

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

00:00:02 Jesse Thorn Host Welcome to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. I'm Bailiff Jesse Thorn. We're in chambers this week, clearing the docket! And with me is a man who needs no chair because he's sitting on a pile of SkyMiles—

[John laughs.]

—Judge John Hodgman. *[Chuckles.]*

00:00:16 John Hodgman Host That's true; I did have a—you know, uh, there were a lot of SkyMiles that I had accumulated. Over our years of touring together in the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast live show. And other professional responsibilities and duties.

[Chuckles.] Duties...

00:00:31 Jesse Host *[Laughs.]* Good one.

00:00:32 John Host Yeah, I know, right? But! The past, you know—for the past 18 months or so, 14, 15 months... I haven't been flying around! I'm sitting on these SkyMiles, they don't expire, why don't I turn them into a—a throne?

00:00:45 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:00:47 John Host So I've got a throne of SkyMiles and Biscoff cookies, that I collected off of Delta planes over many years.

Jesse Thorn. The times, they are... a-changing, to quote the bard of all Boomers, Mr. Robert Dylan.

00:01:02 Jesse Host Mm-hm. Sure. *[Laughs quietly.]* I—I'm familiar with him.

00:01:04 John Host And, uh—and soon, I've gotta spend those SkyMiles. I gotta dismantle my throne and put them into use to get us into the air, and across the country, and in front of people again.

00:01:17 Jesse Host John, would you call Bob Dylan... a rock star poet? 'Cause that's what I would call him. In my opinion, he's as much a poet—

[John snorts.]

—as he is a musician.

00:01:26 John Host Well, he's a Nobel Laureate. For poetry.

00:01:28 Jesse Host Mm-hm.

00:01:29 John Host Sure.

00:01:30 Jesse Host Yeah. In poetry.

00:01:31 John Host I was just like, "Can you imagine all the poets holding their heads in their hands that day?"

[Jesse laughs.]

All the professional poets.

[Stifles laughter.]

This thing's only given out once a year, to one poet a year.

00:01:45 Jesse Host *[Bob Dylan impression]* "I choose the rooad less travelled!"

00:01:48 John Host *[Laughs.]* I mean no disrespect to Bob Dylan—

00:01:52 Jesse Host Bob Dylan is a great musician.

00:01:54 John Host Of course! A—an essential artist! The fact that I do not have the DNA receptor for Bob Dylan does not mean that he is—that he is not an essential artist.

00:02:04 Jesse Host Yeah, who are—

00:02:05 John Host I don't get it.

00:02:06 Jesse Host Who are you to complain? You have the DNA receptor for Tom Waits.

00:02:09 John Host Well, that's what I was gonna say. Nobel Laureate of my heart!

00:02:12 Jesse Host Let's get into the docket. Here's a case from Mike in Kansas City, Missouri—

00:02:15 John Host I don't want—I don't want to, yet, Jesse. I have to tell you something.

00:02:17 Jesse Host What's that?

00:02:19 John Host I feel—I feel terrible.

00:02:20 Jesse Host Why?

00:02:21 John Host Physically destroyed. Do you know why?

00:02:24 Jesse Host Why is that?

00:02:25 John Host I saw—*[stifles laughter]*—I saw friends.

[Jesse laughs.]

I saw human beings. For a prolonged encounter.

00:02:29 Jesse Host *[Stifling laughter]* Oh, I thought you meant the television show *Friends*. I immediately assumed.

00:02:33 John Host No! No, no, no, no. No. No, no, no, no.

00:02:34 Jesse Host They recently reunited!

00:02:36 John Host Yes. I have not seen—

00:02:37 Jesse Host Everyone likes Joey best now!

00:02:38 John Host You know what, Matt LeBlanc? The sleeper star of the *Friends*! No one knew. No one gave Matt LeBlanc his props in his time. But then *Episodes*, so good. Matt LeBlanc is great! But I have not—the—no, the reunion of *Friends* has not touched my eyes, in part because Paul Rudd wasn't there. But also in part because I was away this weekend!

Our friends Jonathan Coulton—and yours—Jonathan Coulton and Christine Connor, and their families, and our families, our old friends, invited us to go to their home in the mountains of upstate New York in an undefined location. Because we were all vaccinated. And it's the first prolonged social overnight encounter I've had, with some of our dearest friends. We've seen them—this was a long stretch of being in and breathing in rooms with people who are not in my family, and talking to them. And I—when we got home yesterday, I was like, "I gotta go to bed. I feel like I just got hit in the stomach a

hundred times."

[Stifles laughter.]

Not 'cause it wasn't pleasant! It was just like my body wasn't... up for it! Like, I—if I go out for lunch with someone now, I lose my voice the next day! I'm just not used to this level of encounter. I think I might have an ear infection from it!

[Jesse laughs, John stifles laughter.]

I'm not joking! I don't know what's going on!

00:04:00	Jesse	Host	Like a baby that took a plane ride?
00:04:01	John	Host	Yeah, I'm like a baby—! I'm—that's right! Because the babies don't—babies don't fly on planes that often. And their heads get all stuffy with the change in pressure differential. They're not used to it; they've developed no tolerance. All my tolerance is gone. I used to be King of the Skies, Jesse! Now I'm grounded for life!
00:04:21	Jesse	Host	<i>[Laughing]</i> The mighty eagle of mid-tier comedy performers.
00:04:28	John	Host	Wow. Yeah, let's move on.
			<i>[Jesse laughs.]</i>
			I think we'll move on, then. Thanks.
00:04:33	Jesse	Host	Here's a case from Mike in Kansas City, Missouri. By the way, any time on one of these shows, I say "Missouri," people send me different ways to say the name of that state, and they're <u>mad</u> about it.
00:04:43	John	Host	That's really interesting. That's really interesting. 'Cause I thought when you said "By the way," you were gonna walk back your mid-tier roast. But okay, I got you! Let's go on to Missouri.
00:04:51	Jesse	Host	Look! I'm—I'm bottom of the barrel!
			<i>[Both laugh.]</i>
			I'm a—I'm a rotten apple!
00:04:58	John	Host	Look. We're none of us Bob Dylan, so what are we even talking about? Why do we even exist?
00:05:02	Jesse	Host	<i>[Laughs.]</i> You gotta cut around the wormholes if you wanna eat <u>me</u> .
00:05:06	John	Host	No, you know what? You're a sweet, crisp gala apple, and so am I.
00:05:10	Jesse	Host	Thank you very much, but I'm a sundowner.
00:05:12	John	Host	Whoa!
00:05:13	Jesse	Host	Um, I say "Missouri" because my dad is from— <u>was</u> from Kansas City, Missouri.
00:05:18	John	Host	Yeah.
00:05:19	Jesse	Host	And that's how <u>he</u> said it. So... go suck a lemon, people who are mad about how I say "Missouri."
00:05:23	John	Host	I don't know that anyone—however you wanna say the name of that state, it's fine. Just don't show me. Missouri, you're so big on

showing everybody. How about this? Change your motto: "Keep it to yourself" State. Missouri.

[Both laugh.]

Stupid... Mid-tier comedy...

00:05:39 Jesse Host "My wife and I are both introverts. However, in most situations, I'm more gregarious than she is. There is one area, though, where she finds me to be curmudgeonly. I refuse to answer the door when we are not expecting company. I maintain that the doorbell or knock is a request, not a demand, and therefore we can ignore it and go about our business.

Additionally, I propose that in the time of COVID, not answering the door to strangers is being extra safe, even though we're both fully vaccinated. I would like the judge to recognize that I'm being socially appropriate by now answering my door to unanticipated knocks and rings."

00:06:22 John Host So, Jesse... Here's the thing. I live in New York City, uh, almost all of the time. When someone rings the buzzer on our apartment buildings—and of course we all have apartments that are perfect recreations of the sets of *Friends*—

[Jesse laughs.]

—uh, you say, "Who is it?"

[Chuckles.]

Traditionally, you used to say, "Who is it?" You know what I mean? You'd walk the five miles from the settee to the front door in your massive downtown apartment. And hit the buzzer and go, "Who's there?" And the answer was routinely—

"[Echoey, garbled speech.]"

00:06:56 Jesse Host Right.

00:06:57 John Host And you would figure out whether that was someone you knew or not.

00:07:00 Jesse Host Like the announcement on a subway train.

00:07:01 John Host Yeah. Exactly.

00:07:02 Jesse Host *"[Garbled speech] Station!"*

[John laughs.]

Why is the station part clear? I know it's a station.

00:07:07 John Host "Station" is always clear.

00:07:08 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:07:09 John Host *[Laughs.]* To be fair, sometimes the station is unpronounceable, such as Hoyt-Schermerhorn.

[Jesse laughs.]

But in any case... Nowadays, in most contemporary apartment buildings—Hoyt-Schermerhorn—you have a little video screen. You can preview who the person is. You don't have to—you don't have to even ask them. You can be as introverted, even to the point of antisocial, as possible. If the bell rings and it's someone you don't recognize, you just walk away, knowing that they are... many—many locked doors and floors behind you, and they cannot see in, or register that you're there.

But Jesse, you live in a city called Los Angeles. Where most people have—you know, often live in standalone homes. Where someone might—like in Missouri, someone might knock on the door or ring the buzzer. And, uh—and they might see you through a window! What do you do if you get a—in Los Angeles? What's the etiquette if there's a "ding-dong!" that you do not expect? Is it okay to just ignore it?

00:08:12	Jesse	Host	Well, I don't even—I don't even have a doorbell.
00:08:14	John	Host	Really!
00:08:16	Jesse	Host	I mean, I have a doorbell, but it's inside a locked gate.
00:08:18	John	Host	Okay. So how do people indicate that they want to get in?
00:08:21	Jesse	Host	They call me on the phone.
			<i>[Beat.]</i>
00:08:24	John	Host	<i>[Laughs.]</i> Okay. Fair enough. No one ever just knocks on your door?
00:08:29	Jesse	Host	Ah, the—you know, the delivery people throw the packages over the fence.
00:08:32	John	Host	Right.
00:08:33	Jesse	Host	Uh, people that I'm expecting, I leave the gate open for them.
00:08:37	John	Host	Mm-hm.
00:08:39	Jesse	Host	I don't know who—I live on a street that ends in a dirt road.
00:08:43	John	Host	It's barely a street.
00:08:44	Jesse	Host	Yeah. It's—
00:08:45	John	Host	Yeah.
00:08:46	Jesse	Host	To call it a street is generous.
00:08:47	John	Host	Yeah.
00:08:48	Jesse	Host	So there's no casual—you know, there's no Jehovah's Witnesses wandering down my street, uh, to tell me the good news. It's <u>really</u> just people who <u>intend</u> to come to my house.
00:08:59	John	Host	Well, let's—let's throw it to Jennifer Marmor! She also lives in the city of Los Angeles. Hi, Jennifer.
00:09:03	Jennifer Marmor	Producer	Hi!
00:09:04	John	Host	In Los Angeles, is there a etiquette for someone knocking or ringing that you do not expect? Do you <u>need</u> to go and check the door?
00:09:12	Jennifer	Producer	Well, we—yeah. Um, we have a peephole in the door.

00:09:17 John Host Yeah.

00:09:18 Jennifer Producer I'm too short to look out of it—

00:09:20 John Host Oh no!

00:09:21 Jennifer Producer —unless I'm wearing taller shoes.

[Jennifer and Jesse laugh.]

00:09:22 John Host Oh nooo!

00:09:24 Jennifer Producer So if I'm the one who's home, then I have to go... "Who is it?"
[Laughs.]

00:09:29 John Host Right.

00:09:30 Jennifer Producer And, um, we live in a—

00:09:31 John Host And they go, "*[Garbled speech]* Hoyt-Schermerhorn!"

00:09:33 Jennifer Producer Mm-hm. Mm-hm. We live in a fourplex—

00:09:34 Jesse Host "[Inaudible] Station."

[Jennifer laughs.]

00:09:37 John Host Sorry, go ahead.

00:09:39 Jennifer Producer Um, we—that's okay! We live in a fourplex, and so—and the—so it's just, like, a row of four doors, just one next to each other.

00:09:46 John Host Okay.

00:09:47 Jennifer Producer And often what will happen is somebody will be knocking for the neighbor, but like, we hear it.

00:09:54 John Host Right.

00:09:55 Jennifer Producer And so I have to go check, 'cause also my dog is losing his mind, assuming people are coming to, you know, do harm. And yeah! I—
[sighs]. I kind of just ask who it is, and—

00:10:08 John Host And if it's someone that you're not expecting, you just back away slowly from the door?

00:10:13 Jennifer Producer You know what? I—I tend to—I mean, I don't know. I don't tend to open it, but like—it's a case-by-case basis. Because...

00:10:20 John Host Right!

00:10:21 Jennifer Producer You know, there was a time when people were canvassing for, you know, various political candidates.

00:10:28 John Host Yeah.

00:10:29 Jennifer Producer And, you know, this was—I think I guess before COVID, just before COVID, but we would talk to them. Unless the baby was napping, and then we put up a sign that said, "We're voting for such-and-such, but we'll vote for your candidate if they're the—uh, *[laughs]* if they're the nominee."

00:10:46 John Host Right.

00:10:48 Jennifer Producer "We have a sleeping baby. Don't knock."

00:10:49 John Host Right. Right.

00:10:51 Jennifer Producer This isn't a good answer, 'cause it's—it's all just—it's a case-by-case basis!

00:10:53 John Host It's a case-by-case basis!

00:10:54 Jennifer Producer But I do feel like—I do feel like... I can't just ignore it. Because it's very clear that we're home.

00:11:01 John Host Right.

00:11:03 Jennifer Producer We—the—you know, the window is right there. They can see that, like, you know, my kid is doing stuff, and I'm sitting there.

00:11:11 John Host Yeah. I—I would never ignore—I would never ignore a doorbell, or a buzzer. Because I am curious to know who is out there. That is natural curiosity. They call me Curious John.

00:11:20 Jennifer Producer Yeah. That's the other thing for me, is that even if I'm not expecting somebody, I'm like, "Ooh! Did somebody send me flowers or something?" *[Chuckles.]*

00:11:28 John Host Right.

00:11:29 Jennifer Producer "I gotta go see who it is!"

00:11:30 John Host Well, ex—yeah! It's an interesting point, you know, because I have—

00:11:32 Jesse Host "Ooh! A wooden horse?! I've always wanted one!"

[John and Jennifer laugh.]

00:11:37 John Host But I have the—the luxury of being able to see who is ringing the bell, and if I know them, and I can talk to them remotely. And I am totally secure. And the truth is, let's just start out by saying: Don't open your door to a stranger. That's how the movie *Strangers* happens. *The Strangers*. Scariest movie. Don't open a door! Late at night? Someone's knocking? Don't open the door!

When she goes, "Is Tamara here?" Scariest moment in the scariest movie. "Is Tamara here? See you later." Scary. Didn't have to do that, Scott Speedman!

[Nervous laugh.]

Liv Tyler knew! Don't open the door! To a stranger.

00:12:15 Jesse Host "Barbican Station..."

00:12:16 John Host *[Laughs.]*

And there's a special weirdness, you know—I get a little—and I'm feeling, uh, Mike in this case, 'cause I get a little hinky just thinking about going to a door where there's a stranger on the other side going—

[Knock-knock-knock.]

"Is Tamara here?"

And even looking through a peephole, I would feel—that feels intimate to me, and a little scary. Do you know what I mean? In a way that it isn't in New York City, where I am truly removed. Like, I am peering down from a tower. I am untouchable. But like, just getting on the other side of that door, and there's a stranger that I don't expect, I understand why Mike feels a little ambivalent about

this! Makes me feel a little—a little nervous to think, "Who could be on the other side of that door? I saw *The Strangers*; it could be one of them!"

But Jennifer, you raise a very interesting point. Because just this morning, I have received two buzzes of my buzzer here at my office in Brooklyn, New York. The first one, I knew, was the pho soup that I had ordered for my lunch. And I let that person in right away, and ate that pho as quickly as possible.

And then I'm settled down, and I'm—and I've already got this one in my mind. Buzzer buzzes again. I'm like, "Buh? Is that Mike? [*Stifles laughter.*] From the podcast?"

[*Jennifer laughs.*]

"Is that Mike from the docket, testing me? Is it one of the Strangers? Is it a bad guy? What is going on?! Why is this happening?"

00:13:42 John Host

I go, and I think about, like, "Do I just ignore it?" I'm lit—I'm legitimately scared, 'cause it's so uncanny that it just happened as I was thinking about this case. And I hit the video, and there's a man standing down there with a big bouquet of flowers.

[*Jennifer gasps.*]

And I said—I can talk remotely. I say, "I don't think those are for me."

And he said, "Are you Judge John Hodgman? They're from Mike."
No.

[*Jennifer laughs.*]

He said—[*stifles laughter*]—he said, "I've been ringing the other—the other doorbell five times. And I gotta give these flowers to this person."

And I was like, "This is exactly why Mike's gotta check the door!" If Mike doesn't check the door, someone isn't gonna get their flowers! I know it's scary. I get it! But someone could need some help. Someone could be in trouble. Someone might be trying to deliver flowers, or a package, or medication. And they have the wrong address, or they want to figure out if this is the correct address.

00:14:40 John Host

You gotta live a—and look! I know it's scary to go out into the world. I understand and appreciate introversion. I've never been more introverted in my life. I just spent a weekend with some of my oldest and best friends, whom I love, and I feel like I got hit by a bus. And all I wanna do is crawl back into my, uh, pandemic hole, and not come out for a month. I get it.

But we gotta go out. We gotta see what's happening in the world a little bit. We are—we have to be out there a little bit. We have to be able to see—we have to be able to see, and make ourselves available to help if we can. While maintaining, first and foremost, our security. And thinking about that, I realize now that probably that—that guy's flowers were, uh, probably poison.

[Jesse laughs.]

Maybe that's true. I think probably someone got some pretty flowers.

00:15:26 Jesse Host There are plenty of security-based reasons to consider whether and how to open the door for someone. But... *[Laughs.]* I don't think that Emily Post or whatever would endorse—

00:15:45 John Host Just sitting there? *[Laughs.]*

00:15:48 Jesse Host —it being a personal choice whether to accept that someone rang the doorbell.

00:15:51 John Host Yeah. I think that—I think just sitting there, particularly—I mean, if you're in a single home, like you might be in Missouri (*Miss-or-ai*)—that's how I pronounce it.

00:16:02 Jesse Host Mm-hm.

00:16:03 John Host Show me where I'm wrong. Show me where I'm wrong, Miss-or-ai.

Uhhh, or whatever. Like, if someone's—

[Knock-knock-knock.]

—and "bzzt-bzzt-bzzt!" and you're just sitting there going, "Uh, nothing's happening. I'm not here. I'm not going to do it!" and they can just kinda walk across the lawn and look in the window at you, come on. You know better than that, Mike. You gotta get up there and make sure everyone's okay.

00:16:22 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:16:24 Jesse Host John, did you know that Missouri was originally called the "Tell Me" State?

[John snorts.]

Then it took a writing class at the learning annex?

00:16:31 John Host *[Laughs quietly.]* Terrible.

00:16:34 Jesse Host Okay, here's something from Jeff of Pueblo, Colorado:

"Dear Judge Hodgman,

I have an intense fear of lotions, creams, soaps, shampoos, gels, mousses, rubs, rouges, pastes, or basically anything else meant to be applied to the human body."

What about tinctures?

[John laughs.]

"My fear is so intense—"

00:16:53 John Host What about unguents?

00:16:55 Jesse Host Poultice?

"My fear is so intense that I would classify it as a phobia. My wife

laughs at this, and frequently chases me and/or startles me with lotion-covered hands in a pretend attack. She defends this by saying my fear is ridiculous and made up. She also points out I used to tickle her even after she had asked me to stop.

I know I took the tickling too far. I realized years ago that her involuntary laughter was not a signal that she was enjoying things as much as I was, and so I stopped doing this. However, to this day, she will pretend to attack me with some cream or another. I seek an injunction against my wife."

00:17:37 John Host Alright. This is gonna be a quick one, 'cause obviously everyone knows. We've already ruled on it, very recently. If someone feels they have a phobia about a thing, you don't—you don't get to choose they're wrong. If they're a—if they're a-scared of a thing, you've gotta respected their a-scaredness.

Maybe you find out that your spouse is a bit of a scaredy-cat about lotions and unguents. *[Stifles laughter.]* Uh, that's okay! It's okay for them to be a-scared of those things. It's not cool to make fun of them with your lotion hands.

And is it—is it—by the same token, we've ruled on this before. *[Stifles laughter.]* Don't tickle people! Don't—don't touch people unless they're okay with being touched, and particularly if they say stop, you stop! You learn your lesson, you adjust, you apologize. You—you, uh, correct course from then on. And here's the good news: Jeff did it! Jeff did it, Jeff's wife! Jeff stopped. I understand! You're still mad about it. Jeff tickled you too much. Jeff tickled you beyond your comfort level. Jeff shouldn't have been tickling you at all.

You know. Shame on Jeff, I say. And I think shame on Jeff, Jeff says, too! I think he gets it. You've held him accountable. There's no need for vengeance. You don't have to scare him now. That's wrong. I hope that he uses bar soap at least, though, 'cause I'm worried that Jeff smells.

00:18:59 John Host If he's not—I understand he's not okay with body wash or any kind of gels. But he's gotta—I hope he's got some bar soap or something.

00:19:06 Jesse Host A lot of people at UC Santa Cruz told me that you don't need to use soap. Your body will rebalance itself. But all of those people were smelly.

00:19:15 John Host *[Laughs.]* That's the balance that they're seeking. They want us all to be smelly. Then none of us will notice anymore.

00:19:21 Jesse Host I would encourage Jeff—you know, no binding ruling, it's his choice. But I would encourage Jeff to get help with this phobia simply because... a lot of lotions, creams, shampoos, pastes, poultices, are useful and valuable in day-to-day life. Not least of which is sunscreen.

00:19:45 John Host Good point!

00:19:46 Jesse Host I mean, I hope Jeff has some very wide-brimmed hats. Nobody wants to get skin cancer.

00:19:53 John Host Well, but Jeff could get the—the solid block sunscreen. So Jeff

could, like, cover himself up with—

00:19:58 Jesse Host *[Stifling laughter]* The kind that a—the kind that a cartoon lifeguard wears on their nose?

00:20:03 John Host Yeah, that's right. What I'm saying is—but you can put it all over your whole face. And then cover yourself up completely in a white kaftan robe.

00:20:09 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:20:10 John Host And then wear a broad-brimmed hat, and sunglasses.

00:20:13 Jesse Host And that way, nobody knows you're invisible. *[Laughs.]*

00:20:15 John Host Then everybody knows you're Marlon Brando in *The Island of Dr. Moreau*.

[Jesse laughs, John stifles laughter.]

There's one to look at! Talk about scary movies. The only reason—look. All of this is settled law, Jeff and Jeff's wife, who has a name and is a whole person in her own right, I am sure. Jeff's wife, you were wronged, but—but, you know, Jeff has apologized and I hope atoned. And you—and it is wrong to disrespect people's phobias.

I've got a phobia. It's called submechanophobia. It's my—fear of underwater animatronics. It's on the Internet; I found out about it. Submechanophobia is also the name of a fictional band that I just invented. And we're gonna create a tour T-shirt for Submechanophobia for summer 2021. It's gonna be the T-shirt of the summer. I'm gonna imagine a whole tour—touring route for Submechanophobia, an incredible prog rock band.

But even though my fear is irrational, I don't want anyone chasing me with any underwater robots. Stop doing it, Jeff's wife.

00:21:15 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:21:16 John Host The only reason I brought this up is that, um, the idea of being chased around a house with a—by a person with lotion on their hands is legitimately scary. That's scarier than just regular lotion! Like—

00:21:28 Jesse Host Yeah, just squelching their way through the hallway?

00:21:30 John Host Yeah. I'm like, "You know what?" I didn't need to hear this case at all since it's such settled law, except I wanted Jeff to have some justice, and also I wanted to say: I used to think that *The Strangers* was the scariest movie. Now I know *Lotion Hands*. That is gonna be the scariest horror franchise of the next couple of years. *Lotion Hands 1, Lotion Hands 2, Lotion Hands 3: Return of the Poultice*.

00:21:56 Jesse Host Yeah, let's—let's do it, John Krasinski from *The Office*.

[John laughs.]

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 *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

00:22:09 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:22:11 Jesse Promo The *Judge John Hodgman* podcast is brought to you by you. Our members! The folks who have joined Maximum Fun at MaximumFun.org/join. We're also supported this week by our friends at Brooklinen!

00:22:24 John Promo Jesse Thorn, a long time ago, a young man named Lil' John Hodgman went to college. Went all the way from his home just outside of Boston, Massachusetts to a town in Southern Connecticut called New Haven, Connecticut.

00:22:40 Jesse Promo Lil' John Hodgman? What?

00:22:41 John Promo Lil' John Hodgman—

00:22:42 Jesse Promo Okay.

00:22:43 John Promo Lil' John Hodgman was a little homesick! Uh, not knowing this strange and wondrous land so far away from his natural commonwealth. This state they called, uh, Connecticut, which apparently is sometimes in New England, but sometimes isn't. And looking for a little bit of home, John Hodgman found in New Haven a furniture store. A furniture store called Conran's. that doesn't exist anymore, that used to have a branch up there on Exeter Street in Boston, where John Hodgman—Lil' John Hodgman had worked in the stockroom for a whole summer long. And feeling a—a touch of home, went in, and saw a chair. And saw this chair had a certain name.

And he said to the salesperson, "This armchair. It has a name. It's—"

And the person said, "Yes. Our new line of chairs are named after several prominent towns in Massachusetts."

You know what the name of this chair was, Jesse?

00:23:36 Jesse Promo What's that?

00:23:37 John Promo It was the Brookline Chair. My hometown! They had a chair named after my hometown of Brookline, Massachusetts. And I'll tell you what. Lil' John Hodgman sat in that chair and finally felt at home. That chair is discontinued. Conran's is discontinued. New Haven still exists. I'm not in college anymore, I'm old. When I want a taste of home, you know where I go? I take to my bed, and wrap myself in my incredibly comfortable Brookline...N sheets. That's right! Brookline-N sheets—

[Jesse laughs quietly.]

—works directly with manufacturers to make luxury available directly to you, without the luxury-level markups. Brookline-N has something for your every comfort need, ideal for a seasonal refre—wait a minute. It's saying—I'm getting a message here from Jennifer Marmor. It's not Brookline-N sheets. It's Brooklinen?

00:24:28 Jesse Promo Confirmed.

00:24:29 John Promo Then I'm even more impressed. Honestly, I own several sets of Brooklinen sheets. I just received in the mails today—I cannot wait to go home and wash and make my bed with these new, fresh, washed linen sheets that I got from Brooklinen. That's my seasonal refresh. I can't believe I love these sheets so much, and they're not named

after my hometown! That's incredible. Brooklinen!

00:24:54 Jesse Promo So give yourself the comfort refresh you deserve, and get it for less at Brooklinen.

00:24:58 John Promo Go to [Brooklinen.com](https://www.brooklinen.com), and use promo code "Hodgman" to get \$20 off with a minimum purchase of \$100.

00:25:06 Jesse Promo That's [B-R-O-O-K-L-I-N-E-N.com](https://www.brooklinen.com), and enter promo code "Hodgman" for \$20 with a minimum purchase of \$100!

00:25:17 John Promo That's [Brooklinen.com](https://www.brooklinen.com). Promo code "Hodgman."

00:25:21 Jesse Promo We're also supported this week by BetterHelp.

00:25:24 John Promo In 2021, it's finally okay to talk about our mental health. And that's why we're excited to be sponsored by BetterHelp.

00:25:32 Jesse Promo BetterHelp is customized online therapy that offers video, phone, and even live chat sessions. They'll match you with a therapist in under 48 hours, and it's easy to change therapists if needed.

00:25:43 John Promo Remember, you don't need a traumatic event in your life to benefit from therapy—although arguably we've had hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of days of low-grade trauma, all of us. But maybe you're just feeling anxious and depressed, or your stress feels like it's too much to manage. Get some tools to cope, and make your life a little bit easier.

00:25:59 Jesse Promo I've been in therapy for quite a long time. It's meant a lot to me both in times when I was feeling relatively good, and in times when—uh, that were... where the stakes were a little bit higher. And I hope that through whatever means you choose, you will find a way to get mental health assistance. And BetterHelp is one particularly convenient way to do it. Especially if it's a first step!

00:26:27 John Promo Yeah! A lot of us aren't necessarily comfortable yet in going into an office, or maybe taking a train or public transportation. Maybe some of us haven't been eligible for vaccination yet, and so we're a little cautious about leaving. BetterHelp is an option for you. Maybe some of us are having difficulty affording in-person therapy. BetterHelp is an option that you can explore for you, because frankly, therapy is due diligence. It's part of—it's part of your daily healthcare routine. You brush your teeth? What are you, gonna not brush your brain? Which do you use more? Probably about equal. So, seriously.

[Jesse laughs, John stifles laughter.]

Think of—

00:27:02 Jesse Promo I mean, six of one, half dozen of the other, right?

00:27:04 John Promo Seriously. The—having someone to talk to about the things that are on your mind is just one of the most valuable things that you can experience. So this podcast is sponsored by BetterHelp, and *Judge John Hodgman* listeners get 10% off their first month at [BetterHelp.com/jiho](https://www.betterhelp.com/jiho). That's [BetterH-E-L-P.com/jiho](https://www.betterhelp.com/jiho).

00:27:24 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:27:27 Jesse Host Welcome back to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. We're clearing the docket this week, and we have a case from Kyle in Washington, DC:

"My wife and I just bought a camper. It was mainly her idea, as the kids and I were perfectly happy in tents. Now she wants to name the camper. I think naming vehicles is hokey, and only appropriate if the vehicle is part of a fleet, like 'the USS *Ship Name*'."

[John snorts.]

"She wants to name it CC—"

00:27:54 John Host

Best name for a ship.

00:27:55 Jesse Host

Yeah. That is good.

00:27:56 John Host

Best name for a ship. That's really good.

00:27:58 Jesse Host

That is.

00:27:59 John Host

That's like, uh, the No Name brand of ships.

00:28:03 Jesse Host

[Chuckles.]

"She wants to name it CC, as in Cozy Camper, and had a whole ethos developing around the Cozy Camper lifestyle. I just want to camp.

PS,

I wanna put bumper stickers on the camper to memorialize the places we've visited, but she says no bumper stickers! But at the same time, she says bumper stickers from anywhere are fine, regardless of whether the camper was taken there.

I'm a bumper sticker purist! Stickers are only appropriate if the item upon which the sticker rests visited that place. We wouldn't put a bumper sticker from Hawai'i on our camper... question mark, exclamation mark, question mark, exclamation mark, question mark?!?!?"

00:28:46 John Host

Strong close on a question mark. Well, there's a lot—there's a lot to take in, here. A couple of different issues. But first I just wanna go back and mention—I forgot to mention. Speaking of lotions, pastes, and gels. One of the young people that I visited over this weekend, uh, is averse to condiments of any kind. Mustard. Uh, my beloved mayonnaise. Hummus, no thank you.

00:29:13 Jesse Host

Wow.

00:29:14 John Host

Which is not a condiment, but any sort of dip as well. Ranch dip, nope. And—

00:29:18 Jesse Host

Bleu cheese.

00:29:19 John Host

Nope. And when I—and when it was put to him, "What would you say is the base repulsion?" he kinda looked in the air for a while, and he said, "I guess you would just say... I don't like any savory pastes."

[Jesse laughs.]

And I'm like, "You know what? Respect."

[John or Jesse laughs quietly.]

00:29:35 Jesse Host

Yeah.

00:29:36 John Host Respect! Even I, mayonnaise's greatest champion, must respect it is a savory paste, and therefore in that context, it is disgusting. Good for you.

00:29:44 Jesse Host You know, once in college at UC Santa Cruz, I asked my friend Ben Smith—

00:29:49 John Host Mm-hm.

00:29:51 Jesse Host —why he was a vegan.

00:29:53 John Host Right.

00:29:54 Jesse Host And I—to be clear, I have nothing but immense respect for the vegan lifestyle, and vegetarianism more broadly.

00:30:01 John Host Right.

00:30:02 Jesse Host Both of which are responsible choices for our planet.

00:30:05 John Host Yeah.

00:30:06 Jesse Host Ben Smith said to me—he shrugged. He said, "I think I just like extremism."

[Both laugh.]

00:30:14 John Host Honest. You know, I—

00:30:15 Jesse Host And I was like, "You know what? You're doing it right! You're doing your thing! That is one of the top extremisms to pursue! Good for everybody!"

00:30:22 John Host You know, I—I didn't go to UC Santa Cruz, but I have heard that among its noted eccentricities... including its eschewing of all shampoos, conditioners, lotions, uh, liquid soaps—

00:30:34 Jesse Host Yeah. The popularity of unicycles.

00:30:38 John Host Yeah.

00:30:39 Jesse Host Including mountain unicycles, a specific type of unicycle for riding on trails.

00:30:43 John Host *[Stifles laughter.]* I've heard the only acceptable deodorant in the UC Santa Cruz community is, uh, vegan cheese.

00:30:53 Jesse Host Yeah. *[Laughs.]* Did you know that at UC Santa Cruz, I knew multiple people who lived in the woods under a tarp?

00:31:01 John Host All under the same tarp?!

00:31:04 Jesse Host No! They each had—each had their own tarp!

00:31:06 John Host Well, that brings us back to this case: To each their own tarp.

00:31:10 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:31:11 John Host First of all, let's talk about this bumper sticker thing. Jesse Thorn, you live in a—you live in the car culture of Los Angeles. How do you feel about bumper stickers? Thumbs up? Thumbs down? Don't care?

00:31:21 Jesse Host I do have a few travel-style bumper stickers on my car.

00:31:24 John Host Yeah. Alright!

00:31:26 Jesse Host There's not really anywhere to put bumper stickers on the bumper of my car.

00:31:29 John Host Mm-hm.

00:31:30 Jesse Host I recently obtained, at a flea market, a bumper sticker for my favorite baseball team, the San Francisco Giants.

00:31:36 John Host Right.

00:31:37 Jesse Host From the late 1970s. Their—with their, uh, their flagship station KNBR 68, the sports leader. And, uh, I realized that my car did not really have a place to put it. *[Stiffles laughter.]*

00:31:49 John Host Right.

00:31:50 Jesse Host 'Cause it's a two-tone bumper. So there's not really a—a solid—but I do have a few of those kind of... trunk label-style stickers—

00:31:59 John Host Mm-hm.

00:32:00 Jesse Host —in the back side windows of my station wagon, and they do represent places that car has visited. I have one for San Francisco, one for Sequoia National Forest, and I have one that says, uh, I have a property in the particular town in Sequoia National Monument where my cabin is, and that's because if you park on the street, that way the, uh, firefighters won't just push your car off the side of the road if they need to get through.

00:32:27 John Host Off the cliff?

00:32:28 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:32:29 John Host Right. Yeah. "No, he's okay. He has a cabin here. We won't—we won't destroy his car."

00:32:34 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:32:35 John Host Uh, so you—so do you think there's something to this bumper sticker purism? Would you put a Hawai'i bumper sticker on a camper? That will never go to any of the islands of Hawai'i?

00:32:47 Jesse Host I think in both of these cases, from my perspective—

00:32:50 John Host Yeah.

00:32:52 Jesse Host —there is no absolute rule. But Kyle's wife seems cool, and I like her plan.

00:32:57 John Host I agree with you. And here's the thing, Kyle. I follow on Instagram one or two of these, uh, Van Life accounts. These are beautiful young people who live in beautiful vintage camper vans of the old VW Bus variety, etc, etc.

00:33:16 Jesse Host Mitsubishi Delica.

00:33:18 John Host *[Sighs.]* I don't know if there's a—if there's a Delica Life account. There ought to be, man.

00:33:21 Jesse Host There are many. There are manyyy, many, many, many.

00:33:23 John Host Are there people living in them?

00:33:26 Jesse Host Yeah. People love living in those Delicas. How many Delicas do we live in on the daily? Me say many, many, many!

00:33:33 John Host *[Snorts.]* Now that we're all getting outta the house, including Kyle and his family... like, uh, Jesse, when—uh, Jennifer. Jennifer Marmor. You're our tour manager when we go on the road.

00:33:46 Jennifer Producer Yeah.

00:33:47 John Host Would it be possible to just do a Delica tour?

00:33:50 Jennifer Producer Yes.
00:33:51 John Host Like, we could get a Delica, right?
00:33:52 Jennifer Producer Possible and happening.
00:33:53 John Host And we could—would—
00:33:54 Jesse Host Great. Thank you. *[Laughs.]*
00:33:55 John Host Okay, good. Done and done. Thank you.

[Jennifer laughs.]

I mean, the thing about these Van Life, and these Delica Life Instagram accounts, is that it's not about—*[chuckles]*—it's not about the journey or the destination, it's about the van. It's about the lifestyle! It's about people creating a fantasy of a mobile life inside this little, beautiful, perfect thing that can go anywhere.

And I don't know, Kyle, whether your wife, who has a name and is a whole—whole life of her own. Her own Van Life. Uh, is into these kinds of accounts the same way I am. But it sounds like if you said that she's developed this whole ethos developing around the Cozy Camper lifestyle, it sounds like she might—she might be—it might be part of a vision she has for how she wants to spend her life! Out there in the world, on the road, on vacation.

And that vision is different from yours! You and the kids just love tents. You say you just want to camp, right? As though "just camping" is a default, analogue normal, that everyone needs to respect. But the fact is—

00:35:02 Jesse Host Yeah. I just wanna have a tarp, *[stifling laughter]* and put it among the redwoods.
00:35:05 John Host Yeah! Only UC Santa Cruz students actually have to live outside. *[Stifles laughter.]* Everyone else has a choice.
00:35:10 Jesse Host Well, and Bob Debolt, who had the radio show that came on before mine. He was about 65.
00:35:15 John Host And he lived outside?
00:35:16 Jesse Host He lived in a tarp in the UC Santa Cruz campus. *[Laughs.]*
00:35:20 John Host Yeah! That's a true lifestyle choice. I wanna see some of those Tarp Life Instagram accounts. That would be cool.
00:35:27 Jesse Host Yeah. Hashtag #TarpLife.
00:35:30 John Host But I mean, even the kids at UC Santa Cruz, they don't have to live outside. You go outside into the woods, it's not—it's a—it's not a life. It's a lifestyle. It's a fantasy that you are... roleplaying at, when you go out there, and you camp under the stars, and you cook food over fire, and you, you know, imagine that you hear, uh, Blair Witches out there in the woods coming to get you.

That's all the funs! That's all the fun part. It's not something you have to do, and there is no normal to roleplay. There is no normal to the fantasy life that you are engaging in. And frankly, I think you should all be dressing like elves. That's a good fantasy.

00:36:15 Jesse Host Yeah. That would be dope.

00:36:18 John Host And your wife has her own fantasy! And her fantasy is a Cozy Camper with a name, CC. And it is a fantasy camper that can go—that can—even though it will never leave the continental United States, it can bear a bumper sticker from Hawai'i. Because in her mind, this camper can take her anywhere.

And maybe to a certain degree—and this is gonna be harsh, Kyle. But maybe part of the fantasy is to take her away from you.

[Jesse laughs.]

Not—not far away. Same campsite. You know what I mean? Your camping LARP involves tents. Maybe that's not comfortable for her! Maybe that's not as fun for her as her camping LARP, which is, uh, being in a cute, cutesy little camper with a name, that's got a little, uh, daisy in a vase inside of it, or whatever, and is a little bit more comfortable for her!

You can all LARP on the same campsite. You and your kids can be in the tents. And your wife can be in her named camper, CC. And if that still bothers you, then I'm gonna—this is a—a order for Kyle's wife right now: Get a second camper. Get a second camper that never leaves the garage. Call that the USS *Killjoy*. Now you got a fleet of campers.

[Jesse laughs, John stifles laughter.]

USS CC. USS *Killjoy*. And you know what? Better yet? USS *Blair Witch* is a better name for it.

[Jesse snorts.]

00:37:47 John Host Put whatever bumper sticker—look, when you're in a partnership, in a life partnership, you know? Like, sometimes you just gotta let the other person have their thing. And sometimes the person isn't gonna come right out and say, "My thing is I want a really cutesy camper."

Sometimes, especially when it involves expenditure of money, a person will feel the obligation to say, "This is for all of us!" Sometimes it's not for all of us. Sometimes it's just for one or two people in the family. And if they feel strongly about it, let 'em have it! Let 'em have it. Let's go easy on each other, a little bit.

00:38:24 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:38:25 Jesse Host John, I have a new favorite dog on Instagram.

00:38:28 John Host Oh! Really?

00:38:30 Jesse Host Yeah. Bad news for City Willie.

00:38:31 John Host Uh-oh. Demoted!

00:38:33 Jesse Host City Willie called in to *Jordan, Jesse, Go!* last week, I don't care! I'm over City Willie.

00:38:37 John Host Whoa. Bumped—

00:38:38 Jesse Host That's not true. I still love you, City Willie. *[Laughs.]*

00:38:40 John Host Bumped down to the mid tier!

[Jesse laughs.]

Mid-tier dog, City Willie. Make way for new top-tier Instagram dog...
Let's hear it.

00:38:50	Jesse	Host	Archie Was Here .
00:38:53	John	Host	Archie Was Here. Let me check it out...
00:38:56	Jesse	Host	Oh, this Archie, what a pup! What a pup Philadelphia-based scruff dog Archie Was Here is. Archie.Was.Here. And guess what? Archie Was Here is <u>friends</u> with City Willie.
00:39:10	John	Host	Whoa!
00:39:11	Jesse	Host	Yeah, that's right. They like to play together.
00:39:12	John	Host	You've turned what was a completely understandable and natural evolution of taste in dog preference into a <u>real</u> ... uh, roast, of City Willie. A real—
<i>[Both laugh.]</i>			
00:39:24	Jesse	Host	<i>[Laughing]</i> It's not!
00:39:25	John	Host	A real stab in City Willie's back.
00:39:29	Jesse	Host	John, I have to admit it is not dissimilar to how I ended up dating my wife. So—
00:39:33	John	Host	<i>[Stifling laughter]</i> Oh no.
00:39:34	Jesse	Host	<i>[Laughing]</i> And that worked out great! We've been together for over 20 years!
00:39:42	John	Host	I gotta say, Archie.Was.Here... Pretty good-looking dog. That's for sure.
00:39:48	Jesse	Host	Here's a case from Margaret, in Cincinnati, Ohio:

"I have a dispute with my husband Greg. I love to be outdoors, breathing in the, *[stifles laughter]* quote, 'fresh air,' unquote. And sometimes I think that if one is feeling bad, getting some fresh air could make them feel better. Greg, however, doesn't believe in the concept of fresh air, proclaiming that all air, indoors or out, is the exact same air.

I request an injunction that Greg admit there is such a thing as fresh air, and I ask you order him to relish in it."

[Pause.]

00:40:27	John	Host	Uhhh, sorry, I'm—I wasn't paying attention to Greg's weird claim that all air is the same air. Which is undeniably, scientifically false. 'Cause I was quickly browsing through the axolotl hashtag on Instagram.
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[Jesse cracks up, John laughs.]

00:40:46	Jesse	Host	How did you get there from Archie Was Here?!
00:40:49	John	Host	I was just wondering if there was a, uh, Axolotls of Instagram culture!
00:40:53	Jesse	Host	Yeah.
00:40:54	John	Host	The way there's a Dogs of Instagram, and a—other pets of

Instagram.

- 00:40:57 Jesse Host Axolotl being the newt-like ancient creature that lives, uh, underwater.
- 00:41:03 John Host They live in—in darkened, underwater lakes, I believe underneath Mexico City, primarily. The on—[*chuckles*]. There are quite a few illustrations of axolotls. Boy, these are spooky-looking, weird creatures. Love 'em. There are quite a few photos and illustrations of axolotls under the hashtag [#axolotl](#). But very few dedicated axolotl, like, pet pages.
- 00:41:28 Jesse Host Hm!
- 00:41:29 John Host So I'm gonna give a shout-out today to [AxolotlTwins](#).

[*Both stifle laughter.*]

The only one that I can see that follows two particular axolotls, Stella and Luna. Stella and Luna, the twin axolotls. They're very, very adorable. And their axolotl mom and dad apparently take very good care of them. Good job.

- 00:41:48 Jesse Host They're very adorable, depending on how you feel about creatures that aren't entirely opaque.
- 00:41:53 John Host Jesse, did you know—they alternate between photos of Stella and Luna with, um, little facts about axolotls. Did you know axolotls can be sensitive to strong water flow?
- 00:42:04 Jesse Host [*Laughs.*] I would imagine so!
- 00:42:07 John Host Jesse, did you know... axolotls can become impacted by gravel and large-grain sand? [*Stifles laughter.*]
- 00:42:13 Jesse Host [*Stifling laughter*] Oh, wow! Yeah! I mean, can't we all?
- 00:42:18 John Host Anyway, go check 'em out. [AxolotlTwins](#). They're my favorite axolotls of Instagram. Until next week, when I will change it up again.
- 00:42:24 Jesse Host John, Margaret in Cincinnati is entirely wrong about one thing.
- 00:42:28 John Host Yeah?
- 00:42:30 Jesse Host Fresh air doesn't come from the outdoors. It comes from WHYY in Philadelphia.
- 00:42:35 John Host [*Snorts.*] Listen, Margaret—
- 00:42:38 Jesse Host [*Whispering*] "*Fresh Air!*"
- 00:42:40 John Host Margaret—[*stifles laughter*]. Boy. You know, the thing I love about Terry Gross is that when she says *Fresh Air*, you know that for however many years she's done this radio show... how—you know, five days a week, except for certain break times. Every time she says *Fresh Air*, you know she's thinking to herself, "I'm really glad I came up with that name."
- 00:43:05 Jesse Host Yeah. [*Laughs.*]
- 00:43:07 John Host She seems so happy that it's called *Fresh Air*, every time. "*Fresh Air!*"
- 00:43:09 Jesse Host You know, it's a solid name! It's good work! She named it that when, uh, it was a local show.
- 00:43:14 John Host Really?

00:43:15 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:43:16 John Host Because, uh—because Philadelphia Public Radio at the time was stale air. And let me tell you something, Greg: Air gets stale. You say air—inside air and outside air are the same? Uh, my air filter in the great state of Maine would have you know differently. Because when we've got a fire going in the fireplace, boy oh boy, does that thing turn red and start whirring. 'Cause that fire is pumping out all kinds of noxious gases that make it hard for me to breathe.

And I enjoy looking at that fire. And I enjoy the pleasure that it gives to the person who builds it. But that's why at the end of every day, I go up—particularly in the winter—and open my window to the frigid, cold, black, haunted forest, and just suck in as much fresh air as I can. Because it is soothing, and it is good for my lungs.

Uh, so, yes. Fresh air is a real thing. When you have a chance to get out there and enjoy it, please do it. Make it part of your—make it part of your CC Cozy Camper life! Fresh air! It's not just a radio station. It's also... everything out in the world.

00:44:23 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:44:25 Jesse Host Let's take a quick break. When we come back, more justice!

00:44:29 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:44:31 Promo Clip **Music:** Dramatic, suspenseful string music.

Narrator: From the internationally acclaimed creators of *Who Shot Ya?* comes the movie podcast *Maximum Film*. Starring producer and film festival programmer Drea Clark as a woman bound by passion.

Drea Clark: *[Decadently.]* I saw this eight months ago on the festival circuit and I loved it.

Narrator: Film critic Alonso Duralde as a man corrupted by greed.

Alonso Duralde: *[Incensed.]* Why watch one Hallmark Christmas movie when I could watch seven!?

Narrator: And comedian Ify Nwadiwe as a man protecting a love that society simply won't accept.

Ify Nwadiwe: *[In tears.]* I think *Pacific Rim* is a perfect movie. And if you can't accept that, then I want you out of my life!

Narrator: From the makers of the movie podcast *Who Shot Ya?* comes *Maximum Film*.

[Upbeat music fades in.]

Ify: That's right, we changed the name of our show to *Maximum Film*.

Alonso: But don't worry! We're still a movie review show that isn't just a bunch of straight, white dudes.

Drea: So, tune into *Maximum Film*! At MaximumFun.org or wherever

you get your podcasts.

[Music fades out.]

00:45:24 Sound Effect Transition

[Three gavel bangs.]

00:45:26 Jesse Promo

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

00:45:31 John Promo

Well, Jesse Thorn, I just wanted to say thank you again to everyone who contributed to the MaxFunDrive. I have finally finished mispronouncing the names of those MaxFun members who were able to upgrade to the Leadership Squad level or above during the MaxFunDrive, and/or simply upgraded or boost their membership and also showed me proof of their vaccinations. Thank you, everybody.

Especially the folks who got vaccinated, a—a number of fascinating, interesting stories of people who had volunteered at vaccination sites, who got vaccinated early because they're working on the front lines of health and foodservice and other fields. It's just been... It's been so exciting to, um—to see people getting vaccinated, and hopefully moving towards a new and better normal.

Uh, no thanks to Dave from Antarctica. A long and stalwart listener who did spend time in Antarctica, and sent me T-shirts from Antarctica, which is amazing. Dave, I love you. But come on, Dave. You sent in your request to have your name mispronounced a full week and a half after MaxFunDrive. You know better than that, Dave from Antarctica!

00:46:41 Jesse Promo

What'd you send it with, a dog team?

00:46:42 John Promo

Yeah! What, did you send it via dogsled, Dave? No! You sent it via email! I know you're not in Antarctica anymore! There's no excuses, Dave. This is a Maximum Fun Drive promo—this is a MaxFunDrive offer only! So Dave, I got you in the hopper for next year. Next MaxFunDrive, I gotcha in there. You're gonna be number one on the list. No—no, no! I'm not gonna reward bad behavior that way! You're gonna be mid-tier. Mid-tier on the list for next MaxFunDrive. But thanks, Dave, and thanks to everybody.

Beyond that, of course, um, I'm glad to say that my friend David Rees is in town, working with me on a secret project. Which I hope to have some news for you about later. But in the meantime, and completely unrelatedly, check out *Dicktown*! The animated show that David Rees and I created last year for FXX and the Cake show on FXX, and now available streaming to you, all ten episodes, all 111 minutes of *Dicktown*, at bit.ly/dicktown. That's D-I-C-K-T-O-W-N. I'm not ashamed to say it anymore. *Dicktown*. It's a show that you could watch!

Jesse, what have you got going on?

00:47:53 Jesse Promo

This week on my NPR interview show *Bullseye*, I did [an interview with Elizabeth Ito](#), who is the creator of my favorite kids' TV show in a long time, the kind of kids' TV show that you certainly do not have to be a kid to watch and enjoy. A beautiful show on Netflix called *City of Ghosts*.

00:48:12	John	Promo	Yes.
00:48:13	Jesse	Promo	That is just—it's just breathtaking. And Elizabeth was a wonderful guest. She's the first guest I've talked to in-studio in something like 15 months. And I was very grateful to get to share a room with Elizabeth and talk to her about <i>City of Ghosts</i> , a beautiful show that I love very much.
			And also, by the way, this week, my friend—and yours—Ray Suarez—
00:48:39	John	Promo	Oh!
00:48:40	Jesse	Promo	—public media legend, has an interview on <i>Bullseye</i> with Ryan O'Connell! Who is the creator of the television show <i>Special</i> . It's a great show. Ryan O'Connell, really cool guy, and very funny, so check that out! And of course— <i>[laughs]</i> —and of course in the Put This On Shop, I'm selling many, many, many beautiful and extraordinary things, including handmade things, vintage things—
00:49:05	John	Promo	Mm-mm?
00:49:08	Jesse	Promo	Uh, you know. Beautiful dress sets and jewelry, and...
00:49:15	John	Promo	Incredible cufflinks.
00:49:16	Jesse	Promo	Ancient pins that are a hundred years old. And <i>ALF</i> trading cards .
00:49:20	John	Promo	<i>[Snorts.]</i> It's the most important thing!
00:49:23	Jesse	Promo	Sooo, just, if you want Rad Dudes trading cards —I <u>did</u> sell out of <i>Star Trek IV</i> trading cards, <i>[stifles laughter]</i> and <i>Dinosaurs</i> the TV show trading cards. But we have more <i>Yo! MTV Rap</i> cards , and California Raisins cards . And <i>Pee-Wee's Playhouse</i> Fun Paks .
00:49:40	John	Promo	Just go to PutThisOnShop.com/collections/cards-and-patches —cards, hyphen, and, hyphen, patches—
			<i>[Jesse chuckles.]</i>
			—to check out the <u>best</u> in vintage trading cards that are not involved with sports. And then go on over to all of the other menu items such as Pocket Squares, Vintage Jewelry, Fine Jewelry, Accessories, Notions & Miscellanea, Vintage Clothing, Antique Treasures, and so many more incredible things.
			I'm gonna go to Antique Treasures right now. Number one with a bullet. Roos Brothers megaphone ! This is a megaphone, Jesse?
00:50:16	Jesse	Promo	Yeah. It's a megaphone advertising the Los Angeles menswear store Roos Brothers.
00:50:22	John	Promo	<i>[Exhales sharply.]</i> Forget it. That's the greatest! I love it.
00:50:25	Jesse	Promo	Yeah.
00:50:26	John	Promo	1940s green floral metal drink tray .
00:50:29	Jesse	Promo	I'm really partial to this mirror , uh, that says "American Fashion Hats." It's from, like, the 1920s. It's so great.
			Anyway! Go to PutThisOnShop.com . Buy something nice for yourself. We'll be back in just a second on <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> .
00:50:45	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>

00:50:47 Jesse Host Welcome back to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. We've got something here from Luke:

"I guess I pronounce 'album' (*al-bm*) strangely? With a very soft B. V-like! I don't know why I say it this way. I'm from Cleveland. But I don't know that has anything to do with it."

00:51:04 John Host You mean Clebeland?

00:51:05 Jesse Host *[Chuckles.]* I believe that's pronounced "Clebeland."

00:51:08 John Host Clebeland.

00:51:09 Jesse Host Yeah. Straight off the streets of Clebeland.

00:51:11 John Host Ohia. Clebeland, Ohia.

00:51:15 Jesse Host "My wife interrupts the conversation any time I say this word to laugh at me, and mock my pronunciation. I say this word a lot! I'm a musician, and she's a dancer. So we talk about new music often. Couldn't she just laugh to herself and let the conversation continue uninterrupted?

However, she's from Chicago. *[Stifles laughter.]* And thus mispronounces the word 'pants.' So as an alternative to ignoring my pronunciation of 'album,' I seek an order that whenever she laughs and says, 'Alvum?' sneeringly, that I get to say 'Pay-ants' as a retort. And then we both have to move on."

00:51:55 John Host I believe we have some audio footage of Luke from Clebeland saying the word, um... 'album'?

00:52:01 Clip Clip **Luke:** Have you listened to the last track of the Red Baraat alvum *Sound The People?* Alvum. Alvum.

00:52:11 Jesse Host Wow, he really does say it with a V!

00:52:12 John Host That—yeah. There's no, uh—

00:52:13 Jesse Host *[Laughing]* I was not expecting it to be that unequivocally!

00:52:18 John Host There's no Linny or Yanny there. By the way, good shout-out to Red Baraat. Sunny Jain, an incredible musician who leads an incredible band called Red Baraat. If you have a chance to see them in the fresh air, out in the world, whew! That show is big.

00:52:32 Jesse Host And shout-out to friend of MaxFun Phil Elverum of Mount Eerie.

[Both laugh.]

00:52:39 John Host Uh, I mean—*[sighs]*. Yeah. The—look, uh, Luke. You say that word in a... distinctive way. Real Clebeland-style alvum there. I don't know why you say it that way. I can appreciate why it has come up in your marriage before. Um, but, uh, all this teasing has to stop.

You know, someone wrote in recently, thanking the podcast for one of the maxims of settled law that we've developed over the years, which is: If it's not fun for everyone, it's no fun at all.

And you know? You say alvum weird, but it's just like—*[sighs]*. We've all been cooped up together for a long time, chasing each other with lotion hands. I get it. We're all a little bit on edge.

[Jesse laughs quietly, John stifles laughter.]

We're all sick of each other. And our—

00:53:29 Jesse Host

Squelching down those corridors.

00:53:30 John Host

Yeah. If we're lucky enough to have been cooped up with a loved one for 15, 16 months, whatever it is... like, I appreciate that it's, like, just the little—the little things that make us wanna chase each other with lotion hands, and make fun of each other, and pick at each other. It's time to just open up those windows, and let in the fresh air, and let the stale air out.

I mean, here's a difference—Greg—between fresh air and inside air. It's dramatically more difficult to spread disease in fresh air! One disease in particular! Get it?

00:54:06 Jesse Host

Gout.

00:54:07 John Host

[Snorts.] You know, those droplets that come outta your mouth... The stuff that's in them dissipates much more quickly. There's much more ventilation. We all need to—if not literally, at least figuratively—get out into the fresh air, and air out our bunkers, to a certain degree. And part of that means, you know, stopping—don't put any more poison into the environment inside! By making fun of each other. And—and tickling each other, and hurting each other!

[Stifles laughter.]

Like, we've all had a couple of hundred really bad days. So... I think that your message, Luke, is a good one to take. "We both have to move on after that." So I think your request is interesting, Luke. I mean, not only do I order your wife—who is her own person and has a name and everything—to stop making fun of you when you pronounce "album" in your interesting own style. But you request that if she does it again, that you get to sneer back at her and say "pants." "Pay-ants" is how you spell it. And then you both have to move on after that.

I agree with you, and I will allow that, as long as it's one time. One time. She does it, you do it, and then let's just stop it. In fact, make it a ritual. You two sit in front of each other. Go outside. If it's safe to do so in your area. Go outside. Sit in front of one another. And you say "alvum." And she goes, "Ha ha." And she says, "Pay-ants." And you go, "PAY-ANTS, ha ha!"

And then just stand up, and hold hands, and take a walk around the block, and forget it. Leave it behind you.

00:55:49 Sound Effect Sound Effect

[Three gavel bangs.]

00:55:52 Jesse Host

Judge Hodgman, have we received any letters this week?

00:55:54 John Host

We received a letter, indeed! We—you know, the other week we were talking a little bit about appropriate gifts to give at a wedding. And the level of generosity to express at a wedding. And my advice was, "Be as generous as you can afford to be." Um, both financially and emotionally. Generosity is a wonderful expression of love.

But I was surprised to learn, uh, that a number of people simply give cash at a wedding. Rather than giving a gift off a registry or

something else. And I asked—and indeed, Jesse, you had pointed out that at your own wedding, which I was invited to but I did not attend, um, and have so far not given you a gift for, and I feel terrible about it. Um, so, watch—watch the mails!

00:56:48 Jesse Host You know what? Last week on the show, when this came up, uh, I—I forgave you, but I'm taking it back. Now I'm gonna resent it forever.

00:56:53 John Host Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, that's right. That's right. *[Stifles laughter.]* Watch—

00:56:57 Jesse Host Changed my mind on that one.

00:56:58 John Host Watch the mails for a real mid-tier gift from me being thrown over your fence sometime in the near future.

[Jesse cracks up, John laughs.]

But I was like, "Oh! Well, it may be a generational thing, it's a change in culture? Like, do people give gifts at weddings anymore, or is it more often a cash gift, or a donation to a honeymoon fund?"

And indeed, Natalie in Manville, New Jersey, wrote to say:

"I am an event planner at a wedding venue in New Jersey, and I can say the current trend in wedding gift-giving in my experience is that 95% of guests coming to the wedding will bring a card. Some of these cards will include a check inside, but others will have contributed to the couple's honeymoon fund through the couple's wedding website."

Which—so there you go! And I got a number of letters to that effect. So I'm sorry that I am not up with the times. I'm very old, especially after this long weekend, when I just, uh, just got pummeled with social contact.

[Beat.]

00:57:54 John Host But she went on to write:

"In terms of calculating the amount to give, I would like a ruling that wedding guests please do not call the venue—"

[Jesse laughs, John stifles laughter.]

"—and ask how much it costs to have a wedding there. Guests do it all the time. I feel it's very rude. Can you please rule that if you are invited to a wedding, you should give what you can or want to give, and stop calling to make sure that you are covering the cost per plate? Thank you. Hope this helps." Smiling emoji.

I smile emoji back at you, Natalie, and to everyone who has written in letters. Absolutely, Natalie, I—I give a blanket ruling. If you are going to give someone—and I do say give someone, I do not say gift to someone. If you're going to give someone a gift of money, or a contribution towards a honeymoon fund or whatever, seek your heart for what is an appropriate amount. Don't bother someone at the wedding venue to find out just how much your dinner would cost there, just so that you can neutralize your chicken or salmon footprint. Just give of yourself, won't you?

00:59:02 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:59:05 John Host Not "gift to" of yourself. Give of yourself. I apologize. I have a—I have a little hang-up with the phrase "gifted." "I gifted someone," or "Someone gifted to me." They gave it to me.

Please go ahead, Jesse.

00:59:16 Jesse Host I think it's important to remind listeners that what I think we said on that program—and I hope we were clear enough—is that you should give generously relative to your means, your ability to give. There are many ways to give generously. And the couple being married, or for that matter thruple or quadruple—

00:59:42 John Host Sure.

00:59:44 Jesse Host Or the single person being married! I don't know if that's a thing, but maybe it is.

00:59:47 John Host Absolutely. I'm sure it is. I am absolutely certain it is. Hey! If you've married yourself any time in history, please write and let us know, 'cause I'm sure that it's a thing. And I—I mean that sincerely. We're not gonna make fun of you. I'm curious about it. But go on, Jesse. If you are marrying yourself, or another...?

01:00:04 Jesse Host They will be grateful to receive a generous gift from you. Whether that generous gift is thousands of dollars from a rich uncle, \$20 from someone who doesn't have much financial means, or just a thoughtful note in a card. A generous gift can mean many different things. But what you don't want to have is have it be a year later—or in the case of my friend John Hodgman—

[John snorts, Jesse stifles laughter.]

—uh, 12 years later—*[laughs]*—

01:00:33 John Host Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

01:00:35 Jesse Host —and you're looking back and wishing that you had been more generous.

01:00:38 John Host Right. Mm-hm. Making some adjustments to my mid-tier gift.

01:00:44 Jesse Host *[Cracks up.]* Kicking it down to entry-level?

01:00:47 John Host Oh, no, no. It's still solid lower-mid.

01:00:50 Jesse Host *[Laughing]* Okay. Good.

01:00:53 John Host I just want it to be—I want—you know what? I'm bumping it up to top-tier. But I gotta pick something that's gonna, uh, be totally smashed when your delivery person tosses it over the fence.

01:01:02 Jesse Host *[Laughing]* Oh no!

01:01:06 John Host That way I—that way I'm—I'm—

01:01:07 Jesse Host *[Laughing]* The precious Hummels that I asked for! My Hummel figurines!

01:01:10 John Host Nope! Nope! No! I'm not—that's my message to Lotion Hands! You got tickled hard. It's not time for revenge. It's time to move on. Jesse? I will not take revenge by sending you something expensive that you would like, that will get smashed as soon as it's tossed over the fence. I'll make sure that you and Theresa get something that

expresses my love and affection, generously, for both of you.

01:01:35 Jesse Host The docket is clear. That's it for another—
01:01:37 John Host Eventually. Eventually. Eventually.

[Jesse laughs.]

No timeframe on it.

01:01:42 Jesse Host That's it for another episode of *Judge John Hodgman*. This week's episode, edited by Valerie Moffat. By the way, John, Val Moffat has been streaming—producing livestream video of *Jordan, Jesse, Go!* recordings on Sunday nights Pacific time!

01:01:56 John Host Ooh! What fun!

01:01:59 Jesse Host Yeah. If you wanna watch us goof around on *Jordan, Jesse, Go!*, we've been doing it around Sunday night at eight. No promises! Still in beta!

01:02:06 John Host Right.

01:02:07 Jesse Host But like *Jordan, Jesse, Go!* [on Facebook](#). Watch us goof around with David Borey or whatever.

01:02:11 John Host That sounds like fun! Where do you—where do I go to watch it?

01:02:14 Jesse Host Right there [on Facebook](#)! *Jordan, Jesse, Go!*

01:02:16 John Host What a hoot and a holler that is.

01:02:18 Jesse Host Yeah, it is.

01:02:19 John Host I'll check it out. I can't—I love hanging out with you guys. It's the next best thing to being with you under a tarp in the UC Santa Cruz campus.

01:02:25 Jesse Host Our producer, the great Jennifer Marmor! Wearing some signature eyewear this week.

[John whistles.]

Looks great, Jen! Follow us on Twitter at [@JesseThorn](#) and [@hodgman](#)—

01:02:33 Jennifer Producer Thanks. My mom hates 'em. *[Laughs.]*

01:02:35 Jesse Host Your mom hates them?!

01:02:36 Jennifer Producer *[Laughing]* Yeah.

01:02:39 Jesse Host Wow. I just turned around big-time on Carol Marmor!

01:02:42 Jennifer Producer Uh-ohhh.

01:02:43 Jesse Host I was a big fan before! I've turned against her because I support these eyeglasses so much.

01:02:47 John Host Yeah.

01:02:48 Jennifer Producer She said that they hide my beautiful punim. What can I say?

[All three laugh.]

01:02:52 John Host Jennifer Marmor, I just realized I missed a huge opportunity. As soon as we were talking about you answering the door, I should have ordered flowers delivered directly to your house—

[Jennifer laughs.]

—and just—to see what would happen during the recording.

01:03:02 Jennifer Producer That would've been incredible.
01:03:03 John Host So let's just pretend that that happened.
01:03:04 Jesse Host Yeah.
01:03:05 Jennifer Producer It was... wonderful. Thank you.
01:03:06 John Host Alright. Beautiful flowers, right?
01:03:09 Jesse Host Follow us on Twitter at [@JesseThorn](#) and [@hodgman](#), and hey! Why not follow Jen at [@jmarms](#)? Don't follow Carol Marmor, but you know what? If you need a commercial real estate agent in the Los Angeles area, you could do a lot worse than Carol Marmor.

We're on Instagram at [@judgejohnhodgman](#)—

01:03:26 John Host Oh, you're saying you could—but you could do better? You could do better, though, is what you're saying?

01:03:28 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** Like she's mid-tier?

Jesse: She's sorta mid-tier.

John: Mid-tier?

01:03:30 Jesse Host Yeah.

[John and Jesse laugh.]

Make sure to hashtag your *Judge John Hodgman* Tweets [#JJHo](#), and check out the Maximum Fun subreddit at [MaximumFun.Reddit.com](#) to [discuss this episode](#). Submit your cases at [MaximumFun.org/jjho](#), or email hodgman@maximumfun.org. We will talk to you next time on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

01:03:55 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

01:03:58 John Host Surprise, everybody! It's your judge, John Hodgman, here on the other side of the credits with yet another completely out of the blue, jaw-droppingly surprising post-credits sequence that you did not see coming! Or maybe you did! 'Cause as you know, we have been featuring here after the credits some of the songs that listeners sent in, based on my songwriting prompt, "Write a song recounting the life and times of Gary Gygax, the creator of *Dungeons & Dragons*, incorporating his defection from that company just as things were really blowing up for *D&D*, in the style of the band Phish, while also mentioning telepathic Bigfoots."

It was a simple song prompt. Many of you came through. Often—*[stifles laughter]*—often, uh, nailing one or two or three of those requests, but all of you being really, really fun and interesting in your interpretation of the song called "Gygax Departs."

This fourth and final installment—and I do mean final; you don't need to write a Gygax song anymore. Don't send 'em to me. This is it! This one comes to you from Christopher, who wrote the lyrics, and his old

college roommate Peter, who wrote the music. He says:

"I think we hit all the requirements, emulating Phish and working in the Bigfoot line, and I'm proud of what we came up with. I'd love to share this with the other listeners."

Guess what, Christopher and Peter? Your love-to-share wish now comes true! Here it is: "Gygax Departs."

01:05:30 Music

Music

Music:

*We met in a tavern
We took a job killing goblins in a cavern
We fought the forces of evil
We crushed Cheetos and political upheaval*

*But things got weird
I kissed a dwarf, ran my fingers through her beard
It wasn't just D&D
It always meant a little more to me*

*He was there for the pipe-weed and cocaine
He was down with the Satanic and profane
But when we ask him how an Orc's life starts
That's when Gygax departs!*

*He was the first Dungeon Master
He led us in and out of every disaster
He made candles fly around the castle
(Bounce around)
And he didn't care when we thought it was a Bigfoot hassle/house?*

01:06:40 Music

Music

*We got on his last nerve
When we introduced Dave, the rogue halfling perv*

*Now we pour out some Dew for our DM
We rolled a one, and no more will we see him*

*He was there for the pipe-weed and cocaine
He was down with the Satanic and profane
But when we start throwing Kobolds like jarts
That's when Gygax departs!*

*When we joke about a Minotaur's parts
That's when Gygax departs!*

*And though he's left us with a hole in our hearts
That's when Gygax departs!*

[Music finishes.]

01:07:45 Music

Transition

A cheerful ukulele chord.

01:07:46 Speaker 1

Guest

MaximumFun.org.

01:07:48 Speaker 2

Guest

Comedy and culture.

01:07:49 Speaker 3

Guest

Artist owned—

01:07:50 Speaker 4

Guest

—audience supported.

