

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

[00:00:01] **John Hodgman:** Welcome to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. It's me, Governor, your Judge John Hodgman. This week's episode was recorded live in London at the London Podcast Festival. It was our second stop in our Van Freaks Roadshow tour, which is revving back up October 9th in Lexington, Kentucky. Visit VanFreaksRoadshow.com for the rest of our dates and cities, and to buy tickets and to submit your disputes, VanFreaksRoadshow.com. Now, let's go to the stage at King's Place for some live justice at the London Podcast Festival.

[00:00:36] **Jesse Thorn:** London, you've come to us desperate for justice, and we're here live at the London Podcast Festival to deliver it.

(Cheers and applause.)

Let's bring out our first set of litigants. Please welcome to the stage Mae and Paul! Our case? "Undergrounds for Dismissal". When Mae and Paul go out together, Mae prefers to take the bus. She likes to take her time and see the city. But Paul hates the bus. He says the tube is quicker and more reliable. Who's right, who's wrong? Only one can decide. Please rise as Judge John Hodgman enters the courtroom and delivers an obscure cultural reference.

[00:01:19] **John Hodgman:** *(Gutturally and rhythmically.)* "Rattle big, black bones in the dan-ger zone! There's a rum-bling groan down below! There's a big, black town. It is the place I've found! Judge John Hodgman is in London Town! They're alive! They're awake! While the rest of the world is asleep! Below the mine shaft roads, it will all unfoooold! Judge John Hodgman is in London Town!"

(Hurriedly, returning to normal.) Bailiff Jesse Thorn, you may swear them in.

(Cheers and applause.)

[00:02:00] **Jesse Thorn:** The role you were born to play. Mae, Paul please rise and raise your right hands. Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God or whatever?

(They swear.)

Do you swear to abide by Judge John Hodgman's ruling, despite the fact that he travels only by rigid airship?

(They swear with a chuckle.)

Judge Hodgman, you may proceed.

[00:02:24] **John Hodgman:** Semi-rigid these days, I'm afraid.

(Laughter.)

[00:02:28] **Jesse Thorn:** We all get older.

(Laughter.)

[00:02:31] **John Hodgman:** Mae and Paul, you may be seated for an immediate summary judgment in one of your favors. Can either of you name the piece of culture that I referenced as I arose from my slumber to speak to you here in London? Mae, do you want to take a guess?

[00:02:43] **Mae:** I think I know it, but I can't think of it. So, I'm going to definitely look back and regret it.

[00:02:51] **John Hodgman:** No, you'll regret nothing.

[00:02:52] **Mae:** Okay. Uh, is it a Nick Cave song?

[00:02:55] **John Hodgman:** Is it a Nick Cave song? That's a very good guess. I like it. I like the guess.

(Mae thanks him.)

This is an artist with a very specific vocal style.

(Mae agrees.)

And Nick Cave is not that, but that's fine.

(Laughter.)

I think you're in the ballpark, though. Yes. What about you, Paul?

[00:03:12] **Paul:** I wasn't really sure but maybe like a Tim Burton something.

[00:03:17] **John Hodgman:** Tim Burton. Sort of a haunted carnival feel. Also, in the same neighborhood.

[00:03:23] **Jesse Thorn:** Judge Hodgman.

[00:03:24] **John Hodgman:** Yeah. Did you have a guess, Jesse?

[00:03:25] **Jesse Thorn:** I did. Tone Loc?

[00:03:27] **John Hodgman:** (*Laughing.*) Tone Loc. That's exactly right. It is “Funky Cold Medina” by Tone Loc as covered by Tom Waits.

All guesses are wrong. It was Tom Waits song from his album *Swordfishtrombones*, specifically called “Underground”, because that is what we were talking about here today— The London Underground and also the London double above ground, which is what we call a bus, or a loo here in London. Exactly so. So, who comes to seek justice in this fake court?

[00:03:57] **Mae:** I do.

[00:03:58] **John Hodgman:** And you are Mae, correct? What is the nature of the justice you seek?

[00:04:02] **Mae:** So, yeah, Paul and I live in central London. When we go out and about together—

[00:04:06] **John Hodgman:** I thought I detected a central London accent.

(*Laughter.*)

[00:04:09] **Mae:** (*Joking.*) Yep, born and bred.

When we go out together, I prefer to take the bus. It’s more enjoyable.

[00:04:14] **John Hodgman:** You prefer to take the bus when you go out and about. And Paul, how do you respond?

[00:04:20] **Paul:** So, I am actually from London.

(*Laughter.*)

And when we go out, I prefer to take the tube, because I like to get to places.

(*Laughter.*)

[00:04:27] **John Hodgman:** What line is your favorite line?

[00:04:30] **Paul:** Probably the Victoria line, because that's my nearest one, and there’s trains every minute, minute and a half, and they just turn up. And they just go.

[00:04:38] **John Hodgman:** And they just go. I understand.

[00:04:40] **Jesse Thorn:** Let the record reflect that when you said Victoria line, someone went, “Woo!”

(Laughter.)

[00:04:45] **John Hodgman:** Are there favorite lines? Are there good lines?

(Immediate commotion from the audience. Paul confirms.)

What's the best line?

(Many voices speaking over one another in the audience.)

[00:04:54] **Mae:** Did someone say the district line?

(Laughter.)

[00:04:56] **Jesse Thorn:** Oh my god! Someone said the district line?! I also know what that means.

(Laughter.)

[00:05:05] **John Hodgman:** Mae, when did you first take a London bus? It must have been when you were coming home from the hospital here in England.

[00:05:09] **Mae:** Yeah, exactly! Um, no, I moved here ten years ago. I did a semester abroad even before that, so it must have been 2010 I took my first bus.

[00:05:19] **John Hodgman:** Your first bus, and what did it feel like when you were taking it? Was it love at first... bus?

[00:05:26] **Mae:** Yes. Yeah, no, it was great. I think—see, growing up in the US, which is where I'm from—

[00:05:31] **John Hodgman:** Where did you actually grow up, if I may ask?

[00:05:31] **Mae:** I moved around a lot as a child. I grew up in the Midwest region. Lots of different places in the suburbs, so no public transport.

[00:05:42] **John Hodgman:** No public transportation whatsoever.

[00:05:44] **Mae:** Nooo. So, growing up watching, you know, movies and TV shows, seeing that double decker iconic red bus.

[00:05:49] **John Hodgman:** Iconic.

[00:05:50] **Mae:** Arriving to London just being like, “Whoa, it's real!” Riding that bus, especially the night bus, specifically, when I was a student.

[00:05:58] **John Hodgman:** Everyone loves the night bus.

(Cheers.)

I also spent a semester of college here in London on a drink abroad program of my own devising.

(Laughter.)

And I remember loving the night bus. So reliable. And also, the people you meet on the night bus, just the loveliest. You might get some free food thrown at you. Or regurgitated at you. It's like you're a little bird in a nest. Someone's trying to feed you some curry and ale. Yeah, from their stomachs. And so, the majesty and the romance of the night bus really won you over.

(Mae confirms with a laugh.)

And Paul, why is Mae wrong?

[00:06:39] **Paul:** She's wrong about buses, because they're really slow and they don't turn up very often. Although London buses are probably the best buses in the country.

[00:06:46] **John Hodgman:** In all of England, do you mean?

[00:06:48] **Paul:** Or Britain, or probably anywhere. They might be the best in the world, but they just—

[00:06:51] **John Hodgman:** Probably the best in the world?!

[00:06:52] **Paul:** Yeah, but they just are slow, and they don't go in—they don't turn up, and they don't get you there in the time you want to get there.

[00:07:00] **John Hodgman:** You are a Londoner.

(Paul confirms.)

How did you two meet?

[00:07:03] **Paul:** Uh, online.

[00:07:04] **John Hodgman:** Really?

(Paul confirms.)

And how long ago did you meet?

[00:07:07] **Mae:** Nine years ago.

[00:07:08] **Paul:** Nine years ago.

[00:07:09] **John Hodgman:** So, you had moved here already?

(Mae confirms.)

You did not move to be with Paul?

(Mae confirms.)

Wonderful.

(Laughter.)

Sounds like you're still deciding.

[00:07:17] **Mae:** *(Playfully.)* Yeah, yeah, yeah. In the process.

[00:07:20] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, all right. Paul, you're a Londoner.

(Paul confirms.)

Would you think most Londoners would agree with you that the buses suck?

[00:07:26] **Paul:** Yeah, I think they would. Buses suck.

(The audience applauds but with scattered boos. Mae boos.)

[00:07:32] **John Hodgman:** Alright. Who here loves buses?

(Cheers.)

Who here hates buses?

(Weaker cheers.)

Oh, more bus lovers in the crowd! This is not going to be decided by a jury.

(Laughter. Mae agrees.)

Now, you submitted some evidence to the court, some photographic evidence. Could we see that? It's always great for a podcast to have photographic evidence. What's the first piece of evidence, please? Oh, Jesse, you've got the clicker.

Look at that!

[00:07:57] **Mae:** That is a view from my second favorite bus route.

[00:08:01] **John Hodgman:** Right. Only—so, what we're looking at, for those of you listening at home, are four empty seats on the top decker of a double decker bus. There is a lonely, empty can of Red Bull rolling around in one of them.

(Laughter.)

And just behind in the distance, you can see just a bit of the arc of the London super wheel, and then obviously beautiful HP tower right there, HP Sauce tower right there behind it.

(Laughter.)

It is truly a lovely scene. So, tell me, why is this your favorite bus route?

[00:08:31] **Mae:** Yeah, it's beautiful. It's my second favorite bus route.

(John excuses himself with a laugh.)

Yeah. It's the 341 that's going over Waterloo Bridge, back up to my house in Angel. And yeah, it's a good route, because it gets you to Waterloo, and you don't have to take the tube to Waterloo when you need to get there. And you get this lovely view.

[00:08:47] **John Hodgman:** The 341 bus.

(Mae confirms.)

Does that mean that there are at least 341 different routes, Paul?

[00:08:57] **Paul:** No, I don't think so.

[00:08:58] **John Hodgman:** Well, why? Why is it the 341?

[00:09:01] **Mae:** Oh, I read a whole book about it once, but I can't remember.

[00:09:04] **John Hodgman:** You read a whole book about it?

[00:09:05] **Mae:** Yeah, there's a whole—well, because they used to be run by separate companies. And every company would have their own—

[00:09:10] **John Hodgman:** Had its own numbering system. That's right. And so, why make it easy for anyone to get around?

(Laughter.)

You have to decipher a code, right? That's right, it's like the Enigma code. You figure out where you're going. I'm talking from experience. I tried to take the bus yesterday.

(Laughter.)

I'll tell you about it later. I still don't know what happened.

[00:09:24] **Mae:** Yes, please! What bus was it?

[00:09:27] **John Hodgman:** I ended up not at my destination, but I ended up sometime yesterday.

(Laughter.)

[00:09:31] **Mae:** It does happen.

[00:09:32] **John Hodgman:** But in any case, it was very nice. Paul, did you want to say something?

[00:09:36] **Paul:** No, apart from like this bus just takes ages. If you want to get to Waterloo, and you're going there for a train. You just like—you have to leave really early or else you're gonna miss your train.

[00:09:44] **Jesse Thorn:** Is it hard to get to Waterloo?

[00:09:46] **Paul:** From our flat, this bus actually is quite convenient. It's just slow and—

[00:09:49] **Jesse Thorn:** What about to escape if you want to?

(Laughter.)

[00:09:52] **John Hodgman:** Jesse, we're not holograms. Paul, do you work at home? Do you have to be—do you have to commute, either of you?

[00:10:04] **Paul:** I'm mixed. I work from home and commute.

[00:10:05] **John Hodgman:** Right. Okay. And Mae?

[00:10:07] **Mae:** I'm fully remote.

[00:10:08] **John Hodgman:** You're fully remote. So, you don't ever have to be anywhere you don't want to be.

[00:10:12] **Mae:** No. And I can usually take my time, you know, watch the world go by.

[00:10:15] **John Hodgman:** How did you get here tonight?

[00:10:17] **Mae:** We walked. I think we—

[00:10:19] **John Hodgman:** Ooooh. That's good. I'm glad that you agreed to walk everywhere until I decided what you will do for the future.

(Laughter.)

[00:10:26] **Mae:** I think we do agree that walking is the best, but if it's too long to walk, then we disagree.

[00:10:31] **John Hodgman:** Then, you have to choose something else, obviously. What's the next slide that you brought?

(Jesse and John "aw".)

[00:10:37] **Mae:** That's Rupert Giles, our pup.

[00:10:40] **John Hodgman:** *(Snorts.)* You know, you could have picked just one of those names, and it would be perfectly adorable, English, and twee. But you had to add both.

[00:10:46] **Mae:** Yeah, he's Rupert Giles.

[00:10:47] **John Hodgman:** What kind of dog is Rupert Giles?

[00:10:50] **Mae:** He's a mut. A Schnauzer/Poodle/Cocker Spaniel.

[00:10:53] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, and wouldn't you agree, Mae, that he looks terrified of being brought into a hole?

[00:10:57] **Mae:** Yes!

(Paul agrees.)

That's why I bring evidence—

[00:10:58] **John Hodgman:** Oh, you agree as well, Paul?!

[00:10:59] **Paul:** Yeah, sometimes you just have to do it.

(Laughter.)

[00:11:03] **Jesse Thorn:** Are you allowed to bring dogs into the subway?

[00:11:06] **Mae:** Of course!

[00:11:07] **Jesse Thorn:** Of course?! That's not self-evident!

[00:11:08] **Paul:** How else do you get anywhere with a dog?

[00:11:11] **Jesse Thorn:** Subways are for people!

[00:11:12] **John Hodgman:** But any pet can go onto the subway at any time?

[00:11:17] **Mae:** I don't know actually.

[00:11:17] **John Hodgman:** Dogs are allowed though.

(Mae confirms.)

[00:11:20] **Paul:** And then, anything in a *(inaudible)* thing.

[00:11:22] **Jesse Thorn:** Right. Can dogs ride the subway without people?

[00:11:26] **Mae:** I've never seen it happen.

[00:11:27] **Jesse Thorn:** What if they have to get to Waterloo?

[00:11:30] **Paul:** There's videos all the time of pigeons jumping onto the tube, riding it a stop or two, and then jumping off. Which yeah, I mean, animals can do what they want.

(Laughter.)

[00:11:41] **John Hodgman:** We ever see a cat on a leash in there? Yes? Thank you. I love—

[00:11:46] **Jesse Thorn:** What about a guy with an iguana on his shoulder?

[00:11:49] **Paul:** Haven't seen that.

[00:11:51] **John Hodgman:** I love seeing a cat on a leash. It's just so humiliating to them.

(Laughter.)

Next slide, please. Oh, Paul, here you are! You're so happy next to your Lego London Underground map.

[00:12:04] **Paul:** This is at the London Transport Museum out here.

(Mae disagrees.)

No? At the London—? TfL?

[00:12:07] **John Hodgman:** Wrong, Paul!

[00:12:10] **Mae:** It's at the TfL depot.

[00:12:11] **Paul:** It's at the TfL depot.

[00:12:12] **John Hodgman:** The what? The what?

[00:12:13] **Paul:** The Transport for London depot, where they store like historically old trains.

[00:12:15] **Mae:** They store all the old trains.

[00:12:17] **Jesse Thorn:** Where they store all their Legos.

[00:12:18] **Paul:** And Lego maps, yeah.

[00:12:20] **John Hodgman:** Well, and who submitted this piece of evidence?

[00:12:23] **Mae:** I submitted it, because I wanted to be nice. Because look at how happy he is.

[00:12:27] **John Hodgman:** He's very happy! Do you have an affection for the underground beyond just its functionality and getting places?

[00:12:33] **Paul:** I like trains in general. I think they're cool.

[00:12:35] **John Hodgman:** You like choo-choo trains?

[00:12:36] **Paul:** Yeah! Yeah, absolutely. I mean, modern trains are great, but choo-choo trains are fantastic as well.

(Laughter.)

[00:12:43] **John Hodgman:** What about funiculars? What about gondolas?

[00:12:48] **Paul:** Yeah. No problem. I've got no problem. No thoughts really any way of a gondola.

[00:12:52] **John Hodgman:** Jesse, if you had to get rid of all subway trains or all funiculars, what would you do?

[00:12:56] **Jesse Thorn:** God, that's hard. I love riding the subway in Los Angeles, but I love riding Angel's Flight, Los Angeles's most famous funicular.

[00:13:05] **John Hodgman:** Of the many famous funiculars in Los Angeles.

[00:13:08] **Paul:** I've ridden that, and it's quite fun.

[00:13:09] **Jesse Thorn:** It's really great, however, it now occurs to me—without the subway, I couldn't get to Angel's Flight, so I'm gonna stick with the subway.

[00:13:18] **John Hodgman:** Alright, the Los Angeles subway is saved.

(Cheers.)

Good job. Good choice.

[00:13:22] **Jesse Thorn:** And with it, my family's trips to the Central Library.

[00:13:25] **John Hodgman:** Paul, what do you like about the train so much? What's the appeal?

[00:13:32] **Paul:** So, more for trains than the tube. I just like when you're on a train, and you know you're going to get somewhere in time if it's working. You just can just sit out and stare out the window. Obviously, that doesn't work on tubes so much, but yeah, I just like—so, on trains, that. On tubes, it's more just, you know, how long a journey is going to take. And so, you know what time you have to leave, and you don't have to guess how long a bus is going to take to get through traffic.

[00:13:54] **John Hodgman:** Yes, and also tracks. They can't just take a left. It's going to go to that station.

[00:13:58] **Paul:** Yeah, absolutely. They're going to go where they're going to go.

[00:14:01] **John Hodgman:** Could skip a station! Terrifying possibility. Could skip a station. But it's going to at least go through the station. Buses, Mae, go anywhere. I mean, you're at the whim of the driver.

[00:14:14] **Mae:** That's kind of part of the magic, right?

[00:14:17] **John Hodgman:** Well...

(Laughter.)

What if the driver wakes up one morning and takes a bunch of psychedelic mushrooms and decides to go rogue? And then, suddenly you're five blocks from where you were supposed to be. The worst possible outcome!

[00:14:27] **Jesse Thorn:** I thought you were going to say, “And suddenly, dogs are allowed to ride the subway.”

[00:14:33] **John Hodgman:** But you like the predictability of trains, is that not right, Paul?

[00:14:36] **Paul:** Yeah, absolutely. You just know how long it's going to take and how—when they're going to turn up.

[00:14:40] **John Hodgman:** Has the train ever let you down, Paul?

[00:14:42] **Paul:** All the time. But much less frequently than a bus would let me down.

[00:14:45] **John Hodgman:** What was the worst train situation you ever had?

[00:14:48] **Paul:** Uh, I spent an hour just sat in a tube train in a tunnel. Like, when they break down, you just—

[00:14:54] **John Hodgman:** Underground. Unable to get out.

[00:14:58] **Paul:** Or text anyone or yeah.

[00:15:00] **John Hodgman:** Or text or communicate with anyone. Just breathing human farts.

[00:15:05] **Paul:** Some of them are mine though. So, it's fine.

[00:15:07] **John Hodgman:** No, no, I understand.

[00:15:08] **Jesse Thorn:** And some of them are dogs'!

(Laughter.)

[00:15:09] **John Hodgman:** Mae, has the bus ever let you down catastrophically?

(Mae confirms.)

What was the worst situation that ever happened?

[00:15:18] **Mae:** There was—well, actually, it's based off of a tube letdown. There was a tube strike a few years ago. So, everyone was on the buses, and the traffic was really bad, because everyone was driving as well. And I got stuck on the number eight bus.

[00:15:31] **John Hodgman:** The 3952.9?

[00:15:33] **Mae:** No, this was the number eight bus right outside St. Paul's Cathedral, and we were just sat there for probably a good hour. But with a bus, you can jump off!

[00:15:40] **John Hodgman:** But you can get out. You can escape.

[00:15:42] **Paul:** But you didn't. You didn't. You took it.

(Mae confirms.)

You could have just got off and walked and been home in an hour.

[00:15:48] **Mae:** It was on my way to work, so I wasn't really in a hurry.

(Laughter.)

[00:15:51] **John Hodgman:** And why was it stopped? Mechanical error?

[00:15:52] **Mae:** Uh, no, it was just traffic jams.

[00:15:54] **John Hodgman:** Oh, yeah, I was going to say what is the difference between a bus that is stopped in traffic and a bus that is operating normally? Zero difference.

[00:15:02] **Mae:** Some of them zoom real fast.

[00:15:04] **John Hodgman:** Some of them zoom fast. Hm. Well, when you—do you have any claustrophobia, Mae? Is this an anti-tube thing?

[00:16:10] **Mae:** Yeah. Yeah, it's partially anti-tube, partially pro-bus. I feel, especially during rush hour, very closed in on a full tube train when you're kind of in a nook of someone's armpit for an hour.

[00:16:24] **John Hodgman:** Yeah. You probably shouldn't be in there. Not without consent.

[00:16:28] **Mae:** Yeah. I agree. It's tough.

[00:16:29] **John Hodgman:** Paul, do you have a similar reaction to buses? You know, like a sense of anxiety?

[00:16:35] **Paul:** A bit. Sometimes. It depends who's on them. Like, as you were saying earlier, it's like the later ones just get quite sketchy. Yeah.

[00:16:43] **John Hodgman:** Yeah. But you don't have my fear that when you're on a bus, the bus driver will just go rogue and take you anywhere?

[00:16:49] **Paul:** I mean, they do take—

[00:16:50] **John Hodgman:** Or maybe you're now thinking about it for the first time.

[00:16:52] **Paul:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. They do take random routes quite often. But—

[00:16:54] **Mae:** They're not random. You can look them up online beforehand.

[00:16:58] **Paul:** Well, they don't normally tell you. They'll just be like, “Oh, something's broken down over there, so we're gonna go—instead of going that, we'll go like that.”

[00:17:03] **Jesse Thorn:** Has this ever negatively affected your life when you've been on the bus, and you've ended up missing an appointment or something similar?

[00:17:11] **Paul:** Well, I like turning off on time. And like, if we're meeting some friends or something, I don't want to be the late person.

[00:17:17] **John Hodgman:** Has that happened a lot?

[00:17:18] **Paul:** All the time, if we take the busses, yeah.

[00:17:19] **John Hodgman:** Would you say—what would be the rate of being late to meet a friend on the—when you take the bus? 100% of the time?

[00:17:27] **Paul:** Uh, I'd say like 75% of the time.

[00:17:29] **Mae:** Mae, do you disagree? That's

[00:17:30] **Mae:** That's probably right. But it's never catastrophically late. It's like 10 minutes.

[00:17:33] **John Hodgman:** Oh, very continental of you!

(Laughter.)

[00:17:37] **Jesse Thorn:** Is part of this that you don't leave enough time to get there on the bus? *(Chuckles.)*

[00:17:41] **Mae:** Yes, for sure. We could give ourselves a lot more time, and we could get there via the bus.

[00:17:47] **Paul:** But we both operate on a sort of just-on-time basis, and—

[00:17:50] **Jesse Thorn:** Like Walmart?

[00:17:51] **Paul:** Yeah, like Walmart, yeah. And if we take the train, you know when it's gonna—you know what you're gonna do and when you're gonna get there.

[00:17:59] **John Hodgman:** Alright, everyone has a preference, but what would you have me rule? Mae, if I were to rule in your favor, no tubes ever?

[00:18:04] **Mae:** I think, to be fair, tubes have a place. But just—*(laughs)* just when—

[00:18:11] **John Hodgman:** I appreciate your fairness. Tubes have a place.

[00:18:15] **Mae:** Yeah, I don't think they should all be destroyed. Yes. But I think we should only take the tube if we have to get somewhere for like a show or a gig where they're—they might like actually close the doors. So, if we were late, it would be catastrophic.

[00:18:25] **John Hodgman:** But meeting friends wouldn't fit that.

(Mae confirms.)

Paul, how do you feel when you're late meeting friends, and is it only 10 minutes or is that—?

[00:18:34] **Paul:** 10 minutes plus. I just feel guilty like why am I making my friends hang around for me, because I'm too late?

[00:18:40] **John Hodgman:** When you know you're late, do you feel like—

[00:18:41] **Paul:** Oh, I'm a texter. I'm like, "I'm gonna be sort of—" Anything over two minutes late, and I'm like a "sorry, I'm running late" text person.

[00:18:46] **John Hodgman:** Well, yeah, sure. But do you feel it physically when you're running late?

(Paul confirms.)

Yeah. Right. Not a fun feeling for you.

[00:18:53] **Jesse Thorn:** What do you feel?

[00:18:55] **Paul:** Just like guilty. You know, all-encompassing guilt.

[00:18:59] **Jesse Thorn:** How is that different from being English?

(Laughter.)

[00:19:02] **Paul:** That might be the problem, yeah. *(Laughs.)*

[00:19:07] **John Hodgman:** What would you have me rule if I were to rule in your favor, Paul? No more buses ever? Fill them all with cement?

[00:19:09] **Paul:** I'd like—every now and then, the bus is okay. I'd like sort of tubes to be the primary option. Like, that's your first choice, and bus is a fallback.

[00:19:19] **John Hodgman:** Right. Right of first refusal for tubes.

(Paul confirms.)

[00:19:23] **Mae:** But when do we then not use the tube? Where do we draw the line?

[00:19:26] **Paul:** Uh, if we're going to Hackney?

(Laughter.)

[00:19:30] **John Hodgman:** Buses are for Hackney only?

(Paul confirms.)

[00:19:33] **Jesse Thorn:** I couldn't agree more and know what that means.

(Laughter.)

[00:19:38] **John Hodgman:** Do we have any more evidence? Yeah, let's see.

[00:19:40] **Jesse Thorn:** Let's take a look up here at a little more evidence.

(The crowd "aw"s.)

Dogs are allowed on buses, too?! No, that's a tube.

[00:19:48] **Paul:** That's a train.

[00:19:49] **John Hodgman:** That's a train. But that's not a—is that a tube train?

[00:19:52] **Mae:** That's like a mainline train.

[00:19:53] **John Hodgman:** A mainline train.

[00:19:55] **Jesse Thorn:** Somebody's mainlining on this train?

[00:19:57] **John Hodgman:** What's his name? Sinjin Phife or whatever?

[00:19:58] **Mae:** Rupert Giles.

[00:20:00] **John Hodgman:** Seems very happy there, on a mainline train.

[00:20:03] **Mae:** Yeah, he's happy there, because he's not underground.

[00:20:05] **John Hodgman:** Because he's not underground. You think he can sense that he's going down deep into a tube full of people in a place where he can't—

(Mae confirms.)

Mm-hm. And, uh, aw!

[00:20:14] **Mae:** That's me on a bus. Look how happy I am in this one!

[00:20:17] **John Hodgman:** What is the steering wheel?

(Laughter.)

[00:20:21] **Mae:** So, part of the reason I love buses is because if you go on the top deck and you sit in the front you can pretend you're driving. Classic. And on this bus, randomly—this was in Jersey, and we went on the top deck, went to the front, and there was a steering wheel just waiting!

[00:20:32] **John Hodgman:** Oh, there's a fake steering wheel for children.

(Laughter.)

[00:20:38] **Mae:** For everyone. It didn't have a sign or anything.

[00:20:40] **John Hodgman:** I thought that that was something that you brought with you on every bus.

[00:20:44] **Mae:** *(Laughs.)* It's a good idea.

[00:20:45] **John Hodgman:** Which is not a terrible idea if you enjoy it. Alright, I think I've heard everything I need to in order to make my decision. I'm going to descend into my underground lair to make my decision. I'll be back in a moment with my verdict.

[00:20:55] **Jesse Thorn:** Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom.

Paul, how do you feel about your chances tonight?

[00:21:01] **Paul:** I think it went pretty well, yeah. I feel like I have a good chance, here. I think he listened to my arguments and gave me a sympathetic review.

[00:21:10] **Jesse Thorn:** Did you see that that timer that was ticking down in front of you turned red?

[00:21:13] **Paul:** Yeah, I did. I was very impressed about how he drove us through with the times.

[00:21:17] **Jesse Thorn:** How do you feel, though? Because it's red now.

[00:21:19] **Paul:** Well, I've seen red means that I've won.

[00:21:21] **Jesse Thorn:** Do you want to send some texts?

(Laughter.)

[00:21:24] **Paul:** This isn't my party, so you can be as late as you want, I think.

[00:21:27] **Jesse Thorn:** Mae, how are you feeling?

[00:21:29] **Mae:** I'm not feeling great, to be honest.

[00:21:31] **John Hodgman:** Are dogs allowed on busses?

(They confirm.)

Why do I live in America?! Dogs everywhere.

[00:21:38] **Mae:** That's a great question.

[00:21:40] **Paul:** There is a reason she's here. That's one of the reasons.

[00:21:42] **Mae:** That's the number one reason, is the dogs on transport.

[00:21:45] **Jesse Thorn:** Well, Paul, Mae, we'll find out what Judge John Hodgman has to say when we come back in just a moment.

[00:21:50] **Transition:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:21:53] **Transition:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:21:55] **Jesse Thorn:** Please rise as Judge John Hodgman reenters the courtroom and presents his verdict.

[00:22:00] **John Hodgman:** (*Sighs.*) I'm getting too old for that bit. So, I have been visiting your country for a long time. My mother was an Anglophile, and she would come up with reasons that we would have to visit. The first time I ever came to London and the first time I ever encountered the underground was when I was about 11 years old. I know that I was 11 years old, because when we came over, I had a head cold, and I got sick, and I had to stay in bed for a couple of days during our visit. And my father brought me a comic book, and it was the June 1983 edition of *The Legion of Superheroes*. And I said to my dad, "Father. A DC comic? Really? You know me not at all." And I tore it up in his face.

(*Laughter.*)

No, he was doing his best. And I like *Legion of Superheroes*. But the first time I ever saw the tube, I remember thinking to myself—maybe even saying out loud, "Oh my god, they really did it. It's a fucking tube." It doesn't have to be a tube! You know, I grew up in Boston, Massachusetts. We have a subway. It's a hallway. You know, it's a square, rectangular hallway. It doesn't have to be a tube like something that a rodent dug. Do you know—? And not only that, it's a tube within a tube. Like, the trains are tubes too. That's just too—I mean, the branding's impeccable. But I mean, if you really want the experience of being deep underground and running through a tube as though you are running away from danger like the rabbits in *Watership Down*, but there's nowhere to go, because the men have plugged up all the holes, and they're sending poison down the holes, that's what riding the tube is like!

And I'm not normally claustrophobic, but it's just the fact that it's curved, and you're like eugh. Really a tube. Not all of them, but some of them. By contrast, I mentioned before I took the bus yesterday, and it was terrible. I was walking. I was walking along a road, a main road, and I happen to have a little Oyster card in my pocket, because I'm an international traveler. And a bus came along, and I'm like, "This will relieve me of my walk." I was starting to feel a little bit tired. I'm too old to be jumping up and down behind a podium all the time. So, I get onto this bus. And I'm looking at my phone, which is tracking its progress. Because I figure, okay, probably a popular mapping application will be able to tell me which route I'm on. And I saw all the routes of the bus, and this bus was on none of them.

(*Laughter.*)

This bus was on no route whatsoever. And it was going down a major road, and then it took a left—no, excuse me, a right—off its route, just to go on its own. My worst possible fear finally come true! It was just doing its own thing. And I got off that bus very fast. And I

hobbled back up to the main road to wait for a different bus. And then, I looked all the—all the signage, you know, on the post to explain to you what to do. And there were 5,000 numbers there, and none of it was comprehensible to me. So, I decided, okay, I think I've got this figured out. I think I'm going to get on—I think it was a 38 bus.

[00:25:07] **Mae:** That's my number one bus.

[00:25:09] **John Hodgman:** That's your number one bus!

[00:25:10] **Mae:** It's the best bus.

[00:25:11] **John Hodgman:** Well, (*censor beep*) that.

(*Laughter.*)

Sorry to swear, but I would ask you please to ring them up and explain that a foreign visitor was excited to ride the number 38 bus, as were many other people—locals, who needed to go to a place. The bus, number 38 bus, came along, slowed down to a stop. The driver looked at all of us and then went, “No.” And then just kept driving.

(*Laughter.*)

No possible explanation for it other than spite. There was no—the bus wasn't full, and just people just were very upset about it. And that's when I gave up on the bus after that. Can you explain why that happened?

[00:26:01] **Mae:** They might not have liked the look of you.

(*Laughter.*)

[00:26:04] **John Hodgman:** It's not just me! It was—I mean, that I would accept!

[00:26:05] **Mae:** You, as a plural of the group, potentially.

[00:26:08] **John Hodgman:** Oh, all of us.

[00:26:09] **Mae:** They could have thought you might have started something.

[00:26:10] **John Hodgman:** No, it was in the middle of the afternoon. This wasn't a night bus. We were all just trying to—

[00:26:14] **Mae:** I don't know!

[00:26:16] **John Hodgman:** Does that happen? The bus just will not stop?

(The crowd and Paul confirm.)

And what reason, Paul?

[00:26:19] **Mae:** Only when it's full!

[00:26:21] **Paul:** Uh, sometimes it's full. Sometimes the driver's just annoying, honestly.

[00:26:25] **John Hodgman:** It does seem to me that the bus is a little less predictable, but that's known. I mean, really, what should be happening here is, you know, people like what they like. You're going to go meet friends. You take the bus. You take the tube, and you'll get there first, and then you'll look, you know, late. And no one will care. But then you don't get to enjoy the company of each other, right? Can you enjoy each other's company on your hated form of transportation?

(They confirm.)

Alright. Well, you can never ride together again.

(Laughter.)

I'm really stuck here, because I don't know what possible standing I could—you would have, Paul, to order Mae to never take the bus again. I think that Mae's solution is reasonable. If you are trying to make a concert, or a movie, or a restaurant reservation—and Mae, if you're meeting friends, you have to take the tube. If you're going for a fantastical joyride through the magical city of London with no real destination and no need to get anywhere—and really riding is kind of optional too, because it might just be sitting and looking—then absolutely take the bus. But if there's something—if you're traveling together and you have to hit a time period, then I do think that you have to go ahead and take the tube. Paul, I rule in your favor. I hope that you will enjoy. But Paul, your friends don't care if you're late.

(Laughter.)

That's something—you can do some deep breathing exercises, exercise some distress tolerance. Do you know what I mean? They don't really care. Just a reminder, no one's really thinking about you as much as you are thinking about yourself. They're all thinking about themselves, and then, you know, it's very rare that you're actually making someone uncomfortable because you're late. But that said, I don't think that you deserve to feel uncomfortable while you're going to a place. And therefore, I rule in favor of the deep, dark tunnel that is the tube. *(Bangs his gavel three times.)* Judge John Hodgman rules, that is all. Thank you.

(Applause.)

[00:28:20] **Jesse Thorn:** Mae and Paul, thank you for joining us on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

(Applause.)

Judge Hodgman really was excited—like, the first thing that John said when we got to London was, and I'm not making this up, “I'm excited to ride the bus!”

[00:28:38] **John Hodgman:** I really wanted—I was really—I mean, I truly was excited to ride the bus. I haven't—I like riding—I actually like riding the tube. And there's one thing that Paul forgot to point out is that, unlike the bus, the tube has stations. Stuff's happening in those stations. There's some busking going on and urination. Other things are happening in the stations, but I was really excited to ride the bus. But the bus sure did cure me of that. That was a terrible experience.

[00:29:05] **Jesse Thorn:** I gotta tell you, I immediately talked smack about how I prefer the subway. And guess what I went out and did immediately thereafter? Yeah, that's right, I got up on the top floor of a double decker right in the front window and enjoyed a long ride to East London.

(Scattered cheers.)

[00:29:19] **John Hodgman:** Did you pretend to steer and go pew-pew-pew like you're firing lasers?

[00:29:23] **Jesse Thorn:** Well, there wasn't a children's steering wheel there, so no.

[00:29:28] **John Hodgman:** Jesse, last time we were here we had a very special musical guest come and sing for us, and it was so wonderful, and I've missed her so much. And I'm happy to say that we're very lucky, because it's going to happen again.

(Jesse confirms.)

Would you please introduce our guest?

[00:29:42] **Jesse Thorn:** Yeah, last time she was here performing under the name of Emmy the Great, but while she remains great, she is also many other things: a singer, songwriter, essayist, and the author of a forthcoming book, *One Person Playing Two Roles: A Cantopop Memoir*.

Please welcome to the stage, Emma-Lee Moss.

[00:30:01] **John Hodgman:** Emma-Lee Moss to the stage, if you please.

(Applause and cheers.)

[00:30:12] **Emma-Lee Moss:** Hi! Hi! Thank you so much. Um, I love the name of your dog. This song is called “Flower Market”. It's the—it's a new song. It's for a music project I haven't done anything with, so it's a secret. *(Laughs.)* But yeah, it's called “Flower Market”.

And I wrote it after finding a voice note of my mum walking through a flower market, criticizing beautiful flowers.

(Laughter.)

Um, thanks.

[00:30:44] **Music:** “Flower Market” performed live by Emma-Lee Moss.

(Speaking Cantonese)

I'll find a wild acre in this life

Put my head down and set in roots

Seeds I sow will soon grow shoots in my wild acre

I'll find a wild acre where there's light

Moving all around the trees at night

Want for nothing when the fruit grows ripe in my wild acre

Marigold, dandelion, lavender, rose, and hyacinth,

And ivy, stinging nettle, artichoke, wild thistle

Moon-colored buffalo in my mind

I'll leave you out in that sweet green rice, babe

And you're a distant tide in your wild acre

(Speaking Cantonese)

You took me to the flower market

So, we could pick up some spring branches

Blossom and throw me a line

We will not pay full price for a glorified bucket

Get into the car, our arms full, we're going home

And I don't even think

I don't even think there's a correlation here

The seasons come around, they come around, they are returning

And this one, this one is my favorite

Moon-colored buffalo in my mind

Meet me out in that sweet green rice

Your mother's voice, your mother's voice is calling you

Calling you, you, you, you, you, you, you

Your mother's voice in your wild acre

[00:34:45] **Emma-Lee Moss:** Thank you.

(Cheers and applause.)

[00:34:57] **John Hodgman:** Emma-Lee Moss, everyone. Hey, Emma, thank you for being here with us. And so, you're in the midst of artistic transition.

[00:35:10] **Emma-Lee Moss:** Aw, that's a nice way of putting it. Yeah, exactly.

[00:35:12] **John Hodgman:** You have ended the project that was known as Emmy the Great.

[00:35:15] **Emma-Lee Moss:** Uh, yeah, I did a final gig, which was really nice. It was like a ritual kind of thing. Yeah. I feel like I should talk into the mic, because I had extensive—so, I have my back to you, I'm sorry.

[00:35:25] **John Hodgman:** Why don't you come around this way, and you can speak into that microphone just for a moment.

(Emma-Lee confirms)

And so, you had a ritual in which you—did you burn yourself in effigy, or—?

[00:35:37] **Emma-Lee Moss:** So, my bandmate said that we should get a cardboard cutout of me and run it over with a car. But we didn't have the budget. So, I just did 12 songs.

(Laughs.) Yeah.

[00:35:49] **John Hodgman:** Fair enough. And what prompted the change?

[00:35:52] **Emma-Lee Moss:** Well, I wanted to do it like a long time ago. I thought I would wrap it up after a certain point and start something new, because I was playing a lot of really old songs, you know, from when I was like 19 years old. And just some of the references had gone out of date. I didn't feel the same way. I often updated the song lyrics, but then it was just like ugh. You know that thing where you're like cutting the broom. It's like an *Only Fools and Horses* thing, and you're just like, "What am I working with here?" So, yeah.

(Laughter.)

[00:36:24] **John Hodgman:** Sure. Oh, I know about that. I know all about that.

[00:36:26] **Emma-Lee Moss:** I also know all about that. I've seen it loads, but I only know that one.

[00:36:30] **Jesse Thorn:** Yeah, Victoria line.

[00:36:32] **Emma-Lee Moss:** Yeah, I like the district line.

(John "wow"s.)

Just to back that person up. I mean, I don't love it. But...

[00:36:40] **John Hodgman:** Are you team tube or team bus?

[00:36:40] **Emma-Lee Moss:** I was—we were sitting back there, and we were discussing every single line. So, we didn't hear everything, but we thought that your ruling was kind.

[00:36:51] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, I know. I'm sorry.

(Laughter.)

Believe me, when we get to Mob Justice, I'm going to be much meaner. It's going to be much more exciting.

[00:36:59] **Jesse Thorn:** It's going to be an absolute bloodbath. We're going to be—we're going to be taking every single one of these audience members, making a cardboard version of them, and running them over with a justice car.

[00:37:07] **John Hodgman:** *(Laughs.)* Yeah, the printing is happening as we speak. We scanned you all as you came in. It's going to be traumatic. I'm sorry, but yeah.

[00:37:14] **Emma-Lee Moss:** I think you guys are going to be nice to everyone. That's the feeling that I get.

[00:37:16] **John Hodgman:** Oh gosh, you're probably right. Sorry.

[00:37:17] **Jesse Thorn:** We'll see.

[00:37:19] **John Hodgman:** I mean, but you—the fact is you were and are great, but I really admire when someone realizes like, “Oh, I'm in a different time as an artist, and it's time to mark that somehow.”

[00:37:29] **Emma-Lee Moss:** Yeah, it felt really good. I mean, I didn't—after the pandemic, um—

[00:37:33] **John Hodgman:** I'm sorry, the what?

[00:37:34] **Emma-Lee Moss:** Yeah, I didn't want to say it. I didn't want to be the first person to say it. So, I sat still for a really long time. And you know, I just couldn't let go, so I actually carried on for another two years. Because I was like, I really need to hold on to these old songs. And then it got to the point where I could actually feel like the old me knocking about inside just being like, “You need to move on!” So.

[00:37:57] **John Hodgman:** And so, you are, and you have this book coming out.

[00:38:01] **Emma-Lee Moss:** I am writing it and definitely, fingers crossed, it will come out when I've written it.

(Laughter.)

[00:38:09] **John Hodgman:** Historically, that is the order in which it happens. So, that's good news for you.

[00:38:14] **Emma-Lee Moss:** I have to write it.

[00:38:14] **John Hodgman:** And what is it about?

[00:38:15] **Emma-Lee Moss:** It's about my life in Hong Kong. I have I've lived some of my life in Hong Kong, and I've listened to music there that I haven't listened to publicly here. So, it's about like de compartmentalization and the music of—like, fandom and the music of Hong Kong.

[00:38:37] **John Hodgman:** This is Cantopop?

(Emma-Lee confirms.)

Which I'm not familiar with the genre.

[00:38:40] **Emma-Lee Moss:** Um, well. You gotta read my book. No, I'll send you a playlist.

[00:38:43] **John Hodgman:** Well, when you finish it, Maybe it'll be published.

(Emma-Lee agrees with a laugh.)

And then, I will walk to the store and give money for it. You will get a small portion of it. I will leave it on my bedside table and be like, “Why am I not reading that? Why am I just reading Am I the Asshole on Reddit again tonight?”

(Laughter.)

[00:38:58] **Emma-Lee Moss:** I will send you a PDF.

[00:39:01] **John Hodgman:** That's very kind. Thank you very much!

[00:39:02] **Emma-Lee Moss:** Yeah, I will send you a PDF. Um, yeah, no, it's the music of Hong Kong. It's sung in Cantonese. Some of the stars are like Faye Wong.

(Laughter.)

[00:39:16] **John Hodgman:** Well, you'll learn when you all read the book.

[00:39:18] **Emma-Lee Moss:** People usually know—some people usually know.

[00:39:19] **John Hodgman:** Is there anything else, since you have the ear of literally tens of *Judge John Hodgman* fans, that you'd like people to know about, about this new phase in your life, or a website to go to, or a social media account, or anything? This is just what we have to do.

[00:39:33] **Emma-Lee Moss:** Oh, about me? *(Laughing.)* My website just says, “Emmy the Great is a former project.” Every now and then I get like worried letters from people being like, “What? What's happened?” Yeah, no, I just, you all—you sound great. The laughter is really getting across on the feed in there.

[00:39:55] **John Hodgman:** We usually don't give them notes until a little bit later in the program, but uh, I appreciate that. Thank you.

[00:39:59] **Emma-Lee Moss:** Yeah, no, thank you for having me. It's been so nice.

[00:40:02] **John Hodgman:** Thank you. Will you come back a little later maybe and sing something with me?

(She confirms.)

Okay, good. Emma-Lee Moss, everyone!

(Cheers and applause.)

[00:40:10] **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.

[00:40:17] **Transition:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:40:20] **Transition:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:40:23] **John Hodgman:** Jesse, we talk about the airing and quashing of beefs. Does that phrase track? Do people have beefs with each other in the UK? Is that a term that you understand for a dispute?

(Murmuring from the audience.)

Yes? No? Yes? Okay, good. Because we have more beefs to settle, including a beef that has something to do with beef. And I feel like we need an expert to help us with this.

[00:40:45] **Jesse Thorn:** Yeah, I agree, Judge Hodgman. Luckily, the two of us happen to know an actual expert on the subject of beef who lives right here in the United Kingdom. He's the creator of the *Beef and Dairy Network*, one of the funniest podcasts in any genre, no matter what meat it concerns. It will be recording live tomorrow, here at the London Podcast Festival, but we're lucky to have him here with us right now. Please welcome our expert witness: Benjamin Partridge.

(Cheers and applause.)

[00:41:19] **John Hodgman:** Benjamin Partridge to the stage, please.

[00:41:24] **Benjamin Partridge:** Hello!

[00:41:25] **John Hodgman:** Mr. Benjamin Partridge, thank you for being here. Before we hear this beef beef, can you tell us a little bit more about beef, so that we have all the information we need to hear the case properly?

[00:41:37] **Benjamin Partridge:** Yeah, for sure. Um, let's start with an easy one. Have you guys heard of a beef?

(Scattered laughter and applause.)

[00:41:46] **Jesse Thorn:** It's coming through pretty well on the monitors backstage.

[00:41:50] **John Hodgman:** Yeah. It's carrying.

[00:41:51] **Benjamin Partridge:** That's a worrying level of beef awareness, but I have got a little PowerPoint that will help some of these people out with—

[00:41:58] **Jesse Thorn:** During our show?

[00:42:00] **Benjamin Partridge:** Well, this is like a section within your show which kind of becomes my show. It's like diplomatic waters or, you know, an embassy.

[00:42:07] **Jesse Thorn:** Okay. I mean, I assume that we would have to like—but we can't—oh.

[00:42:13] **John Hodgman:** Oh, he set it up already.

[00:42:14] **Benjamin Partridge:** Here we go.

[00:42:16] **John Hodgman:** He hacked into our system, it would seem. Yes.

[00:42:20] **Benjamin Partridge:** So, I'm aware you're not here to see my podcast, but I just thought there's a few facts I'd like to get across to people before you can really get into these cases you've got coming up.

[00:42:28] **John Hodgman:** Yes, I appreciate that.

[00:42:30] **Benjamin Partridge:** And first fact to take away with you, if you learn nothing else from me this evening, it is that in the dictionary, the plural of beef is beaves.

(Laughter.)

There it is. So, there we go.

[00:42:49] **John Hodgman:** Now, it's a disturbing word on its own, and somehow when it's pixelated that way, it becomes nauseating.

(Laughter.)

[00:43:00] **Benjamin Partridge:** But also, a great name for a baby. You know, I've—

[00:43:04] **John Hodgman:** Beaves?

[00:43:05] **Jesse Thorn:** If anyone here is expecting!

(Laughter.)

[00:43:09] **Benjamin Partridge:** Now, I don't know how much people are aware here of how almost any meat in the universe can be categorized into four categories. And really there are only actually four meats.

[00:43:21] **John Hodgman:** No, I've never—

[00:43:22] **Jesse Thorn:** I've heard rumors—never mind.

[00:43:26] **Benjamin Partridge:** So, are you aware of this?

[00:43:27] **John Hodgman:** I always thought that—I think there are more than four meats.

[00:43:33] **Benjamin Partridge:** No. No, so, okay. Let's explain. So, in the early 1900s there started to be more and more meats discovered. So, you've got venison, for example. What do you do with that? From a tax perspective, it was a problem. Okay? And this is a—*(chuckles)* this was a sort of newsletter that came out, back at the time. It was called the *Livestock and Meat Situation*. And by 1950, this problem of how to tax different meats became an actual problem for tax, like the IRS in America and the HCRC here. And that's the only two tax bodies that I know about. But there are—you'll have one if you come from another country. I mean, they needed to know like how to tax all these different kinds of meats. Should there be one tax rate for all meats? That seems mad.

So, what they did was, they came up with a sort of—an idea where all meats could be put into three categories. So, it was either beef, lamb, or chicken. Okay? Then, of course, if you know your history, in the '70s there was another edition of this where they realized that really pork is a meat.

(Laughter.)

Really, pork is a meat.

[00:44:40] **John Hodgman:** That had been controversial for some time. Right.

[00:44:43] **Benjamin Partridge:** Yeah, they didn't know what to do with it. And they thought no, no, no, pork's its own thing.

[00:44:46] **Jesse Thorn:** Things were changing. *Mary Tyler Moore Show*, etc..

[00:44:47] **John Hodgman:** Exactly, so. Yeah, right.

[00:44:51] **Benjamin Partridge:** And so, all meats you can think of can be fitted into this taxonomy of meats. So, for example, venison goes in beef. That is, of course, forest beef.

(Laughter.)

Rabbit, hedgerow—pork meat. Goat, mountain lamb. Goose, violent chicken.

(Laughter.)

Pheasant, posh chicken. Quail, weird chicken.

(Jesse guffaws.)

Now, I know what some of the sharper ones amongst you are thinking. “Ben! What about fish?” Right. What about fish?

[00:45:30] **Jesse Thorn:** Hey, Ben, what about fish?

[00:45:33] **Benjamin Partridge:** Here we go! Now, this is a live issue, and I've got to say there's no consensus really on how this works.

[00:45:36] **John Hodgman:** Hang on. Let's do this all together. On three: Ben, what about fish? One, two, three.

[00:45:43] **Everyone:** *(In unison.)* Ben, what about fish!?

[00:45:45] **Benjamin Partridge:** Well, I'm glad you asked. Now there's no consensus about this, but if we look at what scientists in general are coming to, you can plot most fish onto this. So, for example, in America you have a tuna called chicken of the sea. So, you'd think then that obviously tuna goes into chicken. Wrong! You get tuna steaks. It's beef. Then, obviously salmon is pork, prawns are lamb. It's pretty—once you get into it, it starts coming naturally. It seems—

[00:46:15] **John Hodgman:** Wait! Why is it obvious that salmon is pork?!

[00:46:20] **Benjamin Partridge:** Sorry?

[00:46:21] **John Hodgman:** Why is it obvious that salmon is pork?

[00:46:22] **Jesse Thorn:** Well, it's right there.

[00:46:23] **John Hodgman:** Oh. Oh, sorry. I didn't see that. I was looking somewhere else.

[00:46:27] **Benjamin Partridge:** Sorry, it seems the judge isn't getting the feel of it. It's a feel thing. It's a vibe thing.

[00:46:30] **John Hodgman:** Okay. Salmon vibes pork to you.

[00:46:33] **Jesse Thorn:** And can I just say? The vibes are pristine.

(Laughter.)

[00:46:39] **Benjamin Partridge:** You could—if you threw a salmon at a grizzly bear, it would catch it in his mouth. If you threw a pig at a grizzly bear, similar thing.

[00:46:46] **Jesse Thorn:** That's a great point, Ben.

[00:46:48] **John Hodgman:** I presume this has been tested.

[00:46:52] **Benjamin Partridge:** Now, final bit of knowledge for you. Could there ever be a fifth meat?

(A voice in the audience says “no”.)

[00:47:00] **Benjamin Partridge:** No. There couldn't.

[00:47:01] **John Hodgman:** I don't—I don't know about that. I mean, back in 1975, we thought there were only three meats. Now we all agree that—

[00:47:07] **Jesse Thorn:** *(Shushing him.)* There's no fifth meat.

[00:47:10] **Benjamin Partridge:** There's no such thing as...

(Laughter.)

[00:47:14] **John Hodgman:** But—

[00:47:15] **Jesse Thorn:** No!

(Laughter.)

[00:47:20] **John Hodgman:** Eel?

[00:47:21] **Jesse Thorn:** NO!

[00:47:22] **John Hodgman:** Eel. Smoked eel.

[00:47:25] **Benjamin Partridge:** So, eel is a kind of aquatic snake. And a snake is a rope of chicken.

(Laughter.)

[00:47:44] **John Hodgman:** Iguana?

[00:47:47] **Benjamin Partridge:** I don't actually know that one. I guess—let's think about it. Mm. Again, it's a feel thing. I think it's pork.

[00:47:56] **John Hodgman:** If you threw it at a bear...

[00:47:57] **Benjamin Partridge:** If you threw it at a bear. I mean, the problem with the “if you threw it at a bear” thing is like lots of stuff—it would go a similar way.

[00:48:04] **John Hodgman:** Lots of stuff becomes pork in that way.

(Benjamin confirms.)

[00:48:06] **Jesse Thorn:** Oh, I thought the problem was throwing the llama.

[00:48:09] **Benjamin Partridge:** Llama?!

[00:48:11] **Jesse Thorn:** Oh, I thought it was the llama that’s pork.

[00:48:12] **John Hodgman:** No, Iguana is what I said. Sometimes they eat—sometimes they eat—

[00:48:13] **Jesse Thorn:** Oh, iguana. Well, I'd throw that in a bear. Get out of here, iguana!

[00:48:18] **Benjamin Partridge:** Look, I'll throw anything in a bear.

[00:48:20] **John Hodgman:** Alright, well I'll keep thinking about this fifth meat.

[00:48:23] **Benjamin Partridge:** There's no such thing as a fifth meat!

[00:48:25] **John Hodgman:** I think there has to be a fifth meat.

[00:48:26] **Jesse Thorn:** No, John. We have a case.

[00:48:29] **John Hodgman:** Alright. Thank you very much, Benjamin Partridge, for your presentation.

[00:48:32] **Benjamin Partridge:** My pleasure.

(Cheers and applause.)

[00:48:34] **John Hodgman:** I find this very troubling. But you are the expert after all. And I believe that we have a beef beef to hear right now. So, Jesse, could you invite the litigants to the stage?

[00:48:47] **Jesse Thorn:** Please welcome the stage, Tim and Belle.

[00:48:50] **John Hodgman:** Tim and Belle, please come to the stage.

(Cheers and applause.)

[00:48:54] **Jesse Thorn:** Tim is a hospice chaplain. He used to have a podcast called *God or Whatever*, and Jesse was a guest on it one time. He's a vegetarian. Belle is a graphic designer and is currently not a vegetarian.

[00:49:06] **John Hodgman:** Interesting. So, Tim and Belle, what is the podcast that you had or have?

[00:49:12] **Tim:** It was a podcast I did in lockdown, because we all did podcasts in lockdown, right?

[00:49:16] **John Hodgman:** No, no, some of us did it before lockdown.

(Tim affirms.)

Some of us were actually doing it professionally for some time, before it was decided that everyone should do it.

[00:49:26] **Tim:** And there was a little bit of IP theft involved, because I called it *God or Whatever*. Oh, and I did message you—

[00:49:32] **Jesse Thorn:** Wait a minute, what? Hold on. Why did you start a podcast during lockdown? You're not an actor who's much more famous than we are.

(Laughter.)

[00:49:40] **Tim:** No, but my ego says I am. *(Chuckles.)*

[00:49:42] **John Hodgman:** No, but you called it *God or Whatever*, which is a reference to the way we swear people in and the way I see reality. And that's very nice. And you interviewed Jesse.

[00:49:52] **Tim:** I did, yeah. It was good.

[00:49:54] **Jesse Thorn:** I had a nice time.

[00:49:55] **John Hodgman:** I didn't get an email from you.

[00:49:57] **Tim:** You didn't reply.

[00:49:58] **John Hodgman:** Is that so?

[00:49:59] **Tim:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. I messaged you both on Instagram.

[00:50:00] **John Hodgman:** Oh! Oh, yeah. I don't check that very often. And the podcast is done now?

(Tim confirms.)

Well, I'm not available anyway.

(Laughter.)

So, Belle, you say you are not a vegetarian currently, but it says here that you want to be. Is that correct?

(Belle confirms.)

But it also says that you would like to make one exception to your vegetarianism. Is that correct? And what would that exception be?

[00:50:25] **Belle:** Steak.

[00:50:25] **John Hodgman:** Ah.

(Laughter.)

You want to be a vegetarian, but you want to eat steak? Beef?

(Belle confirms.)

How often would you eat beef? How many beaves would you have in a year? Like, is this a once-a-year thing on your birthday, or—?

[00:50:44] **Belle:** Um, probably about as much as I do now, which is once every couple of weeks or so.

[00:50:48] **John Hodgman:** Okay. That's—how do you respond to that, Tim? What is your opinion on that?

[00:50:54] **Tim:** I mean, it's never been an issue that Belle eats meat. But if you eat steak, you're not a vegetarian. You can eat meat. But you can't be a vegetarian who eats steak.

(Laughter.)

It's not a vegetarian!

[00:51:07] **Jesse Thorn:** Wait, sorry. So, she's—maybe you didn't hear. She's a vegetarian, but she eats steak.

[00:51:14] **Tim:** Well, she's—she isn't. Um.

(Laughter.)

So, I got a text from Belle. She'd been at a festival in her friend Martin's garden called MartFest, and she got drunk and decided to be a vegetarian, but still wants to eat steak—but wants the glory of being a vegetarian.

[00:51:35] **Jesse Thorn:** Wait, she was an omnivore who got drunk and decided to not eat meat?! It's 100% supposed to be the other way around.

(Laughter.)

[00:51:44] **John Hodgman:** Describe your conversion experience, such as it is.

[00:51:49] **Belle:** Well, a lot of my friends—

[00:51:51] **John Hodgman:** First of all, what was the festival that you were trying to buzz market that you were at? I missed it.

[00:51:56] **Belle:** It's not a real festival.

[00:51:55] **Jesse Thorn:** It was their friend Martin's festival, MarFest.

(Laughter.)

[00:52:01] **Belle:** Yeah. It's just his birthday party.

[00:52:02] **John Hodgman:** How often does MarFest happen?

[00:52:04] **Belle:** Annually.

[00:52:05] **John Hodgman:** Annually? Yeah, yeah. Was it like Burning Man this year? Did you get rained on and stuck in the mud?

[00:52:10] **Tim:** Elon Musk was there.

[00:52:11] **John Hodgman:** Ah! Musk made it to MarFest. Very good. So, you were at MarFest. What's going on at MarFest, exactly?

[00:52:19] **Belle:** It's just a barbecue, but most of the people there are vegetarians or vegans. So, every year—

[00:52:24] **John Hodgman:** Uh-huh. What's being barbecued then?

[00:52:26] **Belle:** Well, there's a few meat eaters there. But it becomes a bit of a discussion every year.

[00:52:31] **John Hodgman:** And you got a little bit—you got a little bit tipsy. What were you drinking? Steak juice.

[00:52:37] **Tim:** White Claw. You were drinking White Claw.

[00:52:39] **Belle:** Oh yeah, White Claw, yeah. Yeah.

(Laughter.)

[00:52:40] **John Hodgman:** Oh. You can't remember. *(Mumbling.)* Never mind, I'm not gonna...

[00:52:47] **Jesse Thorn:** I'm a teetotaler except for White Claw.

(Laughter.)

[00:52:53] **John Hodgman:** So, you had a few too many Claws. And what moved you to become a vegetarian, and what does it mean to you to become a vegetarian if you are still eating—like, leave the steak thing aside. What will change?

[00:53:08] **Belle:** Well, for me, I think I care about the environmental impact of eating meat, so that would be my motivation for it. But steak's delicious, so I don't want to give that up.

[00:53:20] **John Hodgman:** Sure. But you will give up—otherwise, how often—like, how much meat—? I'll ask Tim, how much meat does she eat?

[00:53:29] **Tim:** It's a fair amount.

(Laughter.)

[00:53:32] **John Hodgman:** Would this be a major lifestyle—? Even if she were to—?

(Tim confirms.)

Yeah. It's a fairly big lifestyle change, even if she kept steak in the—? Right.

[00:53:38] **Tim:** Totally. It would be a big lifestyle change. And to be clear, I would really support it, but you just couldn't be called a vegetarian. That's all. Like, you eating less meat I'm really up for, but you can't have the label of vegetarian. In my opinion.

[00:53:51] **John Hodgman:** What would be a great label? What's your relationship?

[00:53:54] **Tim:** We're boyfriend and girlfriend.

[00:53:56] **John Hodgman:** Boyfriend and girlfriend, so you get to tell her what she eats and how she describes herself.

(Laughter. Tim disagrees.)

What would be the appropriate label for a steak-itarian?

[00:54:07] **Tim:** Just like normal.

[00:54:09] **John Hodgman:** A low-meat-itarian?

[00:54:11] **Tim:** Yeah. Some people say flexitarian, but they're wankers.

(Laughter and applause.)

[00:54:17] **Jesse Thorn:** He's a hospital chaplain!

[00:54:20] **Tim:** Hospice. Hospice, now.

[00:54:22] **Jesse Thorn:** Oh, hospice! Holy cow!

[00:54:23] **John Hodgman:** That's different.

[00:54:24] **Tim:** They don't mind. They don't mind.

[00:54:24] **John Hodgman:** We all know they're assholes. Benjamin Partridge, do you have an opinion on this, as an expert on beef and meat in general?

[00:54:33] **Benjamin Partridge:** I guess like I do have a problem with vegetarians, because they're some of the few people you can rely on not to be eating lamb. But you know, what are you giving up? Pate Wednesdays?

(Laughter.)

Like, I want to get a better sense of what you're giving up, actually. 'Cause it sounds like you're—

[00:54:51] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, what are some of the favorite foods that you would be giving up?

[00:54:54] **Belle:** Oh, chicken wings, lamb kebabs. Yeah.

[00:54:58] **Benjamin Partridge:** Mm. Sounds good, doesn't it?

[00:55:00] **Belle:** McDonald's, Wendy's. There's so many good meats.

[00:55:02] **Jesse Thorn:** You know what? I'm with you. Tim, you should eat meat.

(Laughter.)

[00:55:07] **Tim:** This has backfired.

[00:55:09] **John Hodgman:** Is there a way, Benjamin Partridge, to classify steak as some kind of—some kind of meaty vegetable?

[00:55:15] **Benjamin Partridge:** Some kind of sentient vegetable? Yeah.

[00:55:20] **Belle:** Cows are vegetarians.

[00:55:22] **John Hodgman:** Say it again?

[00:55:23] **Belle:** Cows are vegetarians. So, by extension—

[00:55:25] **John Hodgman:** Cow are vegetarians. So—

[00:55:26] **Jesse Thorn:** That's a really good point. If you—if you think—

[00:55:28] **John Hodgman:** *(Interrupting.)* But you—hang on! Hang on a second. I have—I really think Bella is onto something here.

(Tim disagrees.)

I'm a vegetarian. I follow the vegetarian diet, because I only eat vegetarians.

(Laughter.)

This is pretty good, Tim, you have to admit. This is a good argument.

[00:55:50] **Tim:** I'm not happy about it. I'm not happy about it.

[00:55:53] **John Hodgman:** Why does it matter to you what she calls herself, Tim?

[00:55:58] **Tim:** It's stolen valor.

[00:56:03] **Benjamin Partridge:** Earlier, Tim, you used the phrase—I think the phrase was the “glory of vegetarians”. That's not a thing. I don't think that's a thing.

(Laughter.)

[00:56:11] **Jesse Thorn:** No, that's a thing. It's in the Bible.

[00:56:15] **Tim:** Yeah, it's in the back somewhere.

[00:56:17] **John Hodgman:** What—define the glory of vegetarianism for you, Tim.

[00:56:23] **Tim:** Well, you—I mean, you're right. There is no glory. That's probably the wrong word, but like it's a sacrifice, right? Like, I used to like meat, and then I became a vegetarian, and it was a hard choice that I made. I mean, I feel like I'm really like blowing my own trumpet, but yeah. It's a choice. It's a hard choice.

[00:56:38] **John Hodgman:** And how long have you been a vegetarian?

[00:56:41] **Tim:** Like 10 years.

[00:56:43] **John Hodgman:** Alright. Yeah. Well, trumpet blown, Tim. Good job.

(Tim thanks him.)

Belle, there's something you wanted to say?

[00:56:49] **Belle:** Um, Tim's a hypocrite.

(Tim "woah"s.)

[00:56:53] **John Hodgman:** Yes! I'll allow it!

[00:56:56] **Tim:** I can't believe you're doing this.

[00:56:57] **Belle:** He asked me not to bring this up.

[00:56:59] **Tim:** I can't believe you're doing this.

[00:57:01] **Benjamin Partridge:** He once ate a dog!

(Laughter.)

[00:57:05] **Jesse Thorn:** On the subway.

[00:57:06] **John Hodgman:** That eats meat! A meat-eating dog on the subway!

[00:57:12] **Emma-Lee Moss:** Tim is a consumer of cod liver oil.

[00:57:14] **Tim:** Because I have arthritis.

(Laughter.)

It's a medical condition. I have to take it. I'm not happy about it!

[00:57:22] **Benjamin Partridge:** She needs steak! She's got anemia, haven't you?

[00:57:25] **Belle:** Yeah, actually I do! *(Laughs.)*

[00:57:27] **John Hodgman:** Well, wait a minute. Wait a minute. Wait a minute. You take cod liver oil medicinally.

[00:57:31] **Tim:** Yes. But not for pleasure. I hate it. It's horrible.

[00:57:34] **John Hodgman:** No, I know. But I mean, I don't know that—can you even categorize that as meat? Or would that not be a kind of fifth meat, Benjamin Partridge?

(Laughter.)

Where would that fit into your little rubric?

(Benjamin disagrees.)

Cod liver oil, if you will.

[00:57:49] **Benjamin Partridge:** No, that's a secretion. That's a whole different thing.

[00:57:53] **John Hodgman:** Alright, Tim, then you are merely a secretist. And as for you, Belle, I have to say that it is it—there is no particular glory. Well, I'm not going to say that. It's wonderful being a vegetarian. Being a vegetarian is a very thoughtful way to live. It's not for me.

(Laughter.)

But I admire those who do eat a vegetarian and a vegan diet and so forth. And good for you, Tim. Enjoy your glory and your secretionism.

(Tim thanks him.)

And but Belle, I just—I don't know. I'm caught between two points here. On the one hand, Belle would be lying. On the other hand, I don't like Tim saying that Belle can't be whatever she wants to be. So, I'm going to say this: I really like your solution, Belle, that you only eat vegetarian animals.

(Laughter.)

[00:58:50] **Benjamin Partridge:** So, now lamb is open to you, goat. Basically, all of them.

[00:58:57] **Jesse Thorn:** She can't eat wolf.

[00:59:00] **John Hodgman:** I think you should say, "I don't eat meat except for vegetarian animals. And also, vegetarians are possible." This is the sound of a gavel. Judge John Hodgman rules. That is all. *(He bangs his gavel three times.)*

[00:59:11] **Jesse Thorn:** Tim and Belle.

(Cheers and applause.)

Let's welcome to the stage Tim and Tamlin!

[00:59:20] **John Hodgman:** Tim and Tamlin are now coming to the stage. Thank you for Tim and Belle. Now, you come to us from Vancouver, British Columbia. Is that so?

(Tim confirms loudly.)

Look at the incredible mic skills on all of these litigants tonight. Let me tell you something. We—you know, we've toured all over the world, and nowhere but London do people know take the microphone and shove it right in your mouth. So, good job.

(Tim thanks him.)

Nah, it's too much, Tim.

(Laughter.)

Tamlin, it says in your complaint that 10 years ago, you made the greatest sandwich ever, but Tim refused to eat it.

(Tamlin confirms.)

And this has gone on for 10 years.

[01:00:03] **Tamlin:** Upwards of 10 years.

[01:00:04] **John Hodgman:** Upwards of 10 years. Take me back to the day 10 years ago. And, as we discussed, don't reveal the ingredients of the sandwich, please. That's going to be an incredible surprise for the audience.

[01:00:18] **Tamlin:** *(Laughs.)* It was an ordinary day.

[01:00:21] **John Hodgman:** It was an ordinary day in Vancouver, British Columbia.

[01:00:24] **Tamlin:** In Vancouver. A little bit rainy.

[01:00:25] **John Hodgman:** Yes, very ordinary!

[01:00:27] **Tamlin:** Yeah, and we were having lunch. We—this was before we had children, so we were independent adults making our own lunches for ourselves. Tim had made his lunch; he had finished it. I made the best sandwich I've ever made. I took a bite and just was overcome. And I said, “Oh, Tim! Like, you have to try this sandwich. It's the best sandwich ever.”

And he responded with, “I got a good mouthfeel.” And then refused.

[01:01:03] **John Hodgman:** I've got a good mouthfeel.

[01:01:06] **Tim:** I had a really good mouthfeel.

[01:01:09] **John Hodgman:** (*Stammering.*) Don't keep saying it like it means something!

(*Laughter.*)

You refused to eat the sandwich because you already had—and I quote—“a good mouthfeel”. Explain what you're talking about.

[01:01:20] **Tim:** A really good mouthfeel. Yeah, I have preferences around textures, and I used to be a very picky eater. So, you know, I really couldn't—nothing mushy. It just wouldn't work for me. I wish—

[01:01:31] **John Hodgman:** Was this a mushy sandwich?

[01:01:33] **Tamlin:** No! Absolutely not!

[01:01:35] **John Hodgman:** Let the record show: not a mushy sandwich. Go ahead, Tim.

[01:01:39] **Tim:** I guess I don't know the answer if it was or not, yeah. But I had just eaten—I wish I could recall, but it was something that probably had texture, probably a lot of crunch, something soft. And it was good! There was probably some butter in it, and it just left me with a really nice feel in my mouth.

[01:01:51] **Tamlin:** Probably.

[01:01:53] **Tim:** Probably. But I was in harmonious bliss. I was in a good state. And I—

[01:01:56] **John Hodgman:** You didn't want to introduce anything that would disturb your already existing good mouthfeel.

(Tim agrees and thanks him.)

What—? And so, it was just like, you know, just like a little saliva-y but a little extra—I don't know. You don't remember what you ate, right? There's a little aftertaste of mayonnaise or something?

(Tim agrees.)

That's what I call a good mouthfeel. Hmm. And since then, have you ever tried to make the sandwich again?

[01:02:23] **Tamlin:** I have. I think that the issue was really on that day, the stars aligned, all of the ratios were perfect—the crunchiness of the lettuce—

(John “bup-bup-bup”s to interrupt her.)

I mean—

[01:02:40] **John Hodgman:** I will—I happen to have the sandwich here, made to your specifications. And Tim, I'm going to taste this sandwich. You say this is the most delicious sandwich ever?

[01:02:55] **Tamlin:** It was the most—it was the most delicious sandwich ever, and Tim's refusal to eat the sandwich was very disappointing to me.

[01:03:06] **John Hodgman:** How does that make you feel?

[01:03:09] **Tim:** This was 13 years ago. And it lives on. The argument lives on. And she—the nickname she's given me is “a batty, catty, scaredy-mouth”, because I wouldn't eat the sandwich.

[01:03:17] **Tamlin:** Because he had a scaredy mouth! A little scaredy mouth.

[01:03:22] **John Hodgman:** Batty, catty, scaredy-mouth Tim.

[01:03:25] **Tim:** Catalyst for bad things whose mouth fears new flavors, effectively.

[01:03:28] **John Hodgman:** Oh, sure, no, I know the dictionary definition.

(Tim apologizes.)

Catalyst for bad things who avoids new flavors. Is this a problem in your life otherwise?

[01:03:38] **Tim:** It was. I've grown tremendously, I think.

[01:03:41] **Tamlin:** There—I think there—yes. The—

[01:03:42] **John Hodgman:** What sort of things was Tim avoiding? Obviously, mushy.

[01:03:47] **Tamlin:** Yeah, well I think that it was sort of a general fear of anything that wasn't sort of—*(laughs)*.

[01:03:56] **John Hodgman:** Oh, sorry! Excuse me. Sorry, go on.

[01:03:57] **Tamlin:** Very much a steak man. So, he'd want a steak—

[01:04:01] **John Hodgman:** Oh, a vegetarian you mean.

(Laughter.)

I see. What sort of foods are you averse to?

[01:04:11] **Tim:** Nothing now. Tamlin—

[01:04:13] **John Hodgman:** Was there any intervention? Did you seek any therapy or was it—? No, I mean, you know, people have food aversions that they have to work through. I'm now trying to get a sense of how serious it was.

[01:04:22] **Tim:** Tamlin's family eats a wonderfully diverse array of foods, and eventually, just through enough exposure, I grew. I was willing to experience new things, and now I'll kind of eat anything.

[01:04:33] **John Hodgman:** Can you give an example of a thing that you didn't want to have and then you tried, and now you enjoy it?

[01:04:38] **Tim:** There's an eggplant dish that you can get at dim sum that's—it looks really mushy and goopy, but when you actually bite it—I mean, it is mushy, but it's got all these other—it's wonderful.

[01:04:47] **Tamlin:** Shrimp. Eggplant.

[01:04:48] **Tim:** Oh, shrimps. Oh, it's lovely. Yeah. And now it's a favorite.

[01:04:52] **John Hodgman:** Does it have a name? No?

[01:04:54] **Tim:** *(Stammering.)* It does.

[01:04:56] **John Hodgman:** It does. Okay. It was a yes or no question. Perfect. And yet you have never tried this sandwich in 13 years. You've never tried to make it for him again?

[01:05:06] **Tamlin:** Well, I was fearful of his scary mouth. I didn't wanna be rejected again.

[01:05:12] **John Hodgman:** Right. You've already been burned once by this non-mushy sandwich. Alright. I'm gonna give it a—shall I give it a try?

[01:05:20] **Jesse Thorn:** I'd love to hear what you think about the sandwich. Wouldn't you guys love to hear about it?

(Cheers and applause.)

[01:05:23] **John Hodgman:** I mean, if there's one thing people who listen to podcasts love, it's people eating on microphones.

(Laughter.)

[01:05:31] **Jesse Thorn:** John, what's in the sandwich?

[01:05:32] **John Hodgman:** Well, hang on. Let me see if I can detect it first.

(Laughter.)

(Chewing.) So, it's on a ciabatta roll. And—mm. I made it to your specifications. So, there's mustard. There's hummus, which was interesting. And by the way, mushy. Just to be fair to Tim.

(Tim thanks him.)

Hang on. *(Mouth full.)* You wanna get in on this, Tim?

[01:06:08] **Tim:** I really—yeah, I really do. Do you want me to go to the back end, or can I bite where you bit? What do you want? I'll go to the back end. Yeah.

(Laughter.)

[01:06:17] **John Hodgman:** Please. This is more than I expected.

(Tamlin agrees.)

[01:06:21] **Tim:** *(Mouth full.)* You want a bite?

[01:06:22] **John Hodgman:** Yep. There's mature cheddar. You want some? Wow.

[01:06:24] **Tamlin:** Yeah. Well, I can tell you how closely you approximated.

[01:06:29] **John Hodgman:** Do we remember which side we're eating from?

[01:06:30] **Tamlin:** No.

[01:06:31] **Tim:** Go middle.

[01:06:32] **Tamlin:** Okay, yeah, I'll go middle.

[01:06:33] **John Hodgman:** We're back at it, folks! Civilization. We've learned nothing! No, I just—I'm gonna keep—I want you both to live. There was an—there was a time when I was going like, “Tamlin should bring the sandwich in herself.” And then I realized, no, no, no, I would like to live. I don't know who this person is. I don't know what kind of mushrooms you're gonna slip into this sandwich. Roofie me with your delicious sandwich. It's pretty good! There's pickle. Mature cheddar. Crispy lettuce.

[01:07:04] **Tamlin:** That lettuce is a little wilted.

[01:07:06] **John Hodgman:** Wow! Tamlin, did you see what happened already here? Tim already ate it. You got your way.

[01:07:14] **Tamlin:** Oh, did I win? (*Laughs.*)

[01:07:15] **Tim:** Was that a trick?!

[01:07:17] **John Hodgman:** You didn't have to eat the sandwich!

(Tamlin cheers.)

But I don't think—obviously, you're not catty, daddy, maddy, waddy.

[01:07:23] **Tim:** That's it. Yeah, you got it. Batty, catty, scaredy. That's the one.

[01:07:24] **John Hodgman:** Batty, maddy, scaredy-mouth. Baddy, catty, scaredy-mouth anymore. You can't call him that anymore, so in that sense you win. And in this sense you win too, because you got him to taste the sandwich, and you got me to taste it too. But I still have to decide if this is the most delicious sandwich. And I gotta tell you, mm, there's something I determine is in here. I don't know what this is. It's—let's see, it's—oh, it's something called turkey? Turkey? I feel like it's like a fifth kind of meat.

(Benjamin disagrees emphatically.)

I mean, this is turkey. You didn't just have turkey up there. Benjamin Partridge, you didn't have turkey on your thing! Fifth meat!

[01:08:08] **Benjamin Partridge:** Turkey is simply robust chicken.

(Laughter and applause.)

[01:08:14] **Jesse Thorn:** No, wait, hold on, hold on, hold on! Because we have an expert here. So far, would you say this is the greatest sandwich ever?

[01:08:23] **John Hodgman:** It's a very good sandwich, Tamlin.

(She thanks him.)

And Tim, you were wrong to not eat it. I like it very much, but I've got to be honest with you: it's not the most delicious sandwich.

[01:08:34] **Jesse Thorn:** Here's my question. Ben, we're lucky enough to have you here. Is there anything we could do to take this sandwich from a very good sandwich to the best sandwich ever?

[01:08:45] **Benjamin Partridge:** Jesse, Judge John, litigants. It's our old friend, beef. Do you want a sausage from my pocket?

(Laughter.)

[01:08:58] **Jesse Thorn:** Are those rich beef sausages?

[01:09:00] **Benjamin Partridge:** Rich, rich, rich beef sausages. Do you want *(inaudible)*.

[01:09:02] **John Hodgman:** I'm so glad that you brought pocket sausage to the show. Yes, Jesse, will you make sure to handle it with all of your fingers too? And put his pocket sausage into the sandwich. And I will eat—a 50/50 chance I'll be eating Tim and Tamlin's saliva along with this. And you'll have to hold it for me, Jessie, 'cause I've got the microphone. And I—

[01:09:27] **Tamlin:** Better?

[01:09:29] **John Hodgman:** *(Mouth full.)* That makes all the difference. It's incredible. Thank you very much, Tim and Tamlin!

(Cheers and applause.)

[01:09:35] **Jesse Thorn:** Thank you, Ben Partridge, host of the *Beef and Dairy Network Podcast*, the funniest podcast in the world!

[01:09:42] **John Hodgman:** Thank you very much, everybody!

There's Bailiff Jesse Thorn. I'm Judge John Hodgman. That's our show. Thank you so much for coming to the London Podcast Festival. We'll see you next time on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast!

(Cheers and applause fade out.)

That's it for another episode of *Judge John Hodgman*. This episode was recorded at King's Place in London for the London Podcast Festival. Our producers were Daniel Taylor and Jennifer Marmor. Marie Bardi-Salinas runs our social media. Congratulations on your marriage. And don't miss us on tour in October and November! Go to VanFreaksRoadshow.com for tickets. And if you live in one of the cities we're visiting, send us your disputes! There's a link right there at VanFreaksRoadshow.com. That's VanFreaksRoadshow.com. We'll talk to you next time on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. Blimey.

[01:10:35] **Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

[01:10:38] **Sound Effect:** Cheerful ukulele chord.

[01:10:39] **Speaker 1:** Maximum Fun.

[01:10:40] **Speaker 2:** A worker-owned network.

[01:10:42] **Speaker 3:** Of artist owned shows.

[01:10:43] **Speaker 4:** Supported—

[01:10:44] **Speaker 5:** —directly—

[01:10:45] **Speaker 6:** —by you!