

00:00:00	Sound Effect	Transition	Three gavel bangs.
00:00:02	Jesse Thorn	Host	Welcome to the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast. I'm bailiff Jesse Thorn. This week, "Acting in Bat Faith". Elyse brings the case against her wife, Erin. Erin wants to install a bat box in their yard to help manage mosquitos. Elyse is opposed. She's concerned about becoming the neighborhood's weird bat people. Who's right? Who's wrong? Only one can decide. Please rise as Judge John Hodgman enters the courtroom and presents an obscure cultural reference.
			<i>[The squeak of chairs followed by heavy footsteps and a door closing.]</i>
00:00:35	John Hodgman	Host	When Sheriff Emmett Kimsey and Dr. Sheila Casper enter the mineshaft and fall down into the cavern full of guano, they light a flare. The flame would've caused the fumes to ignite.
00:00:54	Jesse	Host	Bailiff Jesse Thorn, please swear them in. Elyse and Erin, please rise and raise your right hands.
			<i>[The squeak of chairs.]</i>
			Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God or whatever?
			<i>[They confirm.]</i>
			Do you swear to abide by Judge John Hodgman's ruling, despite the fact that while not <u>the</u> Batman, he probably is a batman.
			<i>[They confirm.]</i>
00:01:14	John	Host	Judge Hodgman, you may proceed. I'm not any of the bats—men or women. I am merely a silent sentinel for justice in my city of Park Slope. Which is to say, I do a podcast. And I'm doing my part! In any case, for an immediate summary judgment—first of all, Erin, Elyse, please be seated.
			<i>[The squeak of chairs.]</i>
			For an immediate summary judgement in one of yours favors, can either of you name the piece of culture that I quoted directly from as I entered this courtroom?
00:01:45	Elyse	Guest	Uh, Elyse, let's start with you. I have no idea.
00:01:46	John	Host	Do your best.
00:01:47	Elyse	Guest	I'm gonna guess one of the Batman movies.
00:01:49	John	Host	One of the Batsman.
00:01:51	Jesse	Host	Yeah, the guano one.
00:01:52	John	Host	<i>[Chuckling.]</i> Yeah. Which one of them?
00:01:54	Jesse	Host	That's the Robert Pattinson one. They should've cut some of the guano stuff, 'cause that movie was like three hours long. It was like—90 minutes of that was guano.
00:02:02	John	Host	It was wading through guano. That's an important resource and fertilizer.
00:02:06	Jesse	Host	They wanted to get back to the roots of the character.

00:02:10 John Host *[Giggles.]* As Erin may know, guano is an important—an important resource and fertilizer in this world. Okay, so it's *The Batman*, starring Robert Pattinson, special guano edition. Got it. Put it in the book.

00:02:24 Erin Guest
00:02:26 John Host Erin, what is your guess?
I think it's one of the Indiana Jones movies.
One of the Indiana Jones—alright, I'm gonna give you—I'm gonna give you all a hint. I'm not quoting from a movie. I am quoting from a website that identifies errors in movies—errors of logic, errors of plot, errors of guano flammability. So, if either of you guess the movie correctly, I'll give it to you. So far, all guesses are wrong. Wanna take another shot at it, Elyse?

00:02:55 Elyse Guest Um, there was this one movie that's like called *Bats*. And I'm stealing one of Erin's guesses, but it's like there's genetically engineered bats that the sheriff in the town has to control and some scientist. That's as obscure as it's gonna get. That's all I've got.

00:03:12 Jesse Host You just googled "bats".

00:03:15 John Host *[Elyse laughs.]*
Are you talking about the 1999 film, starring Lou Diamond Phillips and Dina Meyer?

00:03:21 Elyse Guest
00:03:23 John Host *[Chuckling.]* I think so, yes.
Mm. Interesting guess. What about—what about you, Erin? What's your guess? I already told you *Indiana Jones* is wrong. There are no big guano scenes in *Indiana Jones*, unless there's one in the new one that's coming out. *Indiana Jones and the Secret of the Retirement Community*.

00:03:36 Erin Guest
00:03:37 John Host Man, you took my *Bats*.
Oh, here's an idea—are you both guessing *Bats*, the 1999 film?

[Erin confirms.]

Well, all guesses are right, then! And no one wins.

[Jesse "wow"s and they laugh.]

You are both correct. You're both extremely good guessers. Obviously, Lou Diamond Phillips stans. Thank you. But because you're both correct, we're gonna go ahead and hear the case. By the way, I was thinking of this movie, *Bats*, because it was mentioned—I've never seen it, but it was mentioned recently on *The Flop House* podcast by our friend, Dan McCoy. *The Flop House* is a great podcast, part of the Maximum Fun network. Hey, if you haven't checked out a new Maximum Fun podcast this week, why don't you go do that? Right now. We'll wait for you.

00:04:24 Elyse Guest
00:04:25 John Host
00:04:28 Elyse Guest Okay! You're back? Good. So, let's hear the case. Uh, who comes to seek justice in this court of fake law?
I do, Judge.
Elyse. What is the nature of the justice you seek?
Well, the thing is that my wife, Erin, wants to build a bat box somewhere in our backyard. We have just recently moved to a new house in Long Beach, and I am against building this bat box for a few concerns. And if you want me to tell you about them now, I can. Or we can wait.

00:04:49	Jesse	Host	You know what, let's just skip it.
00:04:52	John	Host	<i>[Laughs.]</i> No! I want to hear about all the concerns. Well, first of all, to clarify: a bat box is not a box that you—that you keep a bat in. It is like a birdhouse, but for bats and I guess more boxy. Do I understand that correctly?
00:05:09	Elyse	Guest	That's correct.
00:05:10	John	Host	And the bat box would not be inside your house. It would be—where, Erin?
00:05:15	Erin	Guest	It would be in the yard. Probably on a pole or something.
00:05:16	John	Host	In the yard. Probably on a bat pole.
00:05:20	Jesse	Host	The traditional place for a bat box is in the bathroom of a dilapidated house in Kansas.
<i>[They chuckle.]</i>			
00:05:26	John	Host	You're referring to "Die Flederhaus", our famous episode about the dueling bat brothers. But in this case, Erin, you wanna keep a bat box and a bat pole in your bat yard.
<i>[Erin confirms.]</i>			
00:05:40	Elyse	Guest	Now, Elyse, you have concerns. What are your concerns? Well, number one, I am a pediatrician. So, one of my main concerns is if we house all these bats in our backyard—you know, we have neighbors. And there's a potential that a wayward bat can get into somebody's house. And the problem with that is if somebody's sleeping and they wake up with a bat in their house, their little bites or scratches are so small that it's considered a rabies exposure even if they don't necessarily see like a lesion on their skin. So, I worry about the welfare of our neighbors. And also, I don't wanna be a creepy bat person in the neighborhood that just houses all the bats in their backyard.
<i>[They chuckle.]</i>			
00:06:21	John	Host	What does being a creepy bat person mean to you? Aside from having a bat box. How do you think the neighbors would perceive you?
00:06:29	Elyse	Guest	Eventually, the neighbors are gonna catch on. They're gonna be like, "Woah, there's a lot more bats in our neighborhood lately." And at dusk, they're gonna see the bats rising from our yard, and they're gonna catch on. They're gonna see that bat box on a pole and they'll be like, "It's them. They're inviting the bats."
00:06:45	John	Host	How nearby—how much of a yard do you got?
00:06:48	Elyse	Guest	We got a little yard. We got a little patch of grass with somewhere where we can park our car. We have a nice deck. A small yard.
00:06:56	John	Host	A little patch of grass in Long Beach, can there be a greater dream than that?
00:06:59	Elyse	Guest	No.
00:07:00	Jesse	Host	Yeah, there can! A little patch of grass in Long Beach, plus a bunch of bats.
00:07:06	John	Host	<i>[Laughs.]</i> Tell me about your bat dream, Erin. Why do you want this bat box so bat bad?
00:07:10	Erin	Guest	So, the mosquitos in Long Beach are really... excessive. We had a beautiful yard all last summer, and we would be like, "Yes, let's go eat dinner in the yard." And we'd last like five minutes before we started getting bit by mosquitos and we were like, "Okay, let's just

go back inside.” So, it’s pretty sad to have our nice patch of grass and not even be able to use it.

00:07:33 John Host Talk about disease vectors—mosquitos too, by the way. Dr. Elyse?
00:07:36 Elyse Guest Yes, you’re absolutely right. And I do acknowledge that mosquitoes do carry diseases such as Zika, West Nile virus, these are all illnesses of concern. So, I do acknowledge that, yes.

00:07:49 John Host But bats are gonna eat them all up, munch, munch, munch.
00:07:52 Elyse Guest That’s true, but—
00:07:53 John Host And then, your neighbors are gonna be like, “Thank you, bat ladies! Thank you!”

00:07:57 Elyse Guest Um, I mean, they can light a citronella candle or use bug spray.
00:08:02 John Host Mm. I still like the idea of you being the dynamic duo of mosquito killing in Long Beach, but I will take your concerns seriously. Let’s get to where this started. Erin, when did you first get the idea to get a bat box and what prompted it and how long have you been thinking about it?

00:08:17 Erin Guest So, I’ve been learning a lot about permaculture and like natural remedies for things. And then, when the mosquitos got really bad, of course I was like looking up like what eats mosquitos, because—you know. You wanna get something natural. And then, bats came up. And bats are really cute. I mean, if you look at the pictures, you know? I don’t know. I wouldn’t mind having them around.

00:08:40 John Host I know you sent in some evidence. We’re gonna take a look at that in a moment, but before we do I’m a dummy when it comes to permaculture. What is it?

00:08:46 Erin Guest So, it’s all about kind of working with like natural ways that things work together. So, you’re trying to like turn things that would be a nuisance into like a resource. So, for example, bats. You know? They are kind of a nuisance if you don’t need them. But if you have lots of bugs for them to eat, then they’re super helpful.

00:09:06 John Host How often have bats been a nuisance in your lives? Either of you?
00:09:11 Elyse Guest I mean, we’ve been living in Long Beach about eight/nine months, and I could tell you the entire summer—last summer—they were a nuisance. They were pretty bad.

00:09:19 John Host Bats were?
00:09:21 Elyse Guest Oh, mosquitos. Mosquitoes, I mean.
00:09:22 John Host Oh, yeah, no, mosquitos are pests. But I’m just curious. I mean, Elyse, you paint this horrifying picture of rabid bats gone loose in Long Beach. Is this a—do you have bats there? I don’t know.

00:09:34 Elyse Guest Not really. We haven’t really seen them flying around. Have you, Erin?

00:09:39 Erin Guest Uuuh, I don’t think I’ve seen any at our house. Definitely in LA we’ve seen some. But I mean, the thing is that they’re like flying around at night. They’re not like—we’re not gonna see them that often.

00:09:51 John Host Hm. Interesting. Erin, can you explain exactly what a bat box is and how it works?

00:09:56 Erin Guest So, a bat box is sort of like a birdhouse, where it’s just like wood. And kind of flat. And inside, there’s a rod for the bats to hang from. So, they—

00:10:07 John Host Mm-hm. A bat rod.
00:10:09 Erin Guest A bat rod. And—
00:10:11 John Host Please use the proper terminology. *[Chuckles.]*
00:10:14 Erin Guest It doesn’t do anything to attract the bats, but once they find it, then they can live there and—you know—have their families and stuff.

00:10:24 John Host And is there storage in there for their bat ropes and their batarangs and their—?

00:10:30 Jesse Host Bat shark repellent?

00:10:31 John Host The bat shark repellent? *[Chuckles.]*

00:10:32 Erin Guest Yeah. Comes with the three-car bat garage.

[They laugh.]

00:10:37 Jesse Host That's the Long Beach dream.

00:10:39 John Host And what is involved in having a bat box? Have you done some research here?

00:10:43 Erin Guest Yeah, so essentially, you put up the box. They're like birdhouses, but they're like kind of a different shape and they have like a place inside where the bats can like hang from, like a rod or something.

00:10:55 John Host Mm-hm. A bat rod.

00:10:57 Erin Guest A bat rod, yeah. And you basically just put it up there and you wait, and then see if they move in. Apparently, it can take like a year or two for them to like decide to live there. But then once they do, they just like move in kind of like a birdhouse.

00:11:11 John Host And would you collect the guano as it dropped from the bat box?

00:11:15 Erin Guest I mean, I guess if it like fell on some like woodchips or something, but I'm not gonna be going out of my way to like—I don't know. I'll clean it, but I'm not trying to like collect bat poop as like a hobby.

00:11:25 Jesse Host Only if it fell on some woodchips.

00:11:28 Erin Guest Yeah, I mean, if it fell on some woodchips, you could just put it in the compost pile, you know.

00:11:31 John Host If—well, bat guano on woodchips, how could I resist? Of course, I'd wanna collect that.

00:11:36 Jesse Host That's the nachos of permaculture.

00:11:39 John Host *[Laughs.]* But guano's good for gardening, isn't it? I'm looking it up.

[Manual keyboard typing sounds.]

Bat guano fertilizer. So, the second thing that comes up—after bat guano—is bat guano coffee. Don't like that. I'm gonna say no to that. Yeah, bat guano is a suitable fertilizer for plants and lawns, making them healthy and green. The internet just told me that. You should maybe consider collecting that bat guano. Would that—would that gross you out? Elyse, what if I added bat box, yes—also, bat tray for bat guano?

00:12:09 Elyse Guest It—it would be a little gross, and honestly I'm not—I am surprised that Erin's not super into it. I thought that she would want to collect the bat poop.

[They laugh.]

00:12:20 Jesse Host Erin, why does your wife think that what you're secretly into is bat poop?

00:12:25 Erin Guest I mean, she knows that I'm very into gardening. Uuh. Yeah. I mean, I guess so. Just—it seems good for the garden. I agree.

00:12:35 Jesse Host Especially if it's on woodchips.

00:12:37 John Host You—I mean, maybe you didn't marry a true bat person after all, Elyse. We'll find out.

00:12:44 Jesse Host Erin, where do you get the best bat box? 'Cause now I'm kind of into the idea.

00:12:47 Erin Guest Well, apparently there's a BatBNB.com.

00:12:53 Jesse Host *[Laughs.]* For the bat sharing economy?

00:12:54 Erin Guest Yeah! Yeah, they just rent it and—you know, you host them.

00:12:59 John Host No, they sell bat boxes. And I'm gonna tell you something, these bat boxes look nicer than even the ones that are on the [Mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov) website. These are some—

00:13:07 Jesse Host I wanna get a premium bat box.

00:13:08 John Host Handsome—you have the Cascade, the Sonora, the Meramec, the Arroyo.

00:13:13 Jesse Host Do they have any Queen Anne bat boxes that would go with my house?

00:13:16 John Host Uh, no. But Jesse Thorn, for your birthday, I'm gonna get you the Triple Crown Dual Chamber.

00:13:24 Jesse Host *[Whistles lowly.]* Holy Moley.

00:13:26 John Host Oh, they were on *Shark Tank*—the bat box boys. Alright.

[Jesse laughs.]

Wish I had known. Erin, you did send in some evidence, and I'm gonna take a look at it. These are some photos that will be available on our Instagram page, [@JudgeJohnHodgman](https://www.instagram.com/judgejohnhodgman) on Instagram. Also on our show page, at [MaximumFun.org](https://www.maximumfun.org). Exhibit A) example of a bat box. Also, you noted that this comes from Wiki Commons. Thank you, it is for fair use. And I am looking at—well, describe it for me if you will, Erin. You love this thing so much; you tell me about it.

00:13:57 Erin Guest Yeah, so it's like—it's a box, but it's kind of thin. So, the bats can go up inside of it and then hang in there. And it's kind of flat, so you can like hang it on the side of a building if you have something tall enough. And then, it's kind of inconspicuous.

00:14:17 John Host My small amount of research into this suggests that a bat box would be sort of flat-ish like this, 'cause bats like to smush themselves up into places. They don't want a big, roomy bat cave—something that can house a giant penny and a tyrannosaurus rex model or anything. They wanna smushy, uppy, narrow bat box so they can get all bat cozy in there. And you mentioned you wanna put it on a bat pole. Is that correct, Erin?

[Erin confirms.]

00:14:46 Erin Guest And you—did you make that up or did you learn that somewhere? Well, you can't put it in a tree, 'cause I guess they're like afraid of squirrels and stuff. And I don't know, I don't think we wanna put it on our house, 'cause I'm not trying to get bats in the house.

[John agrees.]

And our house isn't all that tall. So, I think a pole is gonna have to be the way to do it.

00:15:02 John Host Yeah, I've—do you have an existing bat pole, or would you need to build a bat pole?

00:15:07 Erin Guest We'd have to build a bat pole.

00:15:10 John Host Yeah, based on my small amount of research, it's gotta be about 20 feet up. Bat box is good about 20 feet up. And you don't want it necessarily right up against your house, 'cause you don't want the bats coming in the house, getting stuck in there. And then, exhibit B) you have a photo here of what you—the caption says, "The most common bat in LA, the Mexican free-tailed bat." Jesse Thorn, you ever see a lot of these bats around?

00:15:34 Jesse Host I've never seen a bat in Los Angeles in my life. I've seen a bobcat. I saw an owl, one time.

[John affirms.]

I saw that famous mountain lion one time, at the science museum. It was a picture of him, in '22. RIP.

00:15:49 John Host You ever see—you must see all kinds of hawks and falcons, condors.

00:15:52 Jesse Host Oh, yeah! Oh, sure! With the claws. There's lots of parrots.

00:15:57 John Host Yeah. Not a lot of bats. Maybe 'cause you don't have any bat boxes up.

[Jesse agrees.]

00:16:05 Elyse Guest I'll tell you what, this is a cute looking bat. Do you disagree, Elyse?

00:16:08 John Host No. They're very cute, I just don't wanna house them in my yard.

00:16:13 Erin Guest Then, you have a photo of a couple of non-bats—some dogs. Who are these dogs, Erin?

00:16:22 John Host So, these are our dogs. Brooklyn kind of looks like a bat, and then Kaya does not. She just looks like a dog.

00:16:32 Erin Guest Yeah. Brooklyn's got big old bat ears that are stretching out. And then Kaya is like, "Guess what? I don't have any ears at all. Just kidding; I'm hiding them."

00:16:37 Jesse Host Yeah, she's the scariest pit bull you'll ever meet.

00:16:47 Erin Guest *[Snorts a laugh.]* Did you have to like make the dog look like the bat? It just looks like—you just had that picture of a bat up and then the dog came up and made a bat face?!

00:16:51 John Host It kind of came up that way one night, yes. That was a random picture we had.

00:16:54 Erin Guest Aw. How do they feel about bats? They don't care, do they?

00:17:00 John Host They—honestly, if there was a bat like crawling on the ground, they would probably go after it.

00:17:20 Jesse Host I have some evidence that I would like to share with all of you as well. And I'm going to have to share my screen to do it. It's a short video that comes from the Instagram account that belongs to the Lube Bat Conservancy in Gainesville, Florida. And here I go, sharing. Now, Jesse, can you see this thing?

00:17:27 John Host Yeah. AAW! *[Whimpers in delight.]* Awww! *[Giggling.]* He's bashful!

00:17:44 Jesse Host This is a Malayan fox bat.

[Jesse giggles.]

00:17:55 John Host It's the largest bat in the world, with a wingspan of up to five feet, and this is filmed upside down, 'cause this bat is hanging from the bat roof. Jesse, can you share this video with Elyse and Erin?

00:17:55 John Host Yeah, but I'm gonna need you to share the sound with me, because the first top comment on this, "OMG, I am obsessed with these cute 'lil noises." Heart eyes, heart eyes, heart eyes.

00:17:55 John Host This is obviously—this is a—*[chuckles]* this is an audio podcast. I do have share sound. I guess I gotta unmute it. Here we go. I'm sharing it again. Erin, Elyse, are you ready for this?

[They confirm.]

00:18:08	Clip	Clip	Alright. Here we go.
00:18:15	Erin	Guest	<i>[Tiny whimpering sounds.]</i>
00:18:16	John	Host	<i>[Softly.]</i> So cute.
00:18:23	Valerie Moffatt	Editor	It's just a little whimper! I can see Valerie Moffatt is covering her face in over-cuteness. Yep.
00:18:28	John	Host	John, I'd just like to let the record show that the bat did a very big yawn.
00:18:33	Jesse	Host	Yeah. This is a video of a bat yawning and covering its face with its wing.
00:18:39	John	Host	Remember when he yawned and then he put his wings over his face like, "20 more minutes, Mom!"
00:18:59	Elyse	Guest	<i>[Laughs.]</i> I'm just trying to establish, Elyse, whether you find bats to be disgusting or whether you find the idea of having bats around your house to be offensive. There's nothing intrinsic to bats—you have no phobia, you have no revulsion, you have no repulsion? If you had a chance, you'd take that cute, yawning dog-bat and put it in your house, wouldn't you? I would.
00:19:04	John	Host	I mean, yes, if we had the right safety measures in place, yes.
00:19:07	Elyse	Guest	You think that that Malayan Foxbat also has the rabies?
00:19:08	John	Host	He might!
00:19:23	Elyse	Guest	So, let's talk about rabies. Obviously, rabies is no fun to get. It's no fun to have. It happens. How common is it for a human to get rabies from a bat, in Long Beach or in the United States or wherever? It's very rare. It's not very common. I did briefly look at statistics, and as far as rabies deaths, bats I think in the United States are the leading cause.
00:19:35	John	Host	Rabies deaths in the United States, the leading cause is bat transmission.
00:19:40	Elyse	Guest	I believe so, yes.
00:19:42	John	Host	Because of their little claws carrying little bits of rabies?
00:19:44	Elyse	Guest	I guess?
00:19:45	John	Host	Yeah, I don't know. Interesting. I read somewhere that it might be—on the rare side, I read somewhere that it might be two to three deaths a year in the United States.
00:19:55	Jesse	Host	<i>[Elyse "hm"s.]</i>
00:19:58	John	Host	<i>[Laughing.]</i> Elyse says, "Hm."
00:20:07	Jesse	Host	Yeah, Elyse—let the record show, Elyse made the sound a Malayan Foxbat makes when it yawns and then hides its face.
00:20:15	Sound Effect	Transition	Let's take a quick recess and hear about this week's <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> sponsor. We'll be back in just a moment on the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast.
00:20:17	Sound Effect	Transition	Three gavel bangs.
00:20:19	Jesse	Host	Three gavel bangs.
00:20:23	Elyse	Guest	Elyse, what's the basis for your concerns about your neighbors? Well, we're new to the neighborhood, right? And in our previous neighborhood, we didn't really get to make a bunch of friends and buddies with our neighbors. And I was really looking forward to that. And I just think that if they see we're housing a ton of bats, they might think we're creepy people. And number two, there are like little children around. There's a couple little girls that live on the side of us. And also, we're across the street from the elementary school. So, I guess it might be an unrealistic fear, but a lot of it is like what if

I expose my neighbors—especially the children—to potential rabies exposures?

And I know it's so rare, but maybe that's where it's coming from. It's like mostly for the welfare of the children.

00:21:07 John Host
00:21:09 Elyse Guest
00:21:12 John Host

When did you move again? Remind me.
We just moved this week into our new house.
Congratulations.

[Elyse thanks him.]

And what was the problem with your last neighbors that made you have to move? Were you keeping snakes?

00:21:20 Elyse Guest

[Laughs.] No, we were just—we were renting in a nice neighborhood, and we were looking to buy for some time. So, it was just time to buy our own house and move.

00:21:30 John Host

Did you have any difficulties with neighbors that maybe makes you a little bit shy about throwing up a bat box in your backyard or being provocative in any way?

00:21:41 Elyse Guest

I mean, our dogs couldn't be too noisy, and they couldn't really be dogs. I don't know. What do you think, Erin?

00:21:49 Erin Guest

I mean, our neighbors were a little judgy, in our previous neighborhood.

00:21:53 John Host

Tell me what happened. What'd they judge you for?

00:21:55 Erin Guest

I mean, not like outwardly judgy, but like—I don't know, one neighbor was like, "Oh! My dog will come play with your dogs."

And we were like, "Well, our dogs are not that nice to other dogs. Like, you probably don't want your dog playing with our dogs."

And then, she never talked to us again.

00:22:10 Jesse Host

The bat box in the picture has a bat on it. Like a picture of a bat on it. Are there bat boxes available that could pass for bird houses or other non-bat structures?

00:22:22 Erin Guest

Yes. It does not have to look like a Batman bat box.

[They chuckle.]

00:22:29 John Host

I mean, I don't know. I remember those sisters who were fighting over whether to decorate their shed like the Addams Family or not. They might be upset if there were a bat box in your bat backyard that didn't look creepy and weird. But on the other hand—yes, there are lots of styles of bat boxes. They're all kind of—they're all kind of wide and flat. And indeed, there's a whole big article about bat boxes on the Massachusetts State—excuse me—commonwealth website, [Mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov). Look it up. [Mass.gov/guides/bat-houses](https://www.mass.gov/guides/bat-houses). And you can see there a picture—I mean, I'll share it—I'll share you—I'll share my screen again, since I have this unusual power. Jesse, can you see this bat house?

00:23:12 Jesse Host

The bat house depicted on the commonwealth of Massachusetts website looks just like the mailbox on the side of a suburban ranch house.

[John agrees.]

It is a very simple, contemporary-looking structure that no one would look twice at. It could be the—you know, the cover of an air conditioner or something.

00:23:30 John Host Although, I have to say looking at it now—you're absolutely right. It looks very innocuous, but now that I look at it closely, like the Hartford Whalers logo designed by Peter Good—which uses negative space to stealthily include an H for Hartford in the logo—this one uses negative space to inscribe the bat box with two inverted crucifixes.

[Jesse laughs.]

So, it's a little bit scary. But it's not too scary. And indeed, the Lube Bat Conservancy—*[chuckles]* well, this one goes the other way. I was gonna say the Lube Bat Conservancy sells bat boxes with the proceeds going to keep those bats alive down there at the Lube Bat Conservancy, but these absolutely say “bat cave” on them and have a picture of a bat. So, I would shy away from those.

Would it matter—I mean, between these two—show Elyse these photos, if you will, Jesse. And we'll include photos of them, again, in our materials online. Elyse, can you see the picture of the Lube Bat Conservancy bat cave?

00:24:29 Elyse Guest I can see it, yes.
00:24:30 John Host Alright. Now, don't comment on that. Now, look at this one from the commonwealth of Massachusetts.

[Elyse confirms.]

Pretend like you're getting your eyes checked for glasses. Do you like this one a little bit more? Or do you like this one a little bit more? This is B. B or A?

00:24:45 Elyse Guest A.
00:24:46 John Host A. Do you think your neighbors would look at that and think, “Well, there's a bat house.”

00:24:49 Elyse Guest I mean, they definitely wouldn't, but eventually they're gonna see that the bats are going in and out of that box.

00:24:56 John Host Realistically, how many bats do you think can smush their way into that box?

00:24:59 Elyse Guest Maybe four or five?
00:25:00 John Host Yeah, maybe four or five. I agree with you. I don't think much more than that. Erin, is there someplace where you can put the bat box where the neighbors won't see the bats sneaking in and out at night?

00:25:09 Erin Guest Um, I don't think so? *[Laughs.]* Uh, we do have neighbors on like two sides, and then the alley on the other side. So, I think that they're gonna see it.

00:25:23 John Host What do you think is really going on, Erin, with Elyse's concern here? Is there something she's not talking about?

00:25:28 Erin Guest I mean, I think her main concern is not wanting to be seen as weird and—I mean, I get the like overly conservative, in my opinion, view of not wanting to like hurt people with bats. But I do think they do enough good to like counteract. You know? We're trying to get the mosquitos—make it so everyone can enjoy their yards.

00:25:58 Jesse Host Elyse, do you think that the risk of rabies is greater than the risk of mosquito borne diseases?

00:26:05	Elyse	Guest	No.
00:26:06	Jesse	Host	So, this is about perception for you?
00:26:08	Elyse	Guest	Probably mostly, yes.
00:26:10	John	Host	Yeah, I was gonna ask. You know, Erin, I know that you love Elyse. You're married to her. So, I'm not gonna ask you to speak ill of her. I'm just gonna ask Elyse directly. Elyse, is this rabies thing a real concern or is this just bad faith bat guano that you're trying to push on me to get me to rule in your favor? Remember, you're under fake oath.
00:26:32	Elyse	Guest	It's a real concern. And you know, I do consider myself a worrier. So, I might worry about this more than even the average doctor.
00:26:42	John	Host	I feel you there. Elyse, you talk about rabies being a concern when it comes to your neighbors. What about you and your partner? Are you rabies-proof or are you also concerned that that might sneak into your house?
00:26:56	Elyse	Guest	I mean, I do worry about if there is a sick or injured bat, I just worry about the dogs getting to it and bringing that into the house. In a strange way, I'd worry about like Erin being exposed to the rabies. Just because I am, by virtue, a worrier. But if it happened to me, I'd—you know, I'd know what to do. I'd just have to go to the Department of Public Health, get my rabies shot. It's easier for me to—like it happen to me than to happen to Erin or small children, if that makes sense.
00:27:26	Jesse	Host	Have either of you had bad experiences with neighbors in the past?
00:27:30	Erin	Guest	Not really.
00:27:31	Elyse	Guest	No. Except for the like judgy like not talking to us neighbors. I mean, they weren't friendly, but they weren't like hostile.
00:27:38	John	Host	Elyse, given your concerns about the neighbors thinking you two to be odd or weird or whatever, have you taken any steps to connect with them? To get to know them?
00:27:49	Elyse	Guest	Uh, yeah! As we've been moving in, we've been running into our neighbors who are walking their dogs and whatnot. And some of them introduce themselves to us. Sometimes we reach out first and introduce ourselves. And it's been great! We've been talking to neighbors.
00:28:04	Jesse	Host	Playing any block parties or anything?
00:28:06	Elyse	Guest	No. We're having like a housewarming potluck, so maybe I'll invite my neighbors over and see if they wanna bring something and hang out with us.
00:28:13	John	Host	And have you noticed—have they reacted in any way to the fact that when you walk your dogs, you wear a beard of bees?
00:28:21	Elyse	Guest	<i>[They laugh.]</i>
00:28:23	John	Host	<i>[Laughing.]</i> You know, I have noticed.
00:28:25	Elyse	Guest	They seem okay with it, or—?
00:28:27	Jesse	Host	Eh? They're okay, yeah.
			In my experience, as chronicled on this very show, the best way to connect with your neighbors is to bring over a five foot long, octagonal iron pole to help get a rock out of the ground.
			<i>[They chuckle.]</i>
00:28:38	John	Host	Erin, I am now gonna turn to you and risk having you to have to say something hard, perhaps, about your wonderful wife, Elyse. You can tell me. Is this bull guano or not, this thing about the rabies? Do you think this is really a concern or is it just a something?

00:28:51 Erin Guest So, I think it's a real concern, but I think over the course of the case—reading up on like the rates of rabies and the rates of mosquito borne illnesses, I think that—you know. Elyse is a logical person. She's coming to realize that like maybe the risk of rabies is not as high as she had originally assumed it to be with the bats.

00:29:12 John Host So, you're saying the bats would be a net positive?

00:29:14 Erin Guest In my opinion, yeah!

00:29:15 John Host Alright, but may I be an advocate for Elyse here, for a moment?

[Erin agrees.]

Let's say that your neighbors' precious children get a case of West Nile virus. What happens when a kid gets West Nile? Is that bad, Elyse?

00:29:30 Elyse Guest So, it can be like nothing happens. Sometimes you can have sort of like a flu-like illness. Very rarely, it can be a like serious illness where people have ended up in the hospital. But usually it's like flu-like symptoms, rash, body aches, maybe some fevers.

00:29:49 John Host Alright. Well, let's just say that it's a medium to bad case of West Nile in your next door neighbors. Elyse isn't gonna be up all night going, "Oh, I wish I hadn't built that mosquito house."

[They chuckle.]

Alternately—I mean, I presume you have no standing water or bogs around your house that you're maintaining for the purpose of raising and attracting mosquitos, right?

00:30:10 Elyse Guest No, we don't.

00:30:12 John Host But on the other hand, if one of these children gets rabies from a bat and you got a bat house in your bat backyard?! Elyse, how would you feel then?

00:30:25 Elyse Guest I couldn't live with myself.

00:30:27 John Host You know what the bat Hippocratic oath is. "First do no harm with bats."

[They chuckle.]

You'd be violating your oath.

00:30:35 Elyse Guest That's absolutely correct.

00:30:36 John Host Hm. Erin, have you tried any other mosquito abatement techniques? Does permaculture offer any other solutions?

00:30:43 Erin Guest I mean, I don't think we've tried any other permaculture solutions. We tried like citronella candles. We tried—

00:30:50 John Host Yeah. Those don't work.

00:30:53 Erin Guest Like those bug zapper things with like a racket, where you like—you get bit a few times and you're like, "Okay, gotta go get the racket." So, you go and you get the racket, and then you get the mosquito, but you already have a couple bites.

00:31:03 Jesse Host Those things are amazing though, right?!

[John laughs.]

00:31:04 Erin Guest They do work really well, but they only work after you've gotten bit a few times, which I think is frustrating.

00:31:09 Jesse Host But it's bananas—like, when you connect with a bug and it like makes an outrageous cracking sound because you just

electrocuted it to death?! And you're like, "Yeah! Humans are the kind of animals!" *[Laughs.]*

00:31:21 Erin Guest Yeah. We get it, especially if we get a mosquito in the house. I like watch the mosquito and then I tell Elyse to go get the racket, and then we like *[chuckling]*, if we get it—yeah. It's good.

00:31:30 Jesse Host My kids know to be scared of me when I have the racket in my hand.

[They laugh.]

00:31:36 John Host Yeah. And there are also bug lights that you can put out, but those are very grim, too. They just sit out there and hum, and bugs run into them and go bzzt, bzzt, bzzt. It's like—not permaculture, it's perma-racket. And it makes a racket.

00:31:48 Erin Guest Yeah. And there's bug spray, like Deet and stuff. But I mean, are we gonna like feel bad when we all get like cancer from putting Deet on every day? Like I don't know.

00:31:57 John Host It doesn't sound like a permaculture solution to me. And I've—based on what I've learned about it in my long study of permaculture.

00:32:03 Jesse Host Temp-a-culture at best.

00:32:04 John Host Yeah. And then, of course, may I ask: there is a machine powered by propane that runs all day long and all night long and silently emits a—I think a kind of pheromone that attracts the bugs, and the bugs go into a bag. That's can't be a permaculture solution. A propane tank running all day long and night?

00:32:24 Elyse Guest Yeah. Doesn't sound like it.

00:32:25 John Host Works really good for our neighbors in Maine, though. I'll tell you what. Elyse, if I order you to put a bat pole in your backyard with a bat box, how are you gonna feel at night, as you're sleeping thinking about bats?

00:32:40 Elyse Guest I'll probably worry excessively about a bat getting into my neighbor's home. And honestly? I'd worry for the welfare of the bats too, because I support like the conservation efforts and them controlling the mosquitos, but you have to do bat boxes right. You have to make sure that they don't overheat and hurt the bats. If a bat goes into somebody's house and they capture them for rabies testing, that's basically sentencing the bat to death. You know. These are things I think about too.

00:33:12 John Host You raise an important point, which is that bat boxes can be dangerous for bats, particularly in hot places—southern parts of the United States, including Long Beach. They are not supposed to be stained dark. They're supposed to be stained blonde so that they do not absorb too much heat. In the north—Massachusetts and above, in the region we call the southern maritime provinces of Canada, AKA New England. By the way, it's Newfoundland. No, it's New Found Land.

00:33:43 Valerie Editor Newfoundland. (New-find-land.)

00:33:44 John Host New-find-land. Okay, I got it finally, everybody. I apologize. Say it again, Valerie.

00:33:51 Valerie Editor Newfoundland.

00:33:52 John Host I apologize to the people of New-find—New Found—n—

00:33:55 Jesse Host Newfoundland.

00:33:56 John Host Newfoundland. New Found Land. Anyway, up there you can have a—you can have a dark color bat box, 'cause you wanna absorb the sunlight, give that bat someplace cozy to smush.

00:34:12 Elyse Guest It seems like, Elyse, maybe you've done a little bit more research
00:34:16 John Host into bat boxes than Erin has.
She's shaking her head no. She's done a lot of research!
Erin has.

[Elyse confirms.]

00:34:25 Elyse Guest Okay. Erin's not one to leap into bat box type schemes lightly, is
00:34:26 John Host she?
00:34:29 Elyse Guest No, she's all in.
And yet, you don't trust her that this is gonna be okay.
Oh, that's a hard question. Because I do trust her, but obviously
with all my concerns—yeah, there is a lack of trust there.

00:34:37 John Host Erin, is Elyse a worrier?
00:34:39 Erin Guest Elyse is a worrier, and I do have a tendency to have a lot of ideas,
and not all of them are good ideas. But this one is a good idea.
Please give me an example of a verified bad idea.

00:34:47 John Host I can't remember any bad ideas, actually.
00:34:51 Erin Guest I feel like in Elyse's eyes right now is this look that says, "Which of
00:34:53 Jesse Host the many bad ideas should I pick?"

[They laugh.]

00:34:59 John Host Yeah, I was gonna say I bet Elyse can remember.
00:35:04 Erin Guest *[Laughs.]* I'm trying to think of a specific example. I can't right now,
but when it comes to me, I'll let you know.

00:35:08 John Host Okay.
00:35:09 Erin Guest I mean, we almost bought a house that was—needed a lot of—a lot
of work. And of course, I was like, "We can do it! It's fine!"

00:35:20 Elyse Guest And Elyse was like, "This thing is falling apart under our feet."
00:35:21 John Host That's a good example, yeah.
00:35:25 Erin Guest But I bet it had a lot more yard room for bat boxes.
It did. It did. But I think in the end, we did end up in a better house,
in a better place. So. Good thing that Elyse had some concerns.

00:35:35 John Host Are there any other compromises with regard to this move that I
should take into consideration that a bat box might make amends
for? Like, anything you had to give up, Erin? Like oh, garden space
or I don't know, a den to keep your jellyfish tank in? Or anything that
someone does? Like do you think Elyse owes you one? Be honest.

00:36:00 Erin Guest I mean, our guest room no longer has room for my desk. So, I work
from home. So, our guest room was previously my office, and now
the laundry room is my office. Which is a slight downgrade, I have
to say. But that's okay.

00:36:16 John Host Elyse, does Erin owe you one in any regard with regard to this
move? Any unresolved, unpaid debts that getting rid of a bat box
might make up for?

00:36:26 Elyse Guest I don't think so. She's been amazing. She doesn't owe me anything.
00:36:29 John Host You can tell I'm trying to stoke some real conflict here, because you
both clearly care about each other and are probably willing to
accept the verdict either way.

[They confirm.]

And yet, you still—you know, like I respect the desire to save the
bats and I certainly respect the desire to kill the mosquitos. They
don't do anything good. Bats do good. You know that, right? Bat do

good in this world. They don't just go around getting in people's hairs and giving them rabies. They eat the bugs. They help in pollination. And they're cute and fuzzy, and they yawn and take little naps. Bats are good animals. That said, if you're gonna be haunted by this rabies, I don't know what to do. I'm gonna have to go smush myself up into my little judge box and consider my decision. I'll be back in the moment once the sun sets.

00:37:19 Jesse Host

Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom.

[The squeak of chairs followed by heavy footsteps and a door closing.]

00:37:30 Elyse Guest

Elyse, how are you feeling about your chances in this case? Uuum, I don't know! I think he can rule Erin's way, so I'm a little worried about it. We'll see.

00:37:37 Jesse Host

Have you thought about just leaning into being a weird bat lady?

00:37:40 Elyse Guest

I mean, sometimes, yeah! I think I might have to.

00:37:43 Jesse Host

Like, my aunt Gale is totally a weird husky lady. But you know, we had some litigants on the show one time who had a husky. And I said, "Oh, if you ever want another one, you should get it from my aunt." Turned out, they got the first one from my aunt!

00:37:56 Elyse Guest

[Chuckles.] Well, you know, I can lean into being weird with Erin. As long as it's with Erin, it's good.

00:38:01 Jesse Host

Erin, how are you feeling about your chances in the case?

00:38:04 Erin Guest

You know, I'm not sure. I feel like on one hand, like I really think that we resolved the rabies section of it, but the being thought of as the weird people, that might still happen. I mean, I personally don't care, but I know that Elyse cares.

00:38:21 Jesse Host

I'm glad that we did resolve that rabies canard. And that has led me to wonder whether ducks carry rabies.

[They chuckle.]

We'll find out what Judge John Hodgman has to say about this case when we come back in just a second.

00:38:32 Sound Effect Transition

Three gavel bangs.

00:38:34 Sound Effect Transition

Three gavel bangs.

00:38:36 Jesse Host

Judge Hodgman, as many of our listeners listen to this program, we will be on tour. And I'm excited to see everybody. We still have shows left, as of the release of this episode, at the Gothic Theater in Denver, at the Sydney Goldstein Theater in San Francisco, and in Los Angeles—although the Los Angeles show, currently sold out. The only way you can get in is if you have a dispute that we hear onstage.

00:39:02 John Host

Yeah, and if you do have a dispute for any of these shows, go to MaximumFun.org/ijho. If you wanna grab some of those few remaining tickets for Denver or live in San Francisco, go to the events page at MaximumFun.org or bit.ly/JJHOWEST.

00:39:17 Jesse Host

And no matter where you are, we are streaming live across the world on February 4th. This is the first time we've ever done this, from the stage at SF Sketch Fest. It's gonna be a real knockdown, drag out, blowout program. You can watch it live. If you live somewhere where it's gonna be too late at night for you to stay up, you do get a 48-hour viewing window with your ticket. You're not

gonna be able to watch it anywhere else. And there's lots of stuff in there that you will never get in any other form.

SFSketchFest.com is where you can get your tickets to that live stream. It is gonna be a ton of fun. We're pulling out all the stops for that show. So, please come check it out. Tickets are SFSketchfest.com. No matter where you live in this great world. And of course, if you live in San Francisco and you wanna come to the show in person, SFSketchfest.com is where you get those tickets too. You'll see! Just go check it out. SFSketchfest.com. Bit.ly/JJHOWEST.

00:40:03 John Host

And if you're in San Francisco, I'll be doing *Jordan, Jesse, Go!* with Kevin McDonald of *The Kids in the Hall*, the musician Ladonia—who's one of my all-time faves. It is a killer, spectacular lineup there at Sketch Fest. And we're doing an oops, all gamesies episode. So, it's gonna be all kinds of stupid games.

00:40:37 John Host

I can't wait to get back to Sketch Fest. It's gonna be so much fun.

00:40:40 Jesse Host

I got a rap quiz for Kevin McDonald from *The Kids in the Hall*. He's really gonna get a kick out of that. Okay. If you're in San Francisco, go see that show the night after our *Judge John Hodgman* show. Make it a weekend!

00:40:50 John Host

Make it a long weekend. Make it a weekend that never ends!

I just wanna also mention, by the way—speaking of live shows—I mentioned the Lube Bat Conservancy in Gainesville, Florida. They seem like a very good operation. I only know them virtually, but speaking of Gainesville: our friends David Rees and Jon Kimball, who cohost the *Election Profit-Makers* podcast. You know David, of course, 'cause he's the co-creator of *Dick Town* on Hulu, a very wonderful cartoon for 13 and ups over there on Hulu. Well, he also cohosts a podcast called *Election Profit-Makers* with his old friend from North Carolina, Jon Kimball. It's a looot of fun and they're doing one of their first live events in a forever in Gainesville, Florida. Where else but at Satchel's Pizza? Their number one fan, Satchel at Satchel's Pizza, is hosting them for a live event on March 7th.

If you haven't checked out *Election Profit-Makers*, do check it out. It's a lot of fun. But remember! Live streaming, February 4th.

SFSketchfest.com. Check it out.

00:41:50 Jesse Host

Let's get back to the case.

00:41:52 Sound Effect Transition

Three gavel bangs.

00:41:54 Jesse Host

Please rise as Judge John Hodgman reenters the courtroom and presents his verdict.

[The squeak of chairs followed by heavy footsteps and a door closing.]

00:42:02 John Host

So, first of all, I wanna say bat houses are terrific and so are bats. Just to quote from my home commonwealth for a moment, at Mass.gov/guides/bat-houses. "Bat houses provide a safe environment for bats. They protect your yard from insects, like mosquitos, moths, and beetles. Plus, they give female bats a safe, warm place to raise their young." Did you know that most female bats only have one pup per year? First of all, a baby bat is called a pup. Cute. But they only have one pup per year, so bat populations grow very slowly. At the same time, their habitat is being degraded,

and it's becoming harder for bats to locate natural roost sites. So, installing a bat house, you can provide mothers and pups with a safe home. You might not have known that. But I'll tell you what, [Mass.gov/guides/bat-houses](https://www.mass.gov/guides/bat-houses) did! And they also provide homes for bats that are free of white nose syndrome, which is a bad bat disease, apparently.

Bats are good. Bat houses are good. Yes, bats are *[chuckling]* the leading cause of death among humans who die of rabies. It's true! And that's scary! But going further north in the website geography to [Maine.gov](https://www.maine.gov), I can tell you right now, only about 1 of every 200 bats randomly sampled is positive for the rabies virus. Not a lot of bats got it. Plus, they're fairly easy to spot if they've got rabies. If they're active during the day—well, you know, any animal that is acting odd, you wanna stay away from it. Like that raccoon I saw on the beach in Maine, that time.

[Jesse laughs.]

That was weird! Middle of the day, a raccoon walking up and down on the beach, giving me bad looks. I stayed away.

00:43:43 Jesse Host

I don't know, maybe he was looking for clams to open with his little thumbs.

00:43:47 John Host

They're not otters, Jesse.

00:43:48 Jesse Host

They're known as the otters of the garbage can.

[They chuckle.]

00:43:54 John Host

If you see a bat during the day or if you see a bat doing something it shouldn't be doing or seems sick or it's on the ground, you wanna stay away from it. And indeed! If you get a bat in your house and it gets you, you wanna check and make sure you don't have rabies. It's not likely that you will, but you wanna check. Yeah, that's true. But you know what? I'm telling you that having a bat box in your backyard in Long Beach is not gonna be a problem. And I'll tell you why. Probably there aren't even a lot of bats around. *[Chuckles.]*

I mean, I haven't been to Long Beach in a while. I don't know what part of it is, and I know there's a lot of wildlife in Southern California that isn't around in Brooklyn, New York. I remember, I did a little house show in a house in Laurel Canyon. And as I was waiting to go onstage—that is, to leave the kitchen and go into the living room to do this little house comedy show—there was a big piece of paper magnet-ed onto the refrigerator listing a local wildlife expert's rates for removing various animals from your property—trapping and removing racoons, coyotes, and also snakes, including rattlesnakes. And it was like a menu of services, but with rattlesnakes it just said, "Priced according to size." Fair.

00:45:12 Jesse Host

When you're in Laurel Canyon, you gotta worry about the eagles too.

00:45:15 John Host

Yeah. And maybe up there you've got some bats. I don't know in Long Beach. Neither of you've ever seen one. Jesse, you've lived in LA for a long time. You've never seen a bat. And the fact is, there could be bats there that you don't see, because most of the time bats don't wanna get into your house. It doesn't happen all that often. I can think of two times in the 51 years that I've been a live that a bat has been inside my house: once, when I was a kid in

Brookline, Massachusetts. And then once in Maine, when I was having some dinner with some friends. It flew into the screened porch and someone had to trap it with a colander and throw it away. Not throw it away—release it.

[They chuckle.]

No one got rabies. The likelihood of the worst-case scenario that you are worrying about, Elyse, is very, very small for all of these reasons. And what's more, the positive effects of having a bat house and providing comfort for the bats—if they even bother to ever show up over the next couple of years—is I think a fairly meaningful positive. Especially if it helps control those mosquitos. Your lives will be improved dramatically, and those of your neighbors. And what's even more-more is that I think a bat house properly placed and installed would look pretty innocuous and very few people would look at it and go, "Those are those weird bat people who live there." They wouldn't even know! They wouldn't even know, and you probably would never even see those bats coming and going if two to four bats ever did smush themselves up there. Bat house is a good idea and bats are good pups.

That said, I respect a worrier. Neal Stephenson is an author whom I enjoy quite a bit. Big, long novels of ideas. Jonathan Colton, my very dear friend, once said to me, "You should read this book by Neal Stephenson, *Anathem*. It's a big, long novel about ideas." And I said I am throwing that into the lake. For two reasons. One, it sounds long and boring. Two, my best friend recommended it to me. For some reason, that always bothers me.

[Jesse laughs.]

But I did end up reading some Neal Stephenson years later, and Jonathan was right! Great, great, great writer. Really readable, too—whether it's *Cryptonomicon* or *Reamde*—those are the two ones that I read. But there's one called *Seveneves*. It came out a couple of years ago. And I think about it quite a bit, because I'm a worrier too. And there is a character in this book—and I don't think it spoils anything to say that there's a character in this book who messes up a lot of things for a lot of people. This is a life-or-death situation in space after the moon mysteriously and unexplainedly disintegrates, causing massive havoc on Earth.

That's not a spoiler; it's the first line of the book. The moon just self-destructs, and no one knows why. You never find out. And humanity is trying to survive. And there's one character who keeps messing things up for everyone. And does so because they think that they know best. And what's revealed as the book goes on is that this person is a worrier. This person is a worst-case scenario person and makes a lot of bad choices because this person keeps thinking of the worst-case scenario and trying to avoid it and messes everything up for everybody else. But at the end of the day, when they are deciding basically how to rebuild society, this person makes a case for themselves. And the person says, "I know that I have this problem where I see basically the darkest possible timeline of any scenario. And I know that this causes problems as

00:49:15 John Host

much as it helps. But civilization needs people like me to say these things and to point out what could happen in order to survive.” I think about that a lot. I don’t think it’s easy to live with worry. And if it’s true for you, Elyse—I know that it’s true for me—it’s not easy to put aside worry. Indeed, I have someone in my life who is less of a worrier and pushes me into experiences that I can extrapolate out to their worst possible ends. And I have the experiences, and those worst possible ends don’t happen, and I’m so happy for having had those experiences! Some of them include parenthood, for example. It’s hard to be a worrier. It hurts. And if it’s something that’s interfering with your life, it helps to talk to people about it and work on it, do the best you can. But you know, try to manage it in your life.

That said, it’s something that just happens. It’s just part of who you are! It’s part of who I am. I have intense sympathy for you. And if you are just gonna be up all night, concerned that these bats are gonna bite your neighbors’ kids—well, I respect that. And I think Erin should too. There’s no rule that says you have to have a bat box in your backyard. And if it’s gonna cause you to feel worried to distraction, then that deserves being listened to. I am less sympathetic to the worry that your neighbors are gonna think you’re weirdos. Who cares?! You know? Life is too short, even if you never get rabies from a bat—you know, to worry about what the neighbors think. And there’s no reason that you would even have to ever say a darn thing to your neighbor about that bat box. It’s not their business, and you don’t have to go ask them permission or whatever.

This is one of the rare *Judge John Hodgman* situations where I don’t think anything is benefited from going next door and going *[knocks three times]*, “Do you mind if I put a bat box up here?” People are just gonna get weird about it. None of their business. But in consideration of your worry, I do take real consideration. And I trust that Erin does too. I think that it is fair to take some time with this decision. Take maybe a year or 18 months to settle into your new home, to get to know your neighbors a little bit better, to establish a bond with them, to observe if there are any bats even in the neighborhood, to perfect the bat box plan, to talk to people about this worry and evaluate over time if it is a meaningful one or not. And then and only then, if you change your mind, Elyse, Erin can put in a bat box.

But I’m ordering a bat stay of bat execution of this bat scheme for a year. And then, if Elyse has changed her mind, then I think that it’s—I think you should really push yourself, Elyse. I think you should really push yourself to see if you can be comfortable with this. And if after a year, you still can’t? Then forget it. What you do then, Erin, is go next door. Show the neighbors’ kids pictures of the bat box that you love so much. They’re gonna get so excited about it as a science project, they’ll put it up in their backyard. And if then they get rabies, it’s their own damn problem. And you get rid of the mosquitos. This is the sound of a gavel.

00:52:50 Sound Effect Sound Effect

Bat squeaking sounds.

00:52:53 John Host

Judge John Hodgman rules. That is all.

00:52:55	Jesse	Host	Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom. <i>[The squeak of chairs followed by heavy footsteps and a door closing.]</i>
00:53:04	Erin	Guest	Erin, how do you feel? Uh, I feel pretty good! I mean, I agree with him that I do care not to make Elyse exceedingly worried. And you know, I feel like maybe in a year, we'll be ready for the bat box.
00:53:17	Jesse	Host	Elyse, were you just wiping tears from your eyes.
00:53:20	Elyse	Guest	Yeeeeah. Um, Judge John Hodgman made me unexpectedly emotional with his heartfelt statements about my worry. And I'm really taking his judgement to heart. And I'm gonna put that year in to really consider it with Erin.
00:53:39	John	Host	<i>[The sound of a door opening.]</i> Jesse, I'd just like to express some concern. I just overheard that Elyse was tearing up a little bit and seeing—she's in the studio with you, right? This is a new thing.
00:53:50	Jesse	Host	Yeah, she's right here.
00:53:52	John	Host	Does she seem like she's acting erratically?
00:53:53	Jesse	Host	She's acting differently from how she was acting before, yeah.
00:53:56	John	Host	Yeah. Yeah. I'd be a little concerned. <i>[Chuckles.]</i>
00:53:59	Jesse	Host	I'm looking at the corners of her mouth, just in case. <i>[The door closes.]</i> Guys, I gotta go to the Department of Public Health. I'll be back in a minute. <i>[They chuckle.]</i> Elyse, Erin, thanks for joining us on the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast. <i>[They thank him.]</i>
00:54:13	Sound Effect	Transition	Three gavel bangs.
00:54:15	Jesse	Host	Another <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> case is in the books. In a moment, we will have some Swift Justice. Our thanks to redditor Dr. Colossus of Roads for naming this week's episode "Acting in Bat Faith". Dr. Colossus of Roads, a real veteran over there at the Maximum Fun reddit. It's one of those names you notice.
00:54:33	John	Host	A great handle.
00:54:34	Jesse	Host	If you wanna join the reddit, MaximumFun.Reddit.com . Very pleasant and welcoming place. We'll ask for title suggestions there, too. So, keep an eye out for those. Evidence and photos from the show are on our Instagram account. That's Instagram.com/judgejohnhodgman . You can see that great picture of the dog that looks like the bat. She's holding the phone with a picture of a bat, and then the dog is behind the phone looking exactly like the bat in the picture!
00:55:01	John	Host	Yep! And of course, we'll also at least link to the Lubee Bat Conservancy Instagram account—that video of that beautiful, beautiful bat getting ready to take a nap.
00:55:13	Jesse	Host	Oh, so bashful.

00:55:15	John	Host	Oh, and you know what the name of that bat is? I just—I'm sorry I missed this. Hee-Hee.
			<i>[Jesse "aw"s delightedly.]</i>
00:55:27	Jesse	Host	H-E-E hyphen H-E-E. The Malayan Flying Fox, Hee-Hee. Pretty good.
			<i>[Still chuckling.] Judge John—Judge John Hodgman was created by Jesse Thorn and John Hodgman. Our producer is Valerie Moffatt, filling in for Jennifer Marmor who's out on maternity leave.</i>
			<i>[John cheers.]</i>
			We hope that you will join us in wishing Jennifer and Shane and their whole family all the best. We're certainly thinking of you, Jen. We love you. And good luck.
			Now, Swift Justice, where we answer your small disputes with a quick judgment. Valerie says, "I like to use whatever handy spray cleaner is nearby to kill kitchen ants. My husband prefers to wrap duct tape around his hand and pick them up that way. Who has the better technique?"
00:56:04	John	Host	This isn't Valerie Moffatt, our editor, who wrote in? Is this you, Val?
00:56:07	Valerie	Editor	I would never have a husband.
			<i>[They laugh.]</i>
00:56:09	John	Host	Okay. Certainly, a good idea. Don't have this husband, at the very least. That's grim. I feel like you may have accidentally married a cenobite who finds the pleasure in pain.
			<i>[Jesse laughs.]</i>
			This is weird. Sorry, Valerie's husband. Ummm. You do what you—look. I'm no fan of ants in the house. I have nothing against ants in the world. Sometimes you gotta get rid of the ants. Sometimes you gotta do something about the bugs. I don't—you can do the duct tape if you want, but um, I would not say that's the better technique. If only because you gotta take some time to put that duct tape around your hand and cut it off. You know, it's hard to cut duct tape and everything. It's just a—
00:56:49	Jesse	Host	You're gonna get gunk on your floor.
00:56:50	John	Host	Yeah. Look, I'm all for whatever your kink is, Valerie's husband. But Valerie's—the question is what is a better technique, Valerie's is. I'm getting some incredible emails at MaximumFun.org/jjho about ancient grudges—childhood grudges, old elementary school grudges.
00:57:08	Jesse	Host	Oh yeah! I love that.
00:57:12	John	Host	I read one today. I don't want to spoil anything, 'cause this one's definitely going in the grudge pile, but it involves when someone was young listening in to a dinner party downstairs and his cousin claiming that he tripped over him at the top of the stairs, and that's why he fell down the stairs. Whereas the other person is like no, you kicked me, dude.
			<i>[Jesse laughs.]</i>

You said—you said, “Hello,” and then you kicked me.

If you have a grudge that you have yet to settle, you don’t have to produce your grudge partner. This is just someone that you want to air your grudge about on our podcast—and I will probably rule in your favor if you tell the story well enough. This could be someone from childhood, an extended family member, as I mentioned, an elementary school nemesis, a playground bully, just someone who rubbed you the wrong way in college or your first year out of school or whatever it is, let us know. MaximumFun.org/ijho is where you are to send all of your disputes. And it doesn’t matter if it’s not a grudgy dispute. If it’s just a regular old “my life partner does things the wrong way” dispute, we wanna hear those as well. Don’t we, Jesse?

00:58:25 Jesse Host Submit them! No case too big or too small. We considers ‘em all. Submit your case at MaximumFun.org/ijho. And remember, we’re on tour right now! I think there are probably still a few tickets left in a few places. But there are definitely tickets still left for our livestreaming show from San Francisco Sketch Fest, February 4th. Get those tickets at SFSketchfest.com. That is gonna be a heck of a show, John. I am excited to be going into the living rooms of people all across this great nation and indeed the world.

00:58:55 John Host Yeah, indeed! I mean, we may well sell out our live show at San Francisco Sketch Fest, but there are unlimited tickets available anywhere in the world to those of you who cannot be in the room with us that very night. It’ll be a great time in the room. It’ll be a great time in your room. Go to SFSketchFest.com to get tickets to the livestreaming event of our Sketch Fest show. And of course, go to the events page at MaximumFun.org to get what tickets remain for our remaining shows on tour. That includes the Gothic Theater, tomorrow night, the 2nd of February in Denver, Colorado. As I said, the Sketch Fest show—both live and virtual. SFSketchFest.com.

And then, finally, we’re all sold out at the masonic lodge at the Hollywood Forever Cemetery in Los Angeles. However! We’re finalizing our cases still. If you have a case that you think we should consider to hear live onstage, please let us know at MaximumFun.org/ijho. If you don’t have tickets, we’ll sneak you in the side door so that you can argue about stuff onstage with us.

01:00:02 Jesse Host We’ll talk to you next time on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

01:00:05 Sound Transition Three gavel bangs.

01:00:08 Sound Transition Cheerful ukulele chord.

01:00:09 Speaker 1 Guest MaximumFun.org.

01:00:10 Speaker 2 Guest Comedy and culture.

01:00:12 Speaker 3 Guest Artist owned—

01:00:13 Speaker 4 Guest —audience supported.