

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. We're in chambers this week, clearing the docket. And with me is the pride of Salem College—
			<i>[John laughs.]</i>
			—Judge John Hodgman. Hi, John.
00:00:15	John Hodgman	Host	Hi, Jesse Thorn! Thank you for continuing the tradition of commenting on what I wear. It—it—even though this is a—an audio medium, we can see each other through Zoom. I can see you there in—in—what—you're in Maximum Fun HQ, correct?
00:00:31	Jesse	Host	Yeah, I am! Right there in the American Cement Building. Very proud and happy to be here. Eating tacos for lunch today, baby.
00:00:37	John	Host	<i>[Sighs.]</i> When I learned that that building... that I love <u>so</u> much—that—it looks like the cover of a 1970s science fiction novel.
00:00:45	Jesse	Host	Yes. <i>[Laughs.]</i> True.
00:00:48	John	Host	You know what I mean?
00:00:49	Jesse	Host	Yes, it does.
00:00:50	John	Host	It looks like—is it B. F. Skinner who designed the geodesic dome? And all those monumental urban living structures?
00:00:55	Jennifer Marmor	Producer	Was that Buckminster Fuller?
00:00:57	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Jesse: Buckminster Fuller.
			John: Buckminster Fuller! Thank you, Jenniferrr!
00:00:59	Jesse	Host	Yeah.
00:01:00	John	Host	I always get B. F. and Bucky confused! Anyway, when I learned that building was called the American Cement Building... I almost drove off the road. 'Cause of course it was Google Maps that told me, as I— <i>[laughs]</i> —as I was trying to find it. To drive over there to do the show with you in person, as we used to do!
			It never occurred to us before the—these—the—these recent events, the pandemic, that we could see each other through teleconferencing. And now we're all sick of it! But I'm still glad that you're able to point out that I'm wearing this Salem College shirt, for two reasons. One, it reminds me, <i>[stifles laughter]</i> I have to get dressed. I—
00:01:33	Jesse	Host	Yeah.
00:01:34	John	Host	That's a part of life. I do have to do it.
00:01:35	Jesse	Host	That's the slogan for <i>Jordan, Jesse, Go!</i> this year. "Get dressed every day."
00:01:39	John	Host	I have to get dressed every day. I am wearing—I'm wearing track pants today, because <u>both</u> of my pairs of pants are in the wash. That is, the two pair that fit me.
00:01:47	Jesse	Host	What if coach tells you to hit the—hit the court, and you gotta—
00:01:49	John	Host	Yeah.

00:01:50 Jesse Host —you gotta get off your pants real quick, get down to your shorts?

00:01:52 John Host I may pull some extra laps, for sure. And also, it's a reminder of a very nice time that I spent at Salem College, many, many years ago! Salem College is a traditionally women's college in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and I went and did a—a book event there, I think, for *More Information Than You Require*. So now, you know, more than a decade ago. And yet, shirt still fits! *[Inaudible]*—

00:02:15 Jesse Host Yeah, they got a nice shirt.

00:02:16 John Host It's a royal—I gotta wear more royal blue, I think.

00:02:18 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:02:20 John Host Is what I'm thinking, 2021.

00:02:21 Jesse Host Warriors colors. You play for the Warriors. That's why you're wearing the track pants.

00:02:25 John Host Sure. Jennifer Marmor, I'm sure you know what Jesse is talking about.

[Jesse laughs, John stifles laughter.]

You're doing well over there in your part of Los Angeles?

00:02:31 Jennifer Producer Yeah! Doing alright.

00:02:32 John Host Good. I wanted to say to you guys that I had a very exciting day the other day, because—you know, social media's fun. I mean, it's unbridled fun. It's just fun!

00:02:42 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:02:43 John Host To be on social media, and get to hear what people say about what you think. You know? But—

00:02:47 Jesse Host Yeah. Unbridled and unadulterated. *[Chuckles.]*

00:02:48 John Host Un—*[chuckles]*—

00:02:50 Jesse Host Exclusively fun.

00:02:52 John Host It's just a good time for everybody, and helpful, also. Good feedback. But—

00:02:54 Jesse Host Yeah. Sure.

00:02:56 John Host I actually had a great time on social media recently, because... if you follow me on Instagram, [@johnhodgman](#), you will know... I saw a Christian Slater car in the wild! I saw—you remember?

00:03:09 Jesse Host Wow.

00:03:10 John Host Remember a few episodes ago? The woman said that the back of a Subaru Impreza of a certain era in the nineties, to her, reminded her of Christian Slater, and once I saw it, I couldn't unsee it?

00:03:19 Jesse Host Sure.

00:03:21 John Host Well, we were dropping off a casserole for my sister-in-law, over there in Windsor Terrace, Brooklyn, and I'm walking back, and I saw this Christian Slaters car just... grinning at me with that Christian Slater grin!

[Jesse laughs.]

00:03:35 Jennifer Producer *[Laughing]* That signature Subaru smirk!
00:03:37 John Host Signature Subaru smirk! A Christian Slaterubar!

[Jennifer laughs.]

So I took a picture of it, and I said—I didn't wanna talk about what cars—what celebrities cars look like anymore, 'cause we covered it already. But I did wonder if anyone had a good story about seeing a celebrity in a car. Like, while you are driving, and you turn—you look to your—like that time that I was driving on the West Side Highway, and I looked left, and Jon Stewart was right next to me, and he saw me and he said, "I will race you!"

[Jesse laughs.]

And I said, "Okay! All the way to the renaissance faire!"

[Chuckling] Which is where I was going.

[Jesse laughs.]

And, uh, I—I beat him.

00:04:17 Jesse Host

Yeah.

00:04:18 John Host

I don't even think he was going to the renaissance faire. I think he was probably going somewhere else.

00:04:20 Jesse Host

Yeah.

00:04:21 John Host

So it's not really a fair race.

And one of them wrote in—one person wrote in, and shared one that I thought you might enjoy, Jesse. There are a lot of great stories over there on Instagram... dot com, slash... @johnhodgman. But user @thebrotherdoug wrote in, said:

"I saw Paul Shaffer in his car outside the Ed Sullivan Theater. He was sleeping—"

[Jesse laughs, John stifles laughter.]

"—before a taping."

[John laughs, Jesse cracks up.]

And I just felt—I don't know why I loved that so—I just felt that so, so deeply, that Paul Shaffer... just needed a rest. And he's like, "I'm just gonna sit in my car." And also he's parked on the street, presum—

00:05:04 Jesse Host

Yeah.

00:05:05 John Host

They don't have parking for Paul Shaffer?!

00:05:07 Jesse Host

What I like about imagining Paul Shaffer taking a nap in his car is that Paul Shaffer—who has been on *Bullseye*, my NPR show, and is a lovely, charming—

00:05:16 John Host

Truly.

00:05:17 Jesse Host —delightful person—

00:05:18 John Host Truly, truly.

00:05:19 Jesse Host —who, among many other things—among many other extraordinary career highlights—co-wrote "It's Raining Men." But—

00:05:25 John Host I forgot about that!

00:05:26 Jesse Host Yeah. *[Laughs.]* It's great. Good for him. But, uh, Paul Shaffer... is a celebrity who I could imagine taking a nap in a—in his Rolls Royce.

00:05:39 John Host Right.

00:05:40 Jesse Host Or his 1989 Tercel. Like, either way, I would believe it 100% from Paul Shaffer. *[Laughs.]*

00:05:46 John Host For me, I was—I had a Celica in mind, but Tercel is right.

00:05:49 Jesse Host Yeah. *[Laughs.]*

00:05:50 John Host That's—yeah. No. Those car naps—I've taken a few car naps outside of WERU before going in to record, when we're up there in Maine. Sometimes those car naps—Jennifer Marmor, you ever take a good car nap?

00:06:01 Jennifer Producer Yeah. Um, I used to—*[laughs]*—take regular car naps before my, uh, therapy sessions. *[Laughs.]*

00:06:09 John Host Yeahhh.

00:06:10 Jesse Host Cool.

00:06:12 Jennifer Producer In between my former job and my late afternoon, early evening therapy.

00:06:17 Jesse Host That's called self-care.
[Jennifer chuckles.]

00:06:19 John Host That's a great place for a nap.

00:06:21 Jennifer Producer Yeah.

00:06:22 John Host Because—yeah. There's something inherently therapeutic about a car nap. Because it means that you got to your destination with so much time, you can take a nap! Like, you are not in a rush. You can take—go ahead and take a nap. They're very, very restful. I encourage you, if you're getting out there in the world—*[stifles laughter]*—in your cars, take a car nap. Also, happy Earth Month. Whoops. Okay, let's do the docket.

00:06:44 Jesse Host John, I saw a famous person in a famous car the other day.

00:06:49 John Host You did?! Who'd you see?

00:06:50 Jesse Host Yeah. The car's probably more famous than the person, but my college friend Brandon Bird—

00:06:55 John Host Was it K.I.T.T.? From *Knight Rider*?

00:06:56 Jesse Host Yeah, it was K.I.T.T. from *Knight Rider*.
[Jesse and John laugh.]

It was, uh—*[laughs]*—it was the famous monster truck, Bigfoot?

00:07:05 John Host Ohhh, I love Bigfoot.

00:07:08 Jesse Host Um, I saw the other day, driving in Pasadena, California, my old college pal, artist Brandon Bird.

00:07:14 John Host Sure.

00:07:16 Jesse Host And Brandon, some years ago, ran a crowdfunding campaign—a successful crowdfunding campaign—to buy a Ford Crown Victoria.

00:07:23 John Host Mm-hm.

00:07:24 Jesse Host You know, an old cop car.

00:07:25 John Host Yeah!

00:07:27 Jesse Host And transform it into lowrider tribute to Jerry Orbach from *Law & Order*.

00:07:31 John Host *[Laughs.]* I've seen photos of this online!

00:07:34 Jesse Host And, uh, then, like, immediately after he transformed this car into a tribute to Jerry Orbach—and it's spectacularly beautiful—uh, he was driving—*[stifles laughter]*—I think it was a Toyota Matrix or something, and, uh, going into his driveway, just scraped the whole bottom of his car and totaled it.

00:07:50 John Host Oh no!

00:07:52 Jesse Host And so he just switched to driving the Orbach car on a daily basis. *[Laughs.]*

00:07:55 John Host Yeah!

00:07:52 Jesse Host And I saw him out there on the road! It was a real thrill to see the Orbach car in all its flake-painted glory. Uh, spectacular motor vehicle. Wonderful man, the great Brandon Bird.

00:08:07 John Host Why—why would you have a Jerry Orbach car if that were not gonna be your daily driver? That's what I have to say.

00:08:12 Jesse Host That's a good point. Now, let's get into the docket, here! Here's a case from Sarah from Minneapolis:

"We have a hugger in a group of my friends. She thinks she should get carte blanche to hug as much as she wants after the pandemic. She's even taunting me in our group chat with things like, 'I'll come for you, too, when you're vaccinated!'"

I love her very much. I can't wait to see her in person. But even this terrible year has not turned me into a hugger. Should I just let it go, and let her bear hug me? Or can I stick with my principles and continue to be annoyed, even post-pandemic, when people say, 'Sorry! I'm a hugger.'?"

00:08:52 John Host Hm. Mm-mm.

00:08:55 Jesse Host That's one of the "Sorry, not sorry"-est sorries you can get.

00:08:59 John Host Well—*[chuckles]*. I think you can guess how I'm gonna rule on this one, Jesse, for that very reason. Because I was just gonna say: Now more than ever, Sarah, never stop being annoyed at people who say, "Sorry, I'm a hugger."

That's the worst—*[stifles laughter]*—one of the worst sentences of all time. "Sorry, I'm a hugger" does not give you... permission to touch another person's body without their consent. You might as well be

saying, "Sorry, I'm a face-hugger" from the movie *Alien*.

[Jesse laughs, John stifles laughter.]

Like, "Sorry! Sorry, but I'm gonna attach to your face and send a probe into your stomach to lay an alien egg! Sorry! *[Stifles laughter.]* That's just meee! I love to do it! Sorry! SSSCHLEWP."

No. That's an—that's an invasion! And I—*[sighs]*. It was even before the pandemic, and now, the pandemic has—*[stifles laughter]*—has given us the... perhaps an excuse that we didn't need to be able to say, "No, thank you."

00:09:58 John Host It's—look. Now more than ever, we need human contact. But we don't need, necessarily, to have full body contact. We need to—we—we can express affection for each other, and hugging is a beautiful way of doing so. But that does not mean that everyone is comfortable with it! And your self-identification as a hugger does not outweigh other people's self-identification as a whole human being who can decide what they do with their bodies. Sorry. Sorry, Sarah's friend!

Now, the problem-ish here is, when people come in for hugs, there is an awkward social moment. If this is not discussed in advance, and you see your friend—someone I—someone I know came in for a hug! And I know that—that they were vaccinated, and I was vaccinated. But I didn't—it took me by surprise. I'm not there yet. I'm not ready yet to come out entirely into the hugging world again. I'm not sure I ever will be! But I had to do—but I went for it, I did it. You know what I mean? 'Cause there was no—otherwise I was gonna have to shove this person away!

So I would just say, Sarah, to affirm to your friend in the same way. Just text her right now. Do it right now, as long as you're not driving... your Jerry Orbach car, or whatever. Text her and say, "Sorry, I am not a hugger. Do not come in for a hug for me. Do not try to ask me for one. Do not try to sneak one. Don't do it."

And that's a reasonable boundary to set, that your friend should understand, if they are indeed your friend. And maybe it will give your friend something to reflect upon before they impose their hugging on someone else!

00:11:34 John Host "May I hug you?" That is a thing you say! At this point, you say, "May I shake your hand?" You know? *[Chuckles.]* Like, "How do you feel about this?" Those are things to say.

00:11:44 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:11:46 John Host Ugh. Feel bad for Sarah from Minneapolis.

00:11:49 Jesse Host Is it so hard to say, "Would you like a hug?" Or even just... leave some interpersonal distance, stretch your arms out, and do that eye brow raise that says, "Hug?"

00:12:01 John Host "Eh?" Yeah, that's too much, though. I mean, 'cause then—then you just have to say, "No. I'm not—I'm not going to—"

Like... Then you seem like a killjoy!

00:12:10 Jesse Host Mm.

00:12:11 John Host And I think that the "Sorry, I'm a hugger" thing comes from a different—a—an older mindset, in which not hugging was considered to be... I don't know. Killjoy-ish, and... anti-affectionate, or something? Somehow lesser than, you know, that you're not truly emotional? I—I don't wanna downplay hugging! Hugging is an incredible thing! Kissing is great, too! You know? But we have to agree that, uh, not everybody likes it. Not everybody likes it.

00:12:47 Jesse Host I'm just gonna put out there: Anybody out there who's listening, who's my friend, who's fully vaccinated, we see each other in real life? Not only am I open to hugging... Pretty much whatever. Let's rub butts together. Uh, lets—

00:13:02 John Host That's actually probably one of the most responsible things you can do! *[Stifles laughter.]*

00:13:05 Jesse Host Let's—let's hold our cheeks against each other intimately. That's where I'm at, physical-touch-wise. *[Laughs.]*

00:13:10 John Host Yeah!

00:13:13 Jesse Host *[Stifling laughter]* Let's do that thing where we each grab each other's shoulders, and we just stare deeply into each other's eyes.

00:13:19 John Host Yeah! I mean, this is—that—I mean, this—it's really important to connect with people! And sometimes physical touch is—can be really—really beautiful! You know? It's—but it's—you gotta—both gotta be into it. I remember a producer that I was working with at the time, and I—*[stifles laughter]*—left a meeting, and California, it's like, really weird...

I mean, here's the—by the way, here's the other thing. I was gonna talk about how in California, there seems to be more hugging than in New York. And there are definitely regional and cultural differences. But there are also, uh, a true gender unfairness to this, that has been pointed out to me by my wife and the women in my life constantly. Which is that, particularly in family situations—and even professional ones—women are expected to hug, and men are not.

And that's... terrible. You know? And it's often, like, someone—someone in my family, or an acquaintance, will shake my hand, and then attempt to hug my wife. And my wife doesn't—she's not—sorry, she's not a hugger. You know?

So this producer, I was saying this story very quickly—this producer and I had come out of this meeting, and we were walking out into the hot L.A. sun to our respective cars, because why would we carpool? The Earth will live forever. And we were parting. And we had hugged in the office. Just sort of like—and—and we both were surprised that we had done it. And I kinda looked at him and go, "Are we—are we hugging now? Is that what's happening? Like, are we do—is that where we are?"

00:14:56 John Host And he's like, "Uh, yeah! Okay!" And we hugged in our—in our shirts.

[Jesse laughs, John stifles laughter.]

In the sun. In the sweat. And I was just like—and it was like this

unrelenting glare of a judgmental god or whatever, that was that sun in that moment. And we parted, and we were like, "Nope. That was no good. No, let's not do that again."

00:15:19 Jesse Host

Here's something from Ethan in Mesa, Arizona:

"Can my girlfriend and I—two adults in our twenties—use an all-you-can-eat coupon for a children's pizza chain? She argues a coupon is a coupon. I argue a children's themed pizza and games place requires a child present to avoid stares."

[Pause.]

The chain in question is Peter Piper.

00:15:48 John Host

Yeah, I had never heard of this chain. Are you familiar with this chain, Peter Piper Pizza?

00:15:53 Jesse Host

Uh, I had not heard of it as a pizza chain. I know that... Peter Piper picked peppers, and Run rocks rhymes.

00:16:02 John Host

Right. Apparently, Peter—Peter—Peter—*[laughs]*. You know what, Je—? Sorry, Jesse, I tripped over that one. Uh, I would argue that it's tricky. You know what I mean? It's tricky.

00:16:13 Jesse Host

Yeah. *[Laughs.]* Yeah! I mean, it's tricky to rock a—just as tricky—just as it is tricky to rock a rhyme. *[Stifles laughter.]*

00:16:19 John Host

It's tricky to rock a rhyme... right on time, it's tricky.

00:16:21 Jesse Host

Yeah. That's true.

00:16:23 John Host

It's tricky. Yeah. Uh, no. Peter Piper Pizza apparently—ooh, I'm still—

[Both laugh.]

Still making up tongue twisters here. Peter Piper Pizza apparently—*[stifles laughter]*—uh, presents pizza to children in the Chuck E. Cheese style, because it is owned now by Chuck E. Cheese.

00:16:43 Jesse Host

Sure.

00:16:44 John Host

Ethan is from Arizona, apparently. And I guess this is sort of southwestern. Uh, I did check their menu. No pickled peppers at all on their menu, which just seems dumb.

00:16:53 Jesse Host

Yeah.

00:16:55 John Host

Get it together, Peter Piper. This is not a buzzmarket for you. This is me—this is me blaming you. It's a buzz blame.

So what do you think about being in child-gear-themed places, Jesse, without a child?

00:17:10 Jesse Host

I think... that a coupon is a coupon.

00:17:13 John Host

Right.

00:17:15 Jesse Host

Peter Piper Pizza? It's their prerogative—

[John snorts, Jesse stifles laughter.]

—to offer coupons to whoever it pleases. Who—whoever they—whoever it pleases them.

00:17:25 John Host Peter Piper Pizza's prerogative is to present people—

00:17:28 Jesse Host *[Stifling laughter]* Yes.

00:17:29 John Host —with—

00:17:30 Jesse Host They can have any—they can give coupons to anyone they want, and they can limit those coupons however they please. So, uh, it is— a coupon is a coupon. They can use it. However, I believe it is a separate issue whether Ethan and Ethan's girlfriend should take advantage of this pizza.

00:17:50 John Host Mm-hm!

00:17:51 Jesse Host Whether it's right or reasonable for them to do, eh, it's fine. I think morally, uh, legally, they're fine. Um, and while people might raise an eyebrow, I don't think it's especially creepy or anything for adults to do it.

00:18:06 John Host Right.

00:18:07 Jesse Host It doesn't bother me that much in that department. I would just say that as a person who has three young children, and in better times sometimes had to go to birthday parties—

00:18:19 John Host Yeah.

00:18:20 Jesse Host —at, uh, Chuck E. Cheese.

00:18:22 John Host Right.

00:18:24 Jesse Host The equivalent chain. Uh, I cannot imagine what coupon would lead me to voluntarily go to that place.

[John laughs.]

Like, if the coupon said, "All you can eat pizza; we'll give you 20 bucks."

00:18:37 John Host Right.

00:18:39 Jesse Host I would say, "Thank you, but I'm going to Folliero's." *[Laughs.]*

00:18:41 John Host *[Stifling laughter]* Right. Yeah.

00:18:45 Jesse Host *[Stifling laughter]* It—it may be the worst food I have ever eaten in my life.

00:18:51 John Host Yeah. Look! They are two adults in their—in their twenties. Times are tough. They just may need the calories.

00:19:01 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:19:02 John Host I hope—but I hope they are not under the illusion that they are going to have good food—

00:19:07 Jesse Host No.

00:19:08 John Host —if they go to Peter Piper. Probably the most—the best part about the experience will be people staring at them. *[Stifles laughter.]*

00:19:12 Jesse Host Yeah. *[Chuckles.]*

00:19:13 John Host Because then it's a story. You know?

00:19:15 Jesse Host Mm-hm.

00:19:16 John Host To go along with this terrible pizza.

00:19:18 Jesse Host Plus, I mean, they can play some Skee-Ball. Skee-Ball's fun.

00:19:20	John	Host	Yeah! I mean, I—I think that—I think you should go ahead and do it, Ethan. I'm sorry if you feel uncomfortable. But, uh, the fact is that <u>no</u> —may be that <u>no one</u> stares at you. At all! And no one cares. 'Cause they've got their own young people to tend to. And most people—I know that you're in your twenties, so this will be hard for you to believe, but most people don't care about you, and aren't paying attention to you, anyway.
00:19:46	Jesse	Host	<i>[Laughs.]</i> Yeah.
00:19:50	John	Host	So that—you may be spared <u>that</u> discomfort. And then the only discomfort you will feel... is the diarrhea you will have.
00:19:56	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
00:19:57	Jesse	Host	Yeah. <i>[Laughs quietly.]</i>
			We're gonna take a quick break—even if you just order salad. We're gonna take a quick break to hear from this week's partner. We'll be back with more cases to clear from the docket on the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast.
00:20:10	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
00:20:12	Jesse	Promo	The <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast, of course, brought to you <u>by</u> you, the members of MaximumFun.org. Our thanks to all of you. And the MaxFunDrive is right around the corner, so you'll have the chance to go to MaximumFun.org/join if you haven't already done so. You'll get some cool thank-you gifts and stuff, <u>and</u> you'll keep the lights on here at <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> HQ.
			We're also grateful this week to have the support of the good folks at Brooklinen.
00:20:37	John	Promo	Now, everyone knows that I love Brooklinen, because it's basically the name of my hometown, Brookline, with an N on the end, and also they have some incredible sheets and housewares. And last year, I dubbed 2020 the year of staying in bed as long as possible. But here we are now in year 2021, and at least for me, this is the year of getting <u>out of bed!</u> <i>[Stifles laughter.]</i> At a reasonable hour, in order to live like a human being again. You may be there. You may not be there. You take your time. Figure it out for yourself.
			But what I know is that even though I'm getting out of bed at a reasonable hour, and getting dressed, and doing <u>everything</u> , that only makes me value my bedtime more! I <u>love</u> my Brooklinen sheets! I love getting into them, I don't love getting out of them, and I think about them all the time in between.
			So. If you are ready to make your bedtime as bedtime-y as possible, max out on those extra soft sheets, super plush towels, loungewear... Just go to Brooklinen!
00:21:36	Jesse	Promo	Brooklinen is so confident in their core products, they come with a 365-day warranty. Three out of four years, that's a full year, Judge Hodgman!
			<i>[Both stifle laughter.]</i>
00:21:46	John	Promo	That's in—incredible.

00:21:49 Jesse Promo They've received over 75,000 five-star reviews and counting. By the way, that is probably the worst job at Brooklinen, is counting the five-star reviews.

00:21:58 John Promo Counting the five-star reviews?

00:21:59 Jesse Promo It's like, "Ughhh. Can I please do something else?! *[Stifles laughter.]* Answer the phones, anything!"

Uh, anyway, Brooklinen, very confident in their products. Very proud of their products. And they make all kinds of stuff. It's not just bedsheets. It's also, you know, uh, robes, and towels, and everything you need for a cozy life.

00:22:22 John Promo Not just robes, Jesse. If I may say: Waffle knit robes.

00:22:24 Jesse Promo Oh, yeah.

00:22:25 John Promo And you know how much I care about that? They call me Johnny Waffle Knit.

00:22:28 Jesse Promo Yeah. *[Laughing]* They do.

[John stifles laughter.]

They call me Jesse Pancake.

[Both stifle laughter.]

But it's because I'm very flat. Go ahead?

00:22:35 John Promo So give yourself the comfort refresh you deserve, and get it for less at Brooklinen. Go to [Brooklinen.com](https://www.brooklinen.com), and use promo code "Hodgman" to get \$20 off! With minimum purchase of \$100.

00:22:48 Jesse Promo That's B-R-O-O-K-L-I-N-E-N.com, and enter promo code "Hodgman" for \$20 off with a minimum purchase of \$100. That's [Brooklinen.com](https://www.brooklinen.com), promo code "Hodgman."

We're also supported this week by our friends at Babel.

00:23:08 John Promo Jesse, you know every week I learn a new phrase using the language program Babel, and this week's phrase: Je pense donc je suis! René Descartes, "I think, therefore I am."

And I remember when I learned that in high school. I learned the word "donc." That's my favorite French word, "donc."

[Both laugh.]

00:23:29 Jesse Promo That's funny! That's my favorite miniature donkey.

00:23:32 John Promo *[Stifles laughter.]*

Je—j'em! J'em le donc! Vraiment! Now, did that sound like good French? Probably not. I've been working on my Spanish on Babel. I could stand to brush up on my Francais on Babel, as well. It's the number one selling language-learning app. And it's a fun and easy way to learn a new language, or brush up on one that you learned in high school, or in college!

00:23:54 Jesse Promo There's like a thousand reasons that you might wanna learn a

language.

00:23:58	John	Promo	Yeah!
00:23:59	Jesse	Promo	You're traveling. You got friends you wanna talk to, family you wanna talk to. You wanna fill your time with something other than, uh, pressing your hands together and pulling on your fingers because you're filled with anxiety at the state of the world.
00:24:16	John	Promo	And look. I don't wanna be mean about the <i>New York Times</i> . The <i>New York Times Magazine</i> is the home of the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> column. It's the paper of record. But you know you're wasting your time with that spelling bee, everybody. You're wasting your time! What are you getting out of that? What are you getting out of that?
00:24:32	Jesse	Promo	Yeah. Yeah, we got you in our sights, spelling bee!
			<i>[One of them stifles laughter.]</i>
00:24:34	John	Promo	It just drives you up a tree when you do it, because they don't accept obvious words. And at the end of the day, what do you get? You're playing with your phone. You get <u>nothing</u> . It's a puzzle, sure. So puzzles help you—help your brain get... smarter. But there's no better puzzle than learning a language! Take that time to go to Babel, and learn how to spell foreign words, and you get a language out of it!
00:24:57	Jesse	Promo	Yeah, and it's—it's practical stuff, too. It's the kind of stuff that you'll actually use in everyday life if you're traveling, or you're talking to folks you know. And it's created by experts! Real-life language experts. Not some... sneaky, devious robot.
00:25:12	John	Promo	Yeah. <i>[Stifles laughter.]</i> These people really love language, and there are 14 different languages you can choose from. Including Spanish, French, Italian, German, and I will say it once again—'cause it's a true fact that makes me laugh every time I think about it—the <u>favorite</u> foreign language of the Yale football team, Indonesian. They're all taking it.
00:25:30	Jesse	Promo	Yeah.
00:25:31	John	Promo	Right now when you purchase a three-month Babel subscription, you'll get an additional three months <u>for free</u> .
00:25:37	Jesse	Promo	That's six months for the price of three. Just go to Babbel.com and use promo code "Hodgman."
00:25:43	John	Promo	That's B-A-B-B-E-L.com, code "Hodgman," for an extra three months free. Babel: Language for life.
00:25:52	Jesse	Promo	Let's get back to the docket.
00:25:54	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
00:25:57	Jesse	Host	Welcome back to the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast. We're clearing the docket this week, and we have a case from Cassidy in—
00:26:03	John	Host	Jesse, let me—let me just jump in right now.
00:26:05	Jesse	Host	Yeah.
00:26:07	John	Host	Uh, social media's so much fun.
00:26:09	Jesse	Host	Yeah.
00:26:10	John	Host	And I'm gonna say social media—

00:26:11 Jesse Host It's only fun.

00:26:12 John Host It's only fun. I don't know what you use. Twitter. Facebook. TikTok. WhatsApp. Whatever it is. I don't even know if that's social. But I will—there's one carve-out, though, to this rule.

00:26:25 Jesse Host Mm-hm.

00:26:27 John Host Don't—don't mess around with Peter Piper Pizza Twitter.

[Jesse laughs, John stifles laughter.]

'Cause you will get roasted.

[Jesse laughs.]

I mean, I—this episode hasn't even come out yet, and I am being destroyed on Twitter over what I said about Peter Piper Pizza causing diarrhea. It was a joke, everybody. It was a joke. If you like Peter Piper Pizza—I don't know what it tastes like. I was making a joke. And you're right. It's not fair for me—I am a horrible, immoral hypocrite. For making a judgment about Peter Piper Pizza without having... enjoyed its food first. And I—I don't know whether I would love it or not! But you're right. I am a subhuman hypocrite. And I do apologize. Not only to Peter Piper, but to all of its fans.

It could actually be very, very good. I don't know. But you can go—you can go ahead.

00:27:16 Jesse Host Peter Piper, send us some coupons!

[Both laugh quietly.]

00:27:21 John Host Yeah. I guarantee you, Peter Piper! Send us some coupons... and then—Jesse, you'd have to get a babysitter.

00:27:27 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:27:28 John Host I guarantee you, Peter Piper, that once I can travel to L.A. safely, you will have two bearded men come in and eat your pizza alone at a table.

[Jesse laughs, John stifles laughter.]

00:27:38 Jesse Host *[Laughing]* Yeah.

00:27:40 John Host And play some Skee-Ball. *[Laughs.]*

00:27:41 Jesse Host Sure! *[Laughs.]*

Cassidy in Yellow Springs, Ohio, says:

"My wife and I live in an eccentric house. One of its eccentricities is a central vacuum system. This means our vacuum is essentially just a 20-foot-long corrugated plastic tube that plugs into a hole in the wall, which provides suction. There's one hole in every room.

Another of our house's eccentricities is that it is perennially disputed territory with an endless army of stink bugs."

00:28:17 John Host Alright. That's big. That's big. But I have to say—I have to express some disappointment that the house's other eccentricity wasn't that it

wears a monocle.

00:28:26 Jesse Host Yes. *[Laughs.]*

00:28:27 John Host I would've loved that. Okay, stink bugs. Got it.

00:28:28 Jesse Host Has a mountain unicycle.

[John cracks up.]

"My wife argues—" *[Stifles laughter.]*

I knew a guy like that at UC Santa Cruz.

[John cracks up again.]

"My—"

Arguably, that's why you go to UC Santa Cruz.

"My wife argues she needs the vacuum ready at a moment's notice for surgical strikes against those stink bugs. I argue she's been vacuuming the stink bugs for years, with no discernible difference in their population. I suspect we only see them after they've completed their reproductive cycle, and come out to be vacuumed—*[stifles laughter]*—vacuumed to death, in a *Logan's Run*-style ritual."

[John laughs.]

"Also, the vacuum is an unparalleled tripping hazard. Mostly, though, I just like to put things away where they go."

00:29:21 John Host Well, first of all, uh, thank you, Cassidy, for a sweet *Logan's Run* reference. Those stink bugs are not gonna renew. Jesse, do—have you ever used a central vacuum cleaning system that is described here?

00:29:36 Jesse Host No, but it—it sounds like the best of 1959.

00:29:40 John Host Yeah. It's a very—it's a—what did we say it was, Jennifer Marmor? Buckminster Fuller?

00:29:45 Jennifer Producer Yeah.

00:29:46 Jesse Host Yeah, Buckminster Fuller.

00:29:47 John Host Right. It's a—it's a very sort of, like... Yeah. That period in architecture, and social planning, and urban planning where it was like, um, a guy in a marriage. Like, "Hey, here's a thing that we've all been doing for a million years, particularly the woman in this heterosexual marriage. She knows what she's doing. I've got a better idea."

00:30:10 Jesse Host Mm-hm.

00:30:11 John Host "I'm gonna put a hole in every wall." *[Stifles laughter.]*

00:30:12 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:30:13 John Host But a vacuum cleaner—stationary vacuum cleaner in the basement that leads to every hole in the wall, and then you have a hose that you put into the hole in the wall. And the—it was installed in a lot of suburban homes with the idea that this was somehow more

convenient, and indeed... I was sort of amused, and excited, when we learned, when we bought our house in Maine, that it has one of these things! And, uhhhh, I have—it is dumb. We have used it three times.

[Jesse laughs, John stifles laughter.]

One of the dumbest things about it is you just have this big hose to store. And I think it's supposed to have over this device on the back of the closet door? Now, Jesse, I asked Cassidy to photograph the current storage solution for the vacuum hose in their eccentric house. And I have [the photo here](#), and I'm gonna show it to you. Now, we'll put this photo, obviously, on the *Judge John Hodgman* page at MaximumFun.org, and as well on our [show](#) Instagram page, which is @judgejohnhodgman, which is also a delight.

And Cassidy swears up, down, and all around town that this is not staged. *[Stifles laughter.]* This is just where they found the hose after its last... stink bug sucking sesh, on the carpet, in front of the wood stove, where you are going to trip over it. And fall directly into a hot stove. This is no good.

- 00:31:38 Jesse Host It really—not only is it sitting on the rug, which—it looks in this picture like this rug is the kind of rug that you put in front of a sofa to identify a sort of social space in your living room.
- 00:31:53 John Host *[Chuckles.]* Right. Right.
- 00:31:55 Jesse Host *[Stifling laughter]* Uh, but it appears that in order for it to be in a big pile on that rug, the coffee table has been moved up against the sofa. So you can't sit on the sofa, or use the coffee table, to make room for this giant vacuum hose!
- 00:32:13 John Host Yeah! Looks like a giant, silvery, stink-bug-eating snake. And I'm just gonna give—I'm—look. I agree with—first of all, obviously, I'm ruling in Cassidy's favor. This thing should be put—things should go where they are supposed to go. Put things away. I feel exactly the same way you do. You took it out. Put it away. That's what we try to teach our children. Why can't we do it as adults?

But! I would even go farther to say: Throw this garbage away, completely. I know it's hard. You're invested. You're invested in the fact that your house has a system in it that was put in place before you, presumably. And you wanna use it. It feels—uh, maybe—maybe, um, wasteful! To not use it, and to just get a regular vacuum cleaner.

But we have a family member, uh, in our extended family, who is extremely thrifty, to the point—and frugal, to the point of playing mind games with us. Like when she once asked, "Can I get anything for you from the grocery store? Because your children might be hungry," we said, "A loaf of bread, so that we can make peanut butter and jelly sandwiches." And she came back with a half loaf of bread.

I didn't know you could get sliced bread in half loaves. It was—*[stifles laughter]*—it was, like... four slices of bread. And she's so frugal that we—we started to get very anxious, and like, if she made us dinner, we would be coming up to her and going like, "Um, should we—

00:33:49 John Host should I put these three remaining peas into a Tupperware?"
 And sometimes she would say, "Thank you." *[Stifles laughter.]*

And then sometimes, she'd flip it around 180, and just yell at us, "THROW IT AWAY!"

[Jesse laughs, John stifles laughter.]

And it was scary! And like all scary things, it stuck with us, and it's our catchphrase now whenever we are deliberating whether to hold onto something out of thrift, or a weird sense of loyalty to an object. When that thing, like old food, may be literally rotten, or—like your central vacuum cleaning system—uh, just plain rotten at what it does.

It's certainly not helping you with the stink bug problem after all these years. You have to consult a professional. About your stink bug problem. A pest control professional. A PCP.

[Jesse laughs quietly.]

And meanwhile, go get yourself—I'm telling you. They have cordless vacuum cleaners. And I'm not gonna name a brand. But they—they're incredible, how good these cordless vacuum cleaners are. These recharging cordless vacuum cleaners. You wanna get at a stink bug fast if you need to? Go get yourself a cordless. You don't wanna be plugging in the—in the... bug snake! You wanna grab your cordless!

And for day-to-day, everyday use? A cordless, recharging vacuum cleaner is a really good deal. That's my recommendation to you, Cassidy. Throw it away.

00:35:05 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:35:07 Jesse Host Here's something from Jackson in Minneapolis:

"My friend and I have a dispute about islands."

[John snorts, Jesse stifles laughter.]

00:35:17 John Host You're already loving this one, aren't you, Jesse?

[Jesse laughs quietly, John stifles laughter.]

00:35:21 Jesse Host "My friend Māui says..."

[John laughs quietly.]

Uh—

00:35:23 John Host I should point out that Jackson was one half of the case, uh, that we heard in [episode 320, "Might As Well Judge,"](#) where it was Jackson and a different friend arguing over whether the bassist from Van Halen, Michael Anthony, was the best bassist in the world or the bestest bassist in the world.

[Jesse laughs.]

Now Jackson's in a different fight, with a different friend, about islands. Let's hear what he has to say.

00:35:51 Jesse Host "I say any piece of land that's surrounded by waterways on all sides is an island, whether that waterway is manmade or not. Thus, a peninsula or isthmus could become an island if the appropriate canals or ditches were created.

My friend says a manmade waterway cannot create an island, as manmade waterways typically cannot exist without perpetual human intervention."

[John stifles laughter.]

"And therefore, nature would inevitably turn any artificial island back into a peninsula or isthmus.

On an unrelated note, *[stifling laughter]* we also have a friendly wager about the outcome of your life!"

00:36:34 John Host

My life?

00:36:33 Jesse Host

"Spe—"

[Chuckling] Yeah, apparently your life, John!

00:36:36 John Host

[Chuckling] Oh, boy.

00:36:38 Jesse Host

"Specifically, when and if you will live in Maine full time. We have no stakes on this bet at present, and my friend suggested you come up with the stakes!" *[Laughs.]*

00:36:45 John Host

[Laughing] Okay.

00:36:47 Jesse Host

"Or, if you find the idea of us betting on your life events distasteful, *[stifles laughter]* we will cut it off."

That was an—an entire *Judge John Hodgman* case.

[Both laugh.]

00:36:58 John Host

Uh—*[laughs]*—alright. I'll answer the second part first.

00:37:02 Jesse Host

Yeah.

00:37:03 John Host

Um... Thank you both for... speculating about my private life. Including some fairly specific details that I chose to edit out of your letter, that you revealed to me that you knew about my life, ways, and patterns.

[One or both stifle laughter.]

While also—not only sort of probing my private life, but also giving me homework to do! Like, coming up—for the stakes of your bet! Sadly, Jackson, I cannot suggest stakes for your bet. Because I want you both to lose. It is distasteful, yes! *[Stifles laughter.]*

Please! You're tracking my life too closely for my comfort. But, uh, as long as you don't tell me about it, it's between you and your friend. Just don't bring it up to me. And please, don't... don't break into my

house and look at me while I'm sleeping. In my wonderful Brooklinen sheets. That's a plug.

[Jesse laughs quietly.]

Now, as for this island thing. First of all, Jackson, you can't make an island by surrounding a landmass with ditches. That's not gonna happen.

00:38:07 Jesse Host

No.

00:38:08 John Host

Canals? Okay. Jesse, have you ever heard of the—and I'm going to mispronounce this, I'm sure, because, uh, I am not studying Dutch on Babel. That's a plug. I'm instead studying Spanish.

The Ve—the Veluwemeer Aqueduct? The Veluwemeer Aqueduct, in the Netherlands?

00:38:28 Jesse Host

No, but it sounds great.

00:38:31 John Host

Ah, it's ama—*[stifles laughter]*—it's pretty amazing. Uh, for two reasons. One, the Veluwemeer Aqueduct is an aqueduct in a middle—I don't even know—look, we'll—we'll have to post a photo of it, Jennifer Marmor, on the *Judge John Hodgman* Instagram. Because it connects the mainland to a island, through this lake, the Veluwemeer Lake. But the road to the island is a causeway, a—a low road just above the surface of the lake, and then it dips down below the lake.

[Stifles laughter.]

And then comes back up. So that ships may pass over the road. And when you look at this, especially from the sky, you look like you're seeing something impossible. Go—go look it up at the *Judge John Hodgman* Instagram page. It'll also be on the show page at MaximumFun.org. The Veluwemeer Aqueduct.

And the other amazing thing about it was it led me... to Flevoland! That's right!

[Beat.]

[Jesse laughs.]

00:39:35 Jesse Host

Dut—Dutch r—*[laughs]*—Dutch Interprovincial Road three—
Thank you for confirming that I'm right.

[John laughs.]

00:39:42 John Host

[Laughing] In thinking that it led you to Flevoland.

It not only led me to Flevoland, it leads everyone to Flevoland! Because if I remember the name of the road correctly, it's—it's Dutch Interprovincial Road 302! That connects to Flevoland, which is the largest artificial island in the world! And along with, uh—with, uh, Noordoostpolder and a couple of other islands, it makes up—it is the—it is a whole province of the Netherlands! It's the 12th and youngest province.

And this whole province is made up of reclaimed land in the former Zuiderzee. I think I'm saying that correctly. Which is an inland sea in the Netherlands. And they built up this land... I don't know why they did it. Sometimes they make islands to reduce the risk of flooding, particularly for countries that are, like the Netherlands, below sea level.

In Austria, for example, there's a big, long artificial island in the Danube that was created in order to reduce the risk of flooding of the mainland when the Danube floods. So what happens is, they built this long island, with a—with a lock on either end of the island, and they can shift overflow water into the space between the island and the mainland.

But in the meantime, they've created this almost artificial lake between this long island and the Danube. This artificial lake that's called the New Danube. Which is this beautiful bit of recreational water, and it's known—*[stifles laughter]*—it's known as the swimmer's autobahn, because apparently people in Vienna swim to work in it! I don't know how that works.

00:41:23 Jesse Host

Wow. That's amazing.

00:41:26 John Host

Look! I went on—

00:41:27 Jesse Host

I like—I like that it's the swimmer's autobahn, in the sense that, uh, I'm sick and tired, living here in Los Angeles, of getting speeding tickets when I swim!

00:41:36 John Host

Exactly so!

You can tell that I spent a lot of time on Wikipedia looking up artificial islands. And there's no way I'm gonna have Jackson's friend erasing Flevoland, AKA, "Where we make cities arise." Or, uh, Rokkō Island in Kobe, Japan. Or Port Island in Kobe, Japan. Or Wellington Island in Kochi, India.

Or—or here it is. This is what it's called. Don—I'm not gonna pronounce this correctly. Donauinsel? Which is the long island, uh, in the Danube River that was artificially made. They're making these islands for a reason. Particularly due to climate change, and the climate emergency. The Maldiv Islands are gonna get swamped! They gotta move people! So they're building new islands!

And yeah. I'm not gonna erase these islands, which are awesome—

00:42:28 Jesse Host

Yeah.

00:42:29 John Host

—just because Jackson's friend got into an argument with him at a bar, over what constitutes an island or not. I'm not gonna erase them, because nature is gonna erase these islands soon enough, sure! Nature will eventually return canals and artificial islands into mainlands, I guess, or—or destroy them completely. It's gonna erase everything soon enough. There's no reason.

00:42:48 Sound Effect Sound Effect

[Three gavel bangs.]

00:42:49 John Host

But I do appreciate your sending this in, Jackson. Because as much as I hate the idea of you and your friend sitting there, betting on my

life outcomes, I do miss arguments like this between people over whether or not—what constitutes an island, for example. I do sort of enjoy them. So keep 'em coming, everybody. Nothing about sandwiches, though.

00:43:10 Jesse Host Shout-out Treasure Island. Big ups to the Pan-Pacific International Exposition for which it was built.

00:43:16 John Host That's an—that's an artificial island, Treasure Island?

00:43:18 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:43:20 John Host Ohhh!

00:43:22 Jesse Host Why do you think there's two spans to the Bay Bridge, baby? They had to build an island in the middle.

00:43:28 John Host I thought pirates made it.

00:43:30 Jesse Host *[Laughs.]* That's a good—that's a good point.

Let's take a quick break. When we come back, a dispute about Philadelphia accents.

00:43:37 Sound Effect Transition

[Three gavel bangs.]

00:43:40 Promo Clip

Music: Tense orchestral music plays.

AJ: Mr. Robotman, what are you doing?

C-53: *[Electronically distorted.]* I'm just taking one last look at my coworkers.

Narrator: Every journey comes to an end.

Kiarondo: *[Echoing.]* Remember, Pleck, the space will be with you, always.

Pleck Decksetter: Sorry, who are you again?

Kiarondo: Master Kiarondo?

Pleck: *[Chuckling.]* Oh, right, right, right, sorry!

Kiarondo: Just calling in.

Narrator: Friendships will be tested.

00:44:04 Promo Clip

Bargie: Dar, you have to do it. You have to shoot Pleck.

[Phasers reloading and charging up.]

Dar: Okay.

Bargie: It's the only way to save us.

[A laser noise and a scream, before Bargie is done speaking.]

C-53: Wow, you shot him so fast.

Narrator: Destinies will be fulfilled.

[Wing flapping sounds.]

Nermut Bendaloy: I've become a complete bird! *[Screams.]* I'm flying! I'm flyingggg!

Narrator: On April 28th, the saga starts concluding.

Pleck: Guys, we don't have a choice. We have to put on a show!

AJ: We can do it in the old barn! We've got the costumes. We've got a stage! We can do it, you guys!

[Someone laughs.]

Narrator: *Mission to Zyxx!* The final season, on Maximum Fun!

[Music ends.]

00:44:47 Sound Effect Transition

[Three gavel bangs.]

00:44:49 Jesse Promo

It's the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. We're taking a quick break from clearing the docket. What's going on with you, John?

00:44:55 John Promo

[Bit.ly/dicktown](https://bit.ly/dicktown)—that's B-I-T.ly/D-I-C-K-T-O-W-N—if you are in the United States, or go to Disney+ and search "Dicktown" on Disney+ in Canada, and find out what happens there. You will find a TV show that David Rees and I made, that we're very proud of! Hope to have some news about that for you very soon in the future.

But even sooner in the future, as you well know, Jesse Thorn... the MaxFunDrive is coming right up. And along with all of the other amazing, fun things that the MaxFunDrive entails—all the bonus content you get for joining Maximum Fun, all of the crossovers and fun events that happen over the two weeks of MaxFunDrive—there is a very special offer that I've made year after year. And I have never, ever, ever, ever, ever regretted it.

[Jesse laughs quietly.]

I—*[laughs]*—if you join Maximum Fun during the MaxFunDrive, at the Leadership Squad level or above, in support of the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast—or if you're already a member, and you decide to upgrade your membership to the Leadership Squad level or above in support of *Judge John Hodgman*—and then you email me a receipt, or proof of your upgrading, or your joining, or whatever, I will thank you on Instagram! By mispronouncing your name on the Internet. It's the only version of Cameo I have ever done, or ever will do. And arguably, I invented Cameo, it sounds like. 'Cause I've been doing this for a lot longer than Cameo's been around.

Cameo. Gimme—gimme some Cameo bucks. Or better, give them to Maximum Fun, because—*[stifles laughter]*—this is a great network. We rely on your support. Not—and, you know, frankly, I'm—I'm so grateful for all of your... financial support this past year, but especially your emotional support this past year. And while it does sometimes happen that I am still *[stifles laughter]* thanking people well into June and July, it only means it's because we have so much

support from everybody joining and supporting during the Maximum Fun Drive.

00:47:01 John Promo So, thank you in advance. Uh, do not hold back. I am very, very ready, willing, and able to thank you by mispronouncing your name if you join or upgrade at the Leadership Squad level or above during the Maximum Fun Drive for *Judge John Hodgman*. Or... to do it for a friend of yours. Or an enemy of yours!

MaxFunDrive is coming right up, and my email, as you know, is hodgman@maximumfun.org. That's where you send your proof of membership!

Jesse Thorn, what have you got coming up?

00:47:32 Jesse Promo I wanna thank all the folks who sent me nice notes about an interview I did on *Bullseye* with the British comedy duo Mitchell and Webb. Had a very difficult conversation at the end of that one about the medical care of transgender children. And I heard from a lot of folks who were very kind about that difficult conversation, so—so thanks to them.

00:47:55 John Promo Mm-hm.

00:47:56 Jesse Promo And I have a really cool, and non-upsetting interview coming up on *Bullseye* [this week](#)—

[John laughs, Jesse stifles laughter.]

—which is with the documentarian Ric Burns.

00:48:05 John Promo Ah!

00:48:07 Jesse Promo Uh, he's known as the better of the Burns brothers.

00:48:09 John Promo Whoa!

00:48:11 Jesse Promo Alongside Ken Burns, his brother. Uh, they're—look. They're equally wonderful, but I prefer Ric Burns's movies. Shout-out to *Into the Deep*.

00:48:17 John Promo That was a Burns burn!

00:48:18 Jesse Promo Yeah, a Burns burn. Sorry. Sorry, Ken!

[John laughs quietly.]

Go enjoy your... beautiful collection of quilts. Uh, he has an incredible quilt collection, Ken Burns. *[Laughs.]*

00:48:27 John Promo He loves a—he loves a good quilt.

00:48:29 Jesse Promo Anyway, Ric Burns has this amazing movie about the late neurologist Oliver Sacks.

00:48:36 John Promo Mm.

00:48:37 Jesse Promo Who had a truly extraordinary life. You know, he—he only came out in his—very late in his life, in his, like, seventies. He was at one point a—like, the—one of the top power lifters in the state of California.

00:48:57 John Promo I did not know that.

00:48:59 Jesse Promo Yes. *[Laughs.]* Uh, at one point he was—he would—when he was a medical doctor, would do enough amphetamines to ride his

motorcycle, stopping only for gas, uh, from Los Angeles to the Grand Canyon overnight. Um—and back. And Ric Burns made a truly beautiful film about him that is on PBS, and is so passionate about the subject of Oliver Sacks, who—who is in the film. Like, basically, Oliver Sacks invited Ric Burns to come hang out with him as Oliver Sacks was—uh, as his life was ending.

00:49:37 John Promo

Wow.

00:49:38 Jesse Promo

And it's... really extraordinary movie, and a really wonderful conversation! It's so wonderful that I didn't get to talk about his whaling documentary *Into the Deep*—

[John sighs, laughs.]

—which I recommend very highly. Or—or his movie about Coney Island that rules so hard, and is mostly just Grandpa Al Lewis from *The Munsters*, who used to work at Coney Island as a—like, a three-card Monte man, uh, just being crazy and fantastic. Anyway, uh, that's on *Bullseye*, and also in the Put This On Shop right now I do have *ALF cards*.

00:50:08 John Promo

Oh, no. You can't be serious.

00:50:11 Jesse Promo

Yeah. Now there's *ALF cards*.

00:50:12 John Promo

Oh my—

00:50:14 Jesse Promo

We got some *ALF cards* and some *Bill & Ted cards*. *[Laughs.]*

[John exhales slowly.]

Bill & Ted's Bogus Journey cards. *[Stifles laughter.]* I don't know! I get—people love the cards!

00:50:21 John Promo

People looove the cards!

00:50:22 Jesse Promo

Go to PutThisOnShop.com. That's all. Okay. We'll be back in just a second on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

00:50:28 Sound Effect Transition

[Three gavel bangs.]

00:50:30 Jesse Host

Welcome back to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. We have a case here from Claire in Philadelphia:

"Dear Judge,

I seek an injunction against my husband William. We have two young sons, and live in my hometown, Philadelphia. Our very talkative two-year-old Ward has recently developed the beginnings of a strong Philadelphia accent. This is surprising, since I've lost most of my accent over the years, except for a few words, like 'wudder' for 'water', and 'tale' for 'towel,' and Philly accents are rare in our neighborhood.

I find Ward's accent adorable. And I'll admit I've encouraged it by also hamming up my own accent around him. My husband, a native of North Jersey—"

00:51:18 John Host

Mm-hm.

00:51:19 Jesse Host

"—hates it! And will correct my son constantly. He thinks it's

important to teach our son to speak correctly. I say he's being classist, as it's mostly working-class folks who have strong accents. And also, he's just bothering our son!

He also doesn't correct him when he says... 'opameal' for 'oatmeal,' so he clearly is singling out the Philly-isms.

Please tell my husband to let my son be the Philly rat that he is, and stop correcting his accent."

00:51:53	John	Host	So I don't know—I—like, opa—opameal? I didn't know what that was.
00:51:58	Jesse	Host	Opameal.
00:51:59	John	Host	Yeah.
00:52:00	Jesse	Host	Yeah.
00:52:01	John	Host	So apparently that's a North Jersey thing. It's, uh—it's oatmeal with cubes of Taylor Ham in it.
			<i>[Jesse laughs.]</i>
			No, I think it's just a two-year-old mispronouncing oatmeal, right?
00:52:12	Jesse	Host	Yeah.
00:52:13	John	Host	Yeah. That's not a specific accent thing. That's just a funny thing that a two-year-old said.
00:52:19	Jesse	Host	Yeah.
00:52:20	John	Host	What do you think about this, Jesse?
00:52:22	Jesse	Host	I mean... I don't know. I'm just concerned, uh, if the kid will get made fun of, uh, when he goes to the Wawa to pick up them hoagies!
			<i>[John laughs quietly, Jesse stifles laughter.]</i>
00:52:35	John	Host	"They got that ring baloney at the Wawa I go to."
			<i>[Both laugh quietly.]</i>
			Shout-out to Jon Wurster. Philly Boy Roy.
			I think that Claire knew what Claire was doing when Claire wrote in, 'cause the Philly accent is one of my favorite accents.
00:52:50	Jesse	Host	Yeah.
00:52:51	John	Host	And I was just trying to do it, and I can't. It's—you know, I've mentioned this before, my mom is a native of Philadelphia. She lost her Philadelphia accent when she moved... <i>[deep breath]</i> to New England, <i>[mumbling quickly]</i> which is a region in the northeastern part of the United States.
			<i>[Back to usual speaking voice/speed.]</i>
			My dad grew up in Central Massachusetts, and had a—a Massachusetts accent, which is ve—you know, we've talked about it before on the podcast, how he says "draw" instead of "drawer." Uh, but he <u>mostly</u> lost most of his—what you would think about as your

Affleckian Massachusetts accent as well, when he went to college in middle age, because it's—Claire is not wrong that a lot of these urban accents tend to be, you know, working-class accents. working middle-class accents.

And my mom grew up in what you would call a working middle-class neighborhood of Philadelphia. My grandfather worked in the printing press of the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Most of my aunts still have a Philadelphia accent. Some of their kids still have a Philadelphia accent. But it is identified like the Boston accent! With a—with a kind of a working-class tradition. And I love both accents. I take it back. I don't like the Boston accent.

[Jesse laughs, John stifles laughter.]

It reminds—it reminds me of kids who played hockey in high school, who wanted to be mean to me. But the Philly accent, I have a really deep affection for. The tragedy is, because both my parents lost their accents, I can't do either accent at all. You know, I try and try and try. I say "warder ice" as much as I can. But it just sounds fake. I love that Philadelphia accent. It's so strange, and beautiful, and weird, and melodic, and—and also, you know, it—eh, rough? I mean, it's great. It's a great accent.

00:54:43 John Host

So obviously I'm gonna find in favor of Claire. And it should be obvious! Because unlike, say, a college first-year student who is trying to trick people into thinking he's British, your two-year-old Ward is not trying to fool anyone.

[John chuckles, Jesse laughs quietly.]

Not trying to impress anyone. He's not trying to put on an act, or be interesting! He's two years old!

00:55:04 Jesse Host

[Irish accent] "Oh, Mother! Where can I find me wee binky?"

[Both laugh.]

[Irish accent] "Mother dearest!"

[Accent stops.]

00:55:16 John Host

Ward's just picking it up naturally! And... yeah! For—it's not just because I love the Philadelphia accent that I'm rooting for him to—to take this one on. It's also that I don't think his dad should be hyper-correcting him all the time about what he says, because... look, I'm no parenting expert, but that can't be good!

[Stifles laughter.]

I don't think that can be good. I don't think that leads to good feelings, of support. But... guess what, Claire? You know, in Philadelphia, they call it Taylor Pork Roll. In North Jersey, they call it Taylor Ham. And in the spirit of North Jersey, I'm gonna order you to not ham it up, as you put it. Do not ham up your accent.

Just be yourself! Don't try to trick him into having this accent. You're not—*[stifles laughter]*—you're not putting him in a—*[gasps]*—you're

not—[stifles laughter]—you're not raising this kid scientifically to be exactly the way you want them to be by putting them in a—aha!—B. F. Skinner box. That's the correct reference!

Try and just—[stifles laughter]—try and just coexist with a whole human being, and be a good role model to them. And being a good role model means, A, not hyper-correcting them. And B, just being yourself and talking the way you talk. Let Ward be whoever Ward is.

00:56:35 Sound Effect Sound Effect [Three gavel bangs.]

00:56:37 Jesse Host Can I give a special regional accent shout-out?

00:56:40 John Host Yeah, please.

00:56:42 Jesse Host One that I don't think—one that I think needs its own Philly Boy Roy to champion it?

00:56:46 John Host Yeah.

00:56:47 Jesse Host That's the Baltimore accent.

00:56:48 John Host Bal'more?

00:56:51 Jesse Host Balmer, Maryland. My, uh—my mother is from Washington, D.C.

00:56:54 John Host Yeah.

00:56:55 Jesse Host Spent a lot of time there. And would kind of make occasional reference to that accent, to me. Which involves a lot of... truly amazing... invented diphthongs. [Stifles laughter.]

00:57:07 John Host Yeah.

00:57:08 Jesse Host [Stifling laughter] Like, adding vowels to vowels that weren't there previously.

00:57:10 John Host Right.

00:57:12 Jesse Host And, uh—and I think the most vivid illustration of the Baltimore accent, one that is absolutely remarkable, is if you watch the television show *The Wire*—

00:57:21 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** Yes, I was going to bring this up!

Jesse: Greatest television show of all time.

00:57:23 Jesse Host You can watch the greatest television show of all time, *The Wire*, and you will see a variety of accents. They'd clearly—dialect coaching, not a priority on this program. You have Idris Elba, a Briton, who is doing a very credible generic American accent. You have Dominic West, another Briton, whose character I thought must be... from Ireland, or something? Uh—

[John cracks up, Jesse laughs.]

Until I finally realized that he was just doing an American accent not that well. Um, and you have a lot of actors from—uh, especially from New York, who are just doing kind of generic, "Hey!" type of accents.

00:58:05 John Host "Hey!"

00:58:07 Jesse Host And then you have a few actors who were cast locally.

00:58:11 John Host Yeah.

00:58:12 Jesse Host One of my favorites of them is Robert Chew, who played Prop Joe

on the show.

00:58:17 John Host Yeah.

00:58:18 Jesse Host And not only was he a spectacular actor—I mean, he is just an absolutely compelling performer—

00:58:24 John Host Absolutely.

00:58:25 Jesse Host —he was an acting teacher in Baltimore. Um, which is how they found him. I think he was helping them cast kids, and they just thought he was such an amazing man that he needed to have a part in the show. That's—that's my memory.

Um, but not only is he a gifted actor, but he has a heavy and beautiful Baltimore accent. And the minute he starts talking, *[laughs]* the credibility of how everyone else on screen talks—

00:58:48 John Host Yes.

00:58:50 Jesse Host —just melts away, and you're like, "Ohhh!"

00:58:52 John Host Right.

00:58:53 Jesse Host "This is how an actual Baltimore person—*[stifles laughter]*—a Baltimorean talks like this!"

Felicia Pearson, who played Snoop on the show, is also a Baltimorean.

00:59:01 John Host Yeah.

00:59:03 Jesse Host And she also has that beautiful accent.

00:59:04 John Host Yeah.

00:59:06 Jesse Host And it's so remarkable, and so—I mean, it is like looking at a flower that you don't understand if you're not actually from Baltimore or the—you know, the mid-Atlantic, and you're not familiar with it. It's just really incredible. And those two are just—it's just a joy to hear them talk.

00:59:23 John Host That's—I mean, I re-watched *The Wire* during the—parts of the pandemic, and it was—pretty much I was just waiting to hear the Bal'more accent.

00:59:32 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:59:33 John Host Because it's—it's close to the Philadelphia accent, but distinct as well. And it's equally odd, and melodic, and counter-intuitive, and cool. And, you know, I was gonna shout-out to, uh, the character Marcia Donnelly, who's the assistant principal in season four, who has got a great—it's—much more in the vein of the white working-class Baltimore accent. She's got an amazing Baltimore accent, and I didn't know that she was played by an actor named Tootsie Duvall, which is a great name.

01:00:02 Jesse Host Bravo.

01:00:04 John Host And then Jay Landsman, of course, who was the—who wrote the book *Homic*—that *Homicide: Life on the Street* was based on, and collaborated with David Simon a lot, in terms of the background of how police forces operate. Shows up as an actor in the show, and he's always saying, "Don't get captured."

[Stifling laughter] I just love him so much.

01:00:21 Jesse Host *[Laughing]* Yeah.

01:00:22 John Host Just would wait—every time I'd see him on screen, I'm like, "Please say—please have a line. Please have a line." 'Cause he's not an—he's not a professional actor! You know. But yeah. No, it's such—it's such—you know. Regionalism is something that's getting, you know—seems like it's getting erased a lot. And I don't wanna blame social media, 'cause social media is so much fun. I mean, it's worth it.

01:00:44 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Jesse:** An unalloyed good that's definitely worth doing.

John: Yeah. It's worth it. It's absolutely worth it. The Internet—

Jesse: Yeah. It only makes me feel good.

01:00:50 John Host Yeah. *[Laughs quietly.]* But, you know, the Internet would have you believe—is its own culture that would have you believe that there—that it's erasing all of these small regional cultures, but they're real! They still exist, and they deserve to be celebrated.

And if I had a kid who naturally had a Philly accent? Boy, I'd just be—I'd call him Roy Jr.! You know what I mean? I'd rename my child. Philly Boy Roy Jr. That's what I would rename my child.

01:01:18 Jesse Host John, I do have to say, I—I understand your rule against hamming it up. But, uh, just as I have worked very hard to raise my three children in Los Angeles as San Francisco Giants fans, rather than Los Angeles Dodgers fans—

01:01:32 John Host Right.

01:01:33 Jesse Host —uh, the only other thing that I'm really putting work into in shaping their identities is trying to get them to say "Hella."

[John cracks up.]

Judge, we have anything in the mailbag this week?

01:01:45 John Host We did receive a letter. Remember how I was talking about that Christian Slater car? The Christian *[fumbling slightly]* Slaterubar?

01:01:51 Jesse Host Yeah, sure.

01:01:52 John Host Yeah.

01:01:53 Jesse Host The one that Paul Shaffer sleeps in.

01:01:54 John Host The—*[laughs]*—exactly. Uh, so, I got a letter from Laurel, who had listened to that episode about the Christian Slater—resembling Subaru, and really identified with it. Laurel wrote:

"This is probably the most embarrassing email I will ever write. But the recent case of the Subaru Impreza resembling Christian Slater struck a chord with me! And I had to express solidarity with the plaintiff. When I was a kid, before I fully understood that I liked girls, I knew I liked Kate Winslet. A LOT.

One day while running errands with my mom, I saw a car that literally made my knees weak. It was cool. It was beautiful. I could not stop

looking at it. I wanted to be a grown-up so I could buy it. The car was a black 2007 Jaguar XK."

Should I say jag-wahr, Jesse, or jag-yu-ar?

01:02:49 Jesse Host

[Laughs.] Jag-wire.

01:02:50 John Host

Okay.

"I had—"

This is Laurel again.

"I had, and still retain, zero awareness or interest in cars. There was just something about this one that made my heart hurt, and I could not explain why. Until years later, when I read that Ian Callum of Jaguar designed the 2007 Jaguar XK... specifically to look like Kate Winslet!"

01:03:14 Jesse Host

Holy moly.

01:03:17 John Host

"So, there you have it," says Laurel. "It's possible the designer of the Subaru Impreza just loves *Heathers*."

I had to look this story up. It is absolutely true. Ian Callum said *[stifles laughter]* he was inspired by Kate Winslet when designing the 2007 Jaguar XK, and Kate Winslet was told this, and on a—on a popular American late-night talk show, revealed that, uh, she was very flattered. But she was annoyed *[stifles laughter]* that it didn't have wings like Chitty Chitty Bang Bang.

[Jesse laughs.]

They should have consulted with her! *[Laughs.]*

01:03:49 Jesse Host

Yeah.

01:03:50 John Host

And I feel like I also love Kate Winslet even more.

01:03:53 Jesse Host

Yep. *[Laughs.]*

You know, John, that's why I drive a Volvo station wagon.

01:04:01 John Host

...Why?

01:04:02 Jesse Host

The design—the design is actually based on, uh—*[stifles laughter]*—

01:04:07 John Host

Okay.

01:04:08 Jesse Host

[Stifling laughter] The design is actually—

01:04:09 John Host

You take your time. You take your time. Take your—get ready. I can see you're winding one up.

01:04:12 Jesse Host

[Laughing] Thanks. Yeah.

[John cracks up, Jesse recovers.]

The design is based on "Stay"-era Lisa Loeb.

[John bursts out laughing.]

That was my adolescent crush.

[John hoots with laughter over the top of this statement.]

They don't look alike. Lisa, if you're listening, you don't look like a Volvo station wagon. It's just a—

01:04:31 John Host You don't look like a Volvo station wagon.

01:04:32 Jesse Host It's just a joke about how I had a crush on Lisa Loeb when I was a... 12-year-old, or whatever.

01:04:37 John Host That's great.

01:04:39 Jesse Host [Stifling laughter] Lisa Loeb is so nice, by the way. I've met Lisa Loeb a few times, she's such a cool lady.

01:04:42 John Host She's so lovely. I know. I know.

01:04:43 Jesse Host [Laughing] Yeah.

01:04:45 John Host You know, I—I recently bought a Volvo. Uh, inspired partly by you! And my need for a different car. Than the one that we had been [inaudible].

01:04:56 Jesse Host Yeah. And your need to more fully inhabit the stereotype of a Northeastern Public Radio listener. [Stifles laughter.]

01:05:03 John Host Yeah. Yeah. But I was like—well, the thing was, like—you know, when it came time for us to get a new car, I was looking—it wasn't that I was necessarily gonna get a Volvo. I was just—I was just going through saying, "Which one of these looks the most like Sigourney Weaver in *Aliens*?"

[Beat.]

[Both laugh.]

"Which one—"

01:05:24 Jesse Host The character—

01:05:25 John Host I—*Aliens*—you know what, I'll let that stand. But I—I really mean *Alien*. That's the Sigourney Weaver—

01:05:30 Jesse Host Yeah.

01:05:31 John Host Or do you know what? The Sigourney Weaver of any era. [Laughs.]

01:05:34 Jesse Host Yeah. [Laughs.]

01:05:36 John Host Any era.

01:05:37 Jesse Host Shout-out to Sigourney Weaver in *The TV Set*. Underrated movie, underrated Sigourney Weaver performance!

01:05:44 John Host The—Sigourney Weaver is such a hero.

01:05:46 Jesse Host Yeah. Very funny!

01:05:47 John Host And does not—does not resemble a Volvo in any way.

01:05:50 Jesse Host The docket's clear. That's it for another episode of *Judge John Hodgman*. Our producer is Jennifer Marmor. Follow us on Twitter at [@JesseThorn](#) and [@hodgman](#). We're on Instagram at [@judgejohnhodgman](#). Make sure to hashtag your *Judge John Hodgman* Tweets [#JJHo](#), and check out the Maximum Fun [subreddit](#) to [discuss this episode!](#)

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We'll talk to you next time on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

01:06:44 Sound Effect Transition

[Three gavel bangs.]

01:06:47 John Host

Don't turn off the podcast! Surprise! Post-credits sequence! It's me, Judge John Hodgman, with another surprise post-credits sequence, which I... am starting to feel is becoming less and less of a surprise. Uh, but I needed to talk to you! Very briefly, before you reach your destination, wherever you are going.

Because remember [the other week](#)? When we were with Josh Gondelman, and we were talking about Dungeons & Dragons, and the land of Greyhawk? And we were talking about how Gary Gygax, the creator of Dungeons & Dragons, broke with that business, and left the business, after starting the whole Dungeons & Dragons phenomenon?

And we thought that it would be cool if there were a Phish song called "Gygax Departs," and I challenged people to write a song called "Gygax Departs" in the style of Phish?

Well, a number of listeners did. And they're all wonderful. I don't know if any of them are really in the style of Phish. That was an unfair creative limitation, and I apologize for it. I wanna thank Bradley, I wanna thank J. Michael, and I wanna thank Dave. You all did wonderful jobs. But today I'm going to play the submission by our friend David Merson, who also wrote a song for ["Garlic on My Flap Steak."](#)

01:07:59 John Host

This is David's interpretation of Gygax. This guy... went deep into his Gygax lore, *[stifles laughter]* to tell the true story of Gary Gygax. He's uploaded it to SoundCloud if you enjoyed it. I happened to make a bitly for it, which is [Bit.ly/gonegygaxgone](https://bit.ly/gonegygaxgone). All small letters.

Now, here to take us out, David Noble Merson, AKA Mersona non Grata, with "Gygax Departs."

01:08:26 Music Music

Music: Guitar.

David Merson:

[Singing]

*Gord the rogue drew his magic sword
Of plus-four prostration
And he slew all those Bigfoot down
The entire infestation*

*A cry of joy rose from all of... Oerth, Earth, Oith
In Greyhawk and lands uncharted
But then Gary put his pencil down*

[Guitar strums with an air of grim finality.]

Gygax departed.

[Guitar resumes, faster, more lively.]

*You know, Hollywood's calling
Said they wanna make a deal
We'll make a movie and a cartoon show
And call it Dungeons & Dragons*

*So now I gotta leave ya
My wife in Lake Geneva
Gonna do a little cocaine
And date a Hollywood starlet
Gygax departed...*

[Guitar]

[Music fades out.]

01:11:12	Music	Transition	A cheerful ukulele chord.
01:11:13	Speaker 1	Guest	MaximumFun.org .
01:11:14	Speaker 2	Guest	Comedy and culture.
01:11:16	Speaker 3	Guest	Artist owned—
01:11:17	Speaker 4	Guest	—audience supported.