

00:00:00	Sound Effect	Transition	Three gavel bangs.
00:00:02	Jesse Thorn	Host	Welcome to the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast. This week's episode, recorded live at the Gothic Theatre in beautiful Denver, Colorado.
00:00:12	John Hodgman	Host	Beautiful, mile-high Denver, Colorado. Another stop on our frontier justice tour of the west. And it featured our friend, the great David Gborie.
00:00:22	Jesse	Host	Literally one of the funniest comedians in the world. Oh, there are few in comedy I love as much as I love the great David Gborie. One of the funniest, best guys in the history of entertainment as far as I'm concerned. This was a great show. I'm really excited to hear it. Let's go to the stage at the Gothic Theatre.
00:00:39	Sound Effect	Transition	Three gavel bangs.
00:00:41	Jesse	Host	<i>[The audience cheers and applauds.]</i> Denver, Colorado, you've come to us desperate for justice! And we're here at the Gothic Theatre to deliver it. Let's bring out our first set of litigants! Please welcome Paul and Chris! <i>[The cheering intensifies.]</i> Tonight's case: "Buy Me Subpoenas and Crackerjack". Paul brings the case against his friend Chris. Chris has stopped believing in baseball superstitions and jinxes. He says his behavior can't affect the outcome of a baseball game. Paul says his friend's carelessness has jinxed the team. Who's right? Who's wrong? Only one can decide. Please rise as Judge John Hodgman enters the courtroom and delivers an obscure cultural reference. <i>[The crowd goes wild.]</i>
00:01:38	John	Host	People at the time asked me, "Did you know she was going to become so famous?" And I say no, I didn't. But she did.
00:01:51	Jesse	Host	Bailiff Jesse Thorn, please swear them in. <i>[Chuckles.]</i> Paul and Chris, 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 the only sport he follows is horse-race gambling—and not a wholesome, trotting race but a race where they set down right on the horse? <i>[They confirm.]</i>
00:02:17	Paul	Guest	It makes your blood boil, I should say.
00:02:20	Jesse	Host	Judge Hodgman, you may proceed.
00:02:21	John	Host	Paul and Chris, you may be seated. You've got a lot of energy coming off of you. Which one of you is Paul?
00:02:26	Paul	Guest	I'm Paul.
00:02:27	John	Host	Yeah, I could tell. <i>[Laughter.]</i>

00:02:29	Jesse	Host	For the at-home listener, Paul is—um, believes he’s on the Philadelphia Phillies. <i>[Laughter.]</i>
00:02:39	John	Host	According to visual evidence. You’ve got five hours of energy coming off of you, and I should know.
00:02:41	Paul	Guest	<i>[Laughs.]</i> Yes, I do.
00:02:43	John	Host	Paul and Chris, you may be seated for an immediate summary judgement in one of yours favors. Can either of you name the piece of culture that I referenced as I entered the courtroom? It says here Paul, why don’t you go first—no. Chris, you go first. <i>[Beat.]</i> Do you wanna hear it again?
00:02:58	Chris	Guest	I’m sorry. Yes, please.
00:03:00	John	Host	Okay, so this is a podcast. <i>[Laughter.]</i>
			And I make an obscure cultural reference. And if you guess the source of it, then you automatically win the case. So, here is that obscure cultural reference again. “People at the time asked me, ‘Did you know she was going to become so famous?’ And I say no, I didn’t. But <u>she</u> did.” Who am I quoting, Chris? Any guesses? One guess?
00:03:25	Chris	Guest	Madonna?
00:03:26	John	Host	Madonna!
00:03:28	Jesse	Host	It’s a great guest. She’s a celebrity entertainer.
00:03:30	John	Host	That’s true! Who is Madonna talking about in that quote?
00:03:35	Chris	Guest	Was I on the right track? <i>[Laughter.]</i>
00:03:39	John	Host	Actually, yes. Paul?
00:03:41	Paul	Guest	Uh, Tina Turner.
00:03:43	John	Host	<i>[Chuckling.]</i> Tina Turner. Okay. So, the person is talking about someone else. <i>[Laughter.]</i>
00:03:48	Paul	Guest	<i>The Bodyguard</i> , Kevin Costner.
00:03:50	John	Host	Okay! <i>[Laughter.]</i>
			Kevin Costner talking about Tina Turner. <i>[Paul confirms.]</i>
00:03:54	Jesse	Host	Wait, hold on. Do you think that Kevin Costner goes by The Bodyguard Kevin Costner?!
			<i>[Paul and John confirm.]</i>
00:04:08	John	Host	Like Jesse the Body Ventura? And Chris, your guess is Kevin Costner talking about Madonna? Would that be your guess?

[Chris confirms. Laughter.]

Okay. No, no. Do you have—do you have another guess? You seem to be wanting to say something. And given that it's a podcast, that'd be good.

[Laughter.]

00:04:24	Chris	Guest
00:04:25	John	Host
00:04:27	Jesse	Host
00:04:29	John	Host
00:04:39	Paul	Guest
00:04:40	John	Host
00:04:42	Paul	Guest
00:04:43	John	Host

Sorry, your honor. I don't.
Okay. No, that's great. Great guesses.
No, Kevin Costner and Madonna, the whole thing was great.
Yeah, it's all great. But all guesses are wrong. I was quoting someone named Bonnie Erickson. Paul, do you know who Bonnie Erickson is?
I do not.
Do you know who she was speaking of?
Kevin Costner?!
No.

[Laughter.]

“People at the time asked, ‘Did you know she was going to become so famous?’ And I'd say no, I didn't. But she did.” She was speaking of: Miss Piggy. Why was Bonnie Erickson talking about Miss Piggy? Chris, guess? *[Beat.]* Okay!

[Laughter.]

The reason is Bonnie Erickson worked for Muppet Studios, and she designed Miss Piggy. She also designed Statler and Waldorf and Zoot. And she also designed someone that is close to your heart, Paul, even if you don't know it. Someone or something called the Philly Fanatic, Paul.

00:05:22	Paul	Guest
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The Philly Fanatic.

[Cheers.]

00:05:25	John	Host
00:05:26	Paul	Guest
00:05:28	John	Host
00:05:29	Paul	Guest
00:05:31	John	Host
00:05:35	Paul	Guest
00:05:36	John	Host
00:05:37	Paul	Guest

How does that make you feel, Paul?
It feels very bad. It feels really bad.
You should know.
Not for the last time, I'm sure.
Yes. So, who seeks—since we have to hear this case, who seeks justice in this court?
I do, your honor.
And what is the nature of the justice you seek?
Well, like Bailiff Jesse said, Chris has stopped believing in baseball jinxes, which is fine for his team, the Seattle Mariners, the Seattle Seahawks. But when he breaks them out and they affect my team, I'm seeking an injunction to prevent him from jinxing my team.
Now, your team is the Philadelphia Phillies.

00:05:54	John	Host
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[Paul confirms.]

You are wearing their costumery right now.

[Paul confirms.]

And they—they came in second in the world series. Is that correct?

00:06:04	Paul	Guest	I guess so. That's right, yes.
00:06:06	John	Host	Which is an honor unto itself.
			<i>[Paul agrees.]</i>
			And that's because Chris jinxed them.
			<i>[Paul confirms.]</i>
00:06:15	Paul	Guest	How did Chris jinx them? So, Chris and I run together regularly, and we talk a lot about sports. We talk about a lot of things. But when we talk about sports, we try to respect each other's teams. Both of our teams made the playoffs this year—his for the first time in 20 years. And you know, we try to avoid stepping on each other's teams with jinxes until the last day of the season when Chris said during a run, sort of cavalierly, "The Phillies are—"
00:06:38	John	Host	<i>[Interrupting.]</i> Hang on, hang on. Chris, do you remember what you said?
00:06:42	Chris	Guest	I do. Only, I've been reminded of it a few times.
			<i>[Laughter.]</i>
00:06:47	John	Host	Just for the purpose of dramatic reenactment, can you say it?
00:06:52	Chris	Guest	What Paul claims I jinxed him on was that the Phillies had kept the Astros' designated hitter, Yordon Álvarez, in check."
00:07:03	John	Host	Oooh!
			<i>[Paul agrees.]</i>
			What a spooky incantation!
			<i>[Laughter.]</i>
00:07:19	Paul	Guest	Paul, what does that mean and why should I care? Well, <i>[chuckles]</i> I certainly cared, because Yordon Álvarez—who, by the way, hit a game winning homerun against <u>his</u> Mariners earlier in the playoffs—hit a World Series-winning homerun against my Phillies that night.
00:07:35	John	Host	I see. So, he—what did he do? What was the jinx? Mentioning the name? Speaking at all? Because it is unusual for Chris.
			<i>[Laughter.]</i>
00:07:46	Paul	Guest	Saying specifically that we had kept this player in check while the world series was still happening. To say something is going well for your team—
00:07:54	John	Host	Oh, I see.
00:07:55	Paul	Guest	—is immediately going to upend it. It's like saying—it's like saying the words "no hitter" during a no hitter. You're gonna wreck it.
00:08:00	John	Host	You're gonna—it'd be—right, of course. Because you have incredible mental powers.
			<i>[Paul confirms.]</i>
00:08:07	Paul	Guest	Everyone does.
00:08:08	John	Host	It's true, we all do! That's exactly right.

00:08:09	Paul	Guest	Everything every fan does.
00:08:11	Jesse	Host	They're incredible mental powers that can only be challenged by taking off your hat, folding it in half, and then putting on top of your head like a shark's fin.
00:08:20	John	Host	<i>[Laughter.]</i> Uh, <i>[laughs]</i> Chris, how do you respond to this accusation that you jinxed the Phillies and lost them the World Series and made Paul sad and 1% less bubbly?
00:08:34	Chris	Guest	Right. I mean, it's an amazing feeling knowing you had that power.
			<i>[Laughter.]</i> That part I do relish. Honestly, I don't believe in jinxes at all anymore. I don't believe in the power of a fan to jinx their team. And I base that on a decade—decades of supporting Seattle sports.
00:09:04	John	Host	<i>[Laughter.]</i> <i>[Dryly.]</i> There clearly is no order in the universe.
			<i>[Chris laughs.]</i> Destiny has no authorship. We are destined to cycle into oblivion. Look around you.
00:09:27	Paul	Guest	That's my quote of Chris. Uh, Paul, this is not the first time you've been part of the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast. Is that not correct?
00:09:28	John	Host	That is correct. Indeed, it's not even the second time you've been part of my life.
			<i>[Paul confirms.]</i> Is that not correct?
00:09:27	Paul	Guest	That's true. I see you backing up.
00:09:39	John	Host	Yeah. Why—explain to me your previous intrusions into my life and explain why I should not be calling security right now?
00:09:50	Paul	Guest	<i>[Laughs.]</i> So, I was a litigant on episode 113.
00:09:53	John	Host	113!
00:09:54	Paul	Guest	"Uniform Code of—"
00:09:55	John	Host	This is before many of you were born.
00:09:59	Paul	Guest	<i>[Laughter.]</i> It was ten years ago. It was June of 2013. It was "Uniform—"
00:10:03	John	Host	Five-hour energy drink had just been invented.
00:10:07	Paul	Guest	<i>[Laughter.]</i> It was "Uniform Code of Podcast Justice". And my friend, Jeremy, brought the case against me that I should not be allowed to wear Phillies gear to a game in which the Phillies were not playing.
			<i>[Laughter.]</i> So, we—I submitted as evidence a picture of us at Dodger's Stadium and a game between the Dodgers and the Reds in 2009, wearing this.
00:10:34	John	Host	That outfit.

00:10:35 Paul Guest Including the crocs.
00:10:36 Jesse Host So, what we're seeing here is a cotton, classic early 1980s-style Philadelphia—like a Mike Schmidt style Phillies hat. Got on one of the little star dot Phillies uniforms like a Darren Daulton type uniform. And then, crocs, like a real jerk would wear.

[Laughter.]

00:10:57 Paul Guest Well. So—and Judge Hodgman, you commented at the time that it was a mixed bag of, you know, different versions of the Phillies brand identity. You did call it—during that podcast, you called it my Phillies clown outfit.

00:11:12 John Host Yes, because you were wearing a motley fool arrangement of Philly swag.

[Paul agrees.]

And I never had a chance to see it in person. Nor did I particularly want to.

00:11:23 Paul Guest Here it is.
00:11:24 John Host But here we are!
00:11:25 Paul Guest [Laughs.] But the other time—the first time we interacted, you ruled—

00:11:29 John Host The first time.
00:11:30 Paul Guest In your *New York Times* columnette. So, even before that.
00:11:32 John Host *New York Times Magazine* column, “Judge John Hodgman”.
00:11:33 Paul Guest Sorry. *New York Times Magazine* columnette.
00:11:36 John Host That's right. I don't wanna be associated with the failing *New York Times* newspaper.

[Laughter.]

00:11:45 Paul Guest As opposed to the thriving *New York Times Magazine*.
But I wrote to you about my collection of ice cream helmets from baseball games.

00:11:51 John Host Yes. That's right. I recall now. I didn't know that you were the same person [inaudible].

00:11:57 Paul Guest I'm the same person, yeah. Yeah. And you commented—just to make a long story short, you commented that the difference between—

00:12:05 John Host Well, how many did you have?
00:12:07 Paul Guest At the time, I had maybe 50 or 60.
00:12:10 John Host And how many do you have now?
00:12:11 Paul Guest About 430.

[The crowd loses it.]

And at the time, you said the difference between a hoarder and a collector is a display case.

00:12:20 John Host That's true. That was the origin of that.
00:12:22 Paul Guest That was the origin of that quote, which you have repeated many times.

00:12:23 John Host Of that, uh—of that Judge John Hodgman quote. Yeah. But that time, you had 60 of them.

[Laughter.]

00:12:29 Paul Guest I did, yeah. And they were ordered out of my kitchen cabinets. If I may, I actually did bring gifts for you and Bailiff Jesse.

[Someone in the crowd boos.]

00:12:44 John Host From the collection. I have a Portland Seadogs ice cream helmet.
00:12:47 Paul Guest Ooh! Sure, that's a minor league team in Portland, Maine.
00:12:50 John Host A AA affiliate of the Boston Red Sox.
00:12:53 Paul Guest Uh-huh, that's also a sports team. I know my stuff.
Right? And so, this is the summertime fun time, minor league baseball's Portland Seadogs.

[John affirms.]

Jesse, I had a little harder time coming up with a good gift for him. But a year ago this month, Jesse had as a guest on Bullseye Alan Tudyk from the TV show *Firefly*.

00:13:11 John Host That's right. We were just talking about Tudyk last night.
00:13:14 Jesse Host Love Tudyk.
00:13:15 John Host That's right!
00:13:17 Paul Guest And so, I have brought for Jesse a helmet from the Columbia Fireflies.
00:13:21 John Host From the Columbia Fireflies.
00:13:23 Paul Guest A high-A affiliate of the Kansas City Royals.
00:13:24 John Host Well, I would ask our road producer, Richard Robey, to come out here please and take these things away from you.

[Laughter.]

And off the stage and do the standard, uh poison testing. Very generous of you.

00:13:36 Paul Guest In your *New York Times Magazine* columnette, you referred to them as garbage toys.

[Laughter.]

00:13:47 John Host Well, Paul, it's nice to see you again.

[Laughter.]

What was the name of the person that you had the dispute with when you were on the live—the podcast?

00:13:59 Paul Guest His name was Jeremy.
00:14:00 John Host And he's obviously not in your life anymore.
00:14:01 Paul Guest No, he is! He's one of my very good friends.
00:14:03 John Host *[Playfully skeptical.]* Mm-hm.

Chris, how much did he pay you to be here?

[Laughter.]

Obviously, you don't have a dispute. It's clear you have no idea where you are or why. I'm not actually sure that you've ever met Paul before. I kind of feel like there was a Craig's List add going, "Will someone pretend to be in a fight with me so that I can skip the meet and greet line at the *Judge John Hodgman* show and present my tokens live onstage for my own sick amusement." Is that not

what happened?! Don't wait for the translation, Chris! Answer the question!

00:14:42 Chris Guest
00:14:43 John Host

[Laughter.]
This is a lot, yeah.
Yeah. I'm gonna ask you a series of simple questions that you can answer truthfully, I hope. I'll remind you, you're under fake oath. Do you know Paul?

[Chris confirms.]
Are you his friend?

[Chris confirms.]
How long have you been his friend?
15 years.
Oh, okay! Very good. Is he always like this?
He's passionate, for sure.

00:14:58 Chris Guest
00:14:59 John Host
00:15:02 Chris Guest

00:15:03 John Host
00:15:16 Chris Guest

[Laughter.]
Yeah, for sure. So, you are—you are here in a good faith effort to resolve a dispute, because you don't like being accused of jinxing the Philadelphia Phillies.
Absolutely. Well, I don't mind jinxing the Phillies.

[Laughter and a cheer.]
But I don't—I don't honestly feel I have the power to do so.
Was there a time that you believed in superstitions?
100%. I spent most of my life thinking I could impact the Mariners and the Seahawks. And it turns out I can't.
And it—yeah.

00:15:26 John Host
00:15:30 Chris Guest
00:15:40 John Host

[Laughter.]
What ways would you attempt to impact their performance on the baseball pitch and the... whatever?
Yeah, so—
What was the other team that you like? The Seahawks?

00:15:53 Chris Guest
00:15:56 John Host

[Chris confirms.]
In the football sphere.
That's a foot—in the football sphere. Exactly. Thank you.
Yeah, so I think it's—like most fans, like—
Would you wear a special hat, and they'd get one more into the score hole or something? Or—?

00:16:14 Chris Guest
00:16:16 John Host

[Laughing.] A little bit like that.
Did you have a—did you have a Phillies clown outfit you would wear? Or—?
I don't have—
Was there a podcaster you would stalk and like—?

00:16:20 Chris Guest
00:16:20 John Host

[Laughter.]

“If I could just talk to him, the Mariners will go all the way!”

00:16:30 Chris Guest Sadly, no. I don't think I did anything out of the ordinary from a fan perspective.

00:16:37 John Host I don't know anything about sports. So, just please establish what is ordinary, *visa vie* superstitions. What kinds of things would you do or not do in order to affect the outcome of these games?

00:16:48 Chris Guest So, the Seattle Mariners have been in the playoffs very few times in my life. And as a, you know, grown man, there should have been a lot of games to be involved in. So, I would—

00:17:03 John Host I'm sorry to pause. Paul, Chris claims he's known you for about 15 years.

[Paul confirms.]

Does he always sound so sad? Or just when talking about the Mariners?

[Laughter.]

00:17:15 Paul Guest Because it's heartbreaking. It's genuinely heartbreaking. *[Laughing.]* Can I say—? I just wanna say, Chris is a salesman professionally.

[Laughter.]

00:17:27 Chris Guest His job—he's in sales!
Do I sound sad? That makes me feel bad.

[Laughter.]

00:17:29 John Host Well, no! I mean—

00:17:31 Paul Guest It's because of the Mariners!

00:17:32 Jesse Host It's not—John, it's not exactly sadness that animates the Mariners. It's the example of their great hero Ichiro, who—until he was 48 years old—just spent the whole winter hitting *[inaudible]* in a frozen baseball stadium in Japan so he could come back for one more not-playoffs year in Seattle.

00:17:55 John Host You relate to that, right?

[Paul confirms.]

00:17:58 Jesse Host Yeeeah.
It's a sort of—there's a sort of honor in the toil in the mines of failure.

00:18:04 John Host I understand. I understand. So, what would you do in order to try to make it go?

00:18:11 Chris Guest If I'm at a game, I could easily be in the concourse watching through my hands. If I'm at home or—

00:18:19 John Host Because you're afraid that if you witness—if they know that you're watching, they will fail. That's true. Would someone—? Let it be known that members of the audience are saying that is absolutely true.

[Murmurs of agreement from the audience.]

00:18:31 Chris Guest Right. Right, so if I'm watching through my fingers and we get a hit, then I have to continue to do that. Right?

00:18:40 John Host May I see how you—? I mean, will you show me how you would watch through your fingers?

00:18:44 Chris Guest Yeah. So—well, I'd be holding a beer here, and then I'm like this.
[Laughter.]

00:18:48 John Host Right? Right. You form a little twin face huggers from *Alien* mask for yourself. Okay, I got you. I really painted a word picture there for the at-home audience.

00:19:01 Chris Guest And I think I took you to a—
00:19:02 John Host I could've said fleshy goalie mask, but I think the twin face huggers really brings it home. Sorry, go ahead. I was just complementing myself.
[Laughter.]

00:19:15 Chris Guest Baseball's my true passion, as is Paul's. But I let it spill over into football as well. And I, regretfully, got my kids involved. So, you asked for an example. One of them—and I don't know if I can bring evidence, but I did bring—

00:19:33 John Host No, I'm happy to handle anything that you hand me.
[Laughter.]

Let me take a look. I'll touch this—these gloves that you brought. And I touch them to my face.
[Laughter.]

00:19:49 Chris Guest Give them a smell. I have no fear.
00:19:50 John Host Careful. Yeah. I have no fear from you, unless this has all been set up by Paul.
[Laughter.]

My Moriarty. "I know that he's going—I know that he's going to confiscate my two garbage hats. I'll plant two poison gloves in the pocket of my henchman, Chris. Hodgman will surely breath deep."
[Sniffs loudly.]

00:20:18 Chris Guest What's the meaning of these gloves?
So, these are—these are Seattle Seahawk gloves, back when Russell Wilson played for us.

00:20:26 John Host Wow!

00:20:28 Chris Guest I went there. I went there.

00:20:30 John Host So, are the Seahawks rivals with the Denver football team, the Broncos?
[Cheers.]

00:20:41 Chris Guest I did my research.
00:20:45 John Host I think they used to be. Yeah. Yeah, they used to be. So, you would bring your children to the game, and you had these gloves.

00:20:47 Chris Guest Well, so this is even deeper than that. My son and I—my two boys, Ryan and Jack, and I are watching the Seahawks play the

Minnesota Vikings. This is a playoff game about six/seven years ago. The Vikings are about to win with a 25-foot chip shot. Beat us in the wildcard game.

00:21:08 John Host
00:21:09 Jesse Host
[Softly.] Chip shot?
It's a sports metaphor about sports.

[Laughter.]
00:21:13 John Host
00:21:15 Chris Guest
Please continue.
Super easy. Like, I'm sure people here remember this game. It's a given that the Vikings are gonna beat the Hawks. And right before the shot, I throw these gloves to my son, Ryan. "Put these on. Good luck gloves." The kid misses the chip shot for the Vikings.

00:21:32 John Host
Wait, your son missed the shot?

[Laughter.]
00:21:33 Chris Guest
No! No, no, no. If I believed in jinxes, yes, my son made the shot miss. But this—
00:21:41 John Host
That's why you had the gloves but no son anymore.

[Laughter.]
00:21:47 Chris Guest
So, the Seahawks win the game because I threw my son these gloves.
00:21:51 John Host
00:21:52 Chris Guest
Oh no! That was a good thing. Right. You were—now I remember. My poor son—my poor son thinks that jinxes are a real deal because of me. And I think that's completely irresponsible of me. I think it's—I think it's crazy to think that we have power over what happens on the field. And that was my point with jinxes. I don't believe in them. I don't believe in them.

[Laughter.]
00:22:15 John Host
I especially—
May I—? Just for the listeners at home. There was a very intense look shared between Paul and Chris between the first and second "I don't believe in them".
00:22:28 Chris Guest
The real reason though, your honor, I don't believe in them is because if they were true, the Mariners would've won five World Series in the last—like the last ten years, let's say.
00:22:39 Jesse Host
So, you would only be using the gloves every other year for the Mariners?

[Laughter.]
00:22:46 John Host
00:22:50 Chris Guest
So, does your—does your son still believe in jinx? In sport jinxing?
He does, and I—that's a failing of me as a parent to pass this on that you need to spend your time worrying and think you're responsible as if you're paying this premium to get wins later on in life. It doesn't exist.

00:23:06 Jesse Host
Chris, this is a ridiculous—everyone knows that our jinxes fight with everyone else's jinxes. So, we have to do as many reverse jinxes as we can, so we've done more reverse jinxes than the other people have. The Giants have won three World Series in the last 15 years. [Whispering.] I think I know what I'm talking about.

[Laughter.]

Anyway.

00:23:30	John	Host	That's a good point, Chris. Who's to say that— <i>[Laughter.]</i> Let the record show that Jesse has put his hat on upside down and is making the sign of the double face hugger. What would be—what would be an example of a reverse jinx, anyone onstage who knows about sports? Chris?
00:23:53	Jesse	Host	Well, anything could be lucky. Not changing your underpants, for example. I mean that's one of the luckiest things there is. <i>[Laughter.]</i>
00:24:01	John	Host	Well, being on tour has brought me a lot of luck then. <i>[Laughter.]</i>
00:24:14	Chris	Guest	Chris, what would be a—hang on, Paul! Chris, what—Chris, what would be a reverse jinx? Your honor, thank you for asking. Betting on your team, which is something I didn't do for 15 years before I finally said to hell with this. I'm gonna bet on the Mariners. I'm gonna do a reverse jinx, to your point, sir with the awesome moustache. <i>[Jesse thanks him.]</i>
00:24:34	Jesse	Host	That it doesn't matter what I do. And so, now— You know what, I'll take ten of whatever it is that you're selling. <i>[Laughter.]</i>
00:24:37	John	Host	That's right! That was an incredible maneuver!
00:24:43	Jesse	Host	Judge Hodgman!
00:24:44	John	Host	All of the sudden, I'm over here going, "What the heck? I wanna buy whatever you're selling too! Why is he in love with my bailiff?" <i>[Laughter.]</i>
00:24:55	Sound Effect	Transition	"I also have a moustache!" Three gavel gangs.
00:24:58	Sound Effect	Transition	Three gavel bangs.
00:25:01	John	Host	Paul, when Chris said that thing that cost the Phillies the World Series, was there anything you could do—any kind of special dance or laundering habit or tooth picking or anything that you could do to undo the damage that Chris did?
00:25:18	Paul	Guest	Well, you have to act swiftly in this instance. And the reverse jinx is really important. And so, I said, "Hey. Yordon Álvarez, he's amazing. He's an unrivaled talent on the Houston Astros. They're the better team. They're definitely gonna win. You saw was Yordon Álvarez can do, yourself. Clearly, he's gonna break through at some point." And the power of my reverse jinx was no match for his, you know, careless—you know.
00:25:41	John	Host	So, the reverse jinx is saying your team sucks and they're gonna—they're gonna lose. <i>[Paul confirms.]</i>

Right. And the jinx was him saying your team is pretty good and they're gonna win.

[Paul confirms.]

Aaah! I see. And by saying those two sentences, what have I wrought in this universe? I feel like I'm just a butterfly who just flapped its wings in Indonesia.

00:25:59 Paul Guest

This is really important, because at the time of this recording, we are ten days away from the Superbowl, in which my Philadelphia Eagles—

00:26:07 John Host

That's a famous football fight.

[Laughter.]

00:26:10 Paul Guest

—are about to play. I've been doing my best to keep my distance from Chris. He is invited to the Superbowl party, but I'm worried about whatever he's gonna say that's gonna ruin the Eagles chances in the Superbowl.

00:26:22 John Host

And what it would be would be anything positive about the Eagles whatsoever.

00:26:26 Paul Guest

Any assured statement. Any—

00:26:29 John Host

Any—yeah, any assurance that, of course, they're going to do— I'm not saying that.

00:26:33 Paul Guest

I'm even nervous with you saying it right now.

00:26:34 John Host

No, no, no, no. I'm not saying anything. I'm not saying anything.

00:26:38 Paul Guest

But yes, that.

00:26:39 John Host

That's the sort of thing. And it would make you very upset.

00:26:42 Paul Guest

It would. Well, it would ruin the Eagles chances. I'm trying to do everything I can to win the Eagles a Superbowl, here.

00:26:47 John Host

[Clears his throat.]

[Laughter.]

And I'm sure all of Philadelphia thanks you.

[Laughter.]

00:26:54 Paul Guest

They're doing what they can too.

00:26:56 John Host

There are batteries with your name on them in Philadelphia.

00:26:59 Paul Guest

Go birds.

00:27:03 John Host

You know, I'm gonna give you a shot here, Paul, to finally say something. Chris makes the point that he had this awakening, that when his son started believing in jinxes, he felt as a father that was an irresponsible thing to do, because it is a kind of magical thinking that you are going to be able to affect or that—not even affect, but that outcomes that you have no influence over will be affected by the way you think, act, or feel—which can cause a lot of anxiety. It makes me nervous. What are some fun upsides of feeling terrified all the time that your friend, Chris, is gonna say the wrong thing?

[Laughter.]

00:27:51 Paul Guest

I—and first of all, I'm speaking as a person who has driven both of my children away from team sports. Neither one of them could care less about team sports at this point. But I mean, my response to that is what's wrong with magical thinking?! Magical thinking's a great thing. We're all—you know, team sports—watching team

sports, you're watching grown men in pajamas throw a ball around, right? I get that. I understand it. But what—you know, to me, it feels like you're part of something bigger than yourself if you feel like you are—like you have some sort of effect. And so, to me, sports superstitions—I'm not a religious person—

00:28:26 John Host They turn you into a living god.
00:28:27 Paul Guest They turn you into a living god. *[Chuckles.]* Based entirely on which sofa cushion you're sitting on.

[Laughter.]

00:28:36 John Host So...
00:28:38 Paul Guest Plenty of world religions are based on less. That's what I'm saying! So, to me, there's a beauty in this—what you described as magical thinking. I think that that's a beautiful thing. And I like being a part of it.

00:28:48 Jesse Host Judge Hodgman, if I could explain to you in literary terms.

[John thanks him.]

You've probably read Joan Didion's book, *My Year of Magical Thinking*.

[John chuckles and confirms.]

About the 1987 Philadelphia Phillies.

[Laughter.]

00:29:10 John Host It was a real page-turner.

00:29:23 Paul Guest So, we're coming up on the Superbowl. Your beloved Philadelphia Eggles.
00:29:26 John Host Mm-hm. Eggles. How dare you?

[Laughter.]

Your beloved bird team will either do well or poorly. See how I threaded that needle? Everything's still up in the air. You're asking me to forbid your friend Chris from saying anything that could possibly jinx them.

[Paul confirms.]

00:29:56 Chris Guest Chris, how do you feel about that?
It's just tricky! Right? Like, where do I—where do I start and stop with that?

00:30:00 John Host Well, you could possibly talk about something other than sports.

[Laughter.]

00:30:07 Chris Guest Tricky.
00:30:09 John Host Yeah. *[Laughs.]* That's it. Oooh, it's a tough one! A tough one, Judge! Let the record show that Chris is also chewing some gum in a charismatic way and looks like an extremely handsome retired baseball player.

00:30:28 Jesse Host *[Laughter.]*
Yeah, Chris definitely plays the game the right way.

00:30:35 John Host *[Laughter.]*
Do you think it would be an imposition to you to not be able to speak to your friend? *[Chuckles.]* 'Til the Superbowl was over?

00:30:45 Chris Guest *[Beat.]* He did invite me to his house for the party.

00:30:48 John Host Oooh. Doesn't it give you some pleasure to know how much power you will wield at that party? There's sooo much that you could get Paul to do!

00:31:05 Chris Guest I hadn't thought of that, but—

[Laughter.]

00:31:22 John Host I don't mean it—I don't—I wouldn't wanna do that to him. I wouldn't—'cause I agree. I love sports for the way it brings everyone together. Right? There's probably Mariner fans in here right now. There's all kinds of us. And we just—
Yeah, I don't—

[Laughter.]

00:31:34 Jesse Host Do you remember—do you remember when the audience booed you for mentioning a different team? It wasn't exactly a kumbaya moment.
Also, remember when you said you loved the way sports brings people together? Next to a Phillies sports guy?

00:31:46 John Host *[Laughter.]*
So, if I were to rule in your favor, how would you have me rule?

00:31:53 Chris Guest *[Beat.]* Can you say that there's no such thing as sports jinxes?

00:31:58 John Host I can say it!

00:32:02 Jesse Host *[Laughter.]*
Is this a technique you learned at a seminar?!

[Laughter.]

00:32:16 Chris Guest Did you get the *Judge John Hodgman* lead?!

00:32:17 John Host That would be my request.
Where do I make my investment? I feel very empowered now! Do you have an online course?

How would you feel? How would it make you feel in both your rational and your emotional mind, Paul, if I were to say with aaall of the god-like power that I have given myself as a fake internet judge, "There are no such things as jinxes"? This is hypothetical. I'm not saying it. But perhaps that's a jinx itself! You don't even know! Your brain's twisting and doing cartwheels right now trying to figure out!

00:33:07 Paul Guest Is this a jinx? Ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh!

00:33:10 John Host No, that's not a jinx. I would be sad! I—
INCORRECT, SIR!

[Laughter.]

You just don't know what I jinxed! Let the record show that I waved my hand and went "ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh". How does it make you feel?

00:33:22 Paul Guest I would be—I would be sad. Right? I think it would be—it would be sad to not believe that we're all part of something bigger that we can influence and be a part of.

00:33:31 John Host Stop talking.

[Laughter.]

This is the question I'm asking you, based on my dialectical behavioral therapy that I've been going through, and it's been amazing. When I say there's no such thing as jinxes, describe what your body is doing and how you are feeling.

00:33:54 Paul Guest Alright, well, based on my own therapy—

00:33:55 John Host Describe your feelings.

00:33:56 Paul Guest I can tell you the chest is tightening. There's a pit in the stomach. The lizard brain, the amygdala, it's all kicking in and saying, "No, no, no, this is wrong."

00:34:03 John Host What style of therapy are you doing?

00:34:06 Paul Guest Counseling. I don't know. Talking to a counselor.

00:34:09 John Host Like cognitive behavioral therapy.

[Paul confirms.]

BOOOO! Booooo!

[Laughter.]

00:34:16 Jesse Host The correct answer was high school vocational!

00:34:22 John Host It makes—I can tell that it makes you feel nervous. It makes you feel uncomfortable. Yeah. And I don't want that for you, Paul.

[Paul thanks him.]

00:34:30 Jesse Host Do you think that you've ever positively influenced your team, Paul?

00:34:34 Paul Guest I do, yes. I traded away a bad luck hat to my brother for his good luck hat. And it's been working ever since.

[Murmuring from the audience.]

00:34:43 Jesse Host So, can I ask you how *[chuckles]*... how—

00:34:47 Paul Guest My brother's okay. *[Chuckles.]*

00:34:48 Jesse Host How'd you sell him a—how'd you sell him on that one?! Was it just a pure act of generosity on his part?

00:34:56 Paul Guest No. It was an objectively better hat that I gave him, but I needed it out of my life because when I wore it, the Eagles were losing. When he wears it, they win. He's worn it to the Eagles' playoff games.

00:35:07 Jesse Host What kind of hat did you get back?

00:35:10 Paul Guest It's an Eagles championship hat from 2018.

00:35:14 Jesse Host Hm. Seems like kind of a jinx.

[Laughter.]

00:35:17 Paul Guest Not yet!

00:35:18 John Host Okay. I'm thoroughly confused.

[Laughter.]

And therefore, I think I know everything—I think I’ve heard everything I need to in order to make my decision. I’ll be back in a moment with my verdict.

00:35:28 Jesse Host Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom.

[Cheers and applause.]

00:35:42 Chris Guest Chris, how are you feeling about your chances here tonight? Did you close?

00:35:52 Jesse Host Hmm. I—I don’t—I don’t know. I don’t know. Um, I don’t think so. I think Paul’s got a pretty strong case against me.

00:35:54 Paul Guest Paul, how are you feeling?

00:36:05 Jesse Host You know, you asked me that question ten years ago on the podcast. And I said, “As a Philadelphia sports fan, I live in a constant state of pessimism. I assume I’m gonna lose.” I’m still there, now.

00:36:13 Paul Guest Is pessimism a Philadelphia word for rage?

00:36:16 Jesse Host *[Laughter.]* Just a constant state of affairs for us.

Well, we’ll see what Judge Hodgman has to say about all this. Please rise as Judge John Hodgman reenters the courtroom and delivers his verdict.

00:36:25 John Host *[Cheers and applause.]* You may be seated. Some time ago, I went to a sports contest—a professional sports contest in the sport of ice hockey. Now, you know—

[A cheer.]

Sure!

[Laughter.]

The minor-est of the major leagues. *[Chuckles.]* You probably know that I am not a—I am a fan of only one sport, which is the sport of extinct hockey: hockey teams that don’t exist anymore. The Hartford Whalers, the Quebec Nordiques, etc. I love them because the outcome is known. And it reduces my anxiety. Aaall extinct hockey teams are losers. And I can sympathize with them! But as part of a research project, I went to an actual live, non-extinct hockey game being played between the Pittsburgh Penguins and another team that I don’t remember.

And in advance of this, I was talking to noted public radio hockey correspondent, Greg Wyshynski. And Greg told me that he had a ritual. He had to have pink lemonade when he went to the hockey game or else his team would lose. And I said, “That is goddamn offensive. That is an insult!” Because I am not an athlete, nor do I follow sports, but I know that these athletes work very hard. They push themselves and train themselves and study their work, day in and day out. And to suggest that somehow your wishing is going to affect their performance is an insult to those professional athletes, in my opinion. I went to the game, and I—but I did ask him, “Should

I bring my Hartford Whalers hat to the game? Because—will that jinx it?”

And he said, “No, I think it’ll be fine.”

I went to the game, and I just felt funny about wearing my Hartford Whalers hat in that ice arena. And it came to—what’s—what do you call it? Sudden death, at the end of hockey? Sudden death.

00:38:34 Jesse Host
00:38:35 John Host

Oh, yeah. Overtime, yeah.
Overtime. Sudden death.

[Laughter.]

Someone was gonna die. And not slowly.
Sudden death was at the—that was at the end—that was what was at the end of Joan Didion’s *My Year of Magical Thinking*.

00:38:40 Jesse Host

[Laughter.]

00:38:47 John Host

That’s right. Final chapter. And the other—the other team had one chance to get a goal against the Pittsburgh Penguins, and then the other team was gonna win. But if the Pittsburgh Penguins blocked the goal, phewp, game over. Pittsburgh Penguins won. And I was rooting for the Pittsburgh Penguins ‘cause I knew the name of the team. So, I couldn’t help myself. The last second, I put on that Hartford Whalers hat, and the Penguins lost. Because of what I did.

[Laughter.]

It’s a powerful, powerful feeling! That you have ruined a hockey game. *[Chuckles.]* And just disappointed fans and you’re in Pittsburgh. Who knows what they’ll do to you if they ever found out that you and your hat lost the game for their team? It is part of my therapy to hold opposite ideas in the same moment. On the one hand, there is the—on the one hand, there is the idea. We are pattern recognizing animals. We build narratives around us. And we are massive egotists. We want to be part of those narratives, even when—in fact—what is also true is that the universe doesn’t care about us. We are an accident of evolution. And we won’t last forever, and nothing we do is going to affect anything. We can hold both—

[The audience builds to loud applause.]

That’s the spirit! That’s... that’s what I expect from a city with legalized marijuana.

[Cheers and applause.]

00:40:40 Jesse Host

In my therapy they just taught me Yankees suck.

[Cheers.]

00:40:48 John Host

These seem like two opposite ideas to hold at the same time. But let me ask you, Paul: have you, uh—have you ever watched—do you watch—? Do you have Disney+?

[Paul confirms.]

Have you watched, uh, the *Star Wars* show called *Andor*?

[Paul confirms.]

Yeah. Have I told you what my proposed motto for that show, *Andor*, is?

00:41:12 Paul Guest
00:41:13 John Host

[Chuckling.] No.
Andor: why not both?

[Laughter and cheers.]

00:41:23 Jesse Host
00:41:24 John Host
00:41:31 Jesse Host

Unfortunately—
Why?! Not?! Booooth?!
Unfortunately, this is not a new bit.

[Laughter.]

I think John's about ready to get a tattoo of this bit, he's so pumped about it.

00:41:46 John Host

Doesn't even make any sense! There's "and" in there. It is both! But I'm just trying to get thematically to the idea of "why not both". Why not accept that the universe has no story to it and that we only suffer through it, and the egotistical idea that we can affect what people who are much more physically talented than we are do on a field? Why not both? The problem is that if you accept your point of view, Paul, you're going to suffer. Whereas if, Chris, we follow your point of view—and your son does, as well—and recognize that we're meaningless in this universe until we buy what you're selling...

[Laughter.]

It's profoundly humbling and even sad—almost as sad as the way you talk—but it is also liberating. It felt better to me when I realized that the news made me upset and didn't change because I read it. It's important to be informed, but the compulsive reading of the news or, say, watching election results or whatever, is just making me feel really, really, really bad. *[Chuckles.]* Yeah, sure. You know. What changes things in the world is activism and direct action, not watching and talking and tweeting and thinking.

[Cheers.]

So, what I'm saying to you, Paul, is if things aren't going as well on the field as you would like, just get out there, buddy.

[Laughter and cheers.]

You've already proven—! You've already proven you can insinuate yourself into my life! Talk yourself onto the field! Say I got a couple of toy helmets or whatever! Here is what I'm going to say. Chris, in my opinion, has a healthier worldview than you.

[Laughter.]

But if it gives you happiness and not pain—well, okay. I mean, I guess part of the pleasure of following sports is the pain that is

causes you. This is called the Hellraiser Principle. These are—these jinxes are kind of like your cenobites coming to rip your skin off and make you feel terrible. Look at Chris! For a sad man, look how happy he is! Now that he admits that he’s about a spec of—a spec of meaningless dust in an uncountable time in this universe that has no meaningful story or purpose. But okay. If you wanna feel this way, that’s fine. Chris... *[solemnly]* I’m going against my better judgement to find in Paul’s favor.

[One audience member cheers loudly.]

Wow. I’m going to find in Paul’s favor only because, as his friend, you know some of the things that will trigger this anxiety, and you should probably avoid doing that if you know that saying the wrong thing—you know the kinds of things that you couldn’t say. You’re correct and happier and a—do you have children?

00:45:07 Chris Guest
00:45:08 John Host

Yes.
Okay, you’re a better father also.

[Laughter.]

That’s not true. That’s not true. That’s not true. But I can’t take the joy of Paul’s pain away from him. Paul, I’m going to rule in your favor and I’m gonna say that I have absolute confidence that the Philadelphia Eagles are gonna win the Superbowl.

00:45:36 Paul Guest
00:45:37 John Host
00:45:40 Jesse Host

[Screams and laughter.]

No, they’re not.
This is the sound of a gavel. I hope you have fun. That is all.
Paul and Chris, thank you for joining us on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

00:45:49 Sound Effect Transition

Three gavel bangs.

00:45:52 Sound Effect Transition

Three gavel bangs.

00:45:54 Jesse Host

We’re taking a break from our show at the Gothic Theatre. You have a live show coming up for our New York based friends. I know! I do. You know, apart from our tour, I don’t do as many live shows as I used to, but I have a rare live event coming up here in my hometown of New York City. *Selected Shorts*—a very famous radio program about short stories—asked me to host the McSweeney’s 25th Anniversary Extravaganza on May 10th at Symphony Space. And how could I say no? I didn’t. I said yes, I will host it. It’s gonna be a great night full of friends and family of McSweeney’s, reading stories and sharing memories. I’m hosting it with musical guest Stephin Merritt of the Magnetic Fields. I think it’s gonna be a really special night, and I hope you can come.

00:46:01 John Host

And I’ll tell you what, Symphony Space, *Selected Shorts*, they’ve got special tickets if you’re under 30 years old. 17 bucks. Just in for 17 bucks. Fantastic deal. So, check it out. Just google *Selected Shorts* John Hodgman. You’ll find it.

00:46:57 Jesse Host

Jesse, what do you have going on?
I have some cool stuff on *Bullseye* and *Jordan, Jesse, Go!*—my other shows. We had a couple of really cool *Bullseye* interviews

recently. One was with my friend, Marc Maron, who folks might know as a comic and actor and podcaster. A really fun and deep conversation about what's been going on in his life. Among other things, a really brilliant standup special and his partner who passed away. Marc Summers from *Double Dare* telling the story of—

[John laughs.]

The time Burt Reynolds pied him on *The Tonight Show* in an angry way. And one of the greatest artists of the American theatre, as far as I'm concerned: Anna Deavere Smith, who folks might know from her like journalistic solo shows, like *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992*. Which is in revival here in LA. And Anna Deavere Smith, like possible the smartest and most insightful person who's ever been on *Bullseye*. Just a level of incandescent brightness that you cannot believe is real. And if you wanna learn something about theatre and how it works and how to make it, you could hardly do better than that conversation with Anna Deavere Smith. I really can't say enough about her and her work, all that kind of stuff.

And then, you know, over on *Jordan, Jesse, Go!* it's a bunch of me and Jordan swearing and saying gross stuff. So, go listen to that if that's what you're into.

00:48:37 John Host You might say that it is two of the funniest people and oldest friends being as funny as funny people can be, honestly. It's what it is.

00:48:45 Jesse Host So, go listen to those shows. Let's get back to the stage of the Gothic Theatre in Denver and Swift Justice with our pal, the hilarious David Gborie.

00:48:55 Sound Effect Transition Three gavel bangs.

00:48:57 Jesse Host Please welcome to the stage: Christy and Andrew!

[Applause and cheers.]

00:49:01 John Host Christy!

00:49:02 Jesse Host Christy brings the case against her boyfriend, Andrew. Andrew likes to play video games featuring Nintendo's famous hero plumber. Christy—

00:49:12 David Gborie Guest Luigi!

00:49:13 Jesse Host Christy says he pronounces that character's name incorrectly. Judge Hodgman, you may proceed.

00:49:22 John Host Hello Christy and Andrew. Andrew, you like to play videogames featuring Nintendo's famous hero plumber?!

00:49:29 Jesse Host Nintendo's famous hero plumber! It says here on the paper!

[John stammers.]

00:49:34 David Guest It's like a modern-day warrior poet.

[Laughter.]

00:49:38 John Host I thought Jesse had been replaced by a chatbot. Okay.

[Laughter.]

00:49:45 Jesse Host But—
David Gborie, I think you would make a good king of the cowboy poets.

00:49:49	David	Guest	Maaan, your lips to God's ears.
			<i>[Laughter.]</i>
00:49:54	John	Host	But Christy says that you say the name of this hero adventure plumber—what was it?
00:50:00	Jesse	Host	Uh, that's Nintendo's famous hero plumber!
00:50:03	John	Host	Christy says that you say the name of this—of Nintendo's famous hero plumber incorrectly. How would you say it? Let's say, for example, that you were this person, and you were saying, "It's me."
			<i>[Laughter.]</i>
00:50:22	Andrew	Guest	This person. I'm gonna start with: this is a gotcha. But I would say, <i>[dejectedly]</i> "It's-a me, Mae-rio."
			<i>[Overwhelming boos.]</i>
00:50:32	David	Guest	Yeah, I expected that. How would you park the car at Harvard Yard?
			<i>[Laughter.]</i>
00:50:38	Andrew	Guest	I don't know. On the green?
			<i>[Chuckling.]</i>
00:50:40	David	Guest	Very reasonable.
00:50:41	John	Host	I'd do Spot Hero and probably try to get a spot in the Charles Hotel garage. 'Cause I'm a bougie <i>[censored]</i> hole.
			<i>[Laughter.]</i>
			That's a gotcha! You're not wrong! You're not wrong, Andrew! That was a gotcha. I gotcha! I got you! That's—gotcha is me mispronouncing "I got you". But it had to happen. Christy, how do you—? Let's say you were a famous hero plumber, and you were gonna identify yourself. Like, wait a minute, are you Christy or—? Who are you?
00:51:20	Christy	Guest	No, it's-a me, <u>Mario</u> . (Mah-ree-oh.)
00:51:26	John	Host	I mean—
00:51:27	Jesse	Host	This is why the fans were so upset that Christy didn't play Mario in the movie.
			<i>[Laughter.]</i>
00:51:34	John	Host	That's right.
00:51:37	David	Guest	Can I—can I ask a question?
			<i>[They confirm.]</i>
00:51:44	Andrew	Guest	What about his evil twin? How do you pronounce that name? Wario. (Wor-ee-oh.)
			<i>[Shock and surprise from the audience.]</i>
00:51:46	David	Guest	Wario. Waaaait a SECOOOND!

[Shouting.]

00:51:55 John Host I call shenanigans on this guy!
Andrew, do you—do you come from a place where this is how Mario is pronounced, typically? Or—?

00:52:00 Andrew Guest Yes! Actually, I do.
00:52:01 John Host Where do you come from?
00:52:03 Andrew Guest So, I grew up here, but I lived in New York 'til I was nine. Hudson River Valley, just north of the city. And that is how people say—Putnam County? Westchester County?
00:52:11 John Host Westchester. Near Terrytown.
00:52:13 Andrew Guest White Plains?
00:52:14 John Host Sleepy Hollow.
00:52:15 Andrew Guest Oh, yeah, sure. Of course. Right.
00:52:16 John Host Metro North, represent.
00:52:18 Andrew Guest

[Laughter.]

00:52:22 John Host Saddest thing.
That is what Sleepy Hollow is best known for.

[Andrew agrees.]

00:52:27 Jesse Host Yeah, it's Metro North Station. Yeah, yeah.
00:52:28 John Host Hey, uh, guys?
[Spookily.] The teerrifying stooory of the commuter train without a conductorrrr!

00:52:35 Jesse Host Guys, we've got five minutes a case, so if we spend three minutes making local references to a place where we are not...

00:52:43 John Host Look, I've been on the road for a week wearing the same underwear. Good luck! But I'm homesick. Would you say that there, in Sleepy Hollow, on a dark Halloween everyone would be saying Mae-rio instead of Mario? Is that how it's said there, sir?

00:53:00 Andrew Guest It is absolutely how it is said there.

[Someone in the crowd screams "NO!"]

00:53:03 John Host I feel like—
[Interrupting.] Hold! Hold. I'm—alright. I will ask the audience in a moment, please. Please finish your sentence.

00:53:10 Andrew Guest I wanna point out there was a "yes" in there.
00:53:13 John Host That's fine. That's—they're also part of the audience. Yes.
00:53:16 Andrew Guest I'm just—I'm feeling kind of—
00:53:17 John Host Try to hold both ideas at the same time. See what I mean?
00:53:19 Andrew Guest Okay. Okay. Um, but yeah, that is how I would say it there when I'm talking about the game. It is *Super Mae-rio World* or something to that effect. I think if—yeah, that's it. That's how you say the name.

00:53:31 John Host When you just said it like that, so casually, it's like I hardly even noticed it was weird. It seems okay if that's how you grew up.
Christy, why is this bad?

00:53:40 Christy Guest Because it's a person's name! So, like different words can have regional pronunciations, but Mario—as you so started, he says his own name.

00:53:51 David Guest Heeell yeah!
00:53:52 Christy Guest And we need to respect how people pronounce their own names! Right?!

00:53:57 John Host *[Cheers and applause.]*
Oooh! And one might argue that that extends even now to virtual people, like video game characters and other AIs. Right, Chatbot?

[Laughter.]

00:54:14 David Guest
What do you think about this, David Gborie?
I—I'm with you. As someone who has a name that's often mispronounced, I think it doesn't matter regionally. *[Stammering.]*
He told you how to—he yells it all the time! He's like, *[imitating Mario]* "Mario! Mario! Mario!" You're not new to this! You know what it is! You're like, *[gruffly]* "Hey, Mae-rio!" That's not... that's not fair to anybody!

00:54:32 Jesse Host
It would be—it would be fair— To be fair, it would be fair to say Mae-rio if it were a Nintendo platformer about former New York governor and several-time presidential candidate Mario Cuomo.

00:54:44 John Host
That's true!

[Laughter.]

00:54:48 Jesse Host
That's true. A video game that is begging to be made.
Yeah! Ooooh! I wish there was a game about eloquence!

00:54:53 John Host
[Laughs.] But on the other hand, I think—David Gborie—you make a point just by saying—how did you say it? "It's-a me"?

00:54:59 David Guest
[Imitating Mario.] It's-a me, Mario!

00:55:00 John Host
Yeah, that's not what you're saying, Christy! You're over here saying, *[with no affectation]* "It's-a me, Mario!" You didn't go—you didn't—do it his way!

00:55:07 Christy Guest
[Impersonating Mario.] "It's-a me! Mario!"

00:55:09 John Host
Yeah, that's how you say it.

00:55:10 David Guest
This feels like we're getting into weird territory.

00:55:14 Jesse Host
I don't know, I think it's kinda hot.

00:55:17 David Guest
That's what I meant, weird territory.

[Laughter.]

00:55:18 John Host
That's right. Andrew, does Christy say anything quote/unquote "wrong"?

00:55:24 Andrew Guest
Yeah, they're from Wisconsin. So.

[Laughter.]

You can ask them to say a word like "bag".

[Scattered yelling from the audience.]

00:55:31 John Host
Bag.
Like B-A-G?

00:55:32 Andrew Guest
Yeah, like a thing you put things in.

00:55:34 John Host
Right. How would you say that word?

00:55:37 Christy Guest
That would be bae-g.

00:55:39 John Host
Bae-g? It sounds like you're made to say Mae-rio. That would be a bae-g?

[Christy confirms.]

00:55:51 David Guest Oh, I see. Any other Wisconsin things you wanna bring up to humiliate your partner on stage?
Any proper nouns? Like, 'cause she's saying words, right? Like, it's still names! Any names she says wrong?

00:55:57 Andrew Guest I'm not trying to shame!
00:55:58 John Host How do you say the name of the actor Ed Begley Jr.?

[Laughter.]

00:56:06 Christy Guest Bae-g, right? Ed Bae-gly Jr., right?
Sure. Ed Bae-gly Jr., who I totally know who that is.

[Laughter.]

00:56:11 John Host Wooooow!

[Scattered boos.]

00:56:13 Christy Guest Oh no! Oh, I lost the crowd favor so quickly. *[Laughs.]*
00:56:15 John Host Wooooow. Wowieeee.
00:56:19 Jesse Host Someone's not doing enough about the climate crisis.

[Laughter.]

00:56:21 John Host That's right. Somewhere in the world, Christopher Guest is showing emotion for once!

[Laughter.]

Just kidding, Christopher Guest. I love you, if you hear this part. I can't think of a person. Let's go—so, there was one person yelling in the crowd that, in Sleepy Hollow, you do say Mario Mae-rio. Who is the one who said—who takes that position? Well, they're not speaking up anymore. What? What, what, what, what? No. I know someone yelled—no, I'm getting to you, person! Someone did yell yes. You heard it, right?

[Andrew confirms.]

Who was the one who yelled yes? They've left in shame.

[Laughter.]

Now, vocal person halfway down in the back in the darkness who yelled no, are you from Westchester County? Are you from Sleepy Hollow? Right. Okay.

[Laughter.]

00:57:21 Christy Guest Tell you what. We'll go to the audience when it's time. What would you have me rule if I were to rule in your favor, Christy?
I would like you to rule that he should stop saying this name incorrectly, and also just to admit that he's wrong. *[Laughs.]*

[Murmuring from the crowd.]

00:57:32 John Host Why would you resist that judgment, Andrew?
00:57:34 Andrew Guest So, my only thing is I actually do pronounce like—when I think about like the actor Mario Lopez. I have to actually—
00:57:39 John Host Sure. And I'm sure you think about him a lot.

00:57:42	Andrew	Guest	Sure, yeah. Oddly, especially recently. But I have to actually think about that and make myself make that change in pronunciation, which is like fine. I'm super okay with doing that for a real person. I just don't think that the distinction between fictional character and real human is one where I need to like worry about it.
00:58:03	John	Host	But why do you say Wario?
00:58:05	David	Guest	Aw, that's lazy, pal.
			<i>[Laughter.]</i>
00:58:09	Andrew	Guest	That's lazy. You don't wanna start modeling that up.
00:58:11	David	Guest	It's just as much work! You know what I mean? Who have you spent more time with?! Slater or Mario?
			<i>[Laughter.]</i>
00:58:22	Andrew	Guest	Yeah, good point!
00:58:24	John	Host	What would you have me rule if I were to rule in your favor, Andrew?
00:58:27	Andrew	Guest	Uh, I mean the general ruling would be just stop rolling your eyes when I do it and just like don't worry about it?
00:58:33	John	Host	How often is this even happening?!
00:58:35	Andrew	Guest	Surprisingly often!
00:58:37	John	Host	Why are you always going around the apartment going, "It's-a me, Mae-rio!"
			<i>[Laughter.]</i>
00:58:43	Andrew	Guest	Sometimes I'm like, "Do you wanna play some <i>Mario Kart</i> ." Yeah.
00:58:45	John	Host	Ooooooh.
00:58:47	Andrew	Guest	Yeah, I don't like go around like using this guy's—
00:58:50	Jesse	Host	Why is <i>Mae-rio Kart</i> so much worse than <i>Super Mae-rio World</i> ?
00:58:55	David	Guest	<i>[Laughing.]</i> It was a bummer! I don't know why!
00:58:59	Andrew	Guest	Um—so, but the mean ruling would be they have to say bag. They have—every time they say the word bag, they have to pronounce it that way.
00:59:09	John	Host	So, you get Mae-rio—you get to say—wait.
00:59:14	Andrew	Guest	Not like forever, but like—I don't know, the next two weeks, when they say the word—
00:59:18	John	Host	Two weeks of bag?
00:59:20	Andrew	Guest	Yes. To understand how like it actually takes effort.
00:59:22	John	Host	Oh, you're gonna get two weeks of bag. I don't even know what that means.
00:59:27	Andrew	Guest	I don't either, but I'm scared.
00:59:30	John	Host	It doesn't sound good. It sounds better than two weeks of bae-g, though.
			<i>[Laughter.]</i>
			No offence. I love a Wisconsin accent. Here's what I think. I am—I am loathe to try to stamp out regionalism in how people speak. The way that people grow up speaking in different accents is a fascinating reminder that we're a big country with a lot of different experiences. And also, trying to wipe out regionalisms in speech often is pretty discriminatory and it's saying that people are stupid 'cause they don't talk the way I talk. But Christy makes a good point. If Mario were here—and it's pretty clearly pronounced Mario.

01:00:15 Andrew Guest
01:00:16 John Host

[Laughter.]
I don't—that's—yes.
It's also important to respect how humans wish to be—you know, how their names are pronounced and how they wish to be spoken of in the world and referred to in the world. Sadly, little Mae-rio isn't here to defend himself.

[Laughter.]

I am going to—it's not like me to split the baby, but I'm in a different mindset these days, normally. Do you have Disney+?

01:00:43 Andrew Guest
01:00:48 John Host

[Laughter and scattered applause.]
You know, I do! I do.
You ever see the *Star Wars* show, *Andor*? Have you seen the *Star Wars* show, *Andor*?

[Andrew confirms.]

Yeah. My feeling is *And/Or: Why Not Both?*. When referring to the soon-to-be—

[David laughs helplessly.]

When referring—when referring to the soon-to-be sentient being known as Mario, you must say Mario. As in, “It's-a me, Mario.” Or, “Look at Mario driving so swiftly in his Mae-rio cart.”

[Laughter.]

When referring to his cart, you may say Mae-rio. But if only out of consistency, the hobgoblin of *[inaudible]*. Since you say Wario, say, “It's-a me, Mario.” *Mae-rio Kart* is acceptable. And you can say bag, bae-g, but do get to know the work of Ed Begley Jr.. This is the sound of a gavel.

01:01:55 Jesse Host

[Five hollow thumps.]
Christy and Andrew!

[Applause and cheers.]

Welcome Adrienne and Claire! Adrienne brings the case against her girlfriend, Claire. Adrienne says her dog, Rosie, has hands. Claire says dogs only have feet. Judge Hodgman, you may proceed.

01:02:19 John Host

[Laughter.]
We have not met before, so I'm going—Adrienne, are you on my left or your—? Raise your hand if your name is Adrienne.

[Laughter.]

Adrienne, am I pronouncing that correctly?

[She confirms.]

01:02:36	Adrienne	Guest	Okay. Adrienne, you claim that dogs have hands. Is that correct?
01:02:39	John	Host	I believe that my dog has cute hands.
01:02:41	Jesse	Host	<i>[Laughing.]</i> Okay!
01:02:45	John	Host	So noted! Clarification noted.
01:02:50	Adrienne	Guest	What do other dogs have? Dirty stumps?
			You know, I think I'm only concerned with my dog and her cute hands.
01:02:55	John	Host	Okay! Alright. Why—what does—?
01:02:57	Jesse	Host	<i>[Sadly.]</i> Not my dog's nasty flappers.
			<i>[Laughter.]</i>
01:03:02	John	Host	What is the name of your dog?
01:03:04	Adrienne	Guest	Rosie.
01:03:05	John	Host	Rosie. Okay. What makes you feel that Rosie has hands? Where others, including the person you share your life with, would say otherwise.
01:03:15	Adrienne	Guest	So, it's about how she presents them to the world, which is usually in this type of configuration.
01:03:22	John	Host	So, for the listeners at home, it's a proffered cross-paw configuration, which is very adorable to see.
01:03:29	Adrienne	Guest	And also, how she uses them.
01:03:31	John	Host	Which is, I'm sure, to sketch drawings, do jigsaw puzzles.
01:03:36	David	Guest	Smoke cigs.
			<i>[Laughter.]</i>
01:03:41	Adrienne	Guest	So, she can shake with her right and her left hands.
01:03:44	John	Host	She's ambidextrous.
			<i>[Adrienne confirms.]</i>
			Alright.
01:03:47	Adrienne	Guest	She uses her hands like this when she tries to, you know, eat a toy, use a bone, eat a carrot.
01:03:52	John	Host	Let the record—let the record—for the listener at home, Adrienne is making the shape of the double face hugger to indicate how Rosie uses her quote/unquote "hands" to lift—what? Food to her mouth? Or old balls or something? I missed that part.
01:04:10	Adrienne	Guest	Toys, carrots. But you know—using them to put food into her face.
01:04:13	John	Host	Okay, I couldn't believe that you had said carrots.
			<i>[Laughter.]</i>
01:04:16	Adrienne	Guest	Carrots!
01:04:18	Claire	Guest	She eats a lot of carrots per day.
01:04:20	John	Host	I don't—really?!
01:04:21	Jesse	Host	It's very obvious from the gesture you were making that your dog is eating hoagies.
01:04:28	David	Guest	How sure are we it's a dog? Not to be that guy.
01:04:32	John	Host	Good question, David Gborie. Claire, how sure are we it's a dog?
01:04:36	Claire	Guest	90%, I think.
01:04:37	John	Host	90%?

[She confirms.]

I noticed that Adrienne refers to Rosie as her dog. Is it a shared dog? Or is it—?

01:04:43	Claire	Guest	No, it's very firmly her dog.
01:04:45	John	Host	Right. And why does Rosie have not hands but feet? Which is also debatable.
<i>[Laughter.]</i>			
01:04:55	Claire	Guest	She spends a lot of time walking on them.
<i>[John affirms.]</i>			
01:04:59	John	Host	So, that's a lot of it. I mean, I would think that opposable thumbs are pretty much de rigueur.
01:05:04	Claire	Guest	Yeah, I think it's important to recognize—
01:05:05	John	Host	When we talk—when we talk about typical hands. Certainly, lots of people have hands that don't have thumbs, of course. But I'm saying that's kind of how we basically baseline define hands. Right, Claire?
01:05:17	Claire	Guest	Yeah. I think it's really important to recognize that racoons have very cute hands.
01:05:21	Jesse	Host	But!
01:05:22	Claire	Guest	And that's a distinction. You know?
01:05:23	Jesse	Host	Buuut racoon's hands are also nasty flappers.
<i>[Laughter.]</i>			
01:05:28	David	Guest	That's true. Big, nasty flappers.
01:05:31	Jesse	Host	Oh, hold on. Yeah, I just got some news. We actually had a completely different set of people sent in this exact same dispute!
<i>[Laughter and surprise.]</i>			
01:05:42	David	Guest	It's a big Colorado problem.
01:05:45	Jesse	Host	Please welcome Rachel to the stage!
01:05:47	John	Host	Welcome, Rachel, to the stage!
<i>[Applause and cheers.]</i>			
Rachel, you sent in the same dispute?			
<i>[Rachel confirms.]</i>			
But about a different dog?			
<i>[Rachel confirms.]</i>			
01:06:02	Rachel	Guest	What is the name of the dog you sent in your dispute about?
01:06:05	John	Host	My husband's and my dog's name is Angus. Angus. Okay. I heard something different. Now, I—Angus. Right, got it. Got it.
<i>[Laughter.]</i>			
01:06:14	Rachel	Guest	Okay, Angus. Do you know Claire and Adrienne?
01:06:15	John	Host	No. What is happening?
<i>[Laughter.]</i>			

01:06:20	Rachel	Guest	And where is your husband?
01:06:22	John	Host	He's working tonight, unfortunately.
01:06:23	Rachel	Guest	And where is your dog?
01:06:24	John	Host	With my parents.
01:06:27	Rachel	Guest	Does your dog have hands?
			I like to think that hands can be a conditional state, depending on what my dog is doing.
			<i>[Laughter.]</i>
01:06:37	David	Guest	This is going crazy.
01:06:40	Jesse	Host	I think this is part of the airport horse's plan.
01:06:46	John	Host	What are the conditions under which your dog's paws magically transform into hands in a kind of like Catholic miracle way?
01:06:57	Rachel	Guest	Angus also like to hold bones while he's chewing them.
01:07:01	John	Host	Hold bones. How often does he hold carrots?
01:07:05	Rachel	Guest	He doesn't like vegetables very much.
01:07:08	John	Host	I see. And your husband disagrees with you?
			<i>[Rachel confirms.]</i>
01:07:14	Rachel	Guest	He would refer to those front appendages as—?
01:07:15	John	Host	Feet.
			<u>Feet.</u>
			<i>[Laughter.]</i>
			Since he's not here to make his case—Claire, it falls to you to make the case for the world. Why is it important to establish that these dogs, Angus and Rosie and perhaps other dogs in Colorado, do not have hands?
01:07:43	Claire	Guest	I think it's really important for creatures that have hands to like have that distinction. So, humans and—I don't know, racoons as well.
01:07:51	John	Host	You've been sent by the racoons.
01:07:54	Claire	Guest	<i>[Laughing.]</i> That's exactly correct, yes.
01:07:55	John	Host	Bought and paid for by the racoon lobby. I wouldn't put it past them.
01:08:00	Claire	Guest	You found me out.
01:08:02	John	Host	Do you know we have an apartment in Brooklyn, New York? In a metropolitan—large, metropolitan area, David Gborie?
01:08:08	David	Guest	I've heard.
01:08:10	John	Host	And our apartment is on the ground floor. And we have a little sliding door that leads out to a little bit of green space.
01:08:18	David	Guest	Okay, like a backyard?
01:08:20	John	Host	Like—not a backyard, but like a postage stamp of green.
01:08:24	David	Guest	Okay, like you got like your bins out there and stuff?
01:08:27	John	Host	Say it again?
01:08:28	David	Guest	You have your bins out there? Your bins! Like, your recycling—your trash bins.
01:08:31	John	Host	My bins! Oh—no, no, no, no. We don't keep trash out there. It's a—
01:08:34	David	Guest	Oh! It's just like—
01:08:35	Jesse	Host	This is New York! They keep trash in big piles on the sidewalk for some reason. They figured out everything else about being awesome except for that.
01:08:45	David	Guest	They keep it next to the pee! Yeah.
01:08:46	John	Host	I only make the distinction because this is—you know, for the reason in the story, you'll understand. This is not a place where we store trash! It's just a little, tiny, little miniature garden. And on a

summer evening, my wife—who’s a whole human being in her own right—and I were playing the game Scrabble. And we had the sliding door open but the screen door shut, you know, to let in the air. And we heard *[scraping noise]*. And we looked over, and this little, furry, monstrous hand had slid the screen door over. And a racoon walked halfway into our apartment in New York City.

[Laughter.]

01:09:45	David	Guest	Looked around! And then, backed out. And as it was backing out, it said, “I hope you know; I can kill you at any time.”
01:09:50	John	Host	I mean, you’re lucky it backed out. Because I know traditional racoon law, and that would’ve been his apartment now. That’s true! Exactly!

[Laughter.]

01:09:51	David	Guest	He would’ve just been able to stay.
01:09:52	John	Host	Adverse Raccoon Possession!
01:09:54	David	Guest	Yeah, that’s—that’s an old case!
01:10:00	John	Host	You don’t want your dogs to have hands! Hands are the tools of monsters. Look at the world we live in! I don’t want any—
01:10:08	David	Guest	All the worst guys I know have hands.
01:10:10	John	Host	I don’t want any creeps—I don’t want any creeps taking advantage of this information, but David Gborie, I’ll tell you in confidence right now.

[David thanks him.]

01:10:25	David	Guest	Jesse and I are staying at a hotel in Denver that used to be a vocational school and is now a boutique hotel.
01:10:27	John	Host	Oh yeah, I know what you’re talking about. This country’s doing great.

[Laughter.]

01:10:30	David	Guest	We’re gonna be just fine, ‘cause they’re fixing up the schools!
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[Laughter.]

01:10:33	John	Host	Yeah, let’s turn the—
01:10:36	David	Guest	Was that bleak?
01:10:37	John	Host	I’m sleeping in a—I’m sleeping in a classroom where people used to learn how to design bridges and roads. They could get a middleclass life building infrastructure in this country. And now—
01:10:47	David	Guest	And now you’re just sitting there writing racoon bits?
01:10:49	John	Host	All I’m doing is watching <i>Don’t Worry Darling</i> at 2AM, eating a bunch of Pringles to do a podcast. The country’s doing great! You know why? Hands! I’m being sarcastic. Hands! You don’t want hands. Dogs don’t want hands. That’s why they have paws. This is the sound of a gavel.

[Four gavel bangs.]

01:11:08	Jesse	Host	Thank you, Adrienne, Claire, and Rachel!
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[Applause and cheers.]

Welcome, Caroline and Erin! Caroline brings the case against her girlfriend, Erin. Erin wants Caroline to accept part ownership of her cat. Caroline says that cat is Erin's.

[Laughter.]

01:11:31 John Host Judge Hodgman, you may proceed.
01:11:33 Caroline Guest *[Cackles.]* Who seeks justice in this court?
01:11:35 John Host I do! Caroline.
And you are—and you are Caroline.

[She confirms.]

01:11:39 Caroline Guest So, what's happening here? You have a cat? Or you don't have a cat? Erin has a cat.
Erin has a cat. Erin's family adopted this cat in 2015. Erin and I met in the fall of 2020. Erin wants me to accept this cat as mine now that we have moved in together.
01:11:51 John Host Well, congratulations on moving in together. I hope you're having a great time.

[Caroline thanks him and confirms.]

01:11:58 Erin Guest Erin, why do you want Caroline to adopt your cat?
01:12:01 John Host Um, I think it's cruel not to!
01:12:02 Erin Guest Why?
01:12:03 John Host Well, my cat—
The cat doesn't care. The cat barely knows you're alive!

[Laughter.]

01:12:08 Erin Guest That's not true. Cats are—
01:12:09 John Host She's a very affectionate cat.
01:12:11 Jesse Host Cats can be very affectionate.
They know—they know you're alive. They're waiting for you to die, so they can eat you.
01:12:15 David Guest Get that sweet cheek meat, you know? Barbacoa.

[Laughter.]

01:12:22 Erin Guest So, our dear cat, Prudence. Um, yes.
01:12:27 John Host Dear Prudence. Yeah.
01:12:28 Erin Guest Dear Prudence, yes. Not as in the column, but as in the cat. Our dear Prudence, I—
01:12:34 John Host Is that the cat's full name? Our Dear Prudence?

[Laughter.]

01:12:37 Erin Guest What a great name.
01:12:40 John Host Just Prudence, but she is our dear cat, Prudence.
01:12:43 Crosstalk Host Well, no! She's your dear cat, Prudence.
Crosstalk **Erin:** Our.

David: ODP! 'Cause that's cool.

John: Until—

01:12:46 John Host *[Jesse laughs.]*
 Until I order joint custody, apparently!

01:12:49 Erin Guest Which I do hope you will.

01:12:50 John Host So, tell me about our dear cat, Prudence.

01:12:52 Erin Guest Our dear cat, Prudence. So, I—during quarantine—lived completely alone in an apartment. I was supposed to have a roommate; didn't have a roommate. And I was very lonely! And so, my mom offered to just send the cat with me. And so, I took the cat. And I decided that I loved the cat so much and having her in my home so much that she should just be my cat! And my mom was like, "Cool! She's your cat." She was allergic to cats anyway.

01:13:20 John Host It seems to me you're answering a question I didn't ask. I didn't ask how is it that this wonderful cat, your dear Prudence, come into your life but why do you want Caroline to be a coparent to it? And how is it cruel that she isn't?

01:13:32 Erin Guest Well, this is part of it. The time that I brought the cat to my apartment, and she officially became my cat was about a week before we met. Right, so she wasn't really my cat until about right around the time that we got to know each other. And, um—

01:13:49 Caroline Guest As Erin likes to tell people, I essentially moved in about a week after we met.

01:13:54 John Host *[Erin confirms.]*
 So, you are identifying your relationship as—with the cat and with Caroline as happening all at once. It's the formation of a kind of throuple.

01:14:07 Erin Guest *[Laughter.]*
 Yes, me and my dear girlfriend and our cat. *[Laughs.]* Yes.

01:14:11 John Host It sounds extremely wholesome to me, honestly.

01:14:14 Erin Guest *[Laughing.]* It's fantastic!

01:14:16 John Host But you're saying that the cat and Caroline came into your life around the same time. So, why shouldn't there be a bond?

01:14:23 Erin Guest Yeah. So, essentially—I mean, the cat and Caroline came into my life at the same time. And also, around the time that—you know—Caroline came into my life, and she decided to make me her partner long-term and now we live together. She knew that the cat came with that. She knew that the cat was part of the deal. And so, if she didn't want a cat, I probably wasn't the right person to be dating.

01:14:45 John Host Oooh, woah!

[Similar reactions from the audience.]

Ummm. This got heavy quick!

01:14:54 Caroline Guest *[Laughter.]*
 She's really good at that.

01:14:58 John Host *[Laughter.]*
 Um. Uh, what was—*[stammering].*

01:15:02 Erin Guest *[Laughter.]*
 Sorry!

01:15:04 John Host Essentially, you are putting—you are making an ultimatum.

01:15:09 Erin Guest No!

01:15:10 John Host “You must—you must count this cat as your own or we’re not meant to be,” is what you’re saying.

01:15:15 Erin Guest No, not—not necessarily! No, no! But I’m just saying it probably wasn’t—you know—she didn’t have—

01:15:21 John Host Not in so many words, but in about the same number of words and meaning the same thing.

01:15:26 Erin Guest Well! *[Laughs.]*

01:15:30 John Host I concede.
That’s a fairly emotionally manipulative thing to do, Erin, if I may say.

[Laughter.]

01:15:39 Caroline Guest Caroline, why do you hate this cat?
So, I very much love Prudence. It’s just this was the cat that was part of Erin’s life for—you know, five years before we met. And I feel like, if anything, I am a stepparent to her. And while I love her very much, I have no familial emotions towards her.

01:15:58 David Guest Classic stepmom move.

[Laughter.]

01:16:02 Erin Guest It’s like *Cinderella*.

01:16:03 John Host For real! I mean, you have to enter into a blended family delicately. You can’t just be like, “This is your new mommy.” Do you know what I mean?

[Caroline agrees.]

01:16:11 Jesse Host Have you thought about making the cat live in a tower?

[Laughter.]

01:16:20 David Guest Until its hair grows long enough for someone to climb up and marry it.

01:16:25 John Host Or at least send it to boarding school so you guys can party.
Erin, normally we would be able to show photos of the pets that we discuss on this show. Right now, we don’t have that capability. So, I need you to paint a word picture of Prudence. Tell me what Prudence looks like in a typical Prudence post.

01:16:42 Erin Guest Yeah, so she’s a domestic longhair cat with long, fluffy, grey fur and some white spots. And her favorite way to be is to lounge very elegantly, to look like a queen wherever she goes, and also to sometimes just roll over on her back and just show off her belly to the entire world and stay like that for two hours.

01:17:04 Caroline Guest Because belly-up is very elegant.

01:17:06 John Host Woooah!

01:17:07 Erin Guest It is when she does it!

01:17:08 David Guest Don’t judge!

[Laughter.]

01:17:12 John Host You find this cat disgusting! I was—

[Laughter.]

I was just—I was just caught up in this beautiful word painting of this wonderful cat! But it seems as though you do not—you're like, "Hm. That's not ladylike, dear. Listen to your new mommy."

[Laughter.]

"We *[chuckles]*—we eat dinner at the table together." Do you? That would be cool.

01:17:41 Erin Guest
01:17:44 John Host

Sometimes she likes to jump up there with us.

Yeah, of course! But how else—does she like to cuddle with Caroline?

01:17:47 Erin Guest
01:17:50 John Host

Yes! Yes, she does indeed.

Caroline, is this true or false?

01:17:51 Caroline Guest
01:17:53 John Host

This is true. She's very affectionate, as Erin said.

And when she gets up in your lap or whatever, do you just put your arms aside and stare into the middle distance, expressing no emotion until Prudence leaves?

01:18:02 Caroline Guest

As I said! I love her very much! I will pet her. I will caress her. I am not the kind of person who will like fawn over her and like my heart melts, but like I'll pet the cat if she sits in my lap!

01:18:13 John Host

That all sounds pretty reasonable. I mean, what more do you want from Caroline?

01:18:19 Erin Guest

I want—I want maybe a little bit more responsibility for the cat and her needs than what we're currently seeing.

["Oooh"s from the audience.]

01:18:28 John Host

I heard someone in the audience say, with cynical finality, "Cat box."

[Laughter.]

01:18:33 Erin Guest
01:18:36 John Host

Yes. There was a point—

Is this a cat box cleaning dispute? You want Caroline to clean the cat box?

01:18:40 Erin Guest

I don't think it necessarily should be boiled down to that, but there was a point where Caroline did say to me—

[Laughter.]

"See, Erin, I love the cat. But if I claim her as my own, that means I have to help clean the litter box."

01:18:55 John Host
01:18:57 Erin Guest

That's true. *[Laughs.]*

And that seemed to be her only reasoning for not wanting to partially adopt the cat!

01:19:02 John Host

And a damn good reason it is!

[Laughter.]

01:19:05 Caroline Guest

Hold on! Hold on. Now, I will mention, we also have a dog. And we live in an apartment. Okay? We take the dog out on—

01:19:12 John Host

What is the name of this dog that you didn't even care to mention earlier?

01:19:15 Caroline Guest
01:19:17 John Host

Tuna. Yes. Our dear tuna.

Tuna, yeah. *[Chuckles.]*

01:19:19 David Guest
01:19:20 Caroline Guest

Whose dog is Tuna?

Ours!

[They react with mock horror.]

We adopted Tuna a year and a half—oh, no. No. My math is wrong. Seven months after we met.

01:19:32 John Host Okay. But you adopted Tuna together.

01:19:35 Caroline Guest Together! Erin is instant that we didn't, but we did.

01:19:38 John Host Can you paint—Caroline, can you paint a word picture of Tuna for me?

01:19:42 Caroline Guest Yes. Tuna is a scrap of a dog. She is a ten-pound terrier mix, coarse, grey, and she only has three legs.

01:19:53 Jesse Host *[John "aw"s.]*
[Desperately.] We don't have pictures of this *[censored]* dog?!

01:19:59 Caroline Guest *[Laughter.]*
I sent them!

01:20:00 John Host Jesse, it's—I don't wanna upset you, but it is—

01:20:02 Jesse Host *[Yelling.]* I'm sorry, children!

01:20:03 John Host This sounds like a real scruffy dog!

01:20:06 Jesse Host Richard! When we said we didn't have enough money to pay for the projector, you didn't tell me there was a scruffy, three-legged *[censored]* dog! Jeeesus *[censored]* Christ!

01:20:22 David Guest *[Laughter.]*
No, I'm hurt too.

01:20:25 Jesse Host Because, David, she said it's a terrier mix! And I said, "Oh, is it gonna be scruffy?" And she said, yeah, it's really scruffy! And then, she said it has three *[censored]* legs! It's a tripod *[censored]* dog! And I can't see it!

01:20:35 David Guest No, all I wanna do is see it.

01:20:39 John Host Now, Caroline. Without referring to your notes or your phone, can you describe Prudence?

01:20:50 Caroline Guest Yes! Prudence is a cat who is almost exactly the same size as Tuna. She has huge, yellow eyes.

01:20:56 John Host I've heard enough.

[Laughter.]

You describe your cat, first, in comparison to the dog?!

[Caroline confirms with laughter.]

01:21:12 Caroline Guest You love that dog, and you're ambivalent about that cat.
I am not ambivalent about the cat. I just... maybe I love the dog a little bit more. *[Laughs.]*

01:21:17 John Host There. I appreciate—

01:21:19 David Guest Will somebody think of the children?!

01:21:21 John Host I appreciate your honesty. Now, who walks the dog?

01:21:25 Caroline Guest Both of us.

01:21:26 John Host And I presume in Denver, you pick up that poop.

01:21:30 Caroline Guest We actually about an hour outside of Denver, but yes. We do.

01:21:33 John Host Right. Okay, good. And would you say that that is equally shared, those responsibilities, Erin?

[Erin confirms.]

Yes. So, the only thing outstanding is that you have this elegant creature that poops in a box in your bathroom. And that's the problem. You want Caroline to clean up the cat box.

01:21:52 Erin Guest I want her to claim the cat as her own with me. And part of that happens to be the litterbox, yes.

01:21:59 John Host And if she does not claim the cat as her own and clean the litterbox, then it means she doesn't love you enough.

01:22:06 Erin Guest It means she doesn't love Prudence enough!

01:22:08 John Host Woah!

[Laughter.]

01:22:09 Erin Guest And maybe a little bit by extension, me.

01:22:14 John Host David Gborie, what do you think about this?

01:22:16 David Guest This is complicated.

[Laughter.]

As someone who has a stepdad he's not a fan of, I'm gonna say you guys probably gotta do it like we did in my house. You're gonna have to fistfight that cat.

[Laughter.]

We're cool now.

[The laughter restarts.]

01:22:49 John Host If there was no Tuna, if there was no shared dog, then I would feel very comfortable saying sorry, Erin, you and Prudence are a bonded pair, and you can't force a cat upon someone else. But since you have—and I hate to say this—a fur child together already.

[Beleaguered laughing.]

It is—it is not fair. It is—it is the stuff of the "Am I the Asshole" reddit for you to come out and say this is our shared dog and that is her cat. Because the thing is, animals are not humans. Fur babies are animal companions, not babies that you have. Sorry. I'm gonna get jumped outside of the—outside of the former vocational school.

[Laughter.]

Animals are not your children, but they are deeply, deeply sensitive creatures, obviously. And I happen to know that if a cat senses unfairness in your house, there shall be vengeance. Probably in the form of toxoplasmosis. Unless there is a medical reason for not cleaning the cat box, *[sighs]* I think it would be nice for you to do it once... a year. Otherwise—

[Laughter.]

Take good care of your cat, Caroline. She is part of your family just as Erin is. And I hope that you all have an enjoyable time together here, outside of Colorado, where you still pick up the poop.

[Five hollow bangs.]

01:24:49 Jesse Host Erin and Caroline!

01:24:52	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Cheers and applause.]</i> Three gavel bangs.
01:24:55	Jesse	Host	That's it for this week's episode. Thank you to everybody who joined us onstage at the Gothic Theatre in Denver. We are so grateful to all of our litigants who come and perform as part of our live shows. And a very special thank you to our friend, now Denver-based comedian David Gborie. David is not just a brilliant standup comic and not just a voice you hear sometimes <i>[chuckling]</i> if you subscribe to Paramount+.
01:25:22	John	Host	Oh, really? <i>[Laughs.]</i>
01:25:23	Jesse	Host	Yeah. He does—he voices things on Paramount+ that—I think he's the voice of Comedy Central now. I think—
01:25:29	John	Host	That's incredible.
01:25:30	Jesse	Host	Kyle Kinane has ceded it to David Gborie.
01:25:32	John	Host	Yeah, there was a ceremony.
01:25:33	Jesse	Host	Yeah. A brilliant standup comic. He's also a hilarious podcaster. If you've never heard the podcast <i>All Fantasy Everything</i> with Gborie and Ian Karmel and Sean Jordan, they are so funny. They do fantasy drafts of everything. And Gborie now has his own podcast called <i>My Mama Told Me</i> with Langston Kerman. It is—it is an investigation into Black conspiracy theories, which I think is a fascinating subject. I love it. Love it. Love it. Langston, also crazy funny. But yeah, Gborie, one of the funniest dudes ever. So, go check out <i>My Mama Told Me</i> and <i>All Fantasy Everything</i> .
01:26:13	John	Host	<i>My Mama Told Me</i> and <i>All Fantasy Everything</i> .
01:26:16	Jesse	Host	Evidence and photos from our show posted on our Instagram account, at instagram.com/judgejohnhodgman . Follow us there. Join the conversation about this week's episode on the Maximum Fun subreddit, at MaximumFun.Reddit.com . Thanks to Reddit user Scrotal Migraine for naming this— <i>[chuckles]</i> episode's case, "Buy Me Subpoenas and Crackerjack".
01:26:41	John	Host	Can't deny that genius.
01:26:43	Jesse	Host	<i>Judge John Hodgman</i> , created by Jesse Thorn and John Hodgman. This episode, recorded by our friend Matthew Barnhart. Produced by Valerie Moffatt, Richard Robey, and Jennifer Marmor. We'll talk to you next time on the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast.
01:26:58	Sound Effect	Transition	Three gavel bangs.
01:27:01	Sound Effect	Transition	Cheerful ukulele chord.
01:27:02	Speaker 1	Guest	MaximumFun.org .
01:27:04	Speaker 2	Guest	Comedy and culture.
01:27:05	Speaker 3	Guest	Artist owned—
01:27:06	Speaker 4	Guest	—audience supported.