

[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, "Emotions to Dismiss". Spencer brings the case against his wife, India. Spencer and India say they both tend to humanize the items in their home. Now, they're paring down their belongings as they're planning a big move. Spencer wants to get rid of a particular rug, but India doesn't, because it has owls on it. Who's right, who's wrong? Only one can decide. Please rise as Judge John Hodgman enters the courtroom and presents an obscure cultural reference.

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

[00:00:37] **John Hodgman:** "What do you do when you're wound up?" Asked Euterpe. "Do you play that drum?"

"No," said the child. "We used to dance."

"But now we walk," said the father. "And behind us, an enemy walks faster."

"That's life," said the parrot.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn, please swear them in.

[00:00:59] **Jesse Thorn:** Spencer and India, please rise and raise your right hands.

*(Chairs scrape.)*

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 his rugs contain no animals?

*(They swear.)*

Judge Hodgman, you may proceed.

[00:01:19] **John Hodgman:** Actually, I have a small lice ranch in my rugs.

*(India giggles.)*

Just a small collection of lice and mites. India and Spencer, you may be seated for an immediate summary judgment in one of your favors.

(Chairs scrape.)

Can either of you name the piece of culture that I quoted directly from as I entered this courtroom? Ooh, Spencer, why don't you guess first?

[00:01:41] **Spencer:** I have a guess. I'm gonna guess *The Velveteen Rabbit*.

[00:01:44] **John Hodgman:** Mm! Coming in hot, as they say. Coming in hot.

[00:01:49] **Jesse Thorn:** Hot with scarlet fever.

[00:01:51] **John Hodgman:** That's exactly right. 104 degrees. Gotta burn all the toys. That's how bad that scarlet fever is. Alright. *Velveteen Rabbit*. India. Looks like you got scooped there.

[00:02:03] **India:** Yeah, *Velveteen Rabbit* was my out-of-pocket guess. But yeah, I'm gonna go with a version of *The Nutcracker* that tried to be edgy, but I don't actually know what that would be.

[00:02:17] **John Hodgman:** Another toys come to life concept, a version of *The Nutcracker* that tried to be edgy. Of course, I'm here in Orland, Maine, in the studios of WERU FM89.9 on your FM dial or [WERU.org](http://WERU.org) around the world. Joel Mann, our producer here in in Maine. Do you have a guess?

[00:02:37] **Joel Mann:** *Pee-wee's Playhouse*.

[00:02:38] **John Hodgman:** *Pee-wee's Playhouse*. Oh, boy. Still hurts. Still stings.

(Joel agrees.)

That's a good guess, though. I like it. Love you, Pee-wee.

Well, all very good guesses. And I'll tell you, this is a case about anthropomorphized creatures and throwing them on the junk heap. And so, *The Velveteen Rabbit* is the number one, with a bullet, top traumatic toy discarding book. I would have said all media until *Toy Story 3* came along. Then it got traumatic and inspirational. Number two: *The Red Balloon*. Little French boy falls in love with a sentient balloon and must stand by powerlessly as street urchins pelt the balloon with rocks and then stomp on it. Shown many a rainy-day afternoon at the Heath Elementary School in Brookline, Massachusetts. And why? Simply to make us feel bad.

[00:03:35] **Spencer:** I think *Brave Little Toaster* needs to be added to that list.

[00:03:39] **John Hodgman:** By the time *Brave Little Toaster* came out, I was into an era when I could read fun, uplifting stuff like *1984*.

[00:03:47] **Jesse Thorn:** *Watership Down*.

[00:03:49] **John Hodgman:** Yeah. Oh, yeah. Right. Right, *Watership Down*. But we're talking about toys that are discarded and have inner lives. And number three on the list for me, Judge John Hodgman, Russell Hoban's *The Mouse and His Child*. You ever read that one, Spencer or India? *The Mouse and His Child*. You know that one, Jesse. You know what I'm talking about, right?

[00:04:11] **Jesse Thorn:** It's a great one.

[00:04:12] **John Hodgman:** Heartbreaking book. Beautiful and very sad book about a wind-up toy mouse and mouse child. It's a father mouse and a son mouse who are one wind-up toy. They hold a drum together in their hands, facing each other. And then, they fall off the counter and break, and then they're immediately thrown away. And when they get to the junkyard, they're enslaved by a rat who runs a junkyard casino. And then they escape, but because they're joined by the hands facing each other, as they walk, they're trying to find some purpose in life. And one of them is always walking backwards, because they face each other.

I still get freaked out by it. At some point they're menaced by a pack of voles. And I just remember being really scared by it.

[00:04:58] **India:** I think I needed to emotionally prepare myself a little better for this. I'm being reminded of all sorts of media I pushed out of my head. (*Laughs.*)

[00:05:05] **John Hodgman:** Ah, I'm very sorry to be retriggering all of you, but it is—you know, in this courtroom, all the truth and trauma shall out as we get to the bottom of your dispute over an anthropomorphized rug and other things in your house. But if I understand, Spencer, you want to throw away. And India, you say not so fast. Who comes to this courtroom seeking justice?

[00:05:32] **Spencer:** I do, your honor.

[00:05:33] **John Hodgman:** Spencer, what is the nature of your complaint?

[00:05:36] **Spencer:** I am already emotionally traumatized by getting rid of my own stuff, and I would prefer that my wife not add her trauma onto mine.

[00:05:47] **John Hodgman:** I see. And how is she adding her trauma onto yours?

[00:05:52] **Spencer:** When I bring up getting rid of something occasionally she will say that "Oh no, it was happy with us." Sometimes she will just look incredibly sad. She has a very good incredibly sad face, and she'll just go, "Noooo", in a little voice. She'll sort of walk around looking dejected for a little bit. All kinds of things.

[00:06:14] **John Hodgman:** India, is your sad voice an imitation of what you imagine the object is feeling as it prepares to be thrown away?

[00:06:24] **India:** Sometimes it definitely is, but I think that's only when I'm really desperate, really trying to push it. I think sometimes it's just my own sad voice.

[00:06:36] **John Hodgman:** Can you give me an example of a voice that you attributed to an object?

[00:06:43] **Spencer:** I could give like a hypothetical, "Oh, I'm getting rid of this," that might set you going.

*(India "oof"s.)*

[00:06:48] **John Hodgman:** Oh, yeah. Yeah. Think of something in your house that you want to throw out.

[00:06:52] **Spencer:** This isn't something I'm sincerely wanting to throw out, but I think it might work. I'm just thinking we don't need two creatures. We can pick. We can get rid of Baby or Halifax. Which one would you rather go?

[00:07:03] **India:** *(So sadly.)* Nooo! They love each otherrr!

[00:07:07] **Spencer:** Yeah, exactly like that.

[00:07:09] **India:** You can't—you can't separate them! They're brothers!

[00:07:13] **John Hodgman:** What are these creatures we're talking about?

[00:07:16] **Spencer:** They actually are in one of our evidence photos. We're not getting rid of these creatures. I should make it very clear, but they are in one of the evidence photos.

[00:07:25] **John Hodgman:** Oh, alright. Well, let's go directly to the evidence. What—which photo am I looking at here?

[00:07:29] **Spencer:** That would be our first photo.

[00:07:33] **John Hodgman:** Mm-hm. Oh, look at this. This is an example of your decorating sense.

[00:07:38] **Spencer:** It is mainly to make it very clear that we are both maximalists.

*(India laughs.)*

This is actually—we had just started packing when I took this photo, so there is in fact a number of books that have been removed. Baby and Halifax are the two creatures that are poking their heads out over the top of the TV. They're two monsters that I made.

[00:07:58] **John Hodgman:** (*Chuckles.*) Okay, these are these are not living creatures. They are—

(*Spencer confirms.*)

They kind of look like dark riffs on gremlins from the movie *Gremlins*. In fact, they kind of look like dark riffs on gremlins from the movie *Gremlins 2*, which is very dark. They're very scary and very cute.

[00:08:14] **Spencer:** I've also included this photo to ingratiate myself with the court, because barely visible on one of the bookshelves is my copy of *The Areas of My Expertise*, which was bought for me in 2005 when it came out.

[00:08:24] **John Hodgman:** Why didn't you shelve it face out, like in a bookstore?

[00:08:28] **Spencer:** It is shelved out! It's just hard to see.

[00:08:31] **Jesse Thorn:** I've spotted it. It's on the right-hand bookshelf on the third shelf down.

(*John confirms.*)

Its distinctive orange and blue cover is highly recognizable.

[00:08:42] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, I agree, but, you know.

[00:08:45] **Jesse Thorn:** Judge Hodgman, what you're saying is why isn't it featured with the front cover facing out like an employee pick?

[00:08:52] **John Hodgman:** Yeah! Like an employee pick. Exactly. I would have thought that you would—that all my books would be displayed there, maybe with a little light and—you know what I mean? Like, a little display light or something.

[00:09:03] **Spencer:** Well, obviously, normally they are, but we're in the process of moving. So, we had to remove the display lighting and the hermetically sealed case.

[00:09:10] **Jesse Thorn:** Now, where's *Vacationland* here? And *Medallion Status*?

[00:09:14] **Spencer:** I have since switched to e-readers, because we have a lot of books, and they're very heavy.

[00:09:18] **Jesse Thorn:** Hmm. Can't face those out.

[00:09:20] **John Hodgman:** If you want to play the game of “can you find John Hodgman's book in this enormously busy room?”, you can go to our show page at [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org) or our Instagram account, [@JudgeJohnHodgman](https://www.instagram.com/JudgeJohnHodgman). See how quickly you pick it out.

But there are those two creatures, and their names again are?

[00:09:36] **Spencer:** Baby and Halifax.

[00:09:38] **John Hodgman:** Baby and Halifax. Which one is which?

[00:09:41] **Spencer:** Halifax is the one that has pink accents. Baby is the one that has yellow accents. I used to make monsters for sale. And once I stopped doing it, I eventually made these two as a gift for my wife and I. Just so we had some that were ours.

[00:09:54] **John Hodgman:** Right, but you're not going to actually get rid of one of these babies, are you?

[00:09:59] **Spencer:** No, no, no, no.

[00:10:00] **John Hodgman:** Okay, that was just a cruel hypothetical.

*(Spencer confirms.)*

[00:10:04] **India:** Incredibly cruel. Oh my gosh.

[00:10:06] **Spencer:** For method acting purposes.

*(India chuckles.)*

[00:10:08] **Jesse Thorn:** And I think the record should reflect that India immediately had what was absolutely, certainly a sincere and authentic reaction. *(Laughs.)*

[00:10:20] **John Hodgman:** Yeah. There was nothing pretend about that unless she's the greatest actor in the world. That was for real. India, what if I were to—what if Spencer were to tell you, “Hey, I think it's time to John Hodgman's book”?

*(India “ooh”s thoughtfully.)*

Huh, different reaction.

[00:10:32] **India:** You know what? I, shamefully, have not gotten around to reading that one, so I would be a little bit bummed about it. But I also have switched to e-readers, so I would probably just pick it up for my own e-reader.

[00:10:45] **Spencer:** I rest my case, your honor.

[00:10:48] **John Hodgman:** Yeah. Alright, now I know that you are sincere in ways, but you are actually—both of you—good actors, because it says here you met while LARPing. Tell me about yourLARPs. What's your character, India?

[00:11:02] **India:** We met at a post-apocalyptic LARP. It was the opening game for our local chapter in Northern California. I wanted to play with what privilege looks like in the apocalypse. So, I play a girl who's kind of run away from her hometown, but she was a performing magician there. She's not very good at magic, because I'm not very good at magic. But I wanted to play with that intersection of hyper-femininity and still being powerful and being able to fight zombies. So, that's my—she has a lot of pink and purple. And I try to grunge it down and dirty it down so it's appropriately apocalyptic, but it's that—privilege and femininity in the apocalypse is my character.

[00:11:48] **Jesse Thorn:** And Judge Hodgman, just so you know, they're in the Santa Cruz, California area where all activities are a form of social science PhD dissertation.

*(They laugh.)*

[00:11:58] **John Hodgman:** What is your character's name?

[00:12:03] **India:** It's July.

[00:12:05] **John Hodgman:** July. And there is a photo of you. And is this you, Spencer?

*(Spencer confirms.)*

In this armor? Oh, wow. So, first of all, July looks amazing.

*(India thanks him.)*

And is about to cut Spencer off sort of mid-calf area with some kind of laser sword. I don't know. What kind of weapon is that?

[00:12:22] **India:** It's my magician's baton.

[00:12:24] **John Hodgman:** Magician's baton, excuse me.

*(India laughs.)*

Right, because it's the post apocalypse, so there's magic. I forgot. And then—so, Spencer, you are what?

[00:12:32] **Spencer:** I play a character named Misha, who is essentially a victim of radiation sickness. And so, underneath all of that armor, I also wear like full sort of rotting face makeup. And so, he's just a guy who is kind of falling apart and stuck inside his armor.

[00:12:48] **John Hodgman:** Does anyone ever see your facial makeup or is that just for you?

[00:12:52] **Spencer:** It makes for a really fun reveal, because a lot of people don't go to all the trouble to wear a full-face mask and then also a full face of makeup, and so sometimes I'll have to pull it up to like take a drink or something. And people all go—sort of recoil and go, “Eugh!”

[00:13:05] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, some people don't go all the way. You know what I mean, Jesse? You hear about these lazy LARPer's?

[00:13:12] **Jesse Thorn:** So sick of lazy LARPer's.

[00:13:12] **John Hodgman:** Those half orcs, you know what I mean? Lazy LARPer's. Go full orc!

[00:13:19] **Jesse Thorn:** Yeah, that might cut it in Santa Barbara, but not in the Scruz!

[00:13:24] **John Hodgman:** By the way, Spencer and India are joining us from a radio station that is near and dear to your heart. Right, Jesse?

[00:13:30] **Jesse Thorn:** The Heavyweight 88, KZSC. 88.1FM in Santa Cruz, California, on the campus of UC Santa Cruz!

[00:13:35] **John Hodgman:** Thank you very much, KZSC. Now, this photo—is this your first meeting? Did someone take a photo of you meeting?

[00:13:43] **Spencer:** This is not the very first time we met. We met when we were both unloading into the new player building. This entire game at the time took place on what used to be an abandoned military complex. So, that's what this building in the background is. It was extremely cool. And so, we were unloading into the new player building, and India and her sister walked by. And I waved to them, because I want to make new friends. And I go, “Hi, how are you? It's nice to meet you.”

And they go, (*unenthusiastically*) “Hey,” and keep walking.

[00:14:10] **John Hodgman:** Woooah! Privilege, power, and femininity in action!

[00:14:13] **Spencer:** But it's really fun to hear it from India's perspective.

[00:14:16] **India:** My perspective of that was that Spencer had been posted by the owner of the chapter on the Facebook page—his costume and stuff—because it looked so incredible.



And so, I was like, “Wow, this guy's pretty cool.” And in my defense, the next time we met, he did close a door in my face while I was trying to talk to him. So.

[00:14:37] **John Hodgman:** Classic post-apocalyptic LARPing meet-cute.

*(India laughs.)*

[00:14:42] **Jesse Thorn:** Meet radiation-sick, specifically.

*(They laugh.)*

[00:14:47] **John Hodgman:** Jesse Thorn, did you hear when Spencer said, “I waved hi, because I wanted to meet new friends?”

[00:14:53] **Jesse Thorn:** Oh, did I hear it!? It's all I've been able to think about since he said it.

[00:14:57] **John Hodgman:** *(Chuckling.)* We don't usually talk about the litigants right in front of their faces, but that was very adorable, Spencer, I have to say. And by the way? A good way of meeting friends!

[00:15:08] **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!

[00:15:18] **Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:15:20] **Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:15:22] **John Hodgman:** So, look at you two. You're young, you're living and LARPing it up in Northern California. Your room is full to bursting with all your favorite things and media and monsters, and also my book, for some reason.

[00:15:34] **Jesse Thorn:** Judge Hodgman, they can truly only be characterized as having a Santa Cruz lifestyle that includes—among other things, in Spencer's case—not only professional monster crafting, but stained-glass restoration. And in India's case, the classic Santa Cruz combination of early childhood education and circus arts.

*(India laughs.)*

[00:15:59] **John Hodgman:** Plus, pole dancing, it says here! This is the ideal lifestyle. And Spencer's wearing a t-shirt that's got a mushroom on it. India's eyeglasses are heart-shaped. This is terrific. Everything's going right except for this one thing. You gotta move. You gotta downsize. Spencer wants to throw out creatures that you love, India. Specifically, this rug. I see this photo of this rug here. This rug has pictures of owls on it. Spencer, tell me about this rug, why you want to get rid of it.

[00:16:33] **Spencer:** So, the rug is mine. When I was still making resin and latex masks for various stage productions and LARP and what have you.

[00:16:44] **John Hodgman:** Definitely a sentence I've heard before.

[00:16:46] **Spencer:** Clearly. But we live in apartments, which usually are carpeted, and usually landlords don't particularly appreciate you getting clay ground into the carpet that they have put in your home. And so, I got this carpet for \$20 secondhand that I could put under my desk, so that way anything falling off could get ground into that carpet instead.

[00:17:05] **John Hodgman:** Mm-hm. Very nice. Very thoughtful tenant.

[00:17:09] **Spencer:** I am now moving into a new career where I doubt I'll have time to continue taking commissions. And so, I don't need it anymore. And so, I'm looking to get rid of it.

[00:17:21] **John Hodgman:** What is the new career?

[00:17:22] **Spencer:** I am—the reason we are moving is because I'm starting my PhD program in bioengineering.

[00:17:28] **John Hodgman:** Wow! That's amazing! Congratulations. Are you moving to another city? Are you leaving LARP Central behind?

[00:17:35] **Spencer:** We are moving to Pasadena, California.

[00:17:38] **Jesse Thorn:** Spencer, you said a PhD in bioengineering?

*(Spencer confirms.)*

So, you're planning to go back into the field of monster creation?

[00:17:45] **Spencer:** Um, I can neither confirm nor deny.

[00:17:47] **John Hodgman:** Oh no! Wow!

[00:17:51] **Jesse Thorn:** Fair enough! *(Chuckling.)* He's working on a super soldier serum.

[00:17:55] **Spencer:** India has told me that she will divorce me if I take any money from the DOD. So, I think everyone's safe from that.

[00:18:01] **Jesse Thorn:** I mean, you could always build centaurs for some sort of private military.

[00:18:07] **John Hodgman:** Yeah. Why don't you—yeah. That's a good idea. Why don't you get a—make a chimera to ride around on in Pasadena?

[00:18:14] **Spencer:** I think that's a longer conversation between spouses. I'll have to see how India feels about that one.

[00:18:18] **John Hodgman:** Man, if you brought a chimera to the LARP club, you'd probably be made president right away.

[00:18:24] **Spencer:** Extremely popular.

[00:18:25] **John Hodgman:** I'm getting a lot of thumbs up from India. But India, let's get grounded—specifically back down to the ground underneath Spencer's desk where these owls live. These trash owls, these trash carpet owls. How did you become connected to them?

[00:18:40] **India:** So, I was aware that it was a catching detritus rug to keep the carpet safe. But I figured that we are people who like to merge form and function. And so, I was thinking that it was also a rug he had sought out because it's kind of cute, and I like it. And it's got these little—these cute little owls on it. One of them's got kind of a sad face, so I'm already like attached to that one. 'Cause I wanna—I empathize with it. I wanna help it feel a little happier.

And so, I didn't realize that it was a like “use here and then toss it out” kind of rug. I thought it was a, “Hey, look, I found this cute rug, and it happens to be great for this purpose as well.” So, I let myself get attached to it and kind of get used to having it in my home, get used to seeing the owls. Sometimes I'd visit him, and I'd sit down on the rug next to the owls. And it was kind of nice.

[00:19:39] **John Hodgman:** I have to say I have a difference of opinion, India. You said that one of these owls looks sad? I think they both look a little sad. Don't they both look a little sad, India?

[00:19:52] **India:** I think the one on the yellow bulb looks a little bit sad, and I think the one on the white bulb looks a little more like—uh, (*sighs*) I don't know exactly what the right word is. Maybe suspicious is what I'm thinking of? That one.

[00:20:06] **John Hodgman:** Or resentful, even. Because they're wonderful owls in a very cute rug, and Spencer has put them on the floor to stomp on and collect garbage.

[00:20:20] **Spencer:** This is agonizing. This is terrible.

(*They laugh.*)

[00:20:24] **John Hodgman:** And then after they're—after doing that service for all that time, these owls—what are their names, India?

[00:20:29] **India:** Yeah, the white one is—I'm pretty sure that's Sharon, right now.

[00:20:33] **John Hodgman:** Sharon. Okay. Alright. Sharon is the resentful one. And then, you let me know when the sad one's name comes to your mind. But maybe Sharon is resentful because after this long service just being a trash rug, now Spencer wants to throw them away. You have to admit, Spencer, you could have gone a different way. You know, you could have just gotten some industrial carpet. You could have gotten a piece of plastic, or you could have gotten—I don't know—a giant litter box or whatever to catch this falling resin. I don't know what's going on. I don't know what you're even talking about. What are you doing with the resin again? You're forming things?

[00:21:12] **Spencer:** I try not to cast resin on top of carpet just because resin goes everywhere, but clay bits will fly everywhere. All kinds of stuff. I feel very strongly about—I try to avoid ever having things in my home that purely just serve a purpose. I try to not own things that I don't also have some kind of historical, emotional, aesthetic, something kind of attachment to. I try not to own things for thing's purpose. And so, when I picked out this rug, I picked it out because I really like it.

[00:21:43] **Jesse Thorn:** And Spencer, you said you bought this rug secondhand?  
(*Spencer confirms.*)

Yeah, it's a really cute rug. It's also—you know, would it be fair to characterize this rug as the kind of thing that new might have been \$45 at a store that also sold meatballs?

[00:22:00] **Spencer:** Correct. I think that is exactly correct. There's in fact a tag on the back confirming that fact. And I believe the person who owned it before me had small children, and this was the children's rug. I washed it in a tub when I got it home the first time, and quite a bit of glitter came out. And so, I'm guessing it was underneath their craft table.

(*Jesse chortles.*)

[00:22:18] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, yeah. So, what you're saying is that Sharon and the unnamed sad owl—prior to coming to your home—lived with children. And probably Sharon and the unnamed sad owl believed that the children loved them, and maybe the children did love them and talked to them and gave them other names while they were rubbing glitter in their faces. Until the time came that they both got scarlet fever or grew up or whatever. And Sharon and the unnamed sad owl were cast aside, only to be picked up by you. And now, it's time for them to go into the fire. That's your position, Spencer?

[00:22:54] **Spencer:** Point of order, I think I will—like the rug's in good enough shape to donate. I don't think it's going straight into our famous trash fire out back.

[00:23:04] **John Hodgman:** (*Chuckles.*) Your eternal trash fire.

[00:23:06] **Spencer:** Mm-hm. The one that never, never goes out no matter what you do to it. Yes, of course.

[00:23:11] **John Hodgman:** Right, of course. At the post-apocalyptic LARP site. The Eternal Trash Fire. Mm-hm. Yeah.

[00:23:16] **Jesse Thorn:** To be fair, we don't know that it belonged to children. Could have belonged to RipTaylor.

[00:23:21] **John Hodgman:** That's true. Well, that guy loved glitter. But Spencer, how does the emotional charge that I'm giving you and that India's giving you make you feel?

[00:23:32] **Spencer:** Oh, terrible. Absolutely awful. I get very personally attached to my belongings. A lot of the things that I have have like multiple generations worth of history in them. So, for example, in our first photo—the photo of our room—the sideboard that the TV is sitting on, that's been with my family since 1847.

[00:23:54] **John Hodgman:** Mm-hm, mm-hm. Wow, it's beautiful.

[00:23:57] **Spencer:** So, I have a lot of connections to things. I really feel that—not in the literal like, “Oh, there's ghosts in things,” but I feel that especially in sort of the consumerist world that we're in now, it's very important to have a connection to the things that we have. There's a certain amount of anthropomorphizing, too. The idea of these owls being sad is really, uh, painful!

[00:24:16] **John Hodgman:** Tell me more about your anthropomorphizing of things. Do you think the sideboard has a personality?

[00:24:24] **Spencer:** I think the sideboard has a personality, and I feel like the sideboard is a representation of history. I don't necessarily feel that the owls are a representation of history, but they do have a story. They have like a child that they used to live with, and they had glitter in them, which I think is a story. But also, I recognize that down that road lies madness. And I have to be able to get rid of things occasionally.

[00:24:54] **John Hodgman:** India, question. What's this sideboard's name? Sidey or Boardy? Or something else?

[00:25:00] **India:** (*Laughs.*) You know what? That one I have to leave to Spencer, because it is such a personal connection to him and his family and his family history. He has very, very long generations. So, I respect the connection that he has there, and I recognize that I will never have the same level of connection, because it is not my family, my genealogy that connects that one to me. But I do love it. I would be furious if he tried to get rid of it.

[00:25:27] **John Hodgman:** How much stuff do you both have to get rid of, and what proportion of it is yours, India, versus Spencer's?

[00:25:34] **India:** One of the problems is we don't actually know exactly how much space our new place has. We're going to be living in graduate student housing, which means that we haven't toured the apartment. We don't really have a concrete floor plan or photos of the space. We're just kind of getting down there and seeing how it looks. So, we're doing our best

to pare down as much as possible, but it could be that we show up and we realize, “Oh, we probably could have kept some of this,” or we show up and we realize, “Oh, nope, we've got to get rid of another like full half of our stuff” just kind of depending on how it goes.

So, we're basically—as we're going through, we're trying to get rid of anything that doesn't directly provide us with a necessary function or spark joy. I haven't actually watched or read any of Marie Kondo's stuff. I really need to. I'm sure it would serve me well, but I do know about sparking joy. So.

[00:26:28] **John Hodgman:** You don't need Marie Kondo. You got Judge John Hodgman and Jesse Thorn and our patented system—the all-the-time sorcery of being neater than you were. Or whatever. What kinds of things have you had to get rid of, India, that have been hard so far for you?

[00:26:44] **India:** One of the hardest ones for me that actually just came to mind—and I'm still feeling a little bit sad about this is—I have a pair of, or I had a pair of moccasin boots that I got years and years and years ago. And they're some just high, close to the knee, fringe, moccasin boots. The laces had snapped on them at one point, and I just tied them together kind of. They were grungy. I wore them to LARP a lot. I wore them like to the Renaissance Fair and stuff.

[00:27:14] **John Hodgman:** Is LARP-a-Lot some kind of LARP convention?

[00:27:19] **Jesse Thorn:** (*Laughs.*) No, it's a LARPing nightclub on Pacific Avenue in downtown Santa Cruz.

[00:27:23] **John Hodgman:** Oh, my misunderstanding.

[00:27:26] **India:** (*Chuckling.*) But they were kind of old and grungy. They're falling apart. I also—they don't quite fit around my calves anymore. I've like gained a lot of muscle mass in the past couple of years. And so—

[00:27:41] **Jesse Thorn:** India, I don't think you even have to explain it. We've all had the experience of having to get rid of a beloved set of footwear because we're too yolked now.

(*India laughs.*)

[00:27:49] **John Hodgman:** Hey, the circus arts will do that to you. Plus, early childhood education. Both of those are calf-builders for sure. India, you got rid of those boots, but can you put yourself in Spencer's moccasin boots for a moment? Do you hear what he's saying when he is like, “I'm going through something when I think about throwing away Sharon and her friend. I don't need extra from you.”

[00:28:12] **India:** Yeah, I definitely hear it, and I respect that, but I think the carpet is something that has been in our home, has—I've made this connection to it, and so while it is his item, I feel like I had this connection. And I was kind of caught by surprise when he said, “Okay, yeah, we're getting rid of the carpet,” because I did not realize that that was on the

table. And I hadn't had the time to process that Spencer had already taken and had come to terms with on that. And so, I needed my own time to process, and I recognize and respect that the carpet is his. But I—because it was such a big part of our space, something that I kind of came over to, would spend time on, and I really wanted to be able to have that time to process or to talk through it.

I think even with the boots, Spencer happened to be sitting there, and I don't think he wanted me to bring it to him. But I said, “Should I get rid of these?” And I think for me, that was very helpful! For him, he didn't really care, but—

[00:29:14] **John Hodgman:** He didn't do a little voice like, (*sadly*) “No, we love you. We'll fit your new body. Please, please! We'll fit your new calves!”

[00:29:24] **Jesse Thorn:** (*High-pitched.*) “I say we let him go!”

[00:29:25] **Spencer:** I mean, I am actually pretty sad whenever India gets rid of her things. Just 'cause it's always sad to have to get rid of things, I feel like. But I feel very strongly that my feeling about that isn't helpful, because it doesn't actually have any bearing on whether or not India keeps them. So, I might be like, “Oh, it's really sad that India's having to get rid of these moccasins that she has this feeling about or her jester costume that she's too jacked to fit into.” But at the same time, if I lie on the floor and go, “I'm so sad about your moccasin boots!” It's not helpful to her.

[00:30:02] **John Hodgman:** What happened to that jester costume? Did it get tossed?

[00:30:05] **Spencer:** We're still figuring it out.

[00:30:06] **India:** Oh gosh, this one is really tragic.

[00:30:09] **Jesse Thorn:** Did he get ripped like the Hulk's pants? (*Chuckles.*)

[00:30:12] **Spencer:** Almost!

[00:30:12] **John Hodgman:** (*Chuckles.*) Please don't make me jesty. You won't like me when I'm jesty.

(*They laugh.*)

What kind of jester costume are we talking about here?

[00:30:23] **India:** I used to work in costume design, and so I did a lot of kind of hobby costume building for myself. And this was a piece that I designed and built based off of a gift my sister gave me, which was a Venetian mask. And that one I still have, and that one still fits me. But the costume itself, I made it to match this mask. And it was—I was really proud of it. It was one of my early pieces when I was still in school for apparel production, and it came out really beautifully. It fit me really, really well. It's this incredible piece, and it was so

much fun to wear and jump around. I think I wore it to the Renaissance Fair. I've worn it a few times. I don't remember exactly where every time.

But it's this piece that I love, and I have this deep connection to, because I made it, and it was something I was so proud of. And even if it's not my best constructed piece now, it was my best constructed piece then. And I went to put it on when I was downsizing just to be like, "Okay, let me make sure this still fits," and it won't go on over my shoulders or over my calves. And it is just—it's difficult. 'Cause I don't I don't have a lot of friends who can fit into stuff that.

[00:31:37] **John Hodgman:** So, what are your options since you don't have too many Harlequino sized friends? Do you think you might just have to toss it, sell it on eBay? Etsy? LARPy, the Etsy for LARPing?

[00:31:53] **India:** Spencer actually had a great suggestion just yesterday. His suggestion yesterday was that I reach out and see if any middle school or high school theater departments can take the donation, which is wonderful 'cause I used to work for a local—pretty local high school theater department. And so, I think that's probably gonna be my solution. I need to kind of sit in my emotions for a bit about it, but I think I will reach out to the people I used to work with and offer it as a donation.

[00:32:20] **Jesse Thorn:** I should mention also, just in the way of Santa Cruz-splaining: Judge Hodgman, (*sarcastically*) it is super hard to free-cycle stuff in Santa Cruz. There's no freegans in all of Santa Cruz. It's just super hard to post something on the internet and get somebody to come to your house and take it for free two seconds later.

[00:32:39] **John Hodgman:** However, that may be, I'm still going to give you a little bit of advice, India, when it comes to donating Harlequin costumes or anything to a school or a thrift shop or a charity of any kind. Don't call up and ask first. Just go, put it on the porch, and drive away fast.

(*Jesse cackles.*)

How long have you been living together?

[00:32:59] **India:** We moved into our current place in February 2021. We had a brief stint of somewhat living together, but we moved into our current place about two and a half years ago.

[00:33:12] **John Hodgman:** You merged stuff about two and a half years ago.

[00:33:15] **Spencer:** So, there is still clear delineations.

[00:33:16] **John Hodgman:** There are still clear delineations, you say?



[00:33:19] **Spencer:** Like, there are some things that are ours collectively. There are some things that are India's. There are some things that are mine. We're also newlyweds.

*(John congratulates them.)*

Thank you. And so, there is still a clear like this is hers, this is mine. I've been trying to mainly get rid of my stuff.

[00:33:35] **John Hodgman:** Got it. You're trying to download stuff that you brought into the house together.

*(Spencer confirms.)*

[00:33:41] **Jesse Thorn:** India, do you feel like there is a difference between a sideboard from the mid-19th century that has been passed down for generations through Spencer's family and a rug from a meatball store that he bought for \$20 to absorb clay?

[00:34:01] **India:** I think there's definitely a difference, and the difference is kind of where the emotional a connection comes from. I don't know if I would say there's an equal emotional connection. It's definitely different. But I think there is an emotional connection to both. Whereas the sideboard has this deep kind of family history connection, the connection is definitely deeper on Spencer's side. The rug is something that I've kind of built this—almost this little relationship with that it—again, it has faces. That's a hard one for me. Once it has faces, I kind of like—I connect with it in a different way. That's when I anthropomorphize or that's like the easiest way for me to anthropomorphize.

So, I definitely see a difference there. And I understand what Spencer's saying and that it's his stuff. But when it's a little bigger like this, both of these compared to like a pair of shoes is—these are things that live in our house that we both interact with consistently. Whether or not it's logistically his, it exists in both of our spaces.

[00:35:15] **Spencer:** It's not always the bigger things. If I can bring your attention to our third piece of evidence, the chickens.

[00:35:21] **John Hodgman:** Yes, I was actually just going to ask you, Spencer, to tell me about—not merely the chickens. It says here, “the cursed chickens”.

[00:35:29] **Spencer:** I found—I actually don't have a picture of it here, but I found a plate in a thrift store a long time ago that had the most sort of abysmal, kitschy, terrible rooster. Like, imagine the kitschiest, most awful rooster you've ever seen in your entire life. And I thought it was the funniest thing I'd ever seen in my entire life. And so, I got it. So, ever since then, I have been collecting kitschy, terrible, awful, horrible roosters and chickens in terms of decor and dishware and things like that.

[00:35:58] **John Hodgman:** Like mugs, chicken and rooster mugs. There's a chicken clock here. There's some bowls with chickens on the side. Anything—any sort of houseware decorated with chicken, with fowls of any kind.

[00:36:12] **Jesse Thorn:** They have to be foul fowl.

[00:36:14] **Spencer:** They have to be foul fowl. They have to be from the thrift store, and they have to be a certain level of threatening or miserable.

*(They chuckle.)*

[00:36:22] **John Hodgman:** And they're cursed because they're so weird looking and scary?

*(Spencer confirms.)*

And is your collection in control or out of control?

[00:36:31] **Spencer:** Definitely in control.

[00:36:33] **John Hodgman:** Okay. But you are getting rid of some?

[00:36:36] **Spencer:** I am. I'm getting rid of some that some people got for me.

*(John "oh"s.)*

Somebody came across someone else who had a chicken collection and then just mailed me a box full of chickens. None of them are particularly horrible. None of them are particularly wonderful to me, and I didn't feel very strongly about any of them.

[00:36:58] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, I think the audience will see. So, you sent in a photo of the—one, two, three, four, five cursed chicken pieces that you're contemplating getting rid of because they are not cursed enough. And I think folks who will go and look at the photos will see that there is a difference between a true cursed chicken and a fake—and a fairly cute, cursed chicken or non-cursed chicken.

*(Spencer agrees.)*

Have you gotten rid of them, or are these in contention as well as the rug?

[00:37:24] **India:** We managed to get rid of the biggest one. We recently had a going away party where the stuff that we have decidedly chosen to get rid of—

[00:37:36] **John Hodgman:** And you'd like to hold onto these? Or they have meaning to you?

[00:37:41] **India:** They do. They have faces. I will admit that because these ones are on a higher shelf and I am only five feet tall I, I haven't been able to connect with their faces in the same way as the owls, which were on the floor and much closer to me. So, I don't have quite

as deep a connection, but as soon as he pulled them down, I went, “Oh, no.” ‘Cause those—they're just so sweet. They're dopey. And like I love them. I would love to hang on to them.

[00:38:10] **John Hodgman:** You don't want to start a dopey chicken collection on a shelf, the way Spencer has his cursed chicken collection on a shelf. You want to put these in rotation.

[00:38:19] **India:** I like the idea of having a functional chicken collection. My mom actually fairly recently, within the past year, got me a deviled egg dish that has chickens on it. And she specifically got it for me, because she knows that Spencer's rules are so strict. And—

[00:38:36] **John Hodgman:** I don't know, how do you feel about that, Spencer? It feels like India and her mom are doing an end-run around your chicken rule, bringing in some wrong chickens into your house.

[00:38:46] **Spencer:** I mean, I don't see a reason we can't have two separate chicken collections. I'll just say all the really bad ones are mine.

[00:38:50] **John Hodgman:** Ooh! Look at this. This is the top husband of the apocalypse. That's incredible. I want to ask you a logistical question really quick. You don't know the size of the place that you're moving into.

[00:39:02] **Spencer:** All we know is it's smaller than what we have now.

[00:39:02] **John Hodgman:** Right, you're doing some basic downsizing, but is temporary storage of some stuff an option for you? Or is it, India, too sad for you to imagine these chickens and these owls sleeping in the dark?

[00:39:17] **India:** It's a little rough, yeah. We are renting a storage unit, because we also currently have a garage that has more of Spencer's family heirlooms in it that we didn't have space for in our current house. And those we need to hang on to, so we're renting a storage unit.

[00:39:33] **John Hodgman:** Well, that's for long-term keeping. I'm just talking about short-term or medium-term storage in Pasadena, until you get a sense of what really will fit into your apartment, so you don't have that problem that you suggested where you show up and you're like, “Oh, we've got too much” or “Mm, we don't have enough—not enough chickens” or whatever.

[00:39:53] **Spencer:** Quite frankly, I don't think we can afford it.

[00:39:56] **John Hodgman:** Absolutely. So, now is the time to discard as much stuff as you can. Including this owl rug, says you. Now, is this owl rug gonna go? India, what would you have me rule if I were to rule in your favor? To keep the rug?

[00:40:14] **India:** I mean, I'd love to keep the rug. I think to rule in my favor, I would ask that Spencer bring his discussions to me on things that he's going to get rid of when he is starting his emotional processing to give me a chance to emotionally process or discuss it with him so that that can be a collective decision.

[00:40:34] **John Hodgman:** What's wrong with that, Spencer?

[00:40:38] **Spencer:** I feel that the emotional agony that causes me outweighs the benefit of having that discussion. I would prefer—unless it's something that India really, actually, genuinely cares about keeping—that she find a way to have that internal discussion with herself on her own time.

[00:41:00] **John Hodgman:** And then, if she were to say, “You know what, I want that thing. Let's not throw it away.” Would you be okay with that?

[00:41:06] **Spencer:** And that's perfectly fine. A major issue here isn't actually whether or not we're keeping the rug. India usually comes around to being okay with getting rid of things. The problem is the agony leading up to it.

[00:41:20] **John Hodgman:** Right. So, you would have me rule that India just say, “No. Dibs on owl rug,” and grab it and run away to the other side of the house, where no one can hurt it anymore.

*(Spencer confirms.)*

I think I've heard everything in order to make my decision. *(Chuckles.)* One person goes into the Thunderdome, and in a moment one will come out, and I'll render my verdict.

[00:41:43] **Jesse Thorn:** Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom.

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

India, how do you feel about your chances?

[00:41:49] **India:** I feel like Judge John Hodgman understands that marriage is a partnership and that we should feel out things together. But I also understand the side of it brings Spencer agony, and we want to spare him that agony where we can. And it sounds like, you know, if I'm going to be feeling it either way, maybe the best choice for—will be to make me stew on my own. But I think I've got a pretty good shot here.

[00:42:17] **Jesse Thorn:** Spencer, how do you feel?

[00:42:17] **Spencer:** Similarly to India. I feel like the judge is always very good about finding a good middle ground or a good like—a solution that benefits everybody. And I think everything's going to work out okay regardless.

[00:42:34] **Jesse Thorn:** But still, you want to crush your wife, right?

[00:42:36] **Spencer:** She's too strong. I can't crush her.

[00:42:39] **Jesse Thorn:** (*Laughs.*) Well, once you take that super soldier serum, things might be different!

(*They laugh.*)

Spencer, India, we'll see what Judge Hodgman has to say about all this when we come back in just a moment.

[00:42:50] **Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:42:54] **Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:42:56] **Jesse Thorn:** The Van Freaks Roadshow rolls on through the Midwest and thence to the East!

[00:43:02] **John Hodgman:** Thence! To the East, my favorite John Steinbeck novel.

(*Jesse laughs.*)

Hey, we're coming for you, Lexington, Kentucky, at the Lexington Opera House. Holy moly. We're going to be playing in an opera house in Lexington, Kentucky?! I've never even been to the Bluegrass State! So, I'm counting on you mint julep-ers to get over there and get your tickets at the [VanFreaksRoadshow.com](http://VanFreaksRoadshow.com). Then, we're moving on to Chicago. Madison is almost sold out, I hear. St. Paul, Minnesota at the Fitzgerald Theater. Austin, Texas at the Paramount Theater. Then, we take a tiny little break, just a little breather. Then, we come back hard in Atlanta, Georgia at the Variety Playhouse, following up with Durham, North Carolina, Charlottesville, Virginia with special guest—can we say who it is? Let's not.

[00:43:43] **Jesse Thorn:** Nope! We're not gonna say, but he lives in Charlottesville, Virginia. And he loves cereal.

[00:43:46] **John Hodgman:** (*Chuckles.*) And we might even have a cereal-related dispute. Mm! It's getting exciting!

[00:43:51] **Jesse Thorn:** Washington, DC, our nation's capital.

[00:43:54] **John Hodgman:** Portland, Maine, with special appearance—I just have been negotiating with his agent, Jesse. Joel Mann's coming down.

(*Jesse "wow"s.*)

From Castine to Portland, along with the Night and Day Trio to favor us with some jazz tunes.

[00:44:04] **Jesse Thorn:** Wow! All three of them?

[00:44:07] **John Hodgman:** All three of them! And then, on to Boston, Massachusetts at the Wilbur Theater—our home away from home. And then, to Brooklyn for our second opera house! That's right. We're doing a huge show at the Murmrr Opera House in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. And that's going to be very special. We've got some very special guests lined up for that one. You should get your butts in the seats and give us your beefs at [VanFreaksRoadshow.com](http://VanFreaksRoadshow.com). There are links to all the tickets there, as well as a link to submit your disputes for consideration for live adjudication on stage. It's going to be a lot of fun.

[00:44:40] **Jesse Thorn:** [VanFreaksRoadshow.com](http://VanFreaksRoadshow.com)

[00:44:42] **John Hodgman:** Also, just a quick thing. You are invited to join a secret society. To find out more, go to [bit.ly/youareinvitedtojoinasecretsociety](http://bit.ly/youareinvitedtojoinasecretsociety).

[00:44:49] **Jesse Thorn:** Oh! Let's get back to the case.

[00:44:51] **Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:44:53] **Jesse Thorn:** Please rise as Judge John Hodgman reenters the courtroom and presents his verdict.

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

[00:44:59] **John Hodgman:** So, first of all, congratulations on finding each other, cohabitating happily, getting married recently. You've forged—you've forged. I'm using as much LARP terminology unconsciously as possible here. You've forged or resin-molded a beautiful life for yourself. And now, you're taking a big step from one wonderful place of California to a different culture.

So, it's no surprise that moving—which is emotionally fraught enough—is even more so when it's involving this big life change, this big step forward. A very new marriage and a new PhD program. And you're moving down there to be with him, India, obviously, and uprooting your life for his program. There's a lot of vibing in this LARP of your life. And those owls are cute. I get it. I don't like throwing away stuffed animals. I don't even know. Maybe I still got some back at my dad's house, and we got a whole bunch of them, and we are about to become empty nesters and they are going to have to go into the apocalyptic perpetual fire soon. That's hard.

We are evolutionarily trained to seek other faces. And that's how you sell a glitter rug for a child's room. You put a couple of owls on it. They see those faces. That's how it works. And you know, you got to get it. Got to get those little rug owls. I'm with you, India—and Spencer. I think it's really, really hard to let go of stuff. Particularly if it's been with you for a long time, if you have history with it. And particularly if it has a face. But here's the thing:

you two share not only your life but, going forward, your stuff. I know it's early enough in your cohabitation that there really is a sense of “here's everything that I brought into this house”, and “here's everything that I brought into this house”. And there will always be things that are clearly yours—your clothes, your special possessions that are your own or what have you.

But when it comes to owl rugs under the desk, that's not something you write your name in, in case you get divorced. You know what I mean? Like, that's just a piece of something that's there. And it makes perfect sense that while you are no longer as attached to it, or you've gotten over your attachment to that rug, Spencer, that at the same time that India has been visiting you in your workshop, that she has become attached to it. And it is joint property by law. And I think—I was thrilled, truly, when you said, “If India would like to keep the carpet or the rug, that's fine. I just don't want her making me feel extra guilty about it.” I thought that's very, very healthy and reasonable. So, my ruling is in your favor, Spencer. Insofar as, India, it's sensitive time all around in this household. You and Spencer and all of these belongings have feelings.

That's a lie. You two both have feelings. The rest of the things are just things. And it is a kindness to the person you share your life with to not add to their emotional burden, particularly when you each acknowledge that each of you are very emotional, and you have these connections to these things. And to respect that when Spencer says, “I'm ready to give this up,” that he's gone through a process, and he's ready to give it up. And you are there in your rights to be like, hmm, well, I'm not. Give it to me. As opposed to: how dare you murder these owls? And make him feel even worse. But in fact, I order you for the sake of me sleeping tonight, I need you—India, I need you to take them. I want you to roll up that rug carefully and take care of them.

And perhaps they'll find a place in your new apartment where they can be really well featured, maybe in a space that is your own. Underneath your feet or maybe hung as a tapestry or woven into a costume. You know? Yeah! See what I mean? Can you cut them out? There are only two owls. There's a lot of rug. Put them on a patch in some LARP, you have best friends for life. But I do need you to take care of them. But the flip side of that is don't make Spencer cry any more than he's already cried. And remember this wonderful time in your life. Remember this apartment. Even if you must let it go, don't let it be forgot that once there was a spot for one brief shining moment known as LARPs-a-Lot.

This is the sound of a gavel.

[00:50:10] **Sound Effect:** Owls hooting.

[00:50:12] **John Hodgman:** Judge John Hodgman rules, that is all.

[00:50:14] **Jesse Thorn:** Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom.

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

How are you feeling, India?

[00:50:20] **India:** You know what? I think it's fair. I definitely—my preference is to be able to talk things out together, but I very much see what Judge John Hodgman is saying. And I'm sorry to have caused you extra agony after you've already worked through your agony, Spencer.

[00:50:38] **Jesse Thorn:** Spencer, how do you feel?

[00:50:40] **Spencer:** I really appreciate the judge's ruling, and I want to apologize to my wife that like this is a limit for me, and this is a place that I just can't be there with her. I think it's important to have those boundaries, but it doesn't make them—it still makes it sad that those boundaries exist.

[00:50:56] **Jesse Thorn:** Spencer, you know what I was thinking would be the solution to this? Just each of you get to put three things in the truck, and then you make an ad on Craigslist and let those freegans go ape. Just open the front door and let the freegans go wild!

[00:51:11] **Spencer:** See, the problem is that market's been oversaturated now. All the freegans, their houses are already filled with Fabergé eggs.

*(Jesse laughs.)*

And there's just—there's no more—nobody can take anything more. Everyone already has too much good stuff.

[00:51:23] **Jesse Thorn:** Well, India, Spencer, thanks for joining us on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

*(They thank him.)*

[00:51:29] **Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:51:31] **Jesse Thorn:** Another *Judge John Hodgman* case is in the books. We'll have Swift Justice in just a second. First, our thanks to Redditor w3H774m—that probably spells something in Leet speak—for naming this week's episode, “Emotions to Dismiss”. Join the conversation over at the MaxFun subreddit. That's at [MaximumFun.Reddit.com](https://www.reddit.com/r/MaximumFun). That's where we've been getting these suggestions. It's fun just seeing all the different ones, you know what I mean?

[00:51:56] **John Hodgman:** It's fun seeing all the different ones. You're right. It's an abundance of riches, and it's always hard to pick just one. So, yeah, get over there and name some, it's fun.

[00:52:05] **Jesse Thorn:** Evidence and photos from our show posted on our Instagram account at [Instagram.com/judgejohnhodgman](https://www.instagram.com/judgejohnhodgman). Make sure to follow us there. *Judge John Hodgman* was created by Jesse Thorn and John Hodgman. This episode, engineered by LC Cardoza and Richard Baldwin at KZSC Radio in Santa Cruz, California, and by Joel Mann at



WERU Radio in Orland, Maine. Community Radio representing on this week's *Judge John Hodgman* episode. Marie Bardi runs our social media. Our producer, Jennifer Marmor.

Now, Swift Justice, where we answer small disputes with quick judgment. Redditor OrangeFreshy says, “My significant other claims that fruit on the bottom style yogurt is not meant to be mixed up. They say you're meant to dip down into the bottom to get the perfect bite. I've always mixed it up first. Who's right?”

[00:53:05] **John Hodgman:** Talking about some kind of treasure yogurt? Where you dig down and get the—just the big spoonful of sugary sweet?

[00:53:13] **Jesse Thorn:** What we're talking about, Judge Hodgman, is yogurt with a thin layer of jam and fruit at the bottom. And the dispute here is between a mixy-mixy that makes it all into a fruit yogurt or trying to do a dip that pulls—that uses the tip of the spoon to pull at the layer of fruit at the bottom and draws up standard yogurt from the top, thus making a perfect bite.

[00:53:39] **John Hodgman:** Like digging for buried treasure or extracting sweet petroleum from the earth.

*(Jesse chuckles.)*

I don't think I've eaten fruit on the bottom yogurt since I was on a bus to fifth grade summer school when I took a computing class. That's the last time I remember eating it. I'm trying to remember how I ate it. I think that I probably mixed it up, and I do think that that's the intention, but that doesn't mean it's the only way to do it. I think it's perfectly valid to excavate your fruit from your yogurt. But if I'm going to ask you how it's designed, I think it's designed to be mixed up.

Hey Judge John Hodgman listeners, here's a question. When did you turn on Wes Anderson? I'm not saying I ever—

*(Jesse “wow”s.)*

I'm not saying I've turned on Wes Anderson! Not at all. I love Wes Anderson. I love all of it. I'm just hypothetically asking a question. Was there a movie where you're like, “Hmm, this is no longer for me”? I mean, sometimes an artist that you love goes in a direction that you hate, like Dylan going electric at the Newport Folk Festival. Which everyone really hated, right, Joel?

*(Joel confirms.)*

Yeah, they hated that so much, they booed him. They yelled at Bob Dylan! Or Bob Dylan doing that totally weird dumb Muppet voice on *Nashville Skyline*. Why did you do that, Bob Dylan?

*(Jesse laughs.)*

Someone played that for me, I'm like this is a joke, right?! No, no, this is Bob Dylan. I'm like, oh, well, that's it for me. Or maybe there's an author of fantasy novels who wrote a book you didn't like or maybe isn't writing a book fast enough for you. We want your disputes with artists you love who have gone astray. But don't worry, you—the loyal fan—knows exactly how they can get back on track. You only need to keep them prisoner in your snowbound cabin for a little while and maybe break their ankles.

Disputes with your faves is what we're looking for. Submit them at [MaximumFun.org/jjho](https://MaximumFun.org/jjho), or if you're watching this on social media, just drop them in the comments. Disputes with your faves.

[00:55:28] **Jesse Thorn:** And of course, we want to hear any kind of dispute. Go to [MaximumFun.org/jjho](https://MaximumFun.org/jjho) with your dispute with your mom or your cousin or your sister or your uncle or your best friend or your best frenemy or your work wife or your baseball teammate. Whomever it may be, submit those cases at [MaximumFun.org/jjho](https://MaximumFun.org/jjho). We'll talk to you next time on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

[00:55:54] **Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:55:56] **Sound Effect:** Cheerful ukulele chord.

[00:55:57] **Speaker 1:** Maximum Fun.

[00:55:58] **Speaker 2:** A worker-owned network.

[00:56:00] **Speaker 3:** Of artist owned shows.

[00:56:02] **Speaker 4:** Supported—

[00:56:03] **Speaker 5:** —directly—

[00:56:04] **Speaker 6:** —by you!