

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

[00:00:01] **Jesse Thorn:** Welcome to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. I'm Bailiff Jesse Thorn. This week, "Persona Non Grata Catch 'Em All"! Cameron brings the case against his friend, Shooka. When Cameron and Shooka were in college, Cameron was obsessed with Pokémon Go. One day, Cameron was too distracted by Pokémon Go, so Shooka took his phone and deleted one of his favorite Pokémon. Shooka says it's just a game. Cameron wants justice. Who's right? Who's wrong? Only one can decide.

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

Please rise as Judge John Hodgman enters the courtroom and presents an obscure cultural reference.

[00:00:44] **John Hodgman:** The machine in this room allows us to map the limits of your strength, endurance, and what we call clinical moxie. Please approach the center of the room and stand in the yellow square.

[00:00:55] **Jesse Thorn:** Uh, the yellow square has a sign that says, "Danger."

[00:00:56] **John Hodgman:** Yes, that's the one.

Please swear the litigants in.

[00:01:02] **Jesse Thorn:** Cameron and Shooka, 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.)

[00:01:12] **Jesse Thorn:** Do you swear to abide by Judge John Hodgman's ruling despite the fact that he does not have to catch 'em all?

(They swear.)

[00:01:20] **Jesse Thorn:** Judge Hodgman, you may proceed.

[00:01:22] **John Hodgman:** I only catch the gout.

(Jesse laughs sadly.)

For an immediate summary—and you can't even—it's not even catching! It's not even catching, but I got it.

(They chuckle.)

Gout in my big toe, I choose you! Cameron and Shooka, 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 that I referenced as I entered this courtroom? Let's see. It's someone's birthday today, I just learned. So, *(hurriedly)* Cameron, happy birthday, but Shooka, you go first.

(They laugh.)

[00:01:55] **Shooka:** Um, I would say it's from the 1931 *Dracula* movie.

[00:02:03] **John Hodgman:** Wow.

(They chuckle.)

Very specific. I like that guess. It's a strong guess. I love a dated guess.

[00:02:11] **Shooka:** That's what I thought. *(Laughs.)*

[00:02:12] **John Hodgman:** Let's put it in the guess book. 1931 *Dracula*. The English language or the Spanish Language edition? 'Cause they shot them both, you know.

[00:02:20] **Shooka:** I—yeah, they shot them in the same location.

[00:02:22] **John Hodgman:** Yeah. At day they would shoot the English language, and at night they shot the Spanish language.

[00:02:25] **Shooka:** Exactly. And the Spanish one is better. I would say the Spanish one.

[00:02:30] **John Hodgman:** Okay. Let's put it the Spanish one. 1931's *Dracula*, Spanish. Alright. Cameron, what's your guess?

[00:02:36] **Cameron:** Um, I would like to guess perhaps the novel *1984*. *(Laughs.)*

[00:02:45] **John Hodgman:** “This machine in this room allows us to map the limits of your strength, endurance, and what we call clinical moxie.” Yeah, that feels like a George Orwell sentence, for sure. *1984*. I'll put—the movie or the novel?

[00:02:56] **Cameron:** The novel.

[00:02:57] **John Hodgman:** The novel, yeah. That's a better guess. All guesses are wrong. The answer is that was a quote from a character named Dr. Agent Hobbs, a member of the security elite force called AEGIS, in a little TV show called *The Tick*—which was on Amazon for two seasons. The character Hobbs, Dr. Agent Hobbs—or it may have been Agent Dr. Hobbs—sorry, Ben Edlund, who created *The Tick*—was a-said by me, John Hodgman, who was instructed as I was about to take the stage for my first day of shooting. “Uuh, I don't wanna give you any particular notes on how to play this, but uh, are you familiar with *The Muppets*?”

I'm like, “Oh. You want me to Bunsen Honeydew this, don't you?” He's like yeah. And I'm like, “Okay, I can do it.”

[00:03:49] **Jesse Thorn:** In your acting resume under special skills, it says Bunsen Honeydewing it.

[00:03:54] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, I totally Honey-did it.

[00:03:57] **Jesse Thorn:** (*Chuckles.*) Horseback riding, fencing, Bunsen Honeydewing it.

[00:04:00] **John Hodgman:** You can see most of the time in order to be Bunsen Honeydew, I'm holding a clipboard, and I only use one hand to gesture with, in true *Muppet* style, 'cause the other hand is controlling my mouth. But in any case, why am I—why am I quoting from *The Tick*? (*Stammers.*) That wonderful television show that I got to be a part of when I met my friend, Griffin Newman. He was the costar of that show with the great Peter Serafinowicz. Why am I quoting from that one? Well, because that particular episode, Cameron and Shooka, was written by the writing team of Dan Hernandez and Benji Samit.

Do you know who they are, Cameron and Shooka?

[00:04:37] **Cameron:** Your Honor, I do not have the first idea.

(*Shooka agrees.*)

[00:04:39] **John Hodgman:** You do not have the first idea? Well, birthday boy, you of all people should know that Dan Hernandez and Benji Samit are the co-writers of the motion picture *Detective Pikachu*, who is one of the most famous Pokémons.

(*They agree.*)

[00:04:53] **Jesse Thorn:** Perhaps the most famous of all! Sorry, Snorlax.

(*They laugh.*)

[00:05:00] **John Hodgman:** My favorite of course, being Psyduck—and should be yours too, Jesse, ‘cause he constantly has a headache.

(Jesse laughs.)

But I'll say they're not writers of anything right now, because they're members of the Writer's Guild of America and, like me, they are on strike and not writing anything for WGA contracted productions, including whatever they're working on right now. They're picketing right now. And I'll go picket later on today. And I hope you'll all join me in supporting the WGA, and you can always go to the link in my bio on Instagram to find out more about that.

In the meantime, we have this case to hear. Luckily Maximum Fun is a wonderful organization that respects its creatives, and here we are about to hear a case. Who seeks justice in this fake internet court?

[00:05:42] **Cameron:** Uh, I seek justice, your Honor, against my friend Shooka.

[00:05:46] **John Hodgman:** Well, happy birthday to you, Cameron. It is your birthday. So I do wanna say sincerely, happy birthday. We just learned that.

(Cameron thanks him.)

And what is the justice that you seek?

[00:05:55] **Cameron:** So, I had a good friend of mine, you could say, murdered by a good friend of mine.

My Torterra of Pokémon Go was taken from me in an untimely manner, when I was hanging out in the apartment of my friend Shooka during college. And so, Shooka on that fateful day—Shooka stole my phone, and I chased Shooka around in a circle—in an actual circle. And then Shooka, as I was chasing her around in that circle, deleted that Torterra, Ryan Guldemon, and I would like for Shooka to basically be punished for her crimes.

[00:06:47] **Jesse Thorn:** Technically, Cameron, it's your own fault for putting on “Yakety Sax”.

(Cameron cackles.)

[00:06:54] **John Hodgman:** The Torterra is a Pocket Monster, a Pokémon, correct?

(Cameron confirms.)

But did it have another name?

[00:07:01] **Cameron:** Ryan Guldemon, named after the lead singer of Mother Mother.

[00:07:05] **John Hodgman:** Sure. I don't know—I don't know a lot about Pokémon. I'm sure that I'm going to learn, but when you got a Pikachu, you call it Pikachu. You don't call it like, um, Mark Mothersbaugh or whatever. Are you able to give, you know, given names to your various Pokémon?

[00:07:26] **Cameron:** Yes. In fact, it's tradition. I think—you're allowed to not choose a name for your Pokémon, but I think that with Pokémon Go, you just have to. You just have to name your own Pokémon. I would like to submit to the court for context that Shooka I think knows the least about Pokémon in this room of people. I think that's probably important context.

[00:07:49] **John Hodgman:** Shooka, when did this all go down?

[00:07:51] **Shooka:** It must have been 2018, I think. At one point, everyone around me started playing Pokémon. I don't know exactly when that was, but we were in college, so it must have been 2017 or '18. Including all of my friends, but Cameron I think especially liked to play Pokémon. I never found the game interesting. So, I never downloaded the game or played or engaged with any other Pokémon content. (*Chuckling.*) In fact, so far you have mentioned a few characters that I have no idea who they are.

[00:08:27] **John Hodgman:** Well, we'll all learn together. I certainly don't know the lead singer of Mother Mother or whatever it is.

(They laugh.)

We'll get to the bottom of all of this. We're gonna start here at the top to get down to the bottom of it.

You were in college together; this is some years ago. May I ask where you went to college?

[00:08:46] **Shooka:** George Washington University, in DC.

[00:08:47] **John Hodgman:** George Washington University, in the District of Columbia. Okay.

[00:08:51] **Jesse Thorn:** That's my mother's alma mater. She graduated on academic probation.

(They laugh and Cameron congratulates her.)

[00:08:59] **John Hodgman:** I find in favor of Shooka. I didn't—sorry about that, Cameron. You didn't know about legacy verdicts.

(They laugh.)

I'm Judge John Hodgman. Automatic. I was gonna say, if one of you had gone to Yale, automatic. Automatic find in your favor, unfortunately. And Cameron, can you clarify for both me and clearly for Shooka and some of the other listeners: you weren't just playing Pokémon, you were playing Pokémon Go, correct?

(Cameron confirms.)

And what is that?

[00:09:27] **Cameron:** So, in Pokémon Go, you can basically walk down the street. You open up the app, and you see something that simulates basically what you'd see on Google Maps. You see an overhead view of where you are. You see streets and locations. You see a map. And on that map—

[00:09:50] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, just like you were using your GPS or whatever.

[00:09:53] **Cameron:** Yes. You're represented by, you know, your character in Pokémon Go and where you are in real life. They represent these little Pokémon, these little creatures, on the map. So, you can go, and you can walk towards one of these creatures. If you get close to it on the map and in real life, then you can go ahead and you can—you can catch that creature. So basically, it is a great motivator for people to walk around and go on little adventures and create a collection of these creatures so that you can, you know, simultaneously do something cute and silly in a little game, but also you're kind of really interacting with the real world around you. And you can make a project of it.

[00:10:38] **John Hodgman:** It's an augmented reality game such that when you look through the camera of your phone and you find one of these virtual Pokémons that the Nintendo Corporation has sprinkled all over the map, virtually, imaginarily—but if you hold the camera up, you will see it in the camera, sitting there looking at you. And then you capture it and add it to your collection. And that's the whole game, right? You capture them, you get 'em. You gotta catch 'em all is the theme. And you got a Torterra. Did you get a Torterra originally? Or did you get its earlier form?

[00:11:12] **Cameron:** I got its earlier form. That's correct. So, that's a Turtwig. You get it as Turtwig.

[00:11:17] **John Hodgman:** A Turtwig. Right. That's a cute little turtle with a leaf on its head.

[00:11:20] **Cameron:** Yeah. Yeah, basically. It's a little grass Pokémon. It's a little creature that hangs out in the grass. So, you go somewhere grassy in real life—

[00:11:27] **John Hodgman:** Sorry, was I selling Turtwig short there by saying it was a cute little turtle with the leaf on its head? And you're like, *(grumpily)*, “Uh, basically.”

[00:11:33] **Cameron:** I think that's about correct, your Honor. I think that—I think that's a very accurate description. And I'm sorry for doubting you, your Honor.

[00:11:43] **John Hodgman:** No, no. I didn't know whether there was more depth to Turtwig.

[00:11:47] **Jesse Thorn:** Well, it has large yellow eyes, and its face is oddly shaped. On the bottom of the face there's a yellow mouth in an obtuse shape. And also, on its face it has two tiny nostrils.

[00:11:56] **John Hodgman:** Are you reading from the Pokémon manual again?

(They laugh.)

[00:11:59] **Jesse Thorn:** I'm just reading straight from this Pokémon Wiki.

[00:12:02] **John Hodgman:** What type of—what type of Pokémon is Turtwig?

[00:12:05] **Cameron:** So, Turtwig is a grass Pokémon. It means that—you know, in the original games that just meant basically nothing. It was an aesthetic feature. In real life, in Pokémon Go, it means that—

[00:12:16] **John Hodgman:** Sure, in real life. In real life.

[00:12:19] **Cameron:** *(Laughing.)* In real life, you get to somewhere grassy, and you catch the Pokémon!

[00:12:23] **John Hodgman:** In real life of Pokémon Go, you would find a grass Pokémon in an actual grassy location.

(Cameron confirms.)

Okay. That's cool. I like this. I like this game.

[00:12:38] **Jesse Thorn:** And then, did you feed your Turtwig to grow it into a Torterra?

[00:12:40] **Cameron:** That's basically what it is, actually. So, you grow it into a Grotle first, feeding it Turtwig candy.

(Jesse politely agrees but quickly devolves into giggling.)

And then you feed the Grotle more Turtwig candy, and it turns into a Torterra. *(Laughs.)*

[00:12:54] **Jesse Thorn:** I don't know anything about Pokémon. I love talking about Pokémon.

[00:13:01] **John Hodgman:** Turtwig candy is a virtual candy. And how do you get that? You buy it in an in-app purchase, I presume?

[00:13:08] **Cameron:** You catch other Turtwigs, and then you let them go. So, when you catch a Turtwig, you always get Turtwig candy. But you just set it free. Like you'd catch a fish and you'd let it go. You set the Turtwig free, and you keep the candy,

[00:13:20] **Jesse Thorn:** But first you extract its glands.

[00:13:23] **Cameron:** Maybe. You know, they don't really explain how you get the candy.

[00:13:26] **Jesse Thorn:** It's an invasive procedure.

(Cameron laughs.)

[00:13:30] **John Hodgman:** And then you get a Torterra. And a Torterra is like a big—a big turtle with a forest on its back.

(Cameron confirms.)

Fair enough. And you named this turtle, what did you call it again?

[00:13:43] **Cameron:** Ryan Guldemon.

[00:13:45] **John Hodgman:** Ryan Guldemon.

[00:13:47] **Jesse Thorn:** It has powerful resonances in the world of myth, that this turtle has land on its back.

[00:13:54] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, that's right. It's the, it's the World Turtle, right? Isn't that a common mythological element? A giant tortoise upon which all of the universe rests?

[00:14:04] **Jesse Thorn:** Yeah, as detailed in Joseph Campbell's book, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces: Gotta Catch 'em All*.

[00:14:11] **John Hodgman:** *(Snorts.)* Gotta get all those faces.

[00:14:13] **Jesse Thorn:** 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.

[00:14:21] **Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:14:23] **Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:14:26] **John Hodgman:** Shooka, I saw you laughing uproariously during a lot of this conversation. Is there anything you'd like to share at this point?

[00:14:31] **Shooka:** Uh, this is all music to my ears, if the music was really bad.

(They cackle. Jesse really loses it.)

[00:14:45] **Jesse Thorn:** Judge Hodgman, yesterday I was talking to Oscar Thorn, a regular on this program, and I'm doing a dad joke. An exhausting dad joke. And Oscar says, "Dad, it's like, uh, I don't want you to be my dad anymore." That's what Shooka just dropped!

(Shooka laughs and apologizes.)

[00:15:07] **John Hodgman:** Yeah. That had big "I don't want you to be my dad anymore" energy. Amazing. So, Shooka, do you—do you remember when your friend Cameron got this Torterra or got the Turtwig and turned it into a Torterra by feeding it Turtwig candy?

[00:15:24] **Shooka:** I have to say, because I found this game so boring, I never asked questions. I was not particularly curious about it. So, my friends would play this game all around me, but I would never look at their phones to see what they were doing. I just knew that they were playing Pokémon Go. So, I didn't know what Torterra was until Cameron decided to bring me to court. So, when I—when I did delete this Pokémon, I didn't know that it was Torterra. It was just a Pocket Monster.

[00:15:55] **John Hodgman:** So, Cameron is not the only offender in your friend group back at George Washington University. There are a lot of kids playing this game.

(Shooka confirms.)

And how did that make you feel?

[00:16:07] **Shooka:** You know, it did make me feel a bit left out. It was the—it was the cool thing that the cool kids played. *(Laughs.)* I don't if that's true, but that's what it felt like.

[00:16:16] **John Hodgman:** Shooka. Shooka, no, no. I'm glad we can finally settle this. No, it wasn't.

(Cameron laughs.)

[00:16:21] **Shooka:** Okay. Good to know. But I was—

[00:16:23] **John Hodgman:** Your feelings are valid, but I need to tell you.

[00:16:26] **Shooka:** Thank you. Thank you. That's actually great to know.

[00:16:28] **John Hodgman:** In reality, actual reality, Cameron. But people had fun with it. A lot of people had fun with it. A lot of people had fun with it. You were not one of them.

[00:16:39] **Shooka:** I was not one of them, but it was—it was fine with me that people liked to play this game.

[00:16:45] **John Hodgman:** How did it affect your relationship with Cameron, in a literal sense?

[00:16:51] **Shooka:** So, Cameron is a great friend. He, especially, is a very present friend. He's someone that you can always trust to listen to you when you have something to say. He's a great listener. He's a great conversationalist. And I think Pokémon, you know—Pokémon did not make Cameron a worse person, but I think it did make him a slightly worse friend. *(Laughs.)*

[00:17:15] **John Hodgman:** Oh yeah. So, do you cop to that, Cameron? Were you—were you a more—were you a more negligent friend during your big Pokémon Go period?

[00:17:25] **Cameron:** I have no knowledge of this, but I—well, there's something about the specific events that Shooka has told me about that I cannot possibly deny. So, um, the reason apparently why Shooka took my phone is because me and our friends, Jackson and Justin—the three of us, we were on Pokémon Go in Shooka's apartment, in front of Shooka.

So that I definitely cannot deny that we probably were talking about Pokémon Go in front of Shooka.

[00:17:54] **John Hodgman:** I love it when a litigant tells on them themselves.

[00:17:58] **Cameron:** *(Chuckling.)* Just honest, your Honor.

[00:18:00] **Shooka:** And how conveniently have you forgotten this little detail about what happened that night?

[00:18:06] **Cameron:** I had no idea until you informed me about that, but I doubt that otherwise I was talking about Pokémon Go all the time. Maybe I was.

[00:18:18] **John Hodgman:** You don't have to be talking about it. You're just going around—you got—you're trying to catch 'em all. I mean, it's literally a game where you have to walk out of your house while your friend is trying to tell you something. Like, "Oop! I gotta go. There might be a sand Pokémon nearby. See you later."

I don't know if that was exact, but you are copping at least to the fact that one day in—it was in Shooka's apartment?

(Cameron confirms.)

In the District of Columbia, you—Cameron—Jackson, and Justin, the three musketeers of Pokémon Go, were all on your phones and just ignoring Shooka. What were you trying to do? Talk to them about their days or what?

[00:18:56] **Shooka:** Yeah, I was just trying to have a conversation with my friends who had come over to my place to play Pokémon Go, apparently. I know that they weren't playing it

constantly. It was that they would take their phones out of their pockets every once in a while and start playing Pokémon. And I believe there is a trade of sorts that you can do in Pokémon.

[00:19:17] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, 'cause you weren't hunting for—were you hunting for Pokémon's in Shooka's apartment? Is that what was going on? Or were you doing some other game activity, would you guess, Cameron?

[00:19:26] **Cameron:** I would guess that—so, you have your, your team, your collection of Pokémon, Sometimes, you might have some extra Pokémon that you, you know, catch. You already have—you already have that Pokémon, but you'll take another just so that you can trade it with your friends to get a Pokémon that you don't have. And that's probably what we were doing.

[00:19:47] **John Hodgman:** Some trash Pokémon, some shag weed Pokémon.

[00:19:51] **Jesse Thorn:** You've already extracted its glands. It's dead to you.

[00:19:54] **John Hodgman:** (*Snorts.*) It's gland candy.

[00:19:56] **Jesse Thorn:** It's just a husk.

[00:19:57] **John Hodgman:** Yeah. So, you were probably trading Pokémon's with Jackson and Justin.

(*Cameron confirms.*)

And Shooka grabbed your phone out of your hand. Is this what happened? Tell me.

(*Cameron confirms.*)

Go deep into the narrative of your accusation.

[00:20:11] **Cameron:** Okay. I don't know. It was a cold winter day. We were still in our coats, I think, in Shooka's lovely little apartment, and—

[00:20:22] **John Hodgman:** (*Chuckling.*) Lovely but unheated?

[00:20:24] **Cameron:** Heated, but I think we like had just come in and we were like kind of probably finishing a little bit of a conversation about, “Oh, well I have this Pokémon. Oh, well, uh, let's see. Let me look through my Pokémon, uh—oh, look at—look at my Torterra though. Look at my Torterra. I named him Ryan Guldemon.”

At that time, I had a system where—actually the reason why I had named it Ryan Guldemon was not just because I really like the band that Ryan Guldemon is in. It's because I had a system where I would name Pokémon after members of bands that I couldn't remember the

names of, so that I would always see the Pokémon, and I would always see the names of the band members. So, if I couldn't remember—if for some reason I just kept on forgetting Tom York's name whenever people talked about Radiohead, I could be in on the conversation and talk about the band that I really like. *(Laughs.)*

[00:21:19] **Jesse Thorn:** Judge Hodgman, this is all about the classic intersection between people who gotta catch 'em all in Pokémon and people who got a catch 'em all at the used record store.

[00:21:30] **John Hodgman:** That's right. You're saying that Shooka robbed you of a powerful mnemonic that you are using to remember Ryan Guldemon's name lead, singer of the band Mother Mother?

[00:21:41] **Jesse Thorn:** Cameron operates at the corner of Griffin McElroy and Tom Scharpling.

(They laugh.)

[00:21:49] **John Hodgman:** Okay. So, you're there playing on a cold winter's day. Does Shooka take your phone away or what?

[00:21:55] **Cameron:** She snatches the phone out of my hands. It is completely sudden. And I can guarantee that I was not taking out my Torterra to trade. Ryan Guldemon I would not have traded, and I was in fact, you know, devastated, shock, terrified even, when Shooka stole the phone out of my hands and started running away with it. I did not think that Shaka would have deleted my Pokémon. This is an extremely out of character move for Shooka. And so, I had no idea that she was about to delete it. So, we were running around in circles. She was laughing. I was laughing and sort of that shocked, I-can't-believe-it kind of way. And then when I take my phone back, I see her thumb—as I'm wrestling it out of her hand, I see her thumb come down on the button to delete the Pokémon when it says, “Are you sure you want to delete the Pokémon?”

And Shooka presses yes, with complete confidence. I snatch it back and I go, “How did you just do that?” Um, and then—and then Ryan Guldemon was—he'd left us, yeah.

[00:22:57] **John Hodgman:** Gone forever. Ryan Guldemon was dead, Shooka.

[00:23:02] **Shooka:** I'm sorry for killing Ryan Guldemon.

[00:23:04] **John Hodgman:** It's a very intrusive thing to do, to steal someone's phone and then delete something from their phone without their permission. Don't you agree, Shooka?

[00:23:14] **Shooka:** I think you're right. I agree that I committed evil in that moment.

(John chuckles.)

But I have to say that this was a situation that had built up to that moment. It was—it was like—it was like milk on stove. It was still for a long time, until it boiled and overflowed on that night.

[00:23:36] **John Hodgman:** Milk on stove! You're just dropping the hits! It's incredible. (*Chuckles.*) Yeah. It was a slow boil, and it finally—it finally bubbled over. And boiling over milk is the worst thing that can happen. Milk is a pleasant substance until it boils over, and it coats your cooktop, and it's impossible to get off.

But now you acknowledge that your friendship is coated with crusty milk,

[00:24:07] **Shooka:** (*Laughs.*) I suppose it is!

[00:24:09] **John Hodgman:** Cameron, have you ever had pets?

[00:24:10] **Cameron:** I have. I had a golden retriever. He passed away at the age of 13, while I was in senior year of high school. And his name was Fidelio. He was named after the opera.

[00:24:21] **John Hodgman:** Oh, and do you have a pet now?

[00:24:23] **Cameron:** I do not. I have not had a pet since then.

[00:24:26] **John Hodgman:** Why not?

[00:24:27] **Cameron:** I have been—I've been moving around too much. My future has been changing a lot. My plans have been changing a lot. I haven't been able to get a pet. I've wanted a pet desperately for a long time. But it's never really been a realistic option.

[00:24:49] **John Hodgman:** Would you say that Cameron is a sentimentalist?

(*Shooka confirms.*)

Yeah. Would you say that you are a sentimentalist?

[00:24:57] **Shooka:** In some ways and not in others.

[00:25:00] **John Hodgman:** Mm-hmm. In what ways are you not a sentimentalist?

[00:25:03] **Shooka:** I think I don't get attached to things very easily, especially if those things are not living creatures or—you know. I also have a dog, so I am very attached to my dog, for example.

[00:25:19] **John Hodgman:** What is your—what is your dog's name?

[00:25:21] **Shooka:** My dog's name is Plato.

[00:25:23] **John Hodgman:** Mm. Plato like the philosopher, not like the—not like the sculpting toy.

[00:25:28] **Shooka:** Exactly. Like the philosopher. Yes. So, I do definitely get attached to animals, but I wouldn't say that I get attached to animals that I don't know. For example, if I see a bird on the street, I wouldn't say that I feel any particular way about it.

[00:25:46] **John Hodgman:** Well, you barely know that bird. You haven't even spoken to it. Not once in your life. Yeah. And you feel less inclined to feel attached to imaginary creatures?

(Shooka confirms.)

Mm. You sent in some evidence, Cameron, including a calendar from this year—the year of our God-or-whatever—March 2023—with some dates marked off on it, X-ed off on it. And it says, “Exhibit A) My New Year's resolution. Ask me about this.” So, I'm doing it.

[00:26:17] **Cameron:** *(Laughing.)* Alright. Thank you, your Honor, for asking me about this. So, my New Year's resolution was that I should get on the treadmill at least a minute a day. Usually limited to a minute a day, but at least a minute a day most days out of the year, meaning more than half.

So, I don't get out a lot. I don't exercise a lot. Ever since Pokémon Go—ever since I stopped using Pokémon Go, because I was very sad that my account got messed up and I didn't have any Pokémon left. My Pokémon all died. Both—you know, all of the Pokémon that were left, all of the ones that Shooka didn't murder, those Pokémon died. And ever since that happened, I have not been on Pokémon Go. I haven't tried again. I haven't been motivated to try again. I haven't been motivated to get a new Ryan Guldmond or anybody else. And I haven't been getting out much. I don't exercise and I tend to be like a little bit of a workaholic, so I don't really leave the house too much.

[00:27:26] **John Hodgman:** So, you're saying—you're saying that what happened was Shooka killed Torterra; consequently, all the other Pokémon died. Mysteriously. And you haven't left your home since that time.

(Cameron wheezes with laughter.)

And now you have to make a New Year's resolution to stand on a treadmill and trudge slowly through a nonmagical world in your basement or whatever.

(Cameron confirms.)

Simply to stave off physical infirmity because of this.

(Cameron confirms.)

That's what you wanted me to—(*stammering*) that's what—that was—that was the prompt from this photo of the calendar?

[00:28:04] **Cameron:** Yes. (*Laughing.*) Yes, your Honor. Correct.

[00:28:06] **John Hodgman:** Sounds like it worked. I mean, shoot, that sounds like it worked. You stopped the Pokémon Go after you killed Torterra. Did that—did that end Pokémon Go in your friend group?

[00:28:15] **Shooka:** I've never been so successful in anything else in life.

(*They laugh.*)

[00:28:21] **John Hodgman:** What do you do for a living, if I may ask?

[00:28:23] **Shooka:** I work for the government. I work for the Federal Reserve. I'm an analyst there.

[00:28:27] **John Hodgman:** Oh, okay. Yeah, yeah. Yeah, there's no—there's no room for sentiment at the Federal Reserve.

[00:28:34] **Shooka:** (*Laughs.*) Yeah. You're all cold-blooded.

[00:28:35] **John Hodgman:** So, you shut down the Pokémon Go. And did that improve your friendships with Cameron and Justin and Jackson? Yes or no?

[00:28:42] **Shooka:** I did not realize that what I did was in any way a huge action that I'd taken in my fight against Pokémon, but apparently it was. And I think after that, Pokémon go slowly died down. I don't know if I should take credit for this happening, but I don't believe I know anyone today who plays Pokémon Go. And I don't know if you do. But that is—that is another thing that I think Cameron would, regardless of whether, he had Torterra today and regardless of whether his account still existed, whether he would be playing Pokémon Go still or not, because I don't know anyone else who plays Pokémon Go. Jackson and Justin do not.

[00:29:30] **John Hodgman:** Cameron, you wish to speak?

[00:29:32] **Cameron:** Yes. So, my goal here, today—Shooka has basically already apologized. She's even apologized today. My goal today—so, Shooka, she's not personally responsible for the fact that Pokémon Go somehow deleted my account under mysterious circumstances.

[00:29:50] **John Hodgman:** Wait. There are too many—before you make your statement, please, 'cause I think I see where you're going, I just wanna verify some facts. Because there's a lot of—there's a lot of allusion over some of these mysteries. How did all your other Pokémon die?

[00:30:05] **Cameron:** So, I clicked on the Pokémon Go app one day. My friend said, “Oh, we should—we should meet up and trade Pokémon, Pokémon Go.” And I was so excited. And I clicked on the Pokémon Go app. It was someone I hadn't talked to—

[00:30:18] **John Hodgman:** How long was this after Torterra had been deleted?

[00:30:22] **Cameron:** Six months to a year.

[00:30:23] **John Hodgman:** Would you say that Torterra's deletion basically ended Pokémon Go in your life meaningfully for a while?

[00:30:32] **Cameron:** I was on it a lot less after that. I wouldn't say that it was like an immediate stop, but I think it was a part of it slowing down.

[00:30:40] **John Hodgman:** Would you say that something in you got deleted that day along with Torterra?

[00:30:46] **Cameron:** *(Laughs.)* Yes. Something got deleted along with my Torterra.

[00:30:51] **John Hodgman:** And then, six months later or so, some other friends said, “Let's get back together and try to get the magic back.” And you're like, sure. And you open up the Pokémon app, the Pokémon Go App. And what happens?

[00:30:59] **Cameron:** And it tells me you are not logged in into your account. I tried to get information about how I could log back into my account. It did not work. This apparently has happened with a lot of people. It's a glitch. It's a glitch that happened in the Pokémon Go app. And you just—you just—you just start over. I think that they basically fixed that glitch. I think that's not happening anymore. But because all of my Pokémon are gone, they're dead. My account was deleted. I don't really have much of an interest anymore because of the fact that, you know, the point of the game is the creatures. And my creatures are gone. I don't care about like any creature—

[00:31:40] **John Hodgman:** I just wanna point out that I just did a little research. I just searched “Pokémon Go glitch” and I confirmed that this was a system-wide glitch that deleted lots of accounts. And they say, according to this subreddit, it was due to a malicious code that they have only recently traced back to the Federal Reserve Bank of the United States America

(They laugh.)

[00:32:03] **Shooka:** Ah, I'm caught.

[00:32:04] **John Hodgman:** It's weird, right? So, you lost your account. I'm sorry to hear that.

[00:32:09] **Cameron:** It was unfortunate at the time. I was sad at the time, but you know, that was a couple years ago, now. At this point, what I really want from Shooka—because Shooka has admitted that she has done evil, and actually I don't really have a lot of interest in making Shooka sad.

[00:32:26] **John Hodgman:** Let the record—let the record show that Shooka shrugged when you said that, Cameron.

(Cameron laughs.)

Okay. Continue, please.

[00:32:34] **Cameron:** You know. You know, Shooka—Shooka, aside from being cold-hearted, unsentimental, *(laughs)* she is, aside, from that, Shooka is extremely sweet, and I do not want to cause her any suffering or pain. And I don't care about, you know, making her apologize more or her—like, I don't want a deeper apology. What I would like is very pragmatic. I want Shooka to get me a new Ryan Guldemond. I think that I'm not going to do it. I'm not gonna do it. I'm really sad. *(Laughs.)* And I think that it is a completely suitable and appropriate responsibility for Shooka to take on. I'm not asking her to recover or reproduce the Pokémon that were deleted by the Pokémon app. I'm asking her to take responsibility, just pragmatically. I'm not asking her to like, apologize. Like, I just want her to get the Pokémon.

Get the Pokémon. Bring me a Torterra named Ryan Guldemond. It can be any gender. It doesn't have to be a male Pokémon. As long as it's a Torterra named Ryan Guldemond, it will fill the same space in my heart.

[00:34:02] **John Hodgman:** Let me make sure I'm clear on this, Cameron. You want—you want Shooka to download the Pokémon Go app, go out into the world. She doesn't gotta catch 'em all. She's gotta catch 'em one.

[00:34:12] **Cameron:** Exactly. She's gotta catch 'em one.

[00:34:14] **Jesse Thorn:** Well, she's gotta catch three because she's got to evolve her turtle gog into the dingle dong, and then into the—

[00:34:25] **John Hodgman:** You gotta get—you gotta get a number. She has to get a number of Turtwigs. One for saving, and the other for getting that gland candy out of to feed the candy and become Torterra, and then gift that Torterra to you on your Pokémon Go app?

(Cameron confirms.)

And you created a tutorial for this on how to do it.

(Cameron confirms.)

Which you shared with me. And presumably would share with them with Shooka, as well.

(Cameron confirms.)

Have you walked Shooka through this process before?

[00:34:57] **Cameron:** I have linked Shooka to this information.

[00:35:00] **John Hodgman:** But have you talked to her about it? Have you talked her through it before?

[00:35:03] **Cameron:** Shooka, did we talk through it?

[00:35:05] **Shooka:** I think we talked briefly about it.

[00:35:09] **John Hodgman:** Well, let's pretend that you never did.

[00:35:12] **Cameron:** Okay, alright.

[00:35:12] **John Hodgman:** So, Cameron, describe to me and to Shooka what Shooka's gotta do to gotta catch 'em one.

[00:35:17] **Cameron:** Okay. So, first of all: Shooka, do you have the presentation open on your—on your device? You can—you can bring that up while I'm—while I'm telling you how to catch 'em one. Okay. So first of all, you have to find the Pokémon. You have to find the Turtwig. You just open up the app after you made your account. You—and you made your character—you see if there are any good Pokémon in your area. If not, you just—you walk around in real life, and then you see if there are any good Pokémon in your area. And then you walk around real life, etc.. So, you're looking for the Turtwig. You probably—it's best to go somewhere grassy.

[00:35:59] **John Hodgman:** Grassy, 'cause it's a grass Pokémon. Everyone knows this, Shooka.

[00:36:04] **Cameron:** Shooka. *(Laughs.)* And then if we might—if we might all move to page two of the presentation.

[00:36:11] **John Hodgman:** Yes, don't worry. I'm, I'm following right along.

[00:36:12] **Cameron:** Perfect. So, you go ahead; you click on that—on that Turtwig.

[00:36:19] **John Hodgman:** That looks like a Squirtle to me.

[00:36:20] **Cameron:** This creature is not—are we on the second page of the presentation?

[00:36:27] **John Hodgman:** The only one I'm seeing—I'm seeing a person here. I'm seeing a, a player. And there's a thing that looks like a turtle, but it does not look like a Turtwig. It looks like a Squirtle.

[00:36:37] **Cameron:** That is a Squirtle. So, on the second page we have a different Pokémon, which is also not a Turtwig.

[00:36:44] **John Hodgman:** Okay. This is a great presentation, by the way. Incredible deck. One billion dollars in angel investing. Absolutely. You got it. Sold in the room.

(Cameron laughs.)

Go on. Okay. I see there's this—okay. Right. There's an animation on page two. Got it. Okay.

[00:37:00] **Cameron:** Yes. So, in the theater of our mind, this can become a Turtwig.

[00:37:03] **John Hodgman:** In fact, it's a Zigagon.

[00:37:05] **Cameron:** This is—that's a Zigagoon. That's correct, your Honor.

[00:37:08] **John Hodgman:** Oh, alright. Zigagoon. Yeah. I know my Zigagoons.

[00:37:14] **Cameron:** And so, you take your pokéball and you just, you throw it with your finger at the Pokémon, at your Turtwig. You wanna make sure that you throw it on the moving green circle. There's a moving green circle on the Pokémon, which works as a target. You just throw it in the center. You're gonna try to aim it, and hopefully you caught the Pokémon.

[00:37:37] **John Hodgman:** Okay. Everything clear, Shooka?

[00:37:39] **Shooka:** Yes. But if you notice later, on—I don't know which page it is, but you'll see that I will need to get—

[00:37:47] **Cameron:** We'll get to that, Shooka.

[00:37:50] **Shooka:** Alright! It's all clear.

[00:37:52] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, no, I understand. We'll make the whole deck available, Cameron. I think it's pretty well—pretty—anyone who has passing understanding of Pokémon understands. You throw—you throw your pokéball at the Pokémon and it captures it in like a dimensional pocket or whatever. And the Pokémon is imprisoned in that pokéball until you—until you release it to fight against other Pokémons or feed it gland candy or whatever. And to eventually, over time—as you point out here—Shooka would need to obtain 125 Turtwig candy, catching 42 Turtwigs in all to get that candy to feed it and make it into a Torterra.

[00:38:30] **Cameron:** Yeah, you need 125 Turtwig candy.

(John echoes the number.)

So, on the final page, I did do the math. Yes, that's correct. It's 42 Turtwigs.

[00:38:39] **Jesse Thorn:** Cameron, could she just go to Target and buy one of those Robux gift cards? That's what I usually do for my kids' friend's birthdays. Just by Robux.

(They laugh.)

[00:38:53] **Cameron:** Bailiff, I don't think so.

[00:38:55] **John Hodgman:** There has to be—you have to follow the deck precisely.

If I were to—if I were to find in your favor, Cameron, Shooka would have to follow your instructions precisely. Correct?

(Cameron confirms.)

How long of a time do you think it would take to collect the 42 Turtwigs to get the one Torterra?

[00:39:12] **Cameron:** Depends where you are. Depends how determined you are, whether you're gonna do this in one go or not.

[00:39:18] **Shooka:** Which means years. *(Laughs.)*

[00:39:20] **Cameron:** Definitely not years. I'd say maybe... maybe a month. Maybe a month.

[00:39:28] **John Hodgman:** Maybe a month of daily searching.

[00:39:30] **Cameron:** Maybe a month of—your Honor, that might be right. I think maybe a month of daily searching. If you take a few minutes every day, just a couple minutes every day, you could probably get 42 Turtwigs.

[00:39:45] **Jesse Thorn:** So, you can get Turtwigs at a rate of one a minute?!

[00:39:48] **Cameron:** Not exactly. *(Laughs.)*

[00:39:53] **Jesse Thorn:** How long does it take to get one Turtwig?

[00:39:56] **Cameron:** Hmm. I think it depends—

[00:39:57] **John Hodgman:** A little less than a day! If you're saying it's a month of daily searching and you need 42 of them—

[00:40:05] **Jesse Thorn:** But in a few minutes a day, Cameron said!

[00:40:05] **Cameron:** 10 minutes, maybe—within 10 minutes, you could catch a Turtwig, I think.

[00:40:09] **Jesse Thorn:** So, we're talking about a total of—what is that? 420 minutes?

[00:40:15] **John Hodgman:** 420 minutes—

[00:40:16] **Shooka:** And that is 10 minutes after I'm on some sort of grass, not 10 minutes right outside my house. Is that right?

[00:40:22] **Cameron:** It may register your house as grassy. Yeah.

[00:40:25] **Shooka:** As grass? I see. (*Chuckles.*)

[00:40:27] **Jesse Thorn:** So, we're talking about like seven hours of grass time.

[00:40:29] **John Hodgman:** Seven hours, if you were gonna cram. Yeah. You got grass—you got grass around your Federal Reserve Bank, wherever you live, Shooka?

[00:40:38] **Shooka:** There is some grass. Low quality grass mostly, but there is some.

[00:40:43] **Jesse Thorn:** Come out to Cali. We got the good stuff.

[00:40:47] **Shooka:** (*Laughs.*) It's a work trip then.

[00:40:49] **John Hodgman:** It's true. Do you think your colleagues would feel differently about you if you were taking your lunch hour to go search the grass for Turtwigs?

[00:40:58] **Shooka:** They would probably be very confused. I don't know how many of them would know what Pokémon Go is.

[00:41:03] **John Hodgman:** Especially now. Do people still play this game, Cameron?

[00:41:07] **Cameron:** Uh, it exists. I mean, it's not—it's not—it would not be—

[00:41:10] **John Hodgman:** That's a different—that's an answer to a different question.

[00:41:12] **Jesse Thorn:** How many *Judge John Hodgman* listeners, do you think, would be willing to send a Turtwig to Shooka?

[00:41:17] **John Hodgman:** Oh, yeah. Well, I mean, if we crowdsource the Turtwigs, she could be done in a day.

[00:41:21] **Jesse Thorn:** TurtwigsForShooka.org.

(They laugh.)

[00:41:26] **John Hodgman:** You better get that domain locked down right now, Valerie Moffat.

[00:41:30] **Valerie Moffat:** I'm already on it.

[00:41:31] **Jesse Thorn:** Oh man! We gotta get TurtwigsForShooka.fishing.

(They laugh.)

[00:41:38] **John Hodgman:** But it's not a game—it's not a game that is—the moment has passed for Pokémon Go, to some degree it would seem to me.

[00:41:44] **Cameron:** It's not stylish anymore. It's not—it's not—it's not trendy.

[00:41:48] **Jesse Thorn:** It's no longer for the cool kids.

[00:41:52] **John Hodgman:** You have no desire to get back into this game. You just want to get a Torterra back to complete the cycle and to heal the wound.

[00:42:00] **Cameron:** I do want to get back into this game. If I had the Torterra, then I could, Currently, I actually, genuinely—I'm not lying—I don't have any special, particular interest in it. I think genuinely, if I got this Turtwig, this Torterra, from Shooka, I genuinely would get back into this game. That's not a lie.

[00:42:20] **John Hodgman:** Shooka, let's go back to the original moment. You stole this phone, and you deleted this thing because Cameron wasn't being present in your friendship. Why is that—why is that important to you?

[00:42:35] **Shooka:** Well, Cameron is one of my best friends, and we have been very close ever since college. And as I mentioned before, Cameron is probably one of the most present people that I know. Because I'm sure you all have friends who are—whenever they're talking to you or whenever you're spending time together, they might have their phone out, they might be scrolling down Twitter every once in a while and not at you. And say, “Ah, mm yes, I'm listening.” But maybe they're not entirely listening. Cameron is not that kind of person.

[00:43:07] **John Hodgman:** Mm. Yes. Hm. I'm listening. I'm—what? I'm sorry. What did you just say? I was just looking up stats on the Zigzagoon. Mm-hmm.

[00:43:14] **Jesse Thorn:** Once you're in the Pokémon Wiki, you can't get out. It's like a multilevel marketing scheme.

[00:43:21] **John Hodgman:** So, you felt that Cameron abandoned you to a certain degree for Pokémon Go back a few years ago?

(Shooka confirms.)

And yet Cameron just said that if I order in his favor and you get this Torterra for him, he might start playing again. Why would you want that to happen?

[00:43:35] **Shooka:** Well, I wouldn't want that to happen. I—

[00:43:38] **John Hodgman:** I don't you think he should have—don't you think Cameron should have said, “I just need to get this Torterra so I can feel some sense of closure in my life, and then I'll just go ahead and be a very present friend to Shooka.”

[00:43:48] **Shooka:** Well, listen, I—if Cameron wants to, if that is truly something Cameron wants to do, then I think—if that brings him joy, if he wants to get back into Pokémon Go, I think he should be able to do it. I personally would probably prefer if Cameron did not get back into Pokémon Go. And I'm still not entirely convinced that if that hadn't happened, Cameron would be playing Pokémon Go now. But I guess we can't—we can't guess that.

[00:44:17] **John Hodgman:** No, that's an alternate universe.

[00:44:19] **Shooka:** It is an alternate universe. So, what I do want for Cameron is what he wants for himself, which is to get out of the house more. If that is the purpose that Pokémon Go was serving in his life and not having Pokémon Go has led to him not leaving the house as much as he would like, I would like Cameron to do that. And in fact, if you—if I win this case, I would ask Cameron to get out of the house more, maybe a short amount of time every day, even if it's 15 minutes or 10 minutes. The same amount of time it takes to get a Turtwig. You can, you know, go on grass. Touch grass, as the kids say, and—*(chuckles)* and, uh, you know, enjoy nature without looking down on your phone.

[00:45:12] **John Hodgman:** without the mediation of augmented reality. Just actual reality. You two don't live in the same place anymore.

(Shooka confirms.)

So how does that present—how do you manage to have a present relationship when you are not living in the same place? Because Cameron, you live in New York somewhere, right?

(Cameron confirms.)

Right, right. And you live in a bank?

[00:45:35] **Shooka:** I do live in a bank, yeah. Under all the money. That's where I sleep.

[00:45:37] **John Hodgman:** That's right. Fantastic. Yeah. Must be hard to maintain a relationship. Are you concerned that a resurgence of—I mean, how do you guys stay in touch, currently?

[00:45:49] **Cameron:** We actually are very like actively best friends. So, actually we don't always meet in person, but this is the third month in a row that we're hanging out. Is that right?

(Shooka confirms.)

Yeah. I visited you in March, in DC, where I stayed there for like—what was it? A week?

[00:46:07] **Shooka:** Two weeks.

[00:46:08] **Cameron:** Two weeks. That's right. And then, we met another friend in North Carolina for a weekend. And now, Shooka's visiting me for my birthday. So, aside from that though, you know, we hadn't seen each other for at least like a year, but we are very actively—you know, we're very good friends. We hang out a lot online, but we—like I'll just call Shooka in the middle of the day for no reason. And sometimes Shooka says, “Hi, I'm at work. Can we talk later?” And I say, okay. And then Shooka calls me back a few, you know, hours later and I say, “Oh, I got a terrible stomachache today. Let me tell you about it.”
(Laughs.)

And then—and we'll just talk for hours. I'll say, “Oh, I have to get to work in 15 minutes.” And Shooka will say, okay. And I work from home. I'm basically self-employed, and then we'll just talk for an hour when I have to go work. And we watch TV shows together. We're watching *Twin Peaks*. We're very close.

[00:47:14] **John Hodgman:** Good. And do you—so, do you fear that if I were to rule in his favor, Shooka, that the Pokémon go will cause a damage? Will cause this relationship to become strained?

[00:47:28] **Shooka:** Frankly, no. I don't think that will happen. Both because I think Cameron now knows how I feel about Pokémon. So, I doubt—again, once again, Cameron is a great friend, so I think now that he knows this, he will not talk about Pokémon in my presence, probably.

[00:47:46] **John Hodgman:** And there's no difficulty remaining present when he—you know, you're visiting him now for his birthday. It's not like he's on his phone the entire time.

[00:47:53] **Shooka:** He has not been on his phone.

[00:47:55] **John Hodgman:** Right. And you're present there for him? You're not just sitting over on your phone raising interest rates or whatever it is you do all day?

[00:48:00] **Shooka:** (*Laughs.*) Well—! No, I'm not.

[00:48:04] **John Hodgman:** Alright. So, if you were to—if I were to—I know what Cameron wants if I were to find in his favor. If I were to find in your favor, you're asking that he be more active in the world, but not mediated through augmented reality of Pokémon Go?

[00:48:18] **Shooka:** Yes. I want him to, without Pokémon Go, make an effort to spend some time outside. However much that he wants, or he thinks would be good for him.

[00:48:27] **John Hodgman:** Let me ask you a different question, Shooka. Is there any reason that I should find in your favor?

[00:48:31] **Shooka:** Um, I'm not sure.

[00:48:33] **John Hodgman:** I mean, I like you both. I like you both very much, and I understand where you're coming from. But you did take his thing and delete his thing without his permission, and it was hurtful to him.

[00:48:46] **Shooka:** Well, I guess—I guess two things. Firstly, the crime I committed was out of passion, out of my passion for our friendship. So, I would, firstly—

[00:48:56] **John Hodgman:** Right. It was a crime of passion. Alright. Yeah. No, I like it. I like it. Keep going.

[00:49:00] **Shooka:** So, firstly, I would—I would hope that first you would understand, and you would feel the same if your friend was doing something like Cameron was doing. Now, whether what I did was right or wrong—well, it was wrong. But I don't think I should be punished for it! (*Laughs.*)

[00:49:22] **John Hodgman:** That's a—you know what? That's a very honest defense. I appreciate that. Okay. I think I've heard everything I need to. I'm gonna go to my Pokémon training gym and consult with my Charmander, and I'll be back in a moment with my verdict.

[00:49:35] **Jesse Thorn:** Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom.

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

Cameron, how are you feeling right now?

[00:49:46] **Cameron:** You know, I actually—I came into here thinking that I would win. I do have my doubts. I do understand how many Turtwigs 42 is. But I didn't exactly do the math on how long it would take to catch them. That didn't exactly cross my mind. But, you know, I do really feel like—

[00:50:06] **Jesse Thorn:** Did it make you reevaluate your own choices?

(They laugh.)

[00:50:10] **Cameron:** I'm doubting how well this is gonna go. But I will say, you know, I do feel like when your friend breaks something, usually the right thing to do is to pay them back. And I feel like sometimes the way that you pay somebody back is through time and showing that you care and doing your best instead of just through money.

[00:50:31] **Jesse Thorn:** Shooka, how are you feeling?

[00:50:33] **Shooka:** Before coming here, I was certain that Cameron would win. I'm now less certain, but I still think Cameron would win. So, I have to probably devise a plan to maybe guilt trip Cameron, because it's summer and Cameron knows how much I hate the sun and being outside in in the sun.

(Cameron laughs.)

So, maybe I can make him feel bad about me being out there in the sun on the grass, trying to find little fictional turtles.

[00:50:58] **Cameron:** Extend your deadline. Uh-huh. I see.

[00:51:02] **Jesse Thorn:** Shooka, you said you would find that activity soporific I believe was your word.

(Shooka confirms.)

You know you're an analyst at the Federal Reserve, right?

[00:51:16] **Shooka:** *(Laughs.)* You know, you have a fair point!

[00:51:21] **Jesse Thorn:** We'll see what Judge Hodgman has to say about all this when we come back in just a second.

[00:51:25] **Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:51:27] **Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:51:30] **Jesse Thorn:** Judge Hodgman, we're taking a break from the case. As we record this, the Writer's Guild of America remains on strike.

[00:51:38] **John Hodgman:** Yes, I am prohibited from not only writing for struck studios and companies, but I'm also prohibited from promoting projects in association with struck companies. So, I will not say anything about the projects that you probably already know about, but there's nothing that prohibits me from promoting this, the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

And here's the thing that we've said in the past, but haven't said recently, which is: hey, would you go leave a review of this show somewhere? Would you go tell a friend about the show if you enjoy it? Maybe this is the week when you might go to Apple Podcasts or wherever you get your podcasts and leave a review reflecting your enjoyment. 'Cause it really does help people discover the show, and it's something we're very proud of. So, why don't you go ahead and do that? If you don't mind.

[00:52:25] **Jesse Thorn:** Write a social media post about why a particular episode was your favorite episode.

[00:52:29] **John Hodgman:** Yeah. Anyway, that's all. If you feel like doing that, that sounds great. In the meantime, the writer's strike goes on, and if you go to the link in my bio on Instagram—which is my best link of links—you can find out more details as why the writer's strike is happening and how to support it if you'd like. In the meantime, Jesse Thorn, what do you have going on?

[00:52:49] **Jesse Thorn:** I've got the same usual things going on. You know, I hope that people will check out *Jordan, Jesse, Go!* and *Bullseye*, my other podcasts here at the Maximum Fun Network. And I hope that people will join Maximum Fun, which I think our transition to being an employee-owned co-op—and I will be an employee-owner—is very, very imminent. So, we've all had all the agreements, but I think the actual transition will happen within a couple weeks. So, go to MaximumFun.org/join and support us because it's a big undertaking.

[00:53:24] **John Hodgman:** MaximumFun.org/join. And what about *Bullseye*? Anything coming up?

[00:53:30] **Jesse Thorn:** I had a great interview with Stanley Tucci recently. I mentioned my wonderful interviews with Mary Steenburgen and Lonnie Liston Smith. Got our colleague from *FANTI*, Tre'vell Anderson, coming up. Tre'vell has a new book, and they are one of the most brilliant and entertaining people that I have ever known. So, go listen to that. Let's get back to the case.

[00:53:57] **Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:54:00] **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.)

[00:54:09] **John Hodgman:** “Torterra’s large and clean shell supports the lives of many small Pokémon, which occasionally gather and build their nests upon the shell. Some are born and spend their entire lives on Torterra’s back. Ancient people believed the ground contained a gigantic Torterra living underneath.” This is a deep Pokémon, and Shooka just deleted it. Deleted a whole universe, not just a little virtual pet: a world that supported other animals on its back, deleted in a crime of passion. I’ll allow that Shooka, ‘cause I understand that you were tired of your friends looking at their phones and being distracted by a trend.

And indeed, this trend was fairly distracting. There were—I remember there were a lot of news articles about, you know, people wandering into traffic while looking for these pocket monsters and getting dinged by cars. People wandering into rail yards where they're not supposed to be, looking for valuable ding dongs or whatever. People are wandering off from their friends, looking into their phones. Never mind a lot of the weird, ethical dilemmas regarding in-game advertising and surveillance that was prompted by this game.

What you did was wrong, and obviously I'm gonna find in Cameron's favor, but I understand why you did what you did. It was out of friendship. But let me just be clear to everyone who's listening: no matter how annoying your friends are being, you can't grab their phones away, run around the apartment, and then delete their things. It's not okay. That's a violation. It's a violation that needs to be punished. The question now is—the damages are substantial. You're both young, a couple years out of college. Your lives are not settled yet. Cameron can't get a golden retriever. The only kind of pet that he can have is a virtual one. The emotional damage is clear. He liked that guy. He named him after the singer from Mother Mother. He wants him back. He wants his friend back. He lost a friend that day, thanks to your friendship, Shooka. And that may be hard to accept, but it's true.

One thing I just wanna say is that I really think that you are both terrific friends to each other. I think that, you know, one of the hard things about post-college friendships is you move to other places, and you drift apart. You establish different lives. You've really worked, I think, to not only just, you know, actually stay in touch with each other sort of logistically, but stay in touch with each other emotionally. And I fully felt your apology when you offered it, Shooka. What you did was cruel. Now the question is, what is the sentence? What is the damages? What's going to make it right?

Shooka, you would like for Cameron to get out into the world. Cameron, you want a Torterra. Now look, Shooka, I could order you to go find 42 Turtwigs. That's no problem. And with the help of our listeners, you'd get it done in a day. TurtwigsForShooka.com. Valerie Moffat was looking this up backstage. We can get a year of that domain for \$14.99, right, Valerie?

[00:57:37] **Valerie Moffat:** That's right. It's on sale.

[00:57:39] **John Hodgman:** What about TurtwigsForShooka.fun?

[00:57:41] **Valerie Moffat:** TurtwigsForShooka.fun is available right now for \$4.99.

[00:57:45] **John Hodgman:** Well, that's quite a bargain. What about TurtwigsForShooka.luxury?

[00:57:50] **Valerie Moffat:** TurtwigsForShooka.luxury is available for \$649.99.

[00:57:56] **John Hodgman:** (*Laughs.*) I don't think so. I don't think so. We have any other offers? Any anything else we should consider?

[00:58:02] **Valerie Moffat:** Uh, if we're feeling really flush, TurtwigsForShooka.security is available for \$2,499.99.

[00:58:10] **John Hodgman:** Yeah. Alright. I'll take 10 of them. Gotta catch 'em all. Wow. I think we should just grab TurtwigsForShooka.fun, just to be safe. You know? To make it a little bit easy. Because I'm not gonna order Shooka to go find these Turtwigs on her own in the sun-parched grass around the Federal Reserve Bank, 'cause you're both gonna do it together! It's gonna be a friendship quest! Why are you sending your friend a deck of how to do something, Cameron? When you can just show Shooka in the real world as you go from grassy patch to grassy patch together, finding Turtwigs and siphoning off the ones that our listeners send you. Get it done. Bing, bang, boom. 42 Turtwigs. I think you'd bang it out in an afternoon, for sure. I would wait for an overcast day, so that Shooka doesn't have to be out in the sun. Maybe go to a place with a nice breeze. Maybe go to a—you know, the National Mall or something? I don't know if there are Turtwigs around there. Do something fun together outside. With the aid of our listeners, you're gonna get that Torterra back very quickly.

You know, I appreciate that this is pain and suffering for you, Cameron, but time has passed. I feel like you're in a forgiving mood. One or two afternoons of time with your friend, out in the real world, in the sunshine, collecting little Turtwigs with the help of our listeners, you'll get it done. You'll get your Torterra back. You put that in your pocket. And I don't care whether you play Pokémon Go again or never again. But when you and Shooka are hanging out together, phones down, hang out time is on. Especially now that you don't live in the same place. This is the sound of a gavel.

[01:00:00] **Music:** “Pokémon Theme” from the TV show *Pokémon* by Jason Paige.

Gotta catch 'em all, Pokémon!

[01:00:04] **John Hodgman:** Judge John Hodgman rules. That is all.

[01:00:05] **Jesse Thorn:** Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom.

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

Shooka, how do you feel?

[01:00:15] **Shooka:** I feel good. I think this will infinitely make this activity more fun if I'm doing it with Cameron. So, I accept this. I accept this form of justice.

[01:00:28] **Jesse Thorn:** Will it be as fun as financial reserve analysis?

[01:00:32] **Shooka:** Oh, you have no idea how much fun that is. *(Chuckles.)*

[01:00:36] **Jesse Thorn:** What's the most fun aspect of analysis?

[01:00:40] **Shooka:** Oh, I love to troubleshoot code for hours and hours.

[01:00:47] **Jesse Thorn:** Cameron, how do you feel?

[01:00:48] **Cameron:** I am very happy with this resolution. I am actually surprised and delighted that Shooka is happy with it too. So that brings me joy, 'cause I never wanted Shooka to suffer either. I just wanted, you know, to get my Torterra back in the way that felt the most appropriate.

So, I'm very happy with this, and I think that I'm gonna be really comforted seeing that little creature in my phone screen now. I think it's gonna bring me a lot of comfort, and I'm gonna be happy to see him.

[01:01:20] **Jesse Thorn:** Cameron, Shooka, thank you for joining us on the Judge John Hodgman podcast.

(They thank him.)

[01:01:24] **Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

[01:01:27] **Jesse Thorn:** Another *Judge John Hodgman* case is in the books. In just a second, we'll have Swift Justice. Our thanks first to Reddit user LexFry for naming this week's episode "Persona Non Grata Catch 'em All". Pretty solid. Persona non grata, just a Latin phrase. Nothing to do with legal.

[01:01:46] **John Hodgman:** Just a Latin phrase. Nothing legal.

[01:01:48] **Jesse Thorn:** Yeah. But still—but still pretty good.

[01:01:51] **John Hodgman:** Had to do it. Had to do it. Yep.

[01:01:53] **Jesse Thorn:** Join the conversation on the Maximum Fun subreddit. That's [MaximumFun.Reddit.com](https://www.reddit.com/r/MaximumFun). That's where we ask for title suggestions, so keep an eye out for those posts. Evidence and photos from the show are on our Instagram account. [Instagram.com/judgejohnhodgman](https://www.instagram.com/judgejohnhodgman). Follow us there. *Judge John Hodgman* was created by Jesse Thorn and John Hodgman. Our producer is Valerie Moffat. Our litigants this week were recorded at Tiki Recording Studios in Glen Cove, New York by Fred Guarino.

Now, Swift Justice where we answer your small disputes with quick judgment.

Meredith writes, "Can we please assume that anyone with any sense has their phone in "do not disturb" mode while they're sleeping? Or do we still need to be concerned about what time of day we send texts?"

[01:02:45] **John Hodgman:** Uuuh, what do you think about this one, Jesse?

[01:02:48] **Jesse Thorn:** I don't really know how to turn "do not disturb" mode on and off. I've never bothered to learn. My big concern is that if I turn it on, I will forget to turn it off.

[01:02:59] **John Hodgman:** Yeah. That happens to me quite a fair amount. My main problem is that I'm on “do not disturb” all the time. And then I discover that I should have been disturbed. But it's also the case that you can set “do not disturb”, but certain contacts of yours automatically bypass “do not disturb”, like say your spouse or your child. And I would say that I would prefer to maintain the sanctity of the email as a non-time-sensitive piece of communication, but the text as being “I need your attention right away”. I don't wanna live in a world where people are sending me texts in the middle of the night knowing that I'll get to it later. It's too intimate. It's too intimate. It's like a call. And I would say if you're texting someone at 2AM, you better be seeing if they're up, if you know what I mean. I don't think you should be sending texts in the middle of the night. Sorry, Meredith.

[01:03:53] **Jesse Thorn:** When you say that, you mean that like somebody's giving birth and they gotta go to the hospital or whatever.

[01:03:58] **John Hodgman:** Right. Or, yeah, like, um—yeah, exactly. Or I think there might be a Squirtle outside. I need you to meet me right away.

(They laugh.)

Hey, you know where always asking for cases. And here—since we heard some Pokémon cases, how about some Magic the Gathering cases? That's another thing I don't know anything about. I'd love to learn, and I think—I think I have a very good idea for an expert witness for that case. So, if you've got some Magic the Gathering disputes, send them in. Or any kind of card game, even regular old playing card game. Do you have—do you have a Bridge dispute? Pinochle?

[01:04:35] **Jesse Thorn:** Did somebody sell you a bridge in Brooklyn?

[01:04:38] **John Hodgman:** *(Chuckles.)* Why don't you send in your cases to MaximumFun.org/jjho? And it's not just card game disputes, right, Jesse?

[01:04:47] **Jesse Thorn:** Any kind of dispute! MaximumFun.org/jjho. If you're not sure if it meets our standards, just send it in. The stakes are low here, folks. We look at all of 'em. MaximumFun.org/jjho.

[01:04:58] **John Hodgman:** I love hearing from you, and I read them all. I gotta read 'em all. I gotta read 'em all!

[01:05:03] **Jesse Thorn:** I'll tell you the truth; John can't reply to all of them. It would be impossible. But I think a lot of times John replies to somebody and they're like, “Thanks to whoever answered this that's not actually John Hodgman.” No. John really replies to as many as he can.

[01:05:16] **John Hodgman:** I gotta read 'em all and I and I gotta reply to 'em most. So, send them in.

[01:05:20] **Jesse Thorn:** Not insignificantly.

[01:05:22] **John Hodgman:** MaximumFun.org/jjho, send me your beefs.

[01:05:26] **Jesse Thorn:** And I got one more URL to tell people about, John.

[01:05:30] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, let's hear it.

[01:05:31] **Jesse Thorn:** It's a little URL I like to call TurtwigsForShooka.fun.

[01:05:35] **John Hodgman:** TurtwigsForShooka.fun. That's where you can go to find out information for how to send Shooka Turtwigs.

[01:05:43] **Jesse Thorn:** Honestly, if we'd just texted my Bullseye colleague, Jesus Ambrosio, I bet he has 42 Turtwigs right now. Right now, I bet Jesus has 42 Turtwigs.

[01:05:55] **John Hodgman:** If you've got any extra Turtwigs hanging around, you know where to go: TurtwigsForShooka, S-H-O-O-K-A dot fun.

[01:06:04] **Jesse Thorn:** We'll talk to you next time on the Judge John Hodgman podcast.

[01:06:07] **Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

[01:06:09] **Sound Effect:** Cheerful ukulele chord.

[01:06:10] **Speaker 1:** MaximumFun.org.

[01:06:12] **Speaker 2:** Comedy and culture.

[01:06:14] **Speaker 3:** Artist owned.

[01:06:15] **Speaker 4:** Audience supported.