

00:00:01	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
00:00:03	John Hodgman	Host	<p>Welcome to the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast. It's me, your judge, John Hodgman. Father's Day is just around the corner if you are in the United States, or in the UK. Uh, if you're in Switzerland or Lithuania, it happened a long time ago. Hoo! Tonga, that was May 17th for you. Third Sunday in June in most of these countries, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Namibia, Netherlands, Nigeria, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, United States, United Kingdom—that's a whole big one. But guess what? If you're in Nicaragua or Poland, you've got a couple extra days of gift-shopping time. And—hoo! If you're in Luxembourg, you don't have to get something for your dad until the first Sunday in October! Thailand is December 5th!</p> <p>Anyway, it's Father's Day, coming up. And it got us thinking about some of our favorite WeirDad episodes. If you're new to the podcast, welcome! Uh, you <u>may</u> not know—<i>[laughs]</i>—that the court of <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> has <u>long</u> been a magnet for disputes <u>usually</u> surrounding and/or involving dads of a certain age with quirky habits and systems. We call 'em WeirDads. I've been WeirDadding out myself lately, as we've all been home together. Been wearing a lot of track pants and making my kids watch a lot of movies, and telling a lot of corny jokes.</p> <p>This week, we are taking a journey through the court archives to bring you some of our top weirds! We're gonna start with an old one. All the way back from episode 32: "The Cow Beef."</p> <p>In this one, Ted complains that his father Paul is obsessed with cows. <i>[Laughs.]</i> Now, I'm—I'm gonna—I'll confess, this is a peek behind the podcast curtain. I'm reading this, right? I'm not just saying this off the top of my head. I can't remember that this is episode 32, unless it's written down for me. And now that I'm reading it, I can't believe what I'm reading! 'Cause I'm remembering it. It's such—<i>[laughs]</i>—it's such an incredible—such an incredible WeirDad!</p>
00:02:10	John	Host	<p>Not only does Paul have a massive cow <u>collection</u>, he also says the <u>word</u> "cow" randomly. <i>[Stifles laughter.]</i> You have to hear it to believe it. "Ted wants Paul to tone down the cow talk." <i>[Sighs heavily.]</i></p> <p>You know, I was gonna make myself a cup of coffee, but I'm actually gonna—I'm actually gonna hang around and listen with you to that case now. Let's take a listen.</p>
00:02:29	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
00:02:31	Paul	Guest	Uh—
00:02:32	John	Host	Why do you worship cows and defend cows against the whole world, even your mean son?
00:02:36	Paul	Guest	Uh, because cows are our most important animal friends! Left to their own devices, cows would lead a Zen-like existence, content to search for enlightenment, Nirvana, and large fields of tender young grass. Um, yeah, we should emulate the cows in this busy world that we're in! We could learn a great deal from their calm acceptance of—of fate such as it is.
00:03:05	John	Host	How do you react to your son's description of your interest in cows

as "obsession, and possibly psychological disorder"?

00:03:12 Paul Guest Well, upon occasion it's necessary to say "cow," rather as a mantra. Which indicates that I am going through a—a re-centering moment, when I reach the—

[Someone laughs.]

—the end of one thought, and am moving on into another one. You realize, of course, that the universal "Om" is simply "Moo" spelled backwards.

00:03:33 John Host How often do you say "cow" during the day in order to re-center yourself?

[Someone laughs.]

00:03:38 Ted Guest It's uncountable.

[Someone laughs.]

00:03:39 John Host Excuse me.

[Bangs gavel.]

Excuse me. I'll have order, thank you. This is your father's chance.

00:03:45 Paul Guest Um, I don't know. I suppose a half dozen times, maybe more?

00:03:48 Ted Guest *[Incredulous]* Oh, that's—

00:03:49 John Host What—excuse me, I will have order!

[Bangs gavel.]

00:03:52 Paul Guest Oh, except my wife, uh, says that I simply show "cow" upon occasion when I'm looking for attention. Now, I—

00:03:57 John Host Now, do you say "cow"? Do you intone "cow"? Do you chant "cow"? Or do you shout "cow"?

00:04:04 Ted Guest No, I just simply say "cow."

00:04:06 John Host "Cow."

00:04:07 Paul Guest Cow!

00:04:08 Ted Guest Oh, wait, wait, wait.

00:04:09 John Host Alright.

00:04:10 Ted Guest I got to object.

00:04:11 John Host Alright. I'll hear it.

00:04:13 Ted Guest He actually does say it more than half a dozen times a day, more like—

00:04:15 John Host What would be your guess of how many times he says it?

00:04:18 Ted Guest Thirty to forty. And it's more of a—

00:04:19 John Host Thirty to forty! Stop. Stop talking.

00:04:21 Ted Guest Yeah.

00:04:22 John Host Paul, that's a big discrepancy. Which is true?

00:04:24 Paul Guest Um, I can't imagine that I say it that many times.

00:04:27 John Host Cow.

00:04:28 Paul Guest Except may—cow.

[Someone is laughing quietly.]

00:04:30 John Host That was me. That was me!

00:04:32 Paul Guest Cow.

00:04:33 John Host Don't be blaming your father for that! I like it. Okay, good.

00:04:35 Paul Guest Okay, I—I might—I might give him a little tidge on that. Let's say maybe 10 to 15 times a day.

00:04:40 John Host Okay.

[Ted laughs.]

Ted?

00:04:41 Ted Guest Mm-hm. Yes?

00:04:42 John Host Stop laughing and making sad trombone sounds. Alright. You know what? Here's what's gonna be useful to me. Let's take a moment to do a little bit of roleplaying, so I can get a sense of what's going on in Ted's mind when you're having one of these phone calls. Let's say, for example, Paul—if you'll indulge me—you pretend to be your son Ted. Calling to—

00:05:00 Paul Guest Okay.

00:05:01 John Host Calling your father to ask for money, or whatever it is he does. And Ted, you pretend to be your father Paul. And you, uh, give us a sense of what it feels like to you, to talk to Paul on the phone. Alright. Are you ready? I'm gonna make a telephone noise—

00:05:17 Paul Guest Okay!

00:05:18 John Host I'm gonna make a telephone noise until Ted initiates the conversation by picking up. So hang on. The real Ted, pretending to be Paul.

[John trills, imitating a ringing phone.]

[He repeats the noise.]

00:05:29 Ted Guest "Hello?"

00:05:30 John Host Not yet.

00:05:31 Ted Guest Oh.

00:05:32 John Host We're gonna do three.

[John trills two more times.]

00:05:34 Ted Guest "Hello?"

[John trills one more time.]

00:05:37 Paul Guest "Hi, Dad!"

00:05:38 John Host Now, go!

00:05:39 Ted Guest "Hi, Ted! How are you?"

00:05:41 Paul Guest "I'm fine!"

00:05:42 Ted Guest "Well, I'm fine too! I saw a cow today."

00:05:45 Paul Guest "You saw a cow? You must have been watching—"

00:05:47 Ted Guest "Yes, I did."

00:05:48 Paul Guest "Where did you see a cow? You were in downtown Atlanta?"

00:05:53 Ted Guest "I was watching television and I saw a cow, and it was really neat, and it had horns and hooves and all sorts of other things."

00:06:00 Paul Guest "Were you watching a movie, like, say, *Silverado*?"

00:06:02 Ted Guest "It was on an ad."

00:06:03 Paul Guest "Oh! Okay. Was it the California Cows?"

00:06:06 Ted Guest "It was the California Cows."

00:06:08 Paul Guest "Well, did you—"

00:06:09 Ted Guest "They are happy cows."

00:06:10 Paul Guest "Happy cows give us the best dairy products! Did you vote for your favorite California Cow?"

00:06:14 John Host Wait a minute!

00:06:15 Ted Guest Are you sure you're playing me?

[Ted or Paul laughs.]

00:06:17 John Host Yeah, I don't think—Paul, I don't think you're playing your son!

[Ted or Paul keeps laughing.]

And Ted—

00:06:22 Ted Guest I—yeah?

00:06:23 John Host Ted, you never said "cow" once! And by my reckoning, you should have already said it eight times if your math was correct!

00:06:30 Ted Guest I actually said "cow" twice.

00:06:32 John Host It was a delightful conversation to overhear, I have to say, but it did neither of your arguments a particularly good amount of support.

[Someone laughs quietly.]

Ted, you didn't say "cow" as a—as a re-centering device, or as an "Om"-like chant, at all! And Paul, you just—you just marched right in! You could not help yourself but start talking about cows again!

Alright. Paul, did you do some great injustice to cows that you now feel you must make some Karmic restitution by being their champion in the world?

00:06:57 Paul Guest No, no. Uh, this is simply a realization that cows have been extremely important to the rise of civilization. And of course to our country. It is, after all, cows that won the West.

00:07:10 John Host Go on.

[Ted laughs.]

00:07:11 Paul Guest Well, the cows, uh—the cows—

00:07:12 John Host I—I could—that's not—that's not a statement you just drop into conversation without having—

[Paul or Ted bursts out laughing.]

—a follow-up, or indeed giving me a look demanding a follow-up question.

00:07:22 Paul Guest Well, *[inaudible]*.

00:07:23 John Host "But sir, I believe it was cowboys who won the West!"

00:07:27 Paul Guest Not at all. The cows simply took them along for protection. Wild animals, perhaps. Because some wild animals do indeed want to prey on cows.

00:07:36 John Host Sure.

00:07:37 Paul Guest But so the cows marched—

00:07:38 John Host Man, for example.

00:07:39 Paul Guest Yes. Uh, but the cows moved westward to find, you know, greener pastures, if you will. One of the problems the cowboys had, of course, was that the cows might stampede. Cows love to swim. And after a hard day of marching across the prairie, if they smelled water, they would immediately want to run for it. Shouting to each other, "Last one in's an old cow's tail!" And away they would go, and the cowboys would have to dissuade them from stampeding toward the nearest water.

00:08:12 John Host Are you saying that cows in the Old West could speak English?

00:08:15 Paul Guest Cows speak to us all the time.

00:08:16 John Host Ooh, this is getting—

00:08:17 Paul Guest 'Cause actu—

00:08:18 John Host This is getting very heavy.

00:08:19 Jesse Thorn Host Judge Hodgman, I have important news.

00:08:22 John Host Yes, go ahead.

00:08:23 Jesse Host I've just received an email communique from *Judge John Hodgman* producer Julia Smith.

00:08:28 John Host Yes.

00:08:29 Jesse Host It features an attachment with a photograph of—

[Ted bursts out laughing.]

—an elderly madman, that I can only presume is Paul.

00:08:40 Ted Guest Oh, yeah!

00:08:41 Jesse Host Dressed in a cow suit, with cow udders on his... man junk.

[Ted laughs.]

And a—

00:08:49 John Host Wait a minute. Who—wait a minute. Wait a minute. Wait a minute!

00:08:51 Jesse Host —pail of milk with cow gloves.

00:08:53 John Host *[Bangs gavel sharply.]*

Order! Order! Ted?

00:08:55 Ted Guest *[Stifling laughter]* Yes, sir.

00:08:56 John Host You're the—you're—you—are—is that you cackling in the background?

00:09:01 Ted Guest I can't help it. I'm sorry, Your Honor.

00:09:02 John Host No, you will help it. You will help it. I will not have a son laughing at his father in my courtroom. That is not acceptable to me. Who sent this photograph?

00:09:10 Paul Guest I did.

00:09:11 John Host Very good. Paul, is this you in this cow outfit?

00:09:14 Paul Guest Yes, it is. Have you seen the picture?

00:09:15 John Host I am looking at it now.

00:09:17 Paul Guest Okay. You see I have my milk pail there, ready to—

00:09:18 John Host I do.

00:09:19 Paul Guest —ready to dispense milk chocolate to the Halloween trick-or-treaters.

00:09:25 Jesse Host What kind of sick cow wears tiny cows on his cow hands?

[Paul or Ted laughs.]

00:09:27 Paul Guest Oh, I was—I was simply holding the cows. The cow in my right hand is actually a hand puppet that Ted gave me. The cows are named Dexter and Gordon. Uh, and—

00:09:39 John Host After the great jazz saxophonist.

00:09:41 Paul Guest Uh, well, yes. But there's also a breed of cattle known as the Dexter. These are—they're miniature cows, uh—it's actually from Ireland. And they can be kept as house pets. However, living in suburban Atlanta—

00:09:55 John Host ...What?

00:09:56 Paul Guest —we are rather restricted on the kinds of pets we can keep.

00:09:59 John Host So wait a minute. I—see—this is the reason why I didn't want Ted cackling in the background. 'Cause I need to hear every word. I wanna hear more about that!

00:10:07 Paul Guest Oh, well, the Dexter is a particular breed.

00:10:09 John Host Mm-hm.

00:10:10 Paul Guest There's a similar breed from Australia, which I believe are called the Lowline Angus cattle. Um, *[inaudible]*.

00:10:16 John Host Low-lying? Are they like the Corgis of cows? Do they have little tiny legs?

00:10:21 Paul Guest Um, yes! They have short legs and smaller bodies. And they're bred especially for meat in particular, I think.

00:10:31 John Host Right.

00:10:31 Paul Guest I don't think you want to milk them.

00:10:33 John Host But you keep them in the house? Like, will they curl up on the hook rug?

00:10:36 Paul Guest I don't know, they may come into your house and sleep at the foot of your bed! My—

00:10:40 John Host You know, in Hindu tradition, you would not, uh—you would not move into a home until you had allowed a cow to walk through it.

00:10:48 Paul Guest I—unfortunately I have stairs in my house, and the cows are not too good at stairs. They're fine going up, but they have a terrible time going back down again. I *[inaudible]*.

00:10:58 John Host But maybe you get one of these little Dexter cows, and you walk 'em through one time.

00:11:02 Paul Guest It'd be a grand thing to do. But I—I don't have access to a Dexter cow at the moment. So I simply named one of my favorite cows Dexter.

00:11:10 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:11:13 John Host Cowww. Cowww. *[Stifles laughter.]* Cow. I—people—people—random people have—now I remember that random people often come up to me on the street and just whisper in my ear, "Cow."

Alright. Let's move on. Many, many more weirds to come. In episode 244, "[Commedia della Morte](#)," we spoke with Joseph. *[Laughs quietly.]* Who would like a mi...

[Sighs.]

Jennifer Marmor is our incredible producer. I wanna thank her again for thinking of doing this episode, this clip show of weird dads. 'Cause it's so glorious. And for putting all these words back in front of my eyes, putting all these memories back in front of my brains. *[Stifles laughter.]* "Joseph wants a mime to perform at his funeral! His son Jesse is opposed to this idea."

Let's go back in time and hear exactly what Joseph has in mind when he says he wants a mime to perform at his funeral.

00:12:10 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:12:12 Joseph Guest If you're a good parent and your children love you, the last thing you do to them is make 'em cry. So I thought, "I certainly want my children to cry. But after they cry, I want them to laugh." So... what a surprise it would be, to have in the midst of all of this crying—'cause I assume there're gonna be a lot of people there who are gonna miss me and who are gonna cry—to have a mime appear. Unexplained, un-introduced. Just... appearing. In his white mime makeup, with a little tear painted under his eye. And the striped shirt. And just come in and do mime-y things! Eavesdrop on conversations.

00:12:55 John Host Sure.

00:12:56 Joseph Guest Be trapped in a box, as I will be trapped in a box, and so forth.

00:12:59 John Host Yeah, it's a metaphor for you, and your ines—your inability to escape death.

00:13:04 Joseph Guest Um... okay. Alright. I'll—I was an English teacher. I'll grant that.

00:13:09 John Host Uh—*[laughs]*. Unlike the one time I took a Shakespeare course, with the great Shakespeare scholar and literary critic Harold Bloom at Yale University, and I only took one semester of it. And I only said one comment. It was some totally banal interpretation of, uh, *Macbeth* or something. And Harold—where every other teacher in the world would say "Alright! That's an interesting idea! Let's explore this a little further," Harold Bloom said "Oh no, my dear... You're wrong."

[John and someone else laugh quietly.]

"That interpretation is incorrect." And moved on to a smarter student. But thank you for—

[John and someone else laugh.]

Thank you for, uh, "yes"-ing me along, unlike the cruel Harold Bloom, with my use of mime (*meem*) as metaphor for death. Because the thing about mime is that unlike a clown, or a stand-up comedian, or frankly semaphore, they're not designed to be hilarious. They're designed to be, uh, provocative of contemplation and weirdness and silence! You know what I mean?

00:14:20 Joseph Guest Yes!

00:14:21 John Host Does that play into your thinking? Or you just wanted something weird to happen?

00:14:24 Joseph Guest I just wanted something weird to happen.

00:14:26 John Host Yeah. I don't think you thought it through.

00:14:27 Jesse (Guest) Guest Sounds about right.

[Joseph and John laugh.]

00:14:29 John Host Wh—*[laughs]*. Uh, I—I—uh, I don't know—I don't know whether you thought this all the way through, then. 'Cause a good mime (*meem*) has never made anyone laugh. And arguably, neither has a bad mime (*meem*)! Uh, and by—and "meem," by the way, for you listening along at home, I'm not, obviously, talking about M-E-M-E from the Internet. I'm talking of the French pronunciation of "mime," which is "meem."

It's, uh, one of my many dumb affectations. Where in the course of the ceremony—first of all, what kind of funeral service do you anticipate having? A religious service, a graveside service, non-religious? What do you anticipate?

00:15:09 Joseph Guest Well, um... I will be cremated. However, it's traditional to have a wake. It used to be a three-day wake. I'd settle for one day.

00:15:20 John Host Mm-hm.

00:15:21 Joseph Guest Jesse—I love you dearly, Jesse. Jesse is very serious, but he also has my sense of humor, which is very interesting. He said that I'm making a joke about life. I'm really making a joke about death. Um... being dead sucks! I'm not looking forward to it! I just—

00:15:43 Jesse (Guest) Guest Objection, Your Honor. Hearsay.

[John and Joseph laugh.]

00:15:47 John Host Overruled.

00:15:48 Joseph Guest Thank you, Judge.

00:15:49 John Host Look, you don't—you don't—I'm already allowing a million objections in my own mind, 'cause I asked Joseph a specific question and he's starting to go off on how death sucks. And I'll let him! Bec—out of deference for fatherly wisdom, age, and courtesy to the—those who are closer to death than I. Please go on, sir. You were saying. Dea—being dead sucks.

00:16:13 Joseph Guest Well, Jesse envisions this as being an ongoing thing with a mime, um, appearing for two days, three days, hanging out with the family and stuff. I'm thinking more along the lines of everyone is there, they all talk, and in out of nowhere comes this mime, and just passes through the crowd! You know? Like, just sheds tears, and is trapped in a box, and walks against the wind, and pulls the rope, and then... breezes through the crowd again, and disappears.

00:16:45 John Host How long do you anticipate the mime act—in the course of the day, the day-long—a day-long observation of mourning, you—there will be—you're gonna be cremated, but will your urn be in the room?

00:16:59 Joseph Guest Oh, this will be before I'm cremated. I wanna be there to see this.

[Joseph and/or his son laugh.]

00:17:05 John Host Oh, I see. *[Laughs.]*

00:17:07 Jesse (Guest) Guest I don't—I don't think that's an option! *[Laughs.]*

00:17:10 John Host Can I just clar—can I just clarify a couple—a couple of things? *[Laughs.]* When you're talking about a three-day wake, is it—

00:17:17 Joseph Guest Oh, no, no, no! No! That was traditional. I'm talking about a one-day wake.

00:17:21 John Host And what tradition are we talking, here?

00:17:23 Joseph Guest Uh, in my old Italian family background tradition, it was—you know, usually it was a two-day, sometimes three-day. It's been scaled down.

00:17:33 John Host Give me a timeline. First of all, you pass away, painlessly, in your sleep.

[Someone quietly suppresses laughter.]

00:17:39 Joseph Guest And then, you know, usually the viewing is from two o'clock—from two to... four, and then from seven until nine. And let's say in—not in the, in the, um... uh, the matinee performance, but in the evening performance, the seven-to-nine, the mime would appear. I would say the whole thing would probably take... 15 minutes, 20 minutes, and be gone! And then ten years later, people would say, "Remember that wake we went to? I don't remember who it was. But there was a mime! There was a mime at that wake!" And this is what I wanna leave people with.

00:18:21 John Host Jesse, 15 minutes of mime in a two-hour viewing period is not acceptable?

00:18:26 Jesse Guest That's—that is less than I thought it was going to be. To be honest

(Guest) with you, Judge, until a few months ago, I was really hoping and—and thought that this was just a long-time joke that my father was telling.

00:18:38 John Host Mm-hm.

00:18:40 Jesse (Guest) Guest 'Cause he's been saying this to his—the family for years. And it wasn't until I called my older sister and said, "Say, so how about this mime? Is this for real?" and she said yes, and she has documents from my father, you know, requesting—you know, with the directions to hire a mime after his death, and he has provided a... a CD with a soundtrack and everything, and so this is—

00:19:05 John Host Wait a—whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. What soundtrack?

[One or both guests laugh.]

00:19:09 Joseph Guest I put together a last list, which was some music that I wanted played, and on it is, um... Warren Zevon's "Lawyers, Guns and Money."

00:19:20 John Host Mm-hm.

00:19:21 Joseph Guest Uh, "Desperado."

00:19:23 John Host *[Stifling laughter]* Mm-hm. Yes.

00:19:24 Joseph Guest Um, "Who Knows Where the Time Goes?"

00:19:27 John Host "We Didn't Start the Fire," by Billy Joel. *[Stifles laughter.]*

00:19:30 Joseph Guest That's good—by the way, Billy Joel is a graduate of Hicksville High School!

00:19:35 John Host Yes. Why do you think I made that joke?

[Whispering] I don't know *[inaudible]*—

00:19:37 Joseph Guest Okay!

00:19:38 John Host *[Regular volume]* I just made—I just—I just—I didn't know that. That's good to know. Good to know.

00:19:38 Joseph Guest Yeah, so I—I—I've carefully gone through this. I—again, it's a mixture of sad and funny songs, and I thought it would, um... it would be in keeping with my personality.

00:19:55 John Host Joseph, let me ask you a question here. You keep saying that you wanna leave people laughing, you wanna leave people laughing, you wanna leave people laughing, and I think that there's a lot of merit to that. But is the joke here, like, "Look at this goof! He got a mime! The worst thing!?" Right? Or is it that you actually have a love for the art of mime? Do you have a relationship with the art of mime that is meaningful to you?

00:20:19 Joseph Guest Well, I wouldn't say it's a love with the—relationship with the art of mime. I just think it's—a mime is so... contrary to the event.

00:20:29 John Host Mm-hm.

00:20:30 Joseph Guest The funeral, the wake. That you have to see the absurdity, the humor, the... "My god, what—what is it with the—he had a mime! At the wake!" When people talk about it, and I hope they will, they'll say, "Wow, that was really unique."

I have a friend who plans to give out little keepsake keychains with

his ashes in them. I thought, "What a great idea that is!" My ex wants her ashes to be compressed into jewelry that our daughter and son'll wear. That's—I mean, that's her plan. I don't think a mime is... is that far out of the ballpark here.

00:21:21 John Host Are you trying to keep up with the Joneses?

00:21:23 Joseph Guest Oh, no, no, no! Not at all!

00:21:24 John Host "My friend's putting his ashes in—in—"

[John and Joseph laugh.]

"—in some snow globes and giving 'em away! Why can't I have a mime? A mime is gonna—"

00:21:30 Jesse (Host) Host "My friend is getting his ashes put into an above-ground pool, but I'm getting mine put into an in-ground pool."

00:21:37 John Host *[Laughs.]* You have been planning this for some time. And some evidence was submitted to me, first of all, of a Photoshop of... I guess you, or some person representing you, in a casket, with a big white beard and a giant beer belly. And standing next to you in—is—uh, um, a traditional mime in a striped shirt, sort of doing jazz hands in front of your face. And that's your—that's—we're gonna put this on the website, obviously. Please go to MaximumFun.org—

[The litigants laugh.]

Check it out! And you can see Joseph's vision. You made this Photoshop collage yourself, sir, is that correct?

00:22:16 Joseph Guest Actually, the, uh—my face and the beard, that was part of a Christmas card.

00:22:22 John Host Uh-huh.

00:22:23 Joseph Guest And what I did was I took that top part with my face in there, and I put it in the coffin. And then I took the mime, uh, from a—an ad, I don't remember what it was. And the caption was—

00:22:33 John Host Oh, I can tell you exactly what it was. It was for State Farm Insurance, 'cause there's a couple of—

00:22:38 Joseph Guest Yes! Yes! Yes.

00:22:39 John Host 'Cause there are a couple of awnings in the background of this photo, I just noticed, that have the State Farm logo and name on there. You're secretly an agent for State Farm!

00:22:47 Joseph Guest *[Laughing]* No.

00:22:48 John Host Don't deny it, sir! Do—do the jingle!

[Singing] Like a good neighbor, State Farm is mime!

[The litigants laugh.]

[Speaking] Alright. So anyway—well, you can—people can go look at that crypto-advertisement on the website. But also provided to me was a poem that you wrote, Joseph, about this very subject. Do you have this poem in front of you?

00:23:11 Joseph Guest Uh, no, I don't.

00:23:12	John	Host	Okay.
00:23:13	Jesse (Guest)	Guest	I—I have it up, Judge.
00:23:15	John	Host	Would you read it for me, please, Jesse?
00:23:17	Jesse (Guest)	Guest	"In the world without me, the sun still rises and shines. The moon paces through its phases Shows up sometime, confused, in the daytime But mostly at night. The stars remain obscured by New York City light. My adult children wake and sleep and work And maybe feel me there, and gone And cry, or laugh, or both. My friends who haven't left the world before me might remember that wake of mine, with a mime. That wake with a mime! Unexplained Walking against the wind Trapped in a box Engaged in a tug-of-war Listening to conversations. If my adult children followed my last wishes, and didn't just yes me to death, and after decide what's best. My adult children, embarrassed sometimes, who made excuses for me frequently, indulge me often, accepted me flawed, mostly, and gave my silly life meaning, always." Do you remember writing that, sir? [Sighs.] I do! [Chuckling] That's a very good poem. If you— [Host Jesse bursts out laughing, and the litigants follow suit.] This is my father. I'm—I'm in tears! I'm in tears here. Wow! [Three gavel bangs.] [A few seconds of silence.] Oh. Uh, sorry for the dead air there. I was just thinking about how... how a mime podcast is not possible. Right? Ever think about that? No—if you're a mime, and you can't perform in theaters right now, you can't do what every other comedian is doing and start a podcast. Can't do it! There's no mime podcasting. Alright, let's take a quick break. When we come back, we'll hear about a classic Weird Dad archetype: the Dad Joker! [Three gavel bangs.] Music: A quick, energetic drumroll leads into exciting techno music.
00:24:13	John	Host	
00:24:15	Joseph	Guest	
00:24:21	Jesse (Guest)	Guest	
00:24:22	Joseph	Guest	
00:24:25	Sound Effect	Transition	
00:24:27	John	Host	
00:25:02	Sound Effect	Transition	
00:25:04	Promo	Clip	

Jarrett Hill: Hey, I'm Jarrett Hill, co-host of the brand-new Maximum Fun podcast, *FANTI!*

Tre'vell Anderson: And I'm Tre'vell Anderson. I'm the other, more fabulous co-host, and the reason you really should be tuning in!

Jarrett: I feel the nausea rising.

Tre'vell: To be *FANTI* is to be a big fan of something, but also have some challenging or "anti" feelings toward it.

Jarrett: Kind of like Kanye.

Tre'vell: We're all fans of Kanye. He's a musical genius, but, like, you know...

Jarrett: He thinks slavery's a choice.

Tre'vell: Or like *The Real Housewives of Atlanta*. Like, I love the drama, but do I wanna see black women fighting each other on screen? *[Singing]* Hell to the naaaaaw, to the naw-naw-naaaw!

Jarrett: We're tackling all of those complex and complicated conversations about the people, places, and things that we love.

Tre'vell: Even though they may not love us back.

Jarrett: *FANTI!* Maximum Fun! Podcast!

Tre'vell: Yeah!

[Music fades out.]

00:25:52 Sound Effect Transition
00:25:55 John Host

[Three gavel bangs.]

Welcome back to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. *[Sighs.]* I remember the day that we recorded this one. This is an incredible one. I—it's about dad jokes. And I've told this story often. Perhaps you've heard it before. Perhaps I even told it on this episode of the podcast. I don't remember! Been doing the podcast for ten glorious years! And I'm getting weirder and older, and I remember less and less.

But I do remember the day that I went into Grumpy Coffee on Seventh Avenue, and I did the wholly inexcusable thing of commenting upon the barista's appearance. In this case it was a young woman. Look, this is what this one's about, right? No one in service industry needs to hear your—your—even your compliments! Never mind neutral comments. But she was wearing overalls, and I swear to you, what I believed to be the funniest joke of all time materialized in my mind such that I, a Weird Dad, could not help but tell it!

And I said... "I believe you deserve an award in the category of overall excellence." And she did not laugh. And she said to me, "Nice dad joke." And that is how I died. I'm speaking to you now from the

grave.

Dad jokes! [Episode 265: "Dad Nauseam"](#)!

"Dad Kevin tells the same joke to service industry employees wherever he goes. His son Daniel wants him to stop." Mm-hm! Let us listen to that joke now.

00:27:35 Sound Effect Transition

[Three gavel bangs.]

00:27:38 Daniel Guest

So what he'll do is, uh... Regardless of where he is, the first thing he'll say to whoever's serving him is "I'll have the Kung Pao chicken." Now, this could be at... a toll booth, or, you know, the movie theater.

[John laughs quietly.]

But you know what? It's getting really old. And not just me.

[Someone laughs quietly.]

Lots of people have gotten a little bit tired of it.

00:28:01 John Host

Kevin? *[Stifles laughter.]* Do you really go to toll booths and say, "I'll have the Kung Pao chicken"?

00:28:05 Kevin Guest

[Laughs.] Yeah, I—that's one of my favorite, uh, you know—recently went to a theme park, and as I pulled up to the booth and saw the exorbitant amount being charged, I looked at him and I said, "Hm. I'll—I'll have the Kung Pao chicken." And I always get a hearty laugh, and it doesn't get me in the parking free, but it—it, uh, gets a laugh.

00:28:28 John Host

You always—you always get—100% of the time get a hearty laugh? From the—

00:28:33 Kevin Guest

Well—*[sighs]*.

00:28:34 John Host

Especially from the people who are—who are imprisoned in booths?

[Kevin laughs.]

00:28:40 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Kevin: I guess there is a—

John: I mean, a literal captive audience of one?

00:28:42 Jesse Host

When you say "a hearty laugh," are you referring to the laugh that you laugh after you say it?

00:28:48 John Host

[Stifling laughter] Yeah, good point!

[Kevin laughs.]

I hadn't thought of that!

00:28:52 Kevin Guest

The joy of the Kung Pao line is it's the absolute opposite of what you would typically say, and... it sounds delightful, doesn't it? "Kung Pao"? I mean, it just—it just is... I don't know how my family isn't delighted by it. And delighted to see the response out of those who are hearing it!

00:29:15 John Host

You did not answer my bailiff's question. Are you the one laughing? Or the person who is trapped in a booth, forced to deal with you, laughing?

00:29:24 Kevin Guest *[Chuckles.]* I think I will laugh if the recipient laughs. Not 100% of the time. Yeah.

00:29:31 John Host The poi—so basically you're saying you don't notice what they're doing at all.

00:29:35 Kevin Guest Oh, I d—*[laughs]*—I do.

00:29:38 John Host Okay. *[Stifles laughter.]*

Uh, Daniel? Your father has claimed 100% enjoyment of this joke, time and time again. Do you dispute that assertion?

00:29:46 Daniel Guest Uh, I surely do.

00:29:48 John Host Can you describe a time when your father has requested the Kung Pao chicken, and it didn't—it did not bring joy to the person who was attempting to take his toll or give him a parking ticket?

00:30:00 Daniel Guest If I'm gonna be generous, I'll—from what I've seen, I'll give him a 50/50 of—

00:30:04 Kevin Guest Wow.

[Choked laughter from John.]

00:30:06 Daniel Guest —of, you know, the person maybe just smiling? Or the person just saying "Wow. Really?" *[Laughs.]*

00:30:13 Kevin Guest *[Laughing]* Oh, man!

00:30:15 Daniel Guest I think he has selective memory. I think he remembers the—maybe the one person who actually laughed out loud. And he pastes that over every... you know, following encounter.

00:30:29 John Host It's interesting. So you are counter-asserting a 0-1% hearty laugh rate, *[stifles laughter]* compared to his 100%. And the truth has to be somewhere in the middle.

00:30:41 Daniel Guest Hea—yeah. "Hearty laugh" is... a strong term. I mean, I'm thinking of a—a belly laugh.

[Kevin laughs.]

00:30:47 John Host Like your dad's enjoying right now! Kevin, you have an infectious laugh.

00:30:51 Kevin Guest *[Chuckling]* Oh!

00:30:52 John Host And I also have to say, uh, that when—*[stifles laughter]* when you delivered the line in your dramatic recreation of your parking lot experience...

00:31:02 Kevin Guest Yeah?

00:31:03 John Host I kinda chuckled. It was pretty good delivery. *[Laughs quietly.]*

00:31:05 Kevin Guest You've got to. You've got—to be alive, you have to chuckle.

00:31:08 John Host Well—no—I—

[John and Kevin laugh.]

00:31:12 Kevin Guest It needs to be so off-the-wall that it breaks the arduous tasks that the food provider, or the toll booth operator, is experiencing! So—

00:31:26 John Host Oh, so you're doing it as a favor to them.

00:31:28 Kevin Guest I—kind of! Kind of.

00:31:29 John Host Mm-hm. Okay.

00:31:30 Jesse Host You're like a Johnny Appleseed traveling the nation, sewing mirth in our toll booths?

[Kevin laughs.]

By tossing bon mots their way?

00:31:39 John Host His folkloric name would not be Johnny Appleseed. It would be Kung Pao Kevin.

[Kevin chuckles. Someone snorts.]

00:31:44 Kevin Guest I like that! I, uh, I was taking my daughter back to college one night, and I—we decided to get yogurt. And so we're in this long line, and the gal was just exhausted. And just... hating life. So I get up there, look at the board, and say, "Hm. I'll have the Kung Pao chicken."

[Someone laughs quietly.]

And I tell ya, she laughed... and is still probably laughing to this day. And—

00:32:11 John Host *[Stifling laughter]* She's still probably laughing to this day?!

00:32:14 Kevin Guest *[Laughs.]* She said "Thank you for that"!

00:32:15 John Host You br—you're saying that you broke her brain?!

[John and Kevin laugh.]

00:32:19 Kevin Guest And—

00:32:20 John Host Alright, I—I interrupted you, sir. Go ahead.

00:32:21 Kevin Guest Okay. So—

00:32:22 John Host You—she said "Thank you for that."

00:32:23 Kevin Guest She said "Thank you for that. That made my day." And I said "Well, you're welcome!"

And my daughter, who is one of the—would be a plaintiff if she was here.

00:32:31 John Host Right.

00:32:32 Kevin Guest I said "Rachel, you have to admit, she got a kick outta that!" And she said "Yeah, Papa."

So I think the good overwhelms the bad.

00:32:42 John Host What—do you acknowledge that there is bad?

00:32:47 Kevin Guest There can be! I've said it—I can remember saying it three or four straight times, and the young food servers just looked at me. I think one looked at me as if I was getting dementia, and thought, "Oh, this poor guy doesn't know where he's at."

00:33:00 John Host Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

00:33:01 Kevin Guest So I was really starting to think "Well, maybe the family has a point." But then I laid it on someone, and the hearty laugh pursued, and I—

was like a—my meter was recharged. Vvvv! And—and it's back. So...
[Chuckles.]

00:33:18 John Host You got—*[stifling laughter]* you got your Kung Pao groove back?
[Kevin laughs.]

00:33:20 Daniel Guest I can't tell you how much positive energy I've received from... many, many different people wishing me luck in this case.
[Jesse or Kevin chuckles quietly.]

00:33:30 John Host Oh, really? Do you have, like, a petition? That you've had signatures?
[Jesse or Kevin chuckles again.]

00:33:34 Daniel Guest It might as well be.

00:33:36 John Host You're talking about your brother and your sister. But anyone else supporting you—?

00:33:38 Daniel Guest My brother, my sister, coworkers, my stepmom, my—yeah, it goes on and on.

00:33:44 John Host Your coworkers??

00:33:46 Daniel Guest Correct. So I work with Kevin. We work in the mortgage industry, real estate. And, uh—

00:33:51 John Host Ohhh. No wonder you're such a barrel of laughs.

00:33:55 Daniel Guest *[Laughs.]* The people we work with have heard the Kung Pao just as often as, I mean, uh, the rest of us, the family, so...

00:34:04 John Host In what context are they hearing the Kung Pao line?

00:34:07 Daniel Guest Mostly at our lunch. You know, if we'll go out and grab a bite.

00:34:11 John Host Oh, right. When a client—you—so you are mortgage brokers?

00:34:15 Daniel Guest Correct.

00:34:16 John Host Is your mortgage brokery called Kevin and Dan?
[Kevin laughs quietly.]

00:34:20 Daniel Guest Kevin and Dan's Mortgage? No. I wish. That's a good idea.

00:34:24 John Host Is it called Father and Son Mortgage?

00:34:27 Daniel Guest It could be here, soon.
[Kevin laughs.]

00:34:31 John Host Is it called Kung Pao...

00:34:32 Kevin Guest Kung Pao Finance Factory.

00:34:34 John Host There we go! Kung Pao Finance Factory! Hooly cats!
[John and one or both litigants laugh.]

That is a brand I would love to buzz-market.

00:34:45 Daniel Guest *[Laughing]* I don't think I would trust that outfit with my loan.
[Kevin laughs.]

00:34:48 John Host Are you kidding me, you guys?! If I had a choice between... you know, Universal Mortgage, which is I think the place where I got my mortgage, and Kung Pao Finance Factory?

[John and the litigants laugh.]

00:35:04 Daniel Guest *[Laughing]* You'd go in Universal.

00:35:06 John Host Are you kidding me?! I'd go to KPFF!

00:35:09 Daniel Guest *[Laughs.]* Okay, we can abbreviate it, yeah.

00:35:13 John Host What is it that you're ordering me to do, exactly?

00:35:15 Daniel Guest I'm just saying—

00:35:16 John Host If you win this case, if I find in your favor, what is my order?

00:35:20 Daniel Guest *[Sighs.]* I mean—

00:35:21 John Host I'll let you bring up your other point, but I wanna get this down, out—out there right now.

00:35:24 Daniel Guest Obviously, the most agreeable to me would be an immediate cease and desist—

00:35:30 Kevin Guest Don't—don't say it.

00:35:31 Daniel Guest —on the Kung Pao line.

00:35:33 Kevin Guest Aw, man...

00:35:34 John Host What bothers you more? The joke being repeated over and over again, or the joke existing at all?

00:35:41 Daniel Guest What bothers me the most is not even that he does the joke over and over again. And he does it when, you know, none of us are around. He'll do it just by himself.

00:35:51 Kevin Guest Oh, yeah.

[John laughs.]

00:35:52 Daniel Guest What bothers me is that he knows that it irks us so much, that it causes us such discomfort, that he'll even tell us about the times he used it when we weren't there!

[John and Jesse burst out laughing.]

And the response he got.

00:36:08 John Host *[Laughing]* He reads you—he reads you his Kung Pao chicken joke diary?

[Kevin laughs.]

00:36:12 Daniel Guest Pretty much! Pretty much. He'll come home and say, "Oh! You should've been there! I ordered a burrito. I asked for the Kung Pao chicken. The kid, his face lit up. Oh, you should've been there, it was great."

And we're forced to relive this moment over and over. Even when we are not there. It's rough.

00:36:28 John Host *[Stifling laughter]* Do you ever suspect that your father is... lying?

[Kevin bursts out laughing.]

When he's like—

00:36:33 Daniel Guest

Oh, no doubt! No doubt.

00:36:36 Kevin Guest

[Laughing] Wow.

00:36:37 John Host

"I know that you guys didn't see the Snuffleupagus of everybody enjoying my joke."

[Someone laughs, John stifles laughter.]

"But I swear he was right here, it just happened."

00:36:43 Jesse Host

It might not necessarily have to be characterized as a lie, Judge Hodgman. I mean, it could be that he's seeing the world through laugh-colored glasses.

[Two people laugh.]

00:36:53 Daniel Guest

No, it's not—it's not so much that... he doesn't s—it's—it's—if he gets one good reaction, which he does get, that will last him, you know, making 20 other people uncomfortable. He'll still think it's worth it.

00:37:08 Kevin Guest

Okay.

00:37:09 Daniel Guest

And he'll go after it.

00:37:10 Kevin Guest

Judge—Judge, I have to break in.

00:37:11 John Host

Please.

00:37:12 Kevin Guest

These numbers being thrown about are completely false. I would say I—and I'm not exaggerating—when I go to Starbucks and order a latte, I say it every time.

[John snorts.]

I would say 99% of the people taking that order laugh. And I—I swear that's true.

00:37:34 John Host

Is this the same Starbucks every time?

00:37:38 Kevin Guest

No, it's different Starbucks.

00:37:39 John Host

You say these numbers are all off? There is no data. Why should I believe you when you say the numbers are all off?

00:37:45 Kevin Guest

If I said this, and was getting blank stares like Daniel says I get, and wasn't getting the response that I say I've been getting, I wouldn't do it! Because like—like he said, I will do it when no one's around. And I do it all the time, because I think that person, that Starbucks server, has never heard that before, and they laugh! They think it's clever. And then it opens up other dialogue. And it's just—it's just a... it's just a delight. And—and a fear of mine is that your listeners will also use this, and it won't be that novel!

[John laughs.]

It's an actual fear!

00:38:31 John Host

You're afraid you're burning your material?

00:38:33 Kevin Guest

Yeah, this is like my baby! And I'm afraid that—*[stifles laughter]*—it's

gonna be, you know—

00:38:38 Jesse Host You wouldn't say that your son is your baby?

[Kevin laughs.]

00:38:41 Daniel Guest Well, first the Kung Pao, then me and the other children.

[Kevin laughs.]

00:38:45 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:38:47 John Host "I'll have the Kung Pao chicken." I mean, it's just—it's a legendary phrase at this point. Someone sent me a picture of Kung Pao chicken on Twitter, and I—and probably because my mind is failing, it—I think, like, it took me a day to understand they were making a reference to this case. *[Stifles laughter.]* You gotta spell it out a little bit for me. Don't just send me a picture of Kung Pao chicken. I'll just be looking at delicious Kung Pao chicken, and thinking I wanna eat it!

Alright. Let's get back in the catalogue now to the 100s. In episode 144, *[chuckles]* "[Father Gnaws Beast](#)," (*father knows best*) sisters Kim and Jen bring the case against their dad Rick.

"They're at odds with him when it comes to ordering food for the whole family, because Kim is a vegetarian, and Rick loves meat." And when listening to this next bit, it's important—important context to know—that Rick's nickname around the house is The Pig.

Alright. Let's listen to Kim and Jen and The Pig pick this bone.

00:39:45 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:39:48 John Host Now, Rick?

00:39:49 Rick Guest Yes.

00:39:50 John Host Are you aware that your daughter Kim is a vegetarian?

00:39:52 Rick Guest Oh, yes!

[Kim and/or Jen laugh.]

00:39:53 John Host Do you have—

00:39:54 Rick Guest She became a vegetarian May 3rd, 1999, a day that lives in infamy.

00:39:59 John Host So let's say hypothetically—let's stick to the Chinese restaurant cuisine. How many entrees would you order?

00:40:07 Rick Guest Normally we'd order four.

00:40:09 John Host Does that—do you—do you object, Kim or Jen? Is that about right?

00:40:13 Kim Guest Yeah, that is about right.

00:40:14 Jen Guest That's about right.

00:40:15 John Host It is so hard for me not to call you Jim and Ken right now. I'm having such a—

[The litigants laugh.]

—such difficulty with this. Kim and Jen, that is about right? And what

percentage of those, uh, do you think should have meat, and what percentage of those do you think should be vegetarian, Rick?

00:40:30 Rick Guest Um, well, I think that, um, Kimberly should certainly have one dish that she can eat. I mean, I'm not a monster. Um, and—

00:40:38 John Host I will decide that, sir.

[The litigants laugh.]

00:40:43 Rick Guest But I think we should have—out of four dishes, we should have two or three that are meat. But one of my biggest objections is that Kimberly will order vegetables that I won't eat.

00:40:53 John Host Ahhh. What vegetables will you not eat, sir?

00:40:58 Rick Guest Just really nasty ones like broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, um—

00:41:02 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Kim:** Green beans, asparagus, artichokes...

Rick: Green beans, asparagus, artichokes.

[Kim or Jen laughs.]

00:41:06 Rick Guest Things like that.

00:41:07 Kim Guest The list goes on.

00:41:08 John Host What are the vegetables you will eat?

00:41:10 Jesse Host Is it just dandelion greens?

[John and some or all of the litigants laugh.]

00:41:13 Rick Guest No, I won't—I won't eat those. They're bitter.

00:41:14 John Host Uh-huh.

00:41:15 Rick Guest Well, I eat—I eat normal vegetables! Cabbage, and, uh—um—uh, any color of pepper, although green is the worst one. Eggplant. You know. Zucchini. Um...

00:41:30 John Host Squashes? So a lot of squashes.

00:41:32 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Kim:** He will eat no other squashes.

Jen: Only zucchini.

Rick: Squash is borderline. Squash is kinda borderline.

00:41:36 John Host Okay. I'm trying to find—

00:41:37 Rick Guest Potatoes, sweet potatoes.

00:41:39 John Host Okay. I'm trying to find some method to your madness, here.

00:41:43 Rick Guest Mushrooms.

00:41:44 John Host Y—okay. That's a f—uh, yeah. But what about leafy green vegetables?

00:41:49 Rick Guest Well, those are the kind—I don't like the overly green or really hardcore kind of vegetables.

00:41:53 John Host No, okay. And what about, like, if you go to a steakhouse, will you get cream spinach?

00:41:58 Rick Guest God, no.

00:41:59 John Host Okay. Rick, you may leave. I find in Jim—Jim and Ken's favor.

[John and one or more litigants laugh.]

00:42:08 Jesse Host What—why—why fight—
[Stifling laughter] I find in favor of the scurvy.

[Multiple people laugh.]

00:42:12 Rick Guest I want the record to show that I—you just have to look at me and see that I'm meant to be carnivorous. I have very pointy canine teeth.

[Someone laughs quietly.]

00:42:26 John Host I have type O blood, which is the most primitive type of blood.
Mm-hm.

00:42:27 Rick Guest And I have low cholesterol, and I have award-winning triglycerides. My doctor said I have the lowest triglycerides he's ever seen. So—

[One or more people stifle laughter.]

00:42:35 Jesse Host So your argument, essentially, is that like a Shiba Inu, you're a primitive breed?

[One of the plaintiffs laughs.]

00:42:41 Rick Guest Uh, well, I don't know about that! But, uh, I—I think I'm meant to eat meat. I think meat agrees with me.

00:42:47 John Host What is your opposition to broccoli?

00:42:50 Rick Guest Uh... It's just nasty!

00:42:51 John Host Is it texture or fla—try to talk as though you are not talking to yourself, for once.

[The litigants laugh.]

00:43:02 Rick Guest Try to talk as though you are trying to explain to another human being how you feel.
Well, it's the texture, and the flavor.

00:43:03 John Host Mm-hm. Mm-hm. Okay.

00:43:05 Rick Guest The, uh, appearance.

00:43:06 Kim Guest Have you actually ever eaten broccoli?

00:43:08 Rick Guest By mistake, once.

00:43:10 Kim Guest What year was that?

00:43:12 Rick Guest Uh, it was like, sometime in the seventies.

00:43:13 John Host So you would be happy just eating meat all the livelong day. Is that correct?

00:43:17 Rick Guest No, that's not really true.

00:43:18 John Host Mm-hm.

00:43:19 Rick Guest I like non-nasty vegetables. I like potatoes, I like—

00:43:23 John Host Can we stop saying "non-nasty" vegetables? Why don't you just say "certain" vegetables? You don't have to have a value judgment placed on it.

00:43:31 Rick Guest Okay. Alright. I'll try.

00:43:33 John Host Potatoes... and steak.

00:43:35 Rick Guest Yes, I love potatoes!

00:43:36 John Host Right. Tomatoes?

00:43:38 Rick Guest Uh, cooked.

00:43:39 John Host Cooked tomatoes, in a sauce?

00:43:41 Rick Guest Yes, tomato sauce—

00:43:42 John Host Like on a chicken parm?

00:43:43 Rick Guest Uh, yeah! Yeah, sure.

00:43:44 John Host Alright.

00:43:45 Jesse Host A tuber and a fruit, respectively, for those keeping score at home.

00:43:48 John Host Yeah. What about legumes? How do you feel about legumes? Beans?

00:43:51 Rick Guest Oh, I love legumes! I love—I'll eat any bean that exists, except green beans, which aren't really beans. They're immature bean pods.

00:44:00 John Host And what percentage of your Chinese meal do you think, Kim, should be vegetarian dishes?

00:44:07 Kim Guest Well, since my sister—

00:44:08 John Host Rick has suggested 25, and then I think 'cause he knows that he's losing this case, he then suggested 50% could be something that you could eat.

[Someone laughs quietly.]

00:44:17 Kim Guest Yeah. I don't really—I don't really necessarily believe that he would agree to 50%.

00:44:21 John Host Uh-huh.

00:44:22 Kim Guest And, you know, one problem is that if it had—if it was actually—like, even if I just get one dish at a Chinese restaurant, he wants to refuse to let me get, you know, broccoli with garlic sauce, or like, green beans, Szechuan string beans, or anything that he would consider, uh, you know, a nasty vegetable.

00:44:38 John Host Mm-hm. A nasty vegetable.

00:44:40 Rick Guest Could I, uh, enter some evidence in my favor into this case?

00:44:43 John Host Go ahead.

00:44:44 Rick Guest Part of my objection is that, um, I am the one who often eats the leftovers. So if, uh—I don't mind getting vegetarian things, if they're vegetables that I'll eat, and then the leftovers won't get thrown away.

00:44:57 John Host I see. Because you're a human garbage pail—

00:44:58 Rick Guest *[Inaudible].*

00:44:59 John Host Because you're a human garbage pail, you get to eat whatever you

want.

[One or both of the plaintiffs laugh.]

00:45:02 Rick Guest That's my role in the family, among others.
00:45:05 John Host What is your favorite meat to eat, sir?
00:45:09 Rick Guest Probably beef tongue.
00:45:11 John Host You are hardcore, my friend.
00:45:14 Rick Guest In fact, Kimberly's dog, Gambit, we bond over meat.
00:45:17 John Host Oh, sure!
00:45:18 Rick Guest And once in a while, we'll make—maybe once a month, we'll have *[inaudible]*.
00:45:21 John Host You both—yeah, you both eat, uh, you both eat pig's ears! For example.
00:45:25 Rick Guest *[Chuckling]* Yeah, that too. Yes.
00:45:26 John Host Yeah.
00:45:27 Rick Guest And we'll cook a tongue, and, you know, eat it together, and—
00:45:30 John Host You and the dog?
00:45:31 Rick Guest Yeah.
00:45:33 John Host *[Sighs.]* I can't wait to be as weird a dad as you are, sir.

[The litigants laugh.]

Jen, you introduced some evidence as well. Some photos of your dad, also known as Pig.

00:45:43 Jen Guest Correct. Yes.
00:45:44 John Host Okay, so here we have... we have a picture here, and these will all of course be on the MaximumFun.org website, the *Judge John Hodgman* portion thereof. Here we have a—a—a—a—evidence marked "A. The Pig—" that's your father—"eating a heaping plate of turkey, while wearing one of his favorites, a turkey leg T-shirt."

And this, in case you don't have a chance to look at the website, is just a T-shirt that says "Turkey Leg" on it, and has a picture of a turkey leg. "This shirt was procured from Disney World, where he once bought..."

Alright. "He once brought a clean... sock, with him"?

[Someone laughs quietly.]

Kim. Will you—what—what happened with a sock??

00:46:26 Kim Guest Uh, well, so, whenever we go to this, uh, Florida theme park, my dad likes to always get the turkey legs, and it's like a big thing. Like, it's—you know, he talks about it the whole way there and everything.
00:46:35 John Host Sure.
00:46:37 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Kim:** And so one day we were there, and—

John: It's the only—it's the only—it's the only place in the world you can get them.

00:46:41 Kim Guest Right, of course. And so he's, you know, sniffing around the park all day, trying to find the turkey leg cart. And he finally finds it, and he sits down and eats part of it, and then he pulls out of his backpack—which he carries around with him all the time—a sock. That he had specifically, you know, laundered and brought with him, to... carry his turkey leg around in?

00:47:02 Rick Guest Well, there was a plastic bag inside it!

[Beat. Someone laughs very quietly.]

00:47:05 John Host There was a plastic bag inside the sock?

00:47:07 Jesse Host You had lined the sock?

00:47:10 Rick Guest Well, this was actually an impromptu emergency measure. I bought a turkey leg at the cart, and we were going on a ride, and I couldn't carry it in openly. I had to conceal it. So, uh, I asked them for a doggy bag. They looked like they didn't know what I was talking about, and so in an—in... in an emergency, I found a clean sock and a plastic bag, and put the turkey leg in the bag and put the bag in the sock.

00:47:38 John Host How in an emergency did you find a clean sock and a plastic bag?

[Beat.]

00:47:43 Kim Guest In his backpack.

00:47:44 Rick Guest In my backpack.

00:47:45 John Host I see.

00:47:46 Rick Guest I have lots of things in my backpack.

00:47:47 Kim Guest He also keeps emergency, uh, "iron rations," as he calls them, in his backpack at all times.

00:47:52 John Host What is that?

00:47:53 Kim Guest Which is just a bag of beef jerky.

[Someone laughs quietly.]

00:47:55 John Host I see. Rick, what does the term "glomming on" mean to you?

00:47:59 Rick Guest Just—oh, you're probably referring to the, uh, pizza ordering.

00:48:02 John Host Yes, that's part of the complaint as well.

00:48:06 Rick Guest Well, we go to a pizza restaurant, which I won't name. A locally—you know, a locally owned pizza restaurant. With some of the best pizza in the world, this being Chicago, of course. Uh, and—

00:48:16 John Host I have no idea what you're talking about. Go on.

[Some or all litigants laugh.]

00:48:19 Jesse Host He's talking about some of the best casseroles in the world.

00:48:23 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Rick:** Aaanyway—

John: *[Chuckles.]* Some of the best pizza casseroles?

00:48:24 John Host Some of the best pizza hot dish in the world. Alright, next, you were saying? Alright, so you're ordering pizza.

00:48:30 Rick Guest Okay, so we're ordering pizza, and I kinda—I like to get a, um, a steak, on the side. And just glom onto somebody else's pizza. But, uh—

00:48:41 John Host What—

00:48:42 Rick Guest —I can't do that if they have ingredients that I won't eat. I won't call 'em nasty.

00:48:46 John Host Wh—*[laughs]*. So, Kim—

[Jesse laughs.]

00:48:49 Kim Guest Yes.

00:48:50 John Host What does—what does he—what does your weird dad mean by "glomming on"?

00:48:54 Kim Guest By "glomming on," he means that he wants to order his own giant plate of steak and potatoes.

00:49:00 John Host Mm-hm.

00:49:01 Kim Guest And usually he orders this really meaty nacho dish at that restaurant as well, as an appetizer.

00:49:03 John Host Mm-hm. Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

00:49:06 Rick Guest Nacho Charlie's Dream.

00:49:07 Kim Guest And then he wants to—

[John or Jesse bursts out laughing.]

00:49:10 John Host What did—what was that little thing you just threw in there, sir?

00:49:14 Rick Guest It's a wonderful dish! It's called Nacho Charlie's Dream.

[Jesse and one or both of the plaintiffs laugh.]

00:49:16 John Host And what is Nacho Charlie's Dream?

00:49:21 Rick Guest Nacho Charlie's Dream is nachos covered with cheese, covered with chili.

[Beat.]

00:49:29 John Host *[Dismayed]* Oh.

00:49:30 Rick Guest Actually, I think the chili comes first, and then the cheese.

00:49:32 John Host And then you try to steal some pizza, too?

00:49:35 Kim Guest And then he tries to dictate what we get on our pizza.

00:49:38 Rick Guest "Dictate"'s a strong word!

00:49:39 Kim Guest Dictate is a true word.

[Jen laughs.]

00:49:41 Rick Guest Um, veto!

00:49:42 John Host Rick, when you choose your—the meat that you eat, do you, uh... pay any mind to where it comes from?

00:49:51 Rick Guest Um... Well... I don't really like to think about it too much.

00:49:56 John Host Mm-hm.

00:49:57 Rick Guest I do have problems with the modern state of animal husbandry, actually.

00:50:01 John Host Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

00:50:02 Rick Guest I don't like, um, factory farming.

00:50:04 John Host Mm-hm.

00:50:06 Rick Guest But I think it has brought a lot of cheap food to a lot of people throughout the world, and it's probably prevented some famine, but... I—I have some moral problems with eating meat, but, you know, we're animals, too. We're clearly intended to eat meat.

00:50:19 John Host Do you ever make any choices about where you source your meat, based on your dislike of factory farming?

00:50:28 Rick Guest Uh... I think I have to say no.

00:50:29 John Host Okay. That's fair! I'm just—just—I was just curious, as to what degree—to what about of thought you have given to, uh—to your carnivorousism.

00:50:36 Rick Guest But I try very hard not to waste anything. You know, I hardly ever throw anything away. I pride myself on being able to use things that other people might consider spoiled. Learned a lot of tricks, you know, like washing off the surface of meat that is slightly, uh, over the hill, and... you know. Boiling it first, and things like that.

So you know, this is—I try not to waste.

00:51:00 John Host I really hesitate to comment at all on the relative food safety of... spoiled meat that you have washed.

[The litigants laugh.]

Without Alton Brown here to comment. *[Stifles laughter.]* So I am just going to tell our listeners that Rick's saying that washing spoiled meat makes it good to eat does not necessarily connote approval by this podcast, or an instruction to you.

00:51:31 Rick Guest I haven't thrown up since... April 15th, 1985.

00:51:35 John Host What—*[laughs]*. Now, hang on a second. You've brought up dates a couple of times. Very specific memories from dates. And another thing that I wasn't gonna bring up, but now I feel I must... was Kim submitted your, uh, your Tumblr.

00:51:52 Rick Guest Oh, yes.

00:51:53 John Host As a point of possible interest. And this Tumblr, which I don't mind buzz-marketing, is "This—"

00:51:59 Rick Guest Okay, thank you, I appreciate it!

00:52:00 John Host Alright, well, let me do it then. ThisDayInPigHistory.Tumblr.com. And it's a very minimal Tumblr. Yesterday's entry was "Monday in 1999, Hill cooking chicken." I presume Hill is your wife?

00:52:15 Rick Guest Yes.

00:52:16 John Host Alright.

00:52:17 Rick Guest Hillary.

00:52:18 John Host "Hillary cooking chicken. Jen asks 'Are you in the shaking or baking stage?'"

[The litigants chuckle.]

"Monday in 1979, New Year's Eve. Hill, Duke, and I seek open restaurant. Strike out at Beef Roast Inn and Chicago... Claim Company"?

00:52:33 Rick Guest

Yes.

00:52:34 John Host

"Duke has suggestion. Go to Gulliver's first time. It open, have pizza and grandslammer." How do you account for this perfect recall of these days in history?

00:52:44 Rick Guest

Well, I also keep a journal.

00:52:46 John Host

I see.

00:52:47 Rick Guest

I started keeping a journal on January 1st, 1960. And I, you know, have kept it pretty regularly ever since.

00:52:54 John Host

19—"This Tuesday in 1995. Dream Jen has new Mariah Carey album. She plays me three songs: 'Ring-a-Ling,' 'Bun,' and 'Thomas Jefferson.'"

[John and one of the plaintiffs laugh.]

Uh, let me just—where is the "follow" button on this? Yes, I am going to follow this Tumblr right away.

[One or both plaintiffs laugh.]

00:53:12 Rick Guest

Well, thank you! I appreciate it.

00:53:14 Sound Effect Transition

[Three gavel bangs.]

00:53:16 John Host

Hey, let's take another break. When we return, Weird Dad ideas about language... and ventriloquist dummies! *[Snorts.]* It's probably the greatest tease in the podcast history. I'm—I would come back! I mean, I'm contractually obligated to come back after the break, but you stick around.

00:53:33 Sound Effect Transition

[Three gavel bangs.]

00:53:36 Promo Clip

Music: Tense sci-fi music.

[Speaker 1 narrates in voiceover intercut with dialogue from the show.]

Speaker 1: Strange planets, curious technology, and a fantastic vision of the distant future. Featuring Martin Starr.

Martin Starr: So we're going on day 14. Shuttle still hasn't come.

Speaker 1: Aparna Nancherla.

Aparna Nancherla: *[Cheerful and electronic]* The security system provides you with emotional security! You do the rest!

Speaker 1: Echo Kellum.

Echo Kellum: Can you disconnect me, or not?

Speaker 1: Hari Kondabolu.

Hari Kondabolu: I'm staying.

Speaker 1: From *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, Geoffrey McGivern.

Geoffrey McGivern: Could you play Cyndi Lauper's "Girls Just Want to Have Fun"?

Speaker 1: It's *The Outer Reach: Stories from Beyond*.

Speaker 2: Now available for free at MaximumFun.org, or anywhere you listen.

[Music fades out.]

00:54:21 Sound Effect Transition

[Three gavel bangs.]

00:54:23 John Promo

Hey, everyone! This is the break! But it's still me, Judge John Hodgman. I just wanted to let you know, please, make a small request. Go up to the fridge, or the bulletin board, or wherever you keep your large hanging paper calendar. Maybe it's a calendar themed to your favorite TV show characters. Maybe it's a wooden boat school calendar. Maybe there're some attractive firefighters on the calendar. I don't know. That's your business! Here's my business.

July the 9th! It's a Thursday. It's coming right up. Circle it! Get a red Sharpie. And circle it, and say "Hey, me. Remember to turn on FXX at ten PM! To watch the show *Cake*." Why? Here's a reminder. That's what calendars are good for. They remind you of stuff. Why? Because that is the show, and that is the time, and that is the channel, that will be premiering John Hodgman and David Rees's short-form animated TV show! The name of which... I'm not gonna say on this podcast! 'Cause it's a little salty. Mm-hm. Mm-hm. Look it up.

It's a fun, ten-minute-per-episode detective show, reminiscent of your old *Encyclopedia Brown* books, except my character is not a child detective. Not anymore! I used to be a prodigal child detective in the town of Richardsville, North Carolina. Fictional town. Now I've grown up to be a weird—not a dad, but a weird... middle-aged man, who is still solving mysteries for teenagers. And David Rees plays my former high school enemy and bully, who has now grown up to be my driver and my partner, and my unlikely friend.

Check it out July 9th on *Cake*! FXX's weekly showcase of animated and live action short-form comedy programs, at ten PM Eastern and Pacific. You can watch live on FXX, and then check it out the next day streaming on FX on Hulu!

00:56:35 John Promo

But for real, everybody. This show was a real labor of love for me and David Rees. I'm angry at myself for not merely agreeing to, but suggesting a title that would be a little too salty for *Judge John Hodgman*. Especially since we just found out, after it's been in the

can for quite a while, that we have this premiere date, the 9th. And you know, we gotta get the word out! So I'd be very, very happy if you would check it out.

And as for other feelings I have, I would be remiss if I didn't mention in this episode... that we sell Weird Dad T-shirts! That's right! T-Shirts that say "Weird Dad" on them! If you're looking for a gift for the Weird Dad in your life, go over to MaxFunStore.com! It's a great shirt, designed by friend of the court master designer Aaron Draplin. And you know, even if it's a little too late by the time you hear this to get it for your dad for Father's Day in the UK, you have plenty of time to get it for him in Finland. Got all—November 8th! Nepal isn't until August!

And hey, here's a special shout-out as well, before we go back to the case. Look, Weird Dads are great. But not all—not everyone has a dad in their life. And not everyone has a good dad in their life. And, uh, this is just me, your Judge John Hodgman, saying... I see you. And I hope you have an okay day anyway. And if you ever need a dose of Weird Dad-ness—weird, benign, decent dad-ness—I'm here for you.

Alright! Let's get back to these dads!

00:58:10 Sound Effect Transition

[Three gavel bangs.]

00:58:13 John Host

Welcome back to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. Remember that tease? Language and ventriloquist dummies? Well, we're gonna deal with it! Right now!

We're nearing the end of our trip down Weird Dad memory lane. Up next, fan favorite, we heard from Melissa and her father Mark in episode 394: "Juris-diction."

Melissa says that Mark intentionally mispronounces words and brand names in order to get on her nerves. Typical Weird Dad trick. Mark says, "This is just how I spikes!" Meaning "speaks."

What kind of words and brand names, you ask? Let's find out!

00:58:50 Sound Effect Transition

[Three gavel bangs.]

00:58:52 John Host

Melissa, you bring the case against your dad. What's going on?

00:58:55 Melissa Guest

He has his own ways of pronouncing certain words, that I believe are just... incorrect.

00:59:04 John Host

Mm-hm.

00:59:05 Melissa Guest

And yet he insists that they're alternate pronunciations, when I just—I don't think they're really alternate pronunciations. I think they're... they're just wrong.

00:59:15 John Host

Well, in the case of "robit," for example...

00:59:17 Melissa Guest

Mm-hm.

00:59:18 John Host

Will you say that word again for me, sir? Mark?

00:59:19 Mark Guest

Robut.

00:59:20 John Host

Right.

00:59:21 Mark Guest *[More emphatically]* Robut.

00:59:22 John Host Robut. Yeah, that is an alternate pronunciation. Uh, that—it has been defined by usage, Rod Serling. It is primarily used by podcast half-comedians like me and Jesse, to be a joke.

00:59:36 Melissa Guest I actually don't think he's saying it the same way you're saying it, sir.

00:59:40 John Host Are you saying I can't believe my own mechanical ears?

00:59:43 Melissa Guest I think he's actually saying a—a different alternate pronunciation that is maybe less well-known than the one you are saying. *[Chuckles quietly.]*

00:59:51 John Host Than the archaic, sort of jokey pronunciation that I'm using. Okay. Well, you're seated there with your dad at Argot Studios in New York City. Correct?

01:00:00 Melissa Guest Yes, I am.

01:00:01 John Host Alright. Are you within poking distance of him? Could you poke him in the arm?

01:00:05 Melissa Guest I can... poke him in the hand. *[Laughs.]*

01:00:07 John Host Okay. I want you to poke your dad, and each time you poke him, I want him to say the word R-O-B-O-T. And do that two or three times, so I can hear it a couple of times.

01:00:15 Melissa Guest Okay.

01:00:16 John Host But you have to poke him to make him do it, like he's a robit himself.

01:00:19 Melissa Guest Okay.

01:00:20 Mark Guest Robut. Robut. Robut. ...Robut.

01:00:26 John Host Thank you. I have my new ringtone. I appreciate that. Okay.

[The litigants laugh.]

There is—I—you know, I stand corrected. As much as I hate to say it, Melissa, that is a slightly different pronunciation than Jesse's and my "robit."

[Melissa chuckles.]

That is more like "ro-BUT. Ro-but. Rrrobot." There's almost a—a "hruh" on the "ro," even.

[Melissa chuckles.]

There are some other words that I have a list of here, that Melissa has submitted in her evidence. And I'm going to spell them, and then Melissa, poke your father three times.

[She laughs.]

And sir, you pronounce the word three times. Are you ready, you guys? This is gonna be a fun game.

01:01:04 Melissa Guest *[Laughing]* Okay.

01:01:05 John Host R-E-F-U-G-E.

01:01:08	Mark	Guest	Refuje. Refuje. Refuje.
01:01:13	John	Host	S-A-L-S-A.
01:01:16	Mark	Guest	Salza. Salza. Salza. Salza.
01:01:21	John	Host	P-R-O-G-R-A-M.
01:01:23	Mark	Guest	Program. Program. Program.
01:01:28	John	Host	O-U-T-S-I-D-E.
01:01:31	Mark	Guest	OUT-side. OUT-side. OUT-side.
01:01:36	John	Host	D-A-I-R-Y.
01:01:39	Mark	Guest	<i>[Almost with a silent H or W before the R]</i> Dairy. Dairy. Dairy.
01:01:42	John	Host	Thank you very much. Jesse, I think we have a whole new MaxFun podcast here.
01:01:47	Jesse	Host	Yeah.
			<i>[Jesse and the litigants laugh.]</i>
			"Learn to Speak Bad English." <i>[Laughs.]</i>
01:01:49	John	Host	<i>[Laughing]</i> No!
			Just "Hypnotize Yourself with Melissa's Dad"!
			<i>[Melissa laughs.]</i>
			I was really into that! I was—the hairs were starting to rise up on my forearms. Or as you would say, sir, fuir-ARMS. Fur-ARMS.
			<i>[Melissa laughs, Mark chuckles.]</i>
			Fur-ARMS. "Dairy" sounded pretty good to me! Melissa, what's your complaint with that last one? D-A-I-R-Y?
01:02:09	Melissa	Guest	Instead of "dairy," he says "derry," like it would be spelled D-E-R-R-Y.
01:02:15	John	Host	Eh, it sounded pretty good to me.
01:02:16	Melissa	Guest	Okay!
01:02:17	John	Host	That complaint is stricken from the record. But there were some other unusual ones there. And you say that he <u>chooses</u> to do this. Mark, is that true? Are you <u>choosing</u> to pronounce these things? Or were you raised pronouncing these words in this slightly different way?
01:02:33	Mark	Guest	Well, I think I've said them that way my whole life. I don't think I just said one day, "Let me start changing pronunciations to annoy Melissa." I mean, not that there's anything wrong with annoying Melissa.
01:02:42	John	Host	No, of course, sir.
			<i>[Melissa laughs.]</i>
01:02:46	Mark	Guest	But I didn't set out with that purpose, so I think these are the ways I say these words.
01:02:49	John	Host	So this is not done intentionally. Melissa, do you believe him?

[Beat.]

01:02:53 Melissa Guest

No. *[Laughs quietly.]*

01:02:54 John Host

Oh! Alright! Your dad is a liar. Go ahead!

[Both litigants laugh.]

01:03:00 Melissa Guest

I think he's aware that no one else says words that way. And he still chooses to say them that way anyway. Because when I've brought up, in the past, that I think those are not correct pronunciations, he continues to say them that way. So I think that that is therefore a choice.

01:03:16 John Host

But is it just pronunciation, or are there other language issues that you have with your dad?

01:03:22 Melissa Guest

So besides some of these words, uh, it's not exactly the same thing, but I feel like the underlying issue is the same. There's a brand of soda...

01:03:34 John Host

You can say brand names now. We—

01:03:36 Melissa Guest

Okay.

01:03:37 John Host

We no longer tie ourselves into kuh-nots (*knots*) around that.

01:03:39 Melissa Guest

[Laughs.] Okay. One of his favorite sodas to drink is Coke Zero.

01:03:46 John Host

Mm-hm.

01:03:47 Melissa Guest

And he insists on calling it Zero Coke.

[John and Jesse laugh.]

And reversing the order of the words.

01:03:53 Jesse Host

It was actually named after Zero Mostel.

[John, Melissa, and Mark laugh.]

01:03:58 Melissa Guest

It just drives me bonkers! I mean, 'cause he drinks that a lot, and he'll—we'll be out, and he'll order Zero Coke, or he'll say he's going to the fridge to get a Zero Coke, and... that's just not what it's called!

01:04:08 John Host

Alright.

01:04:09 Jesse Host

Would you say that the primary think about it that drives you bonkers is how much more fun your dad is than you?

01:04:14 John Host

Oh!

01:04:15 Jesse Host

Because Zero Coke is a home run!

[Jesse, John, and Melissa laugh.]

01:04:22 John Host

[Sighs.] You know what? Harsh but fair, Bailiff Jesse Thorn.

01:04:25 Melissa Guest

I would not say that that has anything to do with who is more fun.

01:04:29 John Host

Well, but here is the thing. This is a situation where, unlike the mispronunciation of words, changing the name of a known brand product... could cause slight damage, insofar as it might confuse service personnel.

01:04:45 Melissa Guest

Mm-hm.

01:04:46 John Host Sir, why do you call Coke Zero—which is, by the way, called Coke Zero—Zero Coke? What is your Weird Dad Theory for why you are right and the rest of the world is wrong, including Coca-Cola?

[Melissa chuckles quietly.]

01:04:59 Mark Guest Well, actually Coca-Cola would understand that I'm right if they would just ask me about it. Because they have Diet Coke, and they have Cherry Coke, and they have Vanilla Coke, and they have Zero Coke!

[John laughs very quietly.]

It makes total sense. They're the ones who seem to have accidentally mixed that one up, and I'm just trying to set the record straight.

[Melissa laughs quietly.]

01:05:19 John Host And you sent in some evidence as well, which is a rather lengthy affidavit from your mother, also decrying these pronunciations. It is so long that it feels like she's been waiting... decades to write this.

[Melissa laughs.]

So I can't read all of it, but I'll read a little bit.

"I have been married for 37 years to a wonderful man who annoys me with his incorrect pronunciation. Don't get me wrong. I'm not talking about his charming New Orleans accent, which I love." Also, which... I'm not sure exists.

[Melissa laughs, John stifles laughter.]

"And which gets much stronger when we visit that fair city. What annoys me the most is his purposeful changing of either pronunciation or word placement—Zero Coke instead of Coke Zero. And I think it's a power and control thing. He does it because he likes to see people's reactions."

Hm. Interesting. That's your mother in a signed affidavit. Is that correct, Melissa?

01:06:05 Melissa Guest That is correct.

01:06:06 John Host Do you agree with her?

01:06:07 Melissa Guest I do!

01:06:08 John Host Alright.

01:06:09 Jesse Host Mark, can I have you pronounce a phrase for me?

01:06:12 Mark Guest Sure.

01:06:13 Jesse Host "I'll have the Kung Pao chicken."

[John, Melissa, and Mark laugh.]

01:06:20 Mark Guest "I'll have the Kung Pao chicken."

01:06:22 John Host It does seem to roll right off his tongue. Does it not, Jesse?

[Melissa laughs.]

01:06:25 Jesse Host

It does.

01:06:26 Sound Effect Transition

[Three gavel bangs.]

01:06:28 John Host

Mark—of course, I did not remember that his name was Mark, 'cause he is known throughout the land and the history of the court as Zero Coke Guy. Nice to re-meet you, Mark. If you wanna hear about a more recent dispute between Melissa and Mark—oh, yes! It goes on! Make sure to check out the recent docket-clearing episode number 469: "[The Sponge Leaver's Wife](#)." Also has an incredible song in it.

Finally, our last case. This is another fan favorite, and for good reason. We met George and his dad Tom at our live show at San Francisco Sketchfest in [episode 245](#). The case was called "Portrait of the Artist as a Weird Dad."

"Tom leaves strange photos in George's bunkbed while Tom's away at work. He's a flight attendant. And George doesn't want his dad to leave strange photos in his bunkbed." And by "in his bunkbed," I mean, you know, in the—like, he's on the bottom bunk and he looks up and in the slats, there are all these picture—well, I'll let the case speak for itself.

01:07:29 Sound Effect Transition

[Three gavel bangs.]

01:07:32 John Host

What is it about these photos that you find disturbing, such that you want me to prohibit them from being there?

01:07:38 George Guest

Um, they're just really creepy. Like, for example, there's like, overly made-up circus clowns. And—

01:07:46 John Host

[Stifling laughter] Mm-hm.

[Audience laughs.]

Mm-hm.

01:07:50 George Guest

And—

01:07:51 Jesse Host

Sounds beautiful so far.

[More audience laughter.]

01:07:54 John Host

Mm-hm.

01:07:55 George Guest

And, uh, many, many ventriloquist dummies.

[Audience laughs, scattered applause.]

01:08:01 John Host

Did you say "ventriloquist dummies"? Did—did I hear you correctly? Ventriloquist dummies?

01:08:05 George Guest

Yeah.

01:08:06 John Host

Yeah.

01:08:07 Jesse Host

Yeah! The universal symbol of affection.

[John and the audience laugh.]

[Stifling laughter] I proposed to my wife with a ventriloquist dummy!

[Audience laughs.]

01:08:17 John Host Tom, why are you leaving pictures of ventriloquist dummies—? Now, let me unders—see if I understand this. These photos are being left—these photos and illustrations and images are being left for you, George... you sleep on the bottom bunk?

01:08:29 George Guest Yeah, that's correct.

01:08:30 John Host Is there anyone in the top bunk, or are you a weird only-child like I was?

01:08:34 George Guest No—

01:08:35 John Host Who had a bunkbed just to show off?

[Audience laughs.]

01:08:38 George Guest I have a older brother.

01:08:39 John Host An older brother.

01:08:40 George Guest Yeah.

01:08:41 John Host So you're down there on the bottom bunk, and your dad puts these images in the—on the underside of the top bunk, so you have to stare at them as you fall asleep.

01:08:49 George Guest Yeah.

01:08:50 John Host Okay. Why are you doing this? To your son?

[Audience laughs.]

01:08:54 Tom Guest *[Clears throat.]* Okay. I'm not trying to be weird, or different, or weirdly different. I'm just, like... "Oh, here's a cool photo! I bet George would like it."

01:09:08 John Host Where are you finding—

[Audience laughs, scattered applause.]

—all these photos of ventriloquist dummies, sir?!

01:09:14 Jesse Host He's probably just going—

01:09:15 John Host Special catalogues that you've ordered?

01:09:17 Jesse Host One assumes he just goes to PaternalAffectionPics.com.

[Audience laughs.]

01:09:25 John Host Where do you find the images that you wanna share with your son?

01:09:29 Tom Guest Okay. That's a excellent question.

[Audience laughs.]

01:09:32 John Host The only kind I ask.

[Audience laughs harder.]

01:09:36 Tom Guest These are images that I just happen to encounter, for whatever reason, and I'm like, "Ooh!"

[Scattered laughter.]

01:09:43 John Host "That's cool!"
Yeah, that's what you just said!
[Audience laughs.]
I asked a specific, and I dare say excellent, question.
[Audience laughs.]

01:09:56 Tom Guest Where are you sourcing these images? On the Internet?
S-stand by.
[Audience laughs.]

01:10:03 John Host ...I'll allow it.
[Audience laughs again.]
Standing by.

01:10:11 Tom Guest Okay. I work for an airline. As a flight attendant. And sometimes I'm gone for a long time. Sometimes these flights are very long. Go to Australia, it's about 14-hour flight. Longer. I read a lot of newspapers, and I'm like, "Ooh, that's kinda cool." And I might clip that out.

01:10:25 John Host Mm-hm.
[Light audience laughter.]

01:10:27 Tom Guest I have a whole binder here full of photos—
[Audience and Jesse or Tom laugh.]

01:10:29 John Host Oh, don't think I haven't clocked the binder you're holding!

01:10:33 Tom Guest And it's not just overly made-up clowns!
[Light audience laughter.]
Or ventriloquist dummies. But... wait 'til you see these dummies.
[Audience erupts into laughter, scattered applause.]

01:10:53 John Host Good night.
[Laughter and applause swell, and then gradually fade back down.]
I feel like I could walk out of that stage door, into the wilderness, and never be seen again...
[More laughter.]
...knowing that my great contribution to culture was facilitating you saying, "But wait 'til you see these dummies."
[More laughter and scattered applause.]
One of my most favorite moments of reality.

[Laughter swells.]

And the fact is, sir... We don't have to wait any longer! Because evidence was submitted! Which we are gonna put up on this screen.

[Audience cheers and applauds.]

These are all images that you have placed in George's bed. First image, please.

01:11:49 John Host

[Beat.]

[Audience erupts into laughter. George also laughs.]

Tom. Obviously we're recording this for podcast purposes, so... Tom, either you or I are gonna have to describe for the listener what we're looking at.

01:12:04 Tom Guest

Uh, Your Honor, I think the issue here is—

[Audience laughter.]

—how do I view it, vs. how does my son view it? So...

01:12:16 John Host

Can we just say, for the record, what it is? Because I'm looking at it, and even I'm not sure.

[Audience and George laugh, Tom stifles laughter.]

01:12:23 Tom Guest

Your Honor, it is a helmeted hornbill.

[Audience laughs.]

01:12:27 John Host

A helmeted hornbill.

01:12:29 Tom Guest

Yes.

01:12:30 John Host

And this is a—

01:12:31 Jesse Host

Uh, that's science for "nightmare bird."

[Audience and John laugh.]

01:12:33 John Host

Right.

[Audience keeps laughing. Somebody on stage does a bird call.]

It's, um—and this is a photo of an actual animal, not a monstrous puppet?

01:12:49 Tom Guest

Yeah.

[Tom and audience laugh.]

Your—I'm—I'm sorry—

01:12:52 John Host

This would be a great ventriloquist dummy, by the way.

[Audience laughs.]

01:12:56 Tom Guest

I am sorry if, uh, nature's glory offends you.

01:13:02 John Host *[Audience laughs harder, some applause.]*
It does not offend me. It does not—it—
[Another swell of laughter.]
Why did you choose this to... show to your son directly before he falls asleep?
[More laughter, someone claps. Tom is evidently laughing too hard to speak.]
[Stifling laughter] Stand by. Stand by.
[Audience laughs.]

01:13:26 Tom Guest That's another excellent question.
[More audience laughter.]
Here—this—

01:13:30 John Host That's kinda my thing.
[Audience and Tom laugh.]

01:13:32 Tom Guest This animal, as you can see from its... helmeted hornbill—
[Audience laughs.]
—is, um, unfortunately hunted for its bill. And it's actually more precious, more valuable, than ivory. And it's becoming on the brink of extinction. It's indigenous to Malaysia and Borneo, I believe.

01:13:56 John Host Mm-hm.

01:13:57 Tom Guest So... of course it's bizarre. And I thought, "Well, let me put that up there."
[Audience laughs.]
And then...

01:14:07 John Host Stand by.
[Audience laughs, Tom stifles laughter.]

01:14:09 Tom Guest Instead of him—my ideal is instead of him coming and saying, as he always does, "What is this?! Don't put this in my bed!"
[Audience laughs.]
I would prefer that he would say, "Oh, wow! Dad, tell me more about this curious bird."
[Audience laughs harder, applauds, and cheers.]

01:14:36 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** Let's go to the next image.
George: Yeah.

[Beat. John clears his throat.]

01:14:39 John Host *[Audience bursts out laughing, George also laughs.]*

Now, for the—for the viewer at home... for the listener at home... this is a photo, it looks like from the late sixties, early seventies, of a man with a unibrow and a very short bowtie, smoking a cigarette in front of a Christmas tree. Is this a—a relative of some kind, or...? An uncle, or—?

01:15:03 Tom Guest Uh... that is a Greek tailor.

[Audience and George laugh. Scattered applause.]

01:15:13 John Host For those listening at home, we did not edit anything out.

[Audience laughs harder.]

The silence that you heard after "That is a Greek tailor," full stop, was intentional. Apparently Tom believes that's the only context I need.

[Audience laughs.]

George, did you know this was a Greek tailor when you saw it in your bed?

01:15:36 George Guest Nope.

01:15:37 John Host What was the Greek tailor?

01:15:39 Tom Guest *[Laughs.]* It's kind of a long story, but... you asked—

01:15:43 John Host It doesn't have to be. I bet.

[Tom and the audience laugh.]

01:15:44 Tom Guest You asked where my—

01:15:45 Jesse Host *[Stifling laughter]* "Once upon a time in Greece, there was a boy... whose father was a tailor."

[Audience and John or Tom laugh.]

01:15:52 Tom Guest You asked, "Where do you get these images from?" Sometimes magazines, newspapers. Sometimes from the Internet. Now, I used to live in a town, and I knew this guy. *[Stifles laughter.]* He was a Greek tailor.

[Audience laughs.]

And—

01:16:08 John Host Is that a picture of him?

01:16:10 Tom Guest *[Stifling laughter]* That is a picture of him.

01:16:11 John Host Oh, okay. Phew.

[John and the audience laugh.]

01:16:14 Tom Guest Anyhow, somehow, I looked him up, and there was a... whole photo album of his photos, and I went back and back and back, and I'm

like, "Wow. This guy is like, the quintessential 1974 Greek tailor."

[Audience laughs.]

"At Christmastime..."

01:16:35 John Host

You're right.

01:16:36 Tom Guest

Thank you! Thank you!

01:16:37 Jesse Host

I really think—!

01:16:38 John Host

That old stereotype!

[Audience laughs.]

01:16:41 Jesse Host

Judge Hodgman, I think that more than anything else, this speaks to the deficiencies of the Common Core.

[John and the audience laugh.]

[Failing to stifle laughter] The like, when are children learning about prototypical Greek tailors?

01:16:55 John Host

Your—you know what, Jesse? Your tie is shorter than a Greek tailor at Christmastime!

[Audience laughs.]

01:17:00 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Jesse: I simply don't understand the reference!

John: Sorry! Sorry! That's not very PC of me to say anymore!

Jesse: Yeah.

01:17:05 John Host

Alright. Next image.

[Beat.]

[Audience erupts into a mix of laughter and exclamations of dismay.]

Now... correct me if I'm wrong. Tom, this image to me looks like...

01:17:26 Jesse Host

Me on my birthday! What's uuup!?

[Audience laughs.]

01:17:32 John Host

A hairless rodent of some kind. I don't know if it's a na—it's not a naked mole rat. Is it?

01:17:37 Tom Guest

I—I think that's what it is, yes.

01:17:39 John Host

[Stifles laughter.] Yeah, okay. It's re—it's reclining.

[Audience laughs.]

On what looks like a little naked mole rat-sized armchair in a rec room, and it's covered by an afghan. He's got kind of a self-satisfied grin.

[Audience laughs.]

01:17:56 Jesse Host

Yeah, I mean, Judge Hodgman, I think it's fair to characterize this

naked mole rat as cheesin'.

[More laughter.]

Your boy's definitely cheesin'.

01:18:05 John Host The thought behind this one, Tom?

[Pause.]

01:18:08 Tom Guest Just looks cool.

01:18:09 John Host Yeah!!!

[Jesse and the audience laugh. Audience applauds.]

Do we have any more? Do we have any more? Next one?

01:18:16 Jesse Host That is so metal.

[Audience laughs.]

01:18:19 John Host Yeah. So this is an image of, um—it—it looks like some kind of... figurine of a small Asian... well, I wanna say "boy," but he's smoking a cigarette.

01:18:31 Jesse Host It looks like a Jeff Koons sculpture of a Kim Jong-un.

[Audience laughs.]

01:18:37 John Host Yeah. And also a Post-it message from father to son, saying "George, you look good."

[Audience laughter.]

You—

01:18:44 Jesse Host You do look good, George.

01:18:45 John Host You do look good, George. Yeah.

01:18:46 George Guest Thank you. But don't smoke.

01:18:48 John Host But you—so—and—anything you wanna say about this one, Tom?

01:18:52 Tom Guest Yeah, two things.

[Audience laughter.]

01:18:53 John Host Yeah, sure.

01:18:55 Tom Guest I believe this is a piece of artwork from Taiwan.

01:18:57 John Host Mm-hm.

01:18:59 Tom Guest And sometimes I just like to stuff beans up George's nose, and that's what this is. Like, *[goofily antagonistic]* "Heyyy, check it out!"

01:19:06 Jesse Host It's a classic example of him stuffing beans up George's nose.

[Jesse and the audience laugh.]

01:19:10 John Host So you're just teasing your son with this one of 'em.

01:19:12 Tom Guest Uh, y—good-natured—good—

01:19:13 Jesse Host No, he's stuffing beans up his nose, Judge Hodgman! *[Stifling]*

laughter] Are you even listening?

[Audience laughs.]

01:19:17 John Host I understand Weird Dad talk.

[Jesse laughs.]

As do you. But I'm trying to explain for a listener at home, who may not understand what "stuff beans up your nose" means. Uh, did you have any thoughts about this one, George?

01:19:29 George Guest Um...

01:19:30 John Host When you saw this? Did you feel like...

01:19:32 George Guest The—

01:19:33 John Host ...you got your nose bean-stuffed?

[Audience laughs.]

01:19:37 George Guest No, I didn't think my nose was stuffed with beans.

[Audience laughs.]

Um, I just saw a picture of a shiny boy.

[More laughter.]

And a note that says "You look good." And I do not appreciate that.

[George and the audience laugh.]

01:19:55 John Host Would you prefer there to be nothing there?

01:19:57 George Guest Mmmaybe, like, a poster of my choice, of something I like.

01:20:03 John Host Like what? What do you like?

01:20:04 George Guest Uh, the Golden State Warriors.

[Audience cheers and applauds.]

01:20:06 Jesse Host Yeah, that's what's up.

[Audience audio abruptly cuts.]

01:20:08 John Host Tom, does it terrify you to imagine that your son might look at a sports poster instead of a poster of obscure ventriloquist dummies and clowns?

[Audience laughs.]

01:20:18 Tom Guest That does not terrify me. He has a lot of, uh, Golden State Warriors paraphernalia all over his wall.

01:20:24 John Host Right.

01:20:25 Tom Guest The other walls, and the door. That's cool. So let's just leave that space above the bunkbed...

[Audience laughs.]

...for me.

01:20:36 Sound Effect Transition

[Three gavel bangs.]

01:20:38 John Host

[Sighs.] I totally remember that night. I totally remember talking with Tom after, backstage at Marines' Memorial Theatre, about his leaving those pictures for his son while he was flying all over around the world. That was back when we did that kind of thing. I totally felt for him. Also really—I really plugged him for a lot of information about what it's like to be a flight attendant. 'Cause I find that fascinating.

Tom, if you're out there! I know—you're prob—I hope you're flying safe, if you're flying at all! If you've got some time on your hands, let me know how it's been going. Flight attendants. Love 'em!

Alright, that's it for our Weird Dad retrospective. Our producer is Jennifer Marmor. To discuss the show on Twitter, make sure to hashtag your *Judge John Hodgman* Tweets JJHo. You can also hashtag your Instagram posts, or your... TikToks, or whatever. Follow me on Twitter, though, at @hodgman. Follow me, personally, on Instagram at @johnhodgman. Follow the show for all of our evidence and fun sent-in stuff on Instagram at @judgejohnhodgman. Should be pretty clear. We'll be posting some of our favorite evidence from these dads there, and check out the Maximum Fun subreddit to discuss this episode at MaximumFun.Reddit.com. That's MaximumFun.Reddit.com!

Submit your cases at MaximumFun.org/jjho. Or guess what? You can just email me. Hodgman@maximumfun.org.

We will not see you next time! I have to make an adjustment. This is a podcast. You should know... that when Jesse Thorn says "We'll see you next time on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast," that's not because we've had secret cameras installed! It's not like we can watch you when you're listening. You're safe to be yourself, to dress however you feel. But I will enjoy talking to you next time on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

01:22:29 Sound Effect Transition

[Three gavel bangs.]

01:22:31 Music Transition

A cheerful guitar chord.

01:22:32 Speaker 1 Guest

MaximumFun.org.

01:22:34 Speaker 2 Guest

Comedy and culture.

01:22:35 Speaker 3 Guest

Artist owned—

01:22:36 Speaker 4 Guest

—audience supported.