

00:00:00	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
00:00:03	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 a man who just noticed there's some construction going on on the street outside his house—
00:00:14	John Hodgman	Host	Yes.
00:00:16	Jesse	Host	—Judge John Hodgman.
00:00:19	John	Host	Here in Brooklyn, New York, it has been a quiet moment. It is lovely to see you, Jesse, there in Los Angeles, and you, producer Jennifer Marmor, there in Los Angeles, using teleconference technology, which we have become oh so fond of the past year. But Jesse, I see <u>you</u> —you are in a professional setting, are you not?
00:00:36	Jesse	Host	Yeah, I'm in the studios of MaximumFun.org in the American Cement Building, Los Angeles, California, overlooking beautiful MacArthur Park Lake.
00:00:45	John	Host	So that means, uh, there will be <u>no</u> cameos from Leafy the Leaf Blower.
00:00:51	Jesse	Host	<i>[Laughing]</i> No.
00:00:52	John	Host	And what was the pile driver's name?
00:00:53	Jesse	Host	<i>[Laughing]</i> I don't remember.
00:00:54	John	Host	Piley? <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:00:55	Jesse	Host	But I think you—New York construction is a different breed.
00:01:00	John	Host	Yes.
00:01:01	Jesse	Host	I have a friend who's a professional podcaster named Brian Heater.
00:01:04	John	Host	Yes.
00:01:05	Jesse	Host	Host of the podcast <i>RiYL, Recommended If You Like</i> .
00:01:08	John	Host	Yes.
00:01:09	Jesse	Host	And Brian is a New Yorker. And he's had construction outside his window this entire pandemic time. And at one point, <i>[stifles laughter]</i> he posted a video shot out of the window that he faces when he's podcasting.
00:01:21	John	Host	Mm-hm.
00:01:22	Jesse	Host	And the construction is on this very narrow row house, and the construction was just one man throwing things out of a window. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:01:29	John	Host	<i>[Stifling laughter]</i> Sure!
00:01:30	Jesse	Host	Like, a third-story window.
			<i>[Both laugh.]</i>
00:01:34	John	Host	That's the definition of New York construction.
00:01:37	Jesse	Host	Like, 30% of a toilet. Out the window. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:01:40	John	Host	Sure! When, uh, my wife, who is a whole human being in her own right, moved to New York—before I did—with our dear friend Christine, they shared an apartment together. And, um, they moved

into this apartment, and the person before them had left behind a sofa. And the question was, "What do we do with this sofa? How do we throw this sofa away?"

And between, uh, My Wife Who Is A Whole Human Being and Christine, they realized, "Well, we're in New York now. You just throw it out the window."

[John laughs, Jesse cracks up.]

It was truly—and this made perfect sense to me, because coming from Brookline, Massachusetts, New York was—felt like a totally lawless place! I mean, I was raised on *The Warriors* and *Escape from New York*. Of course—there are no rules! You just throw the stuff out the window! And they had—

[Both laugh.]

00:02:31 Jesse Host

You just light it on fire.

00:02:33 John Host

Yeah! And they had the sofa halfway out the window before they stopped themselves.

[Jesse laughs.]

And they appreciated—I may have told this story before. They looked down, and they appreciated they were gonna take out about five different air conditioning units if they let that thing drop.

[Jesse laughs.]

And that was what stopped them. And finally they were like, "*[Sighs]*. Let's—" Like, they couldn't get it out the door, was the problem.

[Laughs quietly.]

That was why they were trying to get it out the window; they couldn't get it out the door 'cause of—of logistical issues. The size of the sofa and stuff.

So finally they called the superintendent of the building, and asked him what—what he should do, and he said, "Let me take a look at it." And he came up to their apartment, and he kicked the legs off the sofa with his foot.

[Both crack up.]

And then—

00:03:18 Jesse Host

If you can make it there, you can make it anywhere, John!

00:03:21 John Host

Exactly! Exactly. All of which is to say that construction in New York is a little different than it is in Los Angeles. And if I am hearing this correctly—and you might hear it on this recording or you might not; apologies if you do. I am here in my home studio in my office here in Brooklyn, New York. And if I'm hearing this correctly, it sounds to me like someone bought a—a gigantic model set of human teeth from [the Put This On Shop](#), and is now drilling for cavities very loudly.

[Jesse laughs.]

Or they might be drilling into—*[stifles laughter]*—into the concrete wall. I don't know what they're doing. But if you hear Drilly in the background, that's what that is.

And then, I have a neighbor on my left side now. Who's a very good neighbor. Uh, but they have a dog. And through the windows ahead of me, in the yard below, lives another dog, with another human, and sometimes when these two dogs see each other... Hoo! It gets to be a really growly situation. So my fingers are crossed that we're gonna hear those dogs growl at each other. In friendly, doggy—you know. Uh, they're not mad at each other; they're just natural rivals. You know what I mean?

00:04:23	Jesse	Host	Mm-hm. Sure.
00:04:24	John	Host	They're— <i>[chuckles]</i> —yeah. Then—so, we'll see what happens.
00:04:25	Jesse	Host	Like you and Jonathan Coulton. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:04:27	John	Host	That's right. That's right.
00:04:28	Jesse	Host	<i>[Laughing]</i> Yeah.
00:04:30	Jesse	Host	<i>[Laughing]</i> Okay—
00:04:31	John	Host	It's fun. It's all in fun.
00:04:33	Jesse	Host	We've got a lot of justice to dispense on this episode, so let's get into it. Here's something from Greg in Califon, New Jersey: "Your Hodgness, My wife's college friend—" I will—I will accept that. I will accept that. Good job, Greg.
00:04:43	John	Host	
00:04:45	Jesse	Host	Yeah. <i>[Chuckles.]</i> "My wife's college friend is getting married this year. Due to COVID, she's opting out of <u>both</u> the ceremony <u>and</u> the reception." Sure.
00:04:54	John	Host	
00:04:55	Jesse	Host	"My wife wants to send, quote, 'a <u>really</u> nice gift,' unquote—i.e., more money than our usual wedding gift—for two reasons. One: It will provide extra cheer to the friend who is missing out on her wedding. Two: The money we save by not attending can be added into our normal gift. I argue our usual amount is a fine gift. Also, the money the friend saved by not having a reception more than makes up the difference. I ask you to order my wife to stay the course, and give our typical wedding gift, adjusted for inflation." <i>[Stifles laughter.]</i> Adjusted for inflation!
00:05:35	John	Host	
00:05:37	Jesse	Host	Yeah.
00:05:38	John	Host	When was the last time they <u>gave</u> a wedding gift? 1979? <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:05:40	Jesse	Host	You have to index your wedding gifts, but the problem is the democrats want the victory once every few years of raising the

minimum wedding gift standard. So nobody wants to index it.

00:05:52 John Host Right. No, I understand. Look. And I also understand that inflation is ticking up right now due to some post-COVID supply chain shortages, so you don't have to write me. Um, but yeah. It does sound like—uh, do you ever use—one of the things I love to do, of course, is to read *Travis McGee* novels by John D. MacDonald. And one of my very favorite things—these were all written in the sixties and seventies, into the early eighties. And they're crime novels, and they often involve amounts of money that were stolen or recovered. And, uh, I'm a big fan of the Internet inflation calculator. To see how much something—how much buying power a dollar had, say, in 1969, in *Travis McGee* time.

But yeah, I don't know—I mean, I don't know when the last time they went to a wedding was, that they need to adjust their minimum gift for inflation. But okay!

00:06:39 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:06:40 John Host I—I accept it.

00:06:40 Jesse Host Here's the thing about the inflation calculator, John.

00:06:43 John Host Yeah.

00:06:44 Jesse Host You know that thing where your parents say, "When I was a kid, a Coke cost a quarter"?

00:06:48 John Host Yeah.

00:06:49 Jesse Host That was the only thing you could buy. It was Coke, or grain.

[John laughs, Jesse stifles laughter.]

Like, that was what was available. We can get computers and stuff!

[Both laugh.]

Like, they didn't even have Sega Genesis! Much less PlayStation 4.

00:07:06 John Host Coke... or grain.

00:07:08 Jesse Host *[Stifling laughter]* Yeah. Those were the choices.

00:07:09 John Host That's a T-shirt right there.

00:07:11 Jesse Host Yeah. *[Chuckles.]*

00:07:12 John Host Yeah, absolutely.

Uh, so, in any case. This one confuses me a little bit, 'cause I'm not clear on this. Do you take from this that they are planning to give their friends who are getting married cash as a gift?

00:07:24 Jesse Host I think it may be that they're describing the amount of money they will spend on the gift.

00:07:29 John Host Okay.

00:07:30 Jesse Host Although there certainly are weddings where the request is to, uh, give cash. Often towards—I mean, in American weddings anyway—often towards a house down payment, or a honeymoon.

00:07:46 John Host Sure. Right. Right, right, right. Well, as always, the ruling of this court

is, "Help in the way you are asked to help." And so the first rule, Greg, is to check in with the spouses-to-be, your college friend who's getting married. And make sure that they're not already registered somewhere, or asking for a specific kind of gift.

And then the question is, do you give a little—a little boost? Right? Do you give a little extra money, or a little extra... you know, maybe go up a level on the registry? Maybe get the sateen sheets that they asked for?

00:08:26 Jesse Host

Those can be clammy.

00:08:27 John Host

[Laughs.] Yeah, I—I'm—maybe get the, uh, what is it? The heathered linen sheets that you can get... at BrookLinen? Just a little mention of a company that I know? Those are supposed to be very nice!

00:08:38 Jesse Host

Yeah, that's a little—that's a little bonus for you, BrookLinen.

00:08:40 John Host

Yeah, exactly. Because you know what? Generosity feels good! You know? We were just generous to BrookLinen there! We gave away something! And why? 'Cause they've been a good partner for us.

I don't think that gift-giving, whether it's for a wedding or anything, is really the time to be doing year-over-year spending comparisons. And I—I'm not talking—I mean, obviously, look. We all have issues affording the things that we want to afford. But there's a difference, I think, between frugality, and kind of... cheapness. You know? Like...

Giving a gift, especially for a wedding, is a time for generosity. It's a time to—to be—to be a little bit bigger! Than you might normally be. And that may mean spending no money at all! Like, it may mean doing a favor, or creating something really special and heartfelt for the person that you care about and love. Or it could mean just giving them cold hard cash, if you know that that's what they need.

Being cheap does not just mean spending less money to save a little. Being cheap also means just being cheap of spirit. Being cheap of gesture. And look, they don't know—they don't know until they hear this podcast that you were thinking about going the extra mile and then, Greg, you were like, "No, pull it back!"

[Both laugh quietly.]

00:10:01 John Host

You could get away with this! Of this sort of like—this moment of saying, like, "Well, we could give more, but let's not." Until this podcast comes out, you're in the clear. When the podcast comes out—everyone in the world listens to it. It's bigger than the Super Bowl... football... contest. And your college friend will know.

But in general, if you have the impulse to give more of yourself—financially, sure, but just in general. If you have a moment in your life, and an impulse to feel like, "I should give more. This has been a hard time. They're not having the wedding that they wanna have, necessarily. And because I'm not going, I do have some extra resources to give."

When you have that impulse, there really is no virtue in tamping it down.

[Both stifle laughter.]

I don't think you will be remembered—or will you remember yourself—very fondly, for taking that generous impulse and pulling it back into yourself. I think you'll think back on yourself going like, "Why didn't I—I had this extra time, or this extra energy, or maybe a little extra money. And I thought about giving it to them, but I didn't." I don't think that's a moment when you pat yourself on the back.

00:11:09 John Host Um, so I would just say that, you know, as with all gifts, you know, you don't have to go overboard to the detriment of yourself. Obviously, stay within whatever budget you are able to afford. And I mean that financially, obviously, but also emotionally, in time and energy. Don't over-extend yourself. But if you can afford a little bit more, and you think of it, usually you feel better to just follow through with that impulse. Rather than... bury it in a hole.

00:11:42 Jesse Host I have to say, John, when my wife and I were married, uh, we already lived together, had a full complement of household stuff, and lived in a tiny apartment in San Francisco, where we couldn't have held more household stuff if we wanted to. Um, although I should mention that I'm very grateful to Brent Weinbach—comedian Brent Weinbach—for giving us that ice cream maker. Um—

[Both laugh.]

00:12:06 John Host

That's great.

00:12:07 Jesse Host

Yeah. And I'm just—look.

00:12:08 John Host

That's a very—very Brent gift. That's hilarious.

00:12:10 Jesse Host

I'm—I'm grateful to comedian Brent Weinbach for being comedian Brent Weinbach. Bless that man.

00:12:15 John Host

Gift to the world.

00:12:18 Jesse Host

Yeah. But because we were—had a full complement of household goods, but were super broke at the time—like, really didn't have two pennies to rub together—we asked for people to make contributions to our honeymoon fund.

00:12:32 John Host

Sure.

00:12:34 Jesse Host

We wanted to go to Hawai'i for our honeymoon, and we were hoping that people would give us enough money to cover the cost of that. And I found that there were really a broad range of, uh, levels of generosity among our family, our family and close friends. And you know, it ranged from folks who we knew didn't have much money giving us really generous gifts, and people who we knew did who never gave us a gift at all.

00:13:06 John Host

Mm-hm. I'm sitting right here.

00:13:07 Jesse Host

And—*[laughs]*.

00:13:08 John Host

I'm sitting right—I got you.

00:13:09 Jesse Host

Well, you didn't—you weren't able to come. You lived 3,000 miles away. It was a perfectly reasonable decision.

00:13:12 John Host

Yeah. Yeah, I did—I know. I know! Oh, I know! I know!

00:13:17 Jesse Host

It's fine. It's fine, John. But, uh, it—I also, like, learned in doing that that even the most economical wedding—and we had a very

economical wedding! Because as I said, we didn't have two pennies to rub together—is a very expensive proposition. So nobody is getting ahead.

[One of them chuckles quietly.]

00:13:37 John Host

Right.

00:13:39 Jesse Host

By—by receiving gifts at their wedding. You know? Like, uh, unless you have rich parents, your ledger is not coming out in the black. And the lesson that I took from that experience is that within the context of my means, which has varied within my life, I really try to be generous with a wedding gift. Because when else do you get to give a gift that celebrates something so beautiful, in such a sensitive time of life, when someone is already doing something that is really kind for you? Which is, as I said, spending a lot of money for you to be there and celebrate with your community.

And you know, that's true of a—like, I had my wedding in a public park. Uh, shout-out to Fort Mason, in San Francisco, California. I—you know, the ceremony was in the church that I grew up going to and had not been to in 15 years. *[Chuckles.]*

00:14:36 John Host

Right.

00:14:37 Jesse Host

Because they said we could use it for free. And, uh—uh, there's—you know. Like I said. Nobody's coming out ahead, and you'll feel great if you're being generous in this special time.

00:14:49 John Host

Totally! You never regret being generous. You never regr—you never regret it. And it's—as I say, it's not just about the amount of money you spend. You know, you wanna help in the way you are asked to help. And that might be saying, "Hey, I—I can't afford to give you a present. Or, you know, but is there some other help you need in your wedding?" Like—

00:15:12 Jesse Host

"Can I get up at five o'clock in the morning to go to the flower market and buy the flowers wholesale?"

00:15:18 John Host

"Can I pick up anything for you? Do you have... a sofa that you can't get out of your apartment, that I can kick the legs off of for you?"

00:15:23 Jesse Host

[Laughing] Yeah.

00:15:26 John Host

And contrary to that, Greg... You know. You do—even if no one ever finds out that you had a generous impulse that you pulled back on, you will remember it. You know. And look—Greg! I didn't go to Jesse Thorn's wedding! You know? I really regret it.

[Jesse laughs quietly, John stifles laughter.]

I really wish I could have been there for you guys. I mean, I was... as you say, 3,000 miles away, I have a family of my own—you know, I had other obligations. But I think back and I'm like, "Did I get him a present? I don't think I did!"

So... I feel really bad about that! I think about it fairly frequently. And I don't usually need Jesse's reminder to think about it, but I got the message.

So Greg, you and I, we're gonna do—both do penance for our lack of

a generous impulse. You and I are both gonna get Jesse, uh, an ice cream maker. That is, each.

[Jesse laughs, John stifles laughter.]

00:16:18 John Host Jesse and Theresa each get their own ice cream maker. On top of the Brent Weinbach one. And I mean literally on top. I want a tower of ice cream makers.

00:16:25 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:16:26 Jesse Host Here's a case from Jim from Ann Arbor, Michigan:

"The other day, I heard my wife ask a question from the other room. I put down what I was doing and went in to ask her to repeat herself. She said, 'Never mind. I was talking to Siri.'

This is not the first time I was tricked into thinking she was talking to her phone, and not me. So I suggested we use a different voice when we t—"

[Breaks off, laughing.]

[John laughs quietly as Jesse starts cracking up.]

00:16:57 John Host Always love it. I always love the moments when I realize Jesse has not read the letter yet.

[Jesse sounds like he's crying with laughter.]

And hits—and hits the turn. Hits that wild turn into—into, uh—
[laughs]—into left field.

00:17:09 Jesse Host You gotta keep it fresh.

00:17:10 John Host Yeah!

00:17:11 Jesse Host "So I suggested that we use a different voice when we talk to our phones, to prevent this confusion. I can always tell when she's talking to her friends, or a dog, or a baby. Why don't we make up our own unique computer voices?

She just gave me a look. I now use a robot voice—"

[John laughs, Jesse stifles laughter.]

"—when I talk to my phone whenever she's nearby. Please order my wife to reciprocate this simple and courteous practice."

00:17:42 John Host So when he—when Jim from Ann Arbor said, "computer voices," initially, I thought he meant... some kind of distinct voice just for the computer.

00:17:52 Jesse Host Right. That's what would be... only moderately bananas.

00:17:56 John Host Ye—I didn't know that he was gonna go full-on robut (robot) voice.

[Jesse cracks up.]

Which is—I mean, I—I understand using a voice for the computer. Because I—I have a—a smart speaker, as they say. And I'm not

gonna trigger anyone's smart speakers right now. But the smart speaker, and the voice that—of the virtual assistant, has a certain cadence to it. So I find myself imitating the cadence of the speaker. 'Cause I feel that the speaker can understand me better, *[stifles laughter]* and I'll get better outcomes by saying... I won't say—I won't trigger anyone's speakers. I'll just say...

[In a friendly, upbeat cadence, pausing between the word "play" and the song title, as if leaving time for a smart speaker to parse them as different parts of the sentence.]

"Hey, Jesse! Play 'You Make My Dreams Come True,' by Daryl Hall & John Oates."

[Chuckles.] Like, that's—that's how I get the speaker to go. But I never thought to do a robot voice! So of course, Jesse, I had to get Jim to do his robot voice. I had to write to Jim, and say, "Do the robot voice for us." Jennifer Marmor, do you have that audio recording?

00:18:58 Clip Clip *[Jim speaks stiffly, with pauses between the words.]*

Jim: Hey, Siri. Play *Sports* by Huey Lewis and the News.

00:19:05 John Host *[John and Jesse laugh quietly.]*

Alright. Something to unpack here. First of all, Jim, I love your spirit. Your human spirit. ...That robot voice sounds too human to be a robot voice.

00:19:27 Jesse Host Yeah, that's just you talking slow.

00:19:29 John Host That was just talking slow. You need to really robot it up if you're gonna commit to this. And I urge you to do it! And I also urge listeners to get Jim's voice into a remix as quickly as possible.

[Jesse laughs.]

Remix that, and send it.

00:19:40 Jesse Host *[Laughing]* Yeah.

00:19:43 John Host Remix it with a—with a—with a track from, uh, Huey Lewis and the News's album *Sports*. Doesn't matter to me which one it is. "If This Is It," uh, "I Want a New Drug." But not the *Back to the Future* song. That's not on *Sports*.

Uh, I like this idea a lot! But Jesse, after I received this, Jim also wrote:

"Note. While recording this clip on my phone, my HomePod started playing the song you requested. I must admit, never that one heard that song."

Now I don't know what to believe.

[Jesse laughs.]

Because *Sports* is an album, Jim! Not a song!

00:20:24 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:20:25 John Host And second of all, "Never that one heard that song"? Jim, are you an AI? *[Laughs.]*

00:20:30 Jesse Host Yeah! I think—we thought that it was Jim doing a bad job of a robot voice. I think Jim is a robot doing a bad job of a human voice!

00:20:40 John Host Maybe Jim's wife is the only human in the house. Maybe "Jim," quote-unquote, is an Alexa that has come to life and become self-aware. And believes that they are... Jim's wife's... husband, Jim. Which is a personality they invented. For some reason Jim's wife has both an Alexa and a Siri, and every time Jim's wife is talking to Siri, Alexa-Jim is getting jealous, and doesn't understand.

00:21:06 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:21:07 John Host Alexa, play *Sports...* by Huey Lewis and the News.

00:21:15 Jesse Host That's how she says it.

00:21:15 Jesse Host Here's—here's the thing, John. And we're gonna take a quick break to hear from this week's partner. Uh, but... honestly, my upset with Jim is not that he's a robot.

[A dog barks in the background.]

Not that he's got a scheme. Uh, not that he's making this weird request of his wife.

[More barking.]

It's that he's not up on the latest stuff from *Judge John Hodgman*, which is... we don't even request Huey Lewis and the News anymore. So let me correct Jim, and say:

[In a stilted, mechanical robot voice]

"Hey, Siri. Play "Square Biz" by Teena Marie."

[Back to regular Jesse voice.]

What's great is she does a robot voice in the song!

[Back to a robot voice, singing.]

"I'm taaalking square biz!"

[Back to regular Jesse voice.]

Okay.

00:21:58 John Host Whoa! What happened to my human co-host Jesse Thorn?

00:22:00 Jesse Host *[Stifling laughter]* We'll—

00:22:01 John Host Replaced by an AI?

00:22:03 Jesse Host We'll clear some more cases in just a minute.

00:22:04	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
00:22:06	Jesse	Promo	As always, the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast is brought to you <u>by</u> you, the members of MaximumFun.org. We're so grateful to all of you.
			We're also grateful this week to our friends at Babbel! The number one selling language-learning app. Judge Hodgman, have you learned any foreign phrases this week?
00:22:30	John	Promo	¡Yes, sí! Uh, here we go!
			Hey, Siri. Toca la canción que se llamo "Quiero Una Nueva Droga"—
			<i>[Jesse laughs.]</i>
			—del album <i>Deportes</i> , de Huey Lewis y la Not—y las Nostisias. I messed it up at the end.
00:22:45	Jesse	Promo	Yeah.
			<i>[Chuckling]</i> You did pretty good.
00:22:47	John	Promo	Y las Nostis—y las Notisias.
00:22:49	Jesse	Promo	Y las Notisias.
00:22:50	John	Promo	Y las Notisias. See? I'm learning! I'm learning. I'm doing my best.

00:22:55 Jesse Promo Mm-hm.
00:22:55 John Promo Look, there are a lot of reasons to—
00:22:56 Siri Promo Sorry I missed that. *[Inaudible.]*
00:22:57 John Promo Oh.

[Jesse and John laugh.]

[Siri beeps.]

Sorry, wrong Siri.

00:23:01 Jesse Promo Está bien, Siri.

[Jesse and John laugh.]

00:23:03 John Promo Está bien, Siri.

[Stifles laughter.]

There are many reasons to learn a new language, or brush up on one you may have learned in high school, but then forgot. I'm brushing up on Spanish, because travel is a thing that could be happening again soon, and I wanna go to Mexico City with my friend Jesse Thorn! And go down to Buenos Aires, where they don't say, "Que se llama," they say, "Que se shama 'Quiero Una Neuva Droga.'"

Maybe you just wanna connect in a deeper way with your family, or the neighbors who live around you! Or you just wanna give your brain a little workout every day, and you finally realize that the *New York Times* Spelling Bee is not your friend, Bobby Lopez!

[Jesse laughs.]

That's a—that's a mensaje secreto por Bobby Lopez, a listener.

[Jesse laughs.]

Now thanks to Babel, there's a fun and easy way to learn that new language!

00:23:48 Jesse Promo They have 15-minute lessons with practical, real-world conversations. This isn't, uh—this isn't classroom language learning. This is practical language-learning that will get you out into the world, speaking with folks with whom you might not otherwise be able to speak. It's not just Spanish. French, Italian, German, Indonesian, 20,000 other different language.

00:24:16 John Promo Right—

00:24:17 Jesse Promo Not literally 20,000.

[John stifles laughter.]

I'm speaking figuratively. Don't—don't email the FTC about this.

[Laughs.]

00:24:23 John Promo Right now when you purchase a three-month Babel subscription,

			you'll get an additional three months for <u>free</u> .
00:24:29	Jesse	Promo	That's six months for the price of three. Just go to Babbel.com and use promo code "Hodgman".
00:24:35	John	Promo	That's B-A-B-B-E-L.com. B-A-B-B-E-L.com. Code "Hodgman." For an extra three months free. Babbel: Language for life.
00:24:46	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
00:24:49	Promo	Clip	Music: Low, unsettling music.
			Ross Blocher: <i>[Using a spooky, deep voice.]</i> Somewhere between science and superstition, there is a podcast.
			<i>[Several crashes and a blood curdling scream.]</i>
			Ross: <i>[Ominously.]</i> Look, your daughter doesn't say she's a demon. She says she's the devil himself!
			Carrie Poppy: <i>[Dramatically, with a cartoonish southern drawl.]</i> That <u>thing</u> is not my daughter! And I want you to tell me there's a show where the hosts don't just report on fringe science and spirituality but take part themselves!
			<i>[Cheerful music fades in.]</i>
			Ross: <i>[Speaking normally.]</i> Well, there is! And it's <i>Oh No, Ross and Carrie!</i> on Maximum Fun.
			Carrie: <i>[Speaking normally.]</i> This year we actually became certified exorcists.
			Ross: So, yes, Carrie and I <u>can</u> help your daughter!
			<i>[Chainsaw revving sounds.]</i>
			Carrie: Or we can just talk about it on the show.
			<i>[Ominous music returns.]</i>
			Ross: <i>[Spookily.]</i> <i>Oh No, Ross and Carrie!</i> on MaximumFun.org .
00:25:34	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
00:25:36	Jesse	Host	Welcome back to the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast. We're clearing the docket. We're just—we're just a couple of—of human people. Here's a case from Dan in Columbus, Ohio:
			"Dear Judge Hodgman,
			Recently my wife and I made burritos for dinner. We prepare these buffet-style, where the burrito maker has all the various fixings at their disposal and can fill them as they see fit."
			You know—can I tell you, John? <i>[Chuckles.]</i>
00:26:02	John	Host	Yes.
00:26:04	Jesse	Host	Since I watched the television show <i>Eastbound & Down</i> , there's—

[stifling laughter]—there's this—there's a storyline where they open a bake potato kiosk in the mall.

00:26:10 John Host

Sure.

00:26:12 Jesse Host

And basically, the whole—the only thing that happens in this storyline is that they say to each other, "Fiiixins?" And I can't even think of the word—*[stifling laughter]* it's been like five years since that show was on television.

00:26:24 John Host

Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

00:26:26 Jesse Host

I still can't think of that word without thinking, "Fiiixins?" *[Laughs.]*

00:26:29 John Host

"Fixins."

00:26:30 Jesse Host

"Fiiixins."

00:26:31 John Host

"Fiiixuns."

[Jesse laughs.]

[Robotic] "Fee-ick-suns. How do I present fee-ick-suns? Buffet-style or no?"

[Jesse laughs.]

[Back to regular John and Jesse voices.]

00:26:40 Jesse Host

"I asked my wife if she'd like to split a burrito, and she agreed. Much to my surprise, she proceeded to tear the unfilled tortilla in half, leaving a sad, useless half-moon on my plate. My wife insists this is totally reasonable, and a logical way to divide a burrito, but I contend it defeats the purpose and design of the tortilla.

Please order my wife to cease this strange practice. Thank you in advance for your sound judgment."

00:27:11 John Host

So first of all, Jesse... Just so you know, it's Daryl Hall & John Oates.

00:27:18 Jesse Host

Yeah, they don't—yeah.

00:27:19 John Host

The name of the band is not Hall & Oates.

00:27:20 Jesse Host

No. And Daryl Hall will correct you on that, *[stifling laughter]* as I know from firsthand experience.

[Both laugh.]

00:27:29 John Host

Hoo!

00:27:30 Jesse Host

Daryl Hall is a lovely, fascinating guy who will tell you stories about hanging out in nightclubs with Gamble and Huff in Philadelphia, uh, before Hall & Oates was even an act. But he will point out to you that the name of the band is Daryl Hall & John Oates.

00:27:44 John Host

That's something I just recently learned! Because my smart speaker started playing one of their songs, and I'm like, "Oh, it's a Hall & Oates song." And smart speaker was like—

[Robotically]

"No. You are wrong. John Hodgman, it is Daryl Hall & John Oates."

[Jesse laughs quietly.]

And then I looked it up, and it was like my memory of every Daryl Hall and John Oates album cover changed as I was looking at it. They all said Hall & Oates, and then I looked at them, and they changed before my eyes into Daryl Hall & John Oates. Hoo! But you should listen to Daryl Hall & John Oates! Because they—Daryl Hall can sing songs, right?

00:28:17 Jesse Host

Great. I'll say—

[John sighs happily.]

I don't know what your jam is, but "Rich Girl" is, like, a top ten all-time song for me.

00:28:25 John Host

"You Make My Dreams Come True" is great.

00:28:27 Jesse Host

Mm. Yeah.

00:28:29 John Host

I never got into *Abandoned Luncheonette*. I didn't even know these—

00:28:33 Jesse Host

That's a great album.

00:28:34 John Host

—these guys went back to 1973!

00:28:35 Jesse Host

Yeah!

00:28:36 John Host

But "She's Gone" is an incredible song on there.

00:28:39 Jesse Host

Yeah. *Abandoned Luncheonette* I think is probably my favorite Hall & Oates album.

00:28:43 John Host

And it was all downhill from there?

00:28:44 Jesse Host

No! They made so many great records. Incredible act.

00:28:49 John Host

Dan in Columbus, let it be known. Daryl Hall & John Oates is the name of the band.

00:28:53 Jesse Host

Yeah.

00:28:54 John Host

Now, my—*[sighs]*. This—I—again, I feel like I don't understand what's going on here. You're making a burrito buffet—

00:29:00 Jesse Host

It's—it's simple, John! *[Stifles laughter.]*

00:29:02 John Host

[Laughing] Okay.

00:29:03 Jesse Host

They've—they've got their fillings. Not their fixins, but their fillings, in front of them.

00:29:07 John Host

Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

00:29:08 Jesse Host

Their—they've got their beans. They've got their—depending on regional preference, their rice. They've got their meat. And then they've got their salsas and guacamoles and sour creams, and so forth.

00:29:20 John Host

Right.

00:29:21 Jesse Host

Uh, in front of them. Smörgåsbord or buffet-style.

00:29:22 John Host

And this is a—this is—the region is Columbus, Ohio, so... obviously the—

00:29:25 Jesse Host

Yes. Well, I don't know what's in a classic Columbus burrito.

Spaghetti, maybe? *[Laughs.]* Uh—

00:29:31 John Host I think it's a Coney Island hotdog and spaghetti, yeah.

00:29:34 Jesse Host Yeah. So, uh, they've got their stuff in front of them. And normally you would take a full tortilla, fill it, close it, and eat it.

00:29:43 John Host Right.

00:29:44 Jesse Host Uh, he said, "Let's share one." And she tore an empty tortilla in half—

00:29:50 John Host Yeah.

00:29:52 Jesse Host —and they each had half a tortilla.

00:29:53 John Host Yeah. No, I—I—I'm able to read the language. But the problem I'm having is picturing Dan... and his wife, who is a whole human being in her own right... at home in Columbus, Ohio. And they're like, "Alright. Let's make burritos."

First of all, it's implicit in the—it's implicit in the letter! Burritos, plural. "We're gonna—" *[Stifles laughter.]*

"We're gonna light—let me light this Sterno can. Put this little, you know, warming tray of the tortillas up, and then this is for the beans, and this is for the spaghetti, and this is for the big jar of cinnamon that I'm gonna put on it."

[Jesse laughs.]

"And this is for the casserole, and this part's for the shredded lettuce, and here's a little tray of—of, uh—of rice, and everything else." You get all of that out—

00:30:31 Jesse Host Hold on, John. You listed a lot of great things to put on a burrito, but shredded lettuce? Get outta here.

00:30:37 John Host *[Laughs.]* Whoa, I've been fired?

00:30:39 Jesse Host I draw the line at shredded lettuce. Go ahead, John.

00:30:42 John Host The point is after all of that buffet is laid, that's when Dan turns to his wife and go, "You wanna split one?"

[Both laugh.]

I—I hope they had other people over! Do you know what I mean?

00:30:53 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:30:54 John Host It's like, you go through all that trouble to make a single burrito. *[Laughs.]*

00:30:57 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:30:58 John Host I guess—

00:30:59 Jesse Host You could've just done it straight outta the pan.

00:31:00 John Host Yeah. Just do it straight outta the pan. But, uh, yeah. I mean, uh, I think the point here is you don't share a burrito. You know? It was a mistake, Dan, to even suggest it. Because if you want to split a burrito, you can make a burrito and cut it in half, and each have a half. But then you have to be completely on board with the

ingredients in that burrito. And then what's the point of having the fixings bar to begin with?

00:31:30 Jesse Host Fiiixins.

00:31:31 John Host Unless each person can pick their own fix!

00:31:34 Jesse Host Fix.

00:31:35 John Host So there's no—so there i s no point in that. And most especially there's no point because listeners of *Judge John Hodgman* know you wanna make your own burrito, get your own burrito the way you like it, cut it in half, eat half, and then marinate the stump overnight, and have the other half the next day!

00:31:49 Jesse Host You gotta marinate that stump.

00:31:51 John Host So yeah! You know, Dan, your—your wife and partner and a whole human being who lives with you... That was an unusual move, to tear that tortilla in half. There's no structural way to create a burrito out of half of a tortilla. That's not how a burrito can—it can't roll! That's—that's like, uh... I don't even know what that would be. Just kind of a—a floppy—

00:32:15 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:32:16 John Host —large taco. A... flop-tac.

00:32:17 Jesse Host It would be like a burrito—it would be like a—a floppy burrito bowl.

00:32:22 John Host Yeah. But don't ask in the first place! I'm gonna say that your sin is the original sin, Dan. Don't ask to split a burrito. Especially not if you've gone to the trouble of making a buffet. I have to imagine they had friends over or something.

00:32:34 Sound Effect Sound Effect [*Three gavel bangs.*]

00:32:35 Jesse Host Here's the thing, John.

00:32:36 John Host Okay.

00:32:38 Jesse Host As you know, I'm a native of San Francisco's Mission District.

00:32:41 John Host Oh, boy. Here we go.

00:32:42 Jesse Host The home of the burrito.

00:32:44 John Host Yeah. San Francisco is a city?

00:32:46 Jesse Host Yeah. And I think that while—and there is a national chain. Of... fast casual restaurants.

00:32:57 John Host Right.

00:32:58 Jesse Host That was founded by a man who, under false auspices, got a job in a San Francisco taqueria to learn how to copy their burritos and make them into a national chain of fast casual restaurants.

00:33:11 John Host Mm-hm.

00:33:13 Jesse Host And... that chain is fine. I—you know. It's better than some other fast food, worse than other fast food. I'm not—

00:33:22 John Host Sure.

00:33:23 Jesse Host You know.

00:33:24 John Host I would argue—not to buzzmarket a brand, or anything. But I would argue that they do make better burritos than BrookLinen, for example.

00:33:31 Jesse Host Yeah. I think that's fair.

00:33:32 John Host Yeah. Yeah.

00:33:34 Jesse Host Um, but having eaten those burritos—or other burritos in... other parts of the country—

00:33:43 John Host Yeah.

00:33:44 Jesse Host —that sometimes ape the style of San Francisco burrito. There are many styles of burrito, all of which are perfectly legitimate. But sometimes they are presented as though they are a San Francisco-style burrito. One of the biggest problems that I see out there—and this is something that I think burrito makers should really be working on—is the tuck-and-roll.

00:34:08 John Host Yeah.

00:34:09 Jesse Host I think that one of the fundamental things that makes a San Francisco burrito a San Francisco burrito is that you start with a tortilla, often a steamed and griddled tortilla—

00:34:22 John Host Yes.

00:34:23 Jesse Host —to make it both stretchy, and have contrast in texture. Then you layer the ingredients on top of that open tortilla, such that when the burrito is complete, each bite will have a variety of ingredients contained therein.

00:34:39 John Host Correct.

00:34:41 Jesse Host Then there is a tuck-and-roll process involving both the tortilla and—AND—

00:34:46 John Host And...

00:34:48 Jesse Host —the aluminum foil.

00:34:49 John Host Oh, boy.

00:34:51 Jesse Host That creates a tight, compact log. That is what creates the stump that can be marinated!

00:35:00 John Host Right.

00:35:01 Jesse Host When you slice a burrito in half—a good burrito in half—almost nothing comes out of it.

00:35:07 John Host Right. It's so dense.

00:35:09 Jesse Host Yes! Because it—it is packed tightly by an effective tuck-and-roll.

00:35:13 John Host Right.

00:35:14 Jesse Host And if you're making one of these flappy, floppy... fast food burritos—

00:35:21 John Host Yeah, if you're "Making Flippy Floppy" Talking Heads-style—

00:35:23 Jesse Host It's not the worst burrito you could ever—it's not the worst food you could ever eat in the world, but it's...

00:35:27 John Host David Byrne's a genius, but I don't know that he knows how to roll a burrito.

00:35:32 Jesse Host I don't think—I—in fact, I'm gonna go so far as to say I don't think he does.

00:35:35 John Host Yeah.

00:35:36 Jesse Host This—

00:35:37 John Host I mean, his—his burrito tortilla would be too large! Would be my guess.

00:35:40 Jesse Host This is truly my greatest passion in life, if you're wondering. *[Laughs.]*

00:35:43 John Host Jennifer Marmor got that one. Jennifer Marmor got that one. Thank you, Jennifer. Got a reaction. Jesse's still thinking about burritos.

00:35:49 Jesse Host I know! I'm gonna be thinking about this the rest of the time.

00:35:50 John Host Not getting my David Byrne, circa 1991 big suit joke.

00:35:54 Jesse Host I'm gonna be thinking about—I—you know, I'm just gonna be, this whole time, just stewing about shredded lettuce. That you suggested in jest. In a list of joke ingredients, you suggested shredded lettuce. That was enough to upset me for the rest of our recording. *[Laughs quietly.]*

00:36:09 John Host I—I hate to say this to you, *[stifles laughter]* but that one wasn't a joke.

00:36:12 Jesse Host *[Stifling laughter]* Oh no!

00:36:15 John Host I'm—I've—I don't—I didn't—I didn't occur to me not to.

00:36:16 Jesse Host Here's something from—

00:36:17 John Host I love a good burrito, though.

00:36:18 Jesse Host Here's something from Karen in Bolton, Massachusetts:

"I have a dispute with my husband Dave. Dave is obsessed with the movie *The Godfather*. Every time—"

00:36:27 John Host Alright. We can stop reading there. That's fine. I find in your favor, Karen.

[Both laugh.]

Love that movie! Love that movie. But it's time to—

[More laughter.]

Time to—time to move on, from guys being obsessed with *The Godfather*.

00:36:40 Jesse Host "Dave wants to put posters for *The Usual Suspects* on our dorm room walls."

[Both laugh.]

Okay.

"Every time Dave hears the word 'Italy,' sees something Italian, talks about traveling to Italy—which country we both love; don't get me wrong—or eats Italian food, he starts singing, humming, or whistling the theme to *The Godfather*, and proceeds to shush us all—"

00:37:12 John Host Eugh.

00:37:13 Jesse Host *[Stifles laughter.]*

"—until he gets enough of the song out to satisfy his weird compulsion. I'm sick of that song! Please order my husband refrain

from do-do-doing, so we can all go back to enjoying all things Italy in peace and quiet."

00:37:28 John Host Well, first of all, look. I love *The Godfather*. I don't need you to write me any letters. I've seen it many times. It's a beautiful work of art. I have to correct you, Karen, I'm sorry. It is not do-do-doing. The song, the "Love Theme from *The Godfather*" that I presume Dave is singing, is:

[Singing to the tune of "Speak Softly, Love," AKA "Love Theme from The Godfather," by Nino Rota and Larry Kusik]

Meow, meow, meow, meow, meow, meow, meow, meow, meow, meow, meow, meowwww.

[Jesse laughs.]

[John's voice starts to strain as the meowing gets lower.]

Meow, meow, meow, meow, meow, meow, meow, meow, meow, meow, meow, meow—I started in too low a register—meow, meow, meow, meowwww—

[Speaking] Are we gonna get sued at this point?

00:37:59 Jesse Host

Yes, I think we're—

00:38:00 John Host

Can I keep going, or stop?

00:38:02 Jesse Host

No, we're really pushing it.

00:38:03 John Host

That's too far?

00:38:04 Jesse Host

Yeah, we're pushing it.

00:38:05 John Host

Alright. We'll stop there. We'll stop there. Gonna get us sued by Francis Ford Coppola and Meow Mix. That song is called "Speak Softly, Love"! Which I did not know until I used the Wikipedia to research this. It is composed, as all of the *Godfather* music score was composed, by Nino Rota. Uh, published in 1972. It was a—I believe a number one hit, or a big hit, in its vocal version, Andy Williams. Pro—pro—fair to say the least Italian-American singer of the time that I could think of?

00:38:38 Jesse Host

[Chuckling] Yeah, I think that's fair.

00:38:39 John Host

Andy Williams? I could be wrong there! I could be wrong there. But Ni—but, uh, Andy Williams—there's—there are words to it! It's like the *Star Trek* theme. It's got words! It's like *The Odd Couple*. It's got words to it! Go listen to it; it's wild. I never knew this. "Speak Softly, Love" is the name of that song.

And here is the thing. I'm going to... I'm going to apologize to Andy Williams, and Andy Williams's family, because Andy Williams could very well be... Italian! I—no one thinks of John Hodgman of—as having any Italian ancestry, but my father's family are all from Northern Italy! At least his maternal family. Northern Italy, a town called Udine. But I don't—but I don't look like I'm in *The Godfather*, because guess what? Italy's a whole region!

Ugh. People who are listening right now—I don't know when you're

listening to this podcast. Could be years from now. Could be years in the future. But when we're recording this today, on May 18th, 2021, we live in an era where Elon Musk had not yet... become President—

[Jesse laughs.]

—of the country of DogeCoinia XK925, which is what he renamed the United States, I'm sure, in your future timeline, because he was legitimized by being on *Saturday Night Live*. Much like previous presidents in our history were legitimized by being on *Saturday Night Live*. In our—

00:40:10 Jesse Host

You know who you are, Taft!

00:40:11 John Host

[Laughing] Yeah.

Although Taft was really good in—in—when he was one of those bumblebees with John Belushi.

00:40:18 Jesse Host

Yeah, that was very funny.

00:40:19 John Host

That was pretty good. He was funny! He was funny!

00:40:20 Jesse Host

Yeah.

00:40:21 John Host

For a non-comedian?

00:40:22 Jesse Host

Yeah. Doing a non-joke.

00:40:24 John Host

Yeah. Taft was funny!

00:40:26 Jesse Host

Yeah.

00:40:27 John Host

He fit—he fit the suit.

00:40:28 Jesse Host

Yeah.

00:40:29 John Host

No, we're—we live in a timeline where Elon Musk just appeared on *Saturday Night Live*! We don't even know what's gonna happen yet! And in our timeline, the worst thing that's happened is that Elon Musk was on *Saturday Night Live* pretending to be Wario, the evil Mario. The long-celebrated Italian-American stereotype Mario. *[Stifles laughter.]*

00:40:48 Jesse Host

Mm-hm.

00:40:49 John Host

Talking in classic, uh—classic Mario phony-baloney Italian accent. You know, like, uh—like that Daryl Hall & John Oates song, "You Make-a My Dreams Come True"! You know what I'm saying?

[Both laugh.]

00:41:02 Jesse Host

Yes.

00:41:04 John Host

[Italian accent] "It's you! You make-a my dreams come true!"

[Accent stops.]

That's actually how Daryl Hall sings it in that song.

00:41:08 Jesse Host

Mm-hm.

00:41:09 John Host

Anyway, and there's all this phony outrage over, like—a lot of it, I think, kind of bad faith criticism, if you can imagine that on the Internet—of people saying, "Well, if he can do a phony-baloney

Italian accent, then why can't we... use words we shouldn't—" You know, like that kind of thing.

00:41:25 Jesse Host

Yeah.

00:41:26 John Host

Like, "Why is it okay to make fun of Italian Americans in this way?" And you know what? It's not. Not because—*[stifles laughter]*—not because Ital—you know, in contemporary American society, Italian Americans are particularly harmed by these stereotypes. Stereotypes are cheap and lazy and dehumanizing, yes. But mostly because it is unfair to the vast regional differences that are Italy!

You go—you—you know, Nino Rota is from Milan! The—the Godfather is from Sicily! Those two places are not the same at all! At all! They're not "Italian." And as you probably well know, the whole idea of Italy only goes back, you know, a couple hundred years.

00:42:12 Jesse Host

I—

00:42:13 John Host

You know, it's a—it's a—it's a fake idea. It's phony-baloney.

00:42:14 Jesse Host

I went to Milan, and was stunned to see people walking around in Tyrolean capes. And you're like, "Oh, right!"

[Stifles laughter.]

"This is the Alps!"

00:42:23 John Host

[Singing] Meow, meow, meow, meow, meow, meow, meow, meow, meow, meow—

[Breaks off, laughing.]

That's—that's not the song that goes with it!

00:42:28 Jesse Host

Yeah.

00:42:29 John Host

And, very specifically, *The Godfather* is not about Italyyyy. The movie does not start with a—with a guy going to the Godfather, looking for a favor, saying, "I believe in Italy." *[Stifles laughter.]*

It's, "I believe in America!" It's about the Italian-American experience of America, and that is what the movie is about. So look, Dave, of Massachusetts. A commonwealthian. My—my paisan in the commonwealth. You're wrong, Dave! For all kinds of reasons. First of all, stop singing that song. *[Laughs.]*

Don't do—don't do that. Like, if you gotta do it, I understand. You get a song—you get a earworm. It's a beautiful song! You get a little earworm every time you—every—you know, from time to time, you have to sing it. But if you've got a song in your heart that you gotta get out, you can't—and—you can't shush other people. If you're just sitting down to some, you know, spaghetti and—and gravy, or whatever. You can't shush other people so you can get your little thing out.

Like, if this were your adult child writing to me, Dave, I might cut you some Weird Dad leeway on this one, 'cause maybe you were doing this on purpose to embarrass your child. Which is usually—you get a "Get outta jail free" card. But this is your—this is your partner, life

partner, Karen, in Bolton, Massachusetts. You don't shush your life partner so you can get your little song out.

00:43:54 John Host And second of all, like—*[sighs]*. To equate *The Godfather* with anything about Italy is just, uh—that is—that is ignorant. I think that you deserve to, uh—to learn a little bit more about the history and the regions of Italy. It's a very, very interesting place!

00:44:14 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:44:17 Jesse Host John, I can't really sit in judgment on this one. I can't participate because, um... any time anyone mentions Austria, I just go—I bust out my zither. And, uh—

[Both laugh, and then start making zither noises.]

00:44:34 John Host The *Third Man* theme?

[Singing] Barringa dinga ding, a-meow...

00:44:35 Jesse Host The theme from *The Third Man*.

[John keeps meowing musically.]

[Jesse laughs. John does not stop.]

Let's take a quick break! When we come back, we'll have an audio letter from a child complainant.

00:44:48 John Host *Meow! Meow! Meow meow meow meow, meow meow meow meow... Meow, Mrrreow! Meow-meow-meow-meow-meow-meow meow MEOW!*

00:44:53 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:44:55 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.

00:45:20 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.]

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!

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.]

00:45:56 Sound Effect Transition

[Three gavel bangs.]

00:45:59 Jesse Promo

Judge Hodgman, we're taking a break from the docket. What have you got going on that people need to know about?

00:46:05 John Promo

Well, one—you know, look. I—you can always check out the animated TV show that David Rees and I made, called *Dicktown*, over at Bit.ly/dicktown, and get it over there on Hulu. Or if you're on Canada, it's on your Disney+. Just adjust your viewer settings to "mature," because it is a mature show. I mean, it's a PG-13, I would say? There's some—there's some adult content. Mostly feelings of self-alienation and irrelevance. That's sort of the adult themes of the show. But—you can check that out, of course.

But I really wanna—I really wanna just shout out to one of the great artists of the world, a musician and actor named Rubén Blades. I want to just say not only is Rubén Blades incredibly talented—and my co-star on *Antiques Roadshow*. Did you know that, Jesse?

[Jesse sighs.]

Rubén Blades was also on *Antiques Roadshow*. Did you know?

00:46:54 Jesse Promo

Sounds like you can go suck a lemon, and Rubén Blades can go suck a lemon. The legendary singer and musician Rubén Blades. Sorry!

00:47:03 John Promo

When I—

00:47:04 Jesse Promo

Bad news! Go suck a lemon. And you know what? The same goes for Nancy Kerrigan.

00:47:07 John Promo

Ooh! *[Stifles laughter.]*

00:47:08 Jesse Promo Olympic legend Nancy Kerrigan.

00:47:10 John Promo Oh no! What about Mar—

00:47:11 Jesse Promo Also your co-star on the *Antiques Roadshow*. Can go suck a lemon.

00:47:16 John Promo The coolest thing about Rubén Blades, aside from the fact that he has this completely—I had no idea—massive comic book collection—

00:47:22 Jesse Promo *[Laughs.]* Cool.

00:47:23 John Promo —including the first appearance of Batman in it.

00:47:25 Jesse Promo Sweet.

00:47:26 John Promo Like, I didn't know that that was Rubén Blades' deal. It was amazing.

Also, he's such a cool dude that no matter how many times they call him Rubén Blades (*blaydz*), he's like, "Or Blades." (*Blah-dehs.*)

He just says it one time. Lets it go.

[Jesse laughs, John stifles laughter.]

He knows. He knows he—he's Rubén Blades (*blaydz*) to most people. Also, I mentioned last week Alice and Martin Provensen. The piece that I showed on *Antiques Roadshow*, I acquired as a gift for my wife many years ago at the R. Michelson Gallery in Northampton, Massachusetts. And I just wanna shout out to Rich Michelson, who's just one of the nicest guys, who's got this incredible gallery of not only picture book art, but I believe he is the exclusive dealer in Leonard Nimoy's photography, specifically Leonard Nimoy's photography of nudes. Just in case you want that. Go—go check it out there in Northampton.

And if you're in the Pioneer Valley—I don't get out there as much as I'd like to these days—I happen to know that Lady Killigrew Cafe, over there at the Montague Bookmill, open again for business. Please go check them out; it's a wonderful spot. Uh, "Books you don't need in a place you can't find" is the motto of the Montague Bookmill. The Lady Killigrew Cafe is fantastic.

And Monte Belmonte is still holding it down every morning on WRSI The River, and I would like to mention that he has his podcast called *A Week of Mornings*, which collects the best of his interviews and sketches that he does throughout the week. And it's called *Monte Belmonte: A Week of Mornings*, and you can get it wherever you get your podcasts!

What's going on with you, Jesse?

00:48:53 Jesse Promo Well, I just wanna take an opportunity to mention a wonderful charity that I think is really great. It's one that Maximum Fun has supported, and my wife and I have supported. They're called *Al Otro Lado*, or *The Other Side*, in Spanish.

00:49:07 John Promo Mm-hm.

00:49:10 Jesse Promo And they're an organization that provides legal support, but also holistic, uh, humanitarian support to refugees, deportees, and other migrants, both in the United States and in Tijuana, just south of the

United States. And they're a really wonderful organization that not only gives people legal help, which is of course immensely helpful, but helps them in the ways that they need help. The director is based in Tijuana. She used to live here in LA, but she moved a couple of years ago to Tijuana.

And what they do is, you know, a trauma-informed process that really meets immigrants and migrants where they are, helps them the ways that they need help, and gives them the legal help they need to move between countries as they need to. So it's called AI Otro Lado. My wife used to work in immigration law, and this is an organization that her colleagues recommended as one of the absolute best in the business among smaller organization, um, direct aid groups.

So if you're interested in the many challenges faced by migrants, refugees, and deportees on either side of our border with our southern neighbors, AIOTroLado.org is a great place to go.

00:50:36	John	Promo	AIOTroLado.org . I'm there right now, and I am going to—I'm clicking on how I can help. That's amazing.
00:50:43	Jesse	Promo	Let's get back to the docket!
00:50:44	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
00:50:47	Jesse	Host	Welcome back to the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast. John, uh, do you mind if I, by—by listener request, exploit my children for a moment?
00:50:57	John	Host	Please!
00:50:58	Jesse	Host	My youngest, Frankie—
00:51:01	John	Host	This whole segment is all <u>about</u> exploiting children.
00:51:04	Jesse	Host	Great. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:51:05	John	Host	So I'm excited for this. Thank you.
00:51:06	Jesse	Host	My youngest, Frankie, asked me to play Batman the other day.
00:51:10	John	Host	Yeah.
00:51:11	Jesse	Host	And I was supposed to be a robber.
00:51:13	John	Host	Sure.
00:51:14	Jesse	Host	And I was supposed to have, uh—
00:51:15	John	Host	Well, that's the famous duo, Batman and Robber.
00:51:17	Jesse	Host	Yeah. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:51:18	John	Host	Yeah.
00:51:19	Jesse	Host	I was supposed to have tied up Batman. So Frankie was sitting in a—uh, was sitting in a chair, pretending to be tied up. But then Batman burst forth. Uh, and I said—
00:51:32	John	Host	Yeah.
00:51:33	Jesse	Host	I said to Frankie, "Batman! How did you escape my trap?"

And, uh, Frankie said, "Well, too bad! I'm from comic book history! I'm the first Batman, so I punched out of it! I'm the first Batman, so I have a normal car! I don't have a Batmobile!"

[John cracks up.]

And you know what? Frankie's—Frankie's right!

00:52:00 John Host He—

00:52:01 Jesse Host Originally, Batman didn't have a Batmobile; that was a later creation. *[Laughs.]*

00:52:05 John Host Frankie—Frankie knows Frankie's Batman history!

00:52:09 Jesse Host "I'm from comic book history, so I punched out of it!"

00:52:12 John Host Have you been hiring Elliott Kalan to babysit Frankie lately?

00:52:16 Jesse Host That's basically—basically all of my children see Elliott Kalan as a sort of mentor figure. *[Laughs.]*

00:52:24 John Host That's an—an interesting—

00:52:25 Jesse Host They've nothing but contempt for me, and adoration for Elliott Kalan and his Batman bad guy knowledge. *[Laughs.]* But then I be—I stopped being a robber; I became The Joker.

00:52:37 John Host Sure.

00:52:38 Jesse Host Frankie assigned me the role of The Joker. *[Stifles laughter.]* And Frankie explained to me, "Joker! You can do jack-in-the-box! That means you get a cube, and you just hit it, and it does something!"

00:52:53 John Host *[Laughs.]* I know exactly what Frankie is trying to describe. That is a—the classic Joker jack-in-the-box move—

00:53:01 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:53:02 John Host —where The Joker's head comes out of a jack—I know exactly what's going on there. That's incredible.

00:53:05 Jesse Host Yeah. Ultimately, though, Batman, uh, did win the fight. Uh, I'll tell you how.

00:53:11 John Host Sure.

00:53:13 Jesse Host Frankie explained it to me. "I tore one of your arms! And put a robot one! And I tore your face! And put a robot one on that! And it's making you super hot!"

00:53:26 John Host *[Cracks up.]*

You know what, Jesse?

00:53:32 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:53:33 John Host In the future, our arms and our faces will be replaced by robot faces and arms.

00:53:38 Jesse Host *[Laughing]* It's true!

00:53:41 John Host And we will all be super hot. *[Stifles laughter.]*

00:53:42 Jesse Host *[Chuckling]* Yeah! 'Cause of Batman.

00:53:44 John Host But for now we're still in our meat bodies, reproducing biologically! Which is weird.

00:53:48 Jesse Host Wait. So—wait, John.

[John laughs.]

You said that there—that this whole segment is about child exploitation?

00:53:55 John Host I wouldn't say child exploitation, Jesse.

00:53:57 Jesse Host Right.

00:53:58 John Host I would just say child-forward segment.

00:53:59 Jesse Host Yeah. *[Laughs.]*

00:54:01 John Host Because today we received an audio letter from a young person. An 11-year-old listener named Leela. Jennifer Marmor, roll tape.

00:54:10 Clip Clip **Leela:** Judge John Hodgman. My name is Leela, and I'm from Maine. I am 11 years old. My dad and I were listening to [episode 510](#), about it being alright to name a child June even though they are expected in June. Well, my brother's name is August. He constantly gets the question, "Are you named August because you were born in August?"

He's born in December. I think you made the wrong decision. That's why from now on, I will call you Judge Wrong Hodgman.

00:54:50 John Host *[John and Jesse crack up. One of them claps.]*

00:54:52 Clip Clip *[Leela giggles.]*

00:54:54 John Host *[John laughs/shudders. Jesse is still cracking up.]*

Did you catch that laugh at the end? That scary laugh that Leela gave?

00:55:02 Jesse Host Oh, you're so burnt! Oh my gosh! I'm—

00:55:05 John Host *[Laughs.]* So burned.

00:55:06 Jesse Host I'm looking at you in the video conference! All I see is the charred remains, like, *Indiana Jones*—style. *[Laughs.]*

00:55:14 John Host Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Like, I'm—I'm like—I'm, like, in Pompeii over here, I'm so burned.

00:55:15 Jesse Host Like, she just opened—she just opened the Ark on you!

[Both laugh.]

Oh my gosh!

00:55:21 John Host *[John cries out as if he is being melted by the Ark of the Covenant.]*

Yeah. Leela did it.

00:55:25 Jesse Host *[Laughing]* Judge Wrong Hodgman!

00:55:28 John Host How did that—where—that's been out there for ten years.

[Jesse laughs.]

For ten. Years.

00:55:33 Jesse Host Through the eyes of a child, John!

[Laughing] Through the eyes of a child.

00:55:38 John Host Yeah. So, uh, this was shared with us via Leela's father, a listener named Waldren, which is a very cool name. And they're up there in Maine, which is also very cool. Now—now, I—the—I know all of you are now gonna start sending me clips of your children telling me I'm wrong over and over and over again. I'm sure you got the voice memo open already. I cannot stop you from sending these things to me.

[Stifles laughter.]

I will tell you, it will only cause me emotional pain.

[Jesse laughs.]

And I will not play them on the podcast. So do what you wanna do.

[Stifles laughter.]

Leela, though. Leela, you and only you get the win, this time, for coining the term Judge Wrong Hodgman. Which is amazing.

00:56:21 John Host One more bit of kid news. I mentioned the other week, during the MaxFunDrive, that we have a new addition to the extended *Judge John Hodgman* universe and family. A listener named Amy had written to me to say that she, like me, enjoys night cheese. It was a reference to *Shootin' the Bries episode two*, my and our friend Jordan Morris's members-only, once-every-three-years MaxFunDrive BoCo cheese podcast. And Amy wanted to report that she was currently eating night cheese right then from a mini-fridge in a hospital, where she was waiting to give birth!

Well, guess what? She gave that birth! Happened on May 10th or 11. You already know that 'cause I told you, and I made reference to the fact that this child was born, which is amazing, and that Amy had sent me a picture of that brand new baby. But guess what again, everybody? After that, Amy wrote again, and revealed that she had been a litigant on the show before! Specifically, Amy was the plaintiff in verdict number 222, Eminent Toe-main, in which she—"toe," T-O-E—in which she sought to prohibit her then-girlfriend—play Huey Lewis and the News, *Sports*—from wearing Crocs outside. The, uh—the plastic sandals known as Crocs.

Now—that was five years ago. Now Amy and Alexa—play Huey Lewis and the News, *Sports*—they are married to each other. And this is their first child. You can see a picture of Alexa—play Huey Lewis and the News, *Sports*—holding this baby on the *Judge John Hodgman* Instagram page. And Jesse, according to Amy, uh, they've—they've named the child a traditionally male name, because Amy says, "He's a fellow as far as we know at this time."

Do you know what the name of this, uh, baby is?

00:58:09 Jesse Host

What?

00:58:11 John Host

Croc.

[Jesse laughs.]

Named the baby Croc!

[Stifles laughter.]

That's not true. *[Laughs.]* That's not true. But I'm not gonna say what that baby's name is.

00:58:19 Jesse Host Would you say, John, that it's a crock? *[Laughs.]*

00:58:20 John Host No. It's a cro—*[stifles laughter]*—no, it's a Croc! Like the kind you wear on your foot!

00:58:24 Jesse Host Got it.

00:58:25 John Host In honor of the podcast!

00:58:26 Jesse Host Got it.

00:58:27 John Host That's not true. I'm gonna—I'm gonna respect this baby's privacy!

00:58:30 Jennifer Marmor Producer Hey, guys. Really quick. This is a Croc.

[Jesse laughs quietly.]

00:58:34 John Host Yeah!

00:58:35 Jennifer Guest *[Laughs.]* Sorry.

00:58:36 John Host Wait a minute. Jennifer Marmor's wearing a Croc!

00:58:37 Jennifer Guest *[Laughing]* Yeah.

00:58:39 John Host Guess—guess what? My youngest baby, who's now 15 years old, just got a pair of Crocs in the mail! Crocs are happening again!

00:58:45 Jennifer Guest I only wear 'em in the house.

00:58:47 John Host It's a good time to name your baby Croc. So now, listeners, I know what's gonna happen. You're all gonna go get pregnant as fast as you can, so you can send me pictures of your newborn babies, and get your brand new baby on the podcast. Well, don't! Don't do that! I mean, get pregnant if you want, but don't rush into it. And don't do it to be a podcast. But thank you, and congratulations, to Amy, Alexa—play Huey Lewis and the News, *Sports*—Croc, Leela, and all listeners. I really appreciate your letters, your feedback, your questions. But especially your good faith disputes. We need them to make the show go. And you know how to send them to me. hodgman@maximumfun.org.

00:59:24 Jesse Host The docket is 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 *Judge John Hodgman*, where you can go right now and see [the photo](#) of a great dog named Jerry Orbach.

[John laughs, Jesse stifles laughter.]

Oh, look at Jerry Orbach! He really is a great dog! Look at his dumb face! *[Laughs.]*

00:59:47 John Host It's great. The best thing—I mean, Jerry Orbach is known for being in the drama *Law & Order*.

00:59:52 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:59:53 John Host But they captured Jerry Orbachen the dog here as though it's a freeze frame at the end of a 1980s sitcom.

00:59:58 Jesse Host *[Laughs.]* This is—this is—

01:00:00 John Host Like, Jerry Orbach the dog just delivered the signature catchphrase. *[Laughs.]*

01:00:04 Jesse Host This is not Jerry Orbach on *Law & Order*. This is definitely Jerry Orbach starring on Broadway in *The Fantasticks*. *[Laughs.]*

01:00:11 John Host There you go. That's the Jer—is it Jerry or Orbach, is the name of the dog?

01:00:16 Jesse Host Uh, apparently the dog's name is not Jerry, but Orbach. So they—they refer to the dog as Orbach.

01:00:24 John Host Epic.

01:00:25 Jesse Host Yeah. Pretty tremendous. Thanks to Roman and Emily for sending that in.

Hashtag your *Judge John Hodgman* Tweets [#JJHo](#), and check out the Maximum Fun subreddit to [discuss this episode](#). That's at [MaximumFun.Reddit.com](#). You can submit your cases at [MaximumFun.org/jjho](#). That's [MaximumFun.org/jjho](#), or just email them to hodgman@maximumfun.org.

We wanna take this opportunity to thank every single person who joined Maximum Fun, upgraded, or boosted their membership during the MaxFunDrive. There were over 20,000 of you. We are so grateful to every single one of you. It means the world to us. Quite literally. It is how we eat. So thank you very much to all of you Maximum Fun members. You really rule.

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

01:01:20 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

01:01:23 John Host Surprise post-credits sequence! I don't—I don't know when the last time I did this was! I'm losing track of things. But today begins the March of the Gygaxes!

Now, a few weeks ago, uh, we were talking about Gary Gygax leaving—the creator of *Dungeons & Dragons*—leaving the *Dungeons & Dragons* empire, in the context of the band Phish. And I encouraged listeners to create a Phish pastiche of a song called "Gygax Departs." And a number of you did. And they were all wonderful in their own way. A few weeks ago I played one by a listener named David. This week I'd like to play one by a listener named Bradley—Bradley Mehlenbacher—who wrote new lyrics to an old, completely public domain song, which you will recognize as "Old Joe Clark."

This is his version of "Gygax Departs." You're gonna enjoy it, and I have a couple more that'll be playing over the next couple of weeks, so if you're out there, Dave and Christopher, be patient. Don't need anymore Gygax songs, though. You don't have to do this. Remember, I already put out a call for a mashup of, uh—of Jim's robot voice with, um, "I Want a New Drug" or something. So that's your new project. That's your new assignment.

[Stifles laughter.]

One thing I wanna say before I play this from Bradley. I wanna really thank Bradley, not only for recording this, but also for pointing out an amazing new thing in my life. Something I didn't know. A piece of culture—an obscure cultural reference that I did not know. Which is called "Wine Is Elegance." Uh, Jennifer Marmor, producer Jennifer Marmor, are you there?

01:03:01	Jennifer	Producer	Yeah, I'm here.
01:03:02	John	Host	Have you ever heard of "Wine Is Elegance"?
01:03:04	Jennifer	Producer	No!
01:03:05	John	Host	If I told you that it was a spoken word record album of Vincent Price talking about wine and throwing dinner parties, <i>[stifles laughter]</i> would that make you interested?
01:03:14	Jennifer	Producer	Yeah!
01:03:16	John	Host	Yeah. It's incredible. You just Google it, everybody. "Wine Is Elegance." It's—it's all over the Internet.
			But now! Here is Bradley Mehlenbacher. He also said I could pronounce it Mehlen-back-er! With his version of "Gygax Departs."
01:03:29	Music	Music	<i>[Guitar or ukulele.]</i>
			Bradley Mehlenbacher: <i>[Singing]</i>
			<i>Gary Gygax left his job 'Cause of corporate bullcrap He died in 2008 from an abdominal aortic aneurysm</i>
			<i>Gary Gygax, thank you, sir D&D is awesome You taught us all to tell our own Stories about dragons</i>
			<i>Gary Gygax, thank you, sir For all your creations Though you're gone, they live on In dens across the nation</i>
			<i>[Music finishes.]</i>
01:04:08	Music	Transition	A cheerful ukulele chord.
01:04:09	Speaker 1	Guest	MaximumFun.org .
01:04:11	Speaker 2	Guest	Comedy and culture.
01:04:12	Speaker 3	Guest	Artist owned—
01:04:13	Speaker 4	Guest	—audience supported.