

00:00:00	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
00:00:02	Jesse Thorn	Host	Welcome to the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> . I'm Bailiff Jesse Thorn. We're in chambers this week, clearing the docket. And with me, as always, is a man in his home office, wearing a promotional T-shirt that he got for free.
00:00:18	John Hodgman	Host	Yes!
00:00:19	Jesse	Host	Judge John Hodgman.
00:00:20	John	Host	You are correct. I am wearing my Wilco Solid Sound Festival 2017 T. Solid Sound Festival happens every other year. It was not scheduled for this year. It's their off year. And boy, I bet they're glad.
			<i>[Both laugh.]</i>
			Jesse Thorn, you're wearing a delightful plaid cap.
00:00:40	Jesse	Host	Yeah.
00:00:41	John	Host	And—
00:00:42	Jesse	Host	Japanese Americana, John.
00:00:43	John	Host	Oh, yeah, alright! I like it! What's that mean?
00:00:46	Jesse	Host	It's like a multi-panel madras, by the Japanese brand Beams Plus.
00:00:51	John	Host	Alright, very cool!
00:00:53	Jesse	Host	Beams Plus. Big Japanese Americana maker. They make American-style clothing in Japan.
00:00:59	John	Host	Also, your beard and mustache are coming in... at different rates.
			<i>[Both laugh.]</i>
			Like... you sha—you had this magnifi—people who saw you at any of our live shows will know. That for the past <u>several</u> years, you've been sporting a <u>beautiful</u> Rasputin-y beard. Full Rasputin.
00:01:23	Jesse	Host	Yeah. Yeah. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:01:26	John	Host	And you shaved it off <u>concurrent</u> with, uh, quarantine.
00:01:32	Jesse	Host	I shaved it all.
00:01:33	John	Host	Yeah.
00:01:34	Jesse	Host	I shaved all head hair. All head hair was removed by me. Fully depilated—
00:01:37	John	Host	Not—not—not eyebrows.
00:01:39	Jesse	Host	Oh, no, not my eyebrows. No.
00:01:40	John	Host	Yeah.
00:01:41	Jesse	Host	And, uh, it looked bad.
00:01:44	John	Host	No! No.
00:01:45	Jesse	Host	So, uh, my wife didn't love me anymore.
00:01:47	John	Host	Right.
00:01:48	Jesse	Host	So I switched to number one half on my head, and number four on my beard. But I had a long conversation with my wife. The only

person besides you who sees me with no mask on. Uh, and my children. And, uh—

00:02:01 John Host And producer Jennifer Marmor, who is watching us silently from above.

00:02:06 Jesse Host As we sleep, yes.

00:02:07 John Host Yes.

00:02:08 Jesse Host Um, she had us put nanny cams in. *[Laughs.]*

00:02:10 John Host That was weird! That's weird she sent me that Nest Cam.

00:02:13 Jesse Host Yeah, she said it's for producing!

00:02:16 John Host Yeah!

00:02:17 Jesse Host And I honestly don't know what that is, so...

00:02:18 John Host Yeah!

00:02:20 Jesse Host And so I switched to number four on the beard, and number one half on the head. But I had a conversation with my wife, should I grow the mustache back out or keep it trim, and she voted for grow it back out. And it's, you know, sort of her mustache, so...

00:02:34 John Host A brave woman.

00:02:36 Jesse Host Yeah. It makes smooching more complicated, but, uh...

00:02:38 John Host Yeah!

00:02:39 Jesse Host She—she likes the look, so.

00:02:41 John Host I thought maybe you just had incredibly strong mustache hair.

*[Jesse laughs.]*

That was coming out much faster than the beard hair.

00:02:48 Jesse Host Well, I do do a mustache hair-based circus act.

00:02:51 John Host But you shaved—! You shaved all of the head hair minus your eyebrows off for a reason? A fancy? A whim? Easier self-care during quarantine? What?

00:03:02 Jesse Host Anxiety.

00:03:03 John Host I see.

00:03:04 Jesse Host Anxiety. I just wanted to take an action.

00:03:05 John Host Yeah, I understand.

00:03:07 Jesse Host Just wanted to do something that was within my control. I wanted to control something.

00:03:12 John Host Yeah, that's how I feel when I put on pants.

00:03:14 Jesse Host *[Laughing]* Yeah.

00:03:16 John Host But let me tell you something! I'm glad you didn't shave off those brows, 'cause—uh, people don't know—you're a radio personality. You got some of the best brows in the—in the game of life.

00:03:27 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Jesse:** That's true, I have powerful brows.

**John:** Shapely brows.

00:03:29 Jesse Host Some people do know that. People who've seen, for example,

History Channel's *Christmas Through the Decades*.

00:03:33 John Host *[Laughs.]* Right. They only—

00:03:35 Jesse Host On which I appeared.

00:03:36 John Host They only shot you from the eyelids up. They were like, "We just—we just need the brows. We don't need anything else."

00:03:41 Jesse Host I recorded in between Mr. Belding and one of the younger Bradys.

00:03:47 John Host Oh, boy, Jesse. Look. A lot of listeners probably are close enough to our—to my age, anyway, that they know what *The Brady Bunch* is.

00:03:55 Jesse Host Yeah.

*[A child shouts indistinctly in the background.]*

00:03:58 John Host But you—you know—I mean, if you listened to Tom Scharpling in the past two years, you know about Cameo, right?

00:04:03 Jesse Host Yeah, sure.

00:04:04 John Host Right? That's where celebrities charge you \$35 to \$300 to say happy birthday. It's sorta a thing that *Judge John Hodgman* invented when I offered to thank people on Instagram for donating at the Leadership Squad level or above, and mis-pronouncing their names. Cameo saw that and said, "We can get anyone to do that!"

00:04:25 Jesse Host Yeah, specifically Erik Estrada.

00:04:26 John Host Yeah. And—*[laughs]*. Erik Estrada, um... sadly Alan Ruck is not on Cameo. I'm very upset about that.

*[Jesse sighs.]*

Lots of fun people are on it.

00:04:39 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:04:40 John Host Pee-wee Herman, Paul Reubens, is on it! And he does—

00:04:42 Jesse Host Really!

00:04:43 John Host Yeah, and he gives great cameo! Like, he really leans in! He's a great, gracious guy!

00:04:48 Jesse Host He's a very nice man.

00:04:49 John Host Yeah! But I'll say, like, uh—you know, our daughter just went off to college, where she is being safely held prisoner in a—in a, uh, cleansed dorm area.

00:05:03 Jesse Host Yeah?

00:05:04 John Host So far so good, fingers crossed.

00:05:05 Jesse Host Mm-hm.

00:05:06 John Host But we spent the summer at her... frankly insistence, watching the TV show *Love Island UK*.

00:05:15 Jesse Host Uh-huh?

*[Both laugh.]*

00:05:16 John Host Which, like, it was a really good bonding experience for me and our daughter, and our son. Like, we all—and especially during this time

of anxiety and worry and uncertainty, to learn from *Love Island UK*, the—basically the watchwords of my life: "Is what it is! Is what it is, innit?"

[Jesse laughs quietly.]

"Is what it is!" [Laughs quietly.]

But our daughter bought for our son's birthday a birthday greeting from Nas, from *Love Island UK*, most recent season.

00:05:47 Jesse Host

Oh! [Laughs.]

00:05:48 John Host

And he gave so much of himself.

00:05:50 Crosstalk Crosstalk

**Jesse:** Not, for example, Nas from *Illmatic*, the greatest rap album ever recorded.

**John:** Not Nas the—no. No. No, no, no, no, no. No. No. No.

00:05:57 John Host

Just—different Nas. Different Nas. Very sweet guy. Kind of the jokester of the villa. You *Love Island UK*-ies will know what I'm talking about. And then when our daughter went to college, I went a little Cameo cuckoo, and I just started—because I can't—I couldn't send her anything. Couldn't send her any care packages yet. So I just—[stifles laughter]—started sending her and my son cameos from various reality show stars. And it's so endearing, and not—and I—then I sent one to Nas, and Nas—not *Illmatic* Nas. I'm talking about *Love Island UK* Nas.

00:06:31 Jesse Host

Right.

00:06:32 John Host

And I wrote to Nas, and I said, "You were so wonderful to answer our daughter's request to wish our son a happy birthday. And now our daughter is off to college. Would you say something to her?"

And Nas was like—I'm not gonna do an accent, 'cause it's terrible. But he's like, "Hello, Hodgmina! Welcome to college! Good for you! I feel I'm a Hodgman friend of the family now!" [Laughing] I'm so excited.

[Jesse laughs.]

I just wanna—I just wanna write to him every week! But there's a reason I brought this up, which is that, uh, Barry Williams, who played Greg Brady, is on Cameo. Also an incredibly generous, giving guy. I had an interaction with him when I worked at a video store in college, which you can read about in my book *Medallion Status*. So I have a—I have, I feel like, a close connection to him. But if you—I really advise people to check out some of the sample cameos that he's got up there. His anniversary and birthday wishes. 'Cause there's one that takes a hard right turn that you do not see coming.

[Jesse laughs quietly.]

And he handles it so graciously. So there you go. We're talking about—this is all about *The Brady Bunch*, right? This is our new podcast?

00:07:37 Jesse Host

Yeah! Yeah. *Here's the Story* is the name of our podcast.

00:07:39 John Host *[Bursts out laughing.]*

Let's—let's do our actual podcast.

00:07:45 Jesse Host Okay. How about some justice for Sam?

00:07:47 John Host Alright.

00:07:48 Jesse Host "I moved from Florida to Minnesota about three years ago, and was surprised to see pizza sliced into squares rather than the traditional triangular cuts. Triangle cuts have many advantages. Each slice is the same size and shape as the others. Each slice can be held by the crust, so your hands don't get messy. A pizza cut into squares winds up having pieces with no crust to hold, and weird-shaped pieces that are very tiny around the edges.

Is this an issue of 'people like what they like'? Even so, I'd like you to issue a ruling that triangle-cut pizza is better."

*[John laughs, Jesse stifles laughter.]*

"Just look at the emoji for pizza! It's a triangle slice!"

00:08:26 John Host Well...! Trial by emoji, perhaps?

00:08:28 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:08:29 John Host Sam, even though—even if I were to rule people like what they like, Sam wants me to rule that he's correct. Correct?

00:08:34 Jesse Host Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

00:08:35 John Host Alright, well, Jesse, I have a question for you.

00:08:36 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:08:37 John Host 'Cause I think this might be a regional—

00:08:38 Jesse Host Have I eaten in Minnesota, and was I disappointed? Yes and yes.  
*[Laughs.]*

00:08:42 John Host Ohhh, how dare you? How dare you? Minnesota has incredible food.

00:08:48 Jesse Host The last time I was in Minnesota, actually, Bill Corbett and Kevin Murphy from RiffTrax told me—who are Minnesotans.

00:08:53 John Host Yeah. Yeah.

00:08:55 Jesse Host Or they're Minnesota residents.

00:08:57 John Host Yeah.

00:08:58 Jesse Host Longtime Minnesota residents.

00:09:00 John Host Yeah.

00:09:01 Jesse Host Told me about this, uh, kind of, uh—this kind of, like, fish-fry-type situation.

00:09:06 John Host Mm-hm.

00:09:07 Jesse Host Where you go to like a FVW Hall.

00:09:10 John Host Yeah.

00:09:11 Jesse Host And you pay like \$25, and then you just get huge piles of food brought to you.

00:09:14 John Host Yeah!

00:09:15 Jesse Host This... I don't—I'm not a big fish eater, but I think there were other options. This I'm in for. But when I went to a public radio event in Minnesota, and they were very excited to serve us a hotdish?

00:09:29 John Host Yeahhh!

00:09:30 Jesse Host I did—I did not like hotdish. *[Laughs quietly.]*

00:09:31 John Host Hotdish is a catchall term for casserole!

00:09:36 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:09:37 John Host And I used—you know, I love Minnesota. I love Kevin Mur—I've stayed in Kevin Murphy's house. You know how Brussels sprouts come on a big stalk?

00:09:48 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:09:49 John Host He roasted a whole stalk of Brussels sprouts! And with a maple glaze.

00:09:53 Jesse Host Oh, that's fun.

00:09:54 John Host And I don't like sweets, but it was in—it was great.

00:09:55 Jesse Host That's really fun.

00:09:56 John Host People—look. One of the things I miss about travel is not being able to go to Minneapolis–Saint Paul, and see my friends Kevin and Bill. And eat out! There's an incredible food scene in Minneapolis and Saint Paul. Outside of the—I—

00:10:10 Jesse Host You know what? I'm taking it back, because I just remembered those cheeseburgers where the cheese is inside the burger, and that's really fun.

00:10:16 John Host Yeah? There you go! And then outsi—you know, out—there's a huge international population in Minneapolis, and to a certain degree Saint Paul. And then outside traditional Minnesota hotdish, like, it's ju—it's just these people go through long winters, and they think about and enjoy food a lot. And a lot of it.

*[Jesse laughs quietly.]*

And I love it. But you grew up in San Francisco. So here's my question for pizza.

00:10:40 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:10:41 John Host Where was your favorite place to get pizza, and... how many burritos were on it?

00:10:46 Jesse Host *[Cracks up.]*

You know, I've been obsessing over a half-remembered pizzeria in something like Burlingame, California, called Pizza and Pipes.

*[John laughs. Jesse stifles laughter.]*

That was a pipe organ–themed pizza restaurant. Now, I wanna be clear. Pizza and Pipes does—in—when you put it in the Bay Area milieu, it seems like it could be something else. But it was—

00:11:10 John Host It's gotta be a vape shop.

00:11:11 Jesse Host It was an entire restaurant with like a 500-pipe pipe organ.

00:11:18 John Host Mm-hm?

00:11:19 Jesse Host That went around the entire place. And I couldn't remember if this was real and Tony Macaulay had really had his tenth birthday party there.

00:11:28 John Host Yeah.

00:11:30 Jesse Host But I mentioned it on *Jordan, Jesse, Go!*, and apparently there was a really intense pipe organ-themed pizzeria restaurant fad in the mid-1980s to mid-1990s.

00:11:41 John Host Oh!

00:11:44 Jesse Host Um, that then faded away almost as quickly. And I think there is still, like, one Pizza and Pipes in Sacramento or something. But Pizza and Pipes was a national phenomenon, and—along with its imitators.

00:11:55 John Host Whoa! I just Googled an article from a website I've never heard of, so I hope that they are not, um, White Nationalists.

*[Jesse laughs quietly.]*

[TasteCooking.com](http://TasteCooking.com). Probably not. Probably not.

00:12:08 Jesse Host Yeah, probably not.

00:12:10 John Host Called "[The Life and Death of Pizza and Pipes](#)." From 2018. I'm gonna read it! But in any case—

00:12:15 Jesse Host That said—

00:12:16 John Host Yeah.

00:12:17 Jesse Host —for me, it was Straw Hat Pizza on 24th Street. But as you correctly identified, while I like pizza as much as the next person, and it was also a favorite childhood food just like anybody else, as a native of the Mission district, it was a distant third to burritos and pupusas on my, like, comfort food family dinner list.

00:12:37 John Host *[Quietly, to himself]* That's the other thing I miss.

*[Getting back to regular volume]* I miss those San Francisco burritos. San Francisco Sketchfest. Ugh!

00:12:42 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:12:44 John Host But your pizza was cut into triangles probably, right?

00:12:46 Jesse Host Of course. Of course. Yeah.

00:12:47 John Host Yeah. Yeah. That's—

00:12:48 Jesse Host There's very few places where it's cut into squares, I think.

00:12:50 John Host Mm—

00:12:51 Jesse Host Detroit has a weird square pizza, right? But he's talking about—Sam is talking about a round pizza cut into squares.

00:12:58 John Host Yeah. And actually, you know, what I learned—people will remember we've made reference before to the Serious Eats Guide to Regional Pizza, by Adam Kuban. Which lists how there are all different ways of cutting pizza, both in the United States and outside of the United States. And I learned that square-cut round pizza is a thing! In more than one place! Including Minnesota.

So here's what I have to say to Sam. Look, Sam. You got out of Florida. Congratulations!

*[Both laugh quietly.]*

Don't complain! *[Laughs.]* You moved from one intense weather-inspired eccentricity state to another.

*[Jesse laughs quietly.]*

And you need to adapt to something called Minnesota Nice. Which means it's no longer appropriate for you to get mad and scream shirtless on a street corner about your pizza rights being violated. But instead be nice, and accept that there are genuine regional differences. And as you know from the Serious Eats Guide to Regional Pizza, square-cut pizza is one of them.

00:13:59 John Host So in the Midwest, I have learned, Jesse Thorn, you're gonna see square-cut or quote-unquote "tavern-cut" pizza. Tavern-cut. Because this started 'cause it was sold in bars as a side snack with your Malört or whatever, rather than as a meal itself. It was like an appetizer. And the squares go further! And sometimes they're—they don't have a round pizza pan! They have a square pizza pan in some of these taverns. So it makes sense.

I also think that the square-cut pizza—and this is just a guess on my part, but I think it's a cultural difference. It's a deference to the Midwestern hotdish casserole tradition. They are used to square things.

00:14:44 Jesse Host

Right.

00:14:45 John Host

You know what I mean? Now, are triangles—

00:14:46 Jesse Host

All their foods come from dishes.

00:14:47 John Host

All their foods come from dishes! Are triangles more efficient? ...Yes. Each triangle offers the full range of the pizza taste spectrum experience, from the molten central cheese lake, to the twilight ring of sauce, to the arid crust beach, ideally with a big lava bubble on it.

But this is only efficient if you are eating and sharing your pizza with a party divisible, uh, or with factors of—I don't remember factors or divisors. Look, eight slices in a pie. Right, Jesse?

00:15:25 Jesse Host

Right.

00:15:26 John Host

So, like, four people, two people with some leftovers, or, you know, if you're having a really nice night of it, one person. But you try splitting those eight triangles into 16, and you're getting into gross pizza strips. Which are no good.

So here's what I'm gonna say. Square-cut has its place. It's for sharing. Pieces are smaller. More to go around. They cater to individual preference. There are center-cut people. There are edge people. And let's face it, you go beyond two toppings, triangle-cut is a flopping mess. You know? That's gonna be flopping over your hand.



00:16:01 Jesse Host *[Solemnly]* Flip flap flop.

00:16:02 John Host Yeah, exactly! Now, is it—a triangle is better for walking around, if you're a flâneur.

00:16:06 Jesse Host *[Stifling laughter]* Mm-hm.

00:16:07 John Host If you're walking around the streets of Fort Lauderdale or whatever, New York City or whatever.

00:16:11 Jesse Host *[Stifling laughter]* One of those Fort Lauderdale flâneurs?

*[Both laugh.]*

00:16:13 John Host Yeah. You fold your slice, and you gallivant about with it, and you eat. But in Minnesota—

00:16:18 Jesse Host The legendary Evander Berry Wall, the—

*[John laughs, Jesse stifles laughter.]*

—the Dandy Dude?

00:16:22 John Host *[Claps twice.]* Say it slowly, so people can Google it.

00:16:26 Jesse Host [Evander Berry Wall](#). Google it.

00:16:27 John Host Yeah. Google it.

00:16:28 Jesse Host You do wanna Google that. Yeah.

00:16:29 John Host Google that, yeah. But now you're in Minnesota, Sam! You're not folding your slice while walking down the sidewalk. You're sitting in a bar or a rec room, hiding from the cold, silently putting square after square of double cheese extra everything in your mouth, maybe making jokes with Kevin Murphy and Bill Corbett if you're lucky. But even if you're not, I'm jealous of you.

So no, I don't rule in your favor, Sam. And in—and I urge you and everyone to remember to check out the Serious Eats Guide to Regional Pizza. Uh, don't—that's hard to Google. I'm not gonna say it slow. Instead I made a very handy Bitly link for it. [Bit.ly/samiswrong](#). Check it out.

*[Jesse laughs quietly.]*

All small letters. All one word.

00:17:08 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:17:10 Jesse Host Here's something from Charlotte:

"My wife Julie does not say 'Please' when ordering coffee. When greeted by the barista, rather than saying, 'Hello, I would like an iced latte, please,' she will politely say, 'I'll have an iced latte.'

She argues that baristas are often short on time, and appreciate the efficiency. She believes a sincere thank-you when paying and grabbing the drink is all that's needed. I argue that niceties like 'Hello' and 'Please' are all that our shattered society has left to stand between us and *Mad Max*-style anarchy."

*[John laughs.]*

"She's a former barista herself, so she's probably correct, but I am still seeking an order for her to use 'Hello' and 'Please' when ordering coffee."

00:17:51 John Host

Hm.

00:17:52 Jesse Host

"Thank you for your consideration. I await your righteous judgment."

00:17:57 John Host

Well, first of all, Charlotte, I'm gonna say that I don't think the dissolution of "Please" and "Thank you" is what's going to lead to an Immortan Joe–style autocracy in this country. I think that will probably have more to do with the electoral college, and low voter turnout.

*[Jesse laughs quietly, John stifles laughter.]*

So please vote, everybody. Jesse, you remember when we were in DC, and that person said that they weren't gonna vote 'cause they knew they were in a safe district for their vote?

00:18:21 Jesse Host

Yeah.

00:18:22 John Host

And I let 'em off the hook?

00:18:23 Jesse Host

Yeah.

00:18:24 John Host

I regret it. Back on the hook.

00:18:26 Jesse Host

Ooh! *[Laughs.]* A return to the hook!

00:18:28 John Host

Return—get back on the hook!

Look, I know the electoral college is weird, but, like, I believe that voting matters up and down the ballot, and the popular vote matters.

Jesse, I'm putting you back on the hook, too, for dog poop. I'm sorry.

00:18:43 Jesse Host

Wow.

00:18:44 John Host

I just got too many letters about you dumping dog poop in neighbors' things.

00:18:47 Jesse Host

Yeah. They—nobody cares. In my neighborhood.

00:18:51 John Host

Alright, Je—oh—oh, boy. Guess what? I'm gonna send you all the letters I get after that comment.

00:18:56 Jesse Host

I'm only accepting letters from Mount Washington, Los Angeles.

00:19:00 John Host

*[Laughs.]* Okay. When you go to a coffee shop...

00:19:03 Jesse Host

Yeah.

00:19:04 John Host

What do you order, and do you say "Please"?

*[Pause.]*

00:19:08 Jesse Host

I order a ham and cheese croissant.

*[John snorts.]*

Because I don't drink coffee.

*[Both laugh.]*

00:19:14 John Host Of course. I apologize.

00:19:15 Jesse Host And I really only go into a coffee shop, uh, when I'm traveling and need breakfast. And that's the only substantial food they sell there, usually.

00:19:23 John Host Mm-hm.

00:19:24 Jesse Host But, uh, yes, of course I say "Please." I'm a please—my mama raised me right, John.

00:19:30 John Host Yeah! So you're saying that Charlotte's wife Julie was not raised properly?

00:19:34 Jesse Host I mean... I'm not saying that she wasn't raised properly. I'm saying that I was.

00:19:39 John Host *[Sharp exhale.]* Yeah.

00:19:42 Jesse Host I say "Please" and "Thank you" in a airport Burger King.

00:19:45 John Host Of course! Well, I'll tell you something, Jesse. I'll be—I'll be very candid with you. I don't always. I mean, I always say "Thank you." But I get where Julie's coming from. In that I often find myself ordering something with an inflection of—of graciousness that I think everyone understands "please" is... implied? You know?

00:20:09 Jesse Host Mm-hm.

00:20:10 John Host Where I'm not—I'm not being a jerk about it! Like...  
*[Mild-mannered]* "Yeah, I'd like a latte."

00:20:15 Jesse Host Mm-hm. *[Laughs quietly.]*

00:20:16 John Host And then I have to stop and remind myself, "It costs nothing to say 'Please.'" *[Laughs.]*

00:20:19 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:20:20 John Host Truly! Truly it costs nothing to say "Please." And especially during a time when if we are trying to convey care for other people, especially the servers who have to work to give us this coffee, we are wearing masks? A lot of the facial expression, and body language, and tone of voice is muffled or hidden, and I think that it's probably best to err on the side of "Please."

I therefore order, Julie... say "Please"! But I am not gonna order Julie to say "Hello." Because that—*[laughs]*—as our friends in Scientology would say, opens an entirely different comm cycle that needs to be closed.

*[Jesse laughs quietly.]*

Like, you know, "Hello." "Hi." And then you get into "How are you?" and it's like, I'm—I don't even wanna answer that anymore. We all know!

00:21:07 Jesse Host Mnnnnnnnnnn.

00:21:08 John Host No good! None of us is! *[Laughs quietly.]* I—there is a place where I feel you can cut to the chase and say—the person says, "What can I get for you?" and you say, "I would like an iced latte, please," or whatever it is, and then *[swishing noise]*, get out!

*[Sighs.]*

Oh, but definitely don't do this. Don't—if you ever catch yourself or someone you know doing "Yeah, let me get a." You know "Yeah, let me get a"?

00:21:32 Jesse Host Yeah. Sure. "Yeah, let me get a—let me get a ham and cheese—"  
00:21:34 John Host "Yeah, let me get a ham and cheese croissant, and pour some coffee in it, please."

*[Both laugh quietly.]*

I mean, even when you've said "Please," you've already started off wrong. Don't do "Yeah, let me get a."

00:21:43 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Three gavel bangs.]*  
00:21:44 John Host Alright.  
00:21:45 Jesse Host Let's take a quick break. More items on the docket coming up in just a minute on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.  
00:21:49 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*  
00:21:52 Jesse Promo The *Judge John Hodgman* podcast is, as always, supported by the members of Maximum Fun, who came through for us big-time in the MaxFunDrive, and have kept the lights on here. We're also, this week, supported by our friends at Babbel! Babbel is a language-learning app for your phone, and it's pretty neat and fun.  
00:22:13 John Promo Hey, John Hodgman here. For Babbel.  
00:22:16 Jesse Promo *[Laughs.]* Yeah.  
00:22:17 John Promo Have you ever been in a conversation with a friend, and you tried to think of, I don't know, hypothetically speaking, "What is the French word for 'knife'?" Well, sure!  
00:22:26 Jesse Promo Yeah.  
00:22:27 John Promo You can go to the web and look up that specific word, and find out that it's... well, you know what? I'm not gonna tell you. 'Cause you can do the work yourself.  
00:22:38 Jesse Promo Yeah.  
00:22:39 John Promo And then you'll realize this work is hard.  
00:22:41 Jesse Promo Yeah, I have to memorize this by brute force, then recall it later, when I'm not doing it in a fun and easy, comfortable way a few minutes a day?  
00:22:49 John Promo Yeah! The—what you really wanna do is learn French! *[Stifles laughter.]* So much fun, and more useful than looking up word by word. Babbel is a great way to do it. I use it! I enjoy it. I'm using it to brush up on my español. And now I'm gonna use it to brush up on my French, and so many other languages.  

The daily lessons are 10 to 15 minutes. They start by teaching you words and phrases that you'll actually use. Right? So like, "knife." That's one you're gonna use! You're gonna get that. You're gonna get that right away.

00:23:15 Jesse Promo I wanna learn Spanish. You know what my entire goal for after the

			disaster is over?
00:23:21	John	Promo	No.
00:23:23	Jesse	Promo	Take my mom to Mexico City.
00:23:23	John	Promo	[Gasps.] Whooooa. That's a great goal!
00:23:27	Jesse	Promo	Yeah.
00:23:28	John	Promo	And you'll be so much mas feliz—mm, I think that's how it's done—
00:23:31	Jesse	Promo	Yeah.
00:23:32	John	Promo	—if you could speak Spanish by then. And Babbel is the way to do it. The lessons are thoughtfully created by over a hundred language experts. Their teaching method has been scientifically proven to be effective across multiple studies. And you can choose from 14 different languages, including Spanish! That's one we talked about. French, another.
00:23:47	Jesse	Promo	Mm-hm.
00:23:48	John	Promo	What about Italian? Yes. German, yes. Portuguese? Por supuesto. That's Spanish. Don't speak Spanish in a Portuguese-speaking country. I learned that the hard way.
00:23:56	Jesse	Promo	Mm-hm.
00:23:57	John	Promo	Just go ahead and learn Portuguese while you're at it. Right now when you purchase a three-month subscription, Babbel will give our listeners three additional months for free with promo code "Hodgman."
00:24:07	Jesse	Promo	That's <u>three</u> months free if you go to <a href="https://www.babbel.com">Babbel.com</a> —B-A-B-B-E-L— and use the promo code "Hodgman" on your three-month subscription!
00:24:16	John	Promo	That's <a href="https://www.babbel.com">B-A-B-B-E-L.com</a> . Promo code "Hodgman." H-O-D-G-M-A-N.
00:24:23	Jesse	Promo	We'll be back in just a second on the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast.
00:24:26	Sound Effect	Transition	[Three gavel bangs.]
00:24:28	Promo	Clip	<b>Music:</b> "Baby You Change Your Mind" by Nouvellas.

**Raleigh Smirl:** I'm Raleigh Smirl.

**Sydnee McElroy:** I'm Sydnee McElroy.

**Taylor Smirl:** And I'm Taylor Smirl.

**Sydnee:** And together, we host a podcast called *Still Buffering*, where we answer questions like...

**Raleigh:** Why should I not fall asleep first at a slumber party?

**Taylor:** How do I be fleek?

**Sydnee:** Is it okay to break up with someone using emojis?

**Taylor:** And sometimes we talk about buuutts!

**Raleigh:** Nooo, we don't! Nope!

00:24:50	Promo	Clip	<p><i>[Sydnee and Teylor laugh.]</i></p> <p><b>Sydnee:</b> Find out the answers to these important questions and many more on <i>Still Buffering</i>, a sisters' guide to teens through the ages.</p> <p><b>Raleigh:</b> I am a teenager.</p> <p><b>Sydnee &amp; Teylor:</b> And I... was... too.</p> <p><b>Teylor:</b> Butts, butts, butts, butts butts!</p> <p><b>Raleigh:</b> No... <i>[Laughs.]</i></p> <p><b>Music:</b></p> <p><i>Baby, you change your mind Far too many times Over and over again Over and over again</i></p> <p><i>[Music fades out.]</i></p>
00:25:17	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
00:25:19	Jesse	Host	<p>Welcome back to the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast. We're clearing the docket this week. And we have a letter from Cameron. He says:</p> <p>"Well, I've got some opinions about Alan Ruck."</p> <p><i>[John laughs.]</i></p> <p>Get it? The character... was called...</p>
00:25:33	John	Host	Ohhh.
00:25:34	Jesse	Host	Anyway.
00:25:35	John	Host	Ohhh. What if this was Alan Ruck writing in as Cameron?
00:25:39	Jesse	Host	<p><i>[Sighs.]</i> Gosh. That would be wonderful. You know, I have—one of my best friends from college, Matt Dobbs, <u>really</u> favors Alan Ruck. He <u>really</u> looks like Alan Ruck.</p> <p><i>[John makes an appreciative "pshoo" sound.]</i></p> <p>He's a handsome man, and so is Matt Dobbs.</p>
00:25:53	John	Host	Yeah!
00:25:54	Jesse	Host	<p>And you throw a Detroit Red Wings jersey on Matt Dobbs, and he is the spitting image. And we have never been able to figure out how we can take advantage of this.</p> <p><i>[Both laugh.]</i></p> <p>But he really—</p>
00:26:05	John	Host	I know exactly! I know how—I know how! I know how, Jesse! Cameo!

00:26:12 Jesse Host Ohhh, yeah.

00:26:13 John Host Do you know how many celebrity impersonators are on Cameo?!

00:26:15 Jesse Host No! Many?

00:26:16 John Host Yeah. Yeah! Well, a few! More than a few!

00:26:18 Jesse Host What do—what does it cost? Twenty bucks?

00:26:20 John Host You set your own—why am I advertising for Cameo? You—

00:26:24 Jesse Host I don't know. I wanna advertise for Cameo! I recommend the album *Rigor Mortis*.

*[John laughs.]*

Great Cameo album.

00:26:30 John Host Word up. Alright. But—!

00:26:31 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:26:33 John Host Cameo the celebrity greeting service, you set your own price. And there are lots of people who are, like... pretending to be Robert De Niro. Right?

00:26:41 Jesse Host Mm-hm.

00:26:42 John Host And they'll be like, "Hey, you looking at me? I don't see anyone else here." Alan Ruck isn't on Cameo, but Matt Dobbs could—could—producer Jennifer Marmor, question. Do we have money in the budget for a Red Wings Jersey? That's two thumbs up! I'm gonna send it to Matt Dobbs. He can set up a Cameo account. We don't want any of the money. Matt? Just do Cameron from—Fake Cameron. That'll be your Cameo account.

00:27:07 Jesse Host Yep.

00:27:08 John Host *[Exhales thoughtfully.]* Gonna be—and just set a reasonable price, and we'll see what happens!

00:27:13 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:27:14 John Host Alright. Sorry, what does the real Cameron wanna say?

00:27:17 Jesse Host "We have a neighbor with whom my wife and I are casual acquaintances. The other day, this neighbor was wearing a very substantial neck brace! I had a casual chat with her as I was walking in the neighborhood. Later that day, I told my wife about it. She was shocked when I said I hadn't asked about the neck brace. She said it was rude to ignore it, as it may seem as if I don't care about our neighbor's health.

Of course I was curious. I thought it would be rude to ask. Our neighbor is almost certainly tired of telling her tale of woe to every Tom, Dick, and mail carrier who passes her by."

*[John snorts.]*

"Besides, it could be a very serious medical condition that she doesn't wanna talk about. Is it rude to ask, or rude not to ask?"

00:27:57 John Host Mm. Now Jesse, as I mentioned before, we're Zooming.

00:28:01 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:28:02 John Host We're not—we don't get any money from Zoom for saying this. We're video chatting.

00:28:05 Jesse Host No. Sadly. Yeah. Mm. PC.

00:28:07 John Host But the point is I can see you. And so I can see that aside from your hat and your mustache—

00:28:12 Jesse Host Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

00:28:14 John Host —you're also wearing sunglasses.

00:28:16 Jesse Host Mm-hm.

00:28:17 John Host And the rest of your head is all bandaged up in white bandages. I—I hope it's not rude to ask. Are you drinking that invisibility potion again?

00:28:24 Jesse Host Yeah! Of course.

00:28:26 John Host *[Laughs.]* Alright! Fair.

00:28:27 Jesse Host *[Laughs.]* Why wouldn't I be?

00:28:29 John Host No. *[Laughs.]* Now I know this is weird—

00:28:30 Jesse Host That's my whole thing!

00:28:32 John Host *[Laughs.]* Now, I know this is weird.

00:28:34 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:28:35 John Host Because we're talking about invisibility potion.

00:28:36 Jesse Host Right.

00:28:37 John Host But does my asking you feel uncomfortable? Or does it make you feel seen?

00:28:41 Jesse Host Well, given that it's a potion, it makes me feel seen.

*[John laughs.]*

I think if I had some kind of invisibility condition, it might make me feel uncomfortable.

00:28:50 John Host I'm gonna—you gotta settle in for a little tale from my twenties.

00:28:54 Jesse Host *[Laughing]* Oh, great.

00:28:57 John Host *[Laughs.]*

*[Singing along to the Friends theme song, swinging in and out of the rhythmic scheme]*

*Dang ding-a d-ding ding d-ding ding!*

*So no one told you Hodgman lived throughout the nineties!*

*And he worked at a literary agency, helping real agents!*

*And then one day, his boss had a prostate surgery!*

*And he was asked to deliver his mail to his home 'cause the surgery was over!*

*And I said, "I'll be there for you! 'Cause you pay my paycheck!"*

*"I'll be there for you! There's no direct deposit yet!"*

*Ding ding-a d-ding!*



*[Jesse laughs quietly.]*

*[Speaking]* There probably was direct deposit. But I didn't know how to do it. Point is, brought my mail over to Al Zuckerman's home. He had just gotten back from the hospital. He was doing great. Al Zuckerman, the owner of Writers House. Incredible life, incredible guy. Gave me my start. And an incredibly healthy guy. It—he walked home from the hospital. He had the surgery, it was no big deal. He picked up some soup and sandwiches, and after I delivered the mail, he invited me to lunch! And it's like, lunch with the boss. He wasn't even my direct boss. He was my big boss. The big, big boss.

And of course I said yes.

00:30:06 Jesse Host

Right.

00:30:07 John Host

So we sit down to lunch, and I'm eating my soup. And Al goes into incredible detail about his whole prostate surgery story, from start to finish. And I'm sitting there at the table going like, "Wh—I—why are you telling me this? I feel very uncomfortable about it." And later, at I think the office holiday party that year, I mentioned this to a colleague, who, like Al Zuckerman, grew up in New York. And I was like, "I felt unc—weird! Listening to this whole story about his body."

And this colleague said, "Oh, well, where are you from again?" And I said, "Uh, New England." And he said, "Well, there you go."

Now, Jesse, I don't know if you know about New England. This is a region of the United States known for two things primarily. The Hartford Whalers...

00:30:54 Jesse Host

Mm-hm.

00:30:55 John Host

And, um, crippling emotional reticence. We do not talk about our bodies. We do not talk about each other's bodies. Like, my own mother-in-law, who's also from Brookline, Massachusetts—when her best friend was diagnosed with cancer, she went to visit her. *[Stifles laughter.]* And my wife asked her mother, "How did—how is your friend feeling?" And my mother-in-law said, "Oh, I didn't ask. It would be unseemly to ask."

*[Both stifle laughter.]*

00:31:22 Jesse Host

Right.

00:31:24 John Host

And I realized that, "Oh! Okay! There are real cultural differences to how people talk about their bodies, and how—what comfort they feel about talking about their bodies!" And there's a great *This American Life* episode that touches on this from 2013 called "The Seven Things You're Not Supposed to Talk About."

I'm not gonna make you Google it. I set up a Bitly for it. It's [Bit.ly/samisstillwrong](https://bit.ly/samisstillwrong). You can check that out.

00:31:47 Jesse Host

Uh-huh. Great.

00:31:49 John Host

But I thought about, like, how lonely my mother-in-law's friend must have been in that moment. Where they just talked around her cancer. Right? And obviously, Cameron's neighbor isn't his best friend. But it doesn't have to be that!

I also thought about how when I fell down into a door jamb this summer, in a laughing and coughing fit after a Matt Berry joke, and I had to get nine stitches in my forehead—

00:32:12 Jesse Host

*[Stifling laughter]* Mm-hm.

00:32:13 John Host

*[Stifles laughter.]* How when my wife and I later visited her uncle and aunt a week or so later, they made zero mention of the obvious gash in my forehead?

*[Jesse laughs quietly.]*

And I'm sure they—they're New Englanders, too! Well, they're from Maryland, but now they live in Maine. But like, they—I'm sure they felt they were being polite. But I realized I felt strange about it! Like, um... Just give me a chance to explain myself. *[Laughs.]* Please don't just casually accept that I'm a person who is constantly bashing his head apart. A thing happened!

So Cameron, you could be right that your neighbor doesn't wanna tell the whole story about her neck brace again. About how she was watching *The Toast of London* or *What We Do in the Shadows*, and fell down laughing at Matt Berry, which is probably what happened. But you don't kn—you don't know how she feels about it. And I—I think that it's better to express some simple human concern for another person, in a gentle way. Just like, "Oh gosh, I hope you're okay."

And they'll say, "Yeah, I'm fine. Don't worry about it." Or, "Here comes a long story, like John Hodgman just told without anybody asking him to!"

*[Jesse laughs quietly.]*

Let them take the lead. At least, like, let them feel cared for.

00:33:16 Sound Effect Sound Effect

*[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:33:17 John Host

Jesse, thank you for letting me feel cared for, for telling that story about how I went to see Al Zuckerman.

00:33:24 Jesse Host

Now I feel bad. I can see you on the video conference, and I didn't say anything about that neck brace.

00:33:29 John Host

*[Laughs.]* By the way, there's an incredible coda to that Al Zuckerman story. But I'm gonna save it for after the break. That's called a tease.

00:33:39 Jesse Host

*[Laughs quietly.]* Let's take a quick break. When we come back, a case about drinkware!

00:33:44 Sound Effect Transition

*[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:33:47 Jesse Promo

Judge Hodgman, we're taking a break from clearing the docket. What have we got going on right now?

00:33:52 John Promo

Well, Jesse, we're coming to the end of what's been something of a long-ish season of self-promotion for me. I do wanna thank everyone for checking out and sharing my and David Rees's animated show at [Bit.ly/dicktown](http://Bit.ly/dicktown). That's Bit dot ly slash... *[emphatically]* dicktown.

There, I said it. Look. *[Stifles laughter.]* It's September of 2020. Let's drop the niceties. The show's called *Dicktown*. You can see it at [bit.ly/D-I-C-K-T-O-W-N](http://bit.ly/D-I-C-K-T-O-W-N), all small letters.

Uh, and I do—I have to say—gotta keep plugging. I do wanna put it on your radar that my book *Medallion Status* is out in paperback this October, and I'll probably talk to you about that at some point. But right now, in September, I'm just glad to take a break from my own dumb face. And again use what there is of my voice to say...

Black Lives Matter. The reckoning with systemic racism in our institutions, in our lives, it's not a moment. It can't be a moment. It has to be a movement that doesn't end. And I will continue to put myself in its service. If you wanna do the same—and I hope you do, 'cause it feels great—a ways back, *Rolling Stone* compiled a great list of bail funds and anti-racist organizations and community orgs. And that could be a great place for you to start, or keep going.

I made a Bit.ly for it at some point, back when I used to use all capital letters in my Bitlys. [Bit.ly/GETYOURFRIENDS](http://bit.ly/GETYOURFRIENDS). All one word, all capital letters. [Bit.ly/GETYOURFRIENDS](http://bit.ly/GETYOURFRIENDS). It's easier to say than "*Dicktown*."

00:35:45 John Promo

I'm also looking to forward some time every day helping to elect democrats this November. Wherever they are running, at every level, state, local—I think there's a national race going on. The democratic party may not be... your thing. Wherever you are on the political spectrum.

And I'll tell you what. As long as you're not a bigot... we can be friends. You're my neighbor. But I think the democratic party does have some amazing people in it, that point to a future that I want for this country. And frankly, I believe—and I think I'm right—that in 2020, the democratic party is the only viable tool for dislodging the republican party from power. Everywhere. And if you wanna know why I think that's important... read the news? Or write me at [hodgman@maximumfun.org](mailto:hodgman@maximumfun.org).

So if you can, I hope you take some time to get to know some candidates in the democratic party that you like. And help 'em out. I'm gonna be doing some phone banking. Which is terrifying for about 35 seconds, and then it's fun. It's easy. Trust me. I've done it before. No one's knocking door to door these days, which is also terrifying, but is also great to do. David Rees got me to go up to knock on doors for Antonio Delgado. It was incredible.

I'll be doing some texting. You know, donation of time and resources, initiating some uncomfortable conversations with my extended family. And if you can do some of that, great. And most of all, I hope you vote! I hope you vote. There are all sorts of tools and resources for finding out if you're registered, and how you can register, and where you can vote, and how you can help get out the vote. But please do it. Please vote.

00:37:46 John Promo

Even if you think your state/territory/district or whatever is "safe" by your personal measurement, what happens in November may not

keep it literally safe for other people in your community. Right? And yeah, the electoral college is... frankly, a problem. I didn't say that in 2000. But it's pretty clear it needs some addressing.

But until that happens, popular vote still matters, if only symbolically. And symbols are important. And these elections still need your participation! The state and local races matter! They—they matter in your communities. And on a national level! The Supreme Court matters! And protecting our very right to vote matters. Securing the franchise for as many people as possible, fairly, matters.

And I'm sorry if I'm telling you stuff you already know. I'm sorry if it bugs you. But come election—day after election day, I don't wanna feel or say that I didn't do everything in my power, including boring you. And if you wanna talk to me about it, if you wanna engage, you know I'm wide open at hodgman@maximumfun.org.

Oh, one more plug. Of course. *Election Profit Makers!* Podcast! Need some cathartic laughter while staying in tune with state, local, and national elections? Check out *Election Profit Makers* with my friends David Rees—you know, from *Dicktown*? Plus his childhood pal from Chapel Hill, Long Jon Silver Kimball. And the genius of Starlee Kine. And it's really, really funny, engaged, provocative, excellent podcast about not just the election, but also skylines and movies.

00:39:52 John

Promo

Become a Patreon, [*stifles laughter*] and check out their incredible episode about the best Queen Latifah movies. It's great!

And when you don't feel like laughing, and instead you wanna remember just what it felt like the morning after the 2016 election, if you wanna remember why we're doing this now, guess what? I made another Bitly! I'm back to small letters. Listen to episode 17 of *Election Profit Makers* from November 2016. Listen to David Rees cry. At [Bit.ly/whendavecries](http://Bit.ly/whendavecries). All small letters. All one word.

I listened to it. And it... Look. Just listen to it. Remind yourself what it was like. You don't wanna go through that again.

If the past few months have taught us anything, we can't go back to normal. Right? There's no going back to normal. Nor should we! What we thought was normal wasn't working, it turns out. Normal never worked. For a lot of certain kinds of people in this country. And that was on purpose! And once tested by a global pandemic, a thing that we knew was coming, and a thing that can happen again, even people who look like me understood it was never really working at all, this normal. This normal was not built to last. It was not built to work. It was built to grift some money off of.

00:41:33 John

Promo

We can't go back to normal. We need to build a new, and better, and just normal, for everyone. And that doesn't happen on election night in November. That starts. Even if we get what we want on election night in November. Even if David Rees the next morning is not crying. Even if he is smiling, which you don't see very often, frankly. The work for a new and better normal starts.

Alright. Jesse Thorn, I know you have no political opinions

whatsoever. Uh, what's going on with you?

00:42:19 Jesse Promo But I'm also doing the work, John. I appeared on *The Flop House* recently to talk about the movie *Call of the Wild*, starring Harrison Ford and a computer dog.

00:42:28 John Promo *[Laughs.]* You are doing the work. You're absolutely right. That's part of the work!

00:42:34 Jesse Promo Harrison Ford was really great in this movie, by the way. *[Laughs.]* If you're wondering, it is not—I would not call it—I would not describe this movie as a successful or good movie, although you can hear what the other members of the broadcast felt about that movie, 'cause it was not unanimous. But Harrison Ford is really great in that. It's really fun.

If you haven't heard *The Flop House*, whether or not you're a bad movie—certainly if you are a bad movie person, but whether or not you are a bad movie person, *The Flop House* is a delightful, delightful, warm-hearted and hilarious program, and you can go listen to me on it by just opening your phone right now and searching for *The Flop House*, and looking for that *Call of the Wild* episode. I think you're gonna really enjoy it.

00:43:14 John Promo Or, simply say to your smart speaker, "Alexa? Play Huey Lewis and the News: *Sports*."

*[Jesse laughs.]*

And then play *The Flop House* podcast.

00:43:27 Jesse Promo I also am launching, this week, the fall collection at [PutThisOnShop.com](http://PutThisOnShop.com)! We've been clearing out summer stuff, and muddling our way through the pandemic, and we finally got some new stuff on sale. All kinds of new old things, and a few new new things. All at [PutThisOnShop.com](http://PutThisOnShop.com).

So if you're looking for a special treasure for your home, or for a friend, right now is the time to go to [PutThisOnShop.com](http://PutThisOnShop.com), because most of the stuff is—you know, there's only one of it, so when it's gone, it's gone. And I'm, uh—I've been very grateful! Got a lot of *Judge John Hodgman* listeners shopping that sale, sending me little notes in the Put This On Shop. A lot of people who like a beautiful and special thing. So thanks to all those folks who've gone to [PutThisOnShop.com](http://PutThisOnShop.com).

We'll be back in just a second on *Judge John Hodgman*.

00:44:18 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:44:20 Jesse Host Welcome back to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. We're clearing the docket.

00:44:25 John Host *[Singing to the Friends theme song again]*

*Ding ding-a d-ding ding d-ding ding! Gwoooooong!*

*[Both laugh quietly.]*

*[Speaking]* One of the things I forgot to tell about that story of having

lunch at Al Zuckerman's house—one on one with the big boss of the literary agency after his prostate cancer, we were eating soup—was that he—*[laughs]*—his dog—his—he had the two little dogs that were running around the table. And at the end of this uncomfortable lunch—very gracious! But uncomfortable, on my part.

Out of nowhere, he just says—you know, we're coming to the end of lunch, and out of nowhere, he says, uh, "What, you're not gonna lick the bowl?"

*[Jesse cracks up. John laughs.]*

And I—I was like—

00:45:00 Jesse Host

Zuckermann!

00:45:01 John Host

*[Stifles laughter.]* I said, "Um... No, I think I'm fine, Al. Thanks. I'm—I think I've had enough."

And he goes... "Oh, no, I was talking to the dog."

*[Both laugh.]*

And he had put the—I had not noticed that he had put—*[laughs]*—his soup bowl down on the floor, and the dog was like, "Not even I want this soup."

"You're not gonna lick the bowl?"

00:45:23 Jesse Host

*[Laughs.]*

Here's something from Johnathan:

"My roommate has a small room, and a lot of stuff. An unreasonable amount of stuff. My girlfriend and I offered to help her clean, and spent many nights cleaning. We reclaimed a lot of the room, but there's still too much stuff to fit in the space with so many items left on the floor.

We concluded the culprit is a large, uncomfortable futon. It takes up an unreasonable percentage of a small room. We suggested my roommate remove the futon, in the interest of reclaiming useable space. She refused, as she keeps it for guests to sleep over a few times a year. We offered the sleep sofa in the living room, or an air mattress, but she insisted on a space in her room where a guest could crash with minimal effort.

I understand the desire to accommodate guests, but I feel she's doing so to her own detriment."

00:46:14 John Host

Well, obviously guests are kind of hypothetical at this time.

00:46:19 Jesse Host

No.

00:46:20 John Host

But hypothetically speaking, Jesse Thorn, let me run a little quiz by you. Let me get your—

00:46:25 Jesse Host

Okay.

00:46:26 John Host

This isn't a quiz with correct answers. It's just a poll.

00:46:28 Jesse Host Okay.

00:46:29 John Host A couple of different options. You are going to visit, uhhh, what's your Cameron lookalike friend?

00:46:38 Jesse Host Matt Dobbs.

00:46:39 John Host Matt Dobbs.

00:46:40 Jesse Host He lives in Sunnyvale.

00:46:43 John Host In Sunnyvale. And he doesn't—and you're gonna go stay with him, and this is something you want to do.

00:46:48 Jesse Host Oh, of course. See Matt and Jesusa and their beautiful children? Of course. I'd love to.

00:46:51 John Host Yeah.

00:46:52 Jesse Host Maybe go to a swim meet.

00:46:53 John Host Right. And he doesn't have a guest room. Because his guest room is now given over—that's the pure Cameron Cameo room. That's where he does his Cameron Cameos all the time. That's his studio.

00:47:05 Jesse Host Right. That's the moneymaker.

00:47:06 John Host Yeah. So here are your options. This is an A/B, a couple of different A/B comparisons. Would you prefer to sleep on a sleeper sofa with a spring mattress at his house? Or an air mattress on the floor?

00:47:22 Jesse Host A... [*sighs*] sleeper sofa.

00:47:25 John Host Mm-hm.

00:47:27 Jesse Host Yeah, I want the springs.

00:47:29 John Host Yeah.

00:47:30 Jesse Host Air mattresses are better than sleeping on the floor, but they never work the way that you want them to.

00:47:37 John Host Really!

00:47:38 Jesse Host That's my experience.

00:47:40 John Host No, look, this is—I mean, there's not a correct answer. I find sleeper sofas with a spring mattress in them to be profoundly uncomfortable. But—

00:47:48 Jesse Host You talking about like, the one in your office that I often sleep on when I come to visit you?

00:47:52 John Host Well, that one has a memory foam top! That's a different story.

00:47:55 Jesse Host That's true. That's true, it does.

00:47:57 John Host And you're welcome any time.

00:47:58 Jesse Host Thank you.

00:47:59 John Host I find that to be very comfortable. But the old—the—I, for a while in the nineties—

*[Singing again] Ding ding-a d-ding ding d-ding ding!*

*[Speaking]* Uh, my then-girlfriend, now-wife, we—our only bed was a sleeper sofa with spring mattress, and it was not—it was NG, No Good.

00:48:14 Jesse Host Mm.

00:48:15 John Host Alright. Here we go. Next question. Sleeper sofa with a foam—a memory foam top... or futon?

00:48:27 Jesse Host I mean... *[Sighs.]* Obviously there's a broad range of futons.

*[Children shouting in the background.]*

Obviously, one can acclimate to the futon lifestyle, and get a lot of pleasure and comfort out of sleeping on a futon, if one is... the kind of person who stores a bicycle on their wall.

*[John laughs.]*

But I'm gonna say, as a former futon owner, that there are few worse sleeping situations than a futon.

00:49:02 John Host Now, to be clear, I—I think this has come up before on the podcast. We're talking specifically about, like, post-collegiate American futons.

00:49:13 Jesse Host Yeah. The kind that you get at a store called Futon Outlet.

00:49:18 John Host Right. The futon sleeping is—in other countries, in Japan specifically, is a different experience.

00:49:29 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:49:30 John Host Yeah. Alright, final question. Futon or bare floor, with no blanket?

*[Pause.]*

00:49:37 Jesse Host I mean, I—ugh. I'll probably go with the futon. The futon's probably better.

00:49:40 John Host Alright. I was setting you up for bare floor with no blanket. 'Cause I hate futons.

00:49:44 Jesse Host I'm not a heel.

*[John snorts.]*

I'm a babyface.

00:49:48 John Host You are a babyface! Wrestling terms. Who's your favorite wrestler?

00:49:53 Jesse Host André the Giant.

00:49:54 John Host Yeah... Oh, that comic you sent! So good!

00:49:59 Jesse Host Oh, yeah. Shout-out to friend of MaxFun Box Brown, who wrote a wonderful comic book biography of André the Giant.

00:50:06 John Host Yeah, absolutely! Check it out! We—my son and I both enjoyed it a lot.

00:50:10 Jesse Host Yeah. André the Giant's amazing.

00:50:12 John Host Well, look. I think you and I, and André the Giant probably, all agree with Johnathan that a futon is NG. No Good. No good! Not really good sleeping arrangement.

And I would argue—and you might disagree, Jesse. But I would argue that... you know, there have been improvements in air mattress technology. And I would argue an air mattress on the floor



for a guest in your own room, is not only probably gonna be more comfortable than a futon, but easily collapsible and storable. More than a futon, anyway.

But then again, Johnathan... this isn't your room! It's your roommate's room!

00:50:58 Jesse Host

Ha haaa! There it is.

00:51:00 John Host

*[Laughs.]* What do you care? What do you care if she's gonna trip over a futon every time she needs to get up and go to the bathroom and brush her teeth? That's none of your biz! She's already allowed you to, quote, "help," unquote, slash intrude upon her life choices already. To a point! But now that point has been reached!

Now, it seems to me like you're okay with her having guests come by, if and when it's safe to do so. And if that's true, then how and where they sleep is not your concern. I mean, frankly, it—a futon is so uncomfortable, it's probably an automatic regulator on the number of houseguests she's having! So you should be grateful.

*[Jesse laughs quietly.]*

00:51:40 Sound Effect Sound Effect

*[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:51:44 Jesse Host

Yeah. The level of passive-aggression involved in cleaning up someone else's room on their behalf... is so extraordinary to me.

*[Both laugh.]*

Much less enlisting someone in the project, and doing it over multiple nights.

00:52:02 John Host

Yeah. I mean, that—that—I think that that's—that deserves a little sit—a sit-down in the common area with a conch shell.

*[Jesse laughs.]*

To just really talk about how that made Johnathan's roommate feel. Just a check-in to be like—to make sure that Johnathan's roommate is cool with what happened, or maybe felt infantilized and intruded upon.

00:52:27 Jesse Host

Can you pass me the conch real quick?

00:52:28 John Host

Yeah. Here you go, Jesse.

00:52:29 Jesse Host

Sucks to your assmar, John Hodgman!

00:52:32 John Host

What the—?!

*[Jesse laughs.]*

I can't respond. I don't have the conch!

00:52:35 Jesse Host

Kill the pig! Slit her throat! Spill her blood! *[Laughs.]*

00:52:37 John Host

Oh, my god, I wanna say something, but I don't have—it's not my conch time!

00:52:41 Jesse Host

All I remember from reading *Lord of the Flies* in seventh grade is those two phrases. *[Laughs.]*

00:52:47 John Host Well, at least you read it! *[Laughs.]*

00:52:48 Jesse Host Yep.

00:52:49 John Host How many books have I pretended to have read, by simply watching half the movie?

*[Jesse laughs.]*

Many, many, many, many.

00:52:56 Jesse Host Here's something from Veronica. She says:

"I'm writing to you about a reoccurring dispute in my family, over what to call drinkware. When I visit my parents, I sometimes say to my mom, 'Would you please pass me my cup?' or 'I like these new cups!' Whenever I do this, *[stifles laughter]* she acts like she has no idea which object I'm referring to! Then laughs at me for calling something a cup, when she would call it either a mug or a glass."

00:53:19 John Host What?

00:53:20 Jesse Host "She says she has no idea where her daughters learned to call things cups instead of mugs or glasses. She believes 'cup' only refers to a plastic cup, like a kid's sippy cup, or a disposable cup.

Can you please rule on whether it's appropriate to use 'cup' as a catchall term for mugs, glasses, teacups, and other drinkware? Is my mom just being a weird mom and teasing us? Could this be a generational difference, or regionalism? She's from the Midwest. We grew up on the West Coast. Are my sister and I just wrong?"

00:53:52 John Host Hmm. I don't know whether it's a generational difference. But I wonder if it's a regionalism. Jesse, you're from the West Coast, if I understand correctly.

00:54:00 Jesse Host Yeah. That's true.

00:54:02 John Host I was just reading your Wikipedia page.

00:54:05 Jesse Host Uh-huh. I don't usually talk about that in public, so thank you for doing that research.

00:54:08 John Host Yeah, well, I'm sorry if this is uncomfortable for you. Sorry. But, uh, yeah. You're from San Francisco. You live in Los Angeles. What is a cup? I'm gonna ask you—here we go. Another fun poll. Let me ask you about some cups.

00:54:22 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:54:23 John Host Is a sippy cup a cup? You have—

00:54:24 Jesse Host Sure!

00:54:25 John Host Yeah. Okay. Paper cup? Is that a cup?

00:54:27 Jesse Host Yeah, sure. Sure.

00:54:28 John Host Teacup? Teacup, is that a cup?

00:54:30 Jesse Host Yeah, sure.

00:54:31 John Host Coffee cup?

*[Pause.]*

Cup, or no?

00:54:35 Jesse Host I would say only when modified by "coffee." And teacup is close to that.

00:54:39 John Host Right. Right. Stanley Cup? Is that a cup?

00:54:43 Jesse Host Yeah. Absolutely.

00:54:44 John Host Is a mug a cup?

00:54:47 Jesse Host Nnno. A mug is a mug.

00:54:49 John Host Is a hotdog—

00:54:50 Jesse Host That's why I would say—you could say—I could—I would accept "coffee cup" for "mug" if there was coffee in it.

00:54:55 John Host Right.

00:54:56 Jesse Host But it would be a stretch.

00:54:57 John Host Yeah. And I wouldn't call a mug a coffee cup. I would call it—you know what I mean? Like...

00:55:02 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:55:03 John Host A coffee cup, to me, would be a—*[thoughtful noise]*.

00:55:05 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:55:06 John Host A small—

00:55:06 Jesse Host Mugs are more for... icy cold root beer.

00:55:08 John Host The—yeah—a mu—*[laughs]*. Well, that would be a glass mug. A frosted glass mug.

00:55:13 Jesse Host Yeah, like from A&W.

00:55:14 John Host Right.

*[Jesse laughs quietly.]*

Is a glass a cup?

00:55:18 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:55:19 John Host What??

00:55:20 Jesse Host I'm—the thing about—the thing about being a San Franciscan—

00:55:22 John Host What?!

*[Both laugh.]*

00:55:25 Jesse Host The thing about being a San Franciscan is just an immensely democratic use of the English language, because it is a city of immigrants, both from abroad and elsewhere in the United States. It always has been. And I will accept almost any regionalism. It's like, I have no—I have no dog in the soda vs. pop vs. sodapop fight?

00:55:47 John Host No, of course not!

00:55:48 Jesse Host I'd accept any of those. I have no—you could call it seltzer. I don't care. I mean, I would be disinclined to call it a Coke if it wasn't a Coke, which is something that they do in—uh, in and around Atlanta, Georgia, the home of Coke.

00:56:02 John Host Yeah. They'll call a frosty mug of A&W root beer a frosty cup of coke.

00:56:08 Jesse Host Yeah. But like, besides that, I have pretty broad linguistic tastes. I don't have a problem with almost anything being called a cup.

00:56:16 John Host I'm not gonna—look. I came into this with a genuine question! You're from the West Coast. I'm from the East Coast. We—I thought we were on the same page when you said a mug is not a cup.

00:56:28 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** But a glass is a cup?!

**Jesse:** I would be inclined, if you said to me—

00:56:31 Jesse Host If you said to me, "What's the difference between a cup and a glass?" I would say a glass is taller.

*[Long pause.]*

00:56:40 John Host *[Whispering]* Whoa.

*[Not whispering]* I don't even—wow.

00:56:42 Jesse Host But I would accept—

00:56:43 John Host Okay!

00:56:44 Jesse Host I have—my own drinkware has some, like, 10-ounce shorter vessels, and some, you know, 12, 14-ounce taller vessels. And I would accept—I would accept "Pass me the cup" for either of those. And I would accept "Pass me the glass" for either of those." They are made of glass.

00:57:04 John Host Not only did I look you up on Wikipedia, but I looked up "cup" on Wikipedia. And... Wikipedia agrees with Veronica, and I guess you, too, technically. Like, "cup" is a broad catchall term into which all—technically all mugs, tumblers, steins, tankards, goblets, and even glasses may be tossed. And then snifted. *[Laughs quietly.]*

But even Wikipedia is pretty plain. If it's transparent, it's called a glass! That's—I would be very confused if someone—! But here you go! I guess I was... I guess I was wrong about that!

00:57:44 Jesse Host To me, the apotheosis of "cup" would probably be what you described, which is the top of the Stanley Thermos.

*[Pause.]*

When you unscrew that and turn it up, it's short.

00:57:56 John Host Right.

00:57:58 Jesse Host It's opaque. And it doesn't have a handle on it.

00:58:01 John Host Well, I—

00:58:02 Jesse Host Although the Stanley Thermos does have a handle. I'm talking about the kind that doesn't have a handle.

00:58:05 John Host I was talking about Stanley Cup, the—the number one prize in the sport of both hockey and extinct hockey.

00:58:12 Jesse Host Got it.

00:58:13 John Host But either way, cups.

00:58:14 Jesse Host Well, the apotheosis of "cup," for me, is what you slip into your trousers when you're—

*[John snorts.]*

—when you're playing the infield in baseball. *[Laughs.]*

00:58:21 John Host

Also not transparent, by the way. *[Laughs.]*

00:58:24 Jesse Host

*[Stifling laughter]* Yeah.

00:58:25 John Host

Even though it could be! It's being hidden by clothes!

00:58:28 Jesse Host

To me, I think if it has a handle, it—I'm more likely to call it a mug.

00:58:32 John Host

Oh.

00:58:33 Jesse Host

And if it's made of glass, I'm more likely to make it a—to call it a glass. But in between, most of those things are forms of cups.

00:58:41 John Host

Well, there you go! I mean, I think that I feel the same way as Veronica's mother. Uh, which is, I am completely confused, in a deep—

00:58:52 Jesse Host

To the point where if she asked you for a cup, you would—you would just make one of those faces like, "Who? What? When? Where? Why?"

00:59:00 John Host

Yeah! Like I was doing on the Zoom just now.

*[Jesse laughs.]*

I would be completely confused if you referred to any of my glassware as cups, Veronica. But... I must defer to my West Coastian friend, Jesse Thorn! Perhaps this is a re—listen. I can already hear you writing letters now, trying to define what a cup is, and what it isn't. I don't—

00:59:24 Jesse Host

I don't know. That's a three bean salad.

00:59:26 John Host

*[Sighing]* Oh. Remember that? Remember the three bean salad? I was just thinking about that—

00:59:30 Jesse Host

Was it a soup? Three bean soup? The vanilla chai latte?

00:59:35 John Host

Vanilla—

00:59:37 Jesse Host

Chai soy latte.

00:59:38 John Host

Chai soy latte. Yeah. Is a three bean soup.

00:59:39 Jesse Host

Is a three bean soup.

*[John exhales sharply.]*

Yeah, that's pretty much the only one of those that I've ever found to be fun.

00:59:44 John Host

To quote Joe Rogan, think about it.

00:59:47 Jesse Host

Yeah.

*[Both laugh quietly.]*

00:59:48 John Host

But I'm gonna—I'm gonna rule in Veronica's favor. Or at least clarify that there does seem to be some support that there is a regional acceptance that glassware may, too, be cup. That transparent things may also have cupness.

01:00:02 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Three gavel bangs.]*

01:00:04 John Host Hey, if you're out there and in a region, and have an opinion about the cupness of things... don't write me! Instead, start a thread on the Maximum Fun Reddit. That would be a fun thing to do! There we can discover whether or not "cup" for "glass" is a real regionalism, and any other fun regionalisms that might be surrounding this issue that might come up. But you don't need to write me with this one. I got—I got enough. I wanna hear your disputes. I don't wanna hear your theories. Go to the Maximum Fun subreddit, and I will be monitoring it, and jump in from time to time.

01:00:37 Jesse Host Yeah. I also recommend the subreddit Ask Food Historians.

01:00:42 John Host Ohh!

01:00:43 Jesse Host It's just fun. It's just fun!

01:00:44 John Host Hey, Jesse! Do you know what our son and I did over the summer?!

01:00:47 Jesse Host I don't!

01:00:49 John Host Magnet fishing!

01:00:50 Jesse Host *[Laughing]* Oh, yeah!

01:00:53 John Host Magnet fishing is the sport of royalty, discovered by Jesse Thorn on a very important subreddit called—what—is it Magnet Fishing? Just—?

01:01:02 Jesse Host *[Stifling laughter]* I think it's [MagnetFishing.Reddit.com](http://MagnetFishing.Reddit.com), yeah.

01:01:03 John Host Right, or whatever? And you just go—you get a high-powered magnet, and attach it to a line, and then drop it into a body of water and see what you pull up!

01:01:13 Jesse Host Yeah. You swing it around a little bit in there. You know.

01:01:16 John Host We trawled Center Harbor, and didn't come up with a lot. We got stuck a few times on the old nails in the sunken schooner! Which was cool.

01:01:25 Jesse Host Oh, that's fun!

01:01:26 John Host And then I pulled up a—uh, it's a part of a French pocket knife.

01:01:31 Jesse Host Oh!

01:01:32 John Host The—the blade guard of a French pocket knife that fell.

01:01:34 Jesse Host Oh, that's nice!

01:01:35 John Host Yeah, it was exciting. I mean, nothing amazing.

01:01:36 Jesse Host Ooh la la!

01:01:37 John Host I know, but—c'est vrais!

*[Both laugh quietly.]*

01:01:40 Jesse Host Le knif!

*[Laughing]* I don't know what the word for "knife" is in French.

01:01:45 John Host It's le—le—coi? I don't know. You know what? Babbel might be able to tell me. I think I'm gonna learn French in Babbel. I'll get back to you on that one.

01:01:53 Jesse Host Uh, okay, great! Well, justice is served. *[Laughs.]*

The docket's clear! That's it for another episode of *Judge John Hodgman*. Our producer is Jennifer Marmor. You can follow us on Twitter at [@JesseThorn](#) and at [@hodgman](#). We're on Instagram at [@judgejohnhodgman](#). Make sure to hashtag your *Judge John Hodgman* Tweets [#JJHo](#). And check out the MaxFun subreddit, that's at [MaximumFun.Reddit.com](#), to chat about [this week's episode](#), [and](#) to let us know whether you think cups are a certain kind of thing, and where you live.

Right? That's what we're looking for, more or less.

01:02:28	John	Host	Yeah, that's right! Yeah.
01:02:29	Jesse	Host	More or less.
01:02:30	John	Host	What do you call a cup? What counts as a cup?
01:02:34	Jesse	Host	What counts as a cup?
01:02:35	John	Host	Hashtag <a href="#">#WhatCountsAsACup</a> .
01:02:36	Jesse	Host	Hashtag <a href="#">#WhatCounts</a> —what are you, Nick Wiger?
01:02:38	John	Host	That's right.
01:02:40	Jesse	Host	Submit your cases at <a href="#">MaximumFun.org/jjho</a> , or email <a href="#">hodgman@maximumfun.org</a> . We'll talk to you next time on the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast.
01:02:48	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
01:02:51	Music	Transition	A cheerful guitar chord.
01:02:52	Speaker 1	Guest	<a href="#">MaximumFun.org</a> .
01:02:54	Speaker 2	Guest	Comedy and culture.
01:02:55	Speaker 3	Guest	Artist owned—
01:02:57	Speaker 4	Guest	—audience supported.