

00:00:00	Jesse Thorn	Promo	<p>Hey, <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> fans! <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> and all the shows at Maximum Fun are supported by membership. And it's the MaxFunDrive! This is the one time of year when we come to you and ask you to become a member of Maximum Fun. You can join, you can boost, or upgrade your existing membership. It all supports this show and the other MaxFun shows that you listen to.</p> <p>Go to MaximumFun.org/join. That's MaximumFun.org/join to not only join but also see all the great thank-you gifts and all the different levels at which you can join, starting at just five bucks a month.</p> <p>That's MaximumFun.org/join.</p>
00:00:41	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
00:00:43	Jesse	Promo	<p>Welcome to the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast. I'm Bailiff Jesse Thorn. This week, "May it Please Descartes." (<i>"May it please the court."</i>)</p> <p>Drea brings the case against her husband Morgan. Morgan believes we're all living in a simulation. And he <u>loves</u> to talk about it! Drea disagrees <i>[stifles laughter]</i> and does <u>not want</u> to talk about this any longer!</p> <p>Who's right? Who's wrong? Only one can decide.</p>
00:01:06	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	<i>[As Jesse speaks below: Door opens, chairs scrape on the floor, footsteps.]</i>
00:01:07	Jesse	Host	Please rise as Judge John Hodgman enters the courtroom and presents an obscure cultural reference.
00:01:14	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	<i>[Door shuts.]</i>
00:01:15	John Hodgman	Host	Ohhh, it's far deeper than any dream. I wonder where he <u>thinks</u> he is. Sitting on a throne, ruling the universe, all you human garbage fawning at his feet? More honest, don't you think, than this pretense of being a selfless podcaster.
00:01:39	Jesse	Host	Bailiff Jesse Thorn, please swear the litigants in.
00:01:40	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	<i>[Chairs scrape.]</i>
00:01:42	Jesse	Host	Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God <u>or</u> whatever?
00:01:49	Morgan	Guest	I do.
00:01:50	Drea	Guest	I do.
00:01:51	Jesse	Host	Do you swear to abide by Judge John Hodgman's ruling, despite the fact that he has <u>long</u> lived in a simulation—
			<i>[John chuckles.]</i>
			—specifically a game of <i>SimAnt</i> in a middle school computer room?
00:02:03	Morgan	Guest	Yes.
00:02:04	Drea	Guest	Yes.
00:02:05	Jesse	Host	Judge Hodgman, you may proceed.

00:02:06 John Host I have aged, but the SimAnts remain the same age!

[Jesse and the litigants laugh.]

Drea and Morgan, you may be seated.

00:02:14 Sound Effect Sound Effect [Chairs scrape.]

00:02:15 John Host First, before we begin, let the record show please, producer Jennifer Marmor, that we are about to discuss the theory that we are all living in a simulation. Including the theory that that simulation may be being run by beings who are themselves part of an even larger simulation, so on and so forth, and that this particular discussion is taking place on this, our day of God or whatever, the 20th of April, 4/20. Good scheduling, Jennifer Marmor.

00:02:44 Jennifer Marmor Producer Yeah.

00:02:46 John Host Welcome to our 420 episode.

[Drea laughs.]

Where we are but a planet that is an atom in the fingernail of an uncaring god. Before me now sit Morgan and Drea. For an immediate summary judgment in one of yours' favors, can you guess the piece of culture that I referenced when I entered the courtroom? I am now able to see you, via the magic/curse of constant teleconferencing. I am looking at Morgan's face and smile in concern that he is hiding a private glee that he knew this one the moment he heard it, as he is a computer simulation theorist.

I'll ask Drea first. What is your guess?

00:03:27 Drea Guest [Sighs.] I am going to say... it's—and it's really... It's really based on the first part of what you were saying. It kind of rapidly became clear that that could not be what you were talking about, 'cause this is a children's book, but *The Phantom Tollbooth*.

00:03:42 John Host *The Phantom Tollbooth!*

00:03:46 Drea Guest Mm-hm. My favorite book as a child.

00:03:50 John Host No one knows what a tollbooth is anymore. Itself is a thing of fantasy.

Alright, I shall enter that into the, uh, guess book, Drea. Uh—I'm stumbling over my words as I am desperately trying to remember the name of the author of *The Phantom Tollbooth*. I cannot remember.

[The litigants laugh.]

I will not go to Wikipedia and have Jennifer Marmor edit it to make it seem like I knew what I was talking about. I do remember the book. I do remember the movie.

Now. That is a good guess. Morgan... What. Is. Your. Guess?

00:04:23 Morgan Guest I mean, it sounds familiar! I'm gonna say *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*.

00:04:26 John Host *Hitchhiker's Guide... to the Galaxy* is a guess.

[Beat.]

Jennifer Marmor, you—you wanna guess? [Stifles laughter.]

00:04:35 Jennifer Producer

2001: A Space Odyssey.

00:04:37 John Host

Oh, a good guess! And Jesse Thorn, you wanna guess some kind of baseball trivia?

00:04:42 Jesse Host

Yeah. Is it Van Lingle Mungo?

00:04:44 John Host

Quite unexpectedly, given that Morgan is a true [exaggerating the French word] connoisseur of the simulation hypothesis, the simulated reality hypothesis, all guesses are wrong!

See, 'cause what I thought, Morgan, you were gonna say, was, "Well, that's obviously a quote... from the comic book story *For the Man Who Has Everything*, written by Alan Moore and illustrated by Dave Gibbons, in which the intergalactic villain Mongul gives Superman a quote-unquote 'present,' which is a plant called the Black Mercy, which puts him into a state of dreaming in which he dreams his heart's desire. And he believes that he has never come to Earth, and grew up on Krypton, and has a wife and children. And when he realizes that it's all an illusion—a simulation, as it were—it is one of the most heartbreaking moments in comics when he says goodbye to his son."

And then I would have said, "You're wrong, Morgan!"

[The litigants laugh, John stifles laughter.]

That quote is actually from the adaptation of that story for *Justice League Unlimited*, season one, episode two, written by J. M. DeMatteis. But I didn't get to shut you down, as I thought I might have to.

[Drea laughs.]

So I guess we're gonna have to shut you down—or you, Drea, down—by hearing this actual case. Drea, you bring this case before this court. State the nature of your complaint against your—husband, correct? Husband?

00:06:08 Drea Guest

Yes, husband. Legal husband. Mm-hm. Yes.

00:06:12 John Host

Alright, good. What is the nature of your complaint against him?

00:06:15 Drea Guest

Originally, he became really interested in the idea of free will, specifically in the fact that we don't have free will as humans.

00:06:22 John Host

Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

00:06:24 Drea Guest

And this was before we had children, so we would go on vacations with some dear friends of ours.

00:06:27 John Host

Right. Sure. And what else do you do on a vacation but just really get into free will as a topic?

00:06:37 Drea Guest

Really just dig into it, all the different components of it. And so—you know, especially once you're drinking. You know. Then the conversation really gets heated. So it became a very common topic

of discussion on these vacations. My initial complaint was that I would like for him to stop talking about free will, specifically on vacation.

However, we had kids. Vacations ceased.

00:07:04 John Host Mm-hm. You don't go with your friends anymore; now you get drunk with your kids and talk about, uh—

00:07:09 Drea Guest Sure.

00:07:10 John Host —whether we live in a computer simulation.

00:07:12 Drea Guest *[Laughs.]* They're four and two, so they're up for it. They're pretty smart. And so I had updated my request to say I don't really wanna talk about the world as a simulation, because it gives me kind of existential anxiety to even consider it.

00:07:26 John Host Mm-hm.

00:07:27 Drea Guest However, there's one more iteration. I promise this is where it stops, so—

00:07:31 John Host Mm.

00:07:32 Drea Guest It feels... mean to ask him not to talk about something. And that was my original complaint, was that I don't want him to talk about it anymore. But I do love him. And I love talking to him. And so I think what I'm really asking at the end of the day is I would like for you to rule that the world itself is not a simulation.

00:07:51 John Host We'll consider what you are requesting of this court, in due course. But I do need to understand. Morgan, do you have free will?

00:08:00 Morgan Guest I don't think so.

[Morgan and Jesse laugh.]

00:08:01 John Host Okay. So there's no way you can stop talking about—

00:08:04 Jesse Host Judge Hodgman—

00:08:05 John Host Yeah.

00:08:06 Jesse Host Let the record reflect that I made him say that.

[John and the litigants laugh.]

00:08:09 John Host Perfect! You are truly the Cartesian evil demon that is controlling all of Morgan's perceptions of the world! And his will, as well.

Where would you go on vacation?

00:08:21 Morgan Guest For this vacation, we were in Italy.

00:08:23 John Host Mm-hm.

00:08:24 Morgan Guest Um, in—was it Italy?

00:08:25 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Drea:** Yeah. I think so *[inaudible]*.

Morgan: Yeah. I think it was Italy.

00:08:28 Morgan Guest Yeah. So we were—I don't know. Is that—is that good enough, or...?
[Laughs.]

00:08:31 Drea Guest Florence. I think we were in Florence. We started off in Florence. *[Laughs.]* Is that good enough?

00:08:36 Morgan Guest *[Inaudible.]*

[More laughter.]

00:08:37 John Host Ah! I'm concerned that you're going to foreign countries to have philosophical conversations you could have in any college dorm room... and not even remembering that you were in Florence, Italy. That—that is of a concern to me.

00:08:50 Morgan Guest Well, we were traveling around, so I don't remember exa—I remember there was a pool involved. But we're sitting there—

00:08:55 John Host Who are these friends? Bill and Ted?

[The litigants laugh.]

What are their names?

00:08:59 Morgan Guest Jeff and Catherine.

00:09:00 John Host Jeff and Catherine.

00:09:01 Morgan Guest Yeah. Yeah.

00:09:02 Drea Guest Yeah.

00:09:03 John Host And you were wandering around, and you were talking about free will. What's your position on free will?

00:09:07 Morgan Guest Well, I didn't really have one at the time. But I was listening to a bunch of podcasts that were talking about it, and I thought it was an interesting thing to kind of talk about. And everyone on the vacation—everyone else said that there—they had free will. So I was like, "Well, let me just kinda argue that we don't."

00:09:24 John Host Oh, boy...

[Jesse and John laugh, Morgan stifles laughter.]

00:09:26 Morgan Guest And over the course of—of, uh—of ten days, *[laughing]* I think I argued myself into not believing that there's any free will.

00:09:34 John Host You—right.

00:09:35 Morgan Guest So, um... Yeah. *[Laughs.]*

00:09:36 John Host Let the record show to all within the sound of my ears: The devil needs no advocate.

[Jesse and the litigants laugh.]

The devil's the devil. The devil can possess you, make your bed shake, make your head twist around.

00:09:48 Morgan Guest Mm-hm.

00:09:49 John Host Does not need an attorney. Does not need anyone to argue the devil's case. And you see what happened! You argued the devil's case, and you robbed yourself of free will. You believe in some sort of determinism? That all of the choices that you make are written in fate, or there is no control over your own thought and action? What?

00:10:08 Morgan Guest Uh, well, I don't know if I'd go that far. I just—I don't think that at the end of the day, there's, like, a little person in my head, like—or in anyone's head—calling the shots. Like, a lot of our decisions that we make—

00:10:20 John Host Okay.

00:10:21 Morgan Guest —are just kind of a product of our environment, and the people we're with, and what's going on. And—

00:10:26 John Host I don't wish to paraphrase this particular popular thinker: You are the product of your reactive mind.

00:10:33 Jesse Host Judge Hodgman, I went to a public university. Can I ask a point of clarification of you?

00:10:38 John Host Yes, please.

00:10:40 Jesse Host "Free will," that's short for *Free Willy*?

00:10:42 John Host Yes, it is. Short for *Free Willy*. Yeah.

00:10:44 Jesse Host Thank you.

00:10:46 John Host *[Stifling laughter]* Some believe that that movie doesn't exist.

00:10:48 Jesse Host Got it.

00:10:49 John Host Some believe that their experience of watching that movie was simply a hallucination induced by some outside being.

00:10:57 Jesse Host Wow.

00:10:58 John Host What Descartes considered theoretically as the evil genius, or the evil demon. René Descartes. "I think, therefore I am." Uh, is what he said. And I guess I gotta believe him. He was one of the early positors of the simulated universe theory. Right, Morgan? You back me up on that?

00:11:16 Morgan Guest Yeah, so I'm not claiming to be an expert on this. This is strictly kitchen and poolside conversation.

00:11:22 John Host You are pure freestyling this! Alright! I love it. Okay.

00:11:25 Morgan Guest Yeah. You're probably speaking to the least informed person on this actual topic.

00:11:29 John Host Well, maybe this devil does need an advocate, then.

[The litigants laugh, John stifles laughter.]

Maybe you should have hired an attorney to make the—to argue the case that you have no free will.

[Morgan chuckles.]

But then again, I guess you had no choice.

[The litigants laugh.]

So understandably, the idea of whether or not we have a consciousness that can actually control and make decisions independent of our surroundings—I can feel that leading into the idea that we may be living in a simulation.

Now. State the nature of the simulation as you understand it. Is it a computer simulation, à la The Matrix? Is it the dreaming argument, à la René Descartes and several Chinese philosophers? Is it some other kind of simulation? Plato's Cave? Are you currently strapped down, looking at a projection on a wall of the back of a cave, maybe even the caviest cave? And if so, blink twice if you need help.

What is the nature of the simulation that you are describing?

- 00:12:32 Morgan Guest What's interesting about the idea is that if you think about the utility of simulating a universe, right—so if you actually could do that at some point—
- 00:12:42 John Host Right. Right.
- 00:12:43 Morgan Guest That could create a lot of value for society, right? 'Cause you could go forward in time, and you could bring back different, you know, technologies, art, all kinds of things, and enjoy 'em today. Right? So you could go forward in time and see what the cure to cancer is, and then save lives. So there's a lot of reasons why if you could do it—if a society could do it, they would choose to do it.
- 00:13:11 John Host Explain to me how a simulation...
- 00:13:13 Morgan Guest Yeah?
- 00:13:15 John Host ...would allow you to go forward in time.
- 00:13:17 Morgan Guest Okay! So if you're just—you're simulating—let's say you are, um—you're able to simulate a world. Right? There's nothing that says you can't simulate—you have to simulate that world at the same rate of time that you're currently progressing. Right? So you could start that simulation and then clocks just move ten times as fast. So over time, it would actually—it would start off in a place where, you know, the universe is just forming, and then, you know, eventually it fast-forwards and now it's—whatever that simulated universe is, it's progressed more in time than you are in your current universe.
- 00:13:53 John Host You could run your simulated universe at, like, 1.5-times speed or 2-times speed, like a podcast?
- 00:14:00 Morgan Guest Yeah! Yeah. But you'd probably have to be—
- 00:14:01 John Host That's not my preference.
- [The litigants laugh.]*
- 00:14:03 Morgan Guest Probably have to be a lot—a much higher multiple. Yeah.
- 00:14:05 Jesse Host I guess my concern is just that the simulation might ruin the comedic timing.
- 00:14:11 John Host Yeah, exactly.
- [Morgan laughs.]*
- Although you know, if you run the simulation at half speed, then everyone sounds drunk, and it's a lot of fun.
- 00:14:18 Jesse Host Yeah, that is pretty fun.
- [Morgan chuckles.]*
- 00:14:20 John Host Try it out on *Pod Save America*. It's really funny.

00:14:22 Jesse Host Yeah. *Pod Save America* chopped and screwed.

00:14:26 John Host I think that you are gesturing towards Nick Bostrom's (*bo-strums*)—and I apologize if I'm mispronouncing it. I'm sure that I am. It is B-O-S-T-R-O-M. It is a Swedish name for a Swedish man, who's a philosopher at Oxford University. That's one of the—that's one of the bigs, Jesse Thorn. It's one of the bigs.

00:14:45 Jesse Host Yeah. It's Yale, Oxford—

00:14:48 John Host Right.

00:14:49 Jesse Host —UC Santa Cruz.

00:14:50 John Host Mm-hm.

00:14:51 Jesse Host That's the big three.

00:14:52 John Host Yeah.

[One of the litigants laughs.]

I mean, you know, to give you a sense of how advanced they are in the Oxford philosophy department... they propose that there might even be a *Free Willy 2*.

00:15:02 Jesse Host Hm.

00:15:03 John Host That there might even be a second *Free Willy*. If you can imagine it.

00:15:05 Jesse Host Yeah. At UC Santa Cruz, I took a class on whether *Free Willy* existed, and it sort of all hinges on whether the world actually has been healed.

00:15:16 John Host Uh-huh? Uh-huh.

00:15:17 Jesse Host *[Stifling laughter]* And made a better place.

00:15:18 John Host Sure. That makes sense.

00:15:19 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:15:20 John Host So Nick Bostrom (*bo-strum*)—let's say that's how you pronounce his name—he did a big, big philosophical paper that explored whether or not there could be a—we could be living in a simulation. And specifically, he had the idea that we are a simulation of the ancestors of a future post-human society that is able to run a simulation. Do you see what I'm saying?

00:15:44 Morgan Guest Yeah! Yeah.

00:15:45 John Host And so from the point of view of those evil demons who are running—to use the Cartesian term. Those evil demons, those post-humans who are running the simulation of what it was like in the old-timey times of 4/20/2021, yes. Our future has been determined already. If the simulation is running, they could at any point pick the—a future part of the simulation and run the cure for cancer back to us. Is that the point you're making?

00:16:12 Morgan Guest I think that if the technology exists to do it, it would be a reason to do it. And then you look at how vast our universe is, and...

00:16:21 John Host Mm-hm.

00:16:22 Morgan Guest It just seems like it's—it's possible that at some point in time, some society will be able to simulate the universe, and in that case, there's probably gonna be more simulated universes than there are actual

universes, and so... you know, it's possible that we live in a simulated universe. That's the basic thing that we talk about.

00:16:46 Jesse Host

Probably, but not certainly, *RollerCoaster Tycoon*.

[John and Morgan laugh.]

00:16:51 John Host

That was a good game, Jesse Thorn. *RollerCoaster Tycoon*. I loved it because you get to ride the rollercoasters that you build, and it doesn't—obviously it can't simulate the sudden stops and starts. You don't feel your stomach dropping out from under you as you go down those steep inclines, but it's cool, 'cause you build a rollercoaster and you get to ride it. And you're—not only that, but you're having fun, 'cause you're riding in a simulated alternate universe, where someone who builds rollercoasters could be a total tycoon.

00:17:20 Jesse Host

Yeah.

00:17:21 John Host

You know what I mean?

[John and Jesse laugh.]

00:17:23 Jesse Host

[Laughing] Like, a real—like, a real Bill Gates.

00:17:29 John Host

Yeah! Right. Like, Elon Musk. *[Laughs.]*

00:17:31 Jesse Host

[Stifling laughter.] Like, "I've decided—I've decided to use my rollercoaster earnings to fund malaria nets for the third world!"

00:17:38 John Host

[Laughs.] Exactly. That's—that's a great alternate universe.

00:17:44 Jesse Promo

It's MaxFunDrive time. Let's take a quick break from the courtroom, and explain to people what the MaxFunDrive is, how it works, and why they should join Maximum Fun!

00:17:52 John Promo

You mean hashtag #MaxFunDrive? The hashtag that's sweeping not just the nation, but to all of our listeners in the Netherlands, and Colombia, and lands abroad?

00:18:03 Jesse Promo

Honestly, John, the reason I signed up for this was because I thought it was hash browns MaxFunDrive—

[Both laugh.]

Um, so, here I am with my Cholula in my hand, and nothing to eat!

00:18:13 John Promo

Let me explain it to you. *[Stifles laughter.]*

MaxFunDrive is the time every year, once a year, when we come to you and ask for you to think about what Maximum Fun the network and our community of podcasts mean to you, and whether you can support us in the coming year. MaxFun's business model, as you know from all the promos, including the ones that have my dumb voice in 'em, is artist-owned, audience-supported.

Think about that for a second. We're unlike any other network, in that each of the podcasts you listen to is owned by its creator. Not by the big network, some big company. And it is audience-supported! Every year, the audience pitches in to give financial—not just moral, though that is definitely appreciated—financial support to each of those artist-owned, independent podcasts.

So that means when you become a member, you are directly affecting our ability to continue not only *Judge John Hodgman*, but for Maximum Fun as a community of podcasts to plan for other future shows!

00:19:15 Jesse Promo I have to say, this has been a tough year for everybody. I will say that it's been a particularly tough year for me. And I have really relied on the various levels of community of MaxFun. From seeing my friends John and Jennifer once a week, to the fans of *Judge John Hodgman*, to the broader MaxFun community. And I've heard from a lot of people for whom MaxFun shows, including this one, were comforts in very difficult times.

This year is a special year. We understand that. There are lots of *Judge John Hodgman* listeners who are out there who aren't able to join because of their economic circumstances. But I think there are a lot of *Judge John Hodgman* listeners who are able to join, and your joining helps us keep these shows free for the folks who aren't able to join.

All you have to do is go to MaximumFun.org/join. There are levels starting at five bucks a month, and lots of amazing stuff you get at all of those levels. But I think ultimately, the greatest reward that you get for becoming a Maximum Fun member is knowing that you're part of what makes this show and other shows at Maximum Fun possible.

00:20:35 John Promo Yeah, but I'm gonna talk about the swag anyway, Jesse.

00:20:37 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** [*Stifling laughter*] 'Cause it's like—it's part of the—I mean, the—

Jesse: Okay, great. Thank you, John. Thank you, John. That's what I was building towards.

[*John laughs.*]

00:20:41 Jesse Promo Sorry about feelings!

[*Both laugh.*]

00:20:43 John Promo I obviously feel exactly the same way, and in the next pledge break I'll talk about a little bit of what this community has meant to me personally over the past year—over the past ten years, really, but the past year in particular, and that's very true. And you know, I caught myself a couple of times, because we've always described MaxFun, understandably, as a network. It is effectively a broadcast network model in certain ways that feature, support, and nurture, and develop different shows. You know.

But once I realized that the theme of this year's MaxFunDrive was community, suddenly I realized that it's not a network at all. "Network" suggests some kind of, you know, networking, where we're all interconnecting with each other to gain advantage of some kind. From the moment that I was aware of Maximum Fun, joined it, and certainly since I've been a part of it, I've known that it's a community. It's a community of creators who support each other, and in the broader sense—and now I understand better than ever—it's a community of listeners. And it's a community of producers and editors behind the scenes, who are supported by frankly one of the

best companies in the world to work for, I think, that is inclusive, diverse, supportive of different voices both in front of the microphone and behind the microphone.

But also, it is a community of all of the people who support the show by spreading the word, and suggesting titles for the show, and all the other ways that the MaxFun community—who could not get together in person this year with each other, the way we normally would—has stayed together through very difficult times.

00:22:29 Jesse Promo

But seriously, John, the stuff.

00:22:30 John Promo

Right. The swag. Excuse me. I apologize. I made a promise. I'm gonna keep it.

The basic way to join Maximum Fun is at the \$5-a-month level. And that's a great deal. 'Cause not only do you feel good about supporting the podcasts that you love at a very affordable level for a lot of people, but also it unlocks—would you say hundreds of hours?

00:22:53 Jesse Promo

Yeah. [*Chuckles.*] I think it's like 250 or 300 hours or something now of bonus content, including ten years of special episodes of *Judge John Hodgman* that are exclusive to members. This year we made an episode where Jen, John, and I will watch the movie *Dracula* along with you. The Bela Lugosi *Dracula*, which is available on streaming, and is actually a pretty great movie. And I—it's hard for me to say that, because I think as *Judge John Hodgman* listeners know, I do hate Draculas.

00:23:23 John Promo

Yeah. It was a—it was an incredible act of courage on your part, Jesse. But the three of us got through it together. We had a lot of fun. You can watch along with us, and listen to our live commentary on Tod Browning's *Dracula*, starring Bela Lugosi.

And that's just but one of hundreds of hours of bonus content you get! Including—you know, we have a great new podcast in the community this year, *Depresh Mode*, that is hosted and created by our friend John Moe. And one of the things that got John Moe through this difficult time—uh, so far—[*stifles laughter*] was watching kaiju movies on HBO Max. Or wherever you get your kaiju.

[*Jesse laughs.*]

And kaiju, if you don't know—we're talking about, like, Godzilla, Rodan, big monsters.

00:24:05 Jesse Promo

Yeah. Japanese monsters.

00:24:07 John Promo

Japanese monster movies. And we live-riffed a movie called *Destroy All Monsters*, which not—which, I mean, it's right there in the title. All monsters. You got Rodan, you got Godzilla, you got Mothra, you got, uh, Mamba. Or Manda. Sorry. They're all these different kaiju that I never knew about. It's one of the weirdest movies I've ever seen. And I—I don't wanna spoil it for you, but the monsters do not get destroyed. The monsters destroy.

00:24:37 Jesse Promo

Yeah.

00:24:38 John Promo

It was great. So—I mean, all kinds of fun stuff that all the Maximum Fun hosts are cooking up for you in the bonus content that you can

only get if you become a member, and you can start at the \$5-a-month level. But let's talk about those pins for a second, Jesse.

- 00:24:51 Jesse Promo At the \$10-a-month, you get almost certainly our most popular thank-you gift we have ever made. The enamel pins. We have a pin for every show designed by the artist Megan Lynn Kott. People are absolutely nuts about these. They are exclusive to Maximum Fun members; you can't just go to a store and buy them. And they are gorgeous, and each has its own inside reference and beautiful design to the show with which it corresponds.
- 00:25:18 John Promo So for example, in past years we've had lapel pins that just say "Judge John Hodgman" or "All guesses are wrong," "A hotdog is not a sandwich."
- 00:25:40 Jesse Promo *[Laughs.]* Yeah. Too few people know about this! You—this is an opportunity for you to carry this message to your workplace. This is an opportunity for you to carry this message to public parks, to grocery stores, to... churches and other houses of worship. Anywhere where there are folks who do not yet know that Draculas can have any job, this pin will do it.
- 00:26:02 John Promo Look. Are you going on a road trip through the Romanian mountains, or the Transylvania region? Go into an inn! Or a local tavern, wearing this pin. These people need to know! Draculas can have any job.
- 00:26:16 Jesse Promo There are also gifts at the \$20 and \$35-a-month level. At the \$20-a-month level, the Diamond Friendship Circle, you get the pin and the bonus content. You get a letterpress MaxFun membership card. And you get the Take a Minute Tea Kit!

[John exhales appreciatively.]

Which is a special blend of looseleaf Interstellar Orange tea made just for our listeners. Which—this is real! This is a real custom blend. This isn't just, like, something they had lying around. This is actually—we went through a process of blending and designing this tea. It also comes with an infuser, or strainer, and tray that is shaped like the Maximum Fun rocket. It is really neat. You can see it at MaximumFun.org/join. And if you kick it up one more level, you also get a rocket-engraved insulated cup, to keep your tea hot on your way to work or whatever.

But here's the thing.

[A dog barks in the background.]

It doesn't matter what level you choose. We are grateful that you are choosing to become part of Maximum Fun. It was many years ago that I decided to run this operation this way, where we give away all our shows and then ask afterwards, "If you think this is worth a few bucks, please kick us a few bucks." It has seen us through economic crises, and huge changes in the podcasting industry. I'm very grateful to the thousands of people who are members of Maximum Fun. This is something where your money really goes directly to the

costs of running MaxFun, and the costs of making your favorite shows.

00:27:54 Jesse Promo So whatever level you can afford, go to MaximumFun.org/join. MaximumFun.org/join, and do not put it off. Do it now, because this is—only once a year do we actually ask for this, but go to MaximumFun.org/join and become part of this show, and Maximum Fun more generally. And we are eternally grateful for your support.

00:28:17 John Promo We'll be back a little bit later on to talk just a little bit more about the MaxFunDrive. The—I have something special that I wanna offer to you, the listener members. But don't hesitate. Go ahead and go there. MaximumFun.org/join. I'll say it again. MaximumFun.org/join.

00:28:38 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:28:40 John Host Drea, I promise you we're gonna come back to human Earth as we know it in a moment, but I need to probe Morgan's mind a little bit more.

[Morgan laughs.]

00:28:48 Drea Guest Please. Please.

00:28:49 John Host 'Cause here's the thing, Morgan. I asked a simple question.

00:28:52 Morgan Guest Mm-hm?

00:28:53 John Host "What is the nature of the simulation in which you think we are living?"

And you answered a very different question, which was:

A: "What is the likelihood that this is possible?" Right?

00:29:03 Morgan Guest Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

00:29:04 John Host And B: "How can I, Morgan, do it?" *[Laughs.]* Do you know what I mean? Like—

[John and the litigants laugh.]

How ca—like, it seems like you're really thinking of this not as someone who might be subject to a simulation, but from the outside.

[Drea laughs.]

"If you're running a simulation, you can give people the cure for cancer earlier than they normally would have had it!" You're not thinking of yourself, it seems, as, like, Neo in a tank with stuff stuck into your head, and surrounded by goo. You are thinking of yourself like... a god! Like an evil being who is running a simulation! Is that part more interesting to you, or what?

00:29:37 Morgan Guest Being God? No, um—

[The litigants laugh.]

I don't really know what the nature of the simulation is! I, um... I don't know that it matters. I mean, it could just be this whole—everything could just be an illusion. Um...

But I mean, it doesn't negate the fact that, like, you know, I still love Drea and my family, and people I work with, and all that.

00:30:01 John Host What is it that interests you about the idea that everything is an illusion?

00:30:05 Morgan Guest I wouldn't say it's an illusion, 'cause it doesn't mean it feels any less real. I think fundamentally when you think about things like free will, or "We're living in a simulation," it's just trying to understand, like, what—you know, where we sit in the universe. And it's fun to, like, play around and talk about those ideas.

00:30:23 John Host And you have not read even the Wikipedia page for Nick Bostrom (*Bo-strahm*)?

00:30:28 Morgan Guest I have not read the Wikipedia page for Nick—I think it's "Bah-strum."

00:30:31 John Host Oh. Maybe in your universe.

[Morgan laughs.]

Here—here across the timeline portal, we say "Bo-strahm."

[Morgan laughs, John stifles laughter.]

But you are familiar with him.

00:30:42 Morgan Guest Yeah, I'm familiar with him. Yeah. Yeah.

00:30:43 John Host Just, if I may. The idea tickles you. The argument that the universe is so vast that it is possible that at least one species has reached... presumably physical computational power. We're not talking about magic spells. Right?

00:30:58 Morgan Guest Right.

00:31:00 John Host You're talking about the physical computational power to create a completely quantum-computing simulation of a whole reality, and which they are applying to... physical beings? Or now what? Beings of just pure AI. Which is your guess?

00:31:16 Morgan Guest I'm not sure I understand the question.

00:31:17 John Host Are you a Neo in a tube, surrounded by goo?

00:31:20 Morgan Guest Mm-hm.

00:31:21 John Host Or are you a non-player character in some computer simulation on a computer—?

00:31:26 Morgan Guest Oh! Okay. So—so, yeah. I guess I'd be the latter. Right? So just, like, a non-player character.

00:31:31 John Host *[Stifling laughter]* Right. That's your dream?

00:31:32 Morgan Guest That's—that's my dream. Yeah.

00:31:34 John Host That's the dream.

00:31:35 Morgan Guest Yeah. It removes a lot of responsibility, doesn't it? *[Laughs.]*

00:31:37 John Host Okay! Now I understand! Now I understand the nature of the simulation—

00:31:41 Morgan Guest Okay.

00:31:42 John Host —that I was asking you to describe. And I apologize for accusing you of not reading the appropriate Wikipedia page. You obviously have done some research.

00:31:50 Jesse Host Morgan? If we're all just non-player characters in a vast computer simulation, would it be possible for me to be one of those Koroks with the little nuts in *Zelda: Breath of the Wild*, where they go, "Hee hee!" and then they give you a little nut?

[Morgan laughs.]

They're like a little kind of leaf man.

00:32:09 John Host Yeah. Can I be Tom Nook, and own the mortgage of every house on this island?

[John, Jesse, and Morgan laugh.]

00:32:17 Jesse Host *[Laughing]* That Tom Nook's a real rollercoaster tycoon.

00:32:20 John Host *[Laughs.]* Can I be Tom Nook, who gives everyone a tent and a cot the minute they arrive on the island, then charges them 49,000 bells for them, and convinces them that digging weeds to pay off your mortgage is a game?

[Jesse and one or both litigants laugh.]

A fun game to play?!

Alright. Morgan. The idea tickles you. You like to think about it. You like to think about the idea that you're just a non-player character in a vast computer simulation being run by some unknowable other, uh, future—perhaps future human race. And you love thinking about the idea that your wife is also a free will-less non-player character who was just designed by a computer. Correct?

00:33:00 Morgan Guest Yeah! When you put it like that, it sounds really cool. Doesn't it?

[John and the litigants laugh.]

00:33:04 John Host Thereere we go. *[Laughs.]* Drea!

00:33:07 Drea Guest Yes!

00:33:08 John Host How do you feel when you are described by Morgan as a non-player character in a computer simulation?

00:33:13 Drea Guest He would think everybody was that way, right?

00:33:17 John Host Of course!

00:33:18 Drea Guest So I don't take any personal offense to it.

00:33:19 John Host Well, I mean, at least—may I just say, at least Morgan isn't saying what I believed as an only child, which is, "I am the only real human being, and everyone else is an android programmed to trick me."

[Jesse laughs.]

"Including my own mom and dad."

[Jesse laughs.]

00:33:32 Drea Guest Yes, I'm glad he's not saying that. That's a good thing, yeah.
[Laughs.]

00:33:34 John Host Yeah!

00:33:36 Jesse Host I like that those androids were so tricky, John!
[Drea laughs, Jesse stifles laughter.]

00:33:41 John Host I mean, no one knew what *Truman Show* was at the time.

00:33:42 Drea Guest It—yeah, *Truman Show*...

00:33:44 John Host I was being raised in a dome by androids claiming to be my mom and dad and friends.

Does it feel, I dare say, dehumanizing?

00:33:54 Drea Guest It's—it's not that I find it dehumanizing, because I don't believe in it. So where it gives—I think it gives Morgan comfort, would you say? Or like, a sense of, like, comforting detachment, it gives me anxiety. It gives me anxiety because I feel, like, a loss of control.

00:34:11 John Host Let the record show that I observed the litigants, who are standing together in their home in—I'm sorry. Where do you live, again?

00:34:19 Drea Guest Orlando. Orlando, Florida.

00:34:21 John Host Oh. Oh, I'm sorry. You live in a simulation.
[Jesse and Drea laugh.]

00:34:24 Jesse Host *[Laughing]* Yeah, a hundred percent.

00:34:25 John Host I apologize. I didn't—

00:34:28 Drea Guest That's fair.

00:34:29 John Host I didn't know that we were getting beamed information directly from the Orlando SimuDome. This has been going on for... thousands of years, you understand. *[Stifles laughter.]*

00:34:38 Drea Guest Dang it. *[Laughs.]*

00:34:39 John Host Orlando has been a strange experiment for a long time. I didn't realize that. Okay.

00:34:43 Drea Guest Yeah. Yeah.

00:34:44 John Host No, um—I can see you there. And you said, "What I think gives Morgan comfort when he thinks about this—" I'm paraphrasing. And I saw you looking to him. You know what I mean?

00:34:54 Drea Guest Mm-hm.

00:34:56 John Host And looking at his face, which seems real to me. And looking for him as feedback as you speculated as to what he might feel. Right?

00:35:03 Drea Guest Mm-hm.

00:35:04 John Host What I'd like you to do, just as a—experiment. You have no free will in this situation, so you are—have to do it.

[Drea laughs.]

I want you to say what you think gives him comfort. Without looking at him. Just look at me.

00:35:19 Drea Guest Okay.

00:35:20 John Host Don't take any feedback from him.

00:35:22 Drea Guest Okay.

00:35:23 John Host Oh, he's even leaving the—

00:35:24 Drea Guest Yes. He's leaving.

00:35:25 John Host Boy, he is a very compliant non-player character!

00:35:26 Drea Guest *[Chuckles.]* Truly non-player.

00:35:28 John Host I'm very appreciative of you for understanding that there is some comfort that he is taking from it. And I don't want you to hold back. He's got a very cute face, and he's—

00:35:37 Drea Guest Mm-hm.

00:35:39 John Host And he has this very pleading look in his eyes.

[Drea or Morgan laughs quietly.]

And it almost would be like, "Please don't tell the terrible secret of how I feel."

[More laughter.]

So tell me about the comfort he feels in being detached.

00:35:53 Drea Guest He's very smart. Very smart person.

00:35:54 Morgan Guest Yeah. Right.

00:35:56 Drea Guest And so I think that this concept of a world where you really don't have control of the decisions that you make on a day-to-day basis, don't necessarily rely on your intelligence, or, you know, your experience—you don't have any control. And there can be some type of release in that, in just kind of being like, "Well! You know, that didn't go the way I planned, but it's not that big of a deal, because it's outside of my control," right.

And I understand that!

00:36:35 John Host Mm-hm! Okay.

00:36:36 Drea Guest I can see how that would be... comforting.

00:36:40 John Host Is that comforting to you, Morgan? The feeling that you are not responsible for your own actions, not accountable—I mean, I—unaccountability is fun.

00:36:50 Morgan Guest No, I feel accountable and responsible for my own actions.

00:36:55 John Host Right.

00:36:56 Morgan Guest And I think that's important. Yeah.

00:36:57 John Host Yeah. That was my misstatement, I think. In your own words, and looking only at me...

00:37:03 Morgan Guest Mm-hm.

00:37:04 John Host I'll even turn off—you know what? I'll turn off my video, so you can just speak into the endless void that you have no—

[Morgan laughs.]

—that controls your thoughts, but you cannot control yourself. I mean, why does it tickle you? What comfort do you get from it?

00:37:16 Morgan Guest I just think it's an—I think it's an interesting idea. And what, like, the implications of... If it—if everything is a simulation, like, what are the implications of that? 'Cause... I don't know. There's a lot that we just don't know about, like, the world, and, like, how we exist, and everything. And it's—it's just—I think it's fun to, like, think and talk about everything through that lens. To kind of get at, like, the root of, like, "What is existence?" Like, how—you know. What is our consciousness? Where do, like, we—yeah.

00:37:50 Drea Guest Now that I think about it—

00:37:51 Morgan Guest What?

00:37:52 Drea Guest I think that you just use it to comfort me.

00:37:55 John Host Oh!

00:37:56 Drea Guest So now that I'm thinking about it, it's more like when I come to him with a problem or I'm upset about something, he'll say, "Well, it's all just a simulation." *[Laughs.]*

00:38:03 Morgan Guest Well, yeah, I do—

00:38:04 John Host Ah!

00:38:06 Drea Guest So—

00:38:07 Morgan Guest That is—it—well, it is a—I mean, it is really nice, like, when something doesn't go your way, be like, "Well, it's a simulation! It's gonna happen that way anyway." But—

00:38:14 Drea Guest I just assumed it comforted you, but now I see that it's... just a—

[Someone laughs.]

00:38:17 Morgan Guest I just think it's an intere—I mean, I think it's interesting. You can see some—I'm not religious. So, like, when you start talking about things through this kind of lens, it—you know, it's a way of unders—you know. It's—it almost becomes, like, a pseudo-religion kind of thing.

00:38:32 Drea Guest Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

00:38:33 Morgan Guest But it's not something that, like, guides my day-to-day life. I just—I just think it's an interesting concept, and what it means.

00:38:41 John Host I notice that you chose not to articulate how it made you feel emotionally.

00:38:46 Morgan Guest Oh. Um—

00:38:47 John Host In other words, you said, "I think it's interesting." You did not say, "It makes me feel... relieved!" Or, "It makes me feel less anxious," or, "It makes me feel... more anxious!"

[Stifles laughter.]

"Because, you know, I have no control over my life, to a certain degree." This is a joke, but do you have emotions?

[Morgan laughs, John stifles laughter.]

Were you programmed with them?

00:39:12 Morgan Guest Yeah, no. I—I have emotions. It can be comforting to, like, think of things like that. Think of the world as a simulation. That can be, like, a source of—of comfort. I don't think that's why I wanna—I really would wanna talk about it, though. It's more just a kind of—

00:39:29 John Host You just like the thought—you like the thought experiment.

00:39:31 Morgan Guest The thought experiment of it, yeah. Yeah.

00:39:32 John Host The thought experiment that we are all... a thought experiment.

00:39:36 Morgan Guest Yeah.

00:39:37 John Host Well, look, I didn't—I didn't wanna bully you into admitting that you had emotions. I apologize, Morgan. And I wanna acknowledge that—

[John and Jesse or Morgan laugh quietly.]

—you know, we—we—[laughs]—we all have an inner life. But that inner life is accessed in different ways by different people. And so I don't—you know, didn't mean to put you on the spot there. Just wanted to try to get to the bottom of some of this stuff.

00:40:01 Morgan Guest Okay.

00:40:02 John Host Now, Drea.

00:40:04 Drea Guest Yes.

00:40:05 John Host You went through a number of rulings that you would like me to offer.

00:40:09 Drea Guest Mm. Mm-hm.

00:40:10 John Host A whole thought process.

00:40:11 Drea Guest Yes.

00:40:12 John Host A whole philosophical system of its own.

00:40:15 Drea Guest *[Chuckling]* Apologies.

00:40:18 John Host No, no! Don't apologize. Help me remember them.

00:40:20 Drea Guest Oh! Okay.

00:40:21 John Host The first was he should stop talking about it.

00:40:23 Drea Guest *[Sighs.]* Yes. The first was that he should stop talking about it on vacations, specifically.

00:40:28 John Host Does it dominate the whole vacation? I mean obviously, you don't even remember where you were, because you were thinking—

[One or both litigants laugh.]

—so much about how you have no real existence.

00:40:37 Drea Guest Right. Uh, no, it doesn't dominate. It doesn't dominate.

00:40:40 John Host Is it uncomfortable?

00:40:42 Drea Guest It is uncomfortable... for me, because it gives me anxiety. I don't like to think—

00:40:49 John Host Okay.

00:40:50 Drea Guest I'm all for a philosophical conversation, but this specific topic gives me anxiety.

00:40:57 John Host Have you tried explaining that to him before?

00:41:01 Drea Guest We've kind of talked—yeah, we've talked about it a little bit. Mostly in jest. I'm sure if I was more firm about it—a lot of times what would happen is I would just focus my conversation with Catherine, you know, and we would keep talk—we would talk about something else entirely. And he and Jeff would keep being just—you know.

00:41:20 John Host He and Jeff would just keep getting into it, and into it.

00:41:23 Drea Guest Yeah, exactly. Exactly.

00:41:24 John Host Deeper and deeper into the quantum realm.

00:41:26 Drea Guest *[Sighs.]* Yeah. Pretty much. But, you know, that's obviously—I mean, hopefully we'll go on vacation with them one day again.

00:41:32 John Host And you will. There is a difference, obviously, between, you know, when you're on vacation and a couple of people wanna talk about sports all the time, and a couple people don't.

00:41:39 Drea Guest Mm-hm.

00:41:41 John Host Unless you're me, sports conversations do not spark existential crises.

[Drea chuckles.]

It sounds like for you, you feel a kind of existential anxiety?

00:41:50 Drea Guest Yes. Yes. I would agree with that.

00:41:53 John Host Because the idea of a simulated universe, or that this is all a dream or an illusion, makes you feel...

00:41:59 Drea Guest It makes me feel icky. I don't like the idea that I don't have control over day-to-day goings on in my own life—

00:42:07 John Host Right.

00:42:09 Drea Guest —and that we're not real, or that we're controlled by something all-knowing. I think a lot of people would have—you know, feel—maybe feel the same way.

00:42:20 John Host Sure. Okay. Now, then you said I don't have to ban the conversation? You don't wanna rob him of his fun.

00:42:27 Drea Guest Exactly! And I also don't think it's fair—to put anything on kind of, like, a ban, in terms of conversation. Well, I mean, you know, with limits. But I—we've never had to ban anything else. I don't feel like that's necessarily nice of me to ask him to just never talk about it again.

00:42:44 John Host Right.

00:42:45 Drea Guest And so I thought—

00:42:47 John Host I should declare that his worldview is incorrect, and that this is reality.

00:42:50 Drea Guest Yeah!

00:42:51 John Host That I know something that even Nick Bostrom (*Bo-strahm*) doesn't know.

[Drea laughs.]

Or Bostrom (*Bo-strum*).

00:42:56 Drea Guest Yes! Exactly. So my thought is that if... Perhaps if it's ruled that it is not a simulation, then we can talk about it, because it is truly just a philosophical conversation. And we all know, because you have said it's so, that this could never actually be the case, and then I feel like that would actually free me up.

00:43:20 John Host I have just a couple of quick questions before I get to my verdict, Morgan. One, have you seen or experienced evidence that you are in a simulation, as opposed to what you might call reality?

00:43:33 Morgan Guest No. But that just means it's a really good simulation, right?

[Drea laughs.]

00:43:37 John Host I agree—*[stifles laughter]*—I agree with you. Except, here's a question:

Within the simulation, what would be the purpose of having a Morgan in the simulation who openly questions the reality of the simulation?

00:43:51 Morgan Guest Oh, fidelity. You know, just makes it seem more—more believable. Right?

00:43:57 John Host Okay.

[John laughs.]

[The litigants laugh.]

Why would the simulation have to have fidelity? If a Morgan and also a Jeff, and also a Bostrom, and also a René Descartes, and also the Wachowskis, are in this simulation, speculating that this might be a simulation—that that is somehow an aspect of fidelity, about how real human minds often philosophically question the nature of their reality. Is the purpose of the simulation, then, to faithfully replicate human existence? Or harvest body electricity to run space blenders?

00:44:38 Morgan Guest *[Laughs.]* I think it would be—I think the purpose would—

00:44:43 John Host I thought you thought this was interesting to talk about, Morgan!

[Drea laughs quietly.]

00:44:45 Morgan Guest And it—no, it—it is! No, I think the purpose would be to understand—get the benefit of all the—everything that the culture creates, right? So, um...

00:44:56 John Host *The Matrix.* *[Laughs quietly.]* Sure.

00:44:58 Drea Guest *[Stifling laughter]* *The Mat*—

00:44:59 Morgan Guest *The*—*[chuckles]*—technology—

00:45:00 John Host If you were the evil demon, what would you learn from making a simulation of reality that was so faithful to reality that you would have to know everything about that reality in order to simulate it? Hmm? Hmm?! I'll see you in Florence with Jeff! Think it over. Last question.

[The litigants laugh, John stifles laughter.]

'Cause I don't think we're gonna get the definitive answer now.

00:45:22 Morgan Guest

Okay.

00:45:23 John Host

What would you have me rule if I were to rule in your favor?

00:45:25 Morgan Guest

Oh, I would just like to—I would like to just keep talking about it. Although I don't—um, it creates anxiety, I don't—I mean—we don't have to. But, um—I—it's a really... You know, the free will thing, and the simulation thing, it's a good departure point to talk about things that will never, ever come up in a normal conversation. It's not something you would ever talk about, you know, *[stifles laughter]* when you're talking about sports, or a movie you just saw, or work.

And so it's a good departure point. And it's fun to use that as a way to explore different ideas. So I would just like to keep talking about it, in a way that does not create anxiety for Drea.

00:46:05 John Host

You said that this all started, Drea—that we moved from free will...

00:46:10 Drea Guest

Mm-hm.

00:46:12 John Host

...with Jeff and Catherine, which is a great title for an indie movie.

[The litigants chuckles.]

To, "The universe is a simulation" kind of when your kids were born, and you stopped going on vacation?

00:46:22 Drea Guest

Mm-hm. Yes. Yes.

00:46:24 John Host

Right. And how old are your kids?

00:46:27 Drea Guest

Four and two.

00:46:29 John Host

Four—so four years, right? This ongoing conversation about life being a simulation has been happening.

00:46:34 Drea Guest

I would say so. I would say so. Mm-hm. Yep.

00:46:36 John Host

Okay. Morgan, are your own children real human beings?

00:46:40 Morgan Guest

Oh, yeah! They're real.

00:46:41 John Host

Hm. Interesting.

00:46:42 Morgan Guest

Yeah, they're real. To me. Yeah.

[Drea laughs.]

00:46:44 John Host

I think I've heard enough to go into my vat of goo, and plug into my mind palace—

00:46:46 Sound Effect Sound Effect

[Slushing, glooping sounds.]

[Electronic beeps.]

[Whirring.]

00:46:49 John Host

—aka my simulated chambers. I'll be back in a moment with my decision.

00:46:52 Sound Effect Sound Effect

[As Jesse speaks below: Door opens, chairs scrape, footsteps.]

00:46:53 Jesse Host

Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom.

00:46:56 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Door shuts.]*

00:46:57 Jesse Host Drea, how are you feeling about your chances in this case?

00:46:59 Drea Guest I feel pretty good. I feel like the judge is confident in his ability to be an all-knowing god and make this decision, and... you know, kinda lay it down. Maybe etch it into some stone. So that we can move forward with this knowledge for the rest of our lives.

00:47:19 Jesse Host I like that you have taken the opportunity for this preverdict interview to elevate the judge to a deity—

[The litigants laugh.]

—and elevate the three of us into Moses-like figures.

00:47:31 Drea Guest Yeah!

00:47:32 Jesse Host This is pretty extraordinary!

[The litigants laugh.]

Coming down the mountain—*[laughs]*—in just a minute, I guess.

00:47:40 Drea Guest Yeah, exactly.

00:47:41 Jesse Host Morgan, how are you feeling?

00:47:44 Morgan Guest Yeah, I don't know! I don't know. I, uh—I felt kinda confident coming in here. Not so much now!

00:47:52 Jesse Host *[Laughing]* I mean, you'd already talked it through.

[Morgan laughs, Jesse recovers.]

I mean, I guess the question, Morgan, is: Are you even really feeling that way?

00:48:04 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Drea:** Ohhh. Who knows?

Morgan: Oh, yeah. Who knows? Yeah.

[The litigants chuckle, Jesse stifles laughter.]

00:48:07 Jesse Host Well, we'll see what simu-Judge John Hodgman has to say when we come back in just a moment.

00:48:14 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:48:16 Jesse Promo It's *Judge John Hodgman*, and it's MaxFunDrive time. Now, John, we went to our listeners a few weeks ago. And we asked them to share stories with us about what *Judge John Hodgman* has meant in their life. This is my favorite part of the MaxFunDrive every year, because people who are joining MaxFun and people who are longtime members of MaxFun just take the opportunity to share what this work means to them. And you know, we—we make our shows in a vacuum. It's just the three of us now on Zoom, or the three of us and some litigants on Zoom, talking to each other. And we don't hear the way that it falls on the ears of our audience. So this is really special for us.

We got this note here from Hannah in New England, which I—is that, like, a—that's like Northeastern California?

00:49:07	John	Promo	Southeastern, uh, Canada.
00:49:10	Jesse	Promo	Thank you, John.
00:49:11	John	Promo	Yeah.
00:49:12	Jesse	Promo	Do you wanna read this note?
00:49:13	John	Promo	Hannah writes: "Like most folks, I listened to a lot of podcasts during the pandemic. <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> was on heavy rotation, having already been a favorite before COVID. We had a huge thrill when a question we submitted was read during the Rollicking Docket episodes!" Those are the ones we recorded up in Maine with Joel Mann. "Resolving a debate between my husband and me over our daughter's Poop Town stories!" <i>[John and Jesse laugh.]</i> Forgot about the Poop Town stories.
00:49:38	Jesse	Promo	Yeah.
00:49:39	John	Promo	That her daughter was telling around school. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:49:40	Jesse	Promo	It's beautiful.
00:49:41	John	Promo	"We plan to play it at her major life events." <i>[Jesse laughs, John stifles laughter.]</i> "Her first date, graduations, and especially if she decides to have children of her own." <i>[Stifling laughter]</i> The <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> Maximum Fun legacy.
00:49:51	Jesse	Promo	Yeah.
00:49:53	John	Promo	Of embarrassing <u>generations</u> of children.
00:49:56	Jesse	Promo	Yeah.
00:49:57	John	Promo	She goes on to write: "We were also lucky enough to see a live show with John, Jesse, and Joel Mann." And the Night & Day Jazz Trio! Not to—not to mention. "In Portland, Maine!" I remember that show <u>very</u> well, Jesse. That was a lot of fun. That was—that was in January. Of 2020.
00:50:15	Jesse	Promo	Yeah.
00:50:16	John	Promo	We—the last show that we did. "And it was the last live show <u>we</u> were able to enjoy," says Hannah, "before the quarantine, and it was awesome. After the show, I rode in

an elevator full of other people who had been in the audience. Normally, New England elevator rides are silent."

I can vouch for that.

"You don't make direct eye contact with strangers! However, people were smiling and looking at each other in the eyes."

That's so weird. That would never happen.

"Everyone was talking about the experience we had shared, and the word 'delightful' was used more than once. It was truly a New England miracle. Made even more auspicious by the fact that the weather was awful. Not quite a nor'easter, but close. Listening to the podcast during the quarantine brought the same wonderful sense of connection I felt that night. Thank you."

00:51:00 Jesse Promo

Yeah. I think that one of the most special things about this medium, and one of the reasons it's such an—I guess I would say it's such an honor to entertain people in this way, is that... it has the sense of community and intimacy built into it. And we built this show to tend to that feeling. We try and make a place that is going to make you laugh, but also make you leave feeling better and more connected with other people in the world.

And we did not do this because we expected the world around the show to fall apart. But when it did, I know that I personally, even in—just in my own life, was very grateful that I got to stop and check in with that feeling once a week. I heard from a lot of audience members who felt the same way.

That, I think, extends into the way that we do business. The way that we run this thing. Like, the reason we are able to do a show like that is because we are supported by members. I don't just mean in a practical way. You know, I don't just mean that, like, uh, they pay the bills—though they do—but that the fact that that is how we do things is the reason we are able to do this kind of show.

That we—we're not trying to create the perfect venue to sell you stuff from advertisements. We're not trying to create the perfect... you know, mouthpiece for a corporation. We are trying to tend to a community, because that ultimately is what will let us do more of this. And I've been very glad this year to be in that business.

00:52:44 John Promo

You know, I was just thinking how every year when we do the MaxFunDrive, we say, "This is the time of year when we come and ask for your support." And thank you for the support that you've lent to us over the years. But MaxFunDrive, I realized, is other things, too.

First of all, it's fun. It's a time when we, as a community of podcasts—podcast hosts and creators, editors and producers, and so forth—we check in with each other. We do little crossover events with each other. We check in on our community. And we have a lot of fun with listeners and members online, social media, posting special content and having different kinds of fun together. It's fun. It's fun. It's a fun drive!

It's also the time of year, I think—and this has been true for a lot of years that we haven't articulated this way, and it's very, very true this year—when it's—it's not just our opportunity to ask you for support. It's our opportunity to express what you mean to us. And that's always been true. As Jesse mentioned, you know, the structure of our show is engagement with all of you.

And often that is voice to voice. You know. Around the world, around the country, you entrust us with your stories, sometimes with your embar—*[stifles laughter]*—embarrassing, uh, foibles. With your energy and your passions, your strangenesses, your little weirdsies, and your perspectives. That otherwise—that if I hadn't had those perspectives over ten years, I would be a much lesser person than I am today. I've learned and grown so much from engaging with the listeners of *Judge John Hodgman*.

00:54:38 John

Promo

You know, it is... a responsibility, and an honor, and a pleasure, to be in your ears. Particularly since I know—since I am a podcast listener, I know how intimate a relationship that can be. You listen to podcasts a lot of time when you're alone. When you're working. When you're walking. When you're tidying up. It is a very, very, one-to-one relationship. And I know that I listen to podcasts when I am feeling lonely. This has been a year of incredible loneliness, even if we are lucky enough to be in homes where we have—are safe, and have family members around us. There is a—there has been a profound feeling of disconnection, anxiety, and vulnerability.

And I just wanna say that, you know, it's been a—as I say, an honor, and a pleasure, and a fun, to keep you company. But you have kept me company, in so many ways that I can't—I mean, I just don't know what I would have done without the listeners this year.

And my friends Jennifer and Jesse! And Joel, and Monte. Jean. All the incredible friends of the court that I get to talk to every week. But, you know, getting your letters, getting the photos of your dogs and your Draculas, hearing the stories that you've been telling through hodgman@maximumfun.org. Even your—even your pedantries.

Even and especially when your criticism is not a pedantry, but is a genuine criticism of something that I said wrong, or expressed poorly, or a point of view that reflected a privilege that I hadn't, you know, thought of myself. Even and especially when you call me out, you've helped me and the show—me be a better person, but who cares? But the show to become bigger and better and more inclusive.

00:56:41 John

Promo

And to Jesse's point—and I think it's worth repeating—we're not doing it to create a product. We're doing it to tend to a community, because we care about you, and we couldn't literally do it without you.

So, one last thing that I just wanna say. We were talking a little bit about the levels. And traditionally—and I've talked about it in shows leading up to the MaxFunDrive—at the Leadership Squad level, if you join or upgrade to the Leadership Squad level, and you send me a screenshot of your receipt or whatever, at

hodgman@maximumfun.org, then I would do this thing where I would thank you on my Instagram feed and mispronounce your name. And that is a really fun thing to do, and I love doing it every year. It's fairly time-consuming, *[stifles laughter]* but absolutely worth it. You know, it's just an incredible amount of support.

There's no question that this past year has been different. And, you know, we're moving into what I think we all hope will be a new and better normal. Slowly. Perhaps not as surely as I would have hoped. But we are definitely moving in that—and we're moving in that direction because of science. And because of vaccination. And frankly, I think that when you go and get vaccinated, you should get free tickets to the movies, free tickets to sports games—

[Jesse and John laugh.]

—like, free—free, you know, 1,000 Medallion-qualifying miles on Delta. Like, all of these big corporations that have a obvious financial and moral stake in helping people come together to share space again, should be incentivizing the poop outta these vaccines! There's no poop in the vaccines. Don't—

[Jesse laughs.]

00:58:25 John Promo

Don't believe those rumors. The vaccines—I'm double-Pfizered up. It's perfectly safe. It's terrific.

And as I'm critiquing these corporations, I realize I'm gonna put my dumb money where my dumb mouth is. So, look. I think most of our listeners probably are vaccinated, or have plans to do so, don't need an incentive beyond helping us all together as a community move to a new and better normal. But look, if you got vaccinated? I don't care if you join the Leadership Squad! Join or upgrade at any level! Send me a... proof of your vaccination. I don't—I don't want your Social security number or anything.

[Both stifle laughter.]

You know, don't—don't send me any of your personal information. I trust you. If you wanna send a picture of your card, blank out the—the personal information. And I'll thank you, and mispronounce your name on the Internet! Just like all the Leadership Squaddies from years past.

The \$5-, \$10-, \$20-a-month level. Join, upgrade at any level. And send me a screenshot of the receipt, quote-unquote "proof" of your vaccination. And obviously if you're medically or otherwise ineligible to get a vaccination... I'll get you, too. Come on. I'm not gonna be a jerk about it.

This is gonna be a loong list, I'm glad to say. It's exciting! But, you know, I just wanna say thank you everyone for being out there, staying safe, keeping yourself safe. Keeping your friends and families safe, and thinking of your community. By getting vaccinated, and also... supporting Maximum Fun.

00:59:54	Jesse	Promo	<p>Yeah. We're looking forward to getting out there and seeing you in person, too. If you want to become part of Maximum Fun, if you wanna become a member, it's easy. Just go to maximumfun.org/join. There are levels starting at \$5 a month, and we are grateful for <u>every</u> single person who joins Maximum Fun. As well as every person who's unable to join Maximum Fun, and supports our show in all of the <u>many</u> other ways that all of you support us. We're so grateful that we get to do this job, and we're so grateful that we get to work for you.</p> <p>So go to maximumfun.org/join, and we'll get back to the case.</p>
01:00:33	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
01:00:35	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	<i>[As Jesse speaks below: Door opens, chairs scrape on the floor, footsteps.]</i>
01:00:36	Jesse	Host	Please rise as Judge John Hodgman reenters the courtroom and presents his verdict.
01:00:40	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	<i>[Door shuts.]</i>
01:00:41	John	Host	Morgan, Drea, I am not your god. But I <u>am</u> your whatever. And as your whatever, I do control your thoughts and actions there in Orlando. And I am here to reveal... yes. It is <u>all</u> a simulation.
01:00:59	Drea	Guest	<i>[Laughing]</i> Oh, no!
01:01:00	John	Host	Well, now, wait a minute! Let's have some fun and think about whether that were true. Morgan is thinking about this simulation. And the idea, obviously, of determinism, and predestination, and lack of free will, is <u>not</u> one that was originally discussed in the context of a Cartesian evil being/advanced robots in <i>The Matrix</i> who created a simulation, created a world for humans to exist in for some reason. Right? It was originally discussed in the term—in the idea that there's an evil demon who is named God, and what our relationship is with <u>that</u> patriarchal figure, that daddy figure in the sky, who is making us do stuff.
			<p>It also, by the way, is very common—as you pointed out—to many, many different faith pathways. I mean, obviously, the—you know, I'm not an expert in Buddhism, either big vehicle or small vehicle. But the <u>idea</u> that this life that we experience is an illusion, and how that should impact the way we <u>lead</u> our lives, is a big part of faith. Right?</p> <p>This is a faith discussion. Because there <u>is</u> no god or whatever, except for me—<i>[stifles laughter]</i> the one and only god or whatever—who can tell you for certainty that this is a simulation or not. It is an unanswerable question. It is a ponderable.</p>
01:02:24	John	Host	<p>And since it is an unanswerable question, it is one that <u>does</u> produce anxiety. It is—produces more questions! For Morgan, that is... fun? For Drea, it is a nuisance at best, and a existential crisis at worst.</p> <p><i>[Drea laughs.]</i></p> <p>Particularly because the idea of this life being an illusion can be a relief, in the sense that there is—that the material world that we experience has no intrinsic value. That it, in fact, <u>is</u> an illusion that we can transcend, right? Either through meditation or—in other faith</p>

pathways—good work, and get to Heaven, or whatever. Right? Or this is an illusion in which we have no free will, and it is punitive. You know.

Both of those are big ideas that I could understand why a Morgan and a Jeff might wanna sit around and jaw about in Italy. However, I am—strangely, for a god or whatever—personally an agnostic. I believe in unanswerable questions. Including, "Is there something beyond our perception?" Including possibly an afterlife! That is where my faith system lies: that there are questions that we do not know the answers to.

And that therefore, whether you define our existence here on Earth as being an illusion made for us by a god, or our far future transhuman evil genius descendants, or machines, or an AI, or whatever it is... That is necessarily beyond our perception. And whether the "truth," quote-unquote, will ever be revealed to us, itself is an unanswerable question. Until, you know, Laurence Fishburne comes and kidnaps us, and offers us a metaphor for, uh, horrible behavior online.

[A litigant laughs quietly, John stifles laughter.]

Very—very oblique reference, there.

01:04:27 John Host

So I take an existentialist position, which is: We presume that the material world is real, and that we presume that our lives here come to an end, and that the illusion that we experience was not created by one or many consciousnesses, but by the material world itself organizing itself through the principle of evolution and the chaos of change.

I'm right. I think.

[Jesse and a litigant laugh quietly, John stifles laughter.]

But the point is, whether it's a projection, an act of God, an act of AI, or whatever, this world that we experience—it is indistinguishable from a simulation. And therefore, you conduct yourself as though... your wife were a real person.

[Jesse laughs, Drea chuckles, John stifles laughter.]

Obviously you do, Morgan. *[Laughs.]*

01:05:11 Drea Guest

Yes, he does. He does. *[Laughs.]*

01:05:14 John Host

Obviously, you do. The thing that makes me suspicious of the idea that we are living in a simulation is, A: it seems like a real extra step to explain existence. Because as I alluded to early on, the people running the simulation themselves might be a simulation, who are being run by a different simulation. It just goes on and on and on and on and on.

It's, like, a lot of extra work to justify a simple reality: that I am a thing of bone and meat that somehow got this kind of brain, and I somehow am able to use this kind of communication, and somehow have been able to hug and kiss people that I care about, and trust

those emotions are real, and create other—it's just, like—this is just—what's happening is happening. It's the Occam's razor. It's real. I think, therefore I am.

[Beat.]

[A little fainter] Right?

I lost my own train of thought.

[The litigants laugh.]

I talk, therefore I get lost.

[More laughter.]

01:06:06 Drea Guest

That's my own personal mantra.

01:06:08 John Host

The other reason that I am distrustful of the simulation argument is—boy, that would be a consolation, especially after this last year, to imagine.

[Drea sighs, Morgan chuckles.]

As many people have, you know, in popular culture. That this is all part of a simulation, it's not the real thing, that at some point depending on your point of view in the world, you accidentally fell down the stairs and entered into a bizarre dream.

It's natural that we question our sense of reality. We are tested every evening, as we fall asleep! If we're lucky enough to be able to sleep. Reality can be very, very easily simulated. Such that you don't even realize that it's happening. By one brain! Not a million robots! One brain. This is natural.

Just as the world is a natural process, a material process, a real process—not a highly sophisticated hologram—I also think that it's absolutely natural to think about this stuff and think about its consequences.

So...

[Whispering] Drea. The world is real. You're right. I'm just telling you.

01:07:16 Drea Guest

[Whispering] I knew it!

01:07:17 John Host

[Whispering] But I'm not ruling in your favor. I'm sorry.

01:07:20 Drea Guest

[Whispering] Okay. Thank you.

[Morgan chuckles.]

01:07:21 John Host

[Whispering] It—Morgan is using a part of his brain that was—you can't say "designed" by evolution, because evolution is not design.

[Drea laughs quietly.]

[Still whispering] It is a product of evolution, of self-referentiality, and self—and provocative questioning of reality that's totally natural to our species.

01:07:42 Drea Guest

[Whispering] Okay.

01:07:43 John Host

[Whispering] It's part of our imagination, and it's part of why we are in some ways the most constructive and equally the most destructive species on Earth.

01:07:52 Drea Guest

[Whispering] That makes sense.

01:07:53 John Host

[Whispering] You married a real human, is what I'm telling you. Not a hologram.

01:07:56 Drea Guest

[Laughs quietly.]

[Whispering] Thank you.

01:07:58 John Host

[Whispering] I'm glad—I'm glad you can extend him the courtesy of believing in his whole humandom, and I hope that he offers you the same courtesy.

01:08:06 Drea Guest

[Whispering] He does.

[All whispering stops.]

01:08:08 John Host

Morgan, it's fine for you to talk about these things with your friend Jeff.

[The litigants laugh.]

You should try to read the room, and not get into it with Drea, 'cause she doesn't care; she's not as interested as you are.

[The litigants laugh harder.]

If you wanted to, you could try to be more interesting about it.

[More laughter.]

I mean, that's the only other thing I can say. *[Stifles laughter.]* First of all—I mean, you're talking to your god or whatever! For a long time, I had accidentally turned my camera off, and you were just talking to a—an empty void.

[More laughter.]

You know, I might—*[stifles laughter]*—I might as well have been a masked Oracle in Delphi. Very, very—it's intimidating to come onto a podcast, and put your inner lives up for my judgment, and I appreciate that. So are you really gonna get into it with me? The way you can get into it with Jeff at midnight in Florence? No! I bet you and Jeff have some great conversations.

01:08:57 John Host

But... if I'm out here—if I'm doing some Wikipedia research, looking at some Nick Bostrom... you know, let's get into it!

[John and the litigants laugh.]

When I—you know what I mean? Like, don't be like, "I just like thinking about it." Tell me what the consequences are! What the ramifications might be! Why you think it's happening! Why would it even exist in the first place? Get into it with me, man! Let's grok each other!

We'll do it another time, when we can see each other in person, and you will see!

01:09:21 Drea Guest

One time.

01:09:22 John Host

That your god or whatever is not a figment of some computer program. No! I am a flesh-and-blood human being. At MaxFunCon, should it happen again and you attend, let's you and I really dig into whether this is a simulation or not and what it means. Because I think that if you're able to articulate those things in a little bit more of a provocative and interesting way, and have some arguments, maybe Drea would be interested in hearing more about it! You know? Instead of just, like, "You're not real. None of this is real. Where's the milk?"

[Jesse and Drea laugh.]

This is the sound of a gavel.

01:09:52 Clip Clip

[The rumbling of water.]

[The cry of a dolphin and/or a bird, echoed or repeated farther away a moment later.]

01:09:55 John Host

Judge John Hodgman rules; that is all.

01:09:57 Sound Effect Sound Effect

[As Jesse speaks below: Door opens, chairs scrape on the floor, footsteps.]

01:09:58 Jesse Host

Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom. Morgan, how do you feel?

01:10:02 Sound Effect Sound Effect

[Door shuts.]

01:10:03 Morgan Guest

I guess relieved? I do wish I was able to get into it a little bit more. But, um—

[Jesse laughs.]

Yeah! No, I feel good. *[Chuckles.]*

01:10:10 Jesse Host

[Laughing] Admit it, Morgan: You always feel like you wish you could get into it a little bit more.

01:10:18 Morgan Guest

That's my mantra.

[Drea and Jesse laugh.]

01:10:20 Jesse Host

Your getting-into-it is never satiated.

[Jesse and Morgan laugh.]

Drea, how are you feeling?

01:10:27 Drea Guest

I feel good! I feel good. I do—you know, Morgan—his discussion about it is always interesting, I have to say. I would say that it's

probably sometime tempered by the fact that I have had a glass of wine. [Laughs.] So—and so I would say that Jeff would also be a good person to give his opinion on whether or not it's interesting. And y'all always do have long conversations about it!

01:10:53	Morgan	Guest	Yeah.
01:10:54	Drea	Guest	So I will make an effort to get educated on it, as well.
01:10:58	Jesse	Host	Drea, Morgan, thanks for joining us on the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast.
01:11:02	Sound Effect	Transition	[Three gavel bangs.]
01:11:03	Jesse	Promo	We just want to take this opportunity to thank <u>everybody</u> who has gone out of their way to become a member of Maximum Fun during the MaxFunDrive. We salute each and every one of you who's gone to maximumfun.org/join . You're the reason we can do this!
01:11:17	John	Promo	Yep! And, look. I'll say again. If all you can offer is moral support, that is an incredible gift to us. Hashtag #MaxFunDrive. Spread it around. Send an email to your weird dad. Tell your—even tell your Dracula friends! You know?
01:11:35	Jesse	Promo	We take—we'll take memberships from Draculas. I'm not <u>that</u> —I'm not <u>that</u> prejudiced.
01:11:38	John	Promo	We'll take—well, Draculas can have any job!
01:11:41	Jesse	Promo	Yeah.
01:11:42	John	Promo	It's—you know? It's the way it is.

But if you are able to go out of your way—and I appreciate that it is going out of your way, in a small way or maybe even a large way—to support us this year at any of the levels, we really are very, very grateful. It's called maximumfun.org/join. That's the link! maximumfun.org/join.

You know, in years past, when thinking about joining Maximum Fun, I've often said, "Don't don't do it. Do do do it." Go to MaximumFun.org/join!

01:12:19	Sound Effect	Transition	[Three gavel bangs.]
01:12:21	Jesse	Host	Another <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> case in the books! In a moment, we'll have Swift Justice! But first, our thanks to Sean Flaherty for naming this week's episode, "May It Please Descartes." If you would like to name a future episode of our program, like <i>Judge John Hodgman on Facebook</i> . That's where we ask for your submissions.

You can also follow us on Twitter at [@JesseThorn](https://twitter.com/JesseThorn) and [@hodgman](https://twitter.com/hodgman). Hashtag your *Judge John Hodgman* Tweets #JJHo! I like checking out those Tweets. And check out the Maximum Fun subreddit at MaximumFun.Reddit.com to discuss this episode. One of the most pleasant places on Reddit, the Maximum Fun subreddit. You can go and chat in a friendly way with your fellow *Judge John Hodgman* listeners.

We're also on Instagram at [@judgejohnhodgman!](https://www.instagram.com/judgejohnhodgman) Where you can check out the evidence from *Judge John Hodgman* cases, and

related matters. That is—that might be our most popular venue for social media, that—those things always generate a lot of cool chat.

Our producer, the ever-capable Ms. Jennifer Marmor!

Now let's get to Swift Justice, where we answer your small disputes with a quick judgment. Alex says:

"I don't like the bathroom mats I purchased, but they've been in my bathroom for a week. Is it too gross to return them?"

01:13:41	John	Host	Uhhh... yes?
01:13:42	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	<i>[Three fast gavel bangs.]</i>
01:13:43	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	John: <i>[Stifling laughter]</i> I would say? Yes.
			Jesse: Yeah. <i>[Laugh.]</i> Definitely. Yes. Yes it is.
01:13:46	John	Host	If you don't like them because you took them out of the bag and you <u>saw</u> them, and were like, "Oh, this is not what I wanted," then you could probably return them if—if there's online returns. But if they've been in your bathroom for the week, I can only presume that you have decided you don't like the way they feel on your wet, bare feet.
01:14:02	Jesse	Host	Yeah. If they're not <u>defect</u> —I mean, if they're <u>defective</u> ...
01:14:04	John	Host	Yeah, if they've got big holes in them. Or portals to other universes. Yes.
01:14:09	Jesse	Host	Yeah.
01:14:10	John	Host	But if you've just been using these bathmats for a week, you can't return 'em! You could call—I guess you could call the company and see, depending on what they're <u>made</u> out of, if there's some sort of recycling opportunity that you should take advantage of. But, you know, if it's just a regular towel, don't return 'em. Cut 'em up and use 'em as, uh—as, uh, rags!
01:14:29	Jesse	Host	Monster costume.
01:14:30	John	Host	Yeah. Monster costume. And the monster is named Rags.
01:14:33	Jesse	Host	Yeah.
			That's about it for this week's episode. Submit your cases at MaximumFun.org/jjho , or email hodgman@maximumfun.org . No case is too small! We <u>love</u> to hear your cases! We love 'em! We love 'em, we love 'em, we love 'em. We'll see you next time on the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast.
01:14:53	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
01:14:55	Music	Transition	A cheerful ukulele chord.
01:14:56	Speaker 1	Guest	MaximumFun.org .
01:14:57	Speaker 2	Guest	Comedy and culture.
01:14:59	Speaker 3	Guest	Artist owned—
01:15:00	Speaker 4	Guest	—audience supported.