

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

[00:00:03] **Jesse Thorn:** Welcome to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. I'm Bailiff Jesse Thorn. This week, "Full Court Press". Rick brings the case against his friend Ken. During the 2019/2020 NBA season, Rick and Ken made a bet about who would be named Rookie of the Year. Ken bet on Zion Williamson. Rick bet on Ja Morant. While Ja Morant was named Rookie of the Year, Ken believes he should not be compelled to pay. He says the pandemic caused too many complications; the bet should be voided. Rick says Ken needs to pay up.

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.)

[00:00:55] **John Hodgman:** Jean-Hubert Pétillon, Jean-Paul Le Pann, Joseph Bernard, François Rolland, Pierre Stephan, Yves Le Page, Jean Pennarun, Hervé Merour, Pierre Kerbourc'h.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn, please swear them in.

[00:01:08] **Jesse Thorn:** Rick and Ken, please rise and raise your right hands. Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God or whatever?

(They swear.)

Ken, Rick, do you swear to abide by Judge John Hodgman's ruling despite the fact that he does not love the way they dribble up and down the court?

(They swear.)

Judge Hodgman, you may proceed.

[00:01:31] **John Hodgman:** Ken and Rick, you may be seated for an immediate summary judgment in one of yours favors. Can neither of you name the piece of culture that I referenced as I entered the courtroom? Let's start with, uh—Ken. You're the one who just doesn't wanna pay the bet, right? Okay. Ken, you start. What's your guess?

[00:01:44] **Ken:** My guess is famous French chefs.

[00:01:48] **John Hodgman:** Famous French chefs. That's a pretty good guess. It's just a list of names, after all. I mean, this is a conflict about basketball, so you might have guessed like French athletes, French basketball names.

[00:02:03] **Jesse Thorn:** Basketball players eat, John.

[00:02:05] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, that's true. And you know what?

[00:02:07] **Jesse Thorn:** They probably eat more than most. These guys are huge.

[00:02:09] **John Hodgman:** When they're in France, they're eating food made by famous French chefs. I like that guess. We're gonna keep that in the guess book. What about you, Rick?

[00:02:17] **Rick:** Uh, I'm gonna say that that is a quote from the movie *Blue Chips*, delivered by Indiana basketball alum Matt Nover.

[00:02:27] **John Hodgman:** I like that guess quite a bit. And I'll tell you something, if I had not been screaming up Route 15 to get to the radio station, because I was way late at the hardware store, and had time to come up with a proper cultural reference, I might have chosen something from *Blue Chips*. A basketball movie, right? That's a basketball movie, isn't it? There are a lot of famous basketball movies. But if I had come up with a basketball movie cultural reference, surely Rick or Ken, you would've guessed it! Because you are fans of basketball, and I know nothing about basketball. And luckily, I was saved by providence in this case, because all guesses are wrong.

That was actually a list of the most recent nine mayors of a town in Brittany, in northwest France, called Briec. And I mentioned it only because I happen to be sitting here with a man named Briec. That's right! Joel Mann's son-in-law is in the studio, observing the process today. Swing that microphone over to Briec for a second.

[00:03:41] **Briec:** Hello, everyone. I'm very happy to be here, and thank you Judge for having me in the court.

[00:03:45] **John Hodgman:** You're absolutely welcome. And just—an international observer. We are going overseas this fall to do some cases in England and maybe other points across the pond. So, this is a good opportunity for you to let me know if I'm doing anything that is out of accordance with international court standards.

We're here in the studios at WERU, in Orland, Maine, 89.9FM and on the line at WERU.org. And Joel said, “Do you mind if my son-in-law sits in?” And I said no, I don't mind at all. And then I arrived having completely forgotten about it, 'cause I was way late at the hardware store. And suddenly this extremely handsome Britannia man is introducing himself with the name Briec, and it took me about 45 minutes to understand that that is spelled B-R-I-E-C. And he's named after the town. You know, you're from the northwest of France, right?

(Briec confirms.)

Right. And then this town has, you know—I listed to the last nine mayors. These mayors stick around. Like, usually they have at least a decade in office.

[00:04:51] **Briec:** Yes. Usually when they enter, they're very happy here. So, they settle for a long time.

[00:04:56] **John Hodgman:** Right. I mean, I'm looking at—I'm looking at—

[00:04:59] **Jesse Thorn:** Sorry to interrupt. Brie, you don't have to do a funny voice just 'cause it's a comedy podcast.

(They laugh.)

[00:05:08] **John Hodgman:** Quelque-chose, Jesse!

[00:05:10] **Brie:** It might be my natural voice. It's my French accent included, I guess.
(Chuckles.)

[00:05:15] **Jesse Thorn:** It's a wonderful voice.

[00:05:16] **John Hodgman:** Anyway, I had to come up with something quick. And thankfully, you were here, Brie. Welcome. Welcome and hello, Joel. How are you?

[00:05:25] **Joel Mann:** Bonjour.

[00:05:26] **John Hodgman:** Alright, let's move on with the case. Who seeks justice in this court?

[00:05:30] **Rick:** That's me, Rick.

[00:05:31] **John Hodgman:** It is you, Rick. What is the nature of the justice that you seek? Tell me about this bet with Ken.

[00:05:36] **Rick:** So, Ken and I share occupancy in a group chat on one of the social medias. And we made a bet back in 2019 about the NBA Rookie of the Year, and this is right before covid, you know, came through. Zion Williamson had just gotten injured, and so there was a likelihood that he was gonna miss a bunch of games.

And so, I made the comment that it would be silly to presume that he would win the Rookie of the Year. Ken took the opposite opinion. And so, we made a bet. It was \$100. He actually got a little bit of juice on it too. And the season happened. Uh, Zion Williamson did not—

[00:06:22] **John Hodgman:** Wait, what is the juice you're talking about? Some kind of— what's the sports juice you mean here? 100 buck bet.

[00:06:27] **Rick:** So, if I were to win, I would've gotten \$100.

[00:06:30] **John Hodgman:** Oh, okay.

[00:06:30] **Rick:** And if Ken were to win, he would've gotten \$250.

[00:06:34] **John Hodgman:** Right, 'cause the odds were in your favor, Rick.

(Rick confirms.)

Because Zion Williamson was injured, and you were betting against him getting better. You were rooting for his misfortune.

(Rick agrees.)

And got it. Okay. I understand.

[00:06:48] **Jesse Thorn:** His personal, physical misfortune. You hoped ill of another?

[00:06:53] **John Hodgman:** You made a—you made a prediction based on the fact—I mean, look, you know, I don't—I don't make the basketball rules. Air Bud writes the basketball rules. Nowhere in the rule book did it say a dog can't write the rules.

[00:07:04] **Jesse Thorn:** No. There's a part that says, "Woof, woof, woof."

[00:07:07] **John Hodgman:** That's true. And it's often been debated what that means. But it seems to me on unfair that a player who's doing really well takes an injury and is automatically disqualified or probably disqualified from winning Rookie of the Year. But that's the way the basketball bounces.

[00:07:25] **Rick:** Yeah. There's also some history to that. So, there is not a specific rule that says how many games you have to play to win Rookie of the Year, but historically, no one has won Rookie of the Year without playing at least something like 60% of the games. And with the injury that Zion was facing at that point, it was very unlikely he was gonna reach that threshold. So, that was the—sort of the impetus for my bet.

[00:07:49] **John Hodgman:** So, who did you bet on then, Rick? Tell me about this player.

[00:07:52] **Rick:** Yeah. So, I actually bet on the field, but it was pretty clear early on that it was gonna be a two-horse race between Ja Morant of the Memphis Grizzlies, and Zion of the Pelicans, the New Orleans Pelicans.

[00:08:07] **John Hodgman:** I didn't even know of these teams until just now. I knew the Pelicans, because that's a funny name for a basketball team, I think. And honestly, Grizzlies—I don't think that they're particularly good at basketball either. I'm not talking about the team; I'm talking about the animal. Like Jesse, don't you think that those—these don't seem like swift, nimble athletes—these pelicans and grizzly bears.

[00:08:30] **Jesse Thorn:** No. And while I think that there are a fair number of pelicans in New Orleans, along with a history of sports teams named the Pelicans, grizzlies wouldn't be one of the top threats of the natural world in Memphis, Tennessee.

[00:08:46] **John Hodgman:** No.

[00:08:47] **Ken:** There's actually a chapter in a book about basketball, called *Basketball and Other Things* that compares who would be better at basketball: Karl Malone or a grizzly bear. So, I encourage you guys to read it if you've never heard of it.

[00:08:59] **John Hodgman:** Oh, I didn't know that this had been studied already.

[00:09:01] **Jesse Thorn:** I would say I would be more concerned about grizzlies in Vancouver, British Columbia, where the top two concerns are grizzlies and Bryant "Big Country" Reeves.

[00:09:12] **John Hodgman:** So, Ken, it's good to hear from you. You supported Zion Williamson, even though he was injured. What made you decide to stick with him? Did you believe he was gonna pull it out, or do you have a naturally contrarian nature?

[00:09:27] **Ken:** (*Laughs.*) No, you know, I followed Zion when he was in high school. He is a force of nature. And he—you know, I followed his college career, and I just—I think he was gonna be an incredible player. So, he had to sit out the beginning of the season 'cause nursing and injury. And then, when Rick and I took the bet, I believe he hadn't actually played yet that season. So, the bet was really more to—you know, is Zion going to be able to make up the difference about like 20 or 25 games into the season? Between—the gap between him and Ja Morant and the other rookies. So, I just saw him play. He reminded me of a young Charles Barkley, crossed with, you know—Shaq, I guess is the closest thing I could think of.

And, uh, yeah, I just—you know, he's an incredible player. He just has a tough time staying in shape and staying on the court.

[00:10:17] **John Hodgman:** And did—so, would you say that your bet was sentimental? Like, you just always liked this player and wish him the best. And so, you didn't like to—you didn't like that Rick was saying he's not gonna make it, so you were gonna bet against him? Or was your bet like I think he's—we haven't seen him play; I think that he could actually do this.

[00:10:36] **Ken:** I think it was more the latter. So, I thought that his highs were gonna be so high that they would kind of make everyone forget about the 20 or so games that he missed. He is just like a—yeah, a force of nature.

[00:10:49] **John Hodgman:** So, in this case though, non-sentimental betting or no, you were wrong. Zion Williamson did not make Rookie of the Year. Do you just not believe in honor? Why don't you pay Rick his 100 bucks?

[00:11:01] **Ken:** Well, the bet was for who is the Rookie of the Year. And in my mind, the spirit of the bet was, you know, who's going to win Rookie of the Year in a regular season with 82 games. And what happened was the, you know, the season was obviously interrupted by a pandemic. You know, there's I believe like almost four or five months off where nobody played basketball.

The season was shortened. Not all of the teams would have actually been allowed to participate in the NBA bubble. And so, under that sort of premise, I thought, “Well, this bet should be voided, because it’s not exactly like a fair bet anymore.” You know, there’s a number of examples of force majeure where you know, you have this act of God that that sort of interrupts something where both parties are not liable.

[00:11:47] **John Hodgman:** I believe that’s a—I believe that’s a French term. Can we get a—excuse me, can we get a ruling on that from Bricc? Is force majeure a French term?

[00:11:54] **Bricc:** Absolutely. It’s when there is something you cannot control that comes, and you are obliged to go with it. It’s mostly an insurance company term.

[00:12:04] **John Hodgman:** I understand. Thank you very much, Bricc. We’re lucky to have you here.

(Bricc chuckles.)

So, given the—

[00:12:10] **Jesse Thorn:** Again, you don’t have to do the voice though.

[00:12:13] **John Hodgman:** *(Laughs.)* Given the act of God, major force element of this, you feel the bet should have been voided?

[00:12:19] **Ken:** Yes. In that scenario, that’s—that is my argument.

[00:12:22] **John Hodgman:** Because, no—because obviously, we were all dealing with a lot of uncertainty. We were all dealing with stuff that had—was relatively unprecedented in our lives and the health of our world and our culture and sports too.

Why do you reject this argument that the bet should be invalidated, given the fact that—well, I mean, how long was the season, ultimately, that year?

[00:12:47] **Rick:** So, it depends on which team, but the Pelicans’ season was shortened by 10 games, which isn’t a lot. Zion ended up playing only 24 of the games, which means he—

[00:12:58] **John Hodgman:** Of the total—like of—yeah, I know, but it’s like, how many—what’s a normal season number of games?

[00:13:04] **Rick:** A normal season’s 82 games, and the Pelicans played 72.

[00:13:07] **John Hodgman:** 82. But they played 72. Right. And he played 22 of those.

[00:13:12] **Rick:** He played I think 24. He played a third of their games. Exactly a third of their games.

[00:13:18] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, that's exactly right. I mean, God-or-Whatever knows I'm incredible at math. It is exactly 0.33333333. And I'm not just looking at the calculator on my phone. It's hard to argue with the numbers, isn't it, Ken?

[00:13:31] **Ken:** It is difficult to argue in that sense. I would say that, you know, had the season continued—you know, absent a pandemic, it—to be honest, I don't think Zion Williamson would've won. I think he missed too many games to actually catch up. But! My perspective on it is that, you know, these—this is a futures bet. And if you're familiar with sports betting, you know, it's a bet toward—

[00:13:56] **John Hodgman:** I am not, sir.

[00:13:56] **Ken:** For some specific outcome. It's—so, it's a bet for an outcome that is in the future, not like betting on a game that's gonna occur today, for example. Right? So, you can—

[00:14:04] **Jesse Thorn:** Ken, I only bet on things that have happened in the past. And it has worked great.

(They chuckle.)

[00:14:11] **Ken:** And in the case of the pandemic, many of the sportsbooks voided a lot of these future bets, because the games did not take place when they were supposed to. The seasons were not the length that they were supposed to. And so, despite the fact that I think that I would've lost the bet under normal circumstances, that is why I am pushing for a voiding of the bet as opposed to, you know, claiming to win in some insane scenario.

[00:14:38] **Jesse Thorn:** Ken, are you a sportsbook?

[00:14:40] **Ken:** Uh, *(laughs)* no, but sometimes I have to place bets for my friends. So, maybe a bookie in some way, I guess. *(Laughs.)*

[00:14:49] **John Hodgman:** But when you say sportsbook, you're talking about a betting organization for sports.

[00:14:54] **Ken:** Yes. Like the casinos—

[00:14:54] **John Hodgman:** I'm—I mean, I'm just defining terms for all of our listeners, pretty much. And is there a major sportsbook that voided this particular bet? If you see what I mean? This particular futures bet.

[00:15:09] **Ken:** So, I tried to do the research and find specific examples of bets that they had voided. But there is no sort of like clear definition. I have several quotes from managers at large sportsbooks saying they're going to void, you know, certain bets on futures bets and the reasons behind it, but the exact bets—unfortunately, I couldn't find this exact one.

[00:15:30] **John Hodgman:** Not this specific one.

[00:15:30] **Ken:** Which is why Rick—which is why Rick won't leave me alone.

[00:15:34] **John Hodgman:** Right.

[00:15:35] **Rick:** And judge, I will actually give in on the point that a lot of sportsbooks did void the bet, but that was also the assumption behind the bet before we made it. They had already thrown the bet out, which is why we were talking about it in the first place. So, that was built into the fundamental bones of the bet.

[00:15:55] **John Hodgman:** It was baked into the equation. Yeah. Right. So, they had already voided the Rookie of the Year futures bet because of this unusual season?

[00:16:04] **Rick:** Because—they voided the bet due to Zion's torn meniscus. So, he was probably going to miss about half the season. And he, before that moment, was a big favorite to win. So, they had taken it off the books at least temporarily at that point.

[00:16:20] **John Hodgman:** So, the sportsbook basically said force majeure or no, Zion Williamson is not gonna be Rookie of the Year this year. So, we're not even gonna entertain the bet. Is that what you're saying to me, Rick?

[00:16:31] **Rick:** Yes.

[00:16:32] **Ken:** Uh, your honor, I must—I must object.

[00:16:34] **John Hodgman:** Sustained.

[00:16:35] **Ken:** Injuries, for futures bets, are not a reason for the bets to be voided. Sportsbooks may stop offering the bet because someone is not going to play, but the bets that were placed are not voided. And so, if someone is injured, they don't refund your money. Of course, the casino wouldn't do that ever. So, I must object to this statement made by the plaintiff and with—you know, uh, (*laughs*) with zest. I don't know.

[00:17:03] **John Hodgman:** Mm-hm. With zest. I love it with zest. Nice zest.

[00:17:06] **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.

[00:17:14] **Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:17:18] **Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:17:20] **John Hodgman:** Rick, how do you feel about gambling in general? Are you a gambler?

[00:17:24] **Rick:** I am not personally a gambler. The group chat that Ken and I made the bet on is full of a lot of folks who like to gamble. So, there's a lot of talk about gambling, and that's how the topic came up.

[00:17:36] **John Hodgman:** Did you sense a sucker in Ken 'cause you knew that he was—that Zion Williamson was never gonna make Rookie of the Year?

[00:17:43] **Rick:** I sensed the sucker in the sense that—you picked up on this earlier—that Ken has a contrarian nature. And so, as soon as I say certain things, sometimes he will take the opposite point of view. And I felt strongly that what I said was—

[00:17:57] **John Hodgman:** Hold for a moment, Rick. Hold for a moment, Rick, please. Ken, do you have a contrarian nature?

[00:18:03] **Ken:** I don't think there's a real good answer to this. 'Cause if I say no, that means I'm contrarian, right? (*Laughs.*)

[00:18:08] **John Hodgman:** Oooh, I don't like that you saw my game coming! I don't like you saw my game.

[00:18:13] **Ken:** I saw right through you, your honor.

[00:18:15] **John Hodgman:** Alright, well that's the perfect answer. You beat me this time, Ken. I was setting you up so hard.

(Ken laughs.)

You know what? You know what, Rick? I think Ken's pretty clever. I think Ken's pretty clever.

[00:18:27] **Rick:** He is clever.

[00:18:28] **John Hodgman:** Ken is very clever. But if he were really clever, he would've sent in specific evidence of bets on Zion Williamson that had been canceled by sportsbooks and, no questions asked, all money refunded, or no payments made. But instead, Ken, you sent in some pictures of some text chats. What's going on in these? What's happening here?

[00:18:50] **Ken:** So, there's a couple of things that are happening. So—

[00:18:53] **John Hodgman:** This is the group—this is the group chat that you both belong to, where the bet was submitted.

[00:18:58] **Ken:** Yes, so it's a group chat of all of our friends from business school. And we have a lot of sports gambling talk that goes in there. And Rick is not really a gambler, but my theory is that he saw this opportunity to include himself in the conversation for the next like six or eight months.

And one thing that you have to know about Rick is he really likes to annoy everyone in the group. And my theory is that he saw this as an opportunity to annoy me for the next six to eight months, as evidenced by some of the messages that I've sent through. You know, he would continually just message me in the group chat about like, “Hey, like, you know, here's like the update on Zion and Ja Morant,” and like trash talk me and things of that nature.

And then, as you can see by the fact that we're doing this podcast right now, he's continued to annoy me about it over the last three years. And so, the evidence I have provided is more to—less so about the basketball part of it and more to show that Rick actually does not care about this bet, nor does he really believe the bet should not be voided. But he's doing this just to annoy me. And that is—*(laughing)* that is my case.

[00:20:10] **John Hodgman:** How does this evidence show—all I see here is... in the group chat, Rick sends a drawing of a man's face. And this is a drawing of a man's face that you might—I mean, this is not—Rick, what is your profession, if I may ask?

[00:20:27] **Rick:** I am in marketing.

[00:20:29] **John Hodgman:** You're not a fine artist. You're not a—

(Rick confirms.)

[00:20:32] **Jesse Thorn:** This is a—this is a drawing of a man's face you might see in a nightmare.

(They laugh and Ken agrees.)

[00:20:38] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, I was gonna—I was gonna say the drawing of a man's face that you might see doodled on an elementary school desk or on a trapper keeper or something. Who is this supposed to be, Rick?

[00:20:52] **Rick:** Um, you know, it's not by a skilled hand. I wouldn't say that there is a particular model in mind. It's kind of just an attempt at drawing a face.

[00:21:03] **John Hodgman:** And it says—here's the drawing of the face, and your message to the group is, “My first drawing. Any feedback?” Obviously, this nightmare face is going to be available on our show page at MaximumFun.org and on our Instagram, at [Instagram.com/judgejohnhodgman](https://www.instagram.com/judgejohnhodgman). But it's this picture of this face—

[00:21:21] **Jesse Thorn:** I have to tell you guys; it doesn't not look like Bryant “Big Country” Reeves.

[00:21:27] **Rick:** *(Laughs.)* It's close.

[00:21:27] **John Hodgman:** I don't understand the intention at all here, Rick. And in fact, I asked Jennifer Marmor, our producer, “What is this image supposed to mean?” And she said

I don't know. And then she said she was gonna ask you, and I don't think that you responded. Instead, you sent it into the group chat and just said, "My first drawing. Any feedback?" I'm full of questions.

[00:21:47] **Rick:** Yeah, I think I also said, "Do you like my cross hatching?"

[00:21:49] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, you did do some cross hatching there. That's an illustrative technique, for those people who might not be familiar with the English term crosshatching, Brie. It's when you're using fine lines and you create shadows by essentially making a grid of lines crosshatching. You understand? He says—he indicates that he understands.

[00:22:09] **Ken:** I'd like to illustrate for the audience, though, that after nobody replied to his, "this is my first drawing, any feedback"—after like—and nobody responded, he then replied with, "Do you like my cross hatching?" So, you know, this is hours later; he's still on it, like waiting for somebody to have a reaction.

[00:22:25] **John Hodgman:** What does this have—but Ken. I mean, look, as many questions as I have for Rick, sending this inscrutable weird image apropos of nothing into the group chat and demanding a reply—as many questions I have for Rick about that, Ken, I'm asking you—you weaseled out of my "are you contrarian" trap. You're a smart guy. What does this evidence have to do with anything that we're talking about here today? Just that Rick likes to poke at the group chat?

[00:22:53] **Ken:** Yes. So, I'm trying to take a character-based argument, to show that Rick really doesn't care about this bet at all, and that he's just doing this to annoy me. And so, much of the evidence I've provided is Rick trolling myself and other people in our group chat. This is an example of that—this random, nightmare drawing, as you've so eloquently put it.

And then, you know, this long pause of nobody reacting 'cause they know he's fishing for a response. And then him going, "Do you like my cross hatching," which is an absurd statement to begin with it. So, there's just—

[00:23:26] **John Hodgman:** I actually—I actually think it's pretty funny. I actually think it's a pretty funny follow up, honestly.

[00:23:31] **Ken:** There's just tons of examples throughout the course of my history with Rick, where he's just trolling me or trolling us and trying to annoy me. I would like to provide another example, if I may.

[00:23:42] **John Hodgman:** You may.

[00:23:43] **Ken:** Rick—you know, when I first met Rick, I thought he sounded a little bit like James Van Der Beek in the movie *Varsity Blues*. And you know, there's this very famous line from the movie, like, you know, "Playing football for West Canaan may have been the opportunity of your life, but I don't want your life."

So, after I told Rick that he proceeded to call me randomly every few months or leave messages on my phone, yell that line into the phone, and then hang up. For six years. So.

[00:24:16] **John Hodgman:** (*Laughs.*) Rick, do you deny this accusation?

[00:24:18] **Rick:** Uh, not at all.

[00:24:20] **John Hodgman:** Why did you do that?

[00:24:22] **Rick:** When he told me initially—you know, this is back in 2011—that I sounded like James VanDerBeek in *Varsity Blues*, he enjoyed it. He got a good kick out of it. And so, I wanted to give him that enjoyment every few months for six or seven years.

[00:24:40] **John Hodgman:** You miserable troll. You walk into this—you walk into my courtroom and say prank calling your friend for six years is your effort to bring him joy. Is that what you would have me believe?

[00:24:57] **Rick:** Yes.

[00:24:58] **John Hodgman:** Hmm. So, Ken, finally, you sent in another text chat. And this is between Rick and—are you—do you have this in front of you?

[00:25:08] **Ken:** Uh, yes.

[00:25:09] **John Hodgman:** So, this is a conversation between Rick and—are you the—are you the respondent in this conversation?

[00:25:15] **Ken:** I believe I am. Yes.

[00:25:17] **John Hodgman:** You believe you are. Alright. This is in the group chat.

[00:25:19] **Ken:** It is me. It is me.

[00:25:20] **John Hodgman:** Okay. This is you responding. So, I will—in this, just to give folks a sense, let's do a little roleplay. I will say the role of Rick, and you read your lines. Rick. And I don't know, I don't know where we are in this conversation, so I'm just coming in. This is a cold read, first of all. I don't know what the context of this conversation is.

Rick: “No, it's not. It's the exact opposite. You are selling your honor to hold onto a good troll that you enjoy.” Alright. Pause there for a second. Rick, did you write that?

[00:25:51] **Rick:** I did.

[00:25:51] **John Hodgman:** Alright. Okay, go ahead, Ken. What's your response?

[00:25:55] **Ken:** Alright. My response is, “It's you that trolls. You bring it up. I never do. You live for it, you sicky. Annoying people is your number one priority on this chat. You're fishing for eye rolls constantly.”

[00:26:06] **John Hodgman:** “Defending the indefensible is a troll!”

[00:26:10] **Ken:** “You can't tell me this doesn't bring you sick joy.” (*Laughs.*)

[00:26:15] **John Hodgman:** “It brings me much less joy than 100 dollars.” And scene.

[00:26:23] **Ken:** I want to add the context that one of—not only does Rick love trolling, he loves pretending that he's not a troll. And in this case, he's accusing me of trolling him by not paying him \$100. And so, I don't know if you guys have a younger brother or not, but it reminds me very much of like when you have a younger brother whose, you know, goal in life is to just annoy you and then pretend as though he's not trying to annoy you.

Like, “What? What do you mean? Like, I wasn't doing anything!” And my theory is that Rick—Rick has an older brother. My theory is that he's moved on from trolling his brother to trolling our group of friends—and myself, most importantly! (*Laughs.*)

[00:27:02] **John Hodgman:** Do you have any evidence to prove your theory, clever Ken?

[00:27:05] **Ken:** You know, Rick—I'm sure Rick could attest to maybe some this, but it's mostly probably in my head. (*Laughs.*)

[00:27:14] **John Hodgman:** It's speculation. I'm gonna set that aside as pure—

[00:27:17] **Jesse Thorn:** It's part of your head canon for Rick.

[00:27:20] **John Hodgman:** I'm gonna set that aside as sheer head canon. Absolutely, Jesse. Thank you. And finally, you sent in this picture of Rick on vacation. It is a family vacation. It is a photo of him—where are you in this photo, Rick?

[00:27:37] **Rick:** I'm in Alaska. We're on a cruise in Alaska.

[00:27:40] **John Hodgman:** Okay. And you have a specific haircut. How would you describe the haircut, Ken?

[00:27:46] **Ken:** I would say it's a cross between the show *Vikings* and Brock Lesnar.

[00:27:53] **John Hodgman:** Alright. I'm getting one of those. Basically, it's a—you got a little man ponytail on top of your head.

[00:27:58] **Jesse Thorn:** It looks like you've also shaved around the hemisphere of your head, so there really is only a top of your head ponytail.

[00:28:10] **Rick:** That's correct.

[00:28:11] **John Hodgman:** By the way, Brie, if you don't know, Brock Lesnar is an American professional wrestler and former MMA artist and a professional American football player. It's something that I know, 'cause I'm an American, and I definitely didn't just look it up on Wikipedia for you.

[00:28:29] **Jesse Thorn:** Rick, I'm gonna be honest with you, this haircut feels like it's trolling me specifically, because all of the hair is in exactly the place where I do not have hair.

(They laugh.)

[00:28:39] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, it looks like you're wearing a little hair beanie with a little hair propeller on top of it. And Ken, your note here is, "No one would get that haircut sincerely; I'm convinced he did it just to troll us with this picture." Is that the point of this evidence?

[00:28:54] **Ken:** Yes, that's the reason I believe that he sent it to us. It was—you know, the last time I saw Rick, which is maybe like six to eight months ago, he had a normal haircut. And then all of a sudden, he drops this in the group chat. And he never mentioned that he was getting a haircut. All we see is just this ridiculous top ponytail. And no, he doesn't acknowledge it at all. He's just laying it out there for us. And I just can't believe that it wasn't on purpose. You know, no part of me could envision him going to the barber and being like, "Gimme this haircut." And like, just saying like, "Yeah, that's what I actually want." He's just thinking, "Oh man, these guys are gonna laugh so hard. Oh, they're gonna be so annoyed with me." And that's my theory.

[00:29:36] **John Hodgman:** What inspired you to get this haircut? Was it to—was it to troll your group chat?

[00:29:42] **Rick:** I did not get this haircut to troll my group chat. I didn't—was not even thinking of them when I got my hair cut. Um, actually my wife, who is in the picture, cuts my hair. She's been cutting my hair for years, and I think she did a marvelous job.

[00:29:58] **John Hodgman:** Did she suggest this haircut?

[00:30:00] **Rick:** She did not. It was my suggestion.

[00:30:02] **John Hodgman:** Mm-hm. What was the—and your inspiration was the very famous American wrestler Brock Lesnar and also *Vikings* and also what?

[00:30:13] **Rick:** So, I sometime in the next five to ten years want to go on the TV show *Survivor*, and as a male you kind of have to have long hair to go on *Survivor*. So, I'm growing it out, but I still want it to be professional also. This is my compromise.

[00:30:30] **John Hodgman:** Ken...

[00:30:31] **Jesse Thorn:** This is a very professional haircut. This is one I would expect a lawyer to wear to court.

[00:30:37] **Rick:** Thank you.

[00:30:38] **Jesse Thorn:** If the lawyer was Brock Lesnar.

[00:30:40] **John Hodgman:** Ken, let me ask you this question. I don't know what to believe anymore with this guy. Is he gonna try out for *Survivor*? Yes or no?

[00:30:50] **Ken:** I don't think he's gonna try out for *Survivor*. I don't know how anyone could listen to that response and not think he's trolling you, to be honest.

[00:30:56] **John Hodgman:** That's what I'm concerned about!

[00:30:57] **Ken:** In five years' time?!

[00:31:00] **John Hodgman:** I know, Ken. I do—I wonder if he is—I feel trolled a little bit. I don't know. I don't know what to—I don't know about this guy, Rick. Who is Blair Mancini and what does Blair Mancini have to do with this, Ken?

[00:31:14] **Ken:** (*Laughs.*) So, Blair Mancini is one of our former classmates from business school. And when this—you know, and for some reason, one of our friends—I probably shouldn't use his real name, but let's call him Hans. Um, Hans—

[00:31:29] **John Hodgman:** And let's be clear, I have written here that we have explicit permission from Blair Mancini to use Blair Mancini's full name, but only in the context of the Blair Mancini decision. I don't need—I don't need—Hey, Ken, I don't need Blair Mancini's whole biography. Just explain to me the Blair Mancini decision and what it has to do with this case.

[00:31:53] **Ken:** Alright. So, when we couldn't decide, within our group chat, who was right or wrong or whether the bet should be voided or not, what happened was one of our friends—Hans—took the decision to another group chat with a lot of our business school friends, where our friend Blair Mancini resides. And Blair Mancini was then tasked with deciding—by Hans—whether or not the bet should be voided or not.

And Blair Mancini ruled in my favor, saying that any bets made on an 82-game season during the pandemic should be voided. I will also add that Hans and Rick have some bizarre man-relationship that goes beyond any of our—any of us in the group chat. Hans is a staunch Rick apologist and defender, and so under my—you know, under my purview—or excuse me, under my view, you know, Hans was acting as proxy for Rick in this group chat where Rick was also present.

[00:32:53] **John Hodgman:** Jesse, I'm beginning to feel I don't belong to enough group chats. You know what I mean?

(They laugh.)

I mean, I can't think of a single group chat. Joel, will you be in a group chat with me?

(Joel agrees.)

Thanks. Briec?

(Briec agrees.)

He says yes too. We got one going. Jesse?

[00:33:10] **Jesse Thorn:** I'm out.

[00:33:11] **John Hodgman:** Oh, no! *(Laughs.)* I thought I had something there. That's fine. That's fine. Rick, did you agree to abide by Blair Mancini's decision, when it was submitted to him? I don't like being made into an appeals court here.

[00:33:23] **Rick:** No, not at all. It was—

[00:33:24] **John Hodgman:** Is that true? Is that true? I don't like the smile in your voice.

(Ken laughs.)

[00:33:29] **Rick:** No. Blair Mancini was brought into this case, um—

[00:33:33] **John Hodgman:** Rick, are you going to—are you auditioning for *Survivor*? Yes or no? Yes or no?

[00:33:39] **Rick:** Not yet. Not yet, no. I'm not.

[00:33:40] **John Hodgman:** Not yet. Not yet. Have you ever spoken about your intent to audition for *Survivor* before this podcast? Yes or no? I'll remind you, you're under fake oath.

(Rick confirms.)

To whom did you speak it?

[00:33:49] **Rick:** Yes. For years.

[00:33:50] **John Hodgman:** To whom?

[00:33:51] **Rick:** To my wife and anyone else who wants to hear about it.

[00:33:54] **John Hodgman:** She can't testify against you. I need evidence of this. Get it. Dig it up.

[00:34:00] **Rick:** I have a Teams chat.

[00:34:02] **John Hodgman:** You have another group chat?! I won't allow it.

[00:34:05] **Rick:** I have a Teams chat at work that is just to talk about *Survivor*. And it's well-known.

[00:34:11] **John Hodgman:** It's well—it's a well-known Teams chat?

[00:34:12] **Jesse Thorn:** I mean, I knew about it.

[00:34:14] **John Hodgman:** How did you know about the Teams chat?!

[00:34:15] **Jesse Thorn:** John, you haven't heard about this chat?!

[00:34:18] **John Hodgman:** No. (*Laughs.*) No.

[00:34:19] **Jesse Thorn:** It's well known.

[00:34:20] **John Hodgman:** It's well known.

[00:34:21] **Ken:** It's well known.

[00:34:22] **John Hodgman:** Were you surprised when Ken wouldn't pay up the bet, Rick? Is this in Ken's nature? We've spent a lot of time dealing with Ken attempting to assassinate your character. Seems like turnabout is fair play. Does Ken refuse to pay up on bets?

[00:34:37] **Rick:** Never. And that was sort of what made it so surprising and borderline hurtful, I would say.

[00:34:45] **John Hodgman:** Borderline hurtful. And you're being sincere there?

[00:34:47] **Rick:** I am being sincere.

[00:34:48] **John Hodgman:** Say more. How did it hurt you?

[00:34:51] **Rick:** You know, when you make a wager with a friend, you expect that you're both on kind of honest terms. And then, when it doesn't get reciprocated at the end, it sort of can feel like a personal slight, like a disrespect.

[00:35:09] **Jesse Thorn:** Ken, I saw you shake your head. Do you feel differently about a bet with a friend?

[00:35:14] **Ken:** I feel differently about a bet with a friend and a bet with a friend that is Rick. Certainly. Um, I wish this was a video podcast and the audience could see Rick's face as he gave that answer, because (*laughing*) I feel like there's no way they would've believed anything he said.

[00:35:31] **John Hodgman:** It doesn't help that—it doesn't help that the studio that Rick happens to be in, he is lit overhead with a red tinted light bulb, making him truly look like Satan.

[00:35:41] **Jesse Thorn:** Yeah, it's like if Hype Williams made a video about the devil.

(They chuckle.)

[00:35:47] **Ken:** But yeah, like, I am a man of honor. I consider myself a man of honor. I'm Canadian also, so, you know, we're very honorable people. And if I felt that I was in the wrong and absolutely owed Rick the money, I would pay him at the drop of a hat. But I don't believe that the bet should be paid, and I also don't believe that Rick actually cares at all. So, due to both of those sort of—those reasons, I feel like I must not pay him. But I'm, you know, open to finding an amicable solution.

[00:36:24] **John Hodgman:** You've been accused, Rick, of not caring about the bet at all. Now, this could just be Ken trying to get out of paying you 100 bucks—in US dollars, by the way—and we would adjust for inflation.

[00:36:37] **Ken:** Oh, boy.

[00:36:37] **John Hodgman:** 100 bucks isn't what it used to be. Rick, how do you think you will feel if I rule in your favor, and you get that \$100?

[00:36:47] **Rick:** So, Ken is right in the sense that I don't care about the \$100, but I do care about the respect that comes along with paying off on a bet with a friend. So, if you rule in my favor, I would ask that Ken just pay the 100 dollars to a charity of his choice. It doesn't have to come to me.

[00:37:08] **John Hodgman:** This would mean overruling Blair Mancini. Am I gonna get in trouble? Is Blair Mancini gonna come for me?

[00:37:15] **Rick:** Well, I believe that Blair Mancini is a lower fake internet court than yourself, so you have the full right to overrule in the appeals process.

[00:37:26] **Jesse Thorn:** I think it's fair to suggest that a fake internet court takes precedence over a fake group chat court.

[00:37:34] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, that's a—yeah, we've been around for a while. We're settled law over here. We're not some upstart group chat settling disputes. We're not on Quibi, you know what I mean, Jesse Thorn? We're not doing a judge show on Quibi.

[00:37:48] **Jesse Thorn:** Nope. There aren't any more judge shows on Quibi anymore, 'cause Quibi is gone, baby. Find it on the Roku channel.

[00:37:54] **John Hodgman:** Did—Rick says that he did not agree in advance to abide by Blair Mancini's ruling. Is that true or no?

[00:38:01] **Ken:** He did not agree to abide by this ruling. However—

[00:38:04] **John Hodgman:** Thank you. That's all I needed to know. That's all I need to know. Thank you, Ken.

[00:38:06] **Ken:** Oh, okay. Alright.

[00:38:07] **John Hodgman:** How is this bet still coming up three years later?

[00:38:12] **Ken:** Well, you know, after the initial bet there was kind of like this lull period. And then, over the past I would say like year, it's definitely become more of a point of contention. And my theory is that Rick got bored of other trolls that he was committing. And so, he's really started to push back on this one, even though it seemed like it had been settled for about one or two years. And more recently, in the last six months, he's really been pushing hard. And Rick is the one that always brings it up and then accuses me of trolling him. And that's, you know, one of my triggers, I guess, and how we find ourselves here today. (*Chuckles.*)

[00:38:48] **John Hodgman:** Rick, why would you say that this is still going on, specifically more in the past few months?

[00:38:54] **Rick:** I think that Ken likes to use Blair Mancini as a crutch. Whenever anything happens that he doesn't approve of, he will say that Blair Mancini voided whatever the thing is. And I think that he's just had a run lately of instances where he could use that crutch, and that's why it's been coming up more.

[00:39:15] **John Hodgman:** You mean Blair Mancini has settled other disputes.

[00:39:18] **Ken:** Blair Mancini has never settled any dispute, which is why this, you know, verdict of his is so powerful. You know, we brought him out for this one-time thing only, and he laid down the law. And frankly, you know, I think that's—that means something to me. (*Laughs.*)

[00:39:34] **John Hodgman:** Rick, how is he using Blair Mancini as a crutch in other ways then?

[00:39:39] **Rick:** He just brings up the name in conversation. So, if—

[00:39:41] **John Hodgman:** What is it about Blair Mancini that you would turn to him for this kind of wisdom months before you would turn to me? Who is Blair Mancini?

[00:39:53] **Ken:** Well, Blair Mancini is—you know, he is one of our classmates. He has a strong name.

[00:39:56] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, I already know he is one of your buddies! Why do you like him so much? Why do you trust him so much with the fate of your monies?

[00:40:05] **Ken:** I think we've all had good interactions with him. He seems like a level-headed guy with a lot of, you know, really strong educational background. (*Chuckling.*) And I think he's a man of honor, which is—you know—

(*Jesse laughs.*)

[00:40:15] **John Hodgman:** Look, there are a lot of bros in your business bro group chat. Why is this bro unlike any other?

[00:40:22] **Ken:** I think—I think the thing is he knows absolutely nothing about our group chat. And so, as a total impartial third party, he was an ideal candidate.

[00:40:31] **John Hodgman:** Rick, let me ask you: what do you think Ken sees in Blair Mancini? I know that you didn't agree to abide by Blair Mancini's ruling, but what is it about Blair Mancini that is so captured Ken's imagination so much?

[00:40:47] **Rick:** I think in our group chat, it's a lot of yappy guys. We talk a lot. And Blair has the opposite personality. He's very quiet. And when—and he's stoic. And when Blair says something, I think we all listen up and pay attention to what he has to say.

[00:41:06] **John Hodgman:** If I were to rule in your favor, this would be a real slap in the face of Blair Mancini. How would you feel? How do you think Blair Mancini would feel knowing that I overruled him?

[00:41:19] **Rick:** I think he has so much respect for you that he would take it in stride and be happy with your verdict.

[00:41:27] **John Hodgman:** Ken, do you think Blair Mancini even knows who I am?

[00:41:30] **Ken:** He actually did know who you were. He asked if you had been on *The Daily Show*. And so, he does know who you are. So, I—

[00:41:37] **John Hodgman:** Blair Mancini knows who I am?! Brie, do you hear that? Blair Mancini!

[00:41:43] **Ken:** That's high praise. That's high praise.

[00:41:45] **John Hodgman:** Joel, you hear that? Blair Mancini?

[00:41:46] **Joel Mann:** Yes, I did. Amazing.

[00:41:52] **John Hodgman:** I wanna get him on Blair Mancini's group chat. Ken, if I were to rule in your favor, what would you have me rule?

[00:41:58] **Ken:** I would have you rule that I don't have to pay Rick \$100, but I will still pay \$100 to charity, 'cause I think that's a nice thing. But I would like for Rick to admit that he is a troll, and that this entire charade (*sha-rod*) has been a three and a half long year troll, which has culminated in me going on a podcast for the first time.

[00:42:22] **John Hodgman:** I'm sorry, Ken. I don't understand that term. Charade (*sha-rod*). What's the French pronunciation of that word for charade?

[00:42:28] **Briec:** It would be charade (*sha-raid*).

[00:42:29] **John Hodgman:** Charade (*sha-raid*). Thank you very much. I appreciate that.

[00:42:31] **Jesse Thorn:** Yeah. Got it. Charade.

[00:42:32] **John Hodgman:** Charade. Uh, okay, Rick, if I were to rule in your favor, what would you have me rule? Get in trouble with Blair Mancini and get you some money?

[00:42:43] **Rick:** Yeah. You know, Blair Mancini is a wonderful guy. I believe that he ruled an error in this case, and I would ask that you overrule on the appeal Blair Mancini's ruling, and that Ken be ordered to pay the money to charity.

[00:43:04] **John Hodgman:** Okay. I think I've heard everything I need to in order to make my decision. Any follow up questions from Maine or Brittany?

[00:43:14] **Briec:** Yeah, ready for the verdict. Uh, don't know much about basketball. Maybe just, uh, Scottie Pippen was underrated, but that's it.

[00:43:22] **John Hodgman:** Okay. (*Snorts a laugh.*) Thank you very much. I don't have—I don't—I don't have time to get into fights here. I'll be back in a moment with my decision.

[00:43:29] **Jesse Thorn:** Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom.

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

Ken, how are you feeling about your chances?

[00:43:39] **Ken:** Uh, not great to be honest, but you know, I think—I think I've presented a lot of really strong evidence that at least proves that that Rick, you know, is who I say he is. So, at least there's that.

[00:43:54] **Jesse Thorn:** Rick, how do you feel about your chances in the case?

[00:43:56] **Rick:** Uh, I don't—I don't feel great either. I feel like we spent a lot of time talking about what are considered troll tendencies in my personality. Um, but I will say that Ken has to admit that there are a lot of times that I'm very earnest, and I talk about how much I value our friendship and that he's a good buddy of mine, and I'm glad at the end of the day that we get to go through this experience together.

[00:44:21] **Jesse Thorn:** We'll see what Judge Hodgman has to say about this when we come back in just a minute.

[00:44:26] **Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:44:30] **Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:44:32] **Jesse Thorn:** Judge Hodgman, we're taking a quick break from our case, and we are also headed to London, England—Friday, September 15th and Saturday, September 16th.

[00:44:43] **John Hodgman:** I need the people to understand London is the capital of England. This isn't just some city in England. It's the biggest one in England! In the United Kingdom, I dare say. And we are going. So happy to return once again to the London Podcast Festival this September 15th and 16th. Tickets are already on sale, and you can go and get them and all the other details at MaximumFun.org/events. That's MaximumFun.org/events. We're also looking for what, Jesse?

[00:45:17] **Jesse Thorn:** Disputes, baby. English disputes.

[00:45:20] **John Hodgman:** Any London disputes, Cockney rhyming disputes. Any dispute that you might be able—

[00:45:25] **Jesse Thorn:** Double decker bus disputes.

[00:45:26] **John Hodgman:** I know it could be decker versus decker. What if one decker thinks it's better than the other?

[00:45:32] **Jesse Thorn:** Umbrella related disputes.

[00:45:34] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, exactly. That's what I'm talking about. If you live in England and are coming to the London Podcast Festival and you've got a dispute with someone who is also going to be there, and you'd like us to adjudicate your dispute live onstage at King's Place at the London Podcast Festival, well this is really your only chance

this year to get those beefs aired. Go to MaximumFun.org/jjho to submit your, your London beefs.

[00:45:59] **Jesse Thorn:** And to get tickets, it's MaximumFun.org/events. And watch this space, because I'm—all I gotta say is it's not just gonna be London that we head to.

[00:46:09] **John Hodgman:** (*Slyly.*) Not just gonna be London! Not just gonna be London. Also, watch this space, 'cause there's gonna be maybe a surprise after the credits of this episode. So, you know, just stick around. That's my sly voice. Do you like it, Jesse?

[00:46:23] **Jesse Thorn:** Yeah. Uh, I mean, I guess. Sure. Um, I should say yes. Right?

(*John snorts a laugh.*)

Let's get back to the case.

[00:46:31] **Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:46:32] **Jesse Thorn:** Please rise as Judge John Hodgman reenters the courtroom and presents his verdict.

[00:46:39] **John Hodgman:** Blair Mancini knows my name. It's incredible. Incroyable, they say, right? That's what they say? Yeah. I don't—I'm—honestly, I feel a little bit nervous about overruling Blair Mancini's ruling. I mean, Blair Mancini, as I pointed out, probably does know what Blair Mancini is talking about. Whereas I really don't. I don't know anything about the intricacies, the sports intricacies, of this dispute. What I have is merely a bet not paid. I have a wild accusation of trolldom against one party—Rick. And then Rick's contention that Ken is his friend.

(*They laugh.*)

And that Rick—and that Rick is disappointed in his friend. And you know, I don't know whether Rick is a troll or not. I mean, there is something about Rick's—and this is a French word, so if I get it wrong—his mean? Me-ehn? Mien?—demeanor, his self-expression that feels a little slippery to me. When Rick says, “I am going to be on *Survivor*. I'm telling you the truth,” I don't know if that's true. When Rick says, “Believe it or not, I wanted this haircut and I wasn't trolling anybody,” I don't know whether I believe that. When Ken says, “I think he's trolling you,” I kind of feel trolled.

And the beauty of good trolling—and there is no good trolling. Honestly, Rick, if you are trolling, if you are being facetious and insincere in order to get a reaction, I hope you're enjoying this reaction: ugh! Because there's nothing you can do except not feed the trolls. Have I spent this valuable podcast time feeding a troll? The good trolls will never let you know. The good trolls will never let you know, 'cause that's what they want. Quick vote around here, in the studios in Maine. Joel Mann: troll or non?

[00:48:45] **Joel Mann:** Definite troll.

[00:48:46] **John Hodgman:** Troll. Brieç?

[00:48:49] **Brieç:** I would vote for troll too.

[00:48:50] **John Hodgman:** Troll. *Troll Two!* The notoriously bad sequel to the movie *Troll*.

[00:48:59] **Jesse Thorn:** *Troll Two*, one of the great goblin movies!

[00:49:03] **John Hodgman:** I'm gonna—I'm gonna say father-in-law and son, I've—I mean, my vote doesn't count. You've already outvoted me, but I just don't know. If he's doing it, he's doing a really good job. The only evidence to suggest that he is not a troll is the evidence that he sent in, which is a photo that Rick sent in of Rick and Ken—and I don't know if any of these dudes is Blair Mancini, but a couple of other business school bros. The fact that he has this photo of the two of you—well, I was gonna say arm in arm, but you're separated by one kind of fuzzy bro with a beard between you, but you seem happy and friendly together. And he send in a nice picture of your kid, of your child. Very cute child. And a new child—a new child has just arrived. So, congratulations.

I have to give Rick the benefit of the doubt, that he is your friend, that he cares about your friendship. I mean, it's like, you know, like it's clear that a lot of the group chat shenanigans you all get up to are a little bit alien to me, 'cause no one's ever invited me into any business bro group chats. But it's like, you know, there's a lot of—you know, like what do you call these shenanigans, Jesse? What would you call like bro talk?

[00:50:25] **Jesse Thorn:** A lot of junk busting.

[00:50:27] **John Hodgman:** A lot of junk busting? Let the record show that Rick—Rick is laughing.

[00:50:30] **Ken:** That's a good way to put it.

[00:50:32] **John Hodgman:** And thank you, Ken, for weighing in. Good way of putting it. A lot of junk busting. It's not my natural language, but it's—I think that it's clear. It's clear that you care about Rick, Ken, because you do have those good vibes. You know, those good vibes. And I hope that that's not a troll. I hope you're not reverse-trolling me into thinking that you're a good dude.

[00:50:53] **Ken:** (*Laughs.*) No, we're definitely friends. Definitely friends and I care a lot about him, which is why I've agreed to do this podcast.

[00:50:59] **John Hodgman:** Yeah. When you say it—when you say it, I believe it. When Rick says it, I'm like, “I don't know about this guy.” But you know, as they say in dialectical behavior therapy, you can only believe what people say, right? You can't read minds. I'm not a mind reader like Joel and Brieç, over here. I don't know for sure if you're a troll, I have my

suspicious that you're pushing it. But even if you were an acknowledged troll, even if you had said on this podcast, “I am going to come clean on this podcast and say, yeah, I enjoy getting a rise out of Ken by junk—busting his junk about this. Junk busting. Busting makes me feel good.” That's from that song, “Junk Busters”. If you were to say that and just be—have a real honest moment on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast, I wouldn't care! Because guess what? Ken, I'm gonna make those good vibes bad. You lost a bet. A bet is a bet.

I'm sorry, Blair Mancini. Your ruling means nothing unless Rick agreed to abide by the ruling ahead of time. We're not taking people to fake courts here without—you know, you have the right to face your accused in fake court. You can't bring people to court and get a judgment against them. Actually, I did get a judgment against the guy who sublet my apartment in New Haven after I left college and moved to New York, and then he never paid the rent and got up to a looot of messy stuff in there and then disappeared. Could never collect on that. Could never collect on that. Chelso, if you're out there, I'll find you.

Anyway. A bet's a bet. You lost the bet. You gotta pay up. You gotta pay up with damages, Ken. I'm sorry to say. You went for that two and a half—you went for that 2.5 to 1 odds. You thought you were gonna clean up with 250 bucks. Guess what? You're gonna pay 250. \$100 in 2019 is now worth \$120 and 82 cents, according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics Inflation Calculator, one of my favorite websites. \$120 and 82 cents is going to go. You said you were gonna—you said you'd be happy to donate to a charity anyway.

[00:53:09] **Ken:** Yes, yes.

[00:53:09] **John Hodgman:** You said that. Those are your words. So, you're gonna donate \$120 and 82 cents in Rick's memory to [EntertainmentCommunity.org](https://www.entertainmentcommunity.org). That is the organization that is creating a fund to help support people who are striking in the entertainment industry. When this airs, it is—unless things change dramatically, the WGA Writers Guild of America will still be on strike and maybe even joined by the Screen Actors Guild one hopes. And this is for people who are affected by this labor action. There's an emergency fund that they can—that they can apply to and get money for through the entertainment community. [EntertainmentCommunity.org](https://www.entertainmentcommunity.org) for anyone else who wants to support the labor movement.

And then you're gonna give another \$120 and 82 cents—it's very rare. It's very rare, Jesse, that we actually have monetary damages to impose.

[00:54:06] **Jesse Thorn:** I am loving it.

[00:54:07] **John Hodgman:** I know. Well, you know what? You bring on business bros onto *Judge John Hodgman*, there's gonna be some dollars and cents talked about. I'm gonna use a calculator. \$122 and 82 cents...

[00:54:18] **Jesse Thorn:** Guys, I'm gonna need a yield curve on this judgment.

(They chuckle.)

[00:54:22] **John Hodgman:** Rick, you didn't specify a charity, right?

[00:54:25] **Rick:** Correct.

[00:54:25] **John Hodgman:** Yeah. I'm not gonna give you the money on the off chance that you're trolling all of us. I've picked one charity for us. Now, you pick one charity for Ken—unless you want Ken to be able to choose the charity.

[00:54:39] **Rick:** Yeah. I want Ken to be able to choose.

[00:54:41] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, 'cause I'm—you know, what are you gonna give it to Troll Academy?

[00:54:46] **Ken:** I have one in mind already if that's okay.

[00:54:48] **John Hodgman:** What? Yeah, please. What is it?

[00:54:51] **Ken:** Yeah. The Hard Stroke Foundation of Canada. It's a very near and dear cause to my heart. So, yeah, that's the one I would choose. So, I'll be very happy to donate.

[00:55:01] **John Hodgman:** And tell me a little bit more about that organization.

[00:55:04] **Ken:** Well, they support, you know, people who have, you know, had heart or stroke issues. Uh, my mom had a stroke.

[00:55:11] **John Hodgman:** I'm sorry.

[00:55:12] **Ken:** You know, several years ago. And so, it's—yeah, something that's—I really care about. And I think it's a good cause,

[00:55:18] **John Hodgman:** I think that sounds great, Ken. Thank you very much. And so, I rule in Rick's favor. This is the sound of a gavel. How do you say gavel in French, do you think, Brieç?

[00:55:27] **Brieç:** Yeah. Marteau. Slam stuff.

[00:55:28] **John Hodgman:** Marteau. And you know—I don't know if you ever—if you've ever read any of the comic strip adventures of Tintin, the boy adventurer?

[00:55:37] **Brieç:** Yeah, of course. My dad is a fanatic.

[00:55:39] **John Hodgman:** Oh, okay. Very good. Alright. I guess I'm old. But the point is, in our country, when we express what a dog says, it says “woof, woof” or “bark, bark”. But in Tintin, it always says “wouah, wouah”. What does that—what does that dog sound like in France to you?

[00:55:59] **Briec:** Um, “Ouaf, ouaf”, but I guess Tintin was from Belgium, so that explains it.

[00:56:03] **John Hodgman:** Maybe a different accent. “Wouah, wouah.” What do you think a marteau sounds like in France, if you were to make an onomatopoeia of it?

[00:56:12] **Briec:** “Baff, baff”.

[00:56:13] **John Hodgman:** Baff, baff! That is the sound of a gavel, Judge John Hodgman rules. That is all.

[00:56:19] **Jesse Thorn:** Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom.

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

Rick, how do you feel about this verdict?

[00:56:27] **Rick:** I feel good. I think it's—I think it's fair. Um, I'm excited about the two charities that are gonna—they're gonna benefit from it and, you know, I will also match that donation to Ken's charity of choice.

[00:56:42] **Jesse Thorn:** How are you feeling, Ken?

[00:56:44] **Ken:** You know, I came in with very low expectations, just because I feel like having come on the podcast and entertained this, I'd already lost. But I'm happy with the outcome. You know, I think it's great that we're gonna give to some charities. Unfortunately, I'm gonna have to deal with Rick saying that he won for the rest of my life in the group chat, which is gonna be pretty rough. But you know, I think in the end, it'll all have been worth it. So.

[00:57:12] **Jesse Thorn:** Briec, basketball sensation Victor Wembanyama, when he was growing up in France, what were the rules of basketball there?

[00:57:21] **Briec:** Ouaf, ouaf.

[00:57:24] **Jesse Thorn:** *(Giggles.)* Ken, Rick, thank you for joining us on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

[00:57:29] **Ken:** Thank you, guys.

[00:57:30] **Rick:** Thank you all.

[00:57:31] **Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:57:34] **Jesse Thorn:** Another *Judge John Hodgman* case is in the books. In a moment, we'll have Swift Justice. Our thanks first to Redditor ProfessorHighbrow.

(John echoes the name.)

On brand. On brand.

For naming this week's episode, "Full Court Press". Join the conversation at the Maximum Fun subreddit. That's at [MaximumFun.Reddit.com](https://www.reddit.com/r/MaximumFun). That's where we've been asking for title suggestions. Evidence and photos from the show are posted on our Instagram account. That's at [Instagram.com/judgejohnhodgman](https://www.instagram.com/judgejohnhodgman). Make sure to follow us there. *Judge John Hodgman* was created by Jesse Thorn and John Hodgman. Our engineers this week were Christian Williams at Bravo Ocean Studios in Atlanta, Max Fabian at Tightrope Recording in Chicago, and Joel Mann at WERU in Orland, Maine. This week's episode edited by Christian Dueñas, our producer Jennifer Marmor.

Now, Swift Justice, where we answer small disputes with quick judgment. Barbara asks, "Is it pants leg, or pant leg? I say both are correct. My husband insists only pants leg is right."

[00:58:46] **John Hodgman:** Well, I gotta say, Jesse, I don't run a fine menswear website or online shop or blog, so I don't know. Is it pants leg or pant leg?

[00:58:56] **Jesse Thorn:** I think if you wanna sound fancy, you're gonna have to change pants to pant as in like, "Hey, that's a very fine pant." In which case, pant leg is perfectly acceptable.

[00:59:05] **John Hodgman:** I wonder what the French translation is for pant leg.

[00:59:10] **Briec:** It would be like jambe de pantalon, but I guess we have two legs, so maybe two of those.

[00:59:18] **John Hodgman:** The nice thing is that in French, you don't pronounce the final S.

[00:59:22] **Briec:** No, we say, one leg—one leg by one leg. And unless we address the two legs, it's a different word.

[00:59:30] **John Hodgman:** Which is?

[00:59:31] **Briec:** Uh, jambes, plural.

[00:59:34] **John Hodgman:** With an s that you don't pronounce.

(Briec confirms.)

Jambe de pantalon is the correct answer. Put an S on the end of it if you want. Hey, speaking of trolls, we're looking for online beefs. What's the smallest thing you ever got into a dispute over on a social media—like a Reddit or a Twitter or a MetaFilter or a LinkedIn or whatever?

Do they have fights on LinkedIn? I hope they do. I bet the business school bros do.

(Jesse laughs.)

Did you get justice? Did you get into—did you get into a spat with a stranger and feel like you got the better side of it? It almost never happens. I'd love to hear it if you did. Or did you, like the rest of us, just end up hating yourself? Send in your online disputes that still haunt you, and we will rule who is right and who is wrong. And remember, the only troll that I support is *Colbert* writer Ariel Dumas—extremely funny person no matter who employs her—when she goes on social media and just says, “Zelda is the boy,” and just watches what happens. Don't send me letters, but Zelda is the boy.

Hey, Jesse, are we looking for any other disputes or just online disputes only?

[01:00:36] **Jesse Thorn:** We will take any dispute! Think about the people you love in your life and what's wrong with them.

(They laugh.)

Then go to MaximumFun.org/jjho. What they're wrong about, maybe. How about what they're wrong about?

[01:00:52] **John Hodgman:** What are they—what are they—? You know people. What are they wrong about? Send it into MaximumFun.org/jjho. I believe that that's the end of the episode.

[01:01:01] **Jesse Thorn:** Well, we'll have a post credit sequence after we talk to you next time on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

[01:01:06] **John Hodgman:** No, that's a secret! You weren't supposed to reveal that, Jesse! Okay. Yeah. Stick around. Don't leave the theater yet. There is a post-credit sequence coming right up.

[01:01:14] **Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

[01:01:18] **Music:** Bright, sweeping orchestra music.

[01:01:22] **John Hodgman:** That's right. It's the most magical time in weird dad podcasting. It's the Pressmannies! What is that, you ask? Well, a few months ago in our episode “Hot Tubular Non-Sandwich Beef”, we got a letter from a man asking, “Is it okay to take leftovers home doggy bag style from a wedding, charity banquet, or bar mitzvah, anything like that?” And we told that man, no, no, and no, and never.

(Music fades out.)

And the name of that man is Norman Pressman. Now, normally we don't give last names out on this podcast, but in this case we made an exception ‘cause Norman Pressman in his original letter to me said, “It is okay for you to use my whole name. And also, I have a blog.”

Normally, we don't let people buzz market stuff such as NormPressman.com, but in this case we made an exception, because I went to that website and it's fun. If you go to NormPressman.com, you will learn as we did that Norm Pressman is a 70-something-year-old retired attorney in the St. Louis, Missouri area. But like all of us, Norm is so much more than his job and his location. A quick review of his About page shows that he has enjoyed—and this is a direct quote from his bio—“being a polite pain in the ass to hypocritical public figures for years. My blog posts include tales from my legal career and the people I've run across, plus comments on current happenings and religion. I may also start a joke of the week page.”

Significant events in Norm Pressman's life? Well, just go to the about page under the title Significant Events, and you will learn that he was arrested in Chicago in 1969 during Weatherman Riot while taking pictures for a newspaper—picture on right. It's a great photo. He was harassed by Secret Service after writing a letter to President Nixon in protest of bombing of Cambodia. He ran a local poker game and attended poker camp. And he also was arrested for punching a neo-Nazi in the nose in the '60s, back before we were all talking about it recently. With posts such as “The Philly Stink and So Do The Cardinals For Now”, and also “The Supreme Court is Taking More of Our Rights”, and the recent gem “Judge John Hodgman Rules on My Case.”

I thought NormPressman.com was a shoe-in for Best Dad Blog of the Year, which was a category that I invented on the moment just for NormPressman.com. But then, I realized there's so many weird dads out there who have got to be blogging—including me, now that I have a Substack—that we gotta give some more Dad blogs a shot. So, we asked you to nominate your favorite weird dads and moms and stepdads and stepmom's and fathers-in-law. You know what I'm talking about? We still have our French friend here, right? Briec?

[01:03:52] **Briec:** Yes, I'm here. And, I would say I'm going to—I wanna stay in good terms. *(Chuckles.)*

[01:03:58] **John Hodgman:** Right. Okay, that's fine. But maybe, Joel, your daughter can nominate your Instagram page. Which is [@TheMaineMann](https://www.instagram.com/TheMaineMann).

[01:04:06] **Joel Mann:** She's entirely responsible for that page.

[01:04:09] **John Hodgman:** She's responsible for it?

(Joel confirms.)

Okay, so you're not in the running, unfortunately.

[01:04:12] **Joel Mann:** No, no.

[01:04:13] **John Hodgman:** This has to be internet content, whether it's a blog or a YouTube channel or some other social media feed, where an older beloved person in your life—be it a dad, a mom, a godparent, an in-law, an aunt, an uncle, a family friend, a former boss—is putting out content out there that is just so charming and adorable and interesting or

provocative—but not in the wrong way—that you want the world to know about it. That's what we're—that's what we were looking for.

So, we asked for nominees, and you responded, and I hope you will continue to respond and nominate more, because at the end of the year, we're going to announce the very first Dad Blog of the Year. Today, our first nominee comes from listener Kat. Kat writes, “My dad, Drew, has been posting top-tier dad content on YouTube for years. A lot of his videos relate to his job as a filmmaker, but he also has a series of videos about moving to Norway with my stepmom, his experiment with attaching a GoPro on his Roomba-style robotic lawn sprinkler, and most notably, the annual timelapse video of him building the yearly Christmas model train set.” He builds a whole model train set in his basement. It takes hours and hours. And I'm not just talking about putting the tracks together, Joel, I'm talking about everything. You know, landscaping stuff.

[01:05:29] **Joel Mann:** It's a lot of work. A lot of work.

[01:05:30] **John Hodgman:** It's a lot of work. He does a timelapse every year he does this. In 2018, guess how many views he got on his YouTube video for this.

[01:05:37] **Joel Mann:** 200,000.

[01:05:38] **John Hodgman:** (*With genuine shock.*) Exactly! How did you know that?! Geez, (*laughing quietly*) that's incredible. 200,000 on the nose. Just some—just some weird dad energy. I'm saying this as a weird dad, I hope you understand.

[01:05:50] **Joel Mann:** Yeah. You're a weird dad.

[01:05:51] **John Hodgman:** I'm a weird dad. Right. Kat goes on to say, “He's a great dad, and currently in Norway for grad school, studying something that is too complex for me to remember.” Great daughter. “And as you can imagine, all of our childhood home movies were wonderful and incredibly overproduced. He would do things like have me and my siblings sit on a bench eating ice cream while he went across the street to get wide shots and B-roll. I hope you'll consider him for Weird Dad Blog of the Year. P.S.: My dad and mom met while working on *Bill Nye: The Science Guy*.”

[01:06:22] **Joel Mann:** Wow.

[01:06:23] **John Hodgman:** Joel, I gotta tell you the story. Not today. Maybe in the next one or another Dad Blog of the Year, I'll tell you the story about how Bill Nye lowkey bullied me into trying to get me to buy a cast iron waffle pan.

[01:06:37] **Joel Mann:** He trolled you?

[01:06:38] **John Hodgman:** No, no. Not trolled.

(*Joel echoes him.*)

I'm not gonna tell you the story now. This is tea. It was at a wedding. He happened to be at a wedding, and I was telling him about this cast iron waffle pan, and he tried to bully me into buying it. I'll tell you that story. He's a great guy. Just a little bit of a lowkey bully when it comes to cast iron pans.

Briec, I know you wanna stay outta this, but you—the listener—can also nominate your dad, your mom, your step uncle, your godparent, or whatever. Just go to MaximumFun.org/dadblogs. It's linked also on all of our socials. And if you're a member of Maximum Fun, first of all, thank you. And then, you can go and vote on the Weird Dad Blog of the Year there as well. We'll be setting up voting, and your vote will decide who wins Dad Blog of the Year. Going forward, the Dad Blog of the Year contest will be released in the members only feed. So, if you'd like to become a member, go to MaximumFun.org/join. That's MaximumFun.org/dadblogs. If you're a member, you can vote, you can nominate even if you're not a member. And if you'd like to become a member, thank you. MaximumFun.org/join.

And if supporting Maximum Fun is not reward enough for you, please let me tell you that next time—and this is true—Joel, after we talked about Norm Pressman getting arrested for punching a neo-Nazi, I got a letter from a listener named Charles, who said that he had transcripts of Norm Pressman's interrogation by the FBI.

(Joel “wow”s.)

Yeah. And that's for real. And he sent them to me, and we're gonna read from them. And also, we'll learn about Mia's father-in-law's vlog, which is called Uncle Ron and Stuff. So, if you wanna follow along, just go over to MaximumFun.org/dadblogs. And then, if you become a member, look for it in your bonus content feed on MaximumFun.org. That's it. au revoir, Joel.

[01:08:31] **Joel Mann:** Later.

[01:08:32] **John Hodgman:** Au revoir, Briec.

[01:08:34] **Briec:** Au revoir.

[01:08:35] **John Hodgman:** Very good. Tre bien. We did it.

[01:08:38] **Sound Effect:** Cheerful ukulele chord.

[01:08:39] **Speaker 1:** Maximum Fun.

[01:08:40] **Speaker 2:** A worker-owned network.

[01:08:42] **Speaker 3:** Of artist owned shows.

[01:08:43] **Speaker 4:** Supported—

[01:08:44] **Speaker 5:** —directly—

[01:08:45] **Speaker 6:** —by you.