

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

[00:00:02] **Jesse Thorn:** Welcome to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. I'm Bailiff Jesse Thorn. This week, "Fight Court". William brings the case against his wife, Wren. Wren is a member of an amateur boxing gym. William wants to join her gym. Wren is concerned about him overshadowing her hobby. 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.

(Chairs squeak, followed by heavy footsteps and a door closing.)

[00:00:33] **John Hodgman:** David was like, "There's another downtown artist talking about boxing in New York? That's my thing." So, he challenged me to a boxing match. I thought about it, and I decided I'm gonna call myself the Herring Wonder. I had this idea that I would be a reincarnated, turn of the century, Jewish boxer, and I would be fueled by herring. And I would have herring breath in the ring. So, I accepted the challenge. It's on.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn, please swear them in.

[00:00:59] **Jesse Thorn:** William and Wren, please rise and raise your right hands.

(Chairs squeak.)

Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God or whatever?

(They swear.)

Do you swear to abide by Judge John Hodgman's ruling, despite the fact that he has a weak right cross?

(They swear.)

Judge Hodgman, you may proceed.

[00:01:21] **John Hodgman:** The only thing weaker is my left jab.

[00:01:24] **Jesse Thorn:** Yeah. Watch for the hook though.

[00:01:26] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, you'll see it coming. It's very slow.

[00:01:28] **Jesse Thorn:** Cool Breeze taught us that.

[00:01:30] **John Hodgman:** William and Wren, you may be seated for an immediate summary judgment in one of yours favors.

(Chairs squeak.)

Can either of you name the piece of culture I referenced when I entered the courtroom? Uh, William, let's start with you.

[00:01:42] **William:** Ugh, I think I'm gonna have to go with Mike Tyson in an interview. Before he got into boxing, maybe he did herring fishing.

[00:01:50] **John Hodgman:** (Chuckling.) Okay! Mike Tyson in an alternate universe, in which he fished for herring. It's a good guess. Wren, what's your guess?

[00:01:57] **Wren:** I'm gonna guess the Barbara Streisand film, *The Main Event*.

[00:02:03] **John Hodgman:** The Barbara Streisand film, *The Main Event*!

[00:02:05] **Jesse Thorn:** Wrong, it was from *A Star is Born*.

[00:02:07] **John Hodgman:** Uh, wrong. It's called *Yentl*. (Chuckles.) Uh, well, all guesses are wrong. Jesse, can you name the cultural reference? You should be able to.

[00:02:17] **Jesse Thorn:** That's from one of my favorite television shows of all time, *Bored to Death*, starring John Hodgman.

[00:02:21] **John Hodgman:** Actually, Jesse, all guesses are wrong yet again.

[00:02:25] **Jesse Thorn:** Really?! Is it not?

[00:02:27] **John Hodgman:** That is a quote from Jonathan Ames, the creator of *Bored to Death*, in a story about his own real life, when he got into a meta boxing match with a performance artist called David "The Impact Addict" Leslie, in New York City. And he told that story on a little radio show called *Bullseye*, on May 21st, 2021.

[00:02:55] **Jesse Thorn:** Never heard of it.

[00:02:56] **John Hodgman:** Never heard of it. It's an NPR show. I highly recommend it. It's part of a segment called The Craziest Bleeping Day of My Life or something?

[00:03:05] **Jesse Thorn:** Oh yeah, The Craziest (censor beep)ing Day of My Entire Career.

[00:03:08] **John Hodgman:** That's right. We'll bleep that out. Craziest Bleeping Day of My Entire Career.

That's a really fun story. And yes, you're right. *Bored to Death* is a terrific show. Thank you very much. And a lot of that true life story about Jonathan getting into a boxing match was used for the plot of *Bored to Death* season one, episode eight, "Take a Dive"—in which I, John Hodgman, playing the sniffling Louis Green—I actually had to train to box. And you know what, Jesse? Challenging.

The sweet science is not good for a weak asthmatic like me. But I guess that's what we're gonna talk about today. Who comes to this court seeking justice, please?

[00:03:52] **William:** I do, your honor.

[00:03:54] **John Hodgman:** You are William. What is the nature of your dispute?

[00:03:56] **William:** Well, we've both dabbled in boxing for a bit. She's now part of a gym and I've been out.

[00:04:04] **John Hodgman:** She?! She?!

[00:04:08] **William:** Wren. Wren is a part of a—

[00:04:09] **John Hodgman:** (Stammering.) This is your partner, your married partner?

[00:04:12] **William:** Yes. We've been married about six years.

[00:04:15] **John Hodgman:** Her name is Wren.

[00:04:16] **William:** Her name is Wren. Yes. And I've been out of boxing for a bit. She's got back into it, and—

[00:04:25] **John Hodgman:** She?!

[00:04:26] **William:** Wren! (Laughs.)

[00:04:27] **John Hodgman:** Now it's okay. Now you can say it. You've established that Wren is a whole human being in her own right, who happens to be married to you there in Salt Lake City. Okay. Dabbled in boxing. You got out of it. Wren is getting back into it. Go on.

[00:04:39] **William:** Correct. And giving me the bug again. And in October, there's going to be an amateur fight card, and one of the attractive things about training boxing is you have this goal at the end.

Uh, okay. Now all of the training I've done is culminating in a final event. And without that, it's hard to be motivated to engage. And so, the problem here is she's okay with me going to the gym, but not—Wren is not okay with necessarily me being on the same card as her, because having an actual fight camp to engage in an actual fight is a different kind of beast.

[00:05:23] **John Hodgman:** Wren tell me about this boxing gym.

[00:05:26] **Wren:** Well, this gym is really cool, because it fills a really good niche between—like we've trained—when we used to live in Vegas, we used to train at a pro gym. And that was way too much for us. It was—

[00:05:39] **John Hodgman:** Yeah. I would guess a pro gym in Las Vegas is pretty intense. I betcha.

[00:05:44] **Wren:** We did work for their website, and in exchange, one of the coaches trained us. But—

[00:05:50] **John Hodgman:** I was gonna stop you and say, for the viewer who hasn't had a chance to check out the photographs—the very charming photographs of William and Wren and the evidence, which we'll be getting to later. William and Wren look like a couple of people who work on a website, maybe for a boxing—for a pro boxing gym, but more likely for like Ruby Coffee would be my guess.

(They chuckle.)

[00:06:13] **Jesse Thorn:** I'm already like putting their number into my phone in case I'm having trouble with Windows later.

[00:06:19] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, they look—you look like two lovely, if I may say so, nerds. With a kind of like—with a little bit of like a metal element to your nerdism, would that be fair to say? We've got a big beard on William.

[00:06:35] **Wren:** And a Mohawk on me.

[00:06:37] **John Hodgman:** Oh, you got a Mohawk! But I can't see it, 'cause you're wearing some kind of black cap right now.

[00:06:42] **Wren:** Yeah, I'm wearing my Las Vegas Golden Knights cap right now, because we won a Stanley Cup. So—

[00:06:47] **John Hodgman:** Stanley Cup winning team of hockey, Jesse Thorn. Hockey. You know how you love baseball so much and talk about it? I learned who won the Stanley Cup in hockey, so that's kind of my thing now. Hockey.

[00:07:00] **Jesse Thorn:** Yeah, it's about the same, about the same deal. Hockey is another form of exercise that culminates in hurting someone. (Laughs.)

[00:07:08] **Wren:** That's actually why I started watching hockey.

[00:07:11] **John Hodgman:** Well, I've been in a professional boxing gym in New York City when I was forced to train physically for this TV show, *Bored to Death*.

And they're intense. It's not a place where I felt entirely comfortable. But you don't live in Las Vegas anymore. You live in Salt Lake City. What I like to call the Azores of the American West. Right? One person will get that joke, and that's all it's for. In any case, tell me about the boxing gym you go to now. Is there a strong beardo, fuzzy Mohawk, Magic the Gathering contingent in this gym? Is it a little bit more nerd friendly?

[00:07:48] **Wren:** I think it's a bit more everyone friendly. Uh, yes. I hang out with all—people from all kinds of walks of life there. We get people who are just there to get a workout. We've got people who actually wanna learn some like boxing technique. And they host these amateur events a couple times a year.

[00:08:12] **John Hodgman:** And this is the one that's coming up in October. That's the point of contention, at the moment.

(Wren confirms.)

But let me go back a little bit. Now, William said that you both have dabbled in boxing. Wren, what is your history with boxing?

[00:08:24] **Wren:** Well, initially the first time I went to a boxing gym—well, we both independently, before we were together, were interested in watching combat sports. And—

[00:08:36] **Jesse Thorn:** So, that's basically—what are we talking about? MMA, boxing, jousting, um, fencing?

[00:08:45] **Wren:** I actually did use to fence in high school, as well.

[00:08:46] **John Hodgman:** Ooh! What did—what was your—what was your sword? Épée, foil, or saber?

[00:08:51] **Wren:** It was épée.

[00:08:52] **John Hodgman:** Nice. New York Times Crosswords favorite. Yeah. Uh, okay. So, you both independently liked watching combat sports.

[00:09:00] **Wren:** Right. And then, the first time either of us went into a boxing gym, it was me who went into a very, very—more of an aerobics class with boxing. You would, you know, punch bags. Less of actually trying to teach you anything.

[00:09:17] **Jesse Thorn:** Like a punching Zumba.

[00:09:19] **Wren:** Exactly! And that really wasn't for me either. What got us both really, really into boxing was that we participated in this comedy boxing event.

[00:09:30] **John Hodgman:** (Thoughtfully.) Comedy boxing, you said?

[00:09:32] **Wren:** Yes, it was hosted by a different podcast that we listened to. And—

[00:09:37] **John Hodgman:** A different podcast, you say! Jesse—

[00:09:40] **Jesse Thorn:** *Pod Save America*.

[00:09:41] **John Hodgman:** Sounds like they listened to a different podcast. Okay. I think I've heard everything I need to in order to make my decision. Goodbye, forever. William and Wren, you're both out of order.

[00:09:49] **Jesse Thorn:** And you know what, I'm never listening to *On the Media* again, now that I found out they host boxing events.

[00:09:56] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, Brooke Gladstone runs a tight promotion, a tight boxing promotion for sure. Comedy boxing only, though. What is comedy boxing, Wren?

[00:10:05] **Wren:** Well, this event, it has a bunch of different—you know, different themes for the different fights. Some of them are more serious, some of them are more silly. The one that I did was musical chairs. So, you would start with about maybe eight ladies in the boxing ring with six chairs. And whoever doesn't get a chair, those two have to fight each other to stay in the next round.

[00:10:29] **John Hodgman:** Okay. Gotcha. So, there are two people who get locked out of the chairs.

(Wren confirms.)

So, it's real boxing with some comedy.

[00:10:36] **Wren:** With comedy elements.

[00:10:38] **John Hodgman:** Comedy elements, exactly. And did you have—did you box under a hilarious nom de box? A pseudonym or something?

[00:10:45] **Wren:** I hadn't been going by any name yet, the last couple that I did. But I have since adopted the name Wrenegade.

[00:10:54] **John Hodgman:** Nice. And your name is Wren, spelled like the bird.

[00:10:58] **Wren:** Spelled like the bird. So, Wrenegade, spelled with a W.

[00:11:01] **John Hodgman:** That's pretty—that's pretty good, I have to say. That's really good. William, are you into comedy boxing?

[00:11:06] **William:** Uh, yeah. My fights were a little more serious, so I did ones called Biggest Loser. So—

[00:11:12] **John Hodgman:** Listen to this guy, comedy boxing gatekeeping over here. A little bit more serious.

(William laughs.)

It's okay, William. You did serious comedy boxing, I get it. Yeah. What was different about yours?

[00:11:24] **William:** It was, you know, three rounds, and it was the two people who lost the most weight in the timeframe given. So, for me, I lost about 60/70 pounds and—

[00:11:38] **John Hodgman:** Wowie-zowie.

[00:11:39] **William:** Yeah. And then they're against somebody else who lost a similar amount. So, two people who weren't very fit and then got very fit very fast.

[00:11:45] **John Hodgman:** Very fit, very fast. That's not comedy. That feels probably like serious biz. That's not a joke. That's not a—neither of these are a joke. Even though you're starting with musical chairs, you are still getting up and boxing. Hmm. So, is this how you two met? In the comedy boxing world of Salt Lake City?

[00:12:04] **William:** Uh, no. We met because she showed up to my work one day, where I was a manager of a company that works on websites. So—and so, she showed up because her friend worked there, and they had lunch together. And that's where we first met.

[00:12:22] **John Hodgman:** Oh, okay. But you had already—then you discovered that you had blood sport in common.

(Jesse laughs.)

How did that come up?

[00:12:32] **Wren:** So, one of the—one of the reasons that we started hanging out a lot more is because, you know, I had this interest in watching combat sports, but I didn't have access to the pay-per-views and such. But I knew this handsome guy who did watch them all. And if I went over to his house, I could get the fights for free.

[00:12:51] **John Hodgman:** Fights for free! You were a free fightin' freeloader with a romantic angle as well. Nice. That's the sweet science right there.

[00:13:00] **Jesse Thorn:** I can't imagine anything more romantic.

[00:13:02] **John Hodgman:** So, who boxed first, comedy or otherwise?

[00:13:06] **Wren:** The first event that we did together, he was signed up. He had, you know—was in all the paperwork for the event. And I kind of—I trained with him a bit, just ‘cause I thought it was cool. I wanted to join—hang out at the gym.

[00:13:22] **John Hodgman:** You were dating together at this point?

[00:13:24] **Wren:** Yeeeah, I think we were dating. I don't think we were married yet. I think we were dating. And there ended up being an opening for me to hop into this musical chair event at the last minute. So, we were both in the same event together, but he knew and was training for it, and I was a little bit more spontaneous.

[00:13:45] **John Hodgman:** So—but this event was the first event either of you had done?

(Wren confirms.)

And you were doing musical chairs, whereas, William, you were doing this physical challenge, get in shape fast deal.

(They confirm.)

Alright. And then, so basically, your history is kind of matched. You know, different style of events, but it was the same deal. And this was in Salt Lake City?

[00:14:10] **Wren:** That was in Vegas.

[00:14:12] **John Hodgman:** That was in Vegas. Comedy boxing center of the world. Is there comedy boxing in Salt Lake City?

[00:14:19] **William:** I don't think so.

[00:14:20] **Wren:** I would guess not.

[00:14:21] **John Hodgman:** Okay. Alright. And now you've been married for six years. Do you have any other hobbies besides watching and participating in physical combat?

[00:14:33] **William:** So, yeah, I'm kind of a hobby addict. So, I jump into stuff and go very hard for a while and then stop.

[00:14:41] **John Hodgman:** I think you send in some evidence of your hobby addictions. So, I'm gonna take a look now. All these photos, of course, will be available on the show page at MaximumFun.org, as well as our Instagram account, which is [@JudgeJohnHodgman](https://www.instagram.com/JudgeJohnHodgman) on Instagram.

And I'm going in order. Here's a picture of you, William, in a boxing ring with arms aloft. What event was this?

[00:15:06] **William:** This was the second event I was in. And it was part of the same kind of comedy boxing, and yeah. There—I won that time. The first time I didn't, so I had to try again.

[00:15:21] **John Hodgman:** And what was the—what was the gimmick on this competition?

[00:15:24] **William:** Uh, it was biggest loser again, because if you get very fit very fast, it's easy to get very unfit very fast.

[00:15:32] **John Hodgman:** Got it, got it, got it. So, you did it again. This time you won. And then—now, are these in chronological order? Then did you give up boxing to take up steampunk? 'Cause I see a picture of you with a bunch of knobs and dials on a bowler hat.

[00:15:43] **William:** Yeah, my steam punk and metalworking adventure was before boxing.

[00:15:48] **John Hodgman:** Okay, gotcha. So, these are not in any particular order. I see now a human hand holding a bunch of glossy rocks, blue and azure and pearly glossy rocks. What am I looking at?

[00:16:03] **William:** Yeah, currently one of my big hobbies is opal cutting. I get rough from Australia and have a shop in my garage and turn rough into gems.

[00:16:14] **Jesse Thorn:** I like that William's lifestyle is what I would call Gigantic Travis McElroy.

(They laugh.)

[00:16:22] **John Hodgman:** Did you—is that your comedy boxing name? Gigantic Travis McElroy? Or is it Rough-Cutting William the Opal Killer.

[00:16:30] **Wren:** He doesn't have a nickname.

[00:16:32] **John Hodgman:** He doesn't have a nickname.

[00:16:33] **William:** My last name rhymes with hammer, so some people will call me the Hammer. But—

[00:16:36] **John Hodgman:** Fair enough. And then, there's a picture of—I presume—you, William, smooching—is that you Wren, in this photo?

(Wren confirms.)

Through the ropes, like Rocky Balboa style. What's the story here? Plus, you're on the jumbotron behind. That's incredible. That's an incredible photo.

[00:16:54] **William:** Yeah, that was at the same event where I won. She was in my corner. So, she's the one that gets the stool out, gives me water, kinda coaches me and makes sure I'm doing what I trained to do. So.

[00:17:06] **John Hodgman:** What kind of—what kind of coaching did you offer, Wren?

[00:17:09] **Wren:** Oh, well, one of the big things that my job was to remind him was to be gentle. He doesn't need to just go all out in the first round. He needs to pace himself and wear the other guy out a little bit, find his mark. Not just—not just go in with heavy hands, just wait for the timing. So, that was the big coaching thing. And feeding of the water is very important.

[00:17:34] **Jesse Thorn:** Did you do any blood spitting?

[00:17:37] **William:** Um, I did actually. I did start bleeding in the first round, the first punch hit my nose, and so the whole fight it was (muffled, inaudible) blood spitting.

[00:17:46] **John Hodgman:** That's because you go hard. 'Cause you go hard, is what I'm hearing. You go hard, and then you burn out.

[00:17:55] **William:** Yeah. And that's why she literally in my corner is yelling at me to be nice while I'm punching somebody, because I go too hard and gas myself out.

[00:18:04] **John Hodgman:** (Laughs.) Be nice when you're punching someone. That's good advice. And then finally, there's a photo of you with those big, heavy hands plucking a banjo while looking a dog straight in the eye. You see this dog picture, Jesse?

[00:18:16] **Jesse Thorn:** Yeah, this is a—that's a great dog.

[00:18:17] **John Hodgman:** Who's this dog that you're playing banjo to?

[00:18:20] **William:** Uh, her name is Banjo.

[00:18:22] **John Hodgman:** (Snorts.) Pretty good.

[00:18:25] **Jesse Thorn:** We should note here that William is locked in on Banjo, the dog. Banjo, the dog, is locked in on banjo, the banjo.

[00:18:33] **John Hodgman:** That's true. William, you're plucking a banjo. And I don't know whether this is a banjolele or you're just a gigantic human. 'Cause this banjo looks pretty small in your hands.

[00:18:43] **William:** That's actually a larger than average banjo. That's a long neck banjo, a Pete Seeger style.

[00:18:48] **Jesse Thorn:** That's actually a guitarrón.

[00:18:51] **John Hodgman:** Did you—you play the banjo currently? Or is this something you gave up?

[00:18:55] **William:** No, I still play. That's another one of my hobbies.

[00:18:57] **John Hodgman:** Right. So, when you say you're addicted to hobbies, is it the case that you do go hard and give them up? Or that you go hard, and you keep going hard? You keep cutting those opals, hard?

[00:19:09] **William:** Banjo was one where I'll go hard for a couple months and then not play for a couple months and then pick it up again. Some hobbies are like that, and some are one and done. Steampunk was like more of a one and done. So.

[00:19:21] **John Hodgman:** Yeah. Good call there. Good call. Keep it up with the banjo. Steampunk, everyone can put it down. Eeeveryone can put it down at this point. Did you name Banjo the dog after banjo the banjo, or did Banjo the dog give you the idea to start banjoing?

[00:19:37] **Wren:** Well, we named her after the instrument, but there's a little more to it, because our other dog is—our other dog is named Ukulele—

(John and Jesse chuckle delightedly.)

And I play the ukulele. We do in fact own a banjolele. So, our older dog is named Ukulele, and she's a big Labrador, and so I always thought it would be funny if we ever got a second dog to get a smaller one and name it banjo. And so, we have Lele and Jo.

[00:20:09] **John Hodgman:** Oh, Lele and Jo! That's terrific. Great dog names, great nicknames.

[00:20:14] **Jesse Thorn:** Speaking as someone who plays ukulele, sometimes even on stage, I like that the theme of your dog names is musical instruments universally considered to be unpleasant. Looking forward to your cat, Bagpipe.

[00:20:29] **John Hodgman:** Lele and Jo and Pipey. But you know what? You know what I think? I think these are perfect names for these dogs, 'cause I bet you these dogs are plucky. Right?

[00:20:37] **Jesse Thorn:** Now we're talking! I like that in this picture of Banjo, Banjo the dog is clearly trying to figure out what the heck banjo the instrument is. Like, really. The little—the little dog brain marbles in there are rattling around like, “What type of a possum is this?”

(They chuckle.)

[00:20:56] **John Hodgman:** Definitely get over to our Instagram page if you wanna see a dog getting freaked out by a banjo. It's terrific.

And then, you send in some evidence as well, Wren. And this is some of your comedy boxing. Your last—in fact, it says here, “My last comedy fight.” Tell me the story of your last comedy fight.

[00:21:13] **Wren:** I was pretty embarrassed by how it went. I—like I said, the first time, it was very spontaneous. And so—and I was very new to boxing still, so I went in all gung-ho and just had a good time.

And the second time I was—I wanted to really train, but I was kind of in denial about how out of shape I was. And so, I got in there, and I just got hit in the face a whole bunch. I barely remembered to get my hands up and protect my face. I just got hit a bunch, lost my one round, and that was how it went.

[00:21:50] **John Hodgman:** Yeah. So, this is you—this is you getting punched here?

[00:21:53] **Wren:** Yes, I'm the one with the green hair getting punched.

[00:21:55] **John Hodgman:** Oof. And when was this?

[00:21:58] **Wren:** That was—I wanna say 2019 maybe? Maybe 2018? Somewhere around there.

[00:22:02] **John Hodgman:** 2019. Yeah. And then, spitty contact sports kind of took a pause for a couple of years.

(Wren confirms.)

Now, obviously—in Salt Lake City, at least—it's roaring back with a vengeance, like a Jean-Claude Van Damme wheelhouse kick. It's coming back around!

(Jesse laughs.)

Coming back around. But you say this was your last one. This was your last fight. Your second and last fight.

[00:22:28] **Wren:** When I say my last, it was the most recent one that occurred.

[00:22:33] **John Hodgman:** Right. Most recent. That's what I mean to say. You're not retired. In fact, you're trying to get back into it.

So, let's go back in time for a second. William, you're getting ready for your big match that you've been training and training and training for. And all of a sudden, Wren, who's never

done this before, on a whim, signs up. How did that make you feel that this person—maybe you weren't even dating at that point, you were still just acquainted.

[00:22:59] **William:** Uh, we were, I think we were dating.

[00:23:02] **John Hodgman:** You were dating! And so, your date shows up to this thing that you've been training for, getting fit fast. And just on a whim, on a joke, signs up for this comedy boxing. How did that make you feel?

[00:23:15] **William:** At first, I was excited. And then, I quickly realized once the bell rang, and I saw her getting hit that it's very—it made me very anxious to see my significant other in the ring getting hit. And it's almost as difficult to watch as when you're in the ring yourself. So, it can be distracting when you have a significant other on the same card.

[00:23:37] **John Hodgman:** Yeah. Yeah. Okay. Well, that may be germane to this case, William. May be germane to this case. Maybe. 'Cause this is what we're talking about. This is exactly what we're talking about.

But Wren, when did this start? So, you started—first of all, you moved to Salt Lake City for some reason, which is your own personal reason. I mean, it's the Azores of the American West. It wouldn't go there?

[00:23:57] **Jesse Thorn:** Access to those stores that sell different soda pops mixed together.

[00:24:04] **John Hodgman:** (Laughs.) Let the record show big nods from William and a slow shake of the head from Wren, with regard to the big stores. I don't know what you're referring to, Jesse. What are those all about?

[00:24:12] **Jesse Thorn:** In Utah and large parts of the American West, but especially Utah, there are a lot of stores that sell giant Styrofoam cups full of pebble ice and different sodas mixed together. And you get them from a drive-through, like a drive-through coffee place.

[00:24:27] **John Hodgman:** So, Wren, you move to Salt Lake City, the land of dirty soda. And you decide to start getting into boxing. What motivated you to start getting into non-comedy boxing?

[00:24:40] **Wren:** Well, it started because there was going to be one more final event of these comedy, during the lockdown times. There was a lot of talk about once things—you know, once things open back up again, we're gonna get in and have one last event, seal up the whole thing. I think it was gonna be the 20th one. It was gonna just, you know, be the capstone. And I started training around November of 2021.

[00:25:12] **John Hodgman:** Okay. In anticipation of this final comedy boxing event?

(Wren confirms.)

Now, did that event happen, or is this the one we're talking about that's going to happen in October?

[00:25:20] **Wren:** No, that one was supposed to happen in April and three weeks before it happened—like I said, I started off just training in my garage, and then, February of this year, I decided I needed a real coach if I was gonna do this right. And that was the big thing; I wanted to do this one right, even though it was comedy. I wanted to train as hard as I could, do the very best I could. ‘Cause like I said, I was embarrassed by the previous performance.

And so, I wanted to get a real coach, go to a real gym, and train as hard as I could. And then, three weeks before the event happened, it got canceled.

[00:25:53] **John Hodgman:** Why? What happened?

[00:25:54] **Wren:** The Nevada State Athletic Commission decided that we needed some more licenses. They wanted us to do some blood tests. We couldn't get everything done in time, and it got shut down.

[00:26:02] **John Hodgman:** See, Jesse, this is why I don't mess around with the Nevada State Athletic Commission.

[00:26:07] **Jesse Thorn:** Yeah, me too. I would be boxing in Nevada right now if it weren't for the blood tests.

[00:26:11] **John Hodgman:** I know. It's just, it's—come on. It's no—have a sense of humor, you guys. It's comedy boxing.

[00:26:17] **Jesse Thorn:** You know what? One time I went to have a boxing fight in Nevada—Las Vegas, Nevada. And I went, and I took the blood test, and they said I was too powerful.

[00:26:28] **John Hodgman:** One time I took the blood test and they said, “Your lipids are too high. You need to stop eating sticks of butter.”

[00:26:34] **Jesse Thorn:** It just gave you some statins. (Laughs.)

[00:26:37] **John Hodgman:** So, obviously, they rescheduled and relocated the comedy boxing final event to Salt Lake City: the land of no rules! Famously libertine Salt Lake City.

[00:26:49] **Wren:** Well, no, the comedy event was canceled. It's almost certain that it's not gonna come back again.

[00:26:58] **John Hodgman:** Oh, no!

[00:27:00] **Jesse Thorn:** But you did get some sweet shorts out of it, according to this photograph.

[00:27:03] **Wren:** I had custom shorts made in anticipation of that fight that are now I guess lounge shorts around the house, because they're not gonna be in a fight.

[00:27:13] **Jesse Thorn:** This is why I would take up boxing, 100% for the outfits. I would want a special robe and special shorts.

[00:27:17] **Wren:** I wanted to get the sleeveless hoodie thing with my name put across the back, but I didn't have time to get it made before the fight. I mean, I could have, because it got canceled. But when I thought it was happening, I couldn't get it done in time.

[00:27:33] **Jesse Thorn:** Special shoes, also. Special, super tall shoes. I'd ride a horse just to wear those special shoes.

[00:27:38] **John Hodgman:** Jesse, when you get a moment, sometime before your next birthday or the holidays, get me your your custom silk embroidered robe size, so we can spangle something up for you real good.

[00:27:54] **Jesse Thorn:** Absolutely. You know, I'm covered with robes. Let's do silk shorts.

[00:27:58] **John Hodgman:** Silk shorts. Alright. Well, Wren—on her shorts—has her fighting name Wrenegade, which looks super cool. Jesse, you'll—let me know what you want—what you want your—what your comedy boxing name is gonna be. Okay?

[00:28:11] **Jesse Thorn:** First thought. Bald Bruiser, but we can work on it.

[00:28:14] **John Hodgman:** Yeah. Yeah. We'll workshop it. Whatever you settle on is fine with me. So Wrenegade, you say that—you can't be hanging up these shorts for good. You're training for a fight right now in October.

[00:28:24] **Wren:** Well, these fights in October are not through the comedy channel. They are through the gym that I started training at. And these ones, they have proper uniforms, so everybody matches. It's not just a—

[00:28:36] **John Hodgman:** Oh, you're not allowed to wear your flare. So, this is real—this is real boxing. Dramatic—not comedy boxing, drama boxing.

[00:28:45] **Wren:** Yeah, it's drama boxing. It's definitely more suited towards that mindset that I was trying to get into with my last fight, of the goal is to train as hard as you can and do the best that you can. And I would actually be fighting somebody in my weight class, which never happened in the comedy circuit. And somebody who they think is paired well for me. So, it would actually be a fair fight. And I wanted to actually show what I could do.

[00:29:14] **John Hodgman:** Why do you keep speaking about this in the past tense? Isn't it gonna happen, yes or no?

[00:29:18] **Wren:** Uh, yes. The event is definitely happening. I am waiting for the judgment to find out whether I will be participating.

[00:29:27] **John Hodgman:** Because your point of view is if William participates, you're not gonna.

[00:29:30] **Wren:** Uh, I might. I might? I might wait for the next one. I'm not sure. I was about to fill out the application when he brought me to court, so it's not set in stone yet.

[00:29:46] **Jesse Thorn:** I just assumed the problem was you couldn't wear the shorts. If it's just your husband's wishes. (Blows a raspberry.)

(Wren laughs.)

Let's take a quick recess and hear about this week's Judge John Hodgman sponsor. We'll be back in just a moment on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

[00:30:02] **Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:30:04] **Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:30:06] **John Hodgman:** So, Wren, you're training for this real boxing match. You're taking it seriously. All of a sudden, William looks up from polishing his opals and says, "Yeah, I wanna do the same thing." When did—when did this happen? How did that happen?

[00:30:24] **Wren:** Well, I went to the last fight that my gym hosted.

[00:30:29] **John Hodgman:** (Overlapping with Wren.) As a spectator.

[00:30:30] **Wren:** (Overlapping with John.) As a spectator. I went and hung out with some of my gym mates. We had a good time, watched some fights. It was a lot of fun. A bunch of us sitting there were like, "Ooh, we should get in the next one." Right? And I, you know—William stayed home. And I texted him from the event and was like, "Hey, they're streaming this online. You can check it out and see what it's all about."

And when I got home, I told him that I wanted to sign up for it, and he said, "Uh, you know, it got me itching to do a fight again too. I wanna sign up for it as well."

[00:30:59] **John Hodgman:** That's called a little thunder stealing, wouldn't you say? How did that make you feel, Wren?

[00:31:05] **Wren:** Yeah, it made me feel like I was gonna not get the glory of this fight that I was hoping for, or I would have to share the glory and share all the stress as well. That's kind of the bigger deal for me.

[00:31:20] **John Hodgman:** William, what happened from your point of view? You're at home with your opals and your banjo and your Banjo. And you get this text from Wren saying, "I think I'm gonna—I think I'm gonna sign up for this boxing match, train for it." What's happening from your point of view? You just decided to go ahead and do it too?

[00:31:39] **William:** Um, yeah, it sounds bad on paper. (Chuckles.) I can admit that, but, um—

[00:31:45] **John Hodgman:** It also sounds bad on a podcast.

(They laugh.)

[00:31:47] **William:** So, the fact that we—you know, I've done boxing before, and it is the only kind of physical fitness I've ever stuck with for enough time to be fit. And now there is a goal again. And of course, during lockdown, wasn't as active. And so, wanting to figure out how to kind of get back on the horse there and then learning about this event in October really kinda, you know, got my juices flowing. But, you know, it's tough.

[00:32:18] **John Hodgman:** You had not been training for boxing already at the point that you got this text message and decided you were going to—?

[00:32:27] **William:** Correct. This is kind of like the first event, where I did all the training and she jumped in. Now, I'm jumping in.

[00:32:33] **John Hodgman:** Here we go! William, this is the sweet science of being a litigant on *Judge John Hodgman*. You just—you just did the rope-a-dope.

You were sitting back there, taking all this—all these body blows from Wren and frankly from me too. And all of a sudden, all that coaching that Wren gave you back in your comedy boxing days to not go hard from the beginning, now you're coming out with some really sweet jabs. A little move we call turnabout is fair play.

Because after all, Wren, did you not do exactly the same thing to William a ways back when, in old Las Vegas?

[00:33:13] **Wren:** I did do exactly this thing, which is why I know that it would be a bad idea for us to fight on the same card together.

[00:33:19] **John Hodgman:** Because—well, wait a minute. In your first round of comedy boxing, when you went in on whim, you won?

[00:33:25] **Wren:** No, I did not.

[00:33:27] **John Hodgman:** Okay. And I know that you lost William, 'cause you were distracted watching your loved one get punched.

[00:33:33] **Wren:** Yeah, it was all her fault.

[00:33:34] **John Hodgman:** And I, by the way—this is not a right—this is not a correct term, comedy boxing. (Chuckles.) Because it's not—first of all, the names aren't funny enough. Second of all, there's no comedy.

It's still boxing; it's still dangerous contact sport that is terrifying to the person in the ring and people watching, if they're of a certain disposition, as I am. It's just like, there's just a gimmick wrapped around it. Still scary stuff to me, but it's cool. What do you like about boxing, William?

[00:34:06] **William:** It distracts me from the fact that I'm exercising, because there's something more important going on. You know, like dodging punches. And so, that's part of it, is it's easier for me to get engaged in exercise. Also, it's—I don't know, there's something animalistic and instinctual of going toe to toe with somebody like that that's appealing.

[00:34:29] **John Hodgman:** So, why—so, why not just train? Why do you have to fight on this particular card? And what is a card? Honestly?

[00:34:39] **William:** So, a card is just the lineup of people who are fighting in the match. And so—but in order for me to stay motivated in the training, I need the carrot. And the fight culminating and realizing why I did all that training is a very important part to stay motivated.

[00:35:02] **Jesse Thorn:** How could anyone exercise if at the end of the exercise there isn't the opportunity to physically hurt a friend or acquaintance?

[00:35:11] **John Hodgman:** Or be hurt! Yeah, but I—William also said there was a carrot at the end too, so maybe he gets to eat a nice carrot.

(Jesse chuckles.)

The reward is terror and adrenaline. And triumph over adversity and triumph over the face of your opponent.

[00:35:34] **Jesse Thorn:** It's like me at the prom. Okay?

(They laugh.)

[00:35:40] **John Hodgman:** So, let me ask you this, Wren. Is there another match that William could train for that isn't the one that you had already set your sights on?

[00:35:48] **Wren:** There should be one coming up next April of 2024. And if not then, there will almost definitely be one again in the fall of 2024.

[00:35:57] **John Hodgman:** And William, that's too long to wait?

[00:36:00] **William:** Uh, yeah, just because of the nature of me and how I engage with hobbies, need to go hard and fast.

[00:36:09] **John Hodgman:** Wren, how does he engage in hobbies?

[00:36:11] **Wren:** He gobbles them up. He gets into something, and he just will obsess over it 100% for a while. And then, some things—like with the banjo, like he mentioned—like, when he first got into the banjo, it was every day, all the time.

He bought four of them in within like a month. You know? That's how he goes with things. And now, he picks up the banjo every few months and plucks around. But that tends to be how he goes with hobbies, is he'll go really, really hard for a while, and then he'll kind of fade off.

[00:36:43] **Jesse Thorn:** What about you, Wren?

[00:36:46] **Wren:** I'm more of like I'll find something I like, and I'll stick to it, kind of slow and steady.

[00:36:50] **John Hodgman:** Like what kind of hobbies are we talking about? What do you pluck with?

[00:36:55] **Wren:** Well, I did mention that I do play the ukulele, and that's something that I pick up and put down all the time as well. I have—I like to play tabletop role playing games. I started playing Dungeons and Dragons in the early '90s, when I was like five years old, and I continue to play that pretty much weekly today.

[00:37:16] **John Hodgman:** (Playfully serious.) Very famous tabletop roleplaying game, Jesse. Dungeons and Dragons.

[00:37:22] **Jesse Thorn:** Wouldn't know I'm artsy.

[00:37:23] **John Hodgman:** Right. It said in the initial petition that you had some concern, Wren, that William—William's hobbies tend to overshadow yours or take up space. Is your concern—do you have a concern about that?

[00:37:38] **Wren:** When William focuses and obsesses about something, he tends to be very good at it. Because of the amount of effort and just, I don't know. He tends to be very good at things that he tries and—

[00:37:51] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, these are some pretty shiny opals, I must say, William. They look really good.

[00:37:55] **Wren:** And also, just the bare nature that he's a great, big, strong man. And I'm a very small, petite, not-very-strong woman. Uh, so—

[00:38:07] **John Hodgman:** But you're—you wouldn't be fighting each other.

[00:38:10] **Wren:** Oh no! But he—you know, bigger fighters tend to be more dynamic than the little ones. I mean, it's that you can still get very, very good fights out of smaller fighters. But they tend to be the showier ones that get the standing ovations at the events.

[00:38:26] **John Hodgman:** William said that he felt distracted when you fought in the same card together back in Las Vegas, because it was hard for him to see you get hurt. Is that your concern? Or is your concern that he's gonna get more—he's gonna overshadow you at this event because of how hard he goes and how good he gets at it and etc., etc.?

[00:38:47] **Wren:** I mean, it's a bit of both of those things, but really—

[00:38:51] **John Hodgman:** It could be a third thing that I didn't even ask about. Why don't you tell me.

[00:38:56] **Wren:** One of the biggest things for me is just that when you are training for a fight—you know a bit about, yourself, training for an imaginary fight. You—it takes a lot of effort, and it takes—it puts a lot of stress on your life and your lifestyle. And it's a lot easier for one of us to be doing that at a time and the other person to be available to kind of pick up the slack around house than for both of us to be going at the same time.

[00:39:31] **John Hodgman:** Well, you're saying that Banjo the dog won't get fed and Lele will—someone was gonna leave the door open, 'cause you're both going so hard, and Lele and Jo are gonna wander off into the hills outside of Utah. You'll never see them again and the bills won't get paid and stuff?

[00:39:46] **Wren:** Hey, if yesterday at the boxing gym I ran a mile and then did a hundred squats, like maybe it's hard for me to get up off the couch to feed those poor puppies.

[00:39:53] **John Hodgman:** Yeah. William, your dogs are gonna starve if you're both training.

[00:39:57] **William:** I think I can probably manage still. No, but she brings up a good point.

[00:40:05] **John Hodgman:** What is the point she—what is resonating for you, in what she brings up?

[00:40:11] **William:** It's when you're—there's a difference between going to a boxing gym and training in a fight camp. Diet changes, your body changes, your sleep changes. Everything is different, because you're—you know, a switch is flipped in your head, and you're doing—you're really going hard at the hobby now. And that's really what's—there's a mental difference in what you prioritize.

[00:40:40] **John Hodgman:** Do you—I don't understand. And either one of you can answer this. Why can't—I mean, aside from the dogs not getting fed—I know they're gonna get fed—

it would seem to me that it would be—there could be a benefit to training together. You could amp each other up. You could feed each other milkshakes made of raw eggs. That's some real dirty soda right there.

[00:41:02] **Wren:** And I have been trying to think—you know, put myself in that mindset of, yeah, we can support each other and, you know, commiserate with each other and help each other out that way.

But just remembering how it was when we both fought—and then, I wasn't even training. It was just suddenly we're both fighting on the same card together that one time that we fought together. It's—there's a lot of like mental stress and emotional stress to it. Like, I just—I want him there in—the way that I was in his corner, the fight that he won, I want him to be in my corner. Not worried about his own fight that's about to come up, but worried about me.

[00:41:40] **John Hodgman:** Yeah. William, why can't you be in her corner right now?

[00:41:44] **William:** I could do both, I think. I can be in her corner and then warm up and do my own fight, but I think there's—you know, she's been very clear about me going to the gym isn't the problem, it's the event and being overshadowed. And I don't wanna—I don't wanna put words in her mouth, 'cause Wren is a—you know, her own person in her own right. But there's also I think a big brother kind of thing. I'm a big brother, and she has a big brother, and he always has overshadowed her too. And so, there's a lot of—you know, I wanna be sensitive to that.

But it's very strange, because we work very well together as a married couple. We're great partners. And this is a situation where we both wanna be a little bit selfish, and we're not very selfish a lot. And so.

[00:42:37] **John Hodgman:** Mm-hm. Mm-hm. I noticed that you raised a finger, you wanted to interject, Wren. What did you want to say?

[00:42:44] **Wren:** So, you'll notice that when talk about us both being on the same card, he talks about watching my fight, then warming up and having his own fight. And when we were talking earlier about fight cards and about how some fighters are more dynamic and more likely to get that kind of special attention, the way that they set up fight cards is the later fights—you know, the earlier ones tend to be less exciting. The later ones tend to be more exciting. And uh, he straight up, just off the bat, assumes I'm gonna be fighting first, then he's gonna warm up and have his fight.

[00:43:21] **John Hodgman:** I don't know how they do it in comedy boxing, but in comedy-comedy, you have the opener, and then the feature act, and then the headliner. And your suspicion is that William, because he's about 30 feet tall and is going to get totally ripped, you're concerned he's gonna be the headliner and you're gonna feel like the opener.

[00:43:44] **Wren:** Um, yeah. I will feel a little bit down if I end up lower on the card than him, but even just—even just to the fact that, uh, every time he talks about it, he just assumes he's gonna be higher on the card than me.

[00:43:57] **John Hodgman:** Wow, William, is that true? You just assume it?

[00:44:02] **William:** Um, yeah. And it is just the nature of our physicality. Heavyweights get the headlines.

[00:44:10] **John Hodgman:** Wooow. William, it says here that your ideal ruling, should I rule in your favor, is to reach some sort of compromise where you can both participate in the October event. Is that correct?

(William confirms.)

Normally a compromise would be each person is giving up something they want. And in this case, Wren's ideal ruling is that you shouldn't fight in the same card. So, that's the 100% of what she wants that is being given up. So where is the compromise? What are you offering in return for getting what you want and her giving up what she wants?

[00:44:53] **William:** Hm. I guess I didn't, uh—compromise sounded good when, uh, I—
(trails off).

(Jesse laughs.)

[00:45:00] **John Hodgman:** It usually does, but that's why this is a court of no compromise.

[00:45:03] **Jesse Thorn:** He spent all his planning points on that rope-a-dope thing.

[00:45:07] **John Hodgman:** That was good. You came out with that rope-a-dope. That was really good. Let me ask you one question. Well, actually I'll ask you two questions. How long does it take to train to do the fight? And corollary, why not delay your training and shoot for next April?

[00:45:27] **William:** A couple of reasons. One is I have the motivation and the itch right now, and I feel like I need to engage in some sort of physical exercise now that—after lockdown, I'm fully, 100% working from home and just not very active. And so, some of it is just I feel like I'm withering away a bit. And this—I know that this is a hobby, a physical hobby that I will stick with for longer than a month. A training camp is usually about three months, if you're gonna do a full one. And so—and then, if we wait until April, I might not be motivated anymore, or she might wanna do another one.

[00:46:09] **John Hodgman:** Well, not if I order her not to! But your concern is that the itch will go away, and you'll move on to another hobby like digeridoo playing or—I don't know. What are some hobbies, Jesse?

[00:46:23] **Jesse Thorn:** I mean, primarily digeridoo playing.

[00:46:25] **John Hodgman:** Digeridoo. Yes. Sorry, I said it wrong.

[00:46:28] **Jesse Thorn:** I mean there's unicycling or hacky sack. I don't know. I went to UC Santa Cruz. So, I only know a certain band of hobbies.

[00:46:37] **John Hodgman:** There's devil sticks.

[00:46:39] **Jesse Thorn:** Collecting psychedelic mushrooms in the woods.

[00:46:42] **John Hodgman:** Right. State quarters. That's a hobby.

[00:46:43] **Jesse Thorn:** Yeah. Shoelessness.

[00:46:46] **John Hodgman:** Wren, do you think that that William will lose the itch?

[00:46:51] **Wren:** I hope that he wouldn't. I don't think that training super hard for a fight for three months and having the fight and then just, you know, putting boxing behind him again—I don't think that's a very sustainable exercise regime. And ideally, I would like for him to start coming to the gym with me and just get in the habit of coming to the gym with me, which I'm already in that habit. Whether I have a fight or not, I'm gonna—I love going to my gym. I'm gonna keep going. And I would love if he came along. And then, once we're in the habit of doing that, then hop on the fight in April.

[00:47:30] **John Hodgman:** If, let's say for the sake of argument, across the street, what's the name of the gym? We might as well say it.

[00:47:36] **Wren:** Legends Boxing.

[00:47:38] **John Hodgman:** Legends Boxing. So, let's say across the street from the gym, there in Salt Lake City, there's another gym called Dirty Soda Boxing Gym or Bring 'Em Young Box-a-Drome. Let's call it that. And they have a—and they have a fight coming up in like, say, November. How would you feel if William just walked across the street and did his thing over there and then fought in that one?

[00:48:04] **Wren:** If it was a separate event, I would be more amenable to that. If we're not just like—even if it's just a few weeks later, if we are not training for the same thing, on the same night, and I have to be worried about his fight the same night as mine, I would be—that would be easier.

[00:48:23] **John Hodgman:** So, just to be clear—so, it's—you're more averse to him fighting on the same card as you than being in training at the same time as you, even if the training is pretty intense?

[00:48:34] **Wren:** Yeah, I think it would mean a lot to me to know that my event is separate and like tonight is my night. I want to just be able to focus on myself on that fight night.

[00:48:47] **William:** There are other hobbies of hers that I haven't—I've consciously not stepped on her toes on, and so I did think of a compromise.

[00:48:53] **John Hodgman:** Oh good!

[00:48:54] **William:** I was—to say you made a ruling that I could start playing the ukulele.

[00:49:00] **Jesse Thorn:** So, you're saying your idea for a compromise is for you to step on her hobbies?

[00:49:06] **William:** I—when she does things, I get interested in them because I see her doing them.

[00:49:12] **John Hodgman:** And you want to play ukulele. And so far, Wren has asked you not to ,and you've observed that embargo.

(William confirms.)

So, the compromise would be if Wren is okay with you playing the ukulele, then you're okay with not fighting in this October card that she's playing.

[00:49:28] **William:** Because I could just get really good for the next three months in a ukulele type fight camp instead of a boxing one. And then I could move on to boxing afterwards, for the next card.

[00:49:37] **John Hodgman:** William. William, we're not supposed to talk about Uke Fight Club.

Okay. So, that is a real compromise, and I will take it into consideration as I ponder my verdict. I am now going to go into my private thunder dome, and I'm gonna hit the heavy bag to some pump-up music and try to punch a verdict out of that thing. I'll be back in a moment with my decision.

[00:50:01] **Jesse Thorn:** Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom.

(Chairs squeak, followed by heavy footsteps and a door closing.)

Wren, how are you feeling right now?

[00:50:12] **Wren:** I'm feeling pretty good. I think that I got most of the points that I wanted to make. I think they're, uh, pretty reasonable.

[00:50:21] **John Hodgman:** How do you feel, William?

[00:50:25] **William:** Yeah, it sounds different when people start saying it out loud and asking the questions, and my confidence has slowly dwindled throughout this podcast, I think.

[00:50:36] **Jesse Thorn:** As it should have. I think that's fair. (Chuckles.) That's a fair reaction to your weird compromise plan that you came up with after not having a compromise plan. You're like, "Well, what if the compromise is Wren takes up cooking, and then I put too much salt in there." Well, we'll see what Judge Hodgman has to say about all this when we come back in just a moment.

[00:50:58] **Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:51:00] **Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:51:02] **Jesse Thorn:** Judge Hodgman, we're taking a quick break from the case. First and foremost, solidarity forever.

[00:51:08] **John Hodgman:** Yes. Thank you, Jesse. As of this recording, the WGA continues to be on strike, and in a few days we'll know the outcome of the Screen Actors Guild negotiation with the American Motion Picture and Television Producers Trade Organization—the ones that simply did not respond to many of the WGA's very reasonable demands for a predictable living wage and to put guardrails on the use of artificial intelligence in the creation of human stories. SAG is in the midst of negotiations right now, and within a few days, they may even be on strike as well. Why is this happening? Why are all your favorite late night shows dark at the moment? Why has *Daredevil* stopped production?

That's because Josh Gondelman picketed the Kingpin's house until they got out of town, along with all the other—all the other incredible WGA members who have been picketing and bringing attention to this fight. Soon, SAG might be on strike as well.

[00:52:09] **Jesse Thorn:** John, if only there were operations companies doing creative work that were owned by the workers who did the work! And if only people could support those organizations directly by going to MaximumFun.org/join.

[00:52:23] **John Hodgman:** It's not enough, only—Jesse, it's true Maximum Fun is an employee-owned cooperative. But most, I dare say, of the big media companies—you know who you are—are not employee-owned cooperatives, and a lot of money is going to some big executives, and not a lot of money is going to the creative people both behind and in front of the cameras who make these shows possible.

If you want to know more about the strike and why it's happening, you can go to Linktr.ee/hodgman. That's Linktr.ee/hodgman. There's a link in my bio, in my Instagram account. And in the meantime, there is some other work that we can do that is outside of the purview of the WGA, and that's hit the road. Right, Jesse?

[00:53:09] **Jesse Thorn:** Well, we're gonna have—look. Spoiler alert, there will at some point be some exciting announcements in that department. But right now—right now, we have a very particular exciting announcement to share, which is we're headed back to London, England, September 15th and September 16th, as part of the London Podcast Festival!

I will also be there doing *Jordan, Jesse, Go!* with my colleague, Jordan. So, if you live in London or environs, get your tickets right now. It is gonna be a blast. It always is. I always love going out there. I know Ben Partridge is gonna be doing *Beef and Dairy Network* that weekend as well. It's gonna be a good old time at the London Podcast Festival. It always is, there at King's Place.

So, number one, get your tickets. Number two, if you or someone you know lives anywhere near London, England, and has beef to share with us, we are going to need beefs.

[00:53:57] **John Hodgman:** That's right. Speaking of *Beef and Dairy*, we don't need your dairy. We need your beef.

[00:54:01] **Jesse Thorn:** Yeah. We're gonna get out there and start picking fights, if we need to, but we need cases from London, England. So, if you live in London, you know somebody who does, send them an email, drop them a line, call them on WhatsApp.

For tickets and more information about the London Podcast Festival, our events page is at MaximumFun.org/events. That's MaximumFun.org/events.

Let's get back to the case.

[00:54:27] **Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:54:30] **Jesse Thorn:** Please rise as Judge John Hodgman reenters the courtroom and presents his verdict.

(Chairs squeak, followed by heavy footsteps and a door closing.)

[00:54:38] **John Hodgman:** You may be seated.

(Chairs squeak.)

So, as I say, William, you are, uh—you are a deceptively crafty combatant. You have a very quiet demeanor, and you laid back for a long time, and then you came out with that big move. And you pointed out, why shouldn't you jump onto Wren's card bout. That's exactly what she did early on in your relationship. And you lost your match, probably because of that.

It wasn't just that she overshadowed you, she got in your head. And when you're in the ring—if there's one thing I learned while training for fake boxing on *Bored to Death*, you can't have romance in your mind when you're in the ring. It doesn't work. That's when you get fake hit and have to fake fall down. Watch that episode of *Bored to Death*, everybody. It's really good. Watch all of *Bored to Death*. Boy, oh boy, was that a good time.

But I think that's a very, very fair point. You are owed one, in the—this is a—you know, potentially you have an argument for a real grudge match here. You are owed one. You are owed a chance to jump in and do a heel turn and jump in on Wren's title bout and potentially

mess up her fighting brain. I really want to get to Salt Lake City and see both of you fight in separate boxing matches. I would go and see that, because you are both so sweet, and I wanna see how you transform werewolf-style to that killer instinct. But that's like in the ring.

And, you know, I wanna—I wanna see how like—you know, I have a picture of you both in time. When is this happening in October, Wren?

[00:56:32] **Wren:** It's the second weekend in October. I can't remember the date off the top of my head.

[00:56:35] **John Hodgman:** Second weekend in October. Okay, so are we talking about Friday the 13th in October? That looks pretty good. I'm gonna circle that. Okay, this is what this case is about now. I'm coming to the fights.

(Jesse laughs.)

And the question is am I'm gonna see Wren fight or both of you fight? Or! Just William? Who am I gonna see in these fights?! I'm deciding, 'cause I'm the commissioner now. I'm the commissioner of Judge John Hodgman Boxing League. You two are the only members of this promotion. You're the only two in the league so far. Welcome aboard. You're our marquee stars. And we're gonna have a big—we're gonna get silk robes for everybody. William, you've got—as I say, you've got an argument to settle this grudge match.

But on the other hand, something else happened. You didn't just lose that one time, William. You also won. Remember that time when you won at boxing? That's what it's called, Jesse, officially. Winning at boxing.

[00:57:37] **Jesse Thorn:** Wouldn't know. Artsy.

[00:57:38] **John Hodgman:** Yeah. You won. And why did you win? 'Cause you had someone in your corner. Wren was in your corner telling you don't go hard and burn out like you do with all your other hobbies. Be nice while you punch, which is the motto of the Judge John Hodgman Boxing League. It was really good advice, and you won, and it felt great. Right? I don't think I even asked you. How great did it feel?

[00:58:06] **William:** It is a great feeling when you win in the ring with the crowd watching.

[00:58:09] **John Hodgman:** Yeah. When you win at boxing, it feels great. Feels like maybe you couldn't have done it without her support, right? I mean, you trained so hard, but wouldn't you say that that was an important part of it?

[00:58:24] **William:** Yeah, she was definitely the biggest support I had.

[00:58:27] **John Hodgman:** Look, the only boxing I ever know is I know from the few movies that I've seen, and here's what I gotta say. When you see a—when you see a Rocky training, it's not like you have two Rockys both cracking eggs into each other's mouths and

supporting each other. You have a Rocky, and then you have a Burgess Meredith in a car behind him going, “Faster, faster!”

[00:58:49] **Jesse Thorn:** And then behind Burgess Meredith is that robot that he's in love with.

[00:58:53] **John Hodgman:** (Chuckling.) That robot that he's in love with. Exactly. And then, behind that robot is Frank Gorshin, ‘cause he's confused. ‘Cause he thinks he's the Riddler and Burgess Meredith is the Penguin, and he wants to get back on camera.

We're talking about human beings, some of whom are in love, who live on this mortal plane but for a moment, and they bleed real blood out of their noses. We're talking about a sport that has high physical stakes but also high emotional stakes. And the reason why you can't have two Rockys is when you're in training, one of you's gotta be the Rocky and one of you's gotta be the coach. Or at least, the other one of you can't get in the way of the Rocky.

You know what I mean? You can't be like, “You know what? I'm gonna run up those stairs too. I love the Philadelphia Museum of Art. I'm gonna run up those stairs. And I'm gonna try to beat you at it!” William, if you had started running up the stairs first, in this case, I'd be ruling in your favor. But you didn't. Wren was already running up those stairs.

Wren was already running up those stairs and she texted you. She said, “I'm so excited to be running up these stairs.” And that's when you get the idea to start running up the stairs of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, listening to pump up music?! She was already there. She was already in training. This is her thing. It's gotta be her thing. It's just gotta be her thing. The October fight has gotta be her thing. So, I think you gotta—you, at the very least, can't trip her while she's running up the stairs. You gotta support her, in this case.

I give you tremendous credit. You offered a compromise and said you'd be willing to walk away from the October fight if you're allowed to play the ukulele. And I'm gonna say, yes, you can play the ukulele. And Wren, I don't know whether this is part of your acting out, your ferocious acting out, but you should never deny a person the right to play the ukulele. You can play that ukulele. You can play that banjolele. Just don't make a mistake and pick up the dog and start plucking the dog. You know what I mean? Get a real ukulele—the musical instrument, I'm talking about.

At the same time though, William, I don't think that you necessarily have to be just the Burgess Meredith in the car. I think that you need to get out of this particular fight and offer her emotional support for her to shine on this night. But if you want to get in training, if you want to get in shape, if you want to listen to pump up music and you want to go for something you need a motivating thing to do, and you don't wanna wait until April? Wren said that it is okay for you to train for something else. Now I was curious: is there another boxing gym in Salt Lake City that you could go to—or for that matter, any other kind of contact sport? ‘Cause you've already talked about doing bareknuckle.

So, I did a simple Google search, which I'm surprised you folks haven't done already, which is “Salt Lake City blood sport opportunities”. And I didn't get very far. It turned up the fact—I think the University of Utah entered a battle robot into the TV show *Battle Bots*, called

Blood sport in 2019. That wasn't very helpful. So, then I did a simple search. I looked at—I looked up Legends Boxing gym. And I don't wanna blow up your spot, but it's in Trolley Square, right?

[01:02:21] **Wren:** I actually go to the one in Bountiful.

[01:02:23] **John Hodgman:** Oh, you go to the one in—wait, there are two of them?!

[01:02:25] **Wren:** There are several.

[01:02:27] **John Hodgman:** In Salt Lake City?! Well, that tracks, 'cause when I simply—when I looked up “Salt Lake City MMA gyms”, I was surprised to see there are like 30 of them.

[01:02:35] **Wren:** There's a bunch.

[01:02:37] **John Hodgman:** Salt Lake City has a lot of mixed martial arts. For a town that has a reputation where the only thing dirty in it is its soda—I mean, we're looking—we got Ultimate Combat Training Center, Snake Pit MMA, Combat Arts Strength and Conditioning, Gracie Barra Salt Lake City Brazilian Jujitsu. There's a lot of ways to get your fight on in SLC. There are probably more MMA training facilities and other combat sport training facilities in Salt Lake City alone than in all of the Azores, would be my guess. I think that's a good guess.

In fact, when I spoke about combat art, strength, and conditioning—remember when I—so, I was thinking that you were at the trolley square. 'Cause I was like, “Maybe there is a boxing gym right across the street.” And there almost is! Combat Arts Strength and Conditioning is a 16-minute walk away from the Trolley Square Legends. I don't know about the one in Bountiful. I would go ahead and encourage you, William, to check out some of these alternate—whether it's a boxing gym or Jujitsu or MMA or something—something! They've gotta have a big fight coming up. There's always a big fight coming up. There wouldn't be movies if they didn't have a big fight coming up.

Get into your own zone. Get into your own lane. I don't mind if you train simultaneously. I don't mind—as long as the fight isn't on October 13th or whenever Wren's fight is, you can train right now for that. Or you can even go—you could even go sooner, honestly. Like, you said you need three months to get into shape? We're recording this in June. July, August, September. You can go in September! It's not about that. It's not about keeping you from doing this thing. It's about letting Wren have her night, her big match. Wren's big match. And I will come and see. Wren, you fight on October 13th. If you can set something up for October 14th, I'll probably still be in town, William. But even if it's another time when I can't come to Salt Lake City, I'll be rooting for you. You're both members of the Judge John Hodgman Blood Sport Squad.

And remember, when you're punching, remember to punch nice. This is the sound of a gavel.

[01:04:52] **Sound Effect:** A triple bell ring.

[01:04:53] **John Hodgman:** Judge John Hodgman rules. That is all.

[01:04:55] **Jesse Thorn:** Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom.

(Chairs squeak, followed by heavy footsteps and a door closing.)

William, how are you doing?

[01:05:05] **William:** I'm doing okay. Kind of saw the writing on the wall as the—you know, we were talking things through. And I might take Judge John Hodgman up on that and see, you know, what else is around.

[01:05:20] **John Hodgman:** Wren, how are you doing?

[01:05:22] **Wren:** I'm feeling pretty good. That was, uh, pretty much exactly what I was hoping for.

[01:05:25] **Jesse Thorn:** You gonna take down this other chump?

(Wren confirms.)

All you need is the one-two.

[01:05:30] **Wren:** I have a mean six as well.

[01:05:32] **Jesse Thorn:** Heck yeah. No idea what this means. Well, (laughs) Wren and William, thank you so much for joining us on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

(They thank him.)

[01:05:43] **Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

[01:05:46] **Jesse Thorn:** Another Judge John Hodgman case is in the books. We'll have Swift Justice in just a second. Our thanks to Reddit user IronyMaiden—that's a pun name—for naming this week's episode "Fight Court". How come we didn't order anyone to come into the ring to the *Night Court* theme? Seems like a natural now.

[01:06:06] **John Hodgman:** Yeah. Well, when we get down there in Salt Lake City, you know that as co-commissioners of the league, we're gonna be laying down a lot of rules.

[01:06:16] **Jesse Thorn:** (Singing the *Night Court* theme song.) One, two, six! One, two, six!

[01:06:16] **John Hodgman:** (Sings along briefly.) Yeah, it's gonna be great. We're gonna have a good time.

[01:06:21] **Jesse Thorn:** Okay. Join the conversation at [MaximumFun.Reddit.com](https://www.reddit.com/MaximumFun). We ask for our title suggestions there. So, if you contribute a title, you might end up on the air. You can also follow us on Instagram at [Instagram.com/judgejohnhodgman](https://www.instagram.com/judgejohnhodgman), and on Facebook at [Facebook.com/judgejohnhodgman](https://www.facebook.com/judgejohnhodgman). You're definitely gonna wanna see this dog trying to figure out what a banjo is.

[01:06:44] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, it's like—you look at this and you feel like this dog has never seen a banjo before.

[01:06:48] **Jesse Thorn:** This dog's a little ding-dong dog, like my dog, Sissy. Just like—just a couple little rocks in there, splattering around, knocking around where a brain should be.

[01:06:59] **John Hodgman:** Just a little jingle bell for a brain.

(They giggle.)

[01:07:04] **Jesse Thorn:** *Judge John Hodgman*, created by Jesse Thorn and John Hodgman. Our producers, Valerie Moffat and Jennifer Marmor. Welcome back, Jennifer Marmor! Congratulations on creating human life again! Our litigants this week we're recorded by Toby Ali at Rocket Skates Recording in Salt Lake City.

Now Swift Justice, where we answer small disputes with quick judgment. Peggy writes, “Several times a year at random intervals, my husband rearranges the silverware drawer. (Laughing.) He says he's doing this to keep us from getting complacent and set in our ways. It's mildly annoying, but lately he's been talking about doing this while visiting our friends when they aren't looking. (Laughs.) Please order him to stop being great.” I added the last part.

[01:08:01] **John Hodgman:** One time I reorganized Jonathan Colton's kitchen for him, 'cause I thought he had done it all wrong. And I had the consent—I had the consent. In fact, I was—I feel like I was invited to do this, by his life partner and whole human being in his own right, my old high school friend, Christine. But he was not happy about it. It's very personal how you organize your kitchen. You should not be messing with other people's silverware drawers.

[01:08:24] **Jesse Thorn:** I love the idea of you though, in somebody's kitchen with a stopwatch, like a—like the boss at a factory in 1905 inventing the assembly line.

[01:08:36] **John Hodgman:** Here's the thing. This is the most important thing. If anyone is organizing a kitchen for the first time or as this opportunity, you need two garbage areas. Need two garbages, in different parts of the kitchen, because if you got that one garbage that's always just to the left of the sink, someone's gonna be getting in your way when you're doing the dishes or prepping those veg or whatever it is. You need an extra garbage—an extra garbage bin if you can hack it.

[01:09:04] **Jesse Thorn:** My second garbage bin was an absolute revelation. Put a skinny garbage can—I went onto an e-commerce website, typed in the dimensions of the tiny space between my counter and my stove, got a skinny garbage can that fit right in there.

(John whistles appreciatively.)

When I'm chopping, I got some trimmings I don't want? Whew, off they go. Off they go. Just—(whooshing sound).

[01:09:23] **John Hodgman:** Right into the garbage.

[01:09:26] **Jesse Thorn:** I don't have to pick them up and carry them across the room.

[01:09:28] **John Hodgman:** Right. And oh, by the way—Peggy, speaking of garbage, uh, your husband's garbage.

[01:09:34] **Jesse Thorn:** (Laughs.) I love this! This is the best.

[01:09:35] **John Hodgman:** It is actually pretty funny.

[01:09:36] **Jesse Thorn:** This is my—I think this might literally be my favorite husband scheme in the history of *Judge John Hodgman*. This is like, you know how when you open your browser—at least in my browser; I use Firefox—in my browser, it suggests articles for me to read. 100%—

[01:09:53] **John Hodgman:** Yeah. For blood sport opportunities in Salt Lake City?

[01:09:57] **Jesse Thorn:** 100%, one of these articles is, uh, “How to Prevent Aging: Rearrange Your Silverware Drawer to Keep Yourself from Getting Complacent”.

[01:10:06] **John Hodgman:** Complacent. Alright, you know what, Jesse Thorn? You're right. I take it back. Peggy, your husband is not garbage. There is something—he should not do this to other people outside of your marriage, but inside of your marriage? This is some—this is some feisty stuff. I could see a little bit of play there. But then again, as we've just learned, turnabout is fair play.

If he messes with the silverware drawer, you get to mess with his sock drawer or whatever. Hide his underwear, as I'm pretty sure someone has been doing in my house. As long as he's willing to be messed around with as much as he's messing around with your brain, then you can have some fun in that marriage. But keep it in the marriage. Keep it in the home. Don't take it outside.

Hey, speaking of, uh, confrontation—my favorite topic?

(They giggle.)

We have a podcast—much—very surprisingly, for a people-pleasing only child like myself—that is based on confrontation. Confrontation is at the center of the podcast. It's people having disputes with each other and trusting me and Jesse to figure out who's right and who's wrong. So, to do this show, we need disputes. Send them in, won't you? And how about this for a particular case request? Anything to do with wrestling. We talked about boxing today. If you have a dispute surrounding wrestling—who is the best professional wrestler? In athletic wrestling or, you know, wrestling entertainment?

[01:11:31] **Jesse Thorn:** It's Colt Cabana. He's my friend.

[01:11:31] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, because if it's Colt Cabana—(stammering) is that the luchador you met down in Mexico City?

[01:11:38] **Jesse Thorn:** No, Colt Cabana introduced me to the luchador. The luchador is El Guerrero Maya.

[01:11:43] **John Hodgman:** Yeah. Who would win in a fight? El Guerrero Maya or Colt Cabana? Have you—are you a wrestler? Did you lose a match that you should have won? What if you are Perry Von Vicious, friend of the show and is an independent wrestler up there in New England? You have a grudge against one of the wrestlers in your fun, Western Massachusetts independent promotion. Maybe we can—maybe we can do some crossover with our friends over at *Tights and Fights* podcast.

Uh, wrestling. Wrestling fights is what we're talking about, of all kinds. If you've got them, send them in at MaximumFun.org/jjho. And we don't just want wrestling fights, do we, Jesse?

[01:12:25] **Jesse Thorn:** No! We want fights of all kinds! If there is a dispute between you and someone in your life—or! If you note that someone in your life is complaining about a dispute in their life that doesn't involve you, suggest to them to go to MaximumFun.org/jjho and have it settled in the court of Judge John Hodgman, the only court that matters. I mean, approximately. Right? Well, I'll just say it. The only court that matters. Why not? What matters? Nothing matters! It's 2023.

[01:12:59] **John Hodgman:** Ever since Chrissy Teigen's, Quibi judge show came to—came to a natural end—

[01:13:03] **Jesse Thorn:** Remember—one time they announced that Snoop Doggy Dogg was gonna have a show with this format. It was like, uh-oh. But it never happened. You know why?

[01:13:12] **John Hodgman:** I think he knew that we were there first, and we've been doing it right for a long time. The only court that matters, MaximumFun.org/jjho. What are we gonna do? Talk to you next time? I guess so. Say it, Jesse.

[01:13:26] **Jesse Thorn:** We'll talk to you next time on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

[01:13:27] **John Hodgman:** Boom! Catchphrase!

[01:13:30] **Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

[01:13:33] **Sound Effect:** Cheerful ukulele chord.

[01:13:34] **Speaker 1:** MaximumFun.org.

[01:13:36] **Speaker 2:** Comedy and culture.

[01:13:37] **Speaker 3:** Artist owned.

[01:13:38] **Speaker 4:** Audience supported.