

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, "Forge Majeure". Jordan brings the case against his friend Jacob. Jordan and Jacob are both blacksmiths. Jacob has been Jordan's apprentice for the past few years and says it's time he gets a new title—like "journeyman". Jordan says Jacob is still learning and needs more experience first. 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>
00:00:38	John Hodgman	Host	I've never seen a steel butt forge weld like that in a single hit. And it wasn't hot enough. And if you ever put wood next to something that hot, it would disintegrate. But you don't hold it to such a high accountability, 'cause it's not real. It's a tree dude giving his arm for a handle. I mean, you can't take it too seriously.
00:00:58	Jesse	Host	Bailiff Jesse Thorn, please swear them in. Jordan and Jacob.
			<i>[Chairs squeak.]</i>
			Please rise and raise your right hands. 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 he hasn't leveled up to the point where he can make elven or orcish armor?
			<i>[They confirm and chuckle.]</i>
			Judge Hodgman, you may proceed. I can also make chitin armor.
			<i>[They laugh.]</i>
00:01:26	John	Host	I think it's some kind of bug—bug metal.
00:01:29	Jesse	Host	Yeah, chitinous armor. Chitinous armor. Right.
00:01:30	John	Host	It's a bug armor.
00:01:32	Jesse	Host	For bugs.
00:01:35	John	Host	Stalhrim armor is another kind I can make.
			For what's 'em called, from <i>The Dark Crystal</i> , the Garthrim. You might say they had chitinous armor. But they were just bugs! But it's not fair, Jesse. <i>[Chuckles.]</i> Why would you put orcish armor and elvish armor on the same level? I mean—
00:01:47	Jesse	Host	Well, you have to level up. This is <i>Skyrim</i> talk, John. Gather some lavender and call me back.
00:01:53	John	Host	But I have a feeling that both the master and the apprentice blacksmith in this case are gonna back me up that there's no comparison between elvish and orcish armor. But before we talk to them about that—and maybe only that for the next hour or so—

Jordan and Jacob, you may be seated for immediate summary judgement in one of yours favors.

[Chairs squeak.]

Can either of you name the piece of culture that I referenced as I entered this fake courtroom? Uh, Jacob, why don't you guess first? You're the apprentice? What do you got?

00:02:21 Jacob Guest
00:02:23 John Host
00:02:28 Jacob Guest

It come off a Marvel movie; I could tell you that for sure.
Oooh! I feel like we're talking to someone maybe in Gainesville, Florida.
Eh, maybe.

[They chuckle.]

00:02:33 John Host
It definitely come off a Marvel movie, though.
It does reference a Marvel movie. And I'm gonna go ahead and put your guess in as "it come off a Marvel movie, though". Alright?

[Jordan laughs.]

00:02:42 Jacob Guest
00:02:45 John Host
00:02:48 Jordan Guest
00:02:53 John Host

Yeah. That's fine! I'm really curious if he knows.
Yeah, Jordan. You wanna get a little bit more—a little bit more specific?
Oh man. Well, I was hoping it was gonna be a *Conan* reference.
But, uh—
Conan the Barbarian.

[Jordan confirms.]

'Cause that movie opens with the forging of a sword. Correct?

[Jordan confirms.]

And how do you feel about that scene's voracity? As a master blacksmith, how do you feel about *Conan* pouring that molten steel into a mold and then dipping it in snow. Is that how you make a sword?

00:03:12 Jordan Guest
00:03:13 John Host
00:03:15 Jordan Guest

No, not at all. No.
What's wrong with it?
Uh, all of it. I mean, that's how you make a bronze sword if you wanna make a bronze sword.

[They laugh.]

00:03:21 Jesse Host
00:03:25 Jordan Guest
00:03:35 John Host
00:03:43 Jordan Guest
00:03:46 John Host
00:03:50 Jordan Guest
00:03:53 John Host
00:03:54 Jordan Guest

[Laughing helplessly.] I mean! If you're making a sword out of bronze!
Come on! No. You gotta smite the steel. That's—you gotta hit it with a hammer. That's how you do it.
If you were gonna mold a sword using steel, would you just do it open-face like that? Like they—or would it be an enclosed mold?
Yeah, no, it'd be flat on top, wouldn't it? It'd be flat on top.
Yeah, it'd be an enclosed mold, 'cause you're gonna be molding it on both sides of the sword.
And it would be cast iron, which is brittle. You know?
And that's not—you don't want that.
If you ever broke a cast iron skillet, the handle sometimes breaks off.

00:03:59 Jesse Host But it's naturally nonstick!
 00:04:01 John Host Yeah, that's true. Once it's seasoned, you can cook an egg on it pretty good.
 00:04:02 Jordan Guest That's a good point. That's a good point.
 00:04:05 John Host I learned a lot about blacksmithing today from today's cultural reference. So far, you haven't made a guess though.
 00:04:11 Jordan Guest I'm sorry, no. Um.
 00:04:13 John Host You wanna guess *Conan*? That's a good guess.
 00:04:15 Jordan Guest Yeah, I think *Conan the Barbarian* said that. That's my guess.
 00:04:19 John Host The truth is, you both win and you both lose. All guesses are wrong.

[They laugh.]

But you both made reference to movies that were being commented upon in a YouTube video that I found this morning called "Blacksmith Rates Nine Forging Scenes from Movie and TV: How Real is It?"

00:04:40 Jacob Guest I know exactly who that come from too.
 00:04:41 John Host Yeah, who is it?
 00:04:43 Jacob Guest Alec Steele.
 00:04:44 John Host No, it isn't actually. But I love your youthful stabs. Appropriate for a knife-maker, taking some youthful stabs, young Jacob. You're not that young; I'm just being silly with you. No, the blacksmith was commenting—and this is for some YouTube channel called Insider. I don't know what it's all about. But this guy was cool. Neil Kamimura.

You familiar with him? Of T. Kamimura Blacksmith from—in Hilo, Hawaii.

[They confirm.]

And commented on—he commented on the blacksmithing scenes in *Conan*, the blacksmithing scenes in *Avengers Endgame*—which is the one that you were thinking of, Jacob—and then a bunch of other movies, including some Mark Walburg movie, and he had this quote that I was gonna give you as a secondhand. "For all his muscles—and I love Mark Walburg—but at the rate he's swinging, it would take him three [censored] days to draw that steel out without any breaks."

[They laugh.]

That's blacksmith humoor!

[Jesse laughs.]

00:05:44 Jesse Host Okay.
 I just learned something cool: that Conan the Barbarian wrote the monorail episode of *The Simpsons*.

[They chuckle.]

00:05:52 John Host So, who comes to seek justice in this fake internet court? Who brings the case.
 00:05:57 Jordan Guest Uh, I do.
 00:05:59 John Host Okay. That would be you, Jordan.

00:06:01 Jordan Guest Yes, Jordan does.

00:06:02 John Host What is the nature of the justice that you seek?

00:06:05 Jordan Guest Well, uh, my apprentice, Jacob, is insisting that—

00:06:09 John Host Boy, you really love saying “my apprentice, Jacob”.

00:06:12 Jordan Guest Well. *[Chuckles.]*

00:06:13 John Host That was a long pause after that one. Just like, “Mm... my apprentice.”

00:06:19 Jordan Guest *[Laughs.]* I mean, I’m a little bit nervous, here. I’m trying to pick my words correctly.

00:06:21 John Host You’re doing a great job. You’re doing a great job.

00:06:25 Jordan Guest Thank you. But yeah, my apprentice, Jacob, does not wanna be called my apprentice anymore. And I think he’s always gonna be my apprentice.

00:06:34 John Host Woah! The student shall never become the master?

00:06:38 Jordan Guest I mean, and to be honest? I’m not a master. I will not call myself a master. It is something that—I’m good. I know what I’m doing. But I don’t know. A lot of times, the folk I see who call themselves master are maybe jumping the gun a little bit. And most of the actual masters I have met, they don’t—they don’t call themselves that.

00:07:04 John Host So, in a trade such as blacksmithing—an ancient trade, you might say, going aall the way back to Hephaestus in the European canon and Ogun in the Yoruba canon, and many, many other ancient legendary blacksmiths. You would—there were basically three titles that emerged out of the western European tradition. If you were an apprentice blacksmith or any other trade similar to this, you would live with a master, learning from them for seven years. And you would work for them in return for room and board and education. And then, if that master said, “Okay, you’re pretty good,” then the guild would admit you as a journeyman.

Jacob, that’s what you would like to be called, right? Journeyman Jake.

[Jacob confirms.]

That’s pretty good. It sounds like a t-shirt to me.

[Jacob agrees.]

And a journeyman would have the rights to work as a blacksmith for money—be hired, essentially, to be—to work as a blacksmith for money, but would not be allowed to take on an apprentice or an employee. And if I get some of this wrong, don’t write me, blacksmith Twitter. Until the journeyman became a master, and that would be applying to the guild and creating a work of mastery—a masterpiece—to be reviewed by the guild and be called a master.

Now, in northern Florida, is there a blacksmithing guild, Jordan, that you belong to?

00:08:30 Jordan Guest There is, actually! Yeah. It’s called the Florida Artists Blacksmith Association. And it is—it is not so stringently organized as the guilds of old. It’s really kind of just a lot of old dudes sitting around, you know, talking and farting and swinging a hammer occasionally.

00:08:57 John Host *[Laughs.]* Yeah, I was gonna say, I think there’s a little bit more to blacksmithing than talking and farting.

00:09:01 Jordan Guest Yeah. *[Laughs.]* There is. There's quite a bit.
00:09:05 Jesse Host Honestly, I don't know that much about physics, but if I were a blacksmith, I would be worried about farting.

00:09:11 John Host *[They chuckle.]*
That's true; that's a good point. That could be an occupational hazard. No, there's talking and farting and drawing and shrinking and bending and upsetting and swaging and punching and forge welding and buttwelding. I looked at Wikipedia today.

00:09:28 Jordan Guest *[They react enthusiastically.]*
But there's no handing out of mastery certificates or anything? Or what?
So, there are some. There is a journeyman certificate you can get through the guild.

00:09:38 John Host *[John affirms.]*
And actually, neither of us have gotten one.
00:09:40 Jordan Guest Oh. You two are rogues.
Yeah. We are a little bit. And a lot of folk in the club are, just because you tend to specialize in things, and some of the skills you have to do to get the certificate of journeyman, they're some skills that you just don't ever use. Because I'm over here making, say, knives or axes. And some of the skills you need to get to journeyman are skills to make double gates for—you know—giant driveways and things.

00:10:12 John Host Right. And you're mostly focusing on swords and knives?
00:10:17 Jordan Guest Yeah. I like to say I make tools, 'cause I do enjoy making anything that's a tool. But—

00:10:25 Jesse Host Anything from a knife to a hammer to a stick that you would use to gather ants to eat.

00:10:36 Jordan Guest *[They laugh.]*
00:10:40 John Host That's—that's a popular one, yeah.
And you sent in some evidence, though. And the evidence is mostly knives. There's one—there's one cool cast iron pan. We'll talk about that in a second.

00:10:50 Jordan Guest *[Jordan agrees with a laugh.]*
00:10:51 John Host What's the name of this club again?
It's the Florida Artists Blacksmith Association.

00:11:09 Jordan Guest The Florida Artists Blacksmith Association. You know, I think there's one skill that you also have to master with that particular club in order to get the journeyman's certificate and the mastery certificate. You know what that skill is? Greasing of palms. You know what I'm talking about?
00:11:10 John Host *[Laughs.]* I wouldn't know.
Yeah, you gotta start making some coins. Start making some coins, some money, putting it into be-gloved hands. You know what I—

00:11:17 Jesse Host Jimmy Hoffa III running the guild.
00:11:19 John Host That's right. Jesse Thorn, do you know what I learned while watching that video about how movies get blacksmithing wrong all the time?

00:11:25	Jesse	Host	What did you learn?
00:11:27	John	Host	Well, first of all, you would never wear a glove on your hammer hand. Why, Jordan? Well, you know what, Jordan? Let's see what the kid knows. Journeyman Jake.
00:11:36	Jacob	Guest	Yes, sir.
00:11:37	John	Host	Why is it wrong for Mark Walburg to be holding a glove—to be wearing a glove in his hammer hand in the movie where he's making a samurai sword?
00:11:46	Jacob	Guest	There's really no reason to have the glove on. All it does it create a more wear item. You're having to hold the hammer harder to keep it from flying across the room. Um.
00:11:58	John	Host	It's dangerous.
00:11:59	Jacob	Guest	You just end up tiring yourself out. You have to squeeze harder to hold it.
00:12:02	John	Host	And the gloves aren't tight gloves, are they? Those leather gloves, those fireproof gloves are not tight, are they?
00:12:08	Jacob	Guest	No, not at all. They're hard to hold anything.
00:12:11	John	Host	Why are they loose?
00:12:12	Jacob	Guest	So if it catches fire, you can get rid of them quick.
00:12:14	John	Host	Yeah, that's right. That's exactly right.
			<i>[Jacob chuckles.]</i>
00:12:19	Jacob	Guest	He's good, Jordan! You trained him well. You can throw them across the yard and catch something else on fire with them. Yeah.
			<i>[They laugh.]</i>
00:12:24	John	Host	Yeah, Neil Kamimura said, "If that glove gets too hot, it'll cook your hand in an instant. So, you've gotta throw it off your hand right quick."
00:12:30	Jesse	Host	Oh, goodness.
00:12:32	John	Host	I know. It'll cook your hand, he said! This is a fun hobby that you both have.
00:12:37	Jacob	Guest	Sometimes.
00:12:38	John	Host	Jordan and Jacob, is this your career or is this something you do for fun?
00:12:44	Jacob	Guest	Well, I'll let you start.
00:12:46	Jordan	Guest	Alright. Uh, yeah. It is—this is my fulltime profession. It didn't aim to be that way; it just sort of happened. It was my hobby for, you know, almost ten years. And then, the last five years it's been my fulltime gig.
00:12:59	John	Host	And it says here that you—prior to becoming a professional blacksmith, that you held employment at a pizza parlor in Gainesville, right?
00:13:09	Jordan	Guest	In Gainesville, yes.
00:13:10	John	Host	Called Satchel's Pizza?
00:13:12	Jordan	Guest	That's the one!
00:13:13	John	Host	Satchel, the owner of Satchel's Pizza, probably being the most famous listener to <i>Election Profit Makers</i> , David Rees and John Kimble's—
00:13:19	Jordan	Guest	I heard there was something about that! There was a big ol' shindig there not too long ago.
00:13:23	John	Host	That's right, March the 7 th . Okay. So, you gave up—you gave up throwing pies in ovens and you started putting steel in ovens. What drew you to it?

00:13:33	Jordan	Guest	Um. <i>[Sighs.]</i> I needed something to do with my life that was more than just working minimum wage jobs and playing video games. Not that there's anything wrong with, you know, crafting your orc armor and picking lavender, but—
00:13:50	John	Host	Whew. You just described the perfect life for many of our listeners.
00:13:54	Jordan	Guest	<i>[Laughs.]</i> I mean—and there honestly isn't! But for myself, I needed something more. And—I mean, I don't—I read a lot of <i>Conan the Barbarian</i> books as a kid. I played <i>Dungeons & Dragons</i> , and I felt like I had been pretending to do these things for a while. And I thought, yeah, maybe I ought to try to do it for real. And that kind of made me head in that direction. And then, I started seeking out education and taking classes and—
00:14:23	John	Host	And where does one go to get a blacksmithing education in Florida?
00:14:28	Jordan	Guest	<i>[Sighs.]</i> So, in Florida, I'm probably your best bet. Um. Most of— <i>[laughs]</i> I'm sorry! That sounded—
00:14:34	John	Host	No, I love it!
00:14:35	Jordan	Guest	You know. Uh. It's what I do. 90% of what I do is teach classes. And so, there's a few other folks who are great at it. But I am one of the few that kind of zeroes in on that. And that's where, you know, just the bulk of my work is, is in teaching.
00:14:53	John	Host	And I'll go ahead and buzz market it: CrookedPathForge.org is the name of your—is your website describing your work and your classes and everything else. But when you were coming up, before there was you there had to be—there's only two, a master and apprentice. Who was your master?
00:15:11	Jordan	Guest	So, a gentleman by the name of Yaw Owusu Shangofemi. And he's—he actually—you mentioned Ogun; he was part of the Yoruba religion, and he introduced me Ogun. He had a shrine there in his shop, and yeah. He taught me quite a bit of what I know. I apprenticed with him for about a year, going over there on the weekends and when I could after work, and—
00:15:37	John	Host	How did you find him?
00:15:39	Jordan	Guest	Uh, met him at a grocery store. I was working at a grocery store.
00:15:43	Jesse	Host	<i>[John agrees with surprise.]</i> He happened to be carrying an enormous sword.
			<i>[Jordan wheezes with laughter.]</i>
00:15:50	Jordan	Guest	And two gates for a giant driveway.
00:15:54	John	Host	There you go. <i>[Laughs.]</i> It was—it was love at first sight.
00:15:58	Jordan	Guest	And you studied with him for about a year? Not seven years. No. No. And I've picked up learning, of course, since then. There are different craft schools that are around the country where you can take workshops. You know. Week-long, weekend-long, different things like that. And the Florida Blacksmith Association also puts on a conference every year, monthly meetings. And there's mentorships, like informal mentorships all over. And I don't know what you call it when two—I guess collaboration, right? When two people of roughly equal skill teach each other or share knowledge with each other. It's like—I didn't expect to find it. I thought there was gonna be a bunch of miserly dwarves like secreting their knowledge away. And it wasn't that. It was, "Oh, man! You do this too? Come on over. Let's learn from each other. Let's show each other stuff.
00:16:44	John	Host	You're saying it's a generous community.

00:16:46 Jordan Guest It really is, yeah. It really is.
00:16:47 John Host So, like when you've taught someone for a while and they're like, "I think I'm doing well. I think you should call me journeyman," the community goes, *[snottily]* oh, no way! You haven't done enough yet!

00:16:56 Jordan Guest Well. *[Laughs.]*
00:16:58 John Host Get back—get back to the fire! Get back to your bellows, bellows boy!

00:17:04 Jordan Guest Well, I—I don't—I don't know. I mean, when you've—I don't have children. So, I may not understand it all the way. But I know some of you have children. And when they grow up to be adults, maybe they graduate high school, do you call them these are my adults? Or do you still refer to them as this is my child?

00:17:23 John Host I call them my widdle-bitty babies!

[Jordan agrees with a laugh.]

00:17:43 Jordan Host And I refuse to let them leave the house. I tie them to the nest so they might not possibly fly. Oh, I have one question for you, Jordan. Crooked Path Forge. What is the meaning of crooked path to you? So, part of it is it was a crooked path to get to the thing that I was really meant to do, so to speak, being a blacksmith. I worked at Satchel's Pizza. Total coincidence, but I also worked at the Lube Bat Conservancy for a little while.

00:18:02 John Host Wooooow!
00:18:03 Jordan Guest Which you guys referenced. I was there for about five years as a zookeeper. So, I—

00:18:10 John Host So, you were handling those big, old fox bats?
00:18:12 Jordan Guest Yeah. Yeah. I laughed out loud when you mentioned it. I was like no way!

00:18:16 John Host You remember them, Jesse, from our bat house episode a couple weeks back.

00:18:20 Jesse Host Yeah. I mean, it was part of our natural progression towards becoming an all-bat podcast.

00:18:29 John Host *[Laughs.]* On your website, you have—and I'm gonna go ahead and plug something else for you here, Jordan. You have a very provocative link called "The Riddle of Steel". I'll let that go unanswered. It seems to link to your events page. And I believe that by the time this episode comes out, there will still be a chance for people to attend the Last Blade Standing 2 event: a live competition and blade testing event, Saturday March 26th. You'll be there, Jordan?

00:19:03 Jordan Guest So, that one—that was—that's how often I update my website. Uh.
00:19:07 John Host That's from last year?
00:19:08 Jordan Guest That was last year. Yeah. *[Laughs.]*
00:19:11 John Host Alright.
00:19:12 Jordan Guest Soorry.
00:19:13 John Host Here's the thing—no, that's fine.
00:19:14 Jacob Guest You can still watch it on YouTube, though.
00:19:15 Jordan Guest Yeah. Yeah. We were just at the third one, which was this weekend.
00:19:19 John Host Oh, okay. Here's my question. Jacob, maybe you can answer.

[Jacob affirms.]

			What is blade testing and why should—why should anyone get anywhere near a blade testing at an event where there is also free beer?
00:19:32	Jacob	Guest	Why not?
			<i>[John laughs.]</i>
			I mean, that sounds like a great time! Here, let's have a couple drinks and just beat the crap out of this 'til something happens. I mean—
00:19:43	John	Host	<i>[Laughing.]</i> A lot of things could happen, though!
00:19:44	Jacob	Guest	That's right! Yeah! That's the fun!
00:19:48	John	Host	You remember how we were just talking about the story of how your hand could cook in a glove?
00:19:52	Jacob	Guest	Exactly! <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:19:54	Jesse	Host	Jordan, what's the difference between what you do or what you and Jacob do and what the guys in the metal shop across the street from me do when they make—you know. They make a lot of those food holders with sneeze guards for grocery stores. And like, custom stainless steel kitchen things and fences. They make fences sometimes.
00:20:23	Jordan	Guest	They're fabricating. So, they're taking sheets of metal and welding them together, which is sort of a fancy hot glue, essentially. And what I'm doing is taking—you know, sort of raw chunks and pieces of steel and you heat it up in a fire and you hit it with a hammer. The smith in blacksmith, that's implying that you're forging the metal or hitting the metal with a hammer to change its shape. So, you do have coppersmiths and silversmiths and things like that as well. And they would be hitting things with a hammer.
00:20:59	John	Host	And iron and steel was known as black metal, whereas gold and silver were known as white metal.
			<i>[Jordan confirms.]</i>
			And so, you—right. So, that was—that's where the term blacksmith comes from. I told you I read the Wikipedia page.
00:21:12	Jacob	Guest	Did a little research!
			<i>[John confirms.]</i>
00:21:13	Jordan	Guest	You wanna be an apprentice?
00:21:15	John	Host	Well, you're handing it out pretty easily. Sure.
00:21:19	Jordan	Guest	<i>[Laughs.]</i> Hey, it's easy to start.
00:21:20	John	Host	Hey, you've heard all the research I did reading Wikipedia and watching one video. Can I become a journeyman?
			<i>[Jordan laughs.]</i>
00:21:26	Jesse	Host	Wow, I just got a text message. Travis McElroy just moved to Florida!
			<i>[They laugh.]</i>
			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!
00:21:42	Sound Effect	Transition	Three gavel bangs.

00:21:44	Sound Effect	Transition	Three gavel bangs.
00:21:47	John	Host	So, Jacob, let's turn to your crooked path to blacksmithing. How did you come to this craft and how did you and Jordan meet?
00:21:55	Jacob	Guest	Well, uh, I spent a lot of time in the woods growing up and always buying the Walmart knives and the flea market knives and stuff. And they just always broke; never done anything I wanted it to do.
00:22:08	Jesse	Host	Hold on. What did you want them to do?
00:22:10	John	Host	<i>[Chuckling.]</i> I was gonna say, maybe we should let that pass.
00:22:13	Jacob	Guest	<i>[Laughs.]</i> Well, they would never hold the edge that I wanted it to hold. I was very destructive as a kid. You know, always trying to chop down limbs and see how hard I could throw it.
00:22:23	Jesse	Host	Tree limbs.
00:22:25	Jacob	Guest	<i>[Beat.]</i> Uh, sure. If that's what you wanna go with. See how far I could stab it into a tree. You know, just normal kid stuff. And then, could never have one that met my needs, never done what I wanted. So, I had a buddy who said he knew how to do it. Went to his house. We started blacksmithing a knife there out of rebar. Turns out, he didn't know what he was doing. So, we were kind of playing around on YouTube, and just kind of progressed from there. Turns out, it was one of the few things that I'd ever been good at in my life. I was never really good at anything. Sucked in school. Welding was the only thing I was good at.
			So, this kind of just fell into something that I understood. And then, I started playing around with cable Damascus—way too far advanced for what I was doing, but it was fun.
00:23:18	John	Host	What is that?
00:23:19	Jacob	Guest	So, you take steel cable like out of an elevator or something like that, and you pretty much make a knife out of it or—you know, you get it really hot, forge welding temperature, and then you forge weld everything together and shape it into the form of a knife. Turns out, it's way harder than it looks. And I had made one that somehow somewhat stuck together. It had a bunch of mess-ups down the blade—cold shuts and stuff is what we call it, where it just don't fuse. But I was so proud of it. You know?
			So, I went to the Hoggetowne Medieval Fair back in 2018, and that's where I met Jordan, there. He was demonstrating. And he treated it like the macaroni art your kid gives you. You know? Like, "Oh, wow! That looks so good!"
			<i>[John laughs.]</i>
			"Yeah, I'ma put it right here on the fridge." You know? But he gave me his number and I just kept bugging him until he finally let me over at the house to just hold something for like five minutes while he hit it. And then, it was like, "Alright! Get out of here."
00:24:16	John	Host	Uh, Jacob, you sent in some evidence or you both sent in some evidence of the work that you've done. And all these photos of these really cool knives will be available on the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> show page at MaximumFun.org as well as our Instagram account, @JudgeJohnHodgman on Instagram. Jacob, let's turn to your knives first, here. I see two beautiful knives. Tell me about them.
00:24:37	Jacob	Guest	Um, well. The first one there is—you're looking at the big one, right?

00:24:42	John	Host	There's one that's sort of like on a tree, and then there's one that's propped up against what looks like a charred black cow skull.
			<i>[Jacob confirms.]</i>
00:24:53	Jacob	Guest	Okay; I'm getting that right? Yeah, that's a cow skull. So, the one that's propped up against the tree is what's called a Go Mai. It's five layers of steel. You have mono-steel, 15 and 20, then 80CRV2. And some desert iron wood handles with copper pins.
00:25:09	John	Host	Looks beautiful!
00:25:10	Jesse	Host	I was gonna say all that except I thought maybe it was 75CRV2
00:25:15	Jacob	Guest	A common mistake.
00:25:16	Jordan	Guest	Yeah, so close. So close.
00:25:18	Jacob	Guest	That one there was a really proud moment in my career that really made me feel like I accomplished something. 'Cause that's one of the first ones I had come out that clean. I mean, everything was spot on, on it.
00:25:31	John	Host	And do you own this knife currently? Or is it in the home or the back of someone else at this time?
00:25:38	Jacob	Guest	Well. <i>[Laughs.]</i> What he done with it when he bought it is on him. But I did sell it, yes.
00:25:45	John	Host	And then, Jordan, you have some knives that you—that you sent some photos of that you have made, here. And these are not on any kind of skull. They're just arrayed on a tree trunk with some artfully placed autumn leaves. Tell me about these knives.
00:26:02	Jordan	Guest	So, that's a kitchen set that I did. And it's—I just—I just loved how they came out. You know? Getting them to kind of match in a way that you can look at it and go, "Oh, that's a set!" They—you know, they belong together.
00:26:18	John	Host	It looks like a chef's knife and a smaller chef's knife and a paring knife and like a big, old cleaver.
00:26:24	Jordan	Guest	Yeah. And— <i>[sighs]</i> at least with what I've been learning and how I'm—the direction I'm going with my work, there's a lot of people who want chef's knives in the Gainesville area. There's a pretty good foodie scene around here—not just pizzas. And cutting a vegetable, especially a hard vegetable like a carrot or a potato, if the blade is too thick, then it will split the potato before it cuts all the way through. Right? And getting that blade thin while still keeping it straight is one of the sort of like little projects I'm working on and the challenges I've given myself is to really zero in on those attributes that really let that blade function well.
00:27:11	John	Host	And I noticed near the handle there is a kind—there are some runes, a kind of maker's mark.
00:27:17	Jordan	Guest	That's exactly it.
00:27:18	John	Host	What do those runes signify? Are those your initials or are they something in some ancient language that I do not know?
00:27:26	Jordan	Guest	<i>[Laughs.]</i> I mean, it's in Anglo-Saxon runes, and it is as close as I could get without being a scholar to saying Crooked Path, you know, in Viking—for lack of a better term.
00:27:39	John	Host	Oh, I gotcha. Okay.
00:27:42	Jordan	Guest	It was also easy when I was first starting to have a maker's mark that was just straight lines. I didn't have to make a fancy stamp. So, the runes really worked out for that.
00:27:52	John	Host	Honestly, Jordan, you don't seem like a fancy stamp kind of guy.
00:27:57	Jordan	Guest	<i>[Laughs.]</i> I'm not.

00:27:58 John Host You're straightforward, straight runes—up and down runes kind of guy.

[Jordan agrees.]

I mean, while we're talking about runes here, you're—both of you—at the Hoggetowne Medieval Fair. I pronounce it that way 'cause it's H-O-G-G-E-T-O-W-N-E Medieval Fair. And I guess this is where you first met, that's you and Jacob together.

[They confirm.]

And Jacob, you went there because when you wanna find a knife maker, you know there's no more wretched hive of scum and villainy than the Hoggetowne Medieval Fair.

00:28:28 Jacob Guest That's where you go.

00:28:29 Jesse Host 100%, Jacob went there to eat one of those giant turkey legs and drink mead, and he happened to find a knife guy there.

00:28:37 Jacob Guest Well, if you want the truth, I was actually planning on going to the trampoline park with the kid. But the wife really wanted to go.

00:28:43 John Host Alright, those are separate things, then. The Hoggetowne Medieval Fair doesn't have a trampoline—a ye olde trampoline-y park?

00:28:48 Jacob Guest Well, you know.

[They chuckle.]

00:28:50 John Host Does the Hoggetowne Medieval Fair attract a lot of blacksmiths and sort of artisans of this kind?

00:28:58 Jacob Guest Um, it's picking up actually. The first couple years, no, there was just really us. I just happened to go there 'cause the wife wanted to go there. And I met him.

00:29:09 John Host And then, a whole new career was started. Is this something you wanna do as your career?

00:29:15 Jacob Guest That is the goal. That is the eventual dream at the end of the tunnel is to leave where I'm working now and just be a bladesmith for my career. I mean, you know. It's something I really enjoy and is good at.

00:29:28 Jesse Host Jacob, you already have a trade, and it's a pretty good job. What do you do now, and why make tree-stabbing swords instead?

00:29:38 Jacob Guest *[Laughs.]* Well, right now I'm a plumber with the Department of Corrections out of Lake Butler, Florida—Reception and Medical Center. So, right now I'm just fixing toilets and sinks and drains.

00:29:54 John Host Yeah, I got to agree with Jesse there. I can't see why making beautiful knives would be more attractive than fixing sinks and—

[Jacob agrees sarcastically.]

Sinks and toilets for the prison industry.

[They chuckle.]

Well, now that I say it that way, I actually support your career change. I think this sounds like a good idea. I think you made some beautiful knives here! I mean, I don't know whether these light up when a goblin is around or not, but they look really cool. Jordan, what's wrong with these knives? Why can't he be a journeyman?

00:30:24 Jordan Guest Look, I'm not here to say that he's not a talented and skilled maker. He 100% is. And you know, I'll be proud the day that he surpasses me. I'll be tickled. 'Cause I'm sure it'll happen. But he's still not gonna not be my apprentice. You know. It—*[sighs]*.
00:30:47 John Host These knives look very sharp to me.

[Jordan confirms.]

To the point that my feeling is that when he surpasses you, you won't even feel it.

[They laugh.]

00:31:00 Jordan Guest That might be the case right now!
00:31:02 John Host Where does he need to improve?
00:31:04 Jordan Guest So, he does need to improve with his grinds.
00:31:10 Jesse Host His ollies, his 360s.

[They laugh.]

00:31:17 Jordan Guest When you're shaping the metal, you can either hit it with a hammer and it moves around like playdoh—you know, it gets soft, and you can move it. But once that process is done and the blade has been heat treated, you can no longer hit it with a hammer. It will—it will break. You can't heat it up anymore. And so, then you have to rely on stock removal. Right? So, a belt sander, a grinder, something like that. And that's where things can get a little more finicky, because a slip, an unsteady hand—once the material's removed, there's no putting it back.

And he's trying to pursue a journeyman's certification through a national guild called The American Bladesmiths Society. So, it's a little tricky to call him an apprentice that's a—or a journeyman that's a knife maker, 'cause people may get confused with this official certification organization. And they have veery stringent guidelines. And he's working towards that. I'm not, by the way. I'm happy where my grind lines are at, and—you know—I like swinging a hammer. I do not enjoy grinding.

00:32:26 John Host You don't need a piece of paper from the ABS to find joy in your life is what you're saying.
00:32:32 Jordan Guest That is basically it.
00:32:33 John Host You don't play their game.

[Jordan confirms.]

00:32:41 Jacob Guest How many more years, Jacob, do you have? You're pursuing this journeyman certificate from the ABS.
I have one year left before I can take the test to become a journeyman.
00:32:46 John Host And when you take it, you intend to pass it—correct?
00:32:48 Jacob Guest That's the goal!
00:32:49 John Host So, it sounds to me like Jordan can't even technically provide you with a journeyman title. Why is it important to you that he stop calling you his apprentice?
00:33:01 Jacob Guest Well, I end up at his shop all the time helping him during his classes and stuff that he does on the weekends. And we used to have an open forge program where people would come in and just pretty much pay for the shop, and then I would supervise the shop for

them. And that's really where the problem lies is—you know, depending on the situation, I don't really mind it. But when I'm at the shop and I'm working at the shop—his shop—and there's people coming in asking questions and you know, he's giving me the supervisor title where—position where I'm watching the shop for him while he's doing whatever he wants to do—when somebody comes up and say, "Hey, man, what about this?"

"Oh, go talk to the apprentice."

00:33:47	John	Host	You know, you kind of get a little wishy-washy on it.
00:33:48	Jacob	Guest	You don't love that.
			Right. Let's say you go to the tattoo shop, right? And you go to get a tattoo and the guy's like, "Oh yeah, go talk to the apprentice. He knows everything." It kind of stirs you off. He's—you know. He's only been there a year, and you're calling him an apprentice? But you know, if he says, "Oh yeah, go talk to—go talk to the shop guy, the—" What's the word I'm looking for there?
00:34:07	John	Host	Shop guy is good.
00:34:08	Jacob	Guest	Yeah, the—yeah. Foreman.

[Jordan laughs.]

00:34:10	John	Host	You know?
00:34:12	Jacob	Guest	The foreman. Right.
			It says that he knows more. He at least has experience and knows what's going on. He's kind of running the shop while the boss is away.
00:34:20	John	Host	How long have you been a supervisor during the open forge sessions and other things like that, would you say?
00:34:25	Jacob	Guest	About a year and a half. Yeah. About a year and a half. I think we were running it for about a year and a half now.
00:34:29	John	Host	And this is—and this is—you're keeping an eye on people. You're not just handing out free beer next to the fire and the knives.
00:34:34	Jacob	Guest	No. I'm—
00:34:35	Jordan	Guest	There's no beer in my shop until the fire is put out.

[John concedes.]

00:34:41	John	Host	There's a lot afterwards, but.
			<i>[Chuckles.]</i> Yeah, I know. I understand. You don't need to tell me what happens after hours at the Hoggetowne Medieval Fair.
00:34:48	Jacob	Guest	On a typical day, Jordan's not in the shop at all for the open forge. I show up with the keys. I open the door. I set up the forge. I set up the shop. People show up. I help them with their projects. They ask me questions; I answer the questions. I guide them to what they're trying to do for the day. And then, I make sure nobody injures themselves and make sure I don't get injured, make sure the shop don't burn down.
00:35:11	John	Host	You feel apprentice is not an appropriate title for the level of skill and responsibility that you have.

[Jacob confirms.]

00:35:18	Jesse	Host	Alright. Would you be happy with "assistant to the regional manager".
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00:35:21 Jacob Guest That—that's great.

[They laugh.]

00:35:25 John Host That's workable.
Speaking of beer in the shop after the fire goes out: Jordan, did you accidentally promote Jacob during a drunken party and then try to walk it back? I don't know why I ask that question; I just had an—

00:35:37 Jordan Guest *[Holding back laughter.]* Why would you even—?

00:35:38 John Host I just had an intuition to ask it.

00:35:40 Jacob Guest That's strange!

00:35:43 Jordan Guest *[Laughs.]* That may—that may have happened. Uh. That may have not.

00:35:47 Jesse Host By the way, your support for *Judge John Hodgman* and the Maximum Fun Drive supports Judge Hodgman's intuition: Valerie.

[They laugh.]

00:35:56 John Host Thank you Valerie for teeing up that important question. Now that you've waited for the translation, will you answer the question, sir?

[Jordan sighs.]

Did you or did you not, at a drunken party, promote Jacob and then try to walk it back? Yes or no, sir?

00:36:09 Jordan Guest I very probably did.

00:36:11 John Host Very probably did. Jacob, do you know what I'm talking about?

00:36:15 Jacob Guest I 100% do.

00:36:16 John Host Can you tell me the story?

00:36:17 Jacob Guest Well, we were at a party. We were actually at a meeting itself. It was a formal meeting for the club at first. And then, after hours—you know, we all sat around, started having beers, having a good time. And—

00:36:33 Jordan Guest This was not a FABA meeting.

00:36:35 Jacob Guest No, no. This was a BBB meeting.

00:36:37 Jordan Guest They might wanna know about that.

[Jacob apologizes.]

00:36:39 Jesse Host That's the Better Business Bureau.

00:36:41 Jacob Guest So, we started a club—Jordan, Chris, and some friends of ours started a club called the Bearded Brotherhood of Blacksmiths.

[John and Jesse titter.]

Yeah, I know, right?

00:36:51 Jordan Guest You don't have to have a beard or be a brother. We have sisters in the club as well.

00:36:55 Jacob Guest The main goal for that club, though, is really to get together and help people. Right? We look out for each other. My shop is your shop. Shop's always open. You have questions, come to me. My knowledge is your knowledge. And we strive to push each other, learn new skills. You know, push yourself. Don't just get in that little comfy spot and stay there. Jordan. But, uh—

00:37:16 John Host Ooh!

[Jesse "wow"s.]

Ooh! Uh, knives are out! It seems to me.

[They laugh.]

00:37:25 Jacob Guest At this meeting we was having for the BBB, we—you know, we did our formal stuff. We sat down to have a project. We completed the project. You know, just—I think we were making sign brackets or something like that. But at the end, you know, we were sitting around a fire having a good time. Everybody started drinking. And out of nowhere, Jordan just got up and wanted to make a speech about how good I'd been doing and my progress and everything. And then, he kind of promoted me. You know? Saying, you know, "I'm sorry for calling you the apprentice all the time. I'm gonna promote you to shop foreman." You know?

And I was like, "Oooh! Is that a promotion like journeyman?!"

He, "Yes," is pretty much what he'd done.

00:38:03 John Host And then, later—when he woke—when he woke—
00:38:05 Jacob Guest Two days later, you know, at the shop when I made a joke—
00:38:06 John Host When he woke up in the middle of Gainesville.

[Jordan laughs and Jacob agrees.]

I don't know enough about Gainesville to make a joke about Gainesville topography.

00:38:15 Valerie Moffatt Producer When he woke up in the dining room at Satchel's Pizza.
00:38:17 John Host When he woke up in the dining room at Satchel's Pizza. Thanks, Valerie.
00:38:20 Jesse Host In a pile of sign brackets.
00:38:25 John Host *[Chuckles.]* He's like, "Woah. Did I—did I accidentally promote Jacob last night? Uuugh, I've gotta—I gotta take that back! Is that what happened?
00:38:34 Jacob Guest Yeah, it's—kind of. Two days later, we were at somewhere and I made a little pun about it. You know? Like, hey! I appreciate that promotion, you know? Looking out for me and everything.

And it was like, "Weeeeell, I may have had a little bit too much to drink.

[John "wow"s.]

00:38:47 Jordan Guest I don't remember it—that part of it.
00:38:50 John Host Wooow, Jordan. Wow.
00:38:52 Jesse Host In the words of Judge John Hodgman, wow.
00:38:55 John Host Wow!

[Jacob laughs.]

00:39:04 Jordan Guest Jordan, what does the term apprentice mean to you? And why should Jacob not feel so bad about being one?
So, *[sighs]*—how do—I mean, it's hard to—it's hard to articulate it. And it's a—I take it very seriously. Partially because I was an apprentice to somebody, and it's a point of pride that I apprenticed under Yaw. And you know, it's in my—you know, it's in a bio if I write up a bio. It's on the website. It's something that, especially because blacksmiths have been so generous in sharing their

knowledge with me, I wanna be really open with who I learn from. And I want that sort of chain of knowledge to remain unbroken as well. Because it really is. Yaw himself was apprentice to a man named Philip Simmons. And Philip Simmons' grandfather, who was also a blacksmith, was born a slave. And the tradition went far back after that.

And so, there's knowledge there that came from a piece of history in the past, and I don't wanna be the one to let that chain break. Yeah. Blacksmiths make chains. They don't break them.

00:40:19 John Host

[Jordan agrees.]

00:40:27 Jordan Guest
00:40:31 John Host

Do you still call yourself an apprentice to Yaw?
[Sighs.] That's—that's the sticking point. Right? 'Cause I wouldn't. Sticking point is another thing that blacksmith's make. This is very good.

[They laugh.]

00:40:38 Jordan Guest
00:40:46 John Host
00:40:51 Jordan Guest

Everything's literally on point.
Right? But if we went to a party and he said, you know, "This was my apprentice. This is my—" You know, this—
If he said, "This is my apprentice," how would you feel?
[Sighs.] I wouldn't correct him.

[John "mm-hm"s.]

00:41:07 John Host
00:41:15 Jordan Guest
00:41:17 John Host
00:41:20 Jordan Guest
00:41:24 Jesse Host
00:41:25 Jordan Guest

But I'm not actively working with him or under him anymore. So, it would—I suppose—technically be wrong. But if he said, "This guy apprenticed under me," that would be fine. I would be proud, in fact. Do you understand why Jacob feels that it might be—it feels a little demeaning when you say, "Go talk to apprentice about that."
I try not to use that tone. *[Laughs.]* But—
No, you seem like a very nice person.
[Laughs.] But yeah, I totally understand. I totally understand. Yeah.
And yet.
Well, you know, I had to go through it. Not that that's a great excuse, but...

00:41:31 John Host
00:41:39 Jordan Guest
00:41:41 John Host
00:41:45 Jordan Guest
00:41:48 John Host
00:41:49 Jesse Host

Let me just get the timeline perfectly straight. How long—how long would you say you apprenticed with your teacher, Yaw?
So, I worked with him for—
No, no, no. Say it. I apprenticed with him. Mm-hm.
I apprenticed with him for a year.
One year!
And that was weekends and sometimes when you could go after work?

00:41:53 Jordan Guest
00:41:55 John Host

Correct. Yeah, it wasn't that much.
And we're talking—we're talking about a standard Florida year, right?

[Jordan confirms with a laugh.]

00:42:02 Jordan Guest

Okay.
He moved out of state, so it—you know. It would've been longer, but.

00:42:07 John Host And did you apprentice with anyone else after him?
00:42:10 Jordan Guest No.
00:42:11 John Host And how long has Jacob been apprenticing with you? Remind me.
00:42:16 Jordan Guest *[Beat.]* Well, it would've been shortly after the fair of 2018.
00:42:21 John Host Right. And based on standard Florida years—19, 20, 21, 22. We're in the fifth year.
00:42:32 Jordan Guest Is that right? Wow.
00:42:33 John Host Time passes even in Florida. Hmm. Interesting. Jacob, how do you feel? Does it feel like Jordan's trying to keep you down?
00:42:41 Jacob Guest In some cases, yes. In some cases, yeah.
00:42:44 Jordan Guest Aw, buddy.
00:42:45 Jacob Guest He's trying to downgrade me a little bit in the shop is what it feels like. A little.
00:42:50 John Host Do you think that he actually is? Do you think that he actually is or it just feels that way?
00:42:51 Jacob Guest Well, hold—hold on. Downgrade wasn't the right word. I'm sorry, there. Downgrade definitely wasn't the right word.
00:42:57 John Host If you could find some word that I could make a blacksmithing joke around, I'd really appreciate it.

[They laugh.]
00:43:04 Jordan Guest I'm trying to upset him?
00:43:06 John Host Yeah. It's upsetting, right? 'Cause upsetting is a blacksmith term? Right?
00:43:10 Jesse Host I think we all knew that.
00:43:12 John Host You know what he's doing? He's punching down. *[Uncertainly.]* Another blacksmith term?
00:43:16 Jesse Host Probably.
00:43:17 Jacob Guest It definitely stokes the fire every time he says that.
00:43:22 Jesse Host Thank you, Jacob. A cutting remark, to be frank.
00:43:27 John Host Jacob just punched it up.

[Jacob laughs.]

Sorry. You're trying to express your feelings and Jesse and I are just making jokes. I apologize. Go ahead.

[Jordan laughs.]

00:43:39 Jacob Guest We—I promise, we'll be quiet.
He does have a couple other people that do apprentice under him a little bit. Not as full-time as I am; they just show up kind of every once in a while. Typically, when I'm just not available, they'll come over and help him and stuff. And you know. When we're all in the shop together and he just says, "Go talk to the apprentice," and he points at me, it's kind of putting me in the same category as the other ones. And that's where I have the problem is I'm—I don't wanna sound cocky when I say I'm better than them, but you know, I have a little bit more knowledge than them and everything. You know? And when it's around them people, I would like to be not put on that level.

[John affirms.]
00:44:17 Jesse Host Jacob, are you ready to strike out on your own?
00:44:20 Jacob Guest I feel like it. Just ready to leave the nest.
00:44:23 Jesse Host So, what's holding you back?

00:44:25	Jacob	Guest	Um, nothing really, I guess. I just feel guilty for—
00:44:31	Jesse	Host	Abandoning Jordan?
00:44:32	Jordan	Guest	What?! <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:44:33	Jacob	Guest	Yeah, you know.
00:44:34	Jesse	Host	He needs you.
00:44:36	Jacob	Guest	Yeah, who's going to—who's going to help him out, you know? Who's going to be there when—who's going to be there when he's overbooked or—you know. Somebody's gotta help him keep track. I do need a lot of help.
00:44:46	Jordan	Guest	
00:44:47	John	Host	Jordan, how would you feel if Jacob was like, "Uh, enough of this already. I'm gonna go off and hang my own anvil shingle?" Or something blacksmith-y.
00:44:57	Jordan	Guest	I mean, he's, skill-wise, definitely ready for it. And I would not—he's good at what he does.
00:45:05	John	Host	Do you want him out of the shop? You—? Like, what's the culmination of this master and apprentice relationship? That he goes and starts his own shop?
00:45:13	Jordan	Guest	I mean, theoretically, that would be the traditional way to do it. But as a journeyman in the old sense, you would've journeyed somewhere away from the master so you're not taking his work. In the modern world, I don't think that matters as much. A lot of this is on the internet, and physical meat-space is not as big of an issue. I would miss him in my shop, just 'cause we're friends and—you know, I think of him as a brother. And I think we would still work together. I would hope we'd still work together, collaborate on things. I would have to find somebody new to take his place, and that would be very hard to do.
			And I—there was a time where I thought I could maybe have him as a fulltime, like official employee. You know? And it just—when I looked into that on the nuts and bolts side of things, that's a lot more expensive than just paying him an hourly wage that I didn't realize going into that sort of thing. And—
00:46:15	John	Host	Right now, what are you providing, aside from instruction? Materials? Hours in the shop?
00:46:23	Jordan	Guest	So, yeah, he has access to some equipment that he doesn't have at home, particularly a power hammer, which is a mechanical hammer that hits much harder than a person can.
00:46:33	John	Host	That's a +19 elvish hammer, Jesse, that you can <i>[inaudible]</i> .
00:46:36	Jesse	Host	Got it.
00:46:37	John	Host	It was forged by the Noldor in the ancient age. Okay.
00:46:43	Jordan	Guest	So, yeah, there's some equipment. Not materials or anything like that. People can source those pretty easy. There's knowledge, experience.
00:46:51	John	Host	But you're not paying him currently to supervise these open forge sessions?
00:46:55	Jordan	Guest	Uh, no. No.
00:46:56	John	Host	And when you considered hiring him officially, you realized that it might not make sense in your business, that you couldn't afford to pay him officially.
00:47:05	Jordan	Guest	I couldn't afford to. I'd love to, but I couldn't afford to.
00:47:07	John	Host	You'd love to. Couldn't—okay. Got it. You know, eventually, he's gonna be a journeyman, and he's gonna apply to the—what is it? The American Button-down Bureaucratic Blade Association?
00:47:17	Jordan	Guest	You nailed it. Yep.

00:47:18	John	Host	<i>[Chuckling.]</i> And get their—another blacksmith reference, there. Nailed it. Thank you.
00:47:22	Jesse	Host	These guys have a real rod up their rear.
00:47:23	John	Host	Woow! Then you're gonna have to call him a journeyman!
00:47:29	Jordan	Guest	I—you know. He would still be my apprentice. I mean—
00:47:33	John	Host	<i>[Disappointedly.]</i> Oooh, woow. Jordan!
00:47:34	Jordan	Guest	<i>[Makes comically distressed sounds.]</i> I mean—I don't mean it like that! I mean it like—
00:47:38	Jesse	Host	You just mean that you're not an apprentice anymore, but he will be forever?
			<i>[They laugh.]</i>
00:47:43	Jacob	Guest	That's how it feels.
00:47:45	Jordan	Guest	Alright. Maybe I am the jerk. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:47:48	John	Host	No! No one's calling you a jerk! Just trying to get to the bottom of what's going on here so that I can make it a proper ruling.
00:47:55	Jesse	Host	We're trying to learn about your feelings. Where our feelings should be, only jokes reside.
			<i>[They laugh.]</i>
00:48:01	John	Host	We're trying to learn what it's like to be a real human being with an interesting hobby and a friendship where you openly express affection for one another. It's really wonderful for us to see! That's not true; Jesse and I express friendship.
			<i>[Jesse agrees.]</i>
			Express affection for one another all the time. And Valerie, too. Valerie, I have affection for you. I'm expressing it.
00:48:20	Jesse	Host	Let the record reflect that Valerie made a symbol of a heart with her fingers.
00:48:25	John	Host	I appreciate what you do, Valerie. And the point is, what would you have me rule then, Jordan? Is he gonna be an apprentice forever? You gonna keep him down in the mines?
00:48:35	Jordan	Guest	No. No. And when he is officially a journeyman, I'm happy to refer to him as a journeyman. And that won't be a problem. Until then, though—
00:48:47	John	Host	Even if he's still supervising your open forge days or whatever?
00:48:51	Jordan	Guest	Well... I'm open to the judge's ruling on what would be a proper title. How's that? Like—and I'm happy to hear that. Because I think Jacob's right, but I don't have a better answer for the title for him. 'Cause to my mind, we can't quite go with journeyman until he's gone through this process with the ABS. But at the same time, he's right. He's not really an apprentice. He's—he is better than that. He is striking out on his own. He's getting his own gigs. He's—you know. This past Medieval Fair, we went halvesies on our table, and he was—you know—essentially an equal member of the event. And he had his own knives on his side of the table, and I had mine on mine. And he did very well. I think you sold all of your knives?
00:49:52	Jacob	Guest	I sold—I even sold the one I was wearing.
00:49:44	Jordan	Guest	Yeah. So, kind of why we're here! Because I don't know the right word, and we've come to somebody wiser and—you know—judgy-er. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:49:56	John	Host	Well. That's very fine. I know—I know—I know how people get ahead in blacksmithing is by palm greasing and judge flattering. I know what you're trying to do.

00:50:08	Jacob	Guest	Really stoking the fire there.
00:50:09	Jesse	Host	You already did that one, Jacob!
<i>[They laugh.]</i>			
00:50:12	Jacob	Guest	Did I?
<i>[Jesse confirms.]</i>			
00:50:13	John	Host	Jacob, congratulations on selling all your knives at the Medieval Fair.
<i>[Jacob thanks him.]</i>			
			Do you feel that you could've made those knives without access to the materials and workshop that your current master provides you?
00:50:27	Jacob	Guest	Yes. I feel like I could.
00:50:29	John	Host	You could build your own shop and strike out on your own?
00:50:32	Jacob	Guest	Well, I already do have my own shop at the house.
<i>[John affirms.]</i>			
			He's just got some equipment that I can't purchase at the moment. You know? He's got the power hammer and a couple other fancier little jigs that really helps it get done. But I have the primitive needs to get it done at the house.
00:50:50	John	Host	And do you have a title in mind? I mean, you will be a journeyman. You're gonna apply for this, the ABS. You're gonna get it. Then, Jordan's gonna have no choice.
00:50:59	Jacob	Guest	Right. I mean—
00:51:00	John	Host	But what in the meantime?
00:51:01	Jacob	Guest	Really just shop foreman would make me happy, just at the shop when we're working. You know? And people are asking for this or that. You know. "Hey, can you, um—how much would this cost? Or how much would that cost? Or you know, what do you think about making this?" Just go talk to my shop foreman would sound great to me. You know? When there's others in the shop, you know, calling me the apprentice kind of knocks me down when that's really not what I am. I'm there. I feel like the shop foreman.
00:51:30	John	Host	And obviously, you're not asking for a raise, 'cause he doesn't pay you anyway.
00:51:34	Jacob	Guest	Yeah, I don't get paid at all. Every once in a while, I get a slice of pizza. But that's about it.
00:51:39	John	Host	You know he's getting that for free from Satchel's anyway.
00:51:42	Jacob	Guest	Exactly! That's the worst.
<i>[Jordan laughs.]</i>			
00:51:42	Jesse	Host	He made all their sign brackets.
00:51:44	Jacob	Guest	It's not even hot. It's cold pizza.
00:51:46	John	Host	Yeah. It's from last month's—it's last month's pizza. Alright. I think I've heard everything I need to in order to make my decision. I'm gonna go bellows the fire of my thinking machine called my brain, and I'll be back in a moment with my verdict.
00:51:58	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>			

00:52:07	Jordan	Guest	Jordan, how are you feeling about your chances here? Oh, pretty terrible. Yeah.
			<i>[They laugh.]</i>
00:52:22	Jesse	Host	But I'm happy for that. It's—we're gonna get an answer we needed a solution to. And this is a good way to do it. <i>[Playfully.]</i> Yeah, you're definitely the jerk. Everyone can tell.
			<i>[Jordan laughs.]</i>
00:52:29	Jacob	Guest	Jacob, how are you feeling about your chances? Pretty good! Yeah. I think I greased the palm pretty good. I'm feeling pretty good about it.
00:52:35	Jesse	Host	Jordan, Jacob, we'll find out what the judge has to say when we come back in just a moment.
00:52:39	Sound Effect	Transition	Three gavel bangs.
00:52:41	Sound Effect	Transition	Three gavel bangs.
00:52:43	Jesse	Host	Judge Hodgman, we're taking a break from the case, and you have a television program coming up soon.
00:52:48	John	Host	Yes, Jesse, that's true. And I have a message not for our listeners so much as for their smart speakers. So, this is for the smart speakers out there. Alexa, remind me to watch <i>Up Here</i> on Hulu on March 24 th , 2023. Hey, Siri, remind me to watch the new romantic musical comedy by Bobby Lopez and Kristen Anderson-Lopez, directed by Thomas Kail, and written by Steven Levenson, and starring Mae Whitman and Carlos Valdes, plus John Hodgman, on Hulu March 24 th , 2023.
			How you doing, Google? I think that's how you get a Google thing to respond. How you doing, Google?! <i>Up Here</i> premieres on March 24 th . It's a really, really funny, really, really toe-tapping and heart-warming comedy about love in New York City in 1999 starring Mae Whitman and Carlos Valdes. Also, I'm in it, but you should still watch it anyway. Remind me to watch it on March 24 th on Hulu. That's it. Are there any other smart speakers out there so far?
00:53:55	Jesse	Host	Honestly, I couldn't tell you. Hey, Sonos!
			<i>[They chuckle.]</i>
00:54:00	John	Host	Hey, Sonos. How you doing, Sonos?
00:54:02	Jesse	Host	Alright, Samsung! Let's do this!
00:54:07	John	Host	What's up, LG?
00:54:09	Jesse	Host	Hey, General Electric, wanna go?
00:54:13	John	Host	Yo, Roku. Remind me to watch <i>Up Here</i> on Hulu, March 24 th .
			Now, Jesse Thorn.
00:54:19	Jesse	Host	Yeah, we have something really important. Next week, the Max Fun Drive starts. If you haven't been listening to <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> for a long time, Maximum Fun is—as we always say—supported by our listeners. And we really only actively solicit your memberships for this one less-than-two-week period a year, the Max Fun Drive. We're gonna have a couple of episodes of <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> that will be very special. And we hope that you will take the opportunity to join Maximum Fun if you love this show. Because

that is really what keeps this show floating. And we mean that very sincerely. So, watch out for the Max Fun Drive. There's gonna be all kinds of fun stuff. And! There's gonna be a really exciting bit of news about Maximum Fun itself that I think you're gonna be really excited about.

00:55:06 John Host Max Fun Drive starts March the 20th. It's Max, it's Fun, it's Drive. You should please, please participate if you can by joining or upgrading your membership. I just wanna reiterate what Jesse said for the new listeners. 'Cause I know that we've had a lot of new listeners join us, and we're very grateful for you around the world. But Maximum Fun as a network is listener supported. This has not been an easy time for podcasts. We're very lucky that our network has been listener supported from the get-go. It's allowed us to weather some hard times in the podcasting landscape. It's what keeps everything going. We're counting on your support. You've been very generous in the past and if you just started listening, I just wanna reiterate this to you: you're the ones who keep us going. And Max Fun Drive is the time to do it.

00:55:55 Jesse Host We'll see you March 20th for the Max Fun Drive, and let's get back to the case!

00:55:59 Sound Effect Transition Three gavel bangs.

00:56:01 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.]

00:56:09 John Host First of all, I just wanna establish that the final authority in this courtroom is me and not the American Blade Society. They're a bunch of pencil-necks and bean counters, and I don't care what they have to say. It is obvious to me that these two blacksmiths are masters at their craft of different level and different experience points, but in a normal, everyday English viewpoint, they're both masters of their craft. These knives—go check them out on the website or the Instagram. These knives are incredible looking. I bet they cut real good, and they're beautiful works of art. And they have, if I dare say, forged a beautiful friendship in this shop. And now they have high-fived. I wish I had screenshot that. Please do it again. Please do it again and hold it.

[They laugh.]

Thank you. So, yes, in the plain English sense, you are both highly skilled—I dare say masters of this craft. And you have forged an incredible friendship. Albeit, one that is—you know, reaching a new stage. Jordan, you have helped shape Jacob's career with your wisdom and your power hammers and your tools and your—and the stuff that you learned from the person you apprenticed with and from the many apprentices before him. And now, it has reached a white-hot intense moment where—I'm going really hard trying to lean into a blacksmith metaphor here. But the point is, with blacksmithing you're not trying to break things apart. You're trying to make things stronger, trying to make the steel stronger. And indeed, though you—you know, you're not doing arc welding where you're using a torch to weld two pieces together, you can do what

we referred to at the beginning of this: butt welding, where you—
First of all, it's got butt in the phrase, so I like that.

[They snicker.]

Second of all, where you take two pieces of strong iron and you weld them together manually, 'cause they're hot at both ends. I don't wanna see this thing break up over such a simple thing as the term. And you have to consider the term. In craftspersonship, these terms are terms that have meaning and are not diminishing. Saying that you are an apprentice to someone who is very skilled at something or have apprenticed is a point of honor. But in the broader sense, Jordan, you must acknowledge that most people understand apprentice as the lower in the pecking order member of a Sith duo who's gonna get chopped in half by Obi-Wan Kenobi. Darth Maul, who was so much better than Darth Sidious. He's the best! Darth Maul was the best! And he got chopped in half. People tend to think that apprentice means a young child who's sleeping in a hayloft and working for free as a servant. It's not that it's a completely diminishing term, but it is one that Jacob has clearly outgrown in his skill. Which you acknowledge.

And the other element of it is that you got drunk and said that he wasn't an apprentice anymore! *[Chuckles.]* You got drunk and promoted him. And a wise person once said to me that one of the things about grinding a blade is that once you take off the material, you can't put it back on. And let's face it: you got drunk. You gave him that promotion to I guess shop foreman. You ground that bit of the blade off. And now, it's nice and sharp, and Jacob is ready to move forward in this new position. And if you don't let him, he's gonna get sharp with you. Cut your bond. Go off, leave you without a pal! Never mind an apprentice. That's right. Jacob is waving goodbye to Jordan! *[Chuckles.]* It could happen right now! I think that it's pretty clear that you both acknowledge that Jacob has outgrown the title of apprentice. It has come to the point where it does not accurately reflect his skill level. He's certainly been an apprentice for a lot longer than you ever were, officially, Jordan. And it's come to the point where it's harming your relationship. So, what—why not? I mean, you're not paying him. Give him a better title! That's what every—that's what—that's what every company does when they don't have money to pay somebody! It's the easiest thing in the world to do. And I think that—you know—as much as I'd like and will order that once Jacob becomes a journeyman in a year, according to the ABS, that you have to refer to him as journeyman Jake instead of bellows boy. When this happens, and it is inevitable that you will become a journeyman. You will have a title that Jordan never sought! An official journeyman's status from the ABS. Is that right, Jordan?

[Jordan confirms.]

01:00:17 John Host

01:00:56 Jordan Guest

01:01:03 John Host

How are you gonna feel once he gets this piece of paper?
Oh, super proud. Very proud. I mean, somebody else's gain is not my loss. I'm happy for that.
In the meantime, I think shop foreman sounds about right! Jacob, you're obviously comfortable with that. Right?

01:01:09	Jacob	Guest	Yeah. I'm very happy with that.
01:01:11	John	Host	Um, you can say shop foreman, but when someone comes to you and it's a question that Jacob is better suited to answer for whatever reason, you can always just say, "Why don't you just go ask my good friend, Jacob, over there? He's a very skilled blacksmith." And say that.
01:01:27	Jordan	Guest	I will. <i>[John affirms.]</i>
01:01:31	Jacob	Guest	I'm sorry.
01:01:32	Jordan	Guest	Kind of a pause, there. You alright? Yeah. Yeah. I just—I was not wanting to talk over anybody for that one.
01:01:36	John	Host	Yeah, you can also refer to him as the power hammer if you want. <i>[Jordan chuckles.]</i>
01:01:40	Jacob	Guest	That would—that would be great.
01:01:42	Jordan	Guest	That's got a nice ring to it! <i>[Jacob agrees.]</i>
01:01:43	John	Host	A ring, ting! Ting! Ting! Ting!
01:01:44	Jacob	Guest	That's another blacksmith—mm-hm.
01:01:47	John	Host	I got you. Thank you very much. So, this is the sound of a gavel. Ting, ting, ting! <i>[Laughs.]</i>
			Make sure that that's the sound effect, even with me laughing through it. Ting, ting, ting! <i>[They laugh.]</i>
			Congratulations, Shop Foreman Jacob. And thank you very much, Master Jordan, for sharing your skills with us, both of you today. Judge John Hodgman rules. That is all.
01:02:11	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>
01:02:22	Jacob	Guest	Jacob, you seem happy about this verdict. Yeah. I'm very pleased with it. I think—I think it suits me. It's—yeah. I'm happy with it. It's suiting for me.
01:02:30	Jesse	Host	You could get like a t-shirt made.
01:02:31	Jacob	Guest	Yeah. I plan on getting t-shirt, hat.
01:02:34	Jesse	Host	Anything you can put flocked lettering on. <i>[Chuckles.]</i>
01:02:39	Jordan	Guest	Jordan, how do you feel? I feel good about it. I think it's the right decision. It's the right word. And it—you know, I'm proud of him. I just needed the push to have someone tell me, hey, stop being weird about this. And, I don't know, call him what he deserves. Yeah.
01:02:54	Jesse	Host	Well, Jacob, Jordan, thanks for joining us on the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast. <i>[They thank him.]</i>

01:03:00	Sound Effect	Transition	Three gavel bangs.
01:03:02	Jesse	Host	<p>Another <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> case is in the books. We'll have Swift Justice in just a moment. Our thanks to Reddit user Beegtronic for naming this week's episode "Forge Majeure". The Maximum Fun Reddit is at MaximumFun.Reddit.com. A lot of fun to be had there. That's where we're asking for case names these days. Evidence and photos from the show are both on our Instagram account, which is at Instagram.com/judgejohnhodgman, and at the MaximumFun.org episode page for this episode. Follow us on Instagram. You can get all kinds of cool stuff, including photos from episodes.</p> <p><i>Judge John Hodgman</i> was created by Jesse Thorn and John Hodgman. Our producer is Valerie Moffatt. This episode, recorded by Lily Ruckstuhl at Pulp Arts in Gainesville, Florida.</p> <p>Now, Swift Justice, where we answer small disputes with quick judgement. Wesley writes, "When there's a lane closure due to construction on the road, at some point two lanes merge into one. I see that—"</p>
01:04:03	John	Host	Zipper merge. That quick enough for you?
01:04:06	Jesse	Host	Yeah.
01:04:07	John	Host	Okay, keep going.
01:04:08	Jesse	Host	"I see that most people stay in the lane that's going to remain open, myself included."
01:04:13	John	Host	You're wrong. Zipper merge. Alright.
01:04:15	Jesse	Host	"I see—"
01:04:16	John	Host	Keep going!
01:04:17	Jesse	Host	"I see others drive to the front of the closed lane, merge, then get to wherever they're going a few minutes faster than I do."
01:04:26	John	Host	Yeah, that's the zipper merge. That's the correct thing to do. Is there more?
01:04:30	Jesse	Host	"I think it would be more efficient if everyone did this. Please rule that I can drive to the front of zipper lanes despite the hateful stares and honks of the patiently waiting motorists."
01:04:43	John	Host	<p>I'm so glad you brought this up, Wesley. And thank you, Valerie Moffatt, for dropping this into Swift Justice, 'cause it just came over the <i>[inaudible]</i> like the other day, and my feeling was, "Are we still talking about this?!" Zipper! Merge! Zip-per merge! Zip-per merge! It is the way you're supposed to do it. People are lining up in the righthand lane—the one—if the lefthand lane is closing, and waiting their turn and then getting huffy while people drive along the lefthand lane and zipper merge in. Don't be huffy. They're wrong.</p> <p>Use all lanes available and merge at the last second. Take turns! It's just been shown over and over and over again that it's much more efficient. So, we've talked about it on the podcast before, I'll bring it up on the podcast again: be safe, be considerate, zipper merge. Spread this gospel through your behavior. Zip-per merge!</p> <p>Meanwhile, Jesse, you know that the Max Fun Drive is coming up, right?</p>
01:05:40	Jesse	Host	Yeah. Towards the end of March.
01:05:42	John	Host	I'd be surprised if you didn't, because—after all—the Max Fun Drive is the one time each year when we come to you asking you to join

			or upgrade your membership as listener supporters of this very network. It's what keeps our lights on and our microphones going. It's not just a squirrel running on a treadmill. We use electricity now.
01:06:01	Jesse	Host	Yeah, in addition to the squirrel on the treadmill.
01:06:04	John	Host	<i>[Chuckles.]</i> Well, that's just for fun! That's just Nutsy having fun. And as always, we're gonna have bonus content for you and lots of fun surprises if we reach certain benchmarks of new and upgrading members. And one of those benchmarks, of course, is the annual cheese podcast that your friend and mine, Jordan Morris, and I host every year after Max Fun Drive, called— What's it called, Jesse?
01:06:31	Jesse	Host	<i>[Flatly.]</i> <i>Shootin' the Bries</i> . B-R-I-E-S.
01:06:34	John	Host	<i>[Quietly delighted.]</i> <i>Shootin' the Bries</i> . B-R-I-E-S.
			Jesse Thorn came to me a few years ago and said, "Do you wanna do a cheese podcast? A one-off cheese podcast with Jordan, called <i>Shootin' the Bries</i> ? B-R-I-E-S."
			I said, "No. I don't wanna do a one-off. I wanna do it once a year after Max Fun Drive."
01:06:51	Jesse	Host	Mm-hm. To mark the changing of the seasons.
01:06:53	John	Host	'Cause Jordan was a cheese monger. And I was a cheese monger! I did my monging in London. He did his in—was it Silverlake?
01:07:02	Jesse	Host	Yeah, in Silverlake by the Trader Joes.
01:07:03	John	Host	And our very first episode of <i>Shootin' the Bries</i> , however many years ago we determined?
01:07:08	Jesse	Host	What's that?
01:07:09	John	Host	I bought cheese from Jordan. In that cheese shop.
01:07:12	Jesse	Host	Holy cow. Holy cow.
01:07:13	John	Host	And you know what else about holy cows? Their milk makes cheeses!
01:07:18	Jesse	Host	Hooo-ly cow!
01:07:20	John	Host	Holy cow, holy sheep, holy goat—cheese! So, I'm asking you—
01:07:28	Jesse	Host	<i>[Wheezes into a laugh.]</i> Cheese!
01:07:29	John	Host	<i>[Laughing.]</i> I'm asking you to start thinking positively. We'll have a benchmark of new and upgrading members to reach before this triggers this cheese podcast. Let's think positively and presume we're gonna meet that benchmark. Start sending me your disputes about cheese, your questions about cheese, your concerns about cheese, your thoughts about cheese. Cheese challenges! Let me know if there's a cheese that you've tried that I never have. Maybe Jordan and I will eat it on the air. We're looking for cheese content. We're looking for it now. 'Cause we know when that Max Fun Drive comes around, you all who are listening now if you're not a member, you're gonna consider becoming one. If you are a member and you have the means, you're gonna consider upgrading.
			It's gonna be great. Max Fun Drive is always fun. So, get your cheese together and send it to me at MaximumFun.org/jjho .
01:08:21	Jesse	Host	And of course, no matter what your dispute is about, we wanna hear about it at MaximumFun.org/jjho . No case too big, no case too small. We adjudicate many of them. We'll talk to you next time on the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast.
01:08:35	Sound Effect	Transition	Three gavel bangs.

01:08:38	Sound Effect	Transition	Cheerful ukulele chord.
01:08:39	Speaker 1	Guest	MaximumFun.org .
01:08:41	Speaker 2	Guest	Comedy and culture.
01:08:42	Speaker 3	Guest	Artist owned—
01:08:43	Speaker 4	Guest	—audience supported.