Is it on land?"

And then according to my reading on his letter, he had a little question mark after "Yes." So I feel like she—

00:50:50 Monte Host "Yes??"

00:50:51 John Host I feel like she said "Is it on land?" and he said "Mm, yyyesss??"

00:50:55 Monte Host Right.

00:50:56 John Host Which frankly, I think, in Twenty Questions is a fairly fair—that is to say, playable—clue that the answer is not—is a little tricky. And that gives information to the questioner.

00:51:11 Monte Host Yeah.

00:51:12 John Host So I think that he played fair. Right? If he said "Yyess?"

00:51:18 Monte Host "Yeeeeesss??"

00:51:20 John Host Because then Josh's wife can start to like, "Well, wait a minute, how—how can it sort of be on land?" And then might get to the point where it's like, "Oh, is it a body of water?" Right?

"Yes!"

And then you're off to the races. Then all you have to do is name every river in the world, and you're done.

00:51:40 Monte Host Right.

00:51:41 John Host And luckily, there—there are only ten of them. So... you get ten qu—

00:51:44 Monte Host And Amazon is going to be the first one that you're gonna guess, and probably try to make an order from—

00:51:50 John Host Right. Right.

00:51:51 Monte Host —in, you know, an inebriated late-night, uh, decision.

00:51:55 John Host *[Laughs.]* So anyway—but that still doesn't settle the question. Is it on land?

*[Beat.]*

00:52:03 Monte Host Yes.

00:52:04 John Host If you were gonna answer that question without the question mark, what would you say? Is it on land?

00:52:07 Monte Host *[Laughs.]* I have no idea how to answer this question, which is kinda why I love it.

00:52:12 John Host Is the Amazon River on... land?

00:52:16 Monte Host I think the only actual answer is the answer that he probably gave in his testimony, which is... "Yes?" Like, it's—

00:52:23 John Host Jennifer Marmor, I can see you, but you can't speak.

*[Monte laughs.]*

00:52:31 Monte Host What, using only body language, is the an—she—  
It's "yes??"

00:52:32 John Host She put her hands palms-up in the, uh, international symbol for either "Yes??" or "I really don't care, can we move on?"

*[Monte and John laugh.]*

00:52:49 Monte Host Well, now she's drawing her finger across her throat. *[Laughs.]*  
Oh, dear.

00:52:50 John Host "Kill this segment." No. She's not doing that.

00:52:53 Monte Host One of my favorite Twenty Question, like, answers for other people—

00:52:57 John Host Yeah. Yeah.

00:52:59 Monte Host —is Twenty Questions, yes.

*[John exhales loudly.]*

00:53:03 John Host So like, you have to guess that what I'm—*[laughs]*—thinking of—  
Whooooa.

00:53:04 Monte Host —is Twenty Questions. *[Laughs.]*

00:53:06 John Host You're a—

00:53:07 Monte Host And that causes all sorts of conundrums like this.

00:53:09 John Host I—

00:53:10 Monte Host Which is part of the reason I really love this particular question. Like,



"Is it on land?"

"Yes??? It is! I guess!"

00:53:19 John Host

Oh, Monte, I'm—now—I'm so glad that I know that.

*[Monte laughs.]*

So that I never get tricked into playing the game with you. Whew! You're a little bit younger than me. You're a true child of the nineties, so you got meta in your bones.

00:53:31 Monte Host

Sorry.

00:53:32 John Host

*[Stuffily]* "The answer to your twenty questions is 'Twenty Questions.'"

00:53:35 Monte Host

Right.

00:53:36 John Host

"The show is the show of the show."

00:53:37 Monte Host

Right.

00:53:38 John Host

"This is the show of the show."

*[Monte chuckles.]*

Here's the answer! Josh, first of all, I've established played correctly. But if you want—and frankly, generously, because you gave her valuable information to teasing out the correct answer. However, if you wanted to answer without a question mark, a definitive yes or no... the Amazon River is on land. Yes. Because—

*[Both laugh.]*

What's at the bottom of the river? Land.

00:54:11 Monte Host

Wow.

00:54:12 John Host

It's sitting on land! It's sitting in a valley of land. It's moving over the riverbed. Which is... soggy land!

00:54:21 Monte Host

Man.

00:54:22 John Host

But land. And you can dispute this if you want, in the Reddit, too. What was the most traumat—which was more traumatic? *I, Claudi*—in your childhood? *I, Claudius*, *Watership Down*, *Wizard of Oz*, and how wrong is John Hodgman on this one? Go ahead! I know I'm right.

But the fact is he played correctly. Because by going "Yes??"—

00:54:41 Monte Host

Right.

00:54:42 John Host

—instead of "Yes"—saying "Yes" plainly would be a misdirection to her, a real misdirection. It would be frankly as bad as playing the game and the answer being "Twenty Questions."

*[Monte laughs.]*

00:54:50 Sound Effect Sound Effect

*[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:54:53 Monte Host

If only she'd asked "Is it blue on a map?" I mean, that's actually what we're kind of thinking about here.

00:54:57 John Host *[Exhales thoughtfully.]* That's a great way. That's a great way. 'Cause—

00:55:00 Monte Host How el—how would she know to ask that question?

*[John exhales thoughtfully again.]*

She would not. So I think... I think your ruling is correct.

00:55:08 John Host Monte. Side show.

00:55:10 Monte Host Yes?

00:55:11 John Host Alright?

*[Monte laughs.]*

A Maximum Fun one-off. A live-on-Zoom Twenty Questions competition between you and me.

00:55:24 Monte Host I love it. *[Cackles.]* Sorry.

00:55:28 John Host We play three rounds, best two out of three. And then maybe we can figure out a way for viewers to qualify to try to stump us.

00:55:40 Monte Host Or we could choose in like, the comments. Like, "I'm gonna ask this as one of my twenty questions."

00:55:45 John Host No, no, I got it figured out.

00:55:46 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** Don't worry about it, Monte, I got it all—I got it all plotted out in my head.

**Monte:** Okay. Alright. You know how to do this way better than I do.

00:55:50 John Host We're gonna do this. It's gonna be good. Alright.

00:55:53 Monte Host Love it.

00:55:54 John Host What's the name of the game gonna be? Twenty Questions?

00:55:58 Monte Host Twenty-Twenty Questions.

00:55:59 John Host Twenty—*[laughs]*.

00:56:00 Monte Host And it'd be 20 rounds of Twenty Questions. *[Cracks up.]*

00:56:03 John Host No. Let's move on. *[Stifles laughter.]*

00:56:05 Monte Host That's only... 400 questions! *[Laughs.]*

00:56:06 John Host Come up with a name! I wanna come up with a name. I'll let everyone know as soon as we can work it out, Monte. This will be a fun thing to do of an evening.

00:56:14 Monte Host Absolutely.

00:56:15 John Host With our listeners. Alright. Let's move on.

00:56:18 Monte Host A listener named Hannah wrote in about a recent piece of Swift Justice that was issued. The question was whether or not a book is a device. The court decided that a book is not a device.

00:56:30 John Host Yeah, Monte, let—let me read this. Because obviously I get a lot of pushback on my correct opinions.

00:56:36 Monte Host Mm-hm.

00:56:37 John Host And this was one—and I normally just say "Thank you for your input,

but I stand by my decision."

00:56:44 Monte Host

Yes.

00:56:45 John Host

But regarding whether or not a book was a device, a lot of people pushed back. Lot of—a lot of bookish people in the audience, which I love. And I start—I read this letter and I started to compose an argument as to why I was still correct, even though Hannah, you will learn, is a historian and publishing scholar who dedicates a lot of her time to trying to convince students that books are a technology like any other.

But then I realized... You know what? I'm wrong.

00:57:16 Monte Host

Wow.

00:57:18 John Host

Here's what Hannah—so I'm gonna read this for Hannah.

"I'm a book historian and publishing scholar who dedicates a lot of my time to trying to convince students that books are a technology like any other. The desire to distinguish between electronic gizmos like eReaders, and print books—"

Which was my—that was personally my, John Hodgman's, dividing line. You wouldn't call a book a "gizmo," therefore it's not a device.

"The desire to distinguish between gizmos like eReaders and print books not only leads to all sorts of ableism, in that it seems to degrade eBooks, but also reflects an ahistorical tendency to pretend that books were never themselves new media. In fact, there are many moments in history that suggest how device-like these technologies once were.

My favorite example—" This is Hannah, still. "—is that of Johannes Fust, the business partner of Johannes Gutenberg." The two Johanneses, they called them. That was me.

00:58:19 Monte Host

It was *Two Johanneses and a Baby!*

00:58:20 John Host

Yeah. *[Laughs.]*

00:58:21 Monte Host

Starring Johannes Gutenberg!

00:58:23 John Host

Alright, back to Hannah's letter.

"Johannes Fust loaned a significant amount of money to Gutenberg to fund his printed Bible. Just as the Bible was being completed, Fust brought suit against his business partner and got everything, including the Bibles. Fust then attempted to sell the printed Bibles in Paris as manuscripts. The authorities got wind of these uncannily identical books, and Fust was charged with witchcraft! Forcing him to reveal the secret of the Bibles, that they were in fact newfangled devices. That is to say, mechanically printed books.

Some scholars have speculated that Fust was the inspiration for the legend of Doctor Faustus and his quest for limitless knowledge."

00:59:08 Monte Host

Hm!

00:59:09 John Host

"Given your established preference for historical accuracy over semantic categories—"

A preference that I don't think is—I have established, but anyway, fine.

"—I may wanna reconsider whether books are in fact devices." And I do reconsider it!

It is a hair that I split...ed. Right? *[Stiffling laughter]* That's the past tense of "split"?

00:59:29 Monte Host

Splitted.

00:59:30 John Host

I splitted that hair. That gizmo vs. book hair. I never intended—and I apologize, Hannah—to suggest that books as a physical object were not, indeed, absolutely, historically, massively disruptive technology. And they are—you know, they are—while "device" tends to imply, in contemporary definitions, having an electronic component, which books do not, at least not printed books...

*[Voice of a disgruntled teenager reluctantly apologizing to his parents]* You're absolutely riiight that even thooough...

*[Monte laughs quietly, John veers back out of the voice.]*

...a book is content that we refer to as being readable across many different kinds of devices, the physical thing we call a book is a hinge. It is mechanical. It was an invention. And I apologize. I got it wrong! First—first time in ten years. First time in ten years. I think. That I have admitted wrongdoing. See? I'm growing.

01:00:35 Crosstalk Crosstalk

**Monte:** *[Laughs.]* That was very—

**John:** Alright!

01:00:37 Monte Host

That was very big of you, Judge John Hodgman!

01:00:41 John Host

Well! It's time for guys who look like me...

01:00:44 Monte Host

Yeah.

01:00:46 John Host

...to listen to the expertise of others, and adjust accordingly.

01:00:51 Monte Host

Hear, hear.

01:00:52 John Host

So Hannah, thank you for your research. Thank you for that great story about Fust, and books being suspected of being the—the—the—the tools of witchcraft! Do the laugh now, Monte. Do the witch—

*[Monte accommodates with a hearty cackle.]*

*[John cries out in despair.]* "Oh, Johannes Fust, you come to haunt me!"

01:01:09 Monte Host

*[Laughs.]*

*[High-pitched and menacing]* "No, I'm Johannes Gutenberg! *[Cackles.]*"

01:01:13 John Host

"Too many Johanneses!"

That's it, the docket is clear! Thank you! For joining us again on another episode of *Judge John Hodgman*. Our producer of course is

Jennifer Marmor.

01:01:24 Monte Host Woo!

01:01:25 John Host Follow us on Twitter. Monte Belmonte is, guess what, [@montebelmonte](#). *[Sort of chanting]* M-O-N-T! E! B-E-L-M! O-N! T-E!

*[Chuckles quietly.]*

01:01:33 Monte Host Love it.

01:01:34 John Host It just rolls off the tongue.

01:01:35 Monte Host It's like a cheer!

01:01:36 John Host *[With more enthusiasm but less rhythm]* M-O-N-T! E-B! E-L-M-O! N-T! E!

*[Both laugh.]*

01:01:42 Monte Host Less like a cheer.

01:01:45 John Host That was better, I thought.

And I am [@hodgman](#). H! O! D! G! M-A-N! H! O! D! G! *[Slight pause, and then rapidly]* M-A-N!

We're on Instagram at [@judgejohnhodgman](#). Make sure to hashtag your *Judge John Hodgman* Tweets [#JJHo](#), and check out the [Maximum Fun](#) subreddit to discuss this episode. Remember...! Remember to talk about which is more traumatic in childhood, *Wizard of Oz* or *Watership Down*. And how wrong I was about the other thing. But do NOT get in that Reddit and complain that I never revealed the best panino I ever had in my life! 'Cause I saved it now!

01:02:19 Monte Host *[Celebratory whisper-shout]* Yes!

01:02:20 John Host To the very end!

A long time ago—this is also a story from ancient times.

01:02:27 Monte Host It's *American Pie*.

*[Singing]*

*A long, long time ago—*

01:02:31 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** Not *American Pie*.

**Monte:** *[Singing]* I once had a panino...

01:02:34 John Host Oh, no. This is a—

01:02:35 Monte Host Sorry.

01:02:36 John Host Now I'm doubly traumatized.

01:02:37 Monte Host Went into Weird Al territory right there.

01:02:39 John Host Which is more traumatic? *Wizard of Oz* on TV, *Watership Down* in the movie theater or on VHS cassette, or listening to your dad at some point sing *American Pie*.

*[Monte makes a kind of creaky noise that could be laughter, agreement, or dismay.]*

*[John laughs quietly.]*

Anyway. It was not an *American Pie*. Because in fact, we were in Venice, Italy. The most beautiful city in the world. Have you ever been, Monte?

01:03:04 Monte Host

No, I have not.

01:03:06 John Host

Yeah. Well, you can't go. *[Laughs.]* You can't go!

01:03:09 Monte Host

I hear plane tickets are real cheap right now.

01:03:11 John Host

Yeah. Can't—you're not allow—you can't go. But I hope that when we forge this new, better normal together, part of that new, better normal will include finally addressing climate change issues that are currently causing Venice tooo disappear beneath the ocean, forever.

But before that happens, near the Peggy Guggenheim Museum, there is a little bar called the Corner Pub. It is—in English, the name of it is "Corner Pub." I mean, it presents itself as an Eng—quote—unquote "English pub." But of course inside it's very Italian. They have cicchetti. Cicchetti is the Venetian bar snack which is often just, like, a little piece of lard on a piece of bread, or like a—a toothpick and a huge piece of provolone. And—with an anchovy on it? It's all—everything I love.

01:04:01 Monte Host

It's just mayo. Grilled.

01:04:03 John Host

Yeah, no. And then they have panini. Right? And this panino—I'm not gonna bury the lead. It did not have mayonnaise on it.

01:04:09 Monte Host

Okay.

01:04:10 John Host

But it was... you know, long bread.

01:04:14 Monte Host

Mm-hm.

01:04:15 John Host

In a panini press. With arugula, butter, speck—which is smoked prosciutto—

01:04:24 Monte Host

*[Emphatically]* Yes.

01:04:26 John Host

—and hard-boiled eggs.

01:04:27 Monte Host

Oh, my.

01:04:28 John Host

And boy, was it good.

*[Monte sighs.]*

So! I'm gonna make one of those for my dinner tomorrow night, I guess.

*[Monte laughs quietly.]*

But now I'm gonna leave you—*[laughs quietly]*—and sadly leave you, Jennifer and Monte! It was great seeing your faces!

Remember to submit your cases at [MaximumFun.org/jjho](http://MaximumFun.org/jjho). Or email me, John Hodgman. The email address is [hodgman@maximumfun.org](mailto:hodgman@maximumfun.org).

Hey! Monte? See you again this summertime! Jennifer, see you

again! And for the rest of you, I will not see you again, because it's a podcast, on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

|          |              |            |  |
|----------|--------------|------------|--|
| 01:05:05 | Sound Effect | Transition | <i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>                          |
| 01:05:08 | Music        | Transition | A cheerful guitar chord.                             |
| 01:05:09 | Speaker 1    | Host       | <a href="http://MaximumFun.org">MaximumFun.org</a> . |
| 01:05:11 | Speaker 2    | Host       | Comedy and culture.                                  |
| 01:05:12 | Speaker 3    | Host       | Artist owned—  |
| 01:05:13 | Speaker 4    | Host       | —audience supported.                                 |