

00:00:00	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
00:00:02	Jesse Thorn	Host	Welcome to the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast. I'm Bailiff Jesse Thorn. This week, "Cat-or-Dogical Imperative." ( <i>Categorical Imperative.</i> )
			Alan files suit against his wife Elaine. Alan thinks their cat Muffin needs a companion. He'd like to get another cat. Elaine, however, would prefer to add a dog to their family. Who's right? Who's wrong? Only one can decide.
00:00:24	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	<i>[As Jesse speaks below: Door opens, chairs scrape on the floor, footsteps.]</i>
00:00:25	Jesse	Host	Please rise as Judge John Hodgman enters the courtroom and presents an obscure cultural reference.
00:00:32	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	<i>[Door shuts.]</i>
00:00:34	John Hodgman	Host	You're very handy. I can tell. I bet you like to podcast a lot, too.
00:00:38	Jesse	Host	Podcasting is dead.
00:00:40	John	Host	Oh. That's very fascinating. I podcast a lot, myself. Some people think I'm too intellectual, but it's a fabulous way to spend your spare time. I also play racquetball. Do you have any hobbies? Like swearing litigants in?
00:00:53	Jesse	Host	Alan, Elaine, please rise and raise your right hands.
00:00:55	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	<i>[Chairs scrape.]</i>
00:00:56	Jesse	Host	Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God or whatever?
00:01:01	Alan	Guest	We do.
00:01:03	Elaine	Guest	Yes.
00:01:05	Jesse	Host	Do you swear to abide by Judge John Hodgman's ruling, despite the fact that he's currently in talks to star in a remake of the 1970s Disney sequel <i>The Shaggy D.A.</i> ?
00:01:16	Alan	Guest	<i>[Chuckles.]</i> We do.
00:01:17	Elaine	Guest	Yes.
00:01:18	Alan	Guest	Yes.
00:01:19	Jesse	Host	It's got a great theme song, sort of <i>Music Man</i> -y. Judge Hodgman, you may proceed.
00:01:23	John	Host	How does the <i>Shaggy D.A.</i> theme song go, Jesse?
00:01:25	Jesse	Host	<i>[Singing]</i> We're gonna elect him our shaggy, gonna elect him our shaggy D.A.!
			<i>[Speaking]</i> But then there's like a patter part.
00:01:37	John	Host	Oh, is that really it?!
00:01:39	Jesse	Host	The—yeah! The verses are patter, and the—that's how the chorus goes. I don't have the verses committed to memory.
00:01:45	John	Host	I'm glad I didn't have Alan and Elaine be seated, because I'm sure they wanted to dance to that. And they did a good job.

*[One or both litigants laugh quietly.]*

00:01:51 Jesse Host Yeah. Well, they certainly would have been roused, because it was a rousing rendition.

*[More laughter.]*

00:01:55 John Host Yeah. Alan and Elaine, please be seated.

00:01:57 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Chairs scrape.]*

00:01:58 John Host For an immediate summary judgment in one of yours' favors, can either of you name the piece of popular culture that I—and our Bailiff Jesse Thorn!—paraphrased? I'll give you a hint; the word "podcast" was not in this actual quote.

*[Someone laughs quietly.]*

We swapped that in for something else. Can either of you name the piece of popular culture that we sort of quoted? As I entered the courtroom? Elaine, do you have a guess?

00:02:21 Elaine Guest Yeah. The only—I mean, the only movie I know in reference to cats and dogs is *The Truth About Cats & Dogs*, so I'm just gonna...

00:02:29 John Host *The Truth... About Cats & Dogs.*

00:02:30 Elaine Guest *About Cats & Dogs.*

00:02:31 John Host That is a good guess. I'm putting that in the guess book. Alan? What is your guess?

00:02:35 Alan Guest Uh, I think I know what this is. I think it's from *Ghostbusters*.

00:02:39 John Host *[Exhales sharply.]* Hm. Wow. ...Wow.

*[Elaine laughs.]*

00:02:46 Alan Guest A movie I've seen several times.

00:02:48 John Host Interesting.

*[Alan chuckles.]*

00:02:50 Elaine Guest With our children. Yeah. *[Chuckles.]*

00:02:52 John Host So your guess is... that this is a quote from *Ghostbusters*. And probably you would guess that I chose a less-quoted quote from *Ghostbusters*. Because the quote that I would want to use would be what, Alan?

00:03:12 Alan Guest "Cats and dogs living together, mass hysteria."

00:03:15 John Host Yeah. Exactly.

00:03:16 Alan Guest Yeah.

00:03:17 John Host But that would be a gimme.

00:03:18 Alan Guest Right. Right. Right. So you went with the racquetball—

00:03:19 John Host Well—

00:03:21 Alan Guest When I heard "racquetball," I was like, "Oh, I—I've only heard someone say, 'I also play racquetball' like... once in a movie." I remember that.

00:03:26 John Host And who said it?

00:03:28 Alan Guest Ohhh. The—the actress from... *[Laughs.]*

00:03:31 John Host Mm. Mm-hm.

00:03:32 Elaine Guest Dan Aykroyd?

00:03:33 Alan Guest No, the lady that's the secretary at the—at the front.

00:03:35 Elaine Guest Ohhh!

00:03:36 Alan Guest And she's like, "You promised me you'd give me a day off." And—

00:03:37 Elaine Guest Oh, right.

00:03:39 John Host Right. So, you don't know the name of the actor or the character. Would that be true, Alan?

00:03:44 Alan Guest Yep. I'm gonna say I—you got me.

00:03:46 John Host 'Cause I—I was putting a lot of Annie Potts sauce on my reading.

00:03:49 Alan Guest Ah! Thank you. There it is.

00:03:51 John Host But—

00:03:52 Alan Guest You did. Your tone was right on there, with Annie Potts tone.

00:03:54 John Host Well, uh, Alan—okay. You're at—*[grumbles]* mm. You're absolutely correct. As much as I tried to hide it, that is a quote from *Ghostbusters*. It's Janine, played by Annie Potts, talking to Egon.

00:04:04 Alan Guest Mm. Mm-hm. Okay.

00:04:07 John Host Uh, Spengler. *[Stifles laughter.]* Played by... the—augh. Now, see? Now I feel like an idiot.

00:04:12 Alan Guest Harold Ramis?

00:04:14 John Host Harold Ramis. Thank you, Alan, you and I did it togetherrr!

*[Alan and John laugh.]*

But luckily for you, because you could not name the actor or the character... You are spared humiliation, 'cause I've decided that's not the cultural reference after all. This is the new cultural reference! I have to adjust my speakers...

*[Quiet clunking and clicking.]*

00:04:35 Clip Clip **Speaker:** Right now we're listening to the 8-track, and we're mixing—sort of playing the role of the conductor, putting together, in this case, a pair of tracks which has all of the string section. It sounds like this.

**Music:** *[Lively music starts up.]*

**Speaker:** There's a harpsichord track. And two flutes. And there's this nice solo that's split up into two tracks.

*[Music continues.]*

**Speaker:** Let's put 'em all together.

*[Music continues.]*

**Speaker:** It needs a little more echo.

*[Music continues.]*

**Speaker:** Yeah, that's good.

*[Music fades out.]*

00:05:22 John Host Now, I played that for you for two reasons. One, just so that everyone knows... that I always have a backup cultural reference. Just in case.

*[One or both litigants laugh quietly.]*

That's not true. I had this one—I—I never do. And I've rarely been caught as flat-footed as I was today by you, Alan. But luckily, I did have this alternate in place. Because—can you—do you know who that was, speaking? Either of you? Elaine or Alan?

00:05:46 Alan Guest No.

00:05:47 John Host No.

00:05:48 Alan Guest No.

00:05:49 John Host That was Wendy Carlos. Who celebrated her 81st birthday a couple of days ago, from this recording, on November the 14th. Wendy Carlos is a pioneering composer, specifically of electronic music. She helped develop the Moog synthesizer. And now—Alan's really shaking his head now.

00:06:09 Alan Guest Yeah. Yeah.

00:06:10 John Host He's nodding like crazy. You know this person?

00:06:11 Alan Guest Yes. *[Laughs.]* I know the Moog synthesizer, yes. Yes.

00:06:14 John Host You know the Moog. Oh, yeah. So... get to know Wendy Carlos. She also composed the soundtracks for *A Clockwork Orange*, *The Shining*, and *Tron*.

00:06:22 Alan Guest Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

00:06:24 John Host And this interview with her, which is—must be circa 1980 or so—uh, is an incredible thing that circulated on Twitter. Just—it's just an interview with her in her studio in Greenwich Village. But she is basically draped in every frame by cats.

*[One or both litigants laugh.]*

It's incredible. Like, she is—she's talking about the original—the very first 8-track, that she has in her studio. Very first 8-track ever made is in her studio. And she's just got a big Siamese cat just sitting on her shoulder.

00:06:53 Alan Guest *[Chuckles.]* Nice.

00:06:55 John Host And then the rest of the thing, there are two Siamese cats, 'cause this is about—this whole episode's about multiple pets—sitting on top of her synthesizer as she does this whole thing. It's great.

*[Alan laughs.]*

It's on my Twitter feed. We'll put a link to it. Wendy Carlos is also a

pioneer in the trans community, because she is—happens to be a trans woman who came out very early on in the history of that community. And is just an incredible creator, and someone worth celebrating.

So there you go! Uh, all guesses are wrong.

*[The litigants laugh.]*

Now the question is, which one of you two is wrong? Let me understand this. You have a cat named Muffin. Correct, Alan?

00:07:34	Alan	Guest	Correct.
00:07:35	John	Host	Right.
00:07:36	Alan	Guest	Yeah.
00:07:36	John	Host	And you would like to add to your pet portfolio another cat. Correct, Alan?
00:07:41	Alan	Guest	Correct.
00:07:42	John	Host	And Elaine, you would like to add to your pet portfolio a <u>dog</u> . Is that correct?
00:07:46	Elaine	Guest	That's correct.
00:07:47	John	Host	Alright.
00:07:48	Elaine	Guest	And I find your cultural reference really amusing, 'cause I don't know if you IMDb'd Alan, but he's a part-time composer. And he wants to add more cats. So this is like, almost like a doomsday for me.

*[Multiple people laugh.]*

00:08:04	John	Host	Yeah, this is the one time that I did not IMDb search both litigants before getting on the line, so...
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*[Multiple people laugh.]*

Alan, what are your claims to fame? Did you compose the music to *Tron*?

00:08:13	Alan	Guest	Oh— <i>[laughs]</i> —no. I was beat out, uh, by that. No, I—for a brief time we were in LA, and I was pursuing a career in film music.
00:08:25	John	Host	Oh, okay.
00:08:26	Alan	Guest	So composing and interning for bigger-name composers.
00:08:29	John	Host	Cool.
00:08:30	Alan	Guest	And I had the idea of composing music for film. So I—I'm familiar, a lot, with film music.
00:08:34	John	Host	You were the one who came up with that?!
00:08:36	Alan	Guest	<i>[Laughs.]</i> Yes.
00:08:38	John	Host	You had the idea for composing music for film?!
00:08:39	Alan	Guest	Yes. For my—yes. Yes.
00:08:42	John	Host	Wait, are you Alan Silvestri?!

*[The litigants laugh.]*

00:08:44 Alan Guest That'd be nice. Yeah.

00:08:45 John Host That would be nice, right?

00:08:47 Alan Guest Yeah. Yeah.

00:08:48 John Host Okay. But now you live in Seattle, is that correct?

00:08:50 Alan Guest Correct, yeah.

00:08:51 John Host Right. I am granting myself to treat you both as hostile witnesses.

*[The litigants laugh.]*

Because, uh, as an only child and a cat person, this entire discussion disgusts me.

00:09:02 Alan Guest *[Chuckling]* Okay.

00:09:03 John Host Uh, you—you have—you have children already. Correct?

00:09:04 Alan Guest We do.

00:09:05 Elaine Guest Three.

00:09:06 John Host Oh, that's more than one, I believe. Ugh.

00:09:08 Alan Guest *[Laughs.]* Yes. Yes.

00:09:10 John Host Yeah. So I—you know, on a cellular level, I—it's hard for me to understand what you're even contemplating here. Because, you know, it was hard enough for me to imagine what having two children would be like. How do you divide your love between two creatures in your house?

00:09:26 Alan Guest Mm-hm.

00:09:27 John Host Never mind then adding a cat, and then adding another animal. Why would you wanna siphon your love away from Muffin?! That seems mean!

*[Alan laughs quietly.]*

And cruel! We'll talk about your "why"s.

00:09:40 Alan Guest Okay.

00:09:41 John Host I mean, I get it. Look. We have one cat. Lolo the dumb-dumb cat. And we think frequently, because she's so... kind of dull, and she spends most of the time staring off into space, we wonder, "Should she have a little friend?" We've often thought about how much fun it would be to get a greyhound, and then get—put a little saddle on the greyhound, so that Lolo can ride the greyhound around.

00:10:03 Alan Guest *[Laughs quietly.]* Mm-hm.

00:10:05 Jesse Host Mm-hm.

00:10:06 John Host That would be great.

00:10:07 Jesse Host Sure.

00:10:08 John Host A lot of fun can be had. You—Jesse, you have two dogs.

00:10:10 Jesse Host Yeah. Two saddles.

00:10:13 John Host Two—

*[John and others laugh.]*

Exactly. And I—I know that you can have more than one cat or dog, just as you can have more than one child, and it's okay. But I'm terribly afraid of the unknown. What happens if we add a greyhound, and all of a sudden that greyhound is chasing Lolo around, 'cause the greyhound thinks she's a rabbit? And then my certainty of what will happen, since this is a cat we're talking about, is even greater than my certainty of the unknown. My fear of the known is great, because you know what's gonna happen. Whether it's a cat or a dog, Muffin is gonna hate you.

*[Alan laughs.]*

Deeply. For a looong time. And cats know how to get revenge. But you are both settled on this path, correct? I can't convince you to just leave well enough alone?

00:11:01	Alan	Guest	Well, I mean... this is why we're here talking to you, is to—maybe you can find—you—I've watched—listened to this for many years. You always come to a good judgment, as far as like, most parties are all happy with the results.
00:11:13	John	Host	Great! Let Muffin be an only child. Next case!
00:11:15	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
00:11:16	John	Host	<i>[The litigants laugh.]</i>
			No, this isn't about—I'm not a part of this dispute. I just need to explain my bias. But I refuse to recuse myself. You have a dispute. I'm gonna settle it.
00:11:28	Jesse	Host	John, I don't think Muffin being an only child is even realistic. Cats can't read alone in their room, and they can't carry briefcases to high school.
			<i>[John and one or both litigants laugh.]</i>
00:11:38	John	Host	It's true. It's true. I don't even think they like to read Edward Gorey.
			<i>[The litigants laugh.]</i>
00:11:43	Jesse	Host	Yeah.
00:11:45	John	Host	So, alright. Alan, tell me about Muffin. How old is Muffin?
00:11:52	Alan	Guest	I think he's... six? Is that right? He's—?
00:11:56	Elaine	Guest	Five?
00:11:57	Alan	Guest	Between five and six. Somewhere around that age.
00:12:00	John	Host	The prime of Muffin's life!
00:12:02	Alan	Guest	Yeah. Yeah, we rescued him. And, um—
00:12:05	John	Host	Good job.
00:12:06	Alan	Guest	Yeah, he's a—I guess a tabby, right?
00:12:07	Elaine	Guest	Mm-hm.
00:12:08	Alan	Guest	Like a housecat tabby. He's very sweet. He's very calm. Uh, with three kids that sometimes, uh, can do rough play with him. He's

pretty chill. He doesn't—you know, he's a good cat.

00:12:20 John Host How old are your kids?

00:12:21 Alan Guest Let's see. Eleven, ten, and eight.

00:12:26 Elaine Guest We got Muffin because of a request from our oldest.

00:12:30 John Host Oh, okay.

00:12:32 Alan Guest Yeah, when she turned—

00:12:33 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Elaine & Alan:** Seven.

**Elaine:** Mm-hm.

**John:** Yeah.

00:12:34 Alan Guest We made the deal—I think we made that deal when she was about five?

00:12:36 Elaine Guest Three. Like three.

00:12:38 Alan Guest Oh, okay.

00:12:38 Elaine Guest We thought seven was so far away.

00:12:40 Alan Guest Yeah.

00:12:41 John Host And—right. Right. So she—your daughter, your eldest daughter, correct? Am I understanding that correctly?

00:12:46 Alan Guest Right. Right. Yeah.

00:12:47 Elaine Guest Mm-hm.

00:12:48 John Host Alright. Requested a cat, and you bequeathed Muffin upon her.

00:12:51 Alan Guest Yes. Yes.

00:12:52 John Host Alright. And she's 11 now. Does she still—does she have a connection with this cat? Does she have an investment in whether Muffin have a—a—a furry friend or no?

00:13:02 Alan Guest She does. She has an opinion on this. She—she's kinda Muffin's mom. She comes down and gets him his little snack in the morning, and she plays with him, and you know, she helps manage the litter box. So she's—she's very much involved.

00:13:14 John Host So Elaine, what is your eldest child's feeling about this new cat/new dog situation? Not that children should rule the roost! I'm just wondering.

00:13:22 Elaine Guest I think her feeling is that she wants—she's like you. She wants neither.

00:13:25 John Host Right.

00:13:26 Elaine Guest She doesn't want to add—right, that's her love.

00:13:28 John Host Right.

00:13:29 Elaine Guest Like you said, she's afraid the attention will be taken away.

00:13:31 John Host Right.

00:13:32 Elaine Guest Or that Muffin will stop loving her in some way.

00:13:34 John Host Right. That will—that's going to happen. So why are you both intent upon ruining both the lives of your cat and at least your oldest child? Elaine—is your—



00:13:44 Elaine Guest 'Cause we're parents. We just—  
*[John and Alan laugh.]*  
You gotta—you gotta just throw it in, and see what happens! Right? Grab popcorn, and just...

00:13:53 Alan Guest Part of the job.

00:13:54 Elaine Guest Yeah. They ruin my life, so—  
*[John and Alan laugh.]*

00:13:58 John Host Vengeance shall be yours. Alan, I'm afraid that, uh, you are losing this case currently.  
*[The litigants laugh.]*

00:14:04 Alan Guest Oh, I know. Yeah. Not surprised.

00:14:05 John Host Elaine just made a really important point. Which is, it's your job to destabilize things.

00:14:10 Alan Guest *[Laughs.]* Yes.

00:14:12 John Host For your children, to help them grow.

00:14:15 Alan Guest Sure. Sure.

00:14:17 John Host And an—an addition of a dog would really do that. Now, Alan, you want this—you want a cat. What is the reason for wanting this extra cat? Toxoplasmosis—

00:14:25 Alan Guest *[Laughs.]* No, no.

00:14:26 John Host —or do you think Muffin has something lacking in his life?

00:14:30 Alan Guest No, I—I was thinking—well, first, we have a neighbor. And she's always had two cats, and I see them play together, and they're just—they're siblings, so it is a little different, but they're very close together. And seeing two cats play together and having fun is—is—you know, that gave me the idea that maybe he would like some companionship. Muffin is mostly an indoor cat. We let him out occasionally, but mostly he's inside. And currently, we're all indoors. We're all here. We're working, and we're going to class, and going to—you know, doing work.  
  
So right now there's plenty of people around to do stuff, but this idea came many months before, thinking that if I go to work, and the kids go off to school, and... you know, maybe he would like a companion! Maybe he'd like an extra friend, like—

00:15:15 John Host Gotcha.

00:15:16 Alan Guest And I just thought maybe a cat would make the most sense to bring into house, as far as a companion for Muffin, to keep him company.

00:15:24 John Host When you say, "We're—" you know, "We're all stuck inside here," you're not saying, "We need some more entertainment. We need cats fighting each other."

00:15:31 Alan Guest *[Laughs.]* No.

00:15:32 John Host You're saying that when we move forward into a new and better normal and we're able to be outside again, you're concerned that

Muffin will be lonely.

00:15:39 Alan Guest Yeah. I think so.

00:15:41 John Host Do you have evidence that this is a possibility?

00:15:43 Alan Guest I don't. No. Trying to read the cat's mind is obviously hard. We're probably projecting a little bit, you know—

00:15:48 John Host Right.

00:15:50 Alan Guest —and that's why I feel like, "Maybe he's lonely!" and Elaine's like, "I don't think he's lonely. He's probably fine."

00:15:52 John Host So Elaine, what do you think is the situation with Muffin, and why do you want a dog instead of a cat?

00:15:58 Elaine Guest Well, I think Muffin, first of all, is a cat. I think cat wants to be alone, so I don't know... bringing another cat... is what Muffin is seeking, right? In companionship. We're his companions. And Muffin is five, and he's—or six. And he's kind of acting like a teenager. So he's kind of, you know, not... I don't know. It's a cat! Like, it doesn't listen to you, doesn't do what you wanna do, and... you know, it would mean one more being rolling their eyes at me and walking away from me, so—

*[John laughs, Elaine stifles laughter.]*

It's—you know. So it's like, if we're gonna get an—I don't want another teenager. Like, I want a dog who would just unconditionally love me.

00:16:37 John Host Yeah.

00:16:38 Jesse Host John, I have three children and two dogs. And, uh, unlike my—for example, my three-year-old, Frankie—my dogs have never said to me, "Daddy, no. I 'on't 'ike you." (*I don't like you.*)

*[John cracks up, Alan laughs.]*

00:16:55 John Host That is true. Cats will often say to you in not so many words—

*[Alan or Elaine laughs.]*

"I don't like you."

*[Alan chuckles.]*

Cats have conditional love down. Dogs do tend to be a little bit more fawning. Do you have an idea of what style of dog you're looking for, size-wise?

00:17:11 Elaine Guest Not really. I think we both agree, you know, we'll look for a dog that is gentle, you know, and plays well with the kids, and is just, you know, chill. I think. I think that's more important to us than the looks of the dog, right? That doesn't—

00:17:28 John Host Yeah, no—

00:17:30 Elaine Guest Should not judge a book by its cover.

00:17:31 John Host Right. But there's no—it's not like you grew up, like, "I've always wanted a lab." You know what I mean?

00:17:38 Elaine Guest Oh. Right. No.

00:17:40 Jesse Host I mean, except to the extent that we all grew up wanting our own Marmaduke.

*[Someone laughs.]*

00:17:44 John Host That's true.

00:17:45 Jesse Host In your kitchen right now, there's already a long string of sausages.

*[Alan chuckles.]*

00:17:48 John Host Yeah. There is a human in our household who's very into getting a Great Dane.

00:17:52 Alan Guest Oh, gosh. No.

00:17:53 John Host And I'd have to explain to him, "Those poops are the size of human poops. You don't want that."

*[The litigants laugh.]*

You don't want that. I don't.

00:18:01 Elaine Guest Yeah. Alan's the dog person, though. He grew up with dogs. I didn't even really grow up with dogs. So...

00:18:08 John Host Oh!

00:18:09 Alan Guest Yeah. Yeah, I grew up with both. And I love both. I do. I love dogs, and I love cats. Seattle is a very dog-friendly town.

00:18:15 John Host Mm-hm.

00:18:16 Alan Guest There's lots of dogs. Our neighborhood actually has a lot of cats. And a lot of outdoor cats. They come and look at Muffin through the window, and they stare at him, and they walk away, and... I know where this can go. It could go either my way, or it could go Elaine's way, so it's like, I—you know, it's—when—it's—I'm prepared for that type of judgment. I'm only thinking of, you know, the purpose of why I wanna do this was just—I think he's—I think he could use a companion! I'd love to see him curled up with another cat on the couch, playing around—

00:18:43 John Host Yeah, you want what the neighbors have. What's their last name? Jones?

00:18:46 Alan Guest Yes, I wanna keep up with the Joneses. Yes. *[Laughs.]* Sure.

00:18:50 John Host You want that Jones cat magic!

00:18:52 Alan Guest *[Laughs.]* Yes.

00:18:54 Elaine Guest But we have another neighbor that also has a dog and a cat. Why can't we be those Joneses?

00:18:59 John Host *[Exhales thoughtfully.]* How does that cat and dog get along?

00:19:01 Elaine Guest Very well.

00:19:03 John Host Do they cuddle up together?

00:19:04 Elaine Guest Yes, they love each other. And they brought out more love in their children than they've ever known, is what she described it to me.

00:19:12 John Host Oh! More—how so? 'Cause now they had more poops to pick up?

*[The litigants laugh.]*

00:19:19 Elaine Guest Yeah, probably. I think it's just—you know, I think you expand your heart. Right? I mean, I don't think—

00:19:23 John Host Hm. I'm gonna make a note of that. "Expand your heart."

*[Someone laughs.]*

00:19:27 Elaine Guest I mean, that's from the Grinch! Right?

00:19:28 John Host "Expand... your..."

*[Pencil scratching on paper.]*

00:19:30 Elaine Guest Your heart expands to the size of—what is it?

00:19:33 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Alan:** Yeah. He—his heart grew so many times.

**Elaine:** Mm-hm. Grew three si—three times.

**Alan:** Yeah.

00:19:36 John Host Dr. Seuss. You're gonna bring Dr. Seuss into this?

*[Alan or Elaine chuckles.]*

00:19:40 Jesse Host Let's take a quick recess! And hear about this week's *Judge John Hodgman* sponsor. We'll be back in just a moment on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

00:19:47 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:19:50 Jesse Promo It's the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. I'm Bailiff Jesse Thorn. Every episode of the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast, of course, is brought to you by the members of [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org), all the folks who've gone to [MaximumFun.org/join](http://MaximumFun.org/join) to make this podcast and all the MaxFun podcasts they listen to possible.

We're also, this week, supported by our friends at... Babbel. ¿Juan, que es Babbel?

00:20:15 John Promo Babbel is a website! And an application. To help you learn a whole bunch of different languages. What are the languages you can learn?

00:20:23 Jesse Promo Indonesian.

00:20:24 John Promo Okay. Now, can I tell you something about Indonesian? I'm glad you brought that up. I mean—

00:20:26 Jesse Promo *[Laughing]* Please do.

00:20:29 John Promo Here's an interesting thing about language instruction. I have it on good authority, from someone in the know at Yale University, my alma mater, which is currently engaging in remote instruction on campus, safely, and they've done a really great job of it.

Uh, the sports teams tend to all take the same language together. So if you are a member of the lacrosse community, you take Czech. If you are—and I don't know why they do this, because they do everything together, I guess. But if you are a member of the football squad, you take Indonesian.

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

So there are a lot of reasons to learn a new language. You could be interested in feeling connected to a culture, to get that promotion at work, maybe keep your brain sharp. Maybe you just wanna sound more like a Yale football player! And you wanna learn Indonesian! Well, Babbel is the place to go. [B-A-B-B-E-L.com](https://www.babbel.com).

It's the language-learning method designed to get you speaking your new language within weeks, with daily 10-to-15-minute lessons. You start with words and phrases, like, "Where is the football?" in Indonesian. "Pass me the football!" in Indonesian.

00:21:35	Jesse	Promo	Mm-hm. Mm-hm.
00:21:38	John	Promo	"Coach, I need to take a break" in Indonesian. Then the sentences gradually get more complex, and soon you're practicing short conversations. And Babbel's interactive dialogue and speech recognition technology helps improve your pronunciation and accent ( <i>ax-AUNT</i> ), so you feel confident when you speak!
00:21:55	Jesse	Promo	Right now, Babbel's offering our listeners three months free with the purchase of a three-month subscription, with promo code "Hodgman."
00:22:04	John	Promo	Visit <a href="https://www.babbel.com">Babbel.com</a> , and use promo code "Hodgman" on your three-month subscription. That's <a href="https://www.babbel.com">B-A-B-B-E-L.com</a> , to use promo code "Hodgman."
00:22:15	Jesse	Promo	We're also supported this week by our friends at Brooklinen! Manufacturers of beautiful bedsheets.
00:22:24	John	Promo	Right. So Jesse, it's 2020. And you know I have officially dubbed this the year of staying in bed as long as possible.
00:22:30	Jesse	Promo	Yeah, I got that proclamation.
			<i>[Both laugh quietly.]</i>
00:22:32	John	Promo	Yeah. I'm glad. Glad that got to you. But whether it's getting a good night's sleep, or hiding away from the new day that has started, it's no fun if your sheets are garbage! Jesse, are your sheets garbage?
00:22:43	Jesse	Promo	I mean, they're probably garbage compared to these Brooklinen sheets!
00:22:46	John	Promo	So if you suspect you have garbage sheets, or you just don't love 'em for whatever reason, Brooklinen has you covered.
00:22:53	Jesse	Promo	They work directly with the manufacturers, so you get the luxury product, but you don't have the luxury markup. That's what we're looking for here! Luxury products have <u>insane</u> markups! Because they spend it all on branding and marketing, and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. Uh, there's middlemen, all this stuff. Brooklinen is working directly so that you get the good stuff cheap.
00:23:13	John	Promo	Brooklinen has <u>beautiful</u> home essentials. Bedding, sheets, towels, and more, that don't cost an arm and a leg. And Brooklinen is <u>so</u> confident that you will love their products, they even offer a 365-day money-back guarantee. That's a full non-Leap Year, Jesse.
00:23:31	Jesse	Promo	Yeah. <i>[Laughs.]</i>

00:23:32	John	Promo	Three hundred and sixty-five days.
00:23:34	Jesse	Promo	It's also their biggest sale of the year right now. There's candles, and silk eye masks, and robes—all kinds of gift-giving stuff. Stuff that everyone in your family will love. John, you got some of these sheets.
00:23:48	John	Promo	<p>Yeah. I did, Jesse. And not only do they feel fantastic, but they look fantastic. Now, I am... and have been, for my entire life... dedicated to one style of sheet. Which is plain, white sheets. Always hated the <u>idea</u> of something other than plain white sheets and pillowcases.</p> <p>But what I have learned recently is that if you have white sheets, and you wear sunscreen during the summer, and you don't shower? Sometimes you can get weird orange stains all over your pillowcases and sheets. That never, ever come out! And then it looks like something terrible happened in your bed.</p> <p>So when I decided to order some Brooklinen sheets, I decided to try something different for once. And my favorite color is gray, so I got the graphite sheets. And based on their suggestion, I matched it with a duvet comforter that is graphite and steel Oxford stripe! And I feel like an incredibly contemporary person now! It looks really good in my bedroom! I've been totally changed by Brooklinen, and I hope you will, too.</p> <p>Don't buy that exact color combination and be like, "Ooh, I'm sleeping in John Hodgman's bed!" That would be weird.</p>
00:25:04	Jesse	Promo	Yeah.
00:25:05	John	Promo	Rock your own style! But experiment! It's just like a shower. If you think, "Maybe I should take a shower," then you <u>definitely</u> should take a shower. It's the best idea in the world.
			<i>[Jesse laughs.]</i>
			If you think, "Maybe—" <i>[Laughs.]</i>
			If you think, "Maybe my sheets don't feel as good as I deserve..." Just go over to Brooklinen, won't you? You can get <u>huge</u> savings, 20% off, and free shipping, through November 30th. Go to <a href="http://Brooklinen.com">Brooklinen.com</a> right now, and use promo code "Hodgman" for 20% off <u>and</u> free shipping.
00:25:35	Jesse	Promo	<a href="http://B-R-O-O-K-L-I-N-E-N.com">B-R-O-O-K-L-I-N-E-N.com</a> , and enter promo code "Hodgman" for 20% off your order plus free shipping. Let's get back to the case.
00:25:45	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
00:25:47	John	Host	Who would do the work of taking care of this dog? This hypothetical dog.
00:25:50	Alan	Guest	Probably the parents? Yeah?
00:25:51	Elaine	Guest	Probably us. Yeah.
00:25:52	Alan	Guest	I think that would be our job.
00:25:53	John	Host	Yeah, but I'm talking about between the two of you.
00:25:55	Elaine	Guest	Oh, it's a shared job. I mean...

00:25:56 Alan Guest I—you know, someone's gonna have to take the dog out for the walk at night. Someone'd have to get up early in the morning, take the dog out for a walk then, and, uh, it—we know it's gonna fall onto us for the most part.

00:26:07 Elaine Guest And we'll share evenly.

00:26:08 John Host Alan, do you believe that that's true? That the dog duties (*doodies*), in both spellings of the word "duty," (*doody*) will be shared equally?

00:26:17 Alan Guest I think so. Yeah. I—that, I'm not too worried about.

00:26:19 John Host Alright. You're not making a very good case for yourself, Alan.

*[One or both litigants laugh.]*

At this point you should be saying, "Elaine has never had a dog. She doesn't understand what's involved. I do. It's an—a completely extra level of care. They—they—"

00:26:33 Elaine Guest I've had three kids.

00:26:35 John Host No, I'm—Elaine. I'm—you don't have—I'm on your side.

00:26:38 Elaine Guest Okay. Oh, okay.

00:26:39 John Host I'm—I'm doodying on Alan right now.

*[Alan laughs.]*

Uh, you should be saying that Elaine doesn't know what a dog entails, and you, Alan, are gonna—it's gonna fall to you, and it's not gonna be fair. Not only are you not going to have the pleasure of watching two cats cuddle, but also you're gonna be taking care of this dog, and Elaine won't. But you're not even making that argument for yourself. You don't want—

00:27:02 Alan Guest Well, that one—no. I'm not—that wouldn't be fair to Elaine, and I've listened to this show so much that I hear couples and guys kind of try to make that claim, and similar, and I know that's just not true with Elaine. I know that she'll—

00:27:14 John Host No.

00:27:15 Alan Guest We'll split the work, and—but yeah, I mean, we'll both have to be out there with the little plastic bag, scooping up after the dog, and it's fine, you know? It's a thing. But as far as splitting the duties, or who's responsible...

*[John snorts.]*

Yeah. It would be—it would call to us.

00:27:32 John Host You said, "Splitting the duties!"

*[The litigants laugh.]*

00:27:34 Jesse Host I'd recommend alternating on the duties.

*[John and the litigants laugh.]*

00:27:38 John Host Yeah, that's probably good. Rather than cutting them in half?

*[More laughter.]*

00:27:42 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:27:43 John Host Well, speaking of duties, there is the case—and I know this because you sent in some evidence—that you will need to get more litter boxes. And Elaine, you sent in a—one of my favorite images in life. Which is a cat sitting in a litter box, trying to act like this is normal.

*[The litigants laugh.]*

And it's one of the great—Jesse, have you ever had a cat?

00:28:07 Jesse Host I've never had a cat, myself.

00:28:09 John Host I gotta say that, you know, there are a lot of rewards to owning a cat. There are some downsides, too. For example, you have a box of poop in your house.

*[Multiple people laugh.]*

00:28:20 Alan Guest Yes.

00:28:21 John Host And when you see that box of poop, you're—you're kind of reminded. It's like, "Oh, I am hosting a parasitic creature."

*[More laughter.]*

"I'm—my mind is no longer my own." But every now and then, you'll wander by, and you'll see the cat in that litter box. And it's the greatest—it's the most hilarious thing.

*[A litigant laughs quietly.]*

Because it is this creature that is obsessed with its own dignity, being caught in the act of pooping or peeing.

*[More quiet laughter.]*

And the look on its face is hila—it just pretends that you're not there. It's so humiliated. I don't know where you got this picture, Elaine, but this is exactly what this cat is—like, "Mm. I'm not here!"

*[The litigants laugh.]*

But you sent in this picture of a litter box because—because why?

00:29:03 Elaine Guest Because we—when we adopted Muffin, I mean—*[sighs]*—we, you know—like any new parents, right? Cat or human. You just wing it. So you get one litter box, and you think that's enough for a cat.

00:29:16 John Host Right.

00:29:17 Elaine Guest But then Muffin starts to not poop in the litter box, but outside the litter box, which we couldn't figure out why. Like, "Is it dirty? Is it smelly?" But then upon researching and talking to the neighbor with the two cat, she said, "Oh, you didn't know? Cat needs a plus-one box."

*[Jesse and John laugh.]*

And whatever—like, who on Earth—?



00:29:36 Jesse Host And the cat's gonna need to be in VIP.

00:29:38 John Host *[Laughs.]* That's right.

00:29:39 Elaine Guest Yeah, exactly! Like—

00:29:40 Jesse Host Cats always order bottle service.

00:29:41 John Host That's right.

00:29:42 Elaine Guest Exactly. So apparently, yeah. If you have one cat, it's—you have to have two litter boxes—

00:29:47 John Host What?!

00:29:48 Elaine Guest —and if you have two cats, you have to have three litter boxes. Yeah! And lo and behold, when we got the second box, Muffin starts being normal, and uses the litter box. Like, weird things about cats. It's ridiculous.

00:30:00 John Host I've never exper—I've had cats for forever. Sometimes one cat, sometimes two cats. I've only ever had one litter box.

*And you also have some evidence here that suggests that there is a cat expert who confirms this advice?*

00:30:15 Elaine Guest Yes. If you Google "cat litter box problems—"

00:30:20 John Host Yeah.

00:30:21 Elaine Guest —apparently there's a cat expert named Jackson Galaxy.

00:30:25 John Host Jackson Galaxy?!

*[The litigants laugh.]*

00:30:29 Elaine Guest Who recommends 1.5 litter box per cat. I don't know what—

00:30:32 John Host One-point—

00:30:33 Elaine Guest I don't know where he's arrived at 1.5, but you just round it to 2, I guess.

00:30:37 John Host I wanna go to the pet store and go, "Yeah, could I get a half litter box, please?"

*[Multiple people laugh.]*

"A demi litter box?"

*[More laughter.]*

00:30:44 Jesse Host I wanna go to the pet store and ask to speak with Jackson Galaxy.

*[John and Jesse laugh.]*

And then they reply, "Uh, I'll get him. Also, this isn't a pet store, it's a bong store."

*[John, Alan, and Jesse laugh.]*

00:30:56 John Host And then you have a picture of Muffin's litter box, which looks...  
*[Whistles.]* What's going on here, Elaine?

00:31:02 Elaine Guest Yeah, that's another thing. He's messy. Like, cats are... you know, they'll just kick the litter everywhere, in every direction. I don't know

what it is. Like, burying or whatever it is. It's everywhere. So we try to get litter box with covers, but then he wouldn't use the litter box with cover, or he would use it and then come out, and just stepped in poo. Like, just has poo on his paw.

- 00:31:25 John Host Poo paw.
- 00:31:26 Elaine Guest And just steps everywhere. Yeah. I don't know. Cats are weird!
- 00:31:30 John Host So your solution to the "one litter box is not enough" problem was to take another full-size litter box and shove that in front of the other litter box, in a narrow niche?
- [Someone laughs quietly.]*
- 00:31:36 Elaine Guest Yes.
- 00:31:37 John Host That's what it looks like to me.
- 00:31:38 Jesse Host Plus it looks like—if I'm interpreting this picture right, you also have a R.O.B. the Nintendo robot.
- 00:31:44 John Host *[Laughs.]* Yeah.
- [Alan laughs.]*
- Looks like you got a little R2-D2 in there. Some kind of robot in there?
- 00:31:47 Elaine Guest It's a—it's a Diaper—it's—well, you guys have kids. It's Diaper Genie, but for cat poop. So it's called Pet Genie.
- 00:31:55 John Host Oh, okay! I got you. All of these photos, of course, will be available at the *Judge John Hodgman* show page at [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org), and on our Instagram, [@judgejohnhodgman](https://www.instagram.com/judgejohnhodgman).
- But wh—uh, I'm not sure that you necessarily wanna run to check out this photo. Of this litter hellscape.
- [Alan chuckles.]*
- Where in your house did you shove all—where is your poop niche in your house, that you shoved all these things in? Or your apartment, or whatever?
- 00:32:20 Alan Guest In our basement.
- 00:32:21 John Host Basement.
- 00:32:22 Alan Guest We have a little extra room where the water heater is, right? And—
- 00:32:25 Elaine Guest Yeah. We—and that's—we built that specifically for Muffin.
- 00:32:31 John Host Wow.
- 00:32:32 Elaine Guest So he had his own—I mean, I didn't—let me show you a picture. We cut out a hole for him, 'cause he couldn't use the cat flap. He would freak out. And then so we cut a hole in the sliding door, just so he could—
- 00:32:41 Alan Guest He could just go in and—
- 00:32:43 Elaine Guest I mean, this cat is like VIP.
- 00:32:45 John Host I'm no Jackson Galaxy though, you guys. I kinda feel like if I were to add an extra litter box, I might put it in a different part of the

basement.

- 00:32:52 Elaine Guest Yeah, but—
- 00:32:53 John Host So that Muffin would have a choice. Instead of this—he has to walk through a litter box to get to a litter box!
- 00:32:59 Alan Guest *[Laughs.]* Yes. Yes.
- [Elaine laughs.]*
- But the good thing is we can close that door all the way, and with the little hole cut out, he can go in and out, and contain all of that litter box stuff in this little room, and not—
- 00:33:11 John Host Just get rid of the litter boxes, and just fill this whole thing with litter!
- [The litigants laugh.]*
- 00:33:17 Jesse Host It seems clear to me that the only answer to this is to get a dog to intimidate the cat.
- [Someone laughs.]*
- 00:33:21 Elaine Guest Yes! Thank you! Exactly. To put it in its place.
- 00:33:28 John Host You don't like Muffin, do you, Elaine?
- 00:33:30 Elaine Guest I do love Muffin. I adore him. Um, but he's a cat. I mean...
- 00:33:35 John Host Yes. There's a—there's a built-in contentious relationship there.
- 00:33:38 Elaine Guest Exactly.
- 00:33:40 John Host Cats do not enjoy making you happy.
- 00:33:43 Jesse Host Yeah. When I come home at the end of a long day of work—at least when I was going to work—uh, there is no better feeling when your children are completely occupied with yelling at each other, and your spouse is completely occupied with trying to manage the potential violence between your children, *[stifles laughter]* to have a dog come up to the door who is absolutely thrilled that you're there.
- 00:34:09 John Host Yeah. I can see that. But it looks like, on your evidence, Alan, that Muffin is a—is into you! And at least one of your children. You sent in some very snuggly photos.
- 00:34:19 Alan Guest Yes. Yes. *[Inaudible.]*
- 00:34:20 John Host What is this evidence of?
- 00:34:22 Alan Guest I—I—from the research I did—fairly limited, admittedly. But some of the research is that cats can be pretty clingy if they're in search of companionship. It could—one of the symptoms could be that they're kinda clingy.
- 00:34:33 John Host Right.
- 00:34:35 Alan Guest And Muffin likes me. And likes Elaine, too. You know—
- 00:34:39 John Host Hm...
- 00:34:40 Alan Guest —and curls up with us, and sits on us, and I don't—I think I tolerate it a little more than Elaine does. There's a picture of him just lying on my son. 'Cause he just—he just wants to be there. Wants to be—you know. Get that attention.

00:34:52 John Host Yeah! This is what you—I mean, first of all, this is a enormous cat.

*[The litigants laugh.]*

00:34:57 Jesse Host Yeah. The cat is spread out on your son the way that the batter spreads out when you're pouring it into a pan to make a pancake.

*[More laughter.]*

00:35:07 Alan Guest Yeah, it just goes all the way to the edges.

00:35:08 John Host I mean, this—your son is under a blanket, so I cannot see the specific width of this child, but this cat is stretched way over past either side of this child, and it does not look like this child could get up if he wanted to.

*[Alan laughs.]*

00:35:22 Elaine Guest Yeah, Muffin is his excuse. "I can't do my homework 'cause Muffin is on me."

*[Someone snorts.]*

00:35:28 John Host Yeah. Yeah. I'm familiar with that.

*[Alan chuckles.]*

If in our house, um, you're sitting on the couch? The cat—our cat, Lolo the dumb-dumb cat, will sort of snuggle in between your legs if you're like—if you have your legs out on the couch, kinda like, half lying on the couch. And that means—"Lolo has legs" means the person who is on the couch cannot get up to do anything.

*[One or both litigants laugh.]*

And must be waited on hand and foot and legs.

00:35:53 Alan Guest Cat law.

00:35:54 John Host Cat law. So you want this to stop. You want your cat to stop cuddling with you.

00:36:00 Alan Guest I only think that if—that could be a symptom of maybe him being so clingy—and I do like it. I don't mind it at all. It's—he's very sweet. But you know, he'll—he will sit right on top of me, while I'm trying to do something.

00:36:10 John Host Right. So this is evidence that he wants a little bit more social interaction than he's getting.

00:36:16 Alan Guest Yeah. Exactly.

00:36:17 John Host And you sent in some pictures of some clawed-up chairs and stuff. What is this evidence of?

00:36:24 Alan Guest Yeah, they can be destructive if they're acting out, or they're in need of some social interaction. He can really go to town on some of the stuff we have that—I don't know if it just feels good to him, or he just has this extra energy, or whatever it is, but he will scratch away on certain furniture in the house. And it's another thing that could—it could be a sign that more social interaction, another companion, could be helpful. Maybe that's why he could be acting out.

00:36:53 John Host That—it's a cat. It's gonna scratch everything.

00:36:56 Elaine Guest Yeah, exactly. Two cats are gonna double the scratches.

00:37:00 John Host Double the scratches, three times the litter box...

*[John and the litigants laugh.]*

00:37:04 Elaine Guest Laying on every human being they can find.

00:37:08 Alan Guest *[Stifles laughter.]* That may very well happen, yes. That's, uh—I am not a lawyer, obviously!

*[Elaine laughs.]*

I—there are some holes in this. But I just—I feel that perhaps—maybe the scratches would go down? I don't know. It's possible they could go up.

00:37:19 John Host Mm. Hmm.

00:37:21 Alan Guest But maybe with this companionship, he would be a little more occupied. Maybe when I'm trying to make dinner, he doesn't do that thing around my legs, where I'm trying to open the oven, and I don't wanna burn him, but he's just gotta be all up in there. You know, maybe when—if he has another kitty, you know, he won't be so intent on just ripping through that chair, or that mat.

00:37:41 Elaine Guest Well, a dog will keep him occupied. Chase him away.

00:37:44 John Host Yeah, I mean, that is a—that's an argument as well, Alan. I mean, a dog—

00:37:47 Alan Guest True. Yeah. That's correct. That could do it. I still think that—I think a cat might be more happy with a cat friend.

00:37:55 John Host And what do your, uh, your kids say? Not that they matter, Elaine. I agree with you. Children don't matter. They've ruined your life.

*[The litigants laugh.]*

They've introduced chaos. But you're about to introduce some more chaos.

00:38:11 Elaine Guest It's payback time.

*[Someone stifles laughter.]*

00:38:13 John Host Alright.

*[Alan laughs quietly.]*

And you would say a dog is greater payback?

*[The litigants laugh.]*

They would be angrier about a dog than a cat?

00:38:21 Elaine Guest No, they'll have to do chores, right? They're gonna have to go take the dogs out for a walk. They're gonna have to learn responsibility.

00:38:27 John Host Mokay. I think I heard everything that I need to in order to make my decision. Do you have any other evidence, or thoughts that you wanna add? Elaine? Alan?

00:38:37 Alan Guest The only thing I can say is that I do think with cats, sometimes we do go overnight, or we'll stay overnight places, and we can take off, and we can leave for a night with a cat, and come back and—

00:38:48 John Host You have three children, sir!

00:38:49 Alan Guest No, I mean, we take the kids, obviously! *[Laughs.]*

00:38:51 John Host Where are you gonna go overnight?

00:38:55 Alan Guest *[Chuckles.]* Camping, maybe, or off to a cabin...

00:38:57 John Host Yeah! Maybe in another five years, we'll see.

*[Someone chuckles.]*

00:39:00 Jesse Host Yeah, there's nothing dogs hate more than camping.

*[Multiple people laugh quietly.]*

00:39:04 Alan Guest Okay, that was a bad example. But yes—

00:39:06 John Host Oh, Alan.

*[The litigants laugh.]*

00:39:09 Alan Guest I was thinking you can leave the cat alone; you can't leave a dog alone. That was where I was trying to go with that. 'Cause a dog will go crazy if you leave a dog overnight, you know? It's—

00:39:16 John Host It's more work! Dog is more work. Dog is more work.

00:39:18 Alan Guest Yeah. Yeah.

00:39:20 Jesse Host Maybe you should just get a houseplant.

*[Alan laughs quietly.]*

00:39:21 Elaine Guest My son did suggest a Venus flytrap.

00:39:25 Jesse Host Oh, yeah. Those are kinda hard to—

00:39:26 John Host Ohhh!

00:39:28 Jesse Host They're hard to take care—surprisingly hard to take care of.

00:39:29 John Host Yeah.

00:39:30 Elaine Guest Yeah, you have to feed it bugs, I think. And I—

00:39:32 Jesse Host Yeah, you gotta find bugs.

00:39:33 Elaine Guest That's where I draw the line. Yeah.

00:39:34 Jesse Host Yeah. Around the house.

00:39:35 John Host You gotta find bugs. Yeah. Basically, you become a pet for the Venus flytrap. I've been there.

*[One or both litigants laugh.]*

00:39:41 Alan Guest A minion.

00:39:43 Jesse Host Then of course it starts demanding blood, and...

*[More laughter.]*

Eventually, you feed it your boss...

00:39:49 Alan Guest *[Laughs.]* Right. Right. Start singing songs. Yeah.

00:39:51 John Host They call it the Dracula plant!

00:39:54 Jesse Host Mm-hm.

00:39:55 John Host It's the favorite plant of Draculas.

00:39:57 Jesse Host Number one.

00:39:58 John Host Yep. Alright. Well, I'm gonna go climb into my litter room and, uh, make my decision. I'll be back in a moment with my verdict.

00:40:04 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[As Jesse speaks below: Door opens, chairs scrape, crunchy footsteps.]*

00:40:05 Jesse Host Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom.

00:40:07 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Door shuts.]*

00:40:08 Jesse Host Elaine, how do you feel about your chances in this case?

00:40:11 Elaine Guest I feel pretty good. I feel like it's a pretty straightforward case. You know, I think Alan, you know, has a lot of holes in his argument, so—and luckily, I feel like my arguments are pretty strong.

00:40:26 Jesse Host Alan, how are you feeling?

00:40:27 Alan Guest We'll see. I feel like, uh—I trust whatever he decides will be good. Again, I know I didn't have, like, a iron-clad case, but I just said what I thought was on my mind, and I felt like I gave a little bit of evidence, and tried to make my point, and I leave it to the court.

00:40:42 Jesse Host Do cats even like other cats?

00:40:45 Alan Guest Sometimes.

*[Jesse and the litigants laugh.]*

We've done some—from what I've read, yes, it's possible.

00:40:51 Jesse Host "Let's roll them bones, and find out!"

*[More laughter.]*

Well, we'll see what Judge Hodgman has to say about all this when we come back in just a moment.

00:40:59 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:41:01 Promo Clip **Music:** Chill, rhythmic synth music plays in background.

**Jesse Thorn:** Hey, friends! Jesse here, the founder of Maximum Fun, and I have some really great news to share with you. This year has brought a lot of changes for all of us, and one tradition that we were grateful to be able to hold onto is our annual pin sale to benefit charity. This year, through your generosity and love of pins, you helped raise \$95,400 for GiveDirectly. If you're a member and you bought pins, they'll ship in January. In the meantime, your support will provide direct cash relief to families impacted by COVID-19 across the United States. Even in this incredibly tough year, the MaxFun community remains extraordinarily kind. And whether or not you bought pins, you can continue to help by heading to [GiveDirectly.org](https://www.givedirectly.org). And as always, thank you.

*[Music fades out.]*

00:41:55 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:41:57 Jesse Promo Judge Hodgman, we're taking a quick break from the case, in chambers, talking about what's going on. What's going on with you?

00:42:03 John Promo Well, first of all, I'd just like to say thank you to everyone who heeded my call to [Bit.ly/CALLGEORGIA](http://Bit.ly/CALLGEORGIA). Uh, had a excellent time phone banking with the democrats of Somerville to help get out the vote in these two important Senate run-off races in Georgia. Thanks for joining me. I hope that you will continue to look for ways that you can be involved in your state, local, and national elections. Wherever you may stand, it's important, I think more than ever, we realize how important it is to be engaged.

Beyond that, I'm just gonna tell you that our—the TV show that I made with David Rees, which is called *Dicktown*—that's right; we made a TV show, and we decided to call it *Dicktown*—is available over there at Hulu. Just go to [Bit.ly/dicktown](http://Bit.ly/dicktown).

And then I will also say that, as always, all of my books are available anywhere you can buy or—or borrow a book, of course. But if you'd like a signed and/or personalized copy of *Vacationland*, *Medallion Status*, *Areas of My Expertise*, *More Information Than You Require*, *That Is All*, they are all available to you via Books Are Magic. They will have *Medallion Status* and *Vacationland* in stock. They might have to special order the earlier ones. Just call them up, or go to their website, [BooksAreMagic.net](http://BooksAreMagic.net). And when you complete your purchase on the website, there's a little spot where you can add extra instructions.

00:43:33 John Promo You could say, "I would like this signed by John," or, "I would like this signed by John and personalized to my wife Gladys, or my partner Mark Venture from *Star Blazers*." Anything you like.

However, uh, you don't need to write jokes for me. I'll take care of that, thanks.

*[Jesse and John laugh.]*

Jesse? *[Stifles laughter.]* What are you up to?

00:43:55 Jesse Promo Well, we still have up in the *Bullseye* feed my hour-long conversation with David Letterman.

00:44:02 John Promo Ooh! That was incredible.

00:44:03 Jesse Promo Um, it is—yeah, thank you! It is, I think, uh—I found it to be a moving and insightful conversation. And I hope people will check that out.

And also, John, this is a traditional shopping week. This is the week that we often—our minds turn to the holidays, and the gifts we're going to give, and I happen to run a store. It's called the Put This On Shop. It's at [PutThisOnShop.com](http://PutThisOnShop.com). It is an adjunct to my menswear website, Put This On, [PutThisOn.com](http://PutThisOn.com). And we have all kinds of vintage and antique treasures for every giftee in your life.

If you wanna show that you put a little thought into a gift, go get them something special at the Put This On Shop, and almost everything ships for free with the code "Justice"! Because you are a *Judge John*



Hodgman listener. So [PutThisOnShop.com](http://PutThisOnShop.com), and use the code "Justice."

00:44:58 John Promo Yeah. I mean, I like [PutThisOnShop.com](http://PutThisOnShop.com) because if I'm kinda, like, on a total blank for a little thing that I wanna get for a friend or relative for the holiday, I just kinda, like, look at this stuff, and then I find stuff for people! Like 1920s dog breed pins!

00:45:16 Jesse Promo *[Laughing]* Yeah, those—those are really good.

00:45:17 John Promo I got someone who's gonna enjoy those! Those are so handsome! Look at those dogs! Jaunty little promotional Dobbs top hat! I don't know who that—I think that one's for me.

00:45:30 Jesse Promo You know, John, we sold those musical cigars that I talked about before, but we still have these giant teeth that are on—each half of the jaw is—

*[Both laugh.]*

00:45:43 John Promo They're connected with like, a gooseneck—like a gooseneck lamp—  
Yeah.

00:45:44 Jesse Promo —so that you can move them in any direction, *[stifles laughter]* and I can't—I can't overemphasize how too big these teeth are.

*[Both laugh.]*

00:45:57 John Promo They're really amazing. Somebody's gonna get this for Christmas, and it's gonna blow their mind.  
Get over there to [PutThisOnShop.com](http://PutThisOnShop.com)! And I may add, also, [MaxFunStore.com](http://MaxFunStore.com)! Because you will find lots of little gifties there for the people in your life who love MaxFun podcasts! Lots of *Judge John Hodgman* T-shirts. T-shirts and doodads from all your favorite podcasts, so... you can stuff a lot of stockings! Tastefully, and I daresay economically.  
Just by going to [PutThisOnShop.com](http://PutThisOnShop.com), [PutThisOnShop.com](http://PutThisOnShop.com), [PutThisOnShop.com](http://PutThisOnShop.com)! You only have to go once.

*[Jesse laughs quietly.]*

00:46:34 Jesse Promo And then enter in [MaxFunStore.com](http://MaxFunStore.com), see what they got over there.  
Let's get back to the case.

00:46:35 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:46:38 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[As Jesse speaks below: Door opens, chairs scrape on the floor, crunchy footsteps.]*

00:46:39 Jesse Host Please rise as Judge John Hodgman re-enters the courtroom and presents his verdict.

00:46:43 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Door shuts.]*

00:46:45 John Host So Alan, you know, I—first of all, I want to apologize for, um, batting you around like a caught mouse. You deserve better in my courtroom. Because I understand your feeling, and your desire. I've seen cats cuddle up together. It's incredible. As a natural cat person, I want this in my life. I feel you. And, you know, you—when you go

and check out Wendy Carlos, *[stifles laughter]* she also has a website that I don't think has been updated since 1998, but there are lots of photos of her multiple Siamese cats just hanging out together.

But... they are all related to each other. And I—in my limited experience, the cats that really love each other tend to be litter mates. Not to say that it can't be done. We had two cats for a number of years. When I merged my household, and my—and my cat dowry with, uh, my wife's household and her cat dowry. I had Petey, she had Francis. They... over years, learned to be in the same room with each other.

But it took a long time. Cats are social, as you pointed out in your evidence. And in time, can be socialized to be together. But it does take time. I mean, we—we honestly—it took years for Petey and Francis to be able to chill together. And, like, I would bring my wife into the room so we could take a picture if they happened to be on the same bed together, but like five feet apart.

*[Someone laughs quietly.]*

That was a huge, momentous occasion.

00:48:38 John Host

Elaine, you want a dog because you are an agent of chaos.

*[Someone laughs quietly.]*

You—if you're gonna up the chaos, you're gonna go all the way, and just go cross-species. Like, "Let's just see what happens." And a dog obviously is a big question mark! You know? Because I've seen those *Tom and Jerry* cartoons. The dogs hate the cat! They wanna eat the cat with the—that was always a weird thing about *Tom and Jerry*. You know that—you knew the cats wanted to eat the mouse. That's what cats do. But dogs do not go around trying to eat cats.

*[John and the litigants chuckle.]*

But every time, and I—I still have it in my mind, when that dog would see Tom the cat, the dog would put on a napkin—tie a napkin around his neck, and get a knife and fork. Gross.

*[Alan laughs.]*

That's a gross image! A bulldog carving into a cat!

00:49:25 Jesse Host

That said, when I'm living on a desert island and someone comes to rescue me, when I see them, they do look like a fully dressed turkey.

*[Multiple people laugh.]*

00:49:37 John Host

So either way, what you are proposing is ruining your existing cat's life. And making it scared and sad, and weirded out. I mean, I'm gonna go ahead and put Margaret on blast. You don't know Margaret. Margaret used to work at Books Are Magic... where you can order signed and personalized copies of all my books for the holiday season. That's a plug. [BooksAreMagic.net](http://BooksAreMagic.net).

Margaret got a cat. Named it one of the best cat names of all time.

Birthday. Had that—had Birthday the cat—Birthday the cat was so happy. I would follow that Instagram, see that happy, big old cat just enjoying life. And then Margaret and her roommate went and got another cat, a little boy they call Baby. And now they only take pictures of Baby. Except in the background, you just see Birthday, sad.

*[The litigants laugh quietly.]*

She tries to convince me that it's getting better. It's not getting better for Birthday. That's an only child who just got a sibling. The worst.

*[More laughter.]*

Dog could be the same! Dog could ruin Muffin's life. We don't know. We don't know.

*[Sighs.]* And yet, so much of what life is about is making these choices, not knowing what the outcome is going to be! When it was suggested to me that we have a second child, I was like, "That's impossible. Who knows what's gonna happen?!"

*[Alan laughs quietly.]*

00:51:08 John Host

And then someone said to me, "Expand your heart," or some stupid stuff like that.

*[Elaine laughs quietly.]*

And we had that second child, and guess what? My heart expanded! I trusted the other person with whom I was having children—my wife. Why didn't I just say that?

*[Someone laughs.]*

I trusted my wife to know better, or to at least know more than I did, because she grew up with siblings. And it worked out! Worked out great. Not always easy! But it worked out great.

I don't know what moved you guys to have three children. Come on, that's too much!

00:51:38 Elaine Guest

Agent of chaos.

00:51:39 John Host

Jesse, you know.

00:51:41 Jesse Host

Yeah, I agree. As the parent of three.

*[Jesse stifles laughter, the others laugh.]*

00:51:44 John Host

It's very hard for me to appreciate, but what you're doing is correct. You both—you want to expand the chaos in your life, and see what happens. You're willing to roll the dice.

Alan, your cases are equally strong. Because essentially, they're based on... kind of nothing. You kinda just want another cat! Elaine kinda just wants another dog. You could leave well enough alone, and be perfectly happy. But you—you wanna flip this table over, one way or the other.

And the problems with cats and an extra cat or an extra dog, in terms of what they are going to... cause to your household to happen, what's gonna happen to Muffin's quality of life and yours—equally unknown, basically.

I think that the compromise position here is a dog. I think it's the better move. Here's why, Alan. And I'm sorry. I wanna see two cats cuddling more than anything. I want that in my life so hard. But I—it's so hard to achieve. I've looked at Muffin. Muffin is a huge cat.

*[The litigants laugh.]*

00:52:53 John Host

Muffin clearly can hold his own. Muffin is not gonna be pushed around. He can push back on that dog, that dog starts bringing out that knife and fork.

*[More laughter.]*

Muffin is at a time in its—in his life when he is extremely playful. He is a teen. He is a teen cat, as Elaine pointed out. If he were an elderly cat, I would feel less inclined to go along with this.

I also noticed that your litter situation is a hellhole.

*[The litigants laugh.]*

And I don't think you should add to it. I think it's time that at least one animal in your house poop outside.

*[More laughter.]*

'Cause this is not—it's not gonna get better, in that litter nook that you've fashioned for Muffin. And I think you need to rethink all of your litter situation. That's...

*[More laughter.]*

00:53:47 John Host

Shoving one box—one litter box in front of another litter box is not—I promi—I've never met Jackson Galaxy, but I'm sure that is not what Jackson Galaxy meant by getting another litter box. You might as well be putting one on top of the other.

*[The litigants laugh.]*

Now, what I would suggest—this is an extra compromise position—is see if, in Seattle, you have the opportunity to foster dogs that are waiting to be adopted. I'm sure you've considered this.

00:54:18 Elaine Guest

Yes.

00:54:19 John Host

You could foster one or two dogs, just to see what happens with Muffin. And maybe you'll get lucky, and maybe one of these foster dogs and Muffin will have a—a love connection. And then you enjoy what's called a failed foster. You just keep it. You'll be doing good in your community while you do it. And you'll have a real life, on the job training of what it'll be like—what the emotional and, uh, chore landscape is gonna be with these two animals.

00:54:49 Alan Guest Yeah.

00:54:50 John Host So I would suggest you look into that. But then... I—you know, look. This is the other part of parenting, right? Our children grow. They move out. Life proceeds. We lose family members. Muffin dies. It will happen. Sorry, Muffin.

*[Whispering]* That's when you move in, Alan. Get two cats.

*[Multiple people laugh.]*

*[No longer whispering]* Let Muffin have the greatest life Muffin can have. You've already made a commitment to this cat. You can try adding on a foster dog. That's my recommendation. See if that enlarges not only your heart, but Muffin's. Muffin—and Muffin deserves a chance to enjoy an enlarged heart. Sounds like a condition.

*[More laughter.]*

00:55:39 Jesse Host My dog literally has an enlarged heart.

*[Jesse, Alan, and John laugh.]*

00:55:43 John Host Aw, which one?

00:55:44 Jesse Host Cocoa. She has to take pills.

00:55:45 John Host Ohhh, Cocoa...

00:55:46 Jesse Host They're beef-flavored.

00:55:47 John Host Ohhh, *Cocoa and Her Beef-Flavored Pills* sounds like a great Dr. Seuss book.

00:55:52 Jesse Host Yeah.

*[One or both litigants laugh.]*

00:55:53 John Host Fulfill and honor your commitment to giving him the best life possible. And then, should a natural transition come along...

*[Multiple people laugh.]*

I don't care if you have a dog at that point. Go ahead and get two cats. 'Cause the dog doesn't—

00:56:07 Alan Guest Alright!

00:56:08 John Host The dog's gonna be thrilled.

*[Multiple people laugh.]*

Two cats. Brother and sister, brother and brother, sister and sister.

00:56:15 Alan Guest Sure.

00:56:16 John Host Right.

00:56:17 Alan Guest Yep.

00:56:18 John Host And then everyone gets what they want. Except your children. Which is the whole point.

*[One or both litigants laugh.]*

This is the sound of a gavel.

00:56:22	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	<i>[A cat meows.]</i>
00:56:23	John	Host	Judge John Hodgman rules; that is all.
00:56:24	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	<i>[As Jesse speaks below: Door opens, chairs scrape on the floor, footsteps.]</i>
00:56:25	Jesse	Host	Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom.
00:56:29	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	<i>[Door shuts.]</i>
00:56:30	Jesse	Host	Alan, how are you feeling?
00:56:31	Alan	Guest	Great! It—I knew it would be a good judgment, and it was a good compromise, and you know, I think, uh—this was a lot of fun.
00:56:39	Jesse	Host	I like how hard Alan is working <u>not</u> to be a jerky husband on this show.

*[Jesse and one or both litigants laugh.]*

He has clearly heard—heard the inflexible, unheeding husbands.

*[More laughter.]*

00:56:52	Alan	Guest	Yeah.
00:56:53	Jesse	Host	In past, uh, heterosexual married relationships on <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> , and has resolved to take a different path.
00:57:01	Alan	Guest	<i>[Laughs.]</i> Never turns out well for those guys, and, uh—yeah.
00:57:04	Jesse	Host	Elaine, how are you feeling?
00:57:07	Elaine	Guest	Uh, awesome. I am so glad he made the right call. I've not—I didn't know what to expect, coming in, 'cause—you know, Alan loves <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> , and I felt like I didn't know as much about it, but I feel like he's... wise beyond the rule of law, so I'm very happy.
00:57:27	Jesse	Host	Well, Alan and Elaine, thanks for joining us on <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> . It was great to talk to you.
00:57:31	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
00:57:34	Promo	Clip	<b>Music:</b> Upbeat, fun music.

**Lisa Hanawalt:** Hey, if you like your podcasts to be focused and well-researched, and your podcast hosts to be uncharismatic, unhorny strangers who have no interest in horses, then this is not the podcast for you.

**Emily Heller:** Yeah, and what's your deal?

*[Lisa laughs.]*

I'm Emily.

**Lisa:** I'm Lisa.

**Emily:** Our show's called *Baby Geniuses!*

**Lisa:** And its hosts are horny adult idiots. We discover weird Wikipedia pages every episode.

**Emily:** We discuss institutional misogyny!

**Lisa:** We ask each other the dumbest questions, and our listeners won't stop sending us pictures of their butts.

**Emily:** We haven't asked them to stop! But they also aren't stopping.

**Lisa:** Join us on *Baby Geniuses*.

**Emily:** Every other week on [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org).

[Music ends.]

00:58:10 Sound Effect Transition

[Three gavel bangs.]

00:58:12 Jesse Host

Another *Judge John Hodgman* case in the books. In a moment, Swift Justice! But first, our thanks to Andrew Eppler Zindell for naming this week's episode, "Cat-or-Dogical Imperative." If you'd like to name a future episode, be sure to like *Judge John Hodgman* on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/judgejohnhodgman), where we regularly put out calls for submissions.

You can follow us on Twitter at [@JesseThorn](https://twitter.com/JesseThorn) and [@hodgman](https://twitter.com/hodgman), hashtag your *Judge John Hodgman* Tweets [#JJHo](https://twitter.com/hashtag/JJHo), and check out the Maximum Fun subreddit at [MaximumFun.Reddit.com](https://www.reddit.com/r/MaximumFun) to chat about [this episode](#).

We're on Instagram at [@judgejohnhodgman](https://www.instagram.com/judgejohnhodgman). Make sure to follow us there for evidence and other fun stuff, and *Judge John Hodgman* is produced by Jennifer Marmor. Uh, with help from a certain tiny Marmor's bubble lawnmower this week.

00:58:59 John Host

Aw. But no appearance from, uh, leaf blower! Over at your house.

00:59:03 Jesse Host

I know! No leaf blower!

00:59:04 John Host

Yeah!

00:59:05 Jesse Host

Record on a different day, with no leaf blower!

00:59:07 John Host

Oh, I miss that guy.

00:59:08 Jesse Host

Now Swift Justice, where we answer your small disputes with quick judgment. Luke says:

"My wife insists that the park is 'down the road' from us, despite the fact that it is both uphill and northward. I contend it is 'up the road.'"

00:59:23 John Host

This is something that I was always mystified by. You know, Jesse, that I am a weird anglophile.

00:59:30 Jesse Host

Mm-hm.

00:59:31 John Host

Among other things. And how it is convention—

00:59:34 Jesse Host

That's a lover of weird angles.

00:59:36 John Host

That's right. Uh, I like oblique angles. I like acute angles. I like 'em all.

00:59:40 Jesse Host

Mm-hm!

00:59:41	John	Host	<p>Uh, in England, they would always say, "<u>up</u> to London," no matter what direction you were coming from. And I couldn't understand that, until I appreciated that in the imagination of a person living in London, London was above everything else. It is a centering of itself, such that everything else is below it. And that, I can only imagine, is why Luke's wife says "<u>down</u> the road," because their house is the center of their lives. And everything else leads down from it, into some gutter that is <u>not</u> them.</p> <p>Whereas Luke situates himself in a rational Cartesian grid, that includes all points equally, and therefore describes where the park is via cardinal direction—North, South, East, West—with the common convention that if it is North of you, you are going <u>up</u> to it!</p> <p>I prefer the latter! A relational system where <u>none</u> of us is above the other. It's easier to understand, when you put it that way. You're actually creating a rational system of direction that another person could follow.</p> <p>So I'm gonna tell Luke's wife that park is <u>up</u> the road, as the crow flies.</p> <p><i>[Both laugh.]</i></p>
01:01:01	Jesse	Host	There's so much "as the crow flies" controversy on Reddit this week.
01:01:05	John	Host	Ohhh my goodness. Oh my goodness.
01:01:07	Jesse	Host	People are upset you didn't give drive times, apparently.
			<p>That's it for this week's episode. Submit your cases at <a href="http://MaximumFun.org/jjho">MaximumFun.org/jjho</a>, or email <a href="mailto:hodgman@maximumfun.org">hodgman@maximumfun.org</a>. No case is too small. We'll talk to you next time on the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast.</p>
01:01:23	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
01:01:26	Music	Transition	A cheerful ukulele chord.
01:01:27	Speaker 1	Guest	MaximumFun.org.
01:01:28	Speaker 2	Guest	Comedy and culture.
01:01:30	Speaker 3	Guest	Artist owned—
01:01:31	Speaker 4	Guest	—audience supported.