

00:00:00	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
00:00:02	Jesse Thorn	Host	Welcome to the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast. I'm Bailiff Jesse Thorn. We're in chambers this week, clearing the docket. And with me... is Maine's other man, Judge John Hodgman.
00:00:13	John Hodgman	Host	<i>[Snorts.]</i> That's right, Jesse Thorn. Hello! Uh, I am here, broadcasting to you live... on .WAV file. From the solar-powered studios of WERU Community Radio here in Orland, Maine. Across the glass—we have the whole J-Squad back together, I see—of course, Jesse Thorn, right there in the teleconference. Our producer Jennifer Marmor—hello, Jennifer—in Los Angeles.
00:00:36	Jennifer Marmor	Producer	Hi!
00:00:37	John	Host	And across the glass from me is, uh, <u>the</u> Maine man, <u>Joel</u> Mann.
00:00:41	Joel Mann	Guest	Hey, Judge.
00:00:42	John	Host	Hi, Joel. A little market report. If you're looking for frozen hash browns, they <u>do</u> have them at Burnt Cove Market in Stonington.
00:00:50	Joel	Guest	Hey, thanks for that tip.
00:00:51	John	Host	Yeah. They're not easy to find. Trust me. They're in the corner—as you turn the corner from the energy drink aisle <u>into</u> the frozen food aisle, they're right on the right, up at the top. Cavendish Farms brand. Apparently, Jesse, these are the official hash browns of Gillette Stadium. Did you know that?
00:01:09	Jesse	Host	I had no idea.
00:01:10	John	Host	Yeah. If you're gonna go see a sports in Gillette Stadium—like a Patriots game? And you're gonna get some of those famous ball park, uh, hash browns— <i>[stifles laughter]</i> —
00:01:19	Jesse	Host	Uh-huh. Sure.
00:01:21	John	Host	—that they sell, as they walk up and down the aisle? Cavendish Farms.
00:01:24	John	Host	So these aren't the official—these aren't the official hash browns of the New England Patriots, for example.
00:01:29	John	Host	No, just the stadium.
00:01:30	Jesse	Host	These are o—just the stadium eats these.
00:01:33	John	Host	Yeah. Just the stadium.
00:01:34	Jesse	Host	Got it.
00:01:36	John	Host	So, yeah. I mean, it doesn't matter <u>what</u> they're doing there! Things are opening back up again. Maybe you're gonna go see a—a concert there. Maybe you're gonna go see Joe Byrd and The Field Hippies play. You want some of those sweet stadium hash browns, just know... That's Cavendish Farms quality.
			By the way, Jesse Thorn, you weren't here, uh, when we, uh, <u>finally</u> wrapped up the Rudy's Place Saga on <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> . And I mentioned that I got a letter from one of Rudy and Mary's neighbors. That letter being 1500 words long.
00:02:06	Jesse	Host	Excellent.
00:02:07	John	Host	Yeah.

00:02:08	Jesse	Host	Too long for a college application, I'll tell you that much right now.
00:02:09	John	Host	Exactly so. Guess what? The record... was just broken. Because Joel, you'll be interested to hear: We heard from a listener named Ray, who wrote a letter saying that, uh, he does <u>not</u> like Joe Byrd and The Field Hippies. He prefers Joe Byrd's <u>earlier</u> band/album, <i>The United States of America</i> . And he told me so <u>in 3,000 words</u> .
00:02:34	Joel	Guest	<i>[Stifling laughter]</i> I would have to agree.
00:02:35	John	Host	Yeah.
00:02:36	Joel	Guest	That is his best album.
00:02:37	John	Host	Okay, but see, that's all you needed to say. Keep it Joel Mann—style, everybody.
			<i>[Joel chuckles.]</i>
			Just a few words.
00:02:44	Jesse	Host	Let me ask you this, though, John.
00:02:45	John	Host	Yes, sir.
00:02:47	Jesse	Host	Could <i>The United States of America</i> fill Gillette Stadium? No, I don't think so.
00:02:50	John	Host	No—
00:02:51	Jesse	Host	That's Joe Byrd and The Field Hippies, all the way.
00:02:52	John	Host	Yeah, that's why—that's why Ray doesn't like 'em. They're too commercial.
00:02:55	Jesse	Host	Mm-hm.
00:02:56	John	Host	They fill—they fill up stadiums.
			Jesse, I have a question for you before we begin.
00:02:59	Jesse	Host	Yeah.
00:03:00	John	Host	This is kind of a deep question. You ready for it?
00:03:04	Jesse	Host	Yeah, sure! Why not?
00:03:07	John	Host	What else is there to do? What else is there to do.
			<i>[Beat.]</i>
			Jennifer Marmor, what else is there to do?
00:03:13	Jennifer	Producer	I'm not sure. <i>[Chuckles.]</i>
00:03:14	Jesse	Host	Gosh, John, I don't know. What else <u>is</u> there to do?
00:03:17	John	Host	I—it's been on my mind. Because last night I took a little evening drive, to enjoy the sunset here in Maine. And, uh, drove around, with the windows down. Beautiful evening. I ended up at the end of a—of a <u>long</u> peninsula. And then at the end of a poured concrete dock. And as I contemplated the a—the abyss of the ocean and the setting sun, I noticed a small hand-painted sign. And only—the only thing written there was, "What else is there to do?"
			And I was like, "Whoa. This is—I did <u>not</u> come out here for an existential gut punch. I came out here to look at the sunset." Do you

know?

Now, I happen to know that the—the sign... pertains to a certain controversy in town. In town, some people wanna end a longstanding tradition, which is on the night of July 3rd, which just happened. The tradition is everyone takes all of the large-form garbage in their lives—mattresses, refrigerators, small boats—that they don't wanna pay to have hauled away, and they dump them in a big pile in front of the general store for the town to then clean up. That's the tradition.

And the town finally, after years, has said, "Uh, please don't do this."
[Stifles laughter.]

00:04:33	Jesse	Host	That's the tradition, John?
00:04:34	John	Host	Yeah. This is the tradition. "Please don't put a big trash pile in the middle."
00:04:37	Jesse	Host	What does that—what does that go back to, Middle Europe? When— <i>[laughs]</i> —is that a Druidic thing, originally?
00:04:44	John	Host	Yeah.
00:04:45	Jesse	Host	A lot of people think that's from the Christian era, but it's actually pre-Christian to— <i>[laughs]</i> —
00:04:48	John	Host	Yeah. If you look—
00:04:49	Jesse	Host	Everybody dumps their big trash in front of Town Hall, that's the—the summer tradition.

[John laughs quietly.]

That's what the sequel to *Midsommar* is about. Everybody dumps their big trash in front of Town Hall. And they wear little outfits.

00:05:02	John	Host	Yeah. And they do a—they wear little traditional outfits, and they do a little Maypole dance around the trash pile.
00:05:08	Jesse	Host	Yeah, what kind of ribbons do they use in Maine for this, uh... <i>[laughing]</i> trash-dumping ritual? And its attendant group dances?
00:05:14	John	Host	They—they use chains of rubber bands that were formerly used to hold lobster claws tight closed.
00:05:22	Jesse	Host	Got it.
00:05:24	John	Host	But— <i>[stifles laughter]</i> —the tradition apparently goes back—according to the furious debate on the social media website devoted to this—a hundred years. And people in town are <u>very</u> ... upset that the— <i>[stifles laughter]</i> —that the—that the town has finally gotten around to saying, "Yeah, no. This is not okay. This has <u>never</u> been okay. This isn't—your outlaw tradition is exactly that: an outlaw tradition. We would like for you to stop."

And let me make it clear: I am in favor of this tradition. A, 'cause I'm like, "It doesn't really cause any harm." And B, I don't wanna be murdered. So, neighbors in town? I'm all for it.

[Stifles laughter.]

But when the town said openly this year, "We don't like this," there was a protest. And instead of one trash pile overnight on July 3rd, several satellite trash piles piled up. Of mattresses and junk and so forth. With various signs.

00:06:21	Jesse	Host	Can I ask a question, John?
00:06:23	John	Host	Yeah.
00:06:24	Jesse	Host	Just a point of clarification. Why do they dump these things in front of City Hall, and not at the dump?
00:06:31	John	Host	Oh, 'cause you have to pay to—you have to pay to—
00:06:33	Jesse	Host	Okay.
00:06:34	John	Host	—have that stuff disposed of at the dump.
00:06:36	Jesse	Host	It's not just a matter of, like, distance. <i>[Stifles laughter.]</i> It's not just they're like, "Uh, I'll go—I'll go <u>six</u> blocks, but I'm not gonna go <u>twelve</u> blocks."
00:06:43	John	Host	First of all, there's no such thing as a block. Here. There are just miles.
00:06:46	Jesse	Host	Got it.
00:06:47	John	Host	And those are miles as the road winds, <u>not as the crow flies</u> .
00:06:51	Jesse	Host	Sure.
00:06:52	John	Host	I think distance is a part of it? I think that—I think that payment for disposing of this stuff is a part of it. But mostly it's just fun. People...
00:06:59	Jesse	Host	Yeah.
00:07:00	John	Host	...like to stay up all night, and look at the trash pile! And add stuff to it. It's part of the fun!
00:07:04	Jesse	Host	Right. Yeah.
00:07:05	John	Host	And, you know—
00:07:07	Jesse	Host	<i>[Laughing]</i> That's why people <u>pay</u> to live in a cosmopolitan place like Maine.
00:07:11	John	Host	Well—
00:07:12	Jesse	Host	You know, the—sure, the rent's outrageous! But you get to look at that trash pile.
00:07:15	John	Host	Well, I mean, you know. It's—the friction is really between people who have been here for generations and people—and interlopers like me. Who are not used to a midnight trash pile!

But all around, these satellite trash piles piled up. With signs—hand-painted signs! And kind of cool-looking signs. That said things like, "Nice try, Select Board."

[Jesse laughs quietly.]

And then one that said, "This is a critical part of our culture." And then this sign, at the end of this dock, that just said... "What else is there to do?"

[John and Jesse stifle laughter.]

What I took to be an existential question was truly a—a—like, a plea. Like, "We have nothing. Give us this trash pile. There is nothing el—what else is there to do?!"

00:07:54 Jesse Host

"This is trash pile erasure."

00:07:55 John Host

Yeah. It struck me... very hard. Even though I know what it was about. To me, it was like, "I don't know! What—what else is—what else is there to do?" Obviously keep doing the podcast. You know, I've written my books, and I've made my things, and everything else. What else is there to do?

And I'm here to tell you the answer, Jesse. For me. I figured out what there is else for me to do in this life.

00:08:18 Jesse Host

What's that?

00:08:19 John Host

Put. Hash browns. On hamburgers.

00:08:22 Jesse Host

Holy cow.

00:08:23 John Host

Yeah.

00:08:24 Jesse Host

Wow.

00:08:25 John Host

I mean, I can't believe no one ever thought ab—probably someone has thought of this before, but in case you haven't—now, I don't care what hash brown you use. Whether it's something you make yourself. Whether it's a frozen product. I don't care what stadium it's associated with. And obviously, I don't care what kind of burger you're having! You know? Whether it's an Impossible Burger, or a Beyond Burger, or a tradition—you know, a traditional burger, or a plant—other plant-based burger. Whatever you're doing... put a hash brown on it!

I've invented a new kind of sandwich that involves a hash brown, a burger patty of some kind, and then a third ingredient that I'm keeping secret because... it's gonna change my life, and many lives. But I am giving away the hash brown for free.

00:09:07 Jesse Host

This is gonna be your whole new business thing.

00:09:10 John Host

Yeah. This is—I mean, it's gonna be—when this thing—word of this thing gets out, it's gonna be very big. Joel.

00:09:16 Joel Guest

Yes.

00:09:17 John Host

You ever go to, um, Crosby's Takeout, in Bucksport?

00:09:21 Joel Guest

Great crab roll.

00:09:22 John Host

Great cra—you ever get a Golden Buck hamburger there?

00:09:24 Joel Guest

Yes!

00:09:25 John Host

Gol—you know what's on the Golden Buck?

00:09:27 Joel Guest

Uh, I know there's the double cheeseburger. But that's not it.

00:09:29 John Host

Yeah, but—the Golden Buck is a cheeseburger with what?

00:09:33 Joel Guest

Um... Bucksport High School.

00:09:35 John Host

Yeah. With the whole high school on top of it.

00:09:37 Joel Guest

Right.

00:09:38 John Host

That's exac—what are you—? Joel.

[Stifles laughter.]

It's true the Bucksport High School is called—their teams are called the Golden Bucks. But the Golden Buck burger, Joel... is a cheeseburger—I had to call them to find out. Cheeseburger with coleslaw and Thousand Island dressing on it.

00:09:52 Joel Guest

Sounds good!

00:09:53 Jesse Host

That sounds great.

00:09:54 John Host

Good. My thing is gonna blow them out of the water. Blow them out of the seas! And it starts with a hash brown.

Okay. I'm giving you that for free. Jesse Thorn, will you make a hash brown sandwich sometime this weekend?

00:10:04 Jesse Host

Yeah. But I'm gonna use the official hash browns of, uh, the Cow Palace in San Francisco.

00:10:09 John Host

[Stifling laughter] Fantastic.

00:10:11 Jesse Host

Yeah.

Here's a case from Steve, who wrote to you aboard a train in Wellington, New Zealand. He says:

"The woman sitting in front of me has been using eyedrops throughout our short journey. I'm feeling deeply uncomfortable seeing her hold her eye open to administer the medication. I think this behavior is inappropriate, as personal hygiene is, by definition, a personal thing.

I'm not the only person on the train sending sideways glances at the woman in question.

I'm not suggesting that she should be ashamed for using a medication. I think using medication discreetly maintains her dignity, as well as the dignity of those around her."

00:10:54 John Host

Uh-huh.

00:10:55 Jesse Host

"I also think that there's a need for your authority to be stamped on personal hygiene behaviors on public transport more generally. I've seen people clipping their nails, applying makeup, and biting their nails on public transport. I firmly believe that these should be done in a private place, if they must be done."

[John cracks up.]

"My request to you is for a definitive judgment on which appropriate personal hygiene practices are, and are not, allowed on public transport."

00:11:25 John Host

So you're saying that Steve—by the way, hello, Wellington, New Zealand. I presume you are the Steve that is referenced in the Flight of the Conchords song "Rhymentoceros vs. Hiphopopotamus"—

00:11:36 Jesse Host

Yeah.

00:11:37 John Host

—which I listened to recently, and it's still good.

00:11:38 Jesse Host Yeah. They're very funny guys.

00:11:40 John Host I miss them.

Is Steve suggesting—when he says, "If they must be done," is he suggesting that people should never clip their nails? *[Stifles laughter.]* Maybe that's preferable to ever clipping their nails, no matter where?

00:11:50 Jesse Host That's what it seems like. I mean, maybe he's using a belt sander at home.

00:11:54 John Host Well, look. I—I'll tell you something. First of all, Steve, this:

A long time ago... I got horribly burned. Not physically. Emotionally. I got burned. I got roasted. By my colleague—mentor? I dare say "friend"—Dave Eggers, the author. We were talking about something to do with the project or show that we were working on together. And I said, "You know, I—I'm really—I'm really not trying to be annoying about this," and Dave just said, "Yeah, no. You're not trying. You don't have to; it comes to you naturally."

[As a wounded noise] Oogh.

00:12:31 Jesse Host Wow. Wow.

[John laughs quietly.]

Wow.

00:12:34 John Host Right. Yeah. Yeah. And I once tried that on someone else. Someone very close to me. And, um—and they did not like it. And I almost got pushed out of a car, *[stifles laughter]* as a result.

[Jesse bursts out laughing.]

But you're right, Steve—!

00:12:49 Jesse Host That's what you get for using it on a cabbie!

00:12:53 John Host *[Laughing]* I was not—can you imagine?!

00:12:56 Jesse Host *[Laughs quietly.]* Picking on cab driver.

00:12:59 John Host That would be such a Flight of the Conchords—era John Hodgman thing to do. Yeah, I was on that show! I was in one episode. And at that time, you could definitely see my—my character and myself saying to a professional driver, "Yeah, you're not trying to be annoying; it comes to you naturally." Boy, oh boy. What a snob I was then. I would never do that now. I love the trash pile. Trash pile for life, everybody!

00:13:22 Jesse Host I could see the doctor from *Baby Mama* saying that.

00:13:25 John Host Yeah, exactly. Oh, boy, oh, boy. My deep cuts! I was deeply cut, though, in this moment, by Dave Eggers.

[Jesse cracks up.]

I'm gonna turn it around on now on Steve! Steve, you're right. You're not suggesting this woman should be ashamed for using a medication. You don't need to suggest it. You're doing it now on my

podcast! Shame on you!

You know... I have someone in my life who has a lot of eyedrops. Due to a—due to a detached retina. And after a year of putting these eyedrops in, uh, on a regular basis, it's finally over with. And they are able to see again. This was no picnic! Putting in eyedrops is not a picnic or a fun thing. And I don't know whether—and you don't know whether, Steve—this woman on the train was putting in these eyedrops on a regular basis, or whether she just remembered at the last minute, "Oh my gosh. I have to put in these eyedrops, or else I can't see today. Or my—or the pressure differential in my eyeballs will change such that I might go blind. I better do it right now."

Get over it, Steve. This—these things happen!

That said, Jesse Thorn: What is your position on... fingernail clipping on public transportation?

00:14:39 Jesse Host Now, there are people who feel that literally any—I mean, it may very well be that Steve from Flight of the Conchords is one of these people who feel that literally any act of grooming is something that needs to be hidden away in a bathroom. I'm not so sure I feel that way. I don't think I would be bothered by someone brushing their hair, uh, if they weren't getting in somebody else's business.

But... *[laughing]* using medicine is using medicine.

00:15:09 John Host

Yeah! I agree.

00:15:12 Jesse Host

[Laughing] And I mean, while I do wonder why this woman was applying the eyedrops "throughout the trip," which is what Steve said—

[Stifles laughter.]

But I don't know her personal medical information, and I don't care to! There's a little something called "HIPAA." ...Which doesn't apply here.

[Jesse and John laugh.]

00:15:31 John Host

Ah—I didn't even think about it until this moment, but... Not only is she putting in eyedrops, she's putting in eyedrops on a moving train. If she's getting them in there, then she's got incredible coordination that should be applauded, not shamed!

00:15:46 Jesse Host

Yeah. I've had to put in eyedrops only a few times in my life. And, uh, I just think any successful eyedropping is to be applauded. *[Laughs.]*

00:15:55 John Host

Ah—

00:15:56 Jesse Host

[Stifling laughter] If you manage to get it in there without closing your eye before it drops in, then God bless you and the best of luck to you in all your future endeavors.

00:16:03 John Host

And I can appreciate that people might have a little bit of "ick" around eyeball issues. Like, non—non-rational, almost phobic reaction to eyeballs. I get it. And I also—and I think—and I appreciate if that's what's going on with you, Steve. But it's kinda part of being out in the world.

I will say on the issue of putting on makeup on a train... To me, that is completely inoffensive, and really none of your business. As long as someone—I mean, and again, something that requires incredible concentration and coordination. Good job putting on makeup. I think that those critiques, which come up again and again, tend to be fairly, um, gendered in nature?

I will say that brushing hair is on the line for me, Jesse. Because my feeling is, if you're leaving behind DNA, that's—then you're leaving work for others.

00:16:55 Jesse Host

Mm. That makes sense.

00:16:56 John Host

That definitely pertains to fingernail-clipping. I just kind of feel like you're leaving your nails around for someone else to clean up, or... to use to clone you. And I don't know what the cloning ethics laws are in New Zealand. So you could probably get cloned pretty—pretty hard by Steve.

00:17:11 Jesse Host

Yeah.

00:17:12 John Host

But generally speaking, let people do what they need to do on the train. Everyone's got a limited amount of time. I appreciate that it's weird to be out there in the world, seeing people's faces and bodies again on public transport, but that should be celebrated and not—and not, uh, complained about.

00:17:27 Sound Effect Sound Effect

[Three gavel bangs.]

00:17:29 Jesse Host

Here's something from Katie:

"Dear Judge Hodgman,

I seek an injunction against my husband Jimmy. The Tour de France is starting soon. I love watching the Tour, and find the scenes of the peloton winding its way through the French countryside to be wonderfully meditative. The problem is that when my husband joins me, he delights in asking me a series of questions I am unable to answer. Including but not limited to:

'Who's winning?'

'What is the name of one participant?'

'Where in France are they?'

I ask the judge order my husband to refrain from such questions. Leave me to enjoy the French countryside, and occasional human drama of a sprint or accident in the peloton... in peace."

00:18:15 John Host

So of course, the Tour de France is over as of this podcast coming out. I don't know who won. *[Stifles laughter.]* S-sorry—sorry, Katie's husband Jimmy. You have to ask your wife.

00:18:26 Jesse Host

I mean, I gotta assume Lance Armstrong, right?

00:18:29 John Host

He's one of the top, uh, bicyclists.

00:18:32 Jesse Host

It's either that or Pee-wee Herman from that dream sequence in *Pee-wee's Big Adventure*.

[John laughs quietly, Jesse stifles laughter.]

00:18:36 John Host Oh, boy.

00:18:37 Jesse Host Or possibly the guy from *Breaking Away*. *[Laughs.]*

00:18:40 John Host Another great film! That's a great double feature right there. *[Sighs.]*

00:18:44 Jesse Host Yeah. Cycling's greatest hits.

00:18:46 John Host I was driving over here—*[stifles laughter]*—thinking about, like, "Hey, I wanna—I wanna get a jumpsuit." Something came up in my mind. Something I was listening to made me think about jumpsuits. I've always wanted to—to be able to rock a jumpsuit. And then literally as I was driving over here, I was like, "*Tch*. If I wore a jumpsuit, I'd just look like Francis from *Pee-wee Herman's Big Adventure*."

[Jesse bursts out laughing.]

I just don't have the—

00:19:11 Jesse Host That's ridiculous, John! Don't be silly, you would look like—

00:19:14 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Jesse:** —Francis's dad.

John: —Francis's father, right, exactly.

00:19:17 John Host And then I was like, "How—who can I do a matching—*[laughs]*—Francis and his dad jumpsuit combo for Halloween someday?" I don't like dressing up for Halloween, but... I've got the body. I've got the body for a Francis in a jumpsuit, or his dad. Dad is better, you're right. Good punch-up.

00:19:33 Jesse Host John, I bought a jumpsuit once on tour with the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

00:19:37 John Host Oh, really?

00:19:39 Jesse Host We were in Boston, playing the Wilbur Theatre. And I went down the road with my friend Zach X. Wolf. Uh, to the legendary vintage store Bobby From Boston. Now closed, but! Their warehouse in Lynn, open by appointment, and sometimes on their Instagram.

And, uh, tried on a green—I think it's a mechanic's—an Army mechanic's jumpsuit? As a joke.

00:20:01 John Host Right.

00:20:02 Jesse Host And Zach was like, "That looks amazing on you; I think you should just buy it."

[Laughing] And I was like, "Yes, I think this looks amazing on me and I should just buy it!" So I did!

00:20:11 John Host And so you did! Ah—by the way, Zach is a wonderful person. I think it's weird that the government makes him have that name—

00:20:19 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:20:20 John Host —but I am glad that he's no longer a wolf.

00:20:21 Jesse Host Yeah. That's true. *[Laughs quietly.]*

So what about this question about the Tour de France?

00:20:24 John Host Oh, right! So, look! Here's the thing! The Tour de France is over. There was, indeed, an accident, because... people love to watch the Tour de France. Because not only do they like—

[Something vibrates.]

—bic—bicycling. Faire du bicycling, I believe that's the French term for it.

00:20:42 Jesse Host Mm-hm.

00:20:43 John Host But because—because it is beautiful in the countryside, and it is meditative, and it is wonderful to watch, the same way watching a—a golf tournament, or even a baseball game can just be kind of a calm thing to do on an afternoon.

But. If you—if you are not—if you are not really watching the race, but instead are just there for the—for the moment. Then you might do a—something bad. Which is to hold a big sign out, handwritten on the sign, "Allez Opi-Omi." And hold it out into the middle of the racecourse, such that it strikes German cyclist Tony Martin. Uh, and then causing him to fall, and causing the entire peloton to fall over.

By the way, the "peloton" is the name of the pack of cyclists all drifting off each other. It's not like one exercise bike is out there; it's a whole bunch of people.

Dozens of bikes fell down, multiple injuries. One rider—uh, Jasha Sütterlin—had to drop out of the race, because a fan... stepped out into the—into the road, with her sign saying, "Allez Opi-Omi," which is "Go, Granddad and Grandma." Presumably for a television camera. That she hoped her granddad and grandma would see.

00:21:54 John Host How do I know all of this? Well, Jimmy, I read the newspaper! I went and I read the newspaper, and I read all about the Tour de France, so I learned things! I betcha during the Tour de France, I probably could've used the newspaper to learn things like, "Who's winning?" Or, "What's the name of one participant?" Or, "Where in France are they?"!

You can find this out! I know you can, Jimmy.

Now, here's what I'm gonna say, though. Katie—Katie specified that she does not know the answer to these questions. If I may re-quote:

[Reading quickly] "The problem is that when my husband joins me, he delights in asking me a series of questions I am unable to answer."

So Katie is not watching this for the sport of faire du bicycling. But if Katie knew the answers, it's not wrong for Jimmy to ask, and it would be wrong for Katie to withhold the answer!

00:22:45 John Host If your—if you are—if your partner is expressing interest in something that you love, and you can help them get into it, you should! You shouldn't be like, "Sh, sh, sh, sh! I'm watching this right now." If you know who's winning, if you know the name of one participant, if you know where in France they are, say so!

But in Katie's case, she didn't, 'cause she's only watching it for the wonderful—wonderful glide of humanity through the French countryside upon these, uh, bikes.

So, Jimmy: Next time, learn a thing. You'll enjoy it!

00:23:11 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:23:14 John Host By the way. Uh, at the end of the newspaper article—it was the *New York Times* newspaper; it's a pretty big newspaper—uh, Richard Plugge, the general manager of Tony Martin's team, which has the great name—this is the German bicycling team called Jumbo-Visma—encouraged the fans: Please, fans, stay off the roads! Quote:

"And if you wanna pay attention to your opi and omi... visit them."

Good advice.

00:23:38 Jesse Host Mm-hm!

00:23:39 John Host If you got an opi or omi in your life, whom you love, who you haven't been in contact with lately, give 'em a ring. Don't jump in front of a sports event at Gillette Stadium with a sign. They're trying to sell hash browns over there.

00:23:51 Jesse Host I mean, this is a classic example of another man on the hunt for fake cycling babes.

00:23:58 John Host *[Laughs.]* Wow.

00:24:03 Jesse Host What a heel this husband is.

00:24:04 John Host *[Objecting]* Ohhh.

00:24:05 Jesse Host He's not trying to learn about cycling.

00:24:08 John Host What—

00:24:09 Jesse Host He's trying to make his wife look bad for watching cycling wrong.

00:24:13 John Host Ohhh! I didn't get that at all! Maybe I'm missing something.

00:24:17 Jesse Host Yeah, this is—this is—*[laughing]* CyclingGate all over again.

00:24:20 John Host He's gatekeeping cycling? Is that what it is?

00:24:23 Jesse Host First of all, I don't think he knows the answers to these. So it's not even like he is saying, "I wish that you cared as much about cycling as I do."

00:24:32 John Host Right.

00:24:33 Jesse Host I think he is just mad that she is watching a sport for different reasons than he would watch it for.

00:24:38 John Host I—look. I'll tell you what. That is something that I could have missed. And so, Katie? Jimmy? If there's something to what Bailiff Jesse Thorn is saying here... I urge you to think on it, and communicate about it.

We've heaped a lot of shame in this whole thing on—on fans getting too close to the cyclists. Uh, on Jimmy, *[laughs]* for asking questions, for two potentially different reasons. Ignorance and/or, uh, bicycling, uh, gatekeeping. But I'm gonna just heap one more bit of

shame. And I would say the largest amount of shame.

Just as Richard Plugge pleads to the fans of the Tour de France to not step into the road—to remember that there's a bicycle race there? May I plead to the bicyclists... in Prospect Park in Brooklyn? You're not in the Tour de France, guys. You're not. I see you on your tight pelotons. In your tight pants, and your special helmets. Biking so fast, so close to each other. Hey. Hey. You're scaring people. *[Stifles laughter.]* I watch you speed by people, and children are scared. It's terrifying and dangerous. You're in a public park, everybody. Slow down.

00:25:49 Jesse Host You're gonna stick a stick in their wheels, *[laughing]* just like those Italians did in *Breaking Away*.

[John laughs quietly.]

Spoiler alert for *Breaking Away*, retroactive.

We're gonna take a quick break to hear from this week's partners. We'll be back with more cases to clear from the docket on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

00:26:06 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:26:08 Jesse Promo It's the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast, and as always, our show is brought to you by you, the members of Maximum Fun. We're so grateful to everyone who has become a member of Maximum Fun—in the MaxFunDrive or otherwise—by going to MaximumFun.org/join.

We're also grateful this week to be supported by... Brooklinen! John, you're the resident Brooklinen expert. I mean, you're basically their brand ambassador at this point.

00:26:35 John Promo It's summertime again. And it's hot. And the word for today... is "crisp."

00:26:41 Jesse Promo Mm. Mm!

00:26:44 John Promo In the wintertime, what you want are cozy sheets. Your washed flannels. Your heathered cashmere. But in the summertime, you want crisp, clean sheets. And I've never had 'em crisper—and I'm not talking about the genetic editing software.

[Jesse laughs.]

I've never had 'em crisper... than when I've—when I've lain my body down—and I think I'm using that verb correctly—onto some crisp, clean, cotton percale (*per-kale*)—I hope I'm saying that correctly—sheets from Brooklinen.

Look. People say, "John Hodgman, you like this brand because it contains the name of your hometown, Brookline, Massachusetts. It's just 'Brookline' with an N! That's why you like it." Well, you're wrong! I like it 'cause I like sleeping good in the summertime! That was bad grammar, but it's true!

I just ordered some waffle knit... towels, and bath sheets, Jesse?

00:27:34 Jesse Promo Mm-hm?

00:27:36	John	Promo	'Cause I was tired of my old towels. And—
00:27:38	Jesse	Promo	Yeah?
00:27:39	John	Promo	And I've never <u>had</u> a waffle knit towel before. Why are they making any other kind of towel?! Those are the <u>two</u> words for today: "Waffle" and "crisp." Crisp waffles! At Brooklinen.com .
00:27:50	Jesse	Promo	They're <u>so</u> confident in their core products, they come with a 365-day warranty! And their fans are confident, too. They have received over <u>75,000</u> five-star reviews, and counting.
00:28:05	John	Promo	So give yourself a comfort refresh this summer, and get it for less at Brooklinen.
00:28:10	Jesse	Promo	Go to Brooklinen.com and use promo code "Hodgman" to get \$20 off with a minimum purchase of \$100. That's B-R-O-O-K-L-I-N-E-N.com , and enter promo code "Hodgman" for \$20 off with a minimum purchase of \$100.
00:28:27	John	Promo	That's Brooklenin.com , promo code "Hodgman."
00:28:31	Jesse	Promo	We're also supported this week by the good folks over at... Babbel.
			You know, international travel's right around the corner, John.
00:28:40	John	Promo	Jesse... They're about to reopen the Canadian–US border.
00:28:45	Jesse	Promo	Wow.
00:28:46	John	Promo	And this is <u>huge</u> news for us up in Maine. Not only because we love the maritime provinces of Canada, and they tolerate us. But also because it's—there's a <u>huge</u> amount of trade and commerce that goes on over these borders. These border communities have really been suffering. It's time to get across those borders, into Francophonic Canada, and parley yourself some maritime French-Canadian talk! And how are you gonna learn to do it? From a <u>book</u> ? No!
00:29:13	Jesse	Promo	<i>[Laughs.]</i> Book? Come on.
00:29:16	John	Promo	What—what is this? 1990? <u>No</u> .
00:29:20	Jesse	Promo	No.
00:29:21	John	Promo	You're gonna learn it using Babbel! Babbel makes the whole process of learning a new language fun and easy. Its 15-minute lessons make it the perfect way to learn a new language on the go. They design their courses with practical, real-world conversations in mind. Things you'll get to use in everyday life. Such as a French translation for, "I would like my chips all-dressed, please."
			<i>[Jesse laughs.]</i>
			Famous flavor of potato chip in Canada.
00:29:47	Jesse	Promo	We did not plan this, but <u>I</u> was gonna say that!
00:29:51	John	Promo	Were you? I'm sorry.
00:29:52	Jesse	Promo	<i>[Laughing]</i> Yeah—no, it's fine! It's wonderful that we both thought of that same dumb thing to say.
			<i>[John laughs.]</i>

But you know what? You won't be dumb! You'll be smart, because you'll be speaking another language, communicating with other people in your community or outside your community. And all it takes is 15-minute lessons for real language acquisition.

00:30:18 John Promo

I think—I think that's it. I'm gonna double check on Babbel. And so can you. Right now, you can save up to 65% off your subscription when you go to Babbel.com/hodgman. That's Babbel.com/hodgman for up to 65% off your subscription.

Babbel: Language for life.

00:30:41 Sound Effect Transition

[Three gavel bangs.]

00:30:43 Jesse Host

Welcome back to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. We're clearing the docket this week, and we have a case here from Laila:

"I bring this case against my partner Adam. He and I have garbage bins in our driveway. We notice dog-walkers regularly place their poop bags in our bins. This bothers Adam, so he turns the bins around to face the bushes. This makes it harder for everyone to use the bins, including us.

Now someone has taken to leaving their bags of dog poop on top of our trash bin. It's happened three times this week. Adam would like to put up a sign. I think this would be unsightly. I don't mind when the bags are placed inside the bin.

Please order Adam to make the bins accessible to all, so we don't have to handle the poop on top of the bins.

PS,

We both agree that if we see the person doing this, we will ask them to stop, but we have yet to catch them in the act."

00:31:39 John Host

[Sharp exhale.] Jesse, you know... I get a—I get a lot of letters. Some of them are thousands of words long. Occasionally, one or two of them includes... a dispute for us to hear on this podcast. More often, they're about how, uh, we grievously erred by suggesting it was okay for you, Jesse Thorn, to put dog poop in other people's bins. Got roasted.

00:32:01 Jesse Host

I'm glad we're bringing this up again. I'm really pumped about this.

00:32:04 John Host

No. Hey, everybody. Don't write—don't write to Jesse about poop disposal habits. Jesse's got enough going on right now.

And I only—I'm only saying this to inoculate you from another wave of letters and comments.

[Jesse laughs quietly.]

It's n—it's a—it's—it's not a big deal. What I'll tell you is a big deal is someone coming around, putting poop in your bin. You're turning your bins around in order to make it harder for them to put their poop in your bin. And instead—*[laughs]*—they leave the poop on top of your bin. That is a no-kay move. You know what no-kay is—

00:32:41 Jesse Host

[Stifling laughter] Yeah.

00:32:42 John Host I just invented it. Opposite of okay.

[Both stifle laughter.]

00:32:43 Jesse Host Yeah. That is a real—I mean, like, this—this dispute is about this husband and wife, and whether they—you know, what they do with the bins. And so there's clearly one monster here, and it's the poop leaver. *[Laughs.]*

00:32:56 John Host Yeah! Poop leaver, don't—

00:32:58 Jesse Host This is—this is not acceptable. *[Laughs.]* Look, you can protest, uh, the city ending the—your ability to pile garbage in front of City Hall. *[Laughs.]* That's appropriate civil disobedience. But leaving a poop bag on top of a trash can lid is really a shady move.

00:33:17 Jennifer Producer May I cut in?

00:33:18 John Host Please!

00:33:19 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:33:20 Jennifer Producer I just, um—I also didn't wanna pile—add to the pile of letters about the dog poop that Jesse and you have received. But, um, the letter writer sent in a photo of this. And it was shocking. Like, too shocking to me not to include in this docket.

00:33:39 Jesse Host Yeah. Thanks, Jennifer. Uh, this photograph that we have in evidence here and you can [see on our Instagram](#), features, uh, what look to be a—a green bin, a recycling bin, and a trash can. They're on a driveway, a publicly accessible driveway. And they're turned the opposite direction. They're turned toward the driveway's wall. Um, not only that, but the trash can is the smallest of the three, and it's been tucked underneath the other two cans, so the lid cannot be lifted. But most shocking of all is—*[laughing]* what appears to be a 75-pound bag—

[John laughs.]

—of dog leavings. Just the most enormous poop bag I've ever seen in my life!

00:34:26 Jennifer Producer It is a clear message. *[Laughs.]*

00:34:28 Jesse Host *[Still laughing]* Yeah. This is, like—this is someone—this is not someone who has picked up one poop. I think this is a poop saver.

[Someone laughs.]

This is somebody who's been hoarding poops for one grand gesture.

00:34:44 John Host Now, you know, another thing that we note—another thing I noted in the full letter, that we edited down a little bit, is that this is a rental property. They recently started renting this part of this house. And it—and it may be that they are new to this neighborhood, whereas the poop leaver has been leaving the poop in this bin... *[stifling laughter]* for a hundred years.

00:35:07 Jesse Host *[Stifling laughter]* Uh-huh.

00:35:08 John Host Going back to Druid times, or whatever. And therefore they—

00:35:11 Jesse Host What else are you gonna do?

00:35:13 John Host Therefore they feel it's part of the tapestry of the neighborhood.

[Emphatically] "This is where I leave my dog's poop!"

And therefore, they're getting aggro now that these new people are coming to town saying, "I would rather you not leave your poop in my bins."

Hey. Poop leaver? You're wrong. If it's obvious that they don't want you to leave the poop in the bins, that's their choice! Don't do it!

00:35:36 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:35:37 John Host And certainly don't go aggro and leave the poop on top of the bins. That is bad. That sends a bad message to the neighborhood. That sends a message to the neighborhood which is, "I hate everyone, and this neighborhood—this community is built on seething fissures of hate."

Even if that's true, *[stifles laughter]* that's not what you want to advertise. Don't do it. But! I'm gonna say this: It's an ambiguous message. Turning those bins around, shoving them up against each other, making them harder to access... That is an ambiguous message.

Jesse Thorn, I will stand by you until... the end of time. Until we no longer know what there—else there is to do. Because we've done it all. And I will never, ever reverse my decision that it is fine for you, a responsible dog owner, to put your poop in a—in a bin, if you are doing it in a responsible way! A bin that you don't own. If you are—if you are tying up that bag securely. So long as you're not trespassing on their property. So long as you are not creating an obvious greater mess for that person, or a sanitation worker, to clean up. If you can put it in that bin responsibly, good. It's fine. I'll never turn on you, Jesse. Send me the letters. I will take the heat. Let me be the Batman to your Two-Face. Let them chase me. Do not send letters to Jesse. Do not address letters to Jesse.

But I ask Jesse now, hypothetically: If you were—if you had some dog poop bagged up, and you went to a bin to responsibly dispose of it, and that bin had a sign on it saying, "Please don't put your poop in this bin," would you do it?

00:37:16 Jesse Host *[Stifling laughter]* Of course not!

00:37:17 John Host No. Of course not.

00:37:18 Jesse Host People—when—when you made that decision, people sent me emails, like, that said, like, "I—I happen to keep my trash can in my child's crib."

[John cracks up.]

"Would you climb to the third floor of my home, punch out my window, throw my child across the room, and put your trash in—"

[Laughing] No! I'm just talking about trash cans that are literally already on the street!

00:37:44	John	Host	Yeah. You wouldn't do that! You don't live in Maine!
00:37:46	Jesse	Host	No.
00:37:47	John	Host	Laila. You and Adam—you ha—you cannot be sent—first of all, this is <u>not</u> okay behavior on the part of the poop leaver. It is perfectly reasonable for Adam to not want poop in his bin. In the bins that you both share. It is perfectly reasonable. But you are sending a <u>ambiguous</u> message. And it is time for an <u>unambiguous</u> message. Which is simply a laminated sign on the bin saying: "Hey. Please don't put your poop in here." Now, is it possible the poop leaver will escalate at that point? It depends. Do you live in Maine? Then yes. <i>[Jesse laughs.]</i> Do you— <i>[stifles laughter]</i> —do you not live in Maine? Question mark. But you—but it is—it is fair, and it is important, I think, not to let this bully get away with it. And you—as you say in your PS, if you catch the person in the act, you will confront them. Good. Confront them <u>politely</u> , firmly, but definitely! Let this bully know: This poop shall not pass.
00:38:44	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
00:38:47	Jesse	Host	Here is something from Lindsey in Storrs, Connecticut. She says: "As we work towards a new and better normal, my husband Thayer and I are using up some restaurant gift cards we've been saving for our full vaccination status. Thayer and I have different approaches to spending gift cards. I like to order the way we normally do, so that we only have to pay the tip out of pocket. Thayer likes to order an additional item, like an appetizer or an alcoholic beverage or a more expensive entree, knowing that we have the gift card to offset the extra cost. What is the better approach?"
00:39:24	John	Host	I can't follow any of this. All I know is money is <u>fungible</u> . <i>[Laughs.]</i> Right?
00:39:30	Jesse	Host	<i>[Laughing]</i> Yeah. This isn't—look. We're not talking about brief video clips of basketball highlights here. Money is fungible!
00:39:40	John	Host	I mean, it's— <i>[sighs]</i> . You're gonna pay—you're gonna pay the bill. And the bill is gonna be either covered by the gift card, or covered partially by the gift card. Right?
00:39:52	Jesse	Host	Yeah.
00:39:53	John	Host	It's—it's all the same! It's all the same pile of... imaginary, uh, uh, uh, shells. Like, I don't get it.
00:40:01	Jesse	Host	Thayer apparently believes that gift cards can only be used to order extra stuff that you wouldn't otherwise have ordered.
00:40:08	John	Host	I guess that people, uh—you know, people have different ways of treating themselves. And treating yourself is a psychological thing as much as it is, perhaps, a financial thing. So if you've got a—a gift card, for you it's more fun to treat yourself by paying less out of

pocket in general. For another person, it might be like, "I really like to—I like to use that gift card to get something a little wacky that I normally wouldn't order at all."

I understand. And I don't think that one is better than the other. So I—I refuse to adjudicate this case. The only reason that I am allowing it in the courtroom at all is two things. One, I wanna make sure people understand this loud and clear: If you are using a gift card to reduce the total cost of your check, tip on the total cost of your check. Plus tax.

[Jesse laughs quietly.]

Same deal if someone buys you a round of drinks, or the—the restaurant or the bar puts a round of drinks, uh, for—buys you a round of drinks. Tip on what the total would be, not what you actually pay. In other words, if you spend, uh, \$10, and you knock off five with a \$5 gift card, you tip \$2. Twenty percent of ten. Or \$3! Thirty percent. This is the kind of math I'm capable of doing. I can do this; I can't do subtraction. *[Stifles laughter.]*

You don't—you don't tip a buck-fifty on a \$10 tip that you've reduced by five with a gift card. Got it? Good.

00:41:39 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:41:41 John Host Second of all... Shout-out to Storrs, Connecticut. Birthplace of Peter Tork.

[Jesse laughs quietly.]

Member of The Monkees.

00:41:48 Jesse Host Sure.

00:41:49 John Host I've been watching a—I've been watching a Monkees documentary on YouTube off and on for the past several days. *[Stifles laughter.]* It's a long documentary. There's a lot more to Monkees history than I realized. And you know what? God-or-whatever darn it, I love those Monkees, Jesse!

00:42:02 Jesse Host How much do you love The Monkees? Do you love The Monkees enough to have auditioned for the New Monkees?

00:42:07 John Host No. Because that—there's someone who loves The Monkees more than me. Who is it, Jesse?

00:42:12 Jesse Host It's the great TOM SCHARPLING! Tom Scharpling's brand new memoir features the story of the time he shamefully—*[laughing]* auditioned for the New Monkees, forgetting that he had no musical skill at all!

00:42:30 John Host And was probably, even at that point... 20 years older than he had to be, *[stifles laughter]* in order to get in those Monkees.

00:42:36 Jesse Host Yeah. Tom Scharpling's new book! *It Never Ends*. It's moving, it's hilarious, the great Tom Scharpling.

00:42:41 John Host *It Never Ends* by Tom Scharpling, please go check it out. But boy, you know, those Monkees... They—I've said it before. And I'll—I'll say again. They've got—they got a lot of poop left on their bins. For

being the quote-unquote "Prefab Four" because they were a—a fabricated pop group.

But you look at those Mon—those Monkees—each one of those Monkees... They have charisma for days. They have chemistry for decades.

00:43:08 Jesse Host

Yeah.

00:43:09 John Host

Like, you—those are TV stars who also happen to be good musicians! Micky Dolenz has a voice that is like nothing else in pop. They are funny. They are TV stars, they're mus—aw, they're—best.

And also, by the way? Just found out, Storrs, Connecticut? Home of Wendy O. Williams, lead singer for the Plasmatics! Whose topless photo posted on the wall of Newbury Comics at its original location on Newbury Street in Boston scandalized me, and I just learned that Aimee Mann may have been eating there that very day, when I was a young person going to Newbury Comics.

So let's hear it for Storrs. Let's hear it for tipping. Let's hear it for the Plasmatics, and hey, hey! We're the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

00:43:47 Jesse Host

Let's take a break. When we come back, it's an update from our favorite cryptocurrency miners! You got favorite cryptocurrency—you got a whole, like, power-ranking for your favorites, right, John? *[Laughs.]*

00:43:58 John Host

Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. No, I'll show you my—I'll show you my spreadsheet.

00:44:00 Sound Effect Transition

[Three gavel bangs.]

00:44:02 Promo Clip

[Dramatic background music.]

Will Campos: Since the dawn of time, screenwriters have taken months to craft their stories! But now, three Hollywood professionals shall attempt the impossible: break a story in one hour!

[Music change: funky, relaxed.]

Freddie Wong: That's right! Here on *Story Break*, I, Freddie Wong—

Matt Arnold: —Matt Arnold—

Will: —and Will Campos—

Freddie: —the creators behind award-winning shows like *Video Game High School*—

Matt: —have one hour to turn a humble idea into an awesome movie.

Will: Now, an awesome movie starts with an awesome title.

Matt: I chose *The Billionaire's Marriage Valley*.

00:44:30 Promo Clip

Freddie: *[Stifling laughter]* Mine was Christmas Pregnant Paradise.

[Everyone laughs.]

Matt: Okay, next we need a protagonist.

Will: So I've heard Wario best described as *[laughing]* Libertarian Mario.

[Someone laughs.]

Freddie: And of course, every great movie needs a stellar pitch.

Will: In order to get to Heaven, sometimes you gotta raise a little hell.

Freddie: Ha-ha, that's the tagline!

[Someone laughs.]

Check out *Story Break* every week on MaximumFun.org, or wherever you get your podcasts.

[Music stops.]

00:44:51 Sound Effect Transition

[Three gavel bangs.]

00:44:54 Jesse Promo

Judge Hodgman, we are taking a quick break from clearing the docket. You still working on that secret project?

00:44:59 John Promo

Yes, I'm—I am in the thick of it! The secret project with David Rees. I cannot tell you what it is yet. I hope you will be as excited as we are, when we are able to tell you what it is. And I hope you will just—uh, keep a—keep a—a braincell in your back pocket of memory for this, such that when we do announce it, you might think about spreading the word? Getting the word out there? Because we are so excited about it, and I think it's gonna be great.

Meantime, apropos of nothing... *Dicktown*, the animated show that David and I made, remains on Hulu for the time being.

[Bit.ly/dicktown](http://bit.ly/dicktown). D-I-C-K-T-O-W-N.

I also wanna point out that our friend Cynthia Hopkins, who you may or may not remember from my one-man show *Ragnarok*, which was on Netflix for a while, until they took it down, because I guess... it was taking up space on their hard drive?

Cynthia Hopkins is one of my very, very favorite musicians, singer-songwriters, performance artists. She ha—she originally performed in a band called Gloria Deluxe, which was kind of a—an alt-country band? Uh, at the turn of the last century, 1999 into the early 2000s. She had some—did some incredible solo performance art shows at St. Ann's Warehouse in Brooklyn that I saw, and I loved the music from them. It's so beautiful. You can check out all of her catalogue. Cynthia Hopkins is her name.

00:46:22 John Promo

But she has a new band now! With a fellow she met in Philadelphia, named James Lavino. And their new single just came out. It's called "Seriously Though". The band is called Fell Walker. F-E-L-L-space-Walker. And they have a long-playing record coming out called *Love Is the Means*. I really encourage you to check out this really, really

special artist, Cynthia Hopkins, and the new band Fellwalker.

You can find out all of their links, including links to the new single, "Seriously Though", by going to... [Linktree](#)? That's L-I-N-K-T-R-dot-E-E-forward-slash-Fellwalker. Link-truh-dot-E-E. *[Stifles laughter.]*

Linktree. You know what I'm talking about, Internet users. [Slash Fellwalker](#). Or just use Google!

Jesse, what do you have going on?

00:47:13	Jesse	Promo	Well, of course, I always host the comedy program <i>Jordan, Jesse, Go!</i> Which, uh, we— <i>[laughs]</i> —we've had some new people, uh, on the Maximum Fun reddit, MaximumFun.Reddit.com , talking about the thrill or horror that they experienced when they first listened to <i>Jordan, Jesse, Go!</i> and discovered the sheer volume of profanity on that program.
00:47:34	John	Promo	Yeah. Yeah...
00:47:36	Jesse	Promo	Um, people— <i>[stifles laughter]</i> —people who had only heard me on NPR or on <u>this</u> family-friendly program. If you're—if you're not a child, I encourage you to go check out the comedy show <i>Jordan, Jesse, Go!</i>

And! Uh, check out the new graphic novel which spun off from the podcast which... sort of spun off from *Jordan, Jesse, Go!*, the graphic novel created by my brilliant colleague Jordan Morris and our friend Sarah Morgan, among others. Tony Cliff. Uh, called *Bubble*.

It is in stores now. It is so funny and action-packed. Uh, and it's so great. So people should go buy that *Bubble* book. I don't—I don't get anything from you buying it. But, uh, go buy it, 'cause it's awesome. And I'm very proud to have had a small part in helping birth the—the show that became that book. So, uh, yeah!

00:48:21	John	Promo	Yeah!
00:48:22	Jesse	Promo	Go to your bookstore, grab <i>Bubble</i> , 'cause it's—it's dope.
00:48:23	John	Promo	It's fantastic! I don't get anything from it either, other than the satisfaction of joining Jesse in recommending to you... a thing that's good!
00:48:30	Jesse	Promo	Yep. <i>Bubble</i> . Go buy it.

Okay. Let's get back to the docket.

00:48:34	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
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00:48:36	Jesse	Host	Welcome back to the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast. Here's a case from Aaron:
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"My girlfriend and I love books. We even had our first date at a bookstore bar. So I was shocked to learn what she did after recently borrowing a cookbook from the communal bookshelf in the lobby of her apartment building. Instead of returning the book after borrowing it, she proceeded to sell the book on a popular social marketplace for selling new and secondhand items, netting a cool \$8.

She says she shouldn't be guilt-tripped into feeling remorse for

reselling a cookbook written by a model-turned-celebrity with zero culinary training. She thinks once an item is left on the communal bookshelf, the owner relinquishes all claims to what happens to the book.

I, however, would like to hold this scofflaw accountable by enjoining her from pilfering for commercial gain the communal property of her friendly neighbors."

00:49:35 John Host So before I dig into this one, Jesse, I was feeling a real mood through the glass here at WERU from Joel Mann when I was talking about The Monkees. You have something you wanna say about The Monkees, Joel?

00:49:45 Joel Guest I met Micky Dolenz going into a rest area in Massachusetts once.

[John laughs.]

00:49:50 Jesse Host Wow, you didn't just make that up just now? I don't—I—honestly, I don't think I believe you.

00:49:54 John Host I thought you were go—gonna get mad at me about The Monkees! I thought—

00:49:57 Joel Guest No, I love The Monkees!

00:49:58 John Host Alright, good.

00:49:59 Joel Guest Yeah.

00:50:00 John Host Everyone loves The Monk—who am I defending The Monkees against, I guess? Critical—critical reception of the time? They're great. Great story, Joel.

00:50:07 Jesse Host Micky Dolenz was on *Bullseye* once. He was—he was wonderful.

00:50:09 John Host Yeah.

00:50:10 Jesse Host Such a nice man.

00:50:11 John Host Yeah!

So now, let's get into this. Jesse, you lived in a—in an apartment building. I—I visited you.

00:50:18 Jesse Host Sure.

00:50:19 John Host And did, um, the show that became known as *Bullseye* from your apartment in Los Angeles. In Koreatown, correct? Yeah.

00:50:25 Jesse Host That's true. In Koreatown. Yeah.

00:50:27 John Host Did you have an—a communal bookshelf, or a place where people left stuff that they no longer wanted?

00:50:34 Jesse Host No. There was a woman who walked around in what can only be described as a cloud of Pomeranians. But there was no—

[John chuckles.]

—communal bookshelf. That I remember.

00:50:44 John Host We—in our apartment building in Brooklyn, New York, we have a shelf that we refer to in our family—it's in the lobby. And we refer to it in our family as "the stoop sale." Because a stoop sale, in Park Slope and other parts of Brooklyn—you know, there are brownstones that

have stoops, and on a—of a spring afternoon, on a weekend, people will put stuff out there, and they will sell that stuff. It's, uh, equivalent of a yard sale or garage sale.

00:51:10 Jesse Host Yeah. One time I bought a rack of really good records, and then took 'em straight to the—straight to the post office, and mailed them to myself in Los Angeles. Media mail, baby.

00:51:18 John Host Oghh. Media mail is one of the best forms of mail.

00:51:21 Jesse Host Yeah. Who knows if it'll get there, or when?

00:51:23 John Host But the stoop sale in our—

00:51:24 Jesse Host Four dollars!

[John laughs, Jesse stifles laughter.]

00:51:28 John Host It's a good—it's a—it's—you know what? It's—it's, uh—it's shipping with the thrill of gambling.

00:51:33 Jesse Host Yeah. I love it. Love media mail. I'm not being sarcastic; *[laughing]* I really do love media mail.

00:51:40 John Host The stoop sale in our lobby, though, is not things that are for sale. It is—it is things that are for to give away. It is effectively the—the town trash pile... of our apartment building, because it is not stuff that is hard to haul away at great distance—

By the way, while we were talking, I received some photos—historical photos of The Trash Pile. From a friend of mine who lives here. Apropos of nothing, I just got texted these photos. And they're from vastly different eras, and in both of them, there are boats that are being thrown away.

[Stifles laughter.]

Boats are being thrown away on the trash pile.

[Jesse laughs quietly.]

I'll post them, and I'll—I'll remove all identifying features.

00:52:21 Jesse Host Can I tell you, John, that when I was a kid, and my brother John was in preschool, uh, there was a preschool raffle that my stepmother entered, and she won a boat.

[Laughing] And—and that boat was in our—in our garage, taking up—

[Recovers.]

It was up against the wall—

00:52:42 John Host Yeah.

00:52:43 Jesse Host —but it still took up all the—all of the walking room in our garage. *[Laughs.]* All of the moving-past-the-car room, so I basically had to climb over the car for—for eight years. *[Laughs.]*

00:52:53 John Host Yeah!

00:52:54 Jesse Host While that boat sat unused. What are we gonna do with a boat?!

00:52:56 John Host Hey. You won it in a raffle, you keep it, right?!

00:52:59 Jesse Host Yeah...

00:53:00 John Host I have to—actually, I have to correct this—this section photo, the one that's in color... It is—*[laughs]*. It's not just a boat. It is a... outhouse... inside of a boat. Someone's outhouse... inside of a boat. And when I say I will remove distinguishing features, I will also blur out the street signs *[stifles laughter]* that were stolen from the town and thrown on the pile. That's the fun that they have.

This trash pile that we have, this stoop sale that we have—like, sometimes you get a raffle boat, and you don't want it anymore. For us, it's like, we have kids' books; we have, uh, old clothes that we don't need anymore; we have, uh—we have books that friends sent to us, or gave to us, that we read and we don't need anymore, or know we're never gonna read, and we put them on the stoop sale.

And it is not the same thing as The Trash Pile here in Maine, 'cause these things are not hard to transport, and you don't have to pay a— a duty or a tax to get rid of them. We are—we are forcing our neighbors to pay the emotional tax of getting these things out of our lives, by believing that this is somehow more virtuous, to litter up a shelf in the lobby with this junk that we don't want, than throwing these things just into the trash where they belong.

Now, in Aaron's case, he refers to this bookshelf in the lobby as a communal bookshelf. Like a lending library. Like a—one of those Little Libraries. And if that's true—if there is the expectation within the apartment building that books that are left there are left there to be borrowed and then returned, then absolutely Aaron's girlfriend is abusing the system. By stealing a book, and selling it, and netting—to quote, "netting a cool \$8" in the process. Netting. What were the gross expenses?! *[Laughs.]*

00:54:51 Jesse Host *[Laughing]* Yeah. What's the—let's—let's see this—let's see this balance sheet.

00:54:58 John Host Yeah. What's the overhead? Well, I guess they—I guess—I guess that the girlfriend may have paid \$4 in media mail shipping costs.

00:55:06 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:55:07 John Host Maybe that. I don't know.

But I'm not sure that I believe you, Aaron. Uh, no offense! But—but I don't know if it's true. Maybe your understanding of this bookshelf is not the rest of the apartment building's understanding of this bookshelf. In which case, I think it deserves clarification. If you have a—an email list in the apartment, or you can put up a note, just saying:

"Hey, what's the deal with books here? Do you wanna keep 'em? Or do you want—or do you—are they just giveaway? Is this a giveaway pile, or is it a lending library pile?"

My guess is it's a giveaway pile! It's a trash pile, just like we all have in our lives and in our communities. In which case, there is no problem with your girlfriend taking a book off the trash pile and

selling it for eight bucks.

If, however, it is the understanding that these are—that this is a communal bookshelf; the books are meant to be saved, then she's doing it wrong. And it's very easy to find out. This is a classic—it's the classic situation of whether or not it's okay to get seltzer water from the soda fountain at a restaurant: Go and ask. That's all! Just go and ask. Go and ask and find out.

00:56:09 John Host But I will say this: Uh, your girlfriend's a snob. I don't care who writes this cookbook.

[Stifles laughter.]

If it's a good cookbook, it's a good cookbook. Don't use the fact that this person is a—a celebrity, or a model, or whatever, to justify treating this book like garbage. If someone's throwing it out, that's enough justification to treat it like garbage and resell it. Don't be a snob.

I—I think I know—I think I know the book you're talking about. I think I understand all the problematics surrounding it. But I will say... it's a good mac and cheese recipe. Jesse?

00:56:42 Jesse Host I—I! Do you really think that these people write their own cookbooks? Famous chefs barely write—like, real chefs.

00:56:51 John Host

Real chefs. Yes.

00:56:52 Jesse Host Great chefs barely write their own cookbooks. There's no way to write 200 recipes and test them, *[laughing]* at least more than once. You know what I mean? Like—

[Recovers.]

I feel like even—even if you are a—I don't know, David Chang, or something like that. Like, you've developed a hundred recipes in your life, maybe.

00:57:15 John Host

Yeah.

00:57:16 Jesse Host

But then after that, you have to hire people to help you write your cookbooks, because somebody has to help you develop the recipes! Even if they're your idea. That's how cookbooks—that's how cookbook-writing works! Unless the coo—person's job is to, like, develop recipes.

You know, our friend J. Kenji López-Alt. His whole life is dedicated to developing recipes. And he may be filling his books with recipes all of which he wrote and developed. I believe that exists in the world.

But the general case is that a book even by a famous chef might have more direction than a book written by a model-turned-whatever. But there's—don't be snooty about it.

00:57:57 John Host Let me ask you a question, Jesse. Do you think *The Essential James Beard Cookbook* is written by James Beard?

00:58:04 Jesse Host That's an interesting question—

00:58:05 John Host The answer is no. James—James Beard has not been alive for a

long time.

00:58:08 Jesse Host I mean, my thinking on this, John, is that while it's possible through the use of a spiritualist medium *[laughing]* that he could have written that cookbook—

[John laughs.]

—but I believe him to be a dead man!

00:58:23 John Host Fair enough.

[Stifles laughter.]

Do you believe that Chris Santos, from television's *Chopped*, is the sole author of Chris Santos's cookbook *Share*?

00:58:33 Jesse Host No! I bet Chris Santos did a lot of work on it.

00:58:36 John Host Mm.

00:58:37 Jesse Host I don't mean to suggest that any of these people aren't involved in the making of their books. It's just that when you make a lot of recipes, you gotta have some help!

00:58:44 John Host Ah—Jesse. Couple of follow-up questions. Just your basic sense of yes or no. You think Frankie Avalon wrote *Frankie Avalon's Italian Family Cookbook*? Yes or no.

00:58:54 Jesse Host One hundred percent yes.

00:58:55 John Host Do you think that Patti LaBelle wrote *Desserts LaBelle* on her own?!

00:59:00 Jesse Host I bet Patti LaBelle has a rotating file of 20 dessert recipes that she loves, that she's messed around with, that are her special things. And then she had some help to get the extra 15 or 20 that are in there.

00:59:13 John Host Let me tell you about that extra help. All of these titles that I mentioned—*Share* by Chris Santos, *Italian Family Cookbook* by Frankie Avalon, *Desserts LaBelle* by Patti LaBelle, *Essential James Beard Cookbook* by the Estate of James Beard—as well as *Simply Divine* by Lisa Vanderpump—all written, co-written, or tested—recipe-tested by Rick Rodgers, one of my favorite clients of my first boss, Susan Ginsburg at Writers House.

Rick Rodgers is an ama—is—this is his job! Is that he channels the voice and culinary interests and recipes of famous people who are either chefs, or home cooks, or otherwi—but are otherwise unable to create a cookbook, and he does it with them and for them.

And Rick is one of the niciest people in the world, and he's written a bunch of cookbooks on his own that are under his name. R-O-D-G-E-R-S. Including *Thanksgiving 101* and *Christmas 101*, the two absolute go-tos that we go to every holiday to just do basic recipes for Christmas, Thanksgiving, and other wintertime holidays. It's fantastic. Rick Rodgers is great. Go check him out.

Aaron, you think—you think I'm gonna let you—your girlfriend diss Rick Rodgers? Wrong. Rick Rodgers is the best. Many, many other cooking professionals out there. Thank you for bringing it up, Jesse.

Thank you for reminding me of Rick Rodgers, and Susan Ginsburg in Writers House. I love you all, and I miss you.

01:00:39 Jesse Host

I do think, by the way, that Adam Reid—the, uh, the guy from *America's Test Kitchen*?

01:00:45 John Host

Yeah.

01:00:46 Jesse Host

I do think he wrote the book—every recipe in the book—*Thoroughly Modern Milkshakes: 100 Classic & Contemporary Recipes*. That book is hot fire about cold dairy. Love that book. Got a—*[laughing]*—got a review copy of that book in the mail. Thought, "There's no way I'm doing a *Bullseye* segment about milkshakes, but this sounds pretty good!" And you know what? It's really good.

[Recovers.]

The answer is—the—the answer, by the way, is that you should, uh, try making tea-based milkshakes. That's real good.

01:01:18 John Host

I also forgot that Joel Mann wrote his own cookbook: *A Gallon of Smoothies*. Right, Joel Mann?

[Jesse laughs.]

01:01:24 Joel Guest

My favorite cookbook is Google.

[John laughs.]

01:01:28 Jesse Host

[Chuckles.] Yeah. Google.com.

Do we have any letters this week, John?

01:01:31 John Host

Yeah. We do. As you know, this is the reunion of the J-Squad—Joel, Jennifer, Jesse, and John—here in Maine. We had a letter from the C-Team! Our friends Caroline and Conner, plus their dogs Cosmo and Chai.

They wrote us some time ago, because they were expecting a human baby. And they wanted to give this human baby a C name, so they could continue their—their C-starting name tradition in their family, and continue to be the C-Team. They couldn't settle on a C-starting name that they liked, the letter C, because Conner was a cryptocurrency enthusiast and hobbyist. You may recall that we met him in London, Jesse, some years ago at the London Podcast Festival, where they—where he and Caroline had a dispute over his Ethereum-mining rig. He stopped mining Ethereum, which is a cryptocurrency, and instead started, uh, having a baby.

And so we suggested that we name—that they name this baby "Chethereum." With a middle name of "Alien" because of a—a very funny *Alien* reference Caroline had included in her original letter. And so she wrote, more recently:

"Hi. Caroline from the C-Team here again. I wanted to share an update on our baby name dispute. Little Chethereum Alien was born six and a half weeks early on June 20th, at 7:41 AM. Since Chethereum is pre-term, the baby will get to stay in their own little NICU rig, mining all the colostrumininum—" What is this word?

"Colostromonium liquid gold he can." I got the—I got the nod from Jennifer Marmor. I said that correctly?

01:03:07 Jennifer Producer

Sounded correct to me!

01:03:08 Jesse Host

Yeah. I mean, if you're gonna—*[laughs]*—make—make one word sound like a space word, I don't know if there's an exact pronunciation in *Webster's*.

01:03:20 John Host

"The baby is not actually named Chethereum," speaking of space words. Caroline writes:

"We wound up calling him Chance, because he's our lucky little guy. Thanks to you, Jesse, Jennifer, and all the other *JJHo* friends for keeping us entertained all these years. I'm sure we'll be re-listening to some old episodes as we dispute birthday parties, Santa Claus, and aggressive miniature ponies as Chance grows up."

So congratulations to the now newly-expanded C-Team! Uh, I just noticed, by the way, Joel, at the Tradewinds Market?

01:03:50 Joel Guest

Yeah.

01:03:51 John Host

You know—you know they have a bitcoin ATM up there now?

01:03:54 Joel Guest

No, I did not!

01:03:55 John Host

Yeah, they do. *[Laughs.]* They do. I don't know how much use it's getting. It's very strange. It's out the exit doors, where you return the carts. But the bitcoin ATM dispenses Ethereum now, I gather. After I leave the radio station today, I'm gonna drop by the Tradewinds and—and see how much some Ethereum costs, and maybe I'll get some for little Chance's, uh, future fund.

01:04:15 Jesse Host

The docket now clear, that's it for another episode of the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. Our producer, Jennifer Marmor. Our engineer in Maine is Joel Mann, the Program and Operations Manager at WERU Community Radio in Orland, Maine.

You can listen to WERU at WERU.org, and you can follow Joel on Instagram. His handle is @themainemann. M-A-I-N-E-M-A-N-N. You can follow us on Twitter at @JesseThorn and @hodgman. We're on Instagram at @judgejohnhodgman. Make sure to hashtag your *Judge John Hodgman* Tweets #JJHo, and check out the Maximum Fun subreddit to discuss this episode.

Submit your cases at MaximumFun.org/jjho, or email hodgman@maximumfun.org. And we do want your cases! Send us your cases! MaximumFun.org/jjho or email hodgman@maximumfun.org. This isn't some goof! We're not goofing around here and—

01:05:16 John Host

This is not a goof!

01:05:17 Jesse Host

—and lying to you that we want your cases. We really do want your cases! Tell a friend! "You got any cases?" MaximumFun.org/jjho, or email hodgman@maximumfun.org.

You know what I say? Just go on one of those neighborhood-based social media apps, and just ask if anybody's got any beef with anybody. See what happens.

01:05:36	John	Host	See what happens!
01:05:38	Jesse	Host	MaximumFun.org/ijho , or hodgman@maximumfun.org. We'll talk to you next time on the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast.
01:05:45	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
01:05:47	Music	Transition	A cheerful ukulele chord.
01:05:48	Speaker 1	Guest	MaximumFun.org .
01:05:50	Speaker 2	Guest	Comedy and culture.
01:05:52	Speaker 3	Guest	Artist owned—
01:05:53	Speaker 4	Guest	—audience supported.