

[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, "Injunction Junction". Dan brings the case against his wife, Carrie. Dan wants to build a model railroad. He'd like to build this railroad in a small switching layout that simulates a switch yard. This type of model railroad does not move in a loop. Carrie says a model railroad is pointless if it doesn't move in a loop, but Dan thinks it could be really cool. 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.

[00:00:40] **John Hodgman:** *(Singing.)* "Copper comes from Arizona. Peaches come from Georgia, and lobsters come from Maine! The wheat fields are the sweet fields of Nebraska, and Kansas gets bonanzas from the grain. Old whiskey comes from old Kentucky, ain't the country lucky. New Jersey gives us glue, and you—you come from Rhode Island, and little old Rhode Island is famous for you!"

(Still singing.) Bailiff Jesse Thorn, swear the litigants in, ba-da-ba-dum boom.

[00:01:15] **Jesse Thorn:** Dan and Carrie, please rise, 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 not wearing a hickory striped cap and overalls?

(They swear.)

Judge Hodgman, you may proceed.

[00:01:34] **John Hodgman:** Is that what that engineer hat pattern is? Hickory stripe?

[00:01:38] **Jesse Thorn:** It's called a hickory stripe.

[00:01:39] **John Hodgman:** Hickory stripe. Had I only ever known. Uh, I am not wearing such a cap. I am actually wearing a linen blue shirt with a little lobster on it, because lobsters do come from Maine, and I am in Maine with Joel "the Maine Man" Mann, Program and Operations Director here at WERU 89.9 FM. Joel, how are you doing?

[00:02:00] **Joel Mann:** Really good, Judge. Good to see you. Thanks for being here.

[00:02:04] **John Hodgman:** What's your Instagram account again?

[00:02:05] **Joel Mann:** Uh, TheMaineMann.

[00:02:07] **John Hodgman:** TheMaineMann on Instagram, M-A-I-N-E-M-A-N-N.

(Joel confirms.)

And how's that doing?

[00:02:13] **Joel Mann:** Doing great. I only need 48 more followers.

[00:02:16] **John Hodgman:** Until what?

[00:02:17] **Joel Mann:** I hit the 2,000,000 mark.

[00:02:18] **John Hodgman:** Woah! 2,000,000?

[00:02:19] **Joel Mann:** 2,000,000.

(Jesse "wow"s.)

I'm catching up to the Kardashians.

[00:02:23] **John Hodgman:** I don't have 95,000! How'd you get 2,000,000?

[00:02:28] **Jesse Thorn:** Joel finally decided to put feet on Maine. M-A-I-N-E.

(They chuckle.)

[00:02:33] **Joel Mann:** Because of you, that's why—you know, before you go away this summer.

[00:02:37] **John Hodgman:** Wait a minute, I'm looking at your Instagram. It does not say 2,000,000.

[00:02:39] **Joel Mann:** What does it say?

[00:02:40] **John Hodgman:** It's like almost 2,000.

[00:02:42] **Joel Mann:** Oh, I guess—yeah, okay. Well, okay, thanks.

[00:02:47] **John Hodgman:** So, 2,000,048 is what we're looking for today. Okay, gotcha. Jesse Thorn, nice to be back with you. Missed you when we had Monte on. It's fun with Monte, but it's fun with Jesse. How's your social media, Jesse?

[00:02:58] **Jesse Thorn:** I only need 48 more.

[00:03:00] **John Hodgman:** Until what?

[00:03:02] **Jesse Thorn:** I don't know. Just feel like I should at least get as many more as Joel does.

[00:03:07] **John Hodgman:** That's right, 48. Everyone gets 48. Dan and Carrie, you may be seated. I hope—let's get you 48 more followers, each of you at least, for an immediate summary judgment. In fact, I'll add a bonus 48 to the person who's able to guess the cultural reference that I sung when I entered the courtroom. Oh, Dan, let's start with you.

[00:03:27] **Dan:** That sounds like a promotional video for a, uh—for Rhode Island.

[00:03:31] **John Hodgman:** It's definitely pro Rhode Island. It's definitely Pro-de Island, for sure. I'll just—I'm going to throw a hint to both of you to see if you can follow my chain of thought here. So, the name of this episode, as offered by Reddit user TheMadJuggler—which is a little scary, is—

[00:03:51] **Jesse Thorn:** (*Giggles.*) That's just the name they assign you if you don't pick something. They're like, “What?”

[00:03:57] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, TheMadJuggler39295979_Nerd. Anyway, the name that we chose from the many terrific ones that were suggested over on Reddit: “Injunction Junction”. Now, I don't know your ages, and I don't wish to know, but if I were to sing (*singing*) “Conjunction Junction, what's your function?” Does that mean anything to you?

(*They confirm.*)

Okay, so maybe that's a little hint. So, promotional song for Rhode Island. We've put that in the book for you, Dan. Carrie, do you have a guess?

[00:04:33] **Carrie:** Well, I feel like this has to be some sort of reference to a children's cartoon. Obviously, I'm thinking about *Schoolhouse Rock*, but I'm drawing a blank here. The only children's program I know with trains was *Shining Time Station*, so.

[00:04:49] **John Hodgman:** There are a lot of children's programs with trains. *Shining Time Station*, who's the tank engine?

[00:04:56] **John & Jesse:** (*In unison.*) *Thomas the Tank Engine.*

[00:04:58] **John Hodgman:** Right. You're going down the right track, if I may, Carrie, with *Schoolhouse Rock*. But you're never going to get there, as all guesses are wrong.

The reason I sang that song is because it's one of my favorites. It was introduced to me by Monte Belmonte on one of his radio shows long, long ago. The name of that song is “Rhode Island is Famous for You”. It is by Arthur Schwartz and Howard Dietz, but most famously—at least to my ear—performed by the great jazz vocalist and pianist, Blossom Dearie.

Now, *Schoolhouse Rock* was—the first season of *Schoolhouse Rock*, which is all about multiplication, “Three is the Magic Number”, etc. All the songs were written by the great jazzy composer Bob Dorough, but Blossom Dearie sang the “Figure Eight” song, and later, “Unpack Your Adjectives”. And Blossom Dearie is a really, really cool vocalist. You know Blossom Dearie, Joel? You know jazz, don't you?

[00:05:56] **Joel Mann:** A little bit.

[00:05:57] **John Hodgman:** Yeah. Blossom Dearie. Do you ever hear of her?

[00:05:59] **Joel Mann:** No. No, never have.

[00:06:01] **John Hodgman:** And I love *Schoolhouse Rock*. And *Schoolhouse Rock* was something that existed. It stopped being on television in the year 2000—23 years ago. But I mean, just imagine a time when networks voluntarily provided educational cartoons with really incredible songs, not just about multiplication and adjectives and conjunctions, but also financial literacy and how to avoid debt. It was incredible! I don't know, it should be mandatory watching for everybody who hasn't watched it. Go check out *Schoolhouse Rock*. “Figure Eight” is a beautiful song, and Blossom Dearie is a wonderful singer.

Alright, that was just the thing. Oh, the other thing is—this is an unintentional plug, Dan and Carrie, because Janet Varney and I, as promised, are in the midst of recording our *Mottos of the States* podcast. And let's just say that this song features prominently in a particular episode dedicated to Pro-de Island, our pro Rhode Island episode. And if you want to hear me sing the whole thing, because it gets a little wacky, check it out. It'll be in your member's feed. Thanks again for joining MaximumFun.org and supporting us.

Alright, Dan and Carrie, you are joining us from Michigan, USA. It says here, Dan, that you are an airline pilot, and you race cars as a hobby.

(Dan confirms.)

Two daring professions for an extremely soft-spoken fellow.

[00:07:17] **Dan:** Well, I don't know how daring either of those really is. It's—I'm a risk manager.

[00:07:22] **John Hodgman:** Um, I would not like to hear that over the PA if I were flying in a plane with you.

(Dan chuckles.)

What kind of planes do you fly? You fly commercially?

[00:07:32] **Dan:** Uh, yeah. For an airline who will not get a medallion. So, I fly the airbus for them.

[00:07:40] **John Hodgman:** What size airbus do you fly?

[00:07:44] **Dan:** A320 and the A320 family.

[00:07:45] **John Hodgman:** Is that the double decker one?

[00:07:49] **Dan:** No, that's the 380. 320 is the narrowbody.

[00:07:53] **John Hodgman:** So, you need like about 48 more.

[00:07:55] **Dan:** Yeah, yeah, about 48 more.

[00:07:57] **John Hodgman:** Everyone needs about 48 more to get that double decker, I feel like, roughly speaking. And Carrie you also—you are married to this person?

(Carrie confirms.)

Very good. How long have you been married?

[00:08:10] **Carrie:** About eight months.

[00:08:11] **Jesse Thorn:** Good. That's the perfect amount of time to develop model train problems.

(They chuckle.)

[00:08:18] **Carrie:** Well, we've been together for about 13 years. So, most of the stuff has shaken out between now and then.

[00:08:25] **Jesse Thorn:** *(Laughing.)* Most of the stuff has festered. It's well marinated.

[00:08:32] **John Hodgman:** Well, good, I'm glad to hear that. And we'll get into the dispute about it, but I just want to say—it says here that you do not fly planes or race cars, but you do have 16 sheep.

[00:08:42] **Jesse Thorn:** We have a lot of librarians on the show, Carrie, as you probably know. You almost certainly have the most livestock of any of those librarians.

[00:08:52] **Carrie:** Um, yeah, I'm a librarian, and I started knitting in grad school. And seven years later, I now have a flock of sheep for the wool. You know, I can't, you know, run out. So.

[00:09:08] **John Hodgman:** It's not required, is it? If you take up knitting to start acquiring sheep?

[00:09:13] **Carrie:** No, but it's optimal.

[00:09:15] **John Hodgman:** *(Laughs.)* What kind of sheep do you have?

[00:09:19] **Carrie:** I raise Shetland sheep and Gotland sheep.

[00:09:22] **John Hodgman:** And how many do you have currently?

[00:09:25] **Carrie:** 16.

[00:09:26] **John Hodgman:** Hm. Seems like you need about 48 more. Well, welcome to the show. Who seeks justice in this court?

[00:09:33] **Dan:** I do, John.

[00:09:34] **John Hodgman:** What is the nature of the justice you seek? State your complaint.

[00:09:38] **Dan:** Well, we both have kind of all-engrossing hobbies. And we are very supportive of each other, and I wanted to pick up this kind of minor hobby. And Carrie has interjected herself into my plans and doesn't think that a switching layout for a model railroad is a legitimate way to go. So, I'm seeking an injunction so I can do as I please with a secondary hobby.

[00:10:08] **John Hodgman:** So, I'm going to get more into the details of what a switching layout is compared to a traditional layout, which is goes in a circle. It goes choo-choo. Your layout would not go in a circle at all.

(Dan confirms.)

And Carrie, why do you feel that the train should go in a circle?

[00:10:28] **Carrie:** Well, I think when you picture a model train—little village with maybe, you know, a tunnel and maybe some pretty trees. And like there's a whole setup, and there's a loop, and it's really quite cute. I was kind of onboard with the idea of having a model railroad set until he showed me some YouTube videos of ones that people have made. And it wasn't

what I was expecting. They just look really lame. They—the trains are—it's a very short track. They just go back and forth. It's very two dimensional. And I just think it's really ugly.

[00:11:17] **John Hodgman:** Dan, I've honestly never heard of a model train set that doesn't go in some kind of loop. Normally what I'm picturing is a basement with about maybe three doors propped up on sawhorses. And then a massive landscape made of modeling clay and miniatures through which a couple of trains make an endless cycle. That to me is like classic dad model train. And—do you have any kids?

[00:11:50] **Dan:** No kids.

[00:11:51] **John Hodgman:** Alright, so classic pre dad—or maybe never dad—basement model train set. Something that might be featured on the Weird Dad Blog of the Year.

[00:12:01] **Dan:** (*Chuckles.*) The switching layouts, it's a thing. It is truly a thing. There's some standard ways to do it. You can kind of put trains together.

[00:12:11] **John Hodgman:** I would hope so.

[00:12:12] **Dan:** Like you would simulate in a in a railroad siding or a switch yard. It's a little different, but it is a legitimate thing that model railroad people do.

[00:12:22] **Jesse Thorn:** Can you describe what it is, specifically?

[00:12:24] **Dan:** So, it'd be one or a number of mainline tracks, and then you're gonna have spurs that come out from there going to—they call them industries. So, you might have your, you know, glue factory or whatever on the railroad siding.

[00:12:44] **Jesse Thorn:** Uh-huh, for Shetland sheep.

[00:12:45] **Dan:** Yeah, well, there you go. Yeah, so you can you know, go back and forth and pick up your cars with your locomotive, put the trains together, and then you can, you know, imagine yourself going off onto the main line from there.

[00:13:00] **Jesse Thorn:** So, you're describing—rather than a picturesque village with hills and little stations and the little conductor guys and all of those classical elements that we might imagine—basically, the pile of train tracks that you go past on an elevated subway once in a while.

(*Dan confirms.*)

[00:13:21] **John Hodgman:** Right. Just a dirty railyard where hobos congregate. And did you mention a glue factory?

[00:13:28] **Dan:** Well, I mean, it's something that you could do.

[00:13:30] **Jesse Thorn:** You could draw—you could put in some picturesque little rabid dogs.

[00:13:34] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, maybe a trash can with a fire in it. But you say you can—you know, you put your train together on the sidetracks, and then you go onto the main track, and you imagine the journey you will take. And you really have to imagine it, because it can't go very far—right?—because it just goes until the end of the track.

[00:13:53] **Dan:** Go off the edge of the table, yeah.

[00:13:55] **John Hodgman:** And you sent in some evidence, including a very detailed website, that made me feel like I had had a brain injury and can no longer comprehend language. The Model Railway's Shunting Puzzles website. Classic Shunting Puzzles, inglenook sidings. And this is just the first paragraph. “Possibly the most salient feature of inglenook sidings, the classic British shunting puzzle par excellence, is its sheer simplicity. There may in fact be some modelers who never really look into this shunting puzzle, because it may first hardly seem to offer much operational challenge. But as is so often the case, first impressions can be misleading. The brainchild of Alan Wright, 1928-2005, is one of those rare examples where a clever and well-balanced combination of a reduced setting and input actually provides an unexpectedly rich end result. And inglenook sidings is a picture book example of reduce to the max.”

What is a shunting puzzle, Dan?

[00:14:54] **Dan:** So, what you can do is: you kind of randomly place different cars at the different spots on the layout there, and then your job is to put together a specific train in a specific order onto the main line there. So, it's a simulation of what—

[00:15:12] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, what an actual engineer would do. It's like solving one of those puzzles that you have—you move tiles around, and you try to get a picture together.

(Dan confirms.)

And here's a picture of Alan Wright, which we're obviously going to—well, it's copyright Kris McKenzie. Let's see if we can get the rights from Kris McKenzie. You can go see this at the show page MaximumFun.org as well as our Instagram account [@JudgeJohnHodgman](https://www.instagram.com/JudgeJohnHodgman). I'm going to get Joel Mann to post it on his Instagram too.

[00:15:38] **Jesse Thorn:** Judge Hodgman, I'm going to say that our audience can go to our Instagram or to the show page to see it, but it t'aint much to see. *(Chuckles.)*

[00:15:50] **John Hodgman:** It's just a picture of an elderly British man sitting down having typically eccentric elderly British man fun, like he would have in his cozy cottage in his cozy village, while murders are happening all around him.

(They chuckle.)

Dan, what is shunting, and why does it appeal to you?

[00:16:10] **Dan:** So, shunting is—it's the same thing—I believe shunting is just the English version of switching, here in the US.

(John affirms.)

Just a different term for the same thing. But it kind of looks fun. Like, I don't know, it looks like good, medium/boring fun. It's something to do on a cold winter afternoon, but you know, not something that's all-engrossing. It's not a whole big, huge thing, which is great.

[00:16:37] **John Hodgman:** What do you mean? You've had enough of all-engrossing things?

[00:16:41] **Dan:** Well, my main hobby with the cars takes up the lion's share of my free time.

[00:16:46] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, you did send in exhibits A-H, and only one of them has to do with shunting. There's just one. The rest is all race car stuff. What kind of car do you race?

[00:16:58] **Dan:** This year, I'm racing a Honda Fit.

[00:16:59] **John Hodgman:** A Honda Fit?

(Dan confirms.)

[00:17:02] **Jesse Thorn:** There's a picture here of you and your father with what looks like a Mini Cooper as well.

[00:17:06] **Dan:** That is that is true, yeah.

[00:17:08] **Jesse Thorn:** I like your commitment to racing practical economy cars.
(Chuckles.)

[00:17:15] **John Hodgman:** You're really sort of shrugging it off talking about your Honda Fit and your shunting puzzle. It's still—it just strikes me that you carry people's lives in your hands every day.

[00:17:25] **Dan:** Oh, people get sick of hearing about it though. I mean, yeah, it's—I don't know, it's just another heavy equipment operator, you know. It's no big deal.

[00:17:35] **Jesse Thorn:** I don't think Dan should start bragging until he adds that second deck.

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.

[00:17:48] **Transition:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:17:53] **Jesse Thorn:** You're listening to *Judge John Hodgman*. I'm Bailiff Jesse Thorn. Of course, the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast, always brought to you by you: the members of MaximumFun.org. Thanks to everybody who's gone to MaximumFun.org/join. And you can join them by going to MaximumFun.org/join.

[00:22:19] **Transition:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:22:21] **John Hodgman:** In any case, so you love to race cars. Another fun risk management. If you're gonna move to model trains, why aren't you moving to like model bullet trains that could go off the track and take out a load bearing wall in your home or something?

[00:22:41] **Dan:** You know, you get enough of it. Sometimes, you know, medium boring is a good thing.

[00:22:46] **John Hodgman:** You just want a calm, easy shunting puzzle.

(Dan confirms.)

Why shunting? Why now? Why you?

[00:22:57] **Dan:** *(Chuckles.)* Uh, well, you know, looking forward here to a cold Michigan winter coming up and looking for something a little fun to do.

[00:23:04] **John Hodgman:** Was there a particular inspiration? Did you find this really web—not even web 1.0, web 0.05 website for the shunting—inglenook siding shunting puzzle, and you just got in your head that you wanted to be like that guy or what? What was the inspiration?

[00:23:23] **Dan:** The YouTube algorithm is—I don't know, very powerful, I guess. And it was suggested to me and—I don't know. Yeah.

[00:23:31] **Jesse Thorn:** You're saying it was this or QAnon.

(They chuckle.)

[00:23:37] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, that's two possible different tracks that you could have taken. I guess I prefer this one. So, Carrie, you didn't want to see this stupid thing. How did Dan first present this stupid thing to you? And how did you feel about it?

[00:23:53] **Carrie:** When he mentioned, you know, wanting to build a model train set I was initially on board. I like the idea. I think they're really cute. I think they can look kind of neat. And I like the little villages, you know, that we'd see when we'd go to the hobby shop.

[00:24:09] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, they've got everything! You can get a little courthouse, a little Judge John Hodgman in there, a little Jesse Thorn.

[00:24:16] **Jesse Thorn:** Free t-shirts for anyone who sends in pictures of their model train set that's *Judge John Hodgman* themed.

(John agrees.)

[00:24:23] **Carrie:** And so, when he showed me a YouTube video of what he was thinking of, I was just really surprised. I wasn't wowed. It was disappointing. The things don't really go anywhere. The models are really just kind of flat and bare bones, and it doesn't look cute.

[00:24:44] **John Hodgman:** What was the action happening on this YouTube video?

[00:24:48] **Carrie:** I saw, you know, a sort of flat planted plane with some tracks on it that cut off at either end and just little trains very slowly moving back and forth—like slower than you would think a model train would normally go. This just wasn't what I was picturing in my head. And I feel like if we're going to have this in a shared space in the house, it needs to be something that we both like.

[00:25:17] **John Hodgman:** Was there an operator visible in the video?

[00:25:21] **Carrie:** No, not in the one that I saw.

[00:25:22] **John Hodgman:** So, it was just trains moving slowly back and forth, solving problems.

[00:25:27] **Carrie:** It was so slow that you couldn't even tell that there was a problem or what the solution was.

[00:25:31] **John Hodgman:** *(Chuckles.)* You say this would go in a shared portion of the house. Where was Dan proposing it be?

[00:25:38] **Carrie:** Initially, I thought it was going to be in the basement, because that feels like a traditional place for model trains. But he wants to have it in the den. The, you know—it's the space that he uses for his office, but it's also a space that I share.

[00:25:58] **John Hodgman:** What do you—do you hang out in the den together with any frequency?

[00:26:02] **Carrie:** Yeah, pretty frequently. It's the spot in the house where we've got the TV, and it's where the dogs like to hang out. So, it's kind of the, you know, the spot where we'll sit down at the end of the day. And...

[00:26:13] **Jesse Thorn:** Carrie, you're interested in knitting to such an extent that you make your own yarn from your own sheep. Would you consider yourself to be the more aesthetically oriented in your marriage?

(Carrie confirms.)

How would this train sit in your den?

[00:26:33] **Carrie:** That's a great question for Dan.

[00:26:34] **Dan:** So, the neat thing about these shunting layouts is you can just build them on a shelf. And so, I was just going to put a shelf above my computer workstation there up on the wall.

[00:26:43] **John Hodgman:** So, it doesn't seem like it takes up a particularly large footprint. I kind of imagined you, Dan, sitting at the den with a little desk in front of you and your shunting problem in front of you like—what's his name, here? Ye Olde Alan Wright, rest in power. Sitting there solving your problems while Carrie sits next to you knitting. That seemed like a pretty cozy scene. Is this something you're going to keep up on your shelf, though, and bring it down to work on from time to time, or what?

[00:27:13] **Dan:** I think it's something that, yeah, you design to just pull down off the shelf and put on the desk.

[00:27:19] **John Hodgman:** Carrie, it sounds like it's pretty low impact in the home. Are you opposed to this because it's butt ugly or because it's just not what a train set should be?

[00:27:31] **Carrie:** Both. I mean, it is butt ugly, and the den is already ugly enough.

[00:27:38] **John Hodgman:** Alright, here we go!

[00:27:39] **Carrie:** That's the one room in the house that I'm not proud of. And I feel like it's adding insult to injury to put another really ugly thing in there that I have to look at.

[00:27:51] **John Hodgman:** What are the other ugly elements of the den?

[00:27:53] **Carrie:** The main ugly element of the den is the couch that we have in there. It's a couch that was a hand me down from Dan's uncle. It has moved with us across several states, but the dogs love it. And so, I haven't been able to convince him to get it out and get a new couch.

[00:28:17] **John Hodgman:** Now, regarding this couch that you just mentioned, Carrie, I'm getting word that some evidence has just been entered in for consideration, including a photo of this couch. So, I'm going to scroll down here. It says—you know, the picture of the couch in Dan's office, complete with sad dog who paradoxically loves this couch. And oh my word,

oh my—as they say on *Love Island*, oh my days. That is a grim looking couch, I must say. It's one thing that I cannot unsee.

[00:28:50] **Jesse Thorn:** Wow, it really—to say it's threadbare distinctly understates it. But also, to say that this sweet greyhound loves it also understates the matter. It's clear that this greyhound's greatest passion in life is to hang its long droopy face off the edge of this sofa.

(John agrees.)

Two of the three seat cushions do not have covers.

[00:29:13] **John Hodgman:** Yeah. Well, you know, greyhounds are famous for their love of putting their butts directly onto uncovered foam rubber. It was just a texture that they love.

[00:29:22] **Jesse Thorn:** The arms are threadbare. The seat is literally uncovered. Like, it has—the wrapping of the foam rubber is 40% missing, to say nothing of the actual upholstery.

[00:29:39] **John Hodgman:** This is one of two greyhounds that you have, Carrie?

(Carrie confirms.)

What are their names?

[00:29:46] **Carrie:** Marge and Lola. Marge is the one on the couch there.

[00:29:51] **John Hodgman:** Dan, this couch looks pretty bad. What's your connection to this couch?

[00:29:55] **Dan:** It's there? You know, I'm not going to deny it looks horrible. It does look horrible. It is still comfy though. And it's—just haven't gotten around to replacing the thing.

[00:30:06] **John Hodgman:** Carrie, let me clarify something. 'Cause on the one hand, you said Dan has his office in this den, and obviously he's storing this ancestral couch—which no one should have, I'll be honest with you. This seems like his room. And yet you call it a shared space. Is this his room in the house, or is this truly a shared space?

[00:30:28] **Carrie:** I think it started off as a shared space. But when the dogs fell in love with the couch—I want to spend time with my dogs. Like, if they want to hang out in a room, I don't want to feel rejected. And so, I'll go sit with them. And you know, if we're hanging out after work, that's where we're at. So, I do think it's a shared space.

[00:30:56] **John Hodgman:** I have two further questions. Do you have a regular living room that you ever hang out in together?

[00:31:03] **Carrie:** We have a regular living room, but we don't hang out in it very much. It's where the dogs hang out.

[00:31:09] **John Hodgman:** The dogs hang out in the living room when you're at work?

[00:31:12] **Carrie:** Yes. There's a little baby gate that keeps them in.

[00:31:15] **John Hodgman:** And then, do you have a room that is your own, Carrie? Just out of fairness?

[00:31:21] **Carrie:** Uh, yes I do. I have a craft room where I keep most of my yarn and my knitting stuff and have a little cozy chair.

[00:31:31] **John Hodgman:** Good. Well, I'm glad that everything is in balance here, except the problem is that your dogs are dictating where you live and how you live, which is not uncommon. I mean, we've seen this a lot. I mean, I almost feel like I need to—and the fact of the matter is everyone has different tastes and different styles of comfort and coziness. But I'm going to say objectively, this couch is trash. I mean, it's trashed. Fully trashed.

[00:31:58] **Dan:** We do throw a blanket over it, you know, when we're not taking pictures, I guess.

[00:32:02] **John Hodgman:** I kind of feel like setting aside this whole model railroad thing and just figuring out what to do about this sofa. I feel like this is a bigger issue in your life. Carrie, would you like to get rid of the sofa?

[00:32:15] **Carrie:** Yes. I really want to get rid of this couch.

[00:32:18] **John Hodgman:** Sorry. Sometimes I don't remember what's a couch and what's a sofa. This is something that happens between me and my wife, who's a whole human being in her own right. I always say sofa, and then she says, "No, it's a couch." And then, I'll say couch. And then, "No, it's a sofa." And I don't know anything anymore.

This couch, this couch that is well-loved and a terrific dog bed is, in my opinion, no longer fit for humans. Dan, you want to keep it?

[00:32:44] **Dan:** Well, I don't know about wanting to keep it as much as just not wanting to do a replacement. It's a lot of money and messing around.

[00:32:54] **John Hodgman:** No, no, no, no, and I'm sensitive to that. I'm just trying to get a sense of whether you are—how do I put this without being cruel? You see this thing, don't you?

[00:33:04] **Dan:** Well, you know, it's also nice that I can, you know, have my morning cup of coffee sitting on the couch, and if I spill a little bit on it, it's like no big deal.

[00:33:10] **John Hodgman:** No, it might even be an improvement! But I think what I'm sensing—and tell me if I'm wrong here, Carrie—that Dan—would you say it's fair that Dan appreciates comfort, thrift, and practicality over style and aesthetic?

(Carrie confirms.)

And Dan, does that not also affect your choice of model railroad?

[00:33:37] **Dan:** Yeah, I mean it still works as a couch. So, yeah, function over form, I guess.

[00:33:43] **John Hodgman:** But as far as a model railroad goes—now it's sort of coming into focus to me why your idea of a model railroad is just enough track to watch it go. Right? Like, just enough track that it moves. Anything else would be a waste. Waste of space, waste of time, waste of track.

[00:34:02] **Dan:** Well, I think it's—yeah, I'm not going to call it superfluous. But yeah. Yeah, yeah.

[00:34:06] **John Hodgman:** Competing worldviews here. Carrie, does this manifest in any other ways?

[00:34:11] **Carrie:** Well, yeah. He's kept around a junk car for a long time out in the yard, because it might have some useful parts.

[00:34:20] **John Hodgman:** So, alright, this project car that you mentioned, Carrie—we have a photo of it here, and wow. Yes, this is, um—this is definitely a yard car. What kind of car was this, Dan?

[00:34:33] **Dan:** It was a 2003 Nissan Sentra.

[00:34:36] **John Hodgman:** It's a two door. It was blue, but the front—what would you call that? Bumper? Is red.

[00:34:45] **Dan:** Yeah. Yeah. A red—it's—the fella I bought it from I think took it on a few cornfield excursions maybe. It looked like that when I bought it. So.

[00:34:54] **John Hodgman:** Why did you buy it? Why did you buy it?

[00:34:57] **Dan:** *(Sighing.)* I was looking for a bunch of parts to use in one of the race cars. So, I scavenged the engine out of there and transmission and a couple of things from the interior. So.

[00:35:09] **John Hodgman:** Where is it on the property?

[00:35:12] **Dan:** That is right in between my shop and Carrie's kind of main holding paddock for the sheep. So, it's not only super ugly, it's also in Carrie's way on a regular basis.

[00:35:23] **John Hodgman:** Yeah. That seems like a very convenient place to have a dead Sentra for sure. I mean, you seem to recognize that this car does not look good, right? Dan, would you agree?

[00:35:34] **Dan:** Oh no, it's absolutely horrible.

[00:35:36] **John Hodgman:** Yeah. Here in this case, you can look at this and be like, “Yeah, this is a car from a Stephen King book. That, if we keep it on the property any longer, it's going to start talking to me psychically and start killing my friends.”

[00:35:50] **Dan:** Well, you know it's bad when your non-nosey neighbors are asking about it.

[00:35:55] **John Hodgman:** Have you had any interest at all in someone taking this dead Sentra off your hands?

[00:36:00] **Dan:** Oh, I would love for it to be gone.

[00:36:01] **John Hodgman:** Alright, we'll post it on our Instagram—our relative social media posts.

(Carrie and Dan chuckle.)

See if anyone—how much are you willing to pay someone to take it?

[00:36:11] **Dan:** Oh, I'd part with 500 bucks to make it go away.

[00:36:15] **John Hodgman:** There we go. So, you can see that this kind of looks not up to snuff in the car department. But when you look at the couch in the den, you still see like functional couch.

[00:36:28] **Dan:** Yeah. I mean, it still does the couch stuff. You can, you know, take a nap on it, and the dogs can hang out on it. And if you throw a blanket over it, it doesn't even look all that bad.

[00:36:39] **John Hodgman:** Dan, you mentioned that yours and Carrie's hobbies do not normally interfere with one another. What other hobbies do you have aside from hoarding animals, Carrie? Sorry, herding animals.

(They laugh.)

[00:36:54] **Carrie:** Well, yeah, I do a bunch of stuff. So, like I said, I knit. I have been known to make some—well, model cars. I paint sometimes. I'm into watercolor. I studied art in college, so you can see the throughline here. And yeah, I'm just into a lot of stuff.

[00:37:22] **John Hodgman:** Yeah. I also can see quite a bit of *Wallace and Gromit* merch submitted in evidence.

[00:37:32] **Carrie:** Yeah. You know, I wanted to show that, you know, we can decorate cute little things. I think it'd be really fun to decorate a little train village. I'm into like painting the little models and stuff. So.

[00:37:48] **John Hodgman:** Dan, would you be opposed—if you got this this shunting set, would you be opposed to Carrie decorating it properly? Or you know, less depressingly?

[00:38:02] **Dan:** I don't think so. I don't know how much the aesthetic thing might affect the functionality, but it's something that we'd have to—we'd have to look into.

[00:38:15] **John Hodgman:** You'd be concerned a little model chapel or town hall or whatever might get in the way of the shunting, might distract from the shunting?

[00:38:24] **Dan:** If you want to do all the aesthetic stuff, there's significant preparation you got to do and all that. You're not just throwing the track down and working the thing. So, you got to worry about, you know, all the—how the terrain flows and all that kind of stuff. So, it'd be extra to do for sure.

[00:38:39] **John Hodgman:** What about—what if you were to do a traditional model train set that had a shunting sidetrack for you? Like, Carrie makes a traditional model train loop, and then there's a shunting puzzle that's connected to the loop.

[00:38:55] **Dan:** And that is something that people do, which is neat. But then, you're talking about putting it in the basement and during the winter—you know, we have an old farmhouse, so cold, crummy basement in the middle of winter doesn't sound like all that super fun to me.

[00:39:12] **John Hodgman:** Right. You want to be able to get to your shunting as quickly as possible.

(Dan agrees.)

You don't have to go down to the basement and sit down there in the cold. Carrie, do you want to have your own model railroad?

[00:39:24] **Carrie:** You know, I kind of think I might.

[00:39:26] **John Hodgman:** Are you willing to have one in the basement?

[00:39:29] **Carrie:** I don't know about the basement. I might be able to integrate it into the craft room though.

[00:39:33] **John Hodgman:** It seems like you both have a fair amount of balance in terms of your independence of your interests, and you have enough space to maintain that independence, which a lot of people don't have.

[00:39:46] **Dan:** Yeah, we're the worst kind of—you know, or best kind of—only children. So, we do very well kind of doing our own thing and leaving each other be, which is why, you know—so, I feel violated when my interest has been commented on, called, you know, stupid and pointless.

[00:40:07] **John Hodgman:** Specifically, the shunting set or other hobbies of yours?

[00:40:11] **Dan:** Oh no, just—she's been wonderfully supportive of everything that that we've done over the years. And this is like the first case of just like, “That is—that's really stupid and pointless.”

[00:40:24] **John Hodgman:** Carrie, Dan said that he feels violated by your making fun of his switching set, his shunting table. How do you feel about that?

[00:40:33] **Carrie:** I feel like that's making a mountain out of a molehill, if I'm being quite honest. If I was doing something really dumb and had, I don't know, like a weaving mill in the house that was ugly and loud, I think he would be within his right to say, “Hey, please don't do that.”

[00:40:53] **John Hodgman:** Dan, tell me the dimensions of the shunting puzzle you want to build.

[00:40:56] **Dan:** Maybe 24 or 36 inches long, 12 inches wide. So, about the size of a normal bookshelf.

[00:41:03] **John Hodgman:** Yeah. Yeah, yeah. Small. Carrie, you sent in a photo of a shunting puzzle. This is not the shunting puzzle, correct? This is an example shunting puzzle?

[00:41:17] **Carrie:** Yeah, this was one of the examples that I turned up when I was doing my research. It's just so ugly.

[00:41:24] **John Hodgman:** So, did you pick this one because it's the ugliest possible version of a shunting set or because this is the one that Dan wants to build?

[00:41:32] **Carrie:** Well, I think it's the one he probably would build, and that's why I picked it. I think that the couch and the Sentra demonstrate the finish quality we're looking at. And it seemed like it would probably be representative of what would end up in my house.

[00:41:53] **John Hodgman:** Right. You don't trust Dan to make a pretty shunting set.

(Carrie confirms.)

No. And does Dan's aesthetic of practical over comfortable over aesthetic branch out to other parts of the house, or is it sort of contained in the den?

[00:42:12] **Carrie:** In the house, it's mostly contained in the den. There's a few household projects here and there that we could prioritize but haven't. But it's really minor compared to the den.

[00:42:25] **John Hodgman:** And why don't you want to hang out in the living room? Why is the living room only suited to be a prison for your greyhounds?

[00:42:32] **Dan:** It's hot in the summer, cold in the winter. It's just not—it's kind of a big room. It's not particularly cozy.

[00:42:41] **John Hodgman:** Is the den the best hang in the house, Carrie?

[00:42:45] **Carrie:** Yeah, it's cool. It's kind of dark, and like I said, it is the spot that the dogs favor. So, if I'm going to be sitting down to knit, I don't want, you know, the dogs to be, you know, meandering around, wondering why I'm not following them to the den. It's easier to just end up there.

[00:43:05] **John Hodgman:** I can just picture those two greyhounds looking over your shoulder—looking over their shoulder at you going, “Come on, come on. We're going to the room where the whole couch is a giant chew toy. Why don't you want to come with us?”

(Dan chuckles.)

Dan, if I were to rule in your favor, it says here, you'd like me to order that you are allowed to build your shelf setup and not get any guff about it. That's pretty self-explanatory.

[00:43:27] **Dan:** I think it is. Yeah.

[00:43:28] **John Hodgman:** Carrie, you want there to be a train set with a landscape where the train goes around in a loop. You want there to be a loop, no matter what.

[00:43:37] **Carrie:** Yes, the loop takes you on a journey. It's about, you know—it's what you picture when you think of a train set. You need to have it.

[00:43:45] **John Hodgman:** Mm-hm. Even though it would probably take up more room in the den than this shunting station, which you can easily put away on a shelf.

(Carrie confirms.)

Okay. And Dan's workspace, he has his computer in the den as well. Describe what his workspace looks like.

[00:44:05] **Carrie:** I'll let Dan take that one.

[00:44:06] **John Hodgman:** Alright. I'll allow it.

[00:44:07] **Dan:** It's medium messy. I mean, easily cleaned in 10 minutes, not 30 seconds.

[00:44:15] **John Hodgman:** But you have a workshop, don't you, Dan? You mentioned that the Nissan Sentra is blocking access to the workshop or something like that, right?

[00:44:22] **Dan:** Yeah. There's a—I have a shop out—yeah, I have a race car shop. And then, yeah, and then I have a little half a machine shop in part of the basement. And then, a little 3D printer upstairs. So, it's kind of—my junk is spread out all over the place.

[00:44:38] **John Hodgman:** Carrie, since the den is the best hang in the house and it's where the dogs want to be, and you want to be with the dogs and your husband from time to time, do you take issue with his workspace being in the den, or is that tolerable for you?

[00:44:51] **Carrie:** That's tolerable.

[00:44:53] **Dan:** Carrie does have some crimes against the aesthetics from time to time in the—

[00:44:58] **John Hodgman:** Alright, I'll allow it.

[00:45:03] **Dan:** But hey, I don't have a problem with it because it's part of her hobby, it's part of what makes her happy, and so I can look past it.

[00:45:12] **John Hodgman:** What are her aesthetic crimes, Dan? You opened this door.

[00:45:19] **Dan:** (*Chuckles.*) We have a—well, she has a hoop house out in the out in the yard that is pretty ugly. But it's—

[00:45:28] **Jesse Thorn:** What is a hoop house? Is that a place you go to learn to sneak things into prisons?

(*They laugh.*)

[00:45:35] **Carrie:** Uh, the hoop house is like a greenhouse, but it doesn't have like solid end walls. It's like a bunch of hoops with the plastic sheeting over it. I bought a kit online, and I built it, and it's where I grow vegetables, and the chickens like to stay in there in winter. And so, it's a nice sort of multi-purpose space.

[00:45:58] **Jesse Thorn:** The hoops are like archways that are covered with a tarp.

(*Dan and Carrie confirm.*)

[00:46:01] **John Hodgman:** Got it. And Dan, you find this aesthetically displeasing?

[00:46:07] **Dan:** It's unpleasing, but I mean, it's part of what she needs to do to do her thing, and so I can easily look past it, because it's part of what she does to make herself happy. That makes me happy. And then, she does the sheep out in the circle drive for that No Mow May deal. And that's—I can live with that, but that's a little—that's a little annoying as well.

[00:46:33] **John Hodgman:** Okay. I feel as though I lost understanding of English there for a second. What is the sheep in the circular drive for No Mow May?

[00:46:42] **Dan:** There's a whole big thing in May where people are not mowing their yards to—Carrie might be able to explain it a little better.

[00:46:50] **Carrie:** Yeah. So, there's this concept of No Mow May, where you don't mow your lawn in the month of May so that, you know, the flowers and stuff can bloom and support pollinators. And it's supposed to be, you know, good for the environment and the bees and all that. And so, after I let it grow through the month of May and in early June—you know, I put a little sort of temporary fence around that part of the yard, and I put the sheep on there to graze it. It's like an ecofriendly lawn mowing.

[00:47:25] **John Hodgman:** Yeah! This seems very adorable and cute. What's your opposition to this, Dan?

[00:47:30] **Dan:** Number one, it makes it so it's not a circle drive. So, that can be a little annoying. And it just—I don't know. Having sheep running around your yard, not out in pastures is a little weird.

[00:47:43] **John Hodgman:** I just have one more question, only because you both mentioned that you're both only children. And you obviously live on a property in Michigan that allows you with a lot of personal space to build race cars and park dead cars and raise sheep and roost chickens and hoop houses and craft rooms and everything else. I just—and I'm not asking to be judgmental but really out of a spirit of hope. Do you happen to have separate bedrooms that are separated by a reflecting pool?

[00:48:19] **Dan:** That is what that couch is. That is where, if I can't sleep, I go down and sleep on the crummy couch.

[00:48:25] **John Hodgman:** Alright, I think I've heard everything I need to in order to make my decision. I'll be back in a moment. I'm going to go into my legal hoop house, and I'll do some hula hooping as I meditate, you know, for the kids. I'll be back in a moment with my verdict.

[00:48:40] **Jesse Thorn:** Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom.

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

Dan, how are you feeling?

[00:48:45] **Dan:** I'm feeling pretty good.

[00:48:46] **Jesse Thorn:** You think the switching thing's gonna happen?

[00:48:51] **Dan:** Eeh, I think there's gonna be probably a good compromise, would be my guess.

[00:48:56] **Jesse Thorn:** Put it out in the hoop house?

[00:48:59] **Dan:** That'll work.

[00:48:58] **Jesse Thorn:** Carrie, how do you feel?

[00:48:59] **Carrie:** You know, I'm feeling pretty good. I think that the evidence has shown that Dan can have these hobbies, and they just kind of turn into a giant car in your yard. And I just don't want to see that with our house. So, I think we're pretty good.

[00:49:21] **Jesse Thorn:** Well, Dan, Carrie, we'll see what Judge Hodgman has to say about this when we come back in just a moment.

[00:49:26] **Transition:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:49:30] **Promo:**

Music: Playful ukulele.

Jesse Thorn: Hi, I'm Jesse Thorn, the founder of Maximum Fun. And I have a special announcement. I'm no longer embarrassed by *My Brother, My Brother and Me*. You know, for years, each new episode of this supposed advice show was a fresh insult, a depraved jumble of erection jokes, ghost humor, and—frankly this is for the best—very little actionable advice. But now, as they enter their twilight years, I'm as surprised as anyone to admit that it's gotten kind of good. Justin, Travis, and Griffin's witticisms are more refined, like a humor column in a fancy magazine. And they hardly ever say "bazinga" anymore. So, after you've completely finished listening to every single one of all of our other shows, why not join the McElroy brothers every week for *My Brother, My Brother and Me*?

(Music fades out.)

[00:50:25] **Promo:**

Music: Suspenseful, orchestral music.

Maddy Myers: *The Legend of Zelda: Tears of the Kingdom.*

Kirk Hamilton: *Diablo 4.*

Jason Schreier: *Final Fantasy XVI.*

Maddy: *Street Fighter 6.*

Kirk: *Baldur's Gate 3.*

Jason: *Starfield.*

Kirk: *Spider-Man 2!*

Jason: *Master Detective: Archive's Raincoat* for Nintendo Switch!? No? Is that just me?

(They laugh.)

Maddy: It's a huge time for video games.

Kirk: You need somebody to tell you what's good, what's not so good, and what's amazing.

Jason: I'm Jason Schreier.

Maddy: I'm Maddy Myers.

Kirk: And I'm Kirk Hamilton. We're the hosts of *Triple Click*, a videogame podcast for anyone who likes games.

Maddy: Find us at MaximumFun.org or wherever you get your podcasts. Bye!

(Music fades out.)

[00:51:06] **Transition:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:51:09] **Jesse Thorn:** Judge Hodgman, the Van Freaks Roadshow is in full effect! Right now, as this podcast releases, we are in the islands off the coast of Western Europe.

(John confirms.)

Dublin, headed to London, England.

(John confirms.)

Gonna do Joe's at King's Place and have a great time at that London podcast festival. Then, we're headed back across the pond with, first, a tour through the Midwest and Southwest. Then, all the way up the East Coast, from Atlanta to Brooklyn, New York City.

[00:51:35] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, Atlanta is technically a coastal city, I think. I think that's a—if you ask around Atlanta, they'll say, “Yeah, technically we're part of the coast.” Lexington, Kentucky, Chicago, Illinois, Madison, Wisconsin, St. Paul, Minnesota, Austin, Texas, and then Atlanta, Durham, Charlottesville, Washington, Portland, Boston, and Brooklyn. And I'm talking about Portland, Maine, of course. We're going to some of our very, very favorite theaters to see some of our very, very favorite audiences that we've seen

before and played for before, plus brand-new places where I've never been in my life. I'm looking at you, Lexington and Charlottesville. Can't wait to visit new places and to be out there on the road with you. We'll have surprises, special guests. We'll sing songs. We wear outfits. Jesse dresses like Bull from *Night Court*. I dress—I have some Canadian jurist robes that I got.

[00:52:19] **Jesse Thorn:** Judge Hodgman, I have a badge that I wear that I had to send in a fax certifying that I wouldn't use it to impersonate an officer of the law.

[00:52:28] **John Hodgman:** Right. There's no better way to certify a thing than sending in a fax. It just makes it legal. And we'll have special merchandise that you can't get anywhere else. And we mentioned last time, we do stand up during the show. We move around on stage. We have visual elements. We have so much on the show that you never get to hear if you just listen to the live shows on the podcast. So much happens in those rooms, I can't even begin to tell you, and it's gonna be a lot of fun.

So, go get your tickets at VanFreaksRoadshow.com. Also, submit your disputes. If you live in any of these cities, think of who's wrong in your life about something and just go ahead and write to us via VanFreaksRoadshow.com. You'll see the prompt when you go there, VanFreaksRoadshow.com, including the incredible new illustration by Tom DJ of Jesse and I maniacally riding a Mitsubishi Delica to hell, basically. It's incredible. VanFreaksRoadshow.com. Go check it out. Thanks to everyone in Dublin who came out—

[00:53:27] **Jesse Thorn:** (*Delightedly, barely containing laughter.*) Judge Hodgman had to send Tom an email. “Please moderate the blood red streaks in our eyes.”

[00:53:31] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, make it more psychedelic, make the wheels bigger, make the flames larger. But we don't need the red streaks in our eyes. Make Jesse's grin more maniacal, make my terror more palpable. It's an incredible illustration, thanks Tom DJ for making it, and you can only see it right now at VanFreaksRoadshow.com.

[00:53:52] **Transition:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:53:54] **Jesse Thorn:** Please rise as Judge John Hodgman reenters the courtroom and presents his verdict.

[00:53:59] **John Hodgman:** You know, first of all, I should say—I take it back, Dan, when I said that I would feel nervous if my pilot got on the PA and said, “I just consider this to be a risk management exercise.” I might feel like, okay, that's a different point of view. But the truth is I would be happy to fly on any plane that you were piloting, because you're no Tom Cruise maverick. You are, as appropriate for any fixed-wing aircraft, unflappable. Calm, collected, and someone focused on the practical and getting from point A to B and then going literally back from B to A, which is how a lot of plane travel goes, right? You know, there are routes that go in a circle sort of, but mostly you go from one city to the other and then turn around and go back and go back to the other, etc., etc..

And honestly, that's how most train lines go too. The idea that trains go in a circle as a philosophy is artificial. That said, model train sets should be in a loop. I've always wanted to have a model train set. You know, we got one of the Weird Dad Blogs of the Year up there over at the Weird Dad Blog of the Year website, which you can find through our show page, of—one of these weird dads is making an incredible model train set every year for the holidays. And I love to look at looping model train sets. I've always wanted to have a huge model train set in my basement, full of all little details with a little graveyard and people actually attending a funeral in the graveyard. Just microscopic detail. You know, it's like, yeah, when we fly, we fly to mock God or whatever, but we model train set build in order to be God or whatever and create a world. I had never heard of a shunting puzzle before, and I'll be honest with you, Dan, it freaked me out.

(They chuckle.)

I did not understand it. I did not understand what the appeal could be. I did not understand what Alan Wright was doing at his weird cozy little British table until you explained to me that it is truly a puzzle. You are putting cars in order in the complicated way engineers of linear actual trains have to do it in a switching station. Or as they say in England, I guess, a shunting pitch. This is something that is completely different from a model train set. Now, Carrie, I appreciate your trepidation here, because you have seen and witnessed and lived with the places where Dan's imagination takes him to ever increasing speeds on a racetrack in cars that are unfit for speeds higher than 35. And then, there is that old Nissan Sentra in the yard, scrapped for parts with no plan for what to do with it afterward.

Quite honestly, Carrie, if Dan—given his track record, literal track record—were to be proposing an actual or traditional model train set, then I'd be worried for you. Because then I feel like it would get too big and too out of hand and would take up too much space and would totally overflow into the den, which is already a shared space that is a place where you are not entirely comfortable. Because even though it's a shared space, the couch belongs to the dogs, and the junk belongs to Dan. And having a full model train set in there would totally edge you out at that point.

But Dan doesn't want to build one of those things. And for that—I mean, if I were in your shoes, I'd be grateful. He just wants to build a big puzzle that uses model trains that can live on a shelf. To me, this is inherently reasonable, and I am going to allow it. But before you celebrate, Dan, we need to have a talk about this couch. I'm very sensitive. I don't want to come at you and say that what you love about this couch you shouldn't love. You love what you love. You like what you like. It's fine. In my very strong opinion, this couch has seen its day. And if you are willing to spend \$500 on a shunting station or pay someone \$500 to take a Sentra away or both, I would take one of those \$500—if it's within your budget—to upgrade that couch. Not restore it, not throw a blanket over it, but get a couch that is dog friendly and dog resistant, but more to the point: Carrie friendly. I'm also going to order that you really—that you tidy up your workspace. If it is not tidy, do the best you can. Make sure that the shunting station that you build fits tidily in that shelf above, so you can take it down and put it back, and it's not going to be all over the place.

And I'm going to order that you allow—and indeed, work with—Carrie to decorate it and make it not look like a blasted plane of Mordor. But insofar as it does not interfere with the

shunting, give it a little bit of—give it a little bit of cozy shunt. You know what I mean? So that she can have some fun with it too. This is the sound of a gavel.

[00:59:38] **Sound Effect:** A train horn toot-toots.

[00:59:40] **John Hodgman:** Judge John Hodgman rules, that is all.

[00:59:42] **Jesse Thorn:** Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom.

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

Carrie, how do you feel?

[00:59:49] **Carrie:** I'm really pleased with the ruling, even though it wasn't technically in my favor. It sounds like we're gonna get a new couch, and I'll get to do some decorating on this shunting station.

[01:00:03] **Jesse Thorn:** Do you got any big ideas?

[01:00:04] **Carrie:** Uh, definitely some fall foliage.

[01:00:06] **Jesse Thorn:** Dan, how do you feel?

[01:00:08] **Dan:** No, I'm feeling good about this. I'm really feeling good about it. It wouldn't hurt to get a new couch either. It's gonna be a little bit to get used to though.

[01:00:14] **Jesse Thorn:** Dan, Carrie, thanks for joining us on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

[01:00:18] **Transition:** Three gavel bangs.

[01:00:20] **Jesse Thorn:** Another *Judge John Hodgman* case in the books. In a moment, we'll have Swift Justice. Our thanks to Redditor TheMadJuggler for naming this week's episode "Injunction Junction". Join the conversation over at the Maximum Fun subreddit, that's [MaximumFun.Reddit.com](https://www.reddit.com/r/MaximumFun). That's where we've been asking for those title suggestions. Evidence and photos from the show are posted on our Instagram account, at [Instagram.com/judgejohnhodgman](https://www.instagram.com/judgejohnhodgman). Make sure to follow us. We've been giving people the opportunity to guess at the cultural reference there via the medium of video.

[01:00:52] **John Hodgman:** Video. We've pivoted to video.

[01:00:58] **Jesse Thorn:** You can see what it looks like inside the studios of a real community radio station in Maine.

[01:01:04] **John Hodgman:** Yeah. You know what? I'm going to do a video tour of the station before I head back to Brooklyn in a few weeks. I'm going to do a whole video. Joel, would you mind if I did that?

[01:01:13] **Joel Mann:** I'd be glad to take you on that journey, John.

[01:01:16] **John Hodgman:** Okay. We're going to do a tour.

[01:01:18] **Jesse Thorn:** John, do you know that joke what's a twain?

[01:01:20] **John Hodgman:** Uh, about three pounds?

[01:01:23] **Jesse Thorn:** It's what a wabbit takes when he goes on a twip.

(John snorts a laugh.)

Okay, bup-bup-bup-bup-ba, *Judge John Hodgman* created by Jesse Thorn and John Hodgman and ended forever by Jesse Thorn just now.

[01:01:37] **John Hodgman:** No!

[01:01:38] **Jesse Thorn:** *(Chuckling.)* This episode engineered by Bob Whittersham at Audio Acres in Chelsea, Michigan and by Joel Mann at WERU in Orland, Maine. Marie Bardi runs our social media. Our producer, the great Jennifer Marmor.

Now, Swift Justice, where we answer small disputes with quick judgment. Emma says, “My partner wears jeans, pants, or shorts any time that he's not in bed. I think he should get some lounge pants and embrace his comfy self. He says he's perfectly comfortable in his leg prisons.”

[01:02:12] **John Hodgman:** *(Laughs.)* I don't know what kind of formal tweed trousers Emma's partner is wearing when trying to lounge in the D-van or what have you. I'm sure that he's perfectly comfortable, and as long as he's not wearing his pants to bed, I feel okay with it. That doesn't mean, Emma, that you can't poke around, say, on—I don't know, a website or a Stitch Fix. Mm, I'm just saying. See if there might be something a little bit less structured, a little bit more cozy for him to wear that you could throw his way come holiday time, see if he takes the bait. But I don't think you can compel him to wear athleisure any day of the week. If he's comfortable in his pants, that's the way he's comfortable. Just don't wear your pants to bed. That's the only thing I say.

[01:02:55] **Jesse Thorn:** We need cases, John.

[01:02:57] **John Hodgman:** Yes, we do need cases. Specifically, we need robot cases. Or as we used to say, robit cases. I'm looking for disputes between your friends, your coworkers, your parents, or whatever about like who are the best robots in science fiction? Is it like R2D2 or Vincent from *The Black Hole*? Who's the cuter—who's the cuter robit? Which of the

Boston Dynamics robots are the scariest? They're all terrifying, but which is the one you would not want to meet in a dark hallway? Anything and everything to do with robots, we want to hear your disputes about it. Whether they are real world thought experiments, philosophical disputes, whatever they are. Get your robots, and if you have a—if you can bring your robot on the show with you, that'd be terrific too.

[01:03:42] **Jesse Thorn:** We also need all kinds of disputes, especially ones that come from the many cities to which we are traveling, on our Van Freaks Roadshow tour. So, if you live in one of those places, make sure to go to MaximumFun.org/jjho, submit your case, and let us know that you live in one of the places to which we will be traveling. Let us know where you live when you submit that case, because we are looking for local cases. This is a circuit court situation! We judge real cases live on stage.

[01:04:11] **John Hodgman:** Yeah. Yeah. We need cases in places. MaximumFun.org/jjho. Don't think your dispute is too big or too small. We judges them all.

[01:04:23] **Jesse Thorn:** We'll talk to you next time on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

[01:04:27] **Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:04:29] **Sound Effect:** Cheerful ukulele chord.

[01:04:30] **Speaker 1:** Maximum Fun.

[01:04:31] **Speaker 2:** A worker-owned network.

[01:04:32] **Speaker 3:** Of artist owned shows.

[01:04:34] **Speaker 4:** Supported—

[01:04:35] **Speaker 5:** —directly—

[01:04:36] **Speaker 6:** —by you!