

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

[00:00:02] **Jesse Thorn:** Welcome to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. I'm Bailiff Jesse Thorn. This week, "Case the Rainbow". Dave brings the case against his niece, Morgan. When Morgan was about five years old, she stole Dave's special collection of red Skittles. Then, she ate them! Even now after 24 years, Dave is still mad. He demands restitution! Morgan says she was just a kid. 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.

[00:00:41] **John Hodgman:** "If we could live our lives backwards, everything would be an omen."

Bailiff Jesse Thorn, please swear them in.

[00:00:48] **Jesse Thorn:** Dave, Morgan, please rise and raise your right hands.

(Chairs squeak.)

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

(They swear.)

Do you swear to abide by Judge John Hodgman's ruling, despite the fact that he's always eating Reese's Pieces? I don't know.

[00:01:06] **John Hodgman:** Reese's Pieces for life!

(They swear.)

[00:01:10] **Jesse Thorn:** Judge Hodgman, you may proceed.

[00:01:11] **John Hodgman:** This case is about Skittles. I don't think I've had a Skittle since 1985. Reese's Pieces, that's the one I want, 'cause it's savory.

[00:01:20] **Jesse Thorn:** 1985 was the great Skittles to Reese's transition in American culture. *(Chuckles.)*

[00:01:22] **John Hodgman:** Look, the Skittles came into this country in 1982 from Great Britain. And you know, even though I don't have a sweet tooth, I have an alcohol molar. I was curious like anyone else. And I tried to Skittle. *(Puffs.)* Not for me. Just sweet, not savory

like a Reese's Piece. You inject Reese's Pieces with some gin, you got something there. I'll follow that trail of breadcrumbs to my spaceship or whatever.

[00:01:44] **Jesse Thorn:** Aliens probably hate Skittles.

[00:01:45] **John Hodgman:** Aliens probably do hate Skittles. Alright. Anyway, Dave and Morgan, please 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 the courtroom? I'll give you the quote again, since it's short, and it's very profound. "If we could live our lives backwards, everything would be an omen." Uh, Dave, let's start with you. What's your guess?

[00:02:06] **Dave:** I mean, that that has to be John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, right?

[00:02:11] **John Hodgman:** *The Grapes of Wrath*. Why does that got to be *The Grapes of Wrath*? Out of curiosity?

[00:02:17] **Dave:** Well, I mean—one, this case is about Skittles, and as we all know, grape Skittles are a thing that exists. So, therefore—and then of course, moving backwards, it just fits with the whole narrative. Yeah.

[00:02:29] **John Hodgman:** The whole theme. The whole theme. Alright. Is that the Dust Bowl novel? *Grapes of Wrath*?

(Dave confirms.)

Right. Okay. Uh, what do you think, Morgan? What's your guess?

[00:02:38] **Morgan:** I have no idea. But the only thing that's coming to mind that has time—that has any themes with time is *Doctor Who*, so that's my thought. It's definitely not the answer, but it's the only thing I can think of.

[00:02:51] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, both interesting guesses. Both of them all wrong. Indeed, I would say all guesses are wrong. Now look, didn't either of you read a Wikipedia page about Skittles like I did five minutes ago? *(Chuckles.)* I did it yesterday actually. You haven't just been walking around with the knowledge, like it's normal, that Skittles got in trouble when they changed lime Skittles to green apple Skittles? And then, in response they released all-lime Skittles. There's—a whole other thing happened when they tried to honor Pride month, and good for them, by saying, *(chuckles)* "There's only one rainbow that deserves attention during Pride month, and that is Pride. So, we are taking the color out of our Skittles, and making them all white."

You're like—I don't think the words "white" and "pride" and "month" should ever be together.

[00:03:38] **Jesse Thorn:** Honestly, just sensorially, the idea of a bag of white Skittle seems terrifying to me. (*Laughs.*) It's like a stalk of celery after Bunnacula eats it.

[00:03:48] **John Hodgman:** Oh yeah! Great Writer's House client, author of *Bunnacula*. Right. Yeah, exactly. And do you think that I knew until literally this morning that there was a Skittles musical that was performed one time at the theater called The Town Hall in Manhattan, in the theater district. It's not a Broadway house, but it might as well be. Starring Michael C. Hall, the actor for whom the town hall was named, I believe.

(*Dave laughs and agrees.*)

The music was by Drew Gasperini. The book was by playwright Will Eno and Nathaniel Lawlor. And the lyrics were by Nathaniel Lawlor. It premiered February 3rd, 2019, as obviously a promotion for Skittles surrounding the Super Bowl. It was a 30-minute musical. And you haven't read about this, so this is a treat that you get to enjoy in the future, Dave and Morgan. But if you read this Wikipedia page, this is the most annoyingly meta musical there is. The set as a recreation of the exterior of town hall with the audience members protesting a commercial musical for Skittles. It's like a snake eating its own tail if the snake was made of Skittles.

[00:04:56] **Jesse Thorn:** I mean, anything that starts with the premise “the Super Bowl’s in town, let’s put on some musical theatre for candy.” Like they tried to book Michael Strahan, and they ended up with Michael C. Hall. (*Chuckles.*)

[00:05:09] **John Hodgman:** Yeah. We'll take any Michael there—any acting Michael. And the one line that is quoted here is the only line that I could find from this musical. “If we could live our lives backwards, everything would be an omen.” I mean, it's a great line! Like, Will Eno’s a good playwright. This is bananas. Bananas stuff. Dave, are there banana Skittles?

[00:05:29] **Dave:** Not in the normal pack, but they do exist. There's a variety of flavors at this point.

[00:05:33] **John Hodgman:** Well, okay, let's get into it. Who comes to my fake court Seeking Justice?

[00:05:37] **Dave:** I do.

[00:05:38] **John Hodgman:** And that would be Dave. Dave, what is the nature of your complaint?

[00:05:40] **Dave:** Basically, the Porg is a dirty, rotten thief who stole all my red Skittles.

[00:05:45] **John Hodgman:** The Porg?

[00:05:46] **Dave:** The Porg.

[00:05:47] **John Hodgman:** The Porg.

[00:05:48] **Dave:** The Porg is what I call my fellow litigant, Morgan.

[00:05:54] **John Hodgman:** Morgan. Who is your niece, correct?

[00:05:55] **Dave:** Who is my niece.

[00:05:56] **John Hodgman:** Alright. You can certainly use actual names. There's no need to hide her identity,

[00:06:01] **Dave:** I mean, the Porg is what I call her. Like—

[00:06:02] **John Hodgman:** You call her the Porg.

[00:06:04] **Dave:** Her name is the Porg.

[00:06:05] **Morgan:** He doesn't call me anything else.

[00:06:06] **John Hodgman:** Other than the prog, P-O-R-G.

[00:06:08] **Morgan:** Yeah. I think the last time he called me Morgan was when I was really little. It's been the Porg for quite some time.

[00:06:14] **John Hodgman:** Alright. Permission to call you the Porg?

[00:06:18] **Morgan:** Sure.

[00:06:19] **John Hodgman:** Very good. The Porg, you have been accused of being a dirty, rotten thief, and I will complete the sentence by saying that Dave accuses you of eating all of his red Skittles that he had collected some almost 25 years ago or whatever. How do you respond?

[00:06:36] **Morgan:** That was 25 years ago whatever, and allegedly I ate all of his red Skittles.

[00:06:46] **John Hodgman:** Do you deny it, the Porg?

[00:06:48] **Morgan:** I don't remember it.

[00:06:48] **John Hodgman:** You don't remember eating the red Skittles?

[00:06:51] **Morgan:** I don't remember eating the red Skittles.

[00:06:54] **Jesse Thorn:** Morgan, I don't remember going to my aunt's NRDC company picnic and then coming back and saying, "I pooped on the beach like a dog." It doesn't mean that it didn't happen.

[00:07:04] **Morgan:** That's fair. But I'm just saying I don't remember. That's why I used the word allegedly. I'll admit I may have eaten them. I don't remember that, but I think it's—time has passed. It was a small infraction, and we should move on.

[00:07:22] **John Hodgman:** I see. The Porg, Dave is your uncle, but I think he's like only about 10 years older than you. Can you explain this?

[00:07:28] **Morgan:** Yeah. So, he's my mom's brother. And was the youngest of the siblings to be born—or to be (*softly*) born. I don't know.

(*They chuckle.*)

And then, I—and then—

[00:07:37] **John Hodgman:** Yeah. Yeah. To get around to being born. Mm-hm.

[00:07:41] **Morgan:** (*Laughs.*) And then, my mom had me, and we just happened to end up being about 10 years apart. We definitely function more as like—we have more of like a sibling relationship. And we're super close. So, yeah, he's always been really close in age. He's always taught me like video games and like fun stuff and been way more fun than most uncles. Uh, definitely more like a sibling.

[00:08:06] **Jesse Thorn:** Or simply like a funcle (*fun uncle*).

[00:08:08] **Morgan:** Yeah, definitely a funcle.

[00:08:09] **John Hodgman:** Definitely a func. Super close though, except for this point of contention, right, Dave?

[00:08:14] **Dave:** Yeah, absolutely. As the Porg stated, we are very close in age. We grew up in the same household for many of our raising years.

[00:08:23] **John Hodgman:** Mm-hm. That's what they're called.

[00:08:26] **Dave:** And so, the Porg very much is like little sibling I never had. My wife—who is a whole human being in her own right—refers to the Porg as my nibling.

[00:08:36] **John Hodgman:** Right. That's an internet coinage for non-gendered niece or nephew term.

[00:08:40] **Dave:** But yeah, the Porg has always been that close little nibling to me. And then, to be betrayed by her just hits the heart in a place that I can't imagine.

[00:08:51] **John Hodgman:** Alright. Tell me the story. How old were you when you were collecting these Skittles?

[00:08:55] **Dave:** If the Porg was five or six, I would've been 15 or 16.

[00:08:59] **Jesse Thorn:** So, this is like prime years. You're collecting Skittles to impress girls.

[00:09:03] **Dave:** Exactly. Exactly. Like all 15, 16 year old boys do. I had a three-pound bag of Skittles. And I love red Skittles. And so, in my mind, I decided I'm going to meticulously eat none of the red Skittles out of this bag. Pick them out, place them in a glass jar, and save them. That way, when I've finished the three-pound bag of grape, orange, yellow, and green—whether they're—

[00:09:34] **John Hodgman:** Green apple or lime. Right.

[00:09:36] **Dave:** Yeah. When those are all gone, I will have this treasure trove of red Skittles. Every time I opened the door, I just heard the (*angelic singing*) “aaah” emanating from the jar.

[00:09:47] **John Hodgman:** I just realized I have a question. Um, do you work for Skittles or something, Dave?

(*They chuckle.*)

How did we get tricked into doing a product show? You work for Skittles, don't you?

[00:09:58] **Dave:** I do not! I do not. I'm actually a federal employee.

[00:10:01] **John Hodgman:** You're in the packet of big Skittle?! You're a federal employee?

[00:10:05] **Dave:** Federal employee. I do government oversight work for Veterans Affairs. I work for the office of Inspector General.

[00:10:10] **John Hodgman:** Okay. We're doing a Skittle show. I just realized it. I just realized it. I don't know why I got tricked into this. Maybe this is why I got tricked into it. 'Cause I'm curious. 'Cause as I mentioned, I've never had a Skittle in a long, long, long time. They're just plain sugar. Right? They don't have flavor, do they?

[00:10:25] **Morgan:** No!

[00:10:26] **Dave:** They do have flavor.

[00:10:27] **Morgan:** No!

[00:10:27] **John Hodgman:** Okay. The Porg?

[00:10:28] **Morgan:** No, they don't.

[00:10:29] **John Hodgman:** I'll allow that objection.

[00:10:31] **Morgan:** So, Skittles the company, if you look this up, they don't actually have flavor. They only have smell. So, essentially like they scented the Skittles to trick you into believing that they have flavor. Now, you can argue the semantics of that all you want, right? But at the end of the day, they don't actually have a flavor profile. They're not flavored. They just smell like each thing. So, like red smells like strawberry. And green smells like green apple now. Or lime.

[00:11:06] **John Hodgman:** Green apple or lime, depending, right?

[00:11:08] **Jesse Thorn:** So, you're saying that Skittles are essentially Lip Smackers?

[00:11:12] **Morgan:** Is that how Lip Smackers—? Yeah. I mean, I guess.

[00:11:16] **Jesse Thorn:** (*Laughing.*) I mean, I've eaten a lot Lip Smackers over the years!

[00:11:17] **Morgan:** Have you eaten a lot of Lip Smackers? (*Laughs.*) Yeah. They're a sham entirely. They're just—

[00:11:24] **John Hodgman:** Woow! Fighting words, Dave.

[00:11:28] **Dave:** Hitting words.

[00:11:29] **John Hodgman:** Let me ask you a question, the Porg. Do you work for Whoppers or something? Are you the opposition?

[00:11:35] **Morgan:** (*Laughing.*) No, I—I don't.

[00:11:36] **John Hodgman:** If you tell me you work for Whoppers, you win the case. Maltesers? Are you in the—? No, okay.

[00:11:41] **Morgan:** I work for an EV charging company. It's not nearly as fun.

[00:11:44] **John Hodgman:** Electric vehicle charging company?

(*Morgan confirms.*)

Oh, cool. Alright. I just wanna make sure that there's no undisclosed bias here or attempt to buzz market.

[00:11:53] **Morgan:** No. I wish I worked for Willy Wonka, but I don't. So.

[00:11:55] **John Hodgman:** That's why I have to ask these questions and do these background checks, because candy is a mean business. If Skittles got Dexter to be a Skittles musical, who knows what length they'd go to, to get onto our podcast?! I didn't think about these things. I should have been afraid. Alright, so the Porg says that they have no flavor. Dave, obviously flavor is subjective, and the truth is aroma is part of flavor.

[00:12:19] **Jesse Thorn:** Judge Hodgman, I've done some exhaustive internet research over the past 120 seconds.

[00:12:25] **John Hodgman:** Yes, sir.

[00:12:25] **Jesse Thorn:** And according to perhaps the greatest scientific research organization in the world, TodayShow.com: while there is a neuroscientist who conducted a non-peer reviewed quick study where he put nose clips on people and had them tell whether they were eating the Skittle he told them they were eating, and he determined that while they have different flavors—which is the sensation that we get by combining taste and smell—they had identical tastes. The Skittles Corporation, Skittles Incorporated—whatever the company is that makes Skittles—maintain very clearly that each Skittles candy does have its own taste as well as its own flavor.

[00:13:15] **John Hodgman:** Let me put it this way. Dave, have you ever done a blind taste test where you eat one Skittle and try to identify the flavor or taste?

[00:13:21] **Dave:** I did. I did. The Porg and her partner forced me into this to prove their point in which they forced me to plug my nose and eat Skittles. I made the same contention that I can't tell the difference between bourbon and gin with my nose plugged, because smell is such an important part of flavor.

[00:13:41] **John Hodgman:** So, I take it you failed the test.

[00:13:42] **Dave:** I failed the test.

[00:13:43] **John Hodgman:** Mm-hm.

[00:13:44] **Jesse Thorn:** But in general, you can tell the difference, because you can both see and smell.

[00:13:48] **Dave:** Absolutely, absolutely. And I would contend even without my sight, I would be able to tell the difference.

[00:13:54] **John Hodgman:** Right. Do you believe Dave when he says that with his nose unplugged but his eyes closed, he could tell the difference between a red Skittle and a lime Skittle? And I remind you, you're under fake oath. So, even though you know you want to answer as the annoying nibbling, I want you to be as honest as possible here.

[00:14:11] **Morgan:** Yeah, no, I believe him. I did the blind taste test myself. But yeah, so they don't have a sense of taste, but I also kind of lost the desire to pick different ones out understanding that they're all the same. That's just kind of like—I'm like, why do you care if they're all the same? They're basically just—yeah. So.

[00:14:34] **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.

[00:14:42] **Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:14:44] **Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:14:46] **John Hodgman:** Here's an interesting question, The Porg. If you hate Skittles so much, why did you eat all of Dave's Skittles?

[00:14:51] **Morgan:** Because I was five.

[00:14:52] **John Hodgman:** Ah, so you admit that you did it!

[00:14:54] **Morgan:** If I did it, I was five. I don't know! (*Laughs.*) I was young and I didn't know! I didn't know any better. I liked sweet things, 'cause I was a five year old or six-year-old, I guess.

[00:15:07] **John Hodgman:** Uh-huh. So, we can dispense with the pretense that this didn't happen?

[00:15:10] **Morgan:** Yeah, no, I don't think that it—I don't know for sure that it didn't happen. I just don't know if it did happen. I realized on the car ride over here that for a very long time, my uncle has told me that this story happened and was very grandiose about how it happened, said all these different things. And then, I realized that I'd never like tried to fact check. I never went to my family. I never was like, "Mom, you know, did this happen?"

[00:15:35] **Jesse Thorn:** What was the grandiosity in his telling? Did it all—did he say it all happened on an enormous sweeping staircase or something?

[00:15:42] **Morgan:** No, okay. So, maybe grandiose isn't the right word, but it's like very like hyper—(*stammering*) not like—I don't know, like very overblown.

[00:15:48] **John Hodgman:** High emotion.

[00:15:50] **Morgan:** Yeah. Like very big and very like this is a really big deal. You know, Morgan's a thief. And—

[00:15:58] **John Hodgman:** This was just in the car ride over here.

[00:16:00] **Morgan:** Yeah. This is what I pondered on the car ride over.

[00:16:01] **John Hodgman:** Right. And how often does he bring it up?

[00:16:05] **Morgan:** I would say almost every time we see each other. Like, it is so much more often than I feel like it needs to be. (*Chuckling.*) Like, let's say he and I see each other between five and ten times a year. It's happening between five and seven times a year that he brings it up, I would say.

[00:16:23] **John Hodgman:** Dave, do you dispute that accounting?

[00:16:25] **Dave:** No, that count sounds accurate.

[00:16:26] **John Hodgman:** So, in your most grandiose style, explain first of all where you kept the Skittles, how many you estimated you had, how long it took you to collect them, and when you noticed that they were missing.

[00:16:42] **Dave:** Absolutely. So, as I stated previously, it was originally a three-pound bag. So, I had collected all of the red Skittles as I ate a handful at a time by placing them in a glass jar that was located on a large cabinet speaker right next to my bedroom door. So, within my bedroom. Like a jam jar. So, a little bit smaller than a pickle jar.

[00:17:07] **John Hodgman:** Okay. A jam jar. Right.

[00:17:09] **Dave:** And it got pretty full. I'd say maybe—I mean, 1/5th of three pounds. Maths that. I don't know.

[00:17:16] **John Hodgman:** Okay. Alright.

[00:17:17] **Dave:** Yeah. So, a good amount of Skittles. And I'd say it took me about a month to curate that collection.

[00:17:24] **John Hodgman:** As you were working your way through this one three-pound bag.

[00:17:26] **Dave:** Correct. Correct. So, yeah, just taking a handful, maybe two at a time, picking out the reds, eating nothing but grapes, you know, purple, yellow, green, orange.

[00:17:39] **John Hodgman:** Right. What is red flavor, by the way? Supposedly cherry or something?

[00:17:43] **Dave:** Supposedly, I believe it is strawberry.

[00:17:45] **John Hodgman:** Strawberry. Okay. And what was your plan for this jar full of red Skittles?

[00:17:50] **Dave:** The plan was to enjoy it all in one—not in one serving. That's quite a—

[00:17:55] **Jesse Thorn:** In one sick Bacchanal.

(They laugh.)

[00:17:59] **Dave:** But just to enjoy nothing but red Skittles. I've always had a lifelong dream of opening up a fruit flavored treat and having nothing but the red ones. You know, the grapes, the limes, the lemons, they're just there for filler, right? I mean, everybody always wants the red popsicle, the red Skittle, the red whatever it is.

[00:18:24] **Jesse Thorn:** The Red Baron.

[00:18:26] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, that's true. The Lime Baron was terrible. Like, you pull the Lime Baron, that's the worst.

[00:18:31] **Jesse Thorn:** One of the worst barons.

[00:18:32] **John Hodgman:** No one wanted to be shot down by the Lime Baron. That was just embarrassing.

[00:18:35] **Dave:** But I believe I discovered it when I had actually finished the bag. So, I had left the jar of red Skittles unattended, went to school or whatever knowing that when I came home, that jar of red Skittles was going to be there. I was gonna go up the stairs, open the door and see that jar of red Skittles just awaiting for me. So, I opened the door, and I looked to the jar and saw not a jar of red Skittles but a jar of two red Skittles.

[00:19:08] **Jesse Thorn:** I like that five-year-old Morgan left two for like plausible deniability. “No, no. There's still Skittles in there!”

[00:19:18] **Dave:** Yeah. See, and this is one of the—this is—to me, this was insult to injury. Not—she didn't take all of the Skittles. She left me two. You are welcome?!

[00:19:26] **Jesse Thorn:** No, no. You miscounted previously. There are two now, as there were previously.

[00:19:32] **Dave:** So, I immediately was enraged. And in an enraged state, turned around looking to the hallway area that was outside of my bedroom, and saw the Porg who just laughed. And so, of course, “Did you eat my Skittles?!”

“No! He-he-he-he-he-he-he!” The telltale of a five-year-old lying.

[00:19:57] **Jesse Thorn:** Just red smeared across her face like a cosplay Joker.

[00:20:01] **Dave:** *(Laughing.)* Right, right. Yeah. Asking me if I wanted to see how she got these scars. And then, immediately called my mother, her mother, into the room voicing a complaint that my roommate had stolen my Skittles. And then, as punishment, my sister told the Porg that she had to apologize to me. And so, I got a, “I'm sorry.”

[00:20:26] **John Hodgman:** Was it an “I’m sorry” or was it like, (*reluctantly*) “I’m sorry.”

[00:20:30] **Dave:** It was the latter. Um, she was not sorry.

[00:20:34] **John Hodgman:** Was her mouth like the brightest red? Did you have physical evidence?

[00:20:39] **Dave:** I did not have physical evidence. I don't—I believe she had done it earlier. After the initial denial—once she had been caught, there was never a denial beyond that.

[00:20:49] **John Hodgman:** I see. So, let me get this straight. You came home, there were two Skittles left. You go out into the hallway. The Porg is laughing at you. You take that as a tacit admission of guilt. You accuse her of eating the Skittles. She says, “No, I didn't.” Then, you narc to your mom or hers?

[00:21:07] **Dave:** Both.

[00:21:07] **John Hodgman:** Both moms.

[00:21:08] **Dave:** Both moms.

[00:21:09] **John Hodgman:** Double narc.

[00:21:10] **Dave:** Yep.

[00:21:11] **John Hodgman:** One of them compels an apology from her, which you take to be as tacit admission that she did it.

[00:21:18] **Dave:** She did it.

[00:21:19] **John Hodgman:** Right. When she denied doing it, she was like, “Wasn't me,” or did she come up with an alternate series of facts?

[00:21:23] **Dave:** No, there was no alternate series of facts. It was just, “No, I didn't! (*Giggles.*)” Yeah. Like, couldn't even finish the “it wasn't me”.

[00:21:29] **John Hodgman:** Couldn't even finish. I know, right? A wonder she had any—was even able to separate her jaw, given the amount of sugar that had just compounded between her molars.

[00:21:37] **Jesse Thorn:** You're saying you caught her on the counter. She said it wasn't me. You saw her eating Skittles on the sofa. She said it wasn't me.

[00:21:45] **John Hodgman:** (*Laughs.*) Yeah. Right. Exactly.

[00:21:47] **Jesse Thorn:** She said she ate them in the shower.

[00:21:49] **Morgan:** It wasn't me.

[00:21:49] **Jesse Thorn:** Yeah.

[00:21:52] **John Hodgman:** (*Laughs.*) Okay. $1/5^{\text{th}}$ of three pounds of Skittles is roughly—it's 9.6 ounces. Let's say that that's 10. Each Skittle weighs 0.11 ounces, so that means you had collected it in that jar, roughly speaking 90.90909090909090 repeated Skittles—red Skittles. About 91 red Skittles, which is about twice as much as a standard bag of Skittles. All red. A standard, 2.17 ounce bag of Skittles contains an average of 56 pieces of candy, those candies being Skittles. Boy, I mean, for someone who loves red candy so much, just thinking about this must make you so excited!

[00:22:35] **Dave:** Oh, man! I mean, the joy I was expecting!

[00:22:38] **John Hodgman:** Did you even know that you had gotten two bags worth of Skittles until I did that math?

[00:22:42] **Dave:** I thought—I always assumed it was one bag!

[00:22:44] **John Hodgman:** Yeah. Even more of that went down the drain of the Porg's digestive system. Was this uncharacteristic or was this characteristic of her behavior towards you?

[00:22:55] **Dave:** This was fairly uncharacteristic. Generally speaking, we got along really well. The Porg and I are closer in age than her mother and I. The Porg and I really—

[00:23:06] **John Hodgman:** I've already done enough math for one show. I don't need any more logic puzzles. And how did it affect your relationship after the betrayal? Was there a cooling of relations?

[00:23:16] **Dave:** There was a cooling initially. I certainly did not trust her initially. I believe I even requested a lock be added to my bedroom door because of the incident. Eventually, the Porg and I did become besties again. But of course, one of our family traditions is stories never die. They just keep being retold and retold, over and over again.

[00:23:37] **John Hodgman:** Sure, sure. Grudges. One of the family traditions is drumming up old grudges.

[00:23:43] **Dave:** I wouldn't even say it's drumming up grudges. It's getting a laugh, perhaps at the expense of somebody else in the family, done with love.

[00:23:53] **John Hodgman:** Who's bringing up this story? You, is what you're saying?

[00:23:54] **Dave:** Oh, I bring—I'm the one who brings up the story.

[00:23:57] **John Hodgman:** Right. You're trying to get family yucks by telling the story over and over again that the Porg is a thief. Trying to get attention.

[00:24:05] **Dave:** Yeah. That's accurate. That's accurate. And I do like me some attention.

[00:24:09] **John Hodgman:** Is it successful?

[00:24:10] **Dave:** Oh yeah! The story goes over really well.

[00:24:12] **John Hodgman:** I'll talk to the Porg for a moment here. When we talk about the family of the Porg, what family are we talking about? What is the shape of this family, and what was the conditions in which you guys were living together with two moms, sisters?

[00:24:26] **Morgan:** Yeah, so we lived—at the time, we lived with my grandma and grandpa, my mom—which is his sister—and my uncle. Right? So, what? Five? Four? Five people? I don't know. Five people. And then, now that we've grown, we like—he and I both have partners. So, it's my aunt, his wife, and then my partner, then my mom, my other aunt—which is his other sister—and then, my grandma, and I have a brother, and then my other aunt has a son. So, it's like, you know, a little under 10 people, I think.

[00:25:06] **John Hodgman:** But not all living together still in like Skittles mansion or something.

[00:25:09] **Morgan:** No, not all living together in Skittles mansion.

[00:25:12] **Jesse Thorn:** But having an annual picnic on Angel Island in the San Francisco Bay, where everybody comes and says, “Do you remember that time that you pooped on the beach and then said you pooped on the beach like a dog?”

(They chuckle.)

[00:25:23] **Morgan:** We get together every holiday, almost. Like, there's very few holidays that we aren't together. So—and then we also, you know, have occasions every now and then where we'll get together for like a Dodgers game or, you know, something else where we get together.

[00:25:38] **John Hodgman:** And he tells the story with some frequency, not just to you but to the whole family.

[00:25:42] **Morgan:** Yeah.

[00:25:43] **John Hodgman:** Do you think it's more important to him that you hear that you're a thief or that the family hears that you're a thief, and they all laugh and pat him on the back and say, “Good story,” all at your expense?

[00:25:53] **Morgan:** I think whoever he can tell that I'm a thief, he thinks it's funny. Like, it's—as long as it's told in his perspective with love as a joke, then he's fine with whoever hears it.

[00:26:05] **John Hodgman:** How do you feel about it when he's telling these stories and your family laughs at you?

[00:26:09] **Morgan:** I'm just over it. Like, it's been going for so long. And my partner also thinks it's hilarious. My partner's on his side on this case, which is very annoying. Because he thinks it's also really funny. But he's only heard it like twice. So, if he had heard it the amount of times that I've heard it over the course of my life, I'm sure he'd probably be like, “This story's whatever,” also.

[00:26:32] **John Hodgman:** So, the whole thing's a lie. Your betrayal at this point has cooled. You no longer feel it particularly keenly. You're only dredging this up in order to participate in the family tradition of telling jokes at each other's expense.

[00:26:46] **Dave:** At this stage of the game, the Porg is one of my closest—not only family members, but just one of my closest people in the world. I care for the Porg deeply. I hold no ill will towards the Porg other than this is a great story that I love to tell. And I think—

[00:27:04] **John Hodgman:** It's a good enough—obviously, I took the bait! Here you are on the podcast, but it's not like—there's not a lot of twist to it. The best part of the story is that this weird kid collected two packs of all red Skittles! That's the story! Morgan, when I said how does it make you feel when he tells this story, you said, “I'm over it” in a way that made me believe that you were born over it.

(Morgan laughs.)

Like, certainly you never were really under it. If it happened—and if you're being truthful, you have completely forgotten it—you didn't seem to care one way or the other whether or not you got blamed for it or not. You denied it. Then, you admitted it. You said you were sorry. Obviously, you weren't. Ha-ha-ha, he-he-he, agent of chaos. Exactly correct for a younger niece or sibling. But surely now that you're adult, hearing the story year after year after year, your funcle saying, “My friend and family member is unreliable and should not be trusted,” that's gotta take a toll. No?

[00:28:03] **Morgan:** Yeah. Okay. So, my mom always used to say there's truth in every joke. And so, I think that's always kind of stuck with me, even though like I know he's joking. And he's even like told me like, “Hey, like, you know like this is a joke, right?” There's still this little part of me that's like what if he actually like thought that at any point in time? Or like have I ever, other than that, given him any reason to make him think that? So, like it's not that big of a deal. Like, the—you know, hearing it over and over isn't. But it does kind of subtly worry me a little bit that like there might be something there when it's told as often as it is and how often I hear like little, teeny, tiny jabs.

[00:28:40] **John Hodgman:** Like, what form would a little, teeny, tiny jab take?

[00:28:43] **Morgan:** Kind of what I mentioned earlier. So, like the—you know, like, “Oh, well, like she can't be trusted 'cause she—you know, like don't trust her around your food. Don't trust her around this.” And it's usually like a food-based trust level. He doesn't usually take it farther than that, but it's like, “Don't leave those around!” You know what I mean? So, it's like this like little subtle jab.

[00:29:03] **John Hodgman:** Dave, do you acknowledge that she has not stolen any more of your precious red Skittles?

[00:29:07] **Dave:** I mean, we haven't lived together.

[00:29:09] **Morgan:** Yeah, we have!

[00:29:10] **Dave:** We have not lived together in quite some time. My wife and I lived in Colorado, and the Porg was gonna move in with us. In fact, she did move in with us. And then, right after her stuff all arrived, she met a boy in Southern California and decided to stay in southern California. And so, I just had a room full of Porg's stuff for the time that we were in Colorado. But—

[00:29:31] **John Hodgman:** And that giant glass carafe of red Skittles that you had collected in order to tempt and entrap her was all for naught! Do you still like Skittles?

[00:29:40] **Dave:** Eh, Skittles are a little on the sweet side for me now. I enjoy them, on occasion. You know, generally in the fun size packet like you get at Halloween. But.

[00:29:48] **John Hodgman:** If they came out with an Oops, All Red bag, would you get it and would you enjoy it?

[00:29:52] **Dave:** Absolutely, I would. In fact, there is another candy that does that—that came out with an all reds and pinks, and it was actually the Porg who first alerted me to said candy coming out.

[00:30:05] **John Hodgman:** Why didn't you say the name of the candy? Unless you are actually a shill for Skittles.

[00:30:09] **Dave:** 'Cause they're the opposition to Skittles, and I would blow my cover if I said Starburst.

(They chuckle.)

[00:30:14] **Morgan:** Oh no!

[00:30:16] **John Hodgman:** Got it. Did you ever bother to collect the red Skittles again?

[00:30:20] **Dave:** No! My dreams were dashed. Uh, now I will say—

[00:30:24] **John Hodgman:** What do you mean your dreams were dashed?! How long did it take you to fill up this jar of red Skittles?

[00:30:28] **Dave:** Like a month!

[00:30:29] **John Hodgman:** Yeah! There are—how many months have you been alive? There are 12 months in your 15th year alone!

[00:30:33] **Dave:** Far too many! (*Laughs.*)

[00:30:35] **Jesse Thorn:** We've already established we're not doing any more math! Don't you dare!

(*They laugh.*)

[00:30:40] **John Hodgman:** I'm just wondering how important to you it really was if you didn't even bother to recreate the red Skittles jar or even go bigger and put it in a vault.

[00:30:48] **Dave:** It was recreated for me when I was dating my wife. She, having heard the story—because of course she did—she recreated the jar of red Skittles for me, and gave it to me at—I think at our one year anniversary.

[00:31:04] **John Hodgman:** At your wedding? And at the altar?

[00:31:06] **Dave:** (*Chuckling.*) Prior to the wedding, but it's definitely one of the reasons I married her for sure.

[00:31:09] **John Hodgman:** Right. That's very adorable of your wife to do that.

[00:31:12] **Dave:** I thought so as well.

[00:31:13] **John Hodgman:** But seriously, is Morgan unreliable? Yes or no?

[00:31:17] **Dave:** No! Morgan is incredibly reliable.

[00:31:19] **John Hodgman:** Right. Does she steal food off of people's plates or whatever it is that you're accusing her of?

[00:31:23] **Dave:** She does! But it's—but I do too. Like, we share food. That's perfectly acceptable. Like, "Ooh, what is that?"

[00:31:29] **John Hodgman:** Share is different than steal.

[00:31:30] **Dave:** Well, I mean we take without asking.

[00:31:32] **John Hodgman:** Okay. Steal. Alright. I'll make a note of something here.

[00:31:36] **Morgan:** Yeah, it should be noted that Dave takes food off my plate very regularly. If there is—

[00:31:42] **Dave:** Absolutely.

[00:31:43] **Morgan:** He also strategically plans his meals to make sure that you get something different than what he gets, so that way you know that he's gonna take something off of yours that he wants to try.

[00:31:53] **John Hodgman:** Wow. Okay. You know, like what? What is he stealing from your plate? What's he going for?

[00:31:58] **Morgan:** So, like let's say like if I got the chicken tenders, he would get the hamburger so he could take a piece of my chicken tenders and make sure he got to try them.

[00:32:07] **Jesse Thorn:** He wouldn't even have the decency to eat one tender? He'd be grubbing into your tenders, tearing them into pieces?

[00:32:15] **Morgan:** He might use a fork. He wouldn't just like manhandle the chicken tenders.

[00:32:20] **Dave:** I would only take part of a tender if she didn't get that many. Like, if she got 50 tenders, I'm taking tendie. Like, that's that. But if she got five—

[00:32:31] **John Hodgman:** Right. You're saying if she gets five or three or whatever, you only want to bite. And hygienically, you're going to break that off with a fork.

(Dave confirms.)

Right. And obviously you're going to ask her before you do this.

(Morgan “hm”s.)

[00:32:42] **Dave:** I mean, there's an implied—

[00:32:45] **John Hodgman:** Uh-huh, sure. Alright, Dave.

[00:32:47] **Dave:** Again, she's getting part—she's getting some of my food too!

[00:32:48] **John Hodgman:** Alright, Dave.

[00:32:50] **Jesse Thorn:** He took care of her stuff in Colorado.

[00:32:53] **John Hodgman:** That's true.

[00:32:54] **Jesse Thorn:** Did you any of the tenders that she send from Southern California to Colorado for her room?

[00:32:59] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, her storage tenders.

[00:33:01] **Dave:** I mean, they would've gone bad if I didn't.

[00:33:04] **Jesse Thorn:** Yeah. That's a fair point.

[00:33:05] **John Hodgman:** Do you steal food from his plate, Morgan?

[00:33:07] **Morgan:** No, I ask. I don't steal food from anybody's plate. I don't steal food from people! Well, I do steal food from Steve's plate, my partner, but he knows that's coming. So.

[00:33:15] **Jesse Thorn:** Let the record reflect that Dave has offered a 45 degree head tilt to indicate "eeeh".

(Morgan laughs.)

[00:33:22] **John Hodgman:** I mean, it's really important to your case that you present yourself as reliable and non-deceitful. So, I'm gonna ask you again: aside from your partner, 'cause Dave is showing a tilt to the head that suggests that you're not telling the truth. Now, this could be him laying another bad accusation at you. I want you to answer truthfully. Do you take food from your family member's plates without asking?

[00:33:49] **Morgan:** Not unless they've stated it's okay to do so, or it's been implied that we are sharing plates.

[00:33:56] **John Hodgman:** Okay. And Dave is now nodding.

[00:33:58] **Dave:** I would agree, because anybody who eats with me, especially within family, knows that that is always implied reality.

[00:34:05] **John Hodgman:** *(Laughs.)* 'Cause that supports your point of view! Does Dave do anything wrong that you don't also do with regard to taking food off plates? Does that make any sense?

[00:34:14] **Morgan:** Yeah, no, it does. I'm trying to think. I don't think so.

[00:34:18] **John Hodgman:** So, you do the—it's the same deal. Will you take a bite of his chicken tendie?

[00:34:22] **Morgan:** Maybe. If I wanted it. I don't know. Sometimes I feel like—*(laughs)* I feel like sometimes it's like this—like he always sets the precedent that we must share food. Like, that's just how it is. And so, like it's just there at the beginning of the conversation. *(Laughs.)*

[00:34:40] **John Hodgman:** Morgan, has any of this brought up details of the day that the Skittles went missing?

[00:34:46] **Morgan:** No.

[00:34:47] **John Hodgman:** I mean, literally, you have no memory at all? Even a false memory that he's implanted into your consciousness by telling the story over and over again? Nothing.

[00:34:56] **Morgan:** Yeah, the interesting thing about the story is—first of all, it started off as a two pound bag. The cup type has changed. It wasn't always a jar. Sometimes it's been a cup. I thought for a period of time it was a red solo cup. Yeah. The location of the jar or cup has been changed. 'Cause I know for a fact it was right by the door. 'Cause that's how I saw it, and I clocked it. But at one point, I think he said it was like up on a shelf.

[00:35:22] **Jesse Thorn:** For the holiday season.

[00:35:24] **Morgan:** Yeah, to show to show it off. But I do remember—I very vividly—so, this is why like I think it could be true. I very vividly remember the two Skittles, and I don't know if he showed it to me and was like, “Did you eat this?” Or if I ate them, and looked at it and was like, “Ha-ha, this is funny.” I don't know. I do think it should be noted we also had two dogs at the time, so things going missing or somebody helping me, like—

[00:35:53] **John Hodgman:** What were your two dogs names? M and M?

[00:35:55] **Morgan:** Bart and Lucy were their names.

[00:35:57] **John Hodgman:** Oh, that's good. Cute names.

[00:35:59] **Morgan:** Bart was named after Bart Simpson, 'cause that was like David's favorite character growing up

[00:36:04] **Jesse Thorn:** And Lucy was named after Lisa Simpson?

[00:36:06] **Dave:** Uh, *Peanuts*, Linus and Lucy.

[00:36:09] **John Hodgman:** Linus and Lucy. Got it.

[00:36:10] **Morgan:** Yeah. So, I feel like if I did have help, that's who helped me. 'Cause if I was that young, I like—I don't know. The idea of eating that many Skittles today gives me a stomach ache just thinking about it. So—but I know when I was a kid, I had an iron stomach.

So, I could probably—actually, no, I didn't! I had really bad tummy troubles when I was a kid. So, I don't know.

[00:36:31] **Jesse Thorn:** Do you think it's possible that eating half a pound of red Skittles cured your colic?

[00:36:40] **Morgan:** (*Laughs.*) I think if anything it contributed to it!

[00:36:43] **John Hodgman:** You know that Skittles were originally invented in England as a patent medicine, Jesse.

(*Jesse laughs.*)

They were originally called Skittles Nerve Tonics, and they were good for your thymus gland. They were good—they improved memory and skin tone, and they cured sciatica originally.

[00:36:59] **Jesse Thorn:** I take them whenever I have the gripe.

[00:37:02] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, totally. They're terrific for gout as well. But only the purple ones for some reason. 'Cause they're very different. Each one is different. It cures something else.

[00:37:10] **Jesse Thorn:** Purple are my favorite.

[00:37:11] **John Hodgman:** Oh, by the way, this is a reminder: don't take medical advice from our show. (*Chuckling.*) Skittles are candy. Skittles are not medicine. Don't take them.

[00:37:20] **Jesse Thorn:** How many podcasts do you think have to offer, “Skittles are not a medicine!”

[00:37:26] **John Hodgman:** Well, they look like little red pills, right? Little red pills.

[00:37:30] **Jesse Thorn:** On some of these podcasts they don't even bother saying that.

[00:37:32] **John Hodgman:** Were you trying to get red pill before that was even a thing, Dave?

(*They laugh.*)

[00:37:37] **Dave:** Yeah, *The Matrix* had not come out yet. I was not going for the—

[00:37:40] **John Hodgman:** You're saying you invented the idea? Yeah, interesting.

[00:37:42] **Dave:** Yeah, that's right. Somebody owes me some money.

[00:37:45] **Jesse Thorn:** Open your eyes and taste the rainbow.

[00:37:50] **John Hodgman:** (*Laughs.*) Alright, Dave. It says here that if I were to rule in your favor, you would want me to order the Porg to give you a heartfelt apology and for the Porg to recreate the red Skittle experiment, to do it all over again and give you the red ones.

[00:38:07] **Dave:** But importantly, she has to eat the non-red Skittles.

[00:38:11] **John Hodgman:** Uh, why is it important that she has to eat them?

[00:38:13] **Dave:** Because that was part—part of the betrayal was that I suffered through the non-red Skittles with no red Skittle to make that enjoyable.

[00:38:24] **John Hodgman:** I see. Your favorite candy was also existential punishment. I understand. And also, offer you an extra regular sized bag of Skittles.

[00:38:34] **Dave:** As interest.

[00:38:35] **John Hodgman:** As interest. I see. Hm. Even though your wife already did the red Skittle thing.

[00:38:40] **Dave:** Without assistance from the Porg.

[00:38:42] **John Hodgman:** Morgan, you would like me to rule that Dave never brings it up again, and for him to stop smearing your name.

[00:38:47] **Morgan:** Correct.

[00:38:48] **John Hodgman:** I think I've heard everything I need to in order to make my decision. I'll be back in a moment with my verdict.

[00:38:52] **Jesse Thorn:** Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom.

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

Dave, how do you feel about your chances?

[00:39:03] **Dave:** You know, I have no idea. The judge is very hard to read. I was very saddened to hear that the Porg thinks that there may be a kernel of truth in my accusations. I do want her to know that she's incredibly important to me, and I do not think she's a person of bad character. And perhaps I should reexamine how frequently I tell the story so that she knows that she is cared for and that it is all done in loving jest.

[00:39:37] **Jesse Thorn:** I find the judge very easy to read. I enjoyed *Medallion Status*, *Vacationland*. I recommend them to our audience. Morgan, how do you feel?

[00:39:47] **Morgan:** Um, good. I feel like I represented myself in the best way that I could. So, whatever happens, it will be based on my character.

[00:39:58] **Jesse Thorn:** Do you think Dave will ever treat you like a grownup?

[00:40:01] **Morgan:** Yeah. (*Laughs.*) I think that he does a decent job of it today, so.

[00:40:09] **Jesse Thorn:** (*Chuckles.*) We'll see what Judge Hodgman has to say about all this when we come back in just a moment.

[00:40:15] **Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:40:18] **Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:40:20] **Jesse Thorn:** Judge Hodgman, the Van Freaks Roadshow is hitting the road.

[00:40:24] **John Hodgman:** That's right.

[00:40:25] **Jesse Thorn:** We've been talking a lot about our shows in Europe, in Dublin and London—that's September 12th in Dublin, September 15th and 16th in London, at King's Place.

[00:40:35] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, that's right. Part of the London Podcast Festival.

[00:40:37] **Jesse Thorn:** But Eu-rope is not the last stop on the Van Freaks Roadshow tour. Because we will be visiting the new world, America!

[00:40:45] **John Hodgman:** That's absolutely right! Starting October 9th, we will be in a place I've never been to in my life: Kentucky! The bluegrass state. Lexington, Kentucky, specifically. Going to that Lexington Opera House at the Lexington Center.

[00:40:57] **Jesse Thorn:** We'll be bringing our opera voices.

(John sings a few notes operatically.)

I'm a boy soprano, and you're a basso profundo.

[00:41:05] **John Hodgman:** It's gonna be very exciting. We're also going to be at the Park West, in Chicago. The Majestic Theater in Maddison, Wisconsin. Jesse, you're gonna be so excited to see this theater. It's a theater that literally turns a corner—the house turns a corner. I can't explain.

[00:41:17] **Jesse Thorn:** Love it.

[00:41:18] **John Hodgman:** Fitzgerald Theater? Oh, one of the most beautiful theaters I've ever performed in. Love it so much. St. Paul, Minnesota. The Paramount in Austin, Texas. Again, this is just hit after hit in terms of incredible theaters and incredible green rooms—some of my favorite green rooms in the world are these theaters. Plus, the Variety Playhouse where we slayed it in Atlanta.

[00:41:36] **Jesse Thorn:** Oh, that was a fun show.

[00:41:37] **John Hodgman:** Right before we had to hide out for a couple of years. The Carolina Theater—another beauty in Durham, North Carolina. The Paramount Theater in Charlottesville, Virginia. I've never been there before. I bet it's gorgeous. The Lincoln Theater in Washington DC. We've been there before. And of course, the wonderful State Theater in Portland, Maine. The Wilbur in Boston, Massachusetts. And then a huuuuge old final show in Brooklyn, at the Murmrr Opera House in Williamsburg.

Incredible venues, incredible shows, incredible surprise guests that we're lining up right now. We're gonna be combining all of the litigious fun that you've come to know from *Judge John Hodgman*, plus songs, plus antiques, plus roadshows, plus vans. You're gonna be—you're gonna love it, and you ought to go over to the Van Freaks Roadshow website right now. Guess what it's called? VanFreaksRoadshow.com—to get those tickets and to send in your disputes for all these places.

[00:42:26] **Jesse Thorn:** First of all, I think our podcast is the only podcast I've ever been involved with where we get lots of letters from people who like the live shows even better than the studio shows.

[00:42:37] **John Hodgman:** That's right.

[00:42:38] **Jesse Thorn:** Which thank you very much. Not only do you get to experience that live, but there's a lot of stuff that doesn't go onto the podcast, 'cause we wanna keep it special for people who buy a ticket and come and see us!

[00:42:47] **John Hodgman:** (*Out of the corner of his mouth.*) You know, secret, special stuff. Wow.

[00:42:50] **Jesse Thorn:** I'm gonna sing two songs. You might get to see Judge Hodgman sing. We settle the disputes of the people in the audience. We often do a little slideshow. We have a lot of fun!

[00:42:59] **John Hodgman:** One very, very special—I daresay unique—thing we do, as a touring podcast? We stand up. We don't just—you know.

[00:43:05] **Jesse Thorn:** Yeah. We actually do a show, yeah!

(*They chuckle.*)

[00:43:06] **John Hodgman:** Yeah. We don't just sit behind a card table. Okay? You know—

[00:43:12] **Jesse Thorn:** I mean, not that there's anything wrong with that. On *Jordan, Jesse, Go!* we sit behind a card table. But!

[00:43:15] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, no, not that there's anything wrong with that. I'm just saying.

[00:43:17] **Jesse Thorn:** On the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast—

[00:43:20] **John Hodgman:** We stand up.

[00:43:21] **Jesse Thorn:** That's right. We wear little outfits. We stand up. We walk around. We have special stools for the litigants. It is a blast! It's a great time. We don't have an inflatable dinosaur like I saw one time on *Radiolab* live, but we haven't got that kind of budget.

[00:43:35] **John Hodgman:** No. No, no inflatables.

[00:43:36] **Jesse Thorn:** Maybe—maybe if everybody comes to the show, next time around we'll have that kind of budget. We'll have a dinosaur budget. It's possible. It could happen.

[00:43:42] **John Hodgman:** Anyway, come join us on the Van Freaks Roadshow—
VanFreaksRoadshow.com. That's VanFreaksRoadshow.com.

[00:43:50] **Jesse Thorn:** And if you've got a case in any of those places, we wanna hear about it. Go to MaximumFun.org/jjho and submit it. Let's get back to the case!

[00:43:59] **Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:44:01] **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.)

[00:44:08] **John Hodgman:** So, one thing I have to circle back to is this contention you made, Dave, that everyone loves the red Skittles or everyone loves red things. The Red Baron, Clifford the big red dog. I mean obviously we don't like Clawford the big yellow dog.

[00:44:24] **Jesse Thorn:** I like Clawford.

[00:44:26] **John Hodgman:** Clawford's fine. But you offered this baseline presumption that everyone would love a red solo cup full of red Skittles. And the truth is, people like what they like and I'm not here to shame your kinks. Red Skittles do nothing for me. But now that I say it, a red solo cup full of red Skittles sounds pretty hot. Next time you tell this made-up story that you clearly are changing the details on as time goes on—three pound bag, two pound

bag, up on a shelf, up on a speaker, jar, red solo cup. Lock in on the red solo cup. 'Cause that's a good part of the story. I think that's a really good detail. That really brings it home. It makes me feel it more, you know what I mean? I, a person who does not like a Skittle to begin with—any color.

I also like the part of the story where you're going upstairs. You're getting home from school. You cannot wait to see your red solo cup of red Skittles. Because it's not in this moment just a story about your kink for red Skittles. It's also a story about your achievement and its loss. And then, in order for this story to have a completion to it—because we already have the protagonist on his hero's journey to collect all red things. He accepts the call to adventure and to taste that rainbow—that rainbow of a single color. Achieves his goal, then has the achievement stolen from him. There has to be a thief! And you made the Porg the thief, and then the story ends. I mean, the truth is that it's unsatisfying as a story, because your accusation is made, she apologizes in the moment. No one sold a hank of hair to get a gold pocket watch to—you know, to buy a hairbrush for the hank of hair. Do you know what I mean? Like there's nothing—there's something missing to your tale. I'm glad your family enjoys it, but if there was some kind of twist.

[00:46:16] **Dave:** Yeah, I get it.

[00:46:17] **John Hodgman:** But you wanted to have more of a story. You wanted a story to tell and continue to tell and continue to tell. For that, you needed the Porg to be a villain for the rest of her life, and you created a character for her, which was: she's a thief and she's unreliable and she steals food. Before you pull a moat out of out of Morgan's eye, check the chicken tender that's lodged in yours!

(They chuckle.)

I think the Porg is one of these admirable people who lets these accusations of Skittle stealing roll off her back pretty easily. Like, I don't sense from you, Morgan, a real sense of a grievance that Dave has been out there all this time calling you a liar and a thief. Now, Morgan, you're a cool character. The Porg is pretty cool, right, Dave?

[00:47:07] **Dave:** She's incredibly cool.

[00:47:09] **John Hodgman:** Incredibly cool. But I think you don't deserve to have to shrug this off. Being called unreliable and a thief takes a toll, even if it's in the context of a family joke. There could have been a version of this where the Porg was delightfully evil. A version of this story where you caught her and you said, “You ate my Skittles, didn't you?” And she shook her head no vigorously. And said, “I know you did!” And then she shrugged and then spat all the Skittles back into the red solo cup.

You know what I mean? This is getting lively now! Now it's a—now we got a protagonist and an antagonist as opposed to just a useful patsy, a five-year-old. But absent having a real protagonist and a real antagonist and, you know, a struggle for authority or whatever the story is gonna be there—right?—your story basically redounds to this five-year-old ate my candy, which is fine. And then, the fiction that Morgan is still a five-year-old on some level, that she's a mischievous thief and liar and unreliable person when she's an adult who you care

about—that's the core of the story without anything else. And you haven't even offered any evidence that she was that person when she was five, other than the lone Skittles incident. I feel that you actually felt a keen sense of disappointment. I believe you, and I see you when those red Skittles were taken from you, that's the hardest part of the story. That's the most meaningful part of the story, and it is fine for you to have told that story for as long as you had. I understand that you were wounded then. I would focus on that.

It's not a grave offense that you've continued to tell this story, but now I think it is time to set it aside. I think it is unfair to the Porg to continue to call her a liar and a thief even in jest. And yet, I will say that wound that you felt was real. And it needs to be healed for once and for all. It is nice that your wife gave you a jar of red Skittles at the altar of your wedding, but it seems plausible and maybe even probable that the Porg did either eat or get rid of those Skittles and laughed at you. And the Porg has to make good. Morgan, I'm not gonna ask you to eat four-fifths of a bag of Skittles in order to get the red ones.

[00:49:26] **Morgan:** Thank you.

[00:49:27] **John Hodgman:** We're not about torture here. Cruel and unusual punishment is not part of our game on the *Judge John Hodgman* show. But I do order you however you do it to get your hands on 90.9090909090 repeating forever, all-red Skittles, put them in a jar and deliver them to Dave and say, “This makes it right.” And then, I don't care. Maybe, I don't know, bury the jar with a hatchet or something. Something symbolic. Get in some chicken tenders. This is the sound of a gavel.

[00:50:04] **Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs overlaid with the judge's voice saying, “Boink, boink, boink” and getting cartoonishly higher each time.

[00:50:06] **John Hodgman:** Judge John Hodgman rules. That is all.

[00:50:07] **Jesse Thorn:** Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom.

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

Dave, how do you feel?

[00:50:18] **Dave:** You know, it's not that far off of what I was expecting. So, I'm feeling okay about it. It just means that I've gotta get a new story. Did I ever tell you guys the one about when the Porg and I went on a—

[00:50:32] **Jesse Thorn:** *(Interrupting.)* I can't. I can't—I can't. Morgan, *(chuckles)* how do you feel?

[00:50:38] **Morgan:** Uuuh, good! This was the outcome that I wanted, more or less. I do have to figure out how to get my hands on 9.90909 or whatever—the ounce-age of Skittles, so that'll be a fun adventure.

[00:50:52] **Jesse Thorn:** I mean, have you thought about like the drugstore or—?

(They laugh.)

[00:50:56] **Morgan:** No, just the separating out!

[00:50:57] **Jesse Thorn:** Like, I'm not telling you how to live your life. I'm just saying.

[00:51:01] **Morgan:** I gotta figure out how to separate 'em out, and then not waste the additional ones. So, there's probably gonna be candy dishes all over my house for a really long time of just Skittles with no red Skittles in them. *(Laughs.)*

[00:51:11] **Jesse Thorn:** Morgan, Dave, thanks for joining us on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

[00:51:15] **Morgan:** Happy to be here.

[00:51:16] **Dave:** Thank you.

[00:51:17] **Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:51:18] **Jesse Thorn:** Another *Judge John Hodgman* case is in the books. We'll have Swift Justice in just a moment. First, our thanks to two Redditors: OkayProfessional7569 and JayoftheInternet. They named this week's episode "Case the Rainbow". Join the conversation at the Maximum Fun subreddit. That's at [MaximumFun.Reddit.com](https://www.reddit.com/r/MaximumFun). That's where we have been asking for title suggestions. You can see evidence and photos from this show on our Instagram account at [Instagram.com/judgejohnhodgman](https://www.instagram.com/judgejohnhodgman), plus dank memes sometimes. You know, sometimes we'll post some dank memes.

[00:51:55] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, sometimes we have some really cool dank memes. We gotta do something with a red solo cup full of red Skittles.

[00:51:59] **Jesse Thorn:** If you wanna send us a dank meme, we'd love to get your dank memes. Post them on the Reddit. Send us dank memes at hodgman@MaximumFun.org. This is gonna be great. All your meme-age, all your meme-age belong to us. Uh, let's see, what else? Oh, *Judge John Hodgman*, created by Jesse Thorn and Judge Hodgman. This episode engineered by Yvonne Rappa and John MacDonald at Cinematic Arts and Sound in Oceanside, California. Marie Bardi runs our social media. Our producer is Jennifer Marmor.

Now, Swift Justice! Michael says, "I want the court to rule that my five-pound chihuahua is too small to be considered a dog. Any 'no dogs allowed' signage couldn't possibly apply to him."

[00:52:41] **John Hodgman:** Wow. Of all the ways that people are trying to sneak their dogs into places where they shouldn't be, particularly their small dogs, to say that's not a dog—
(Chuckling.)

[00:52:50] **Jesse Thorn:** It's extraordinary.

[00:52:51] **John Hodgman:** That's the boldest and the most bald faced of lies. The gall, the sheer gall! I hope you have a big enough gallbladder to handle all your gall, Michael. Yeah. "No dogs allowed" means your dog. It means your dog and your dog and your dog, too. Trained service dogs, obviously get in there, you dogs. But if it says no dogs allowed, that means your dog!

[00:53:10] **Jesse Thorn:** Here's my suggestion for a little—like a little test, a little mental test before you make the claim that your five-pound chihuahua doesn't count as a dog. When you see that "no dogs allowed" sign, imagine if in there they would accept weird rats.

(John cackles.)

Weird, enormous rats. 'Cause that's what a five-pound chihuahua is. I love my chihuahua! I love all chihuahuas, but if you're claiming it's not a dog, it's definitely a weird five-pound rat. So.

[00:53:38] **John Hodgman:** Right. That's the only other alternative. You're absolutely right, Jesse Thorn. I hope you enjoy your rat, Michael.

[00:53:44] **Jesse Thorn:** Anyway. You can't bring a dog on an airplane, unless it's a service dog. Can't bring a giant rat on an airplane—

[00:53:50] **John & Jesse:** *(In unison.)* Unless it's a service rat!

[00:53:52] **Jesse Thorn:** But we are headed on airplanes. We're about to travel the world!

[00:53:56] **John Hodgman:** The whole world—well, a good portion of it to bring justice to Europe, the UK, and a whole bunch of the USA, and we need your cases. Think of someone who is wrong, and write to me at MaximumFun.org/jjho.

[00:54:09] **Jesse Thorn:** And of course, let us know that you live in one of those places so that we know, so we can get you into the show and get you special privileges and get you on stage.

[00:54:19] **John Hodgman:** Yeah. It's gonna be fun. Disputes are the engine upon which *Judge John Hodgman*—both live and recorded—run. So, were you thinking, "I don't think my dispute with my niece over a jar of Skittles is gonna make the grade." Oh, it makes a grade! A+! Get all of your disputes on any subject over to us at MaximumFun.org/jjho.

[00:54:42] **Jesse Thorn:** Hey, John, before we go this week—as we were recording this week's episode, like literally as we were in the studio, I got a text from our former producer—Julia Smith—that said that Paul Rubins had passed away. And folks know Paul as a brilliant writer and actor, not least as Pee-wee Herman, his iconic character. And so, like I

have a lot of comedy heroes—certainly. As we all do. There's not a moment's doubt for me that my greatest comedy hero is and was Paul Rubins.

Peewee Herman is the thing that made me think that I would want to do this with my life. It's the thing that like defined my childhood that I had no less love and appreciation for at any moment in my life. I used to—my parents had split custody, 55/45. And the 55 was with my mom. And it meant that every Friday night after school, I would go to my mom's house. And on Saturday mornings, she and I—my mom, a person who truly does not understand almost any of popular culture—would watch *Pee-wee's Playhouse* together. And, it—and there's nothing more special to me than that.

And a few years ago, I got an email from my friend Nick White, and he was working at KCRW in Santa Monica at the time. And he said, “You know, our program director had a meeting with Paul Rubins. He wants to make a show for KCRW. And I told him the only person to produce it is you.” And I had a meeting with the program director. He said, “Do you have any ideas for what the show could be?” I did. And um, he brought it to the highest-ups there. They said yes. And I brought in Julia Smith, who was the original producer of this show.

And like, it's my job to meet celebrities and artists for *Bullseye*, right? I will never forget the experience of sitting down in a diner across from Paul Rubins. And he could not have been more warm, welcoming, and kind to me. And to work with him on something I think will always be the highlight of my professional career and the thing that I think about if I think, “Gosh, maybe I should have just become a veterinarian or something,” I'll think, “You know, you got to make a radio show with Paul Rubins.” And it was very difficult to make. He—*(chuckles)* it was monumentally difficult to make, because Paul was extraordinarily protective of this character that had defined his life and legacy, as he had earned the right to be he.

And Paul didn't want to improvise at all and was just incredibly—I mean, it took us years to make that hour long show. And there was not one moment in of that hard work that I thought anything other than I can't believe that I get to make a radio show with Paul Rubins. And there was not one moment when I thought anything other than this is one of the kindest, most gracious geniuses I've ever had the chance to sit across a table from. And considering how hard it was to make this show, I think that's a pretty extraordinary achievement!

(They chuckle.)

And you know, Julia texted me while we were recording, as I said, and she said, “I just know that he had art to make and more friends to make.” And you know, I don't think you could find someone who had a greater gift at either. And when I thought about it, like the thing that I thought was, “Gosh, I guess I'm not gonna get a text from Paul on my birthday anymore.” And so, you know, uh—I just wanted to take this opportunity to thank him, *(choking up)* because I feel lucky not just to have worked with him, but to have been able to have his gift and his work touch my life in the ways that they did and the ways that they will continue to do. And so, I hope everybody out there will go and, you know, watch *Pee-wee's Big Adventure* or show the *Playhouse* to their kids or take a moment to appreciate the like absolute singular genius of Paul and that character what a jerk Pee-wee is.

(They laugh.)

[01:00:46] **John Hodgman:** I mean, you know. Yeah. But I'll just say this, that—you know, people would resonate with Pee-wee for a lot of different reasons, and—but you know, as an only child watching that weird only child living in that house, I was like, I get this guy. I get this guy really good.

(They giggle.)

I understand the selfishness. I understand it. I am a loner, Dottie. I'm a rebel. The first thing I said when I found out that he had passed—and he passed apparently after struggling with cancer. That's what's been reported, and I don't know anymore. Only that I'm glad to, you know—any age would be too young, but I hope that he passed on his own terms as best as possible for him. But I didn't know about it until you told me right after we finished recording with the litigants. And the first thing I said was, “Thank you for not telling me.” 'Cause I don't know that I would've been able to do it. You know? You were heroically dealing with those emotions, because not only your idol but your friend passed away. And I knew that too.

And while I met him in passing one time—and in an act of sheer kindness on his part, which is very common—I didn't have the relationship that you had with him. But of course I, like everyone else, loved him and quite rightly. I mean, not only was he really, really, really funny, but he was heroic. When you think about what people saw in Pee-wee Herman, right? Obviously, weird only children saw a weird only child. But Pee-wee represented such an alternate and completely unapologetic way of being in the world that I know was very disruptive to the male MTV culture of the 1980s. You know, the cis male MTV culture of the 1980s. And he triumphed in showing kids other ways to be not just in himself, but when you look at who he put on *Pee-wee's Playhouse*, you know, the backgrounds and the way people looked on that show. You think about how many kids looked at that show in the 1980s, not ever seeing anything like themselves.

And I'm not just talking about, you know, race, ethnic background, whatever. I'm also just talking about straight up weirdness. Like, weird kids didn't have a lot in mainstream culture to look at and feel like, “Oh, I am completely—I do not listen to Van Halen, and everyone at my school bullies me, but I feel like I belong there.” Never mind the fact that he could pivot perfectly between this downtown subversive arts scene to mainstream culture, right? And bring people along with him. Phil Hartman, you know, was in the original Pee-wee's stage show, along with countless other like the—when I discovered that the set design on *Pee-wee's Playhouse* was by Gary Panter, the freaking visionary cartoonist and visual artist—like, what he curated in that show and all of his work for the world to see was a completely different way to be alive and be happy. And it was just so meaningful, you know? And also, obviously cross generational. Because that was—along with *The Muppet Movie*, *Pee-wee's Big Adventure* was one of the movies that I and my kids equally adored.

And we can still like just laugh—if we just look at each other—and I'm gonna see—we're all gonna be together, 'cause they're out in the world. They're adults basically now. They are, actually. But like when I see them all this weekend, I know that I can just look at our daughter or our son and just be like, (*Pee-wee Herman voice*) “I say we let him go!”

(They burst into giggles.)

I just—I'm jealous that you get to miss him personally, because that means that you actually got to be with him. But I think we would miss him—we miss him really terribly. And it's only been an hour since we found out, and I just—you know. Thank you. Thank you, Pee-wee.

[01:05:25] **Jesse Thorn:** Thanks. You know, when we made the radio show—which by the way is on KCRW.com. You can listen to it if you want to. We booked Charo to be the guest, which we couldn't believe we got. Like, we had this long list of like—Jack White made an appearance on the show, but I couldn't believe that we got Charo. And Charo came in. And you know, Charo is Spanish, and has a grand accent. Central to her art is her brilliant guitar playing and her cartoonish persona.

[01:06:02] **John Hodgman:** Also, she says, “Cuchi, cuchi.”

[01:06:04] **Jesse Thorn:** Yep. And she came in just in a flurry, as you would hope. And she gave Paul a big hug, and she said, *(airily)* “I love to see you, Pee-wee!” And then she turned to me, and she says, “His name, it is not Pee-wee, but I call him that. It's okay!”

(They laugh.)

And so, thanks, Pee-wee. Yeah. And thanks Paul. Both of you completely changed my life, so. Thanks so much. Okay.

[01:06:39] **John Hodgman:** Alright. And thank you everyone.

[01:06:41] **Jesse Thorn:** Yeah. Thank you for listening, and we'll talk to you next time on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

[01:06:46] **Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

[01:06:47] **Sound Effect:** Cheerful ukulele chord.

[01:06:48] **Speaker 1:** Maximum Fun.

[01:06:50] **Speaker 2:** A worker-owned network.

[01:06:51] **Speaker 3:** Of artist owned shows.

[01:06:53] **Speaker 4:** Supported—

[01:06:54] **Speaker 5:** —directly—

[01:06:55] **Speaker 6:** —by you!