

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

[00:00:01] **Jesse Thorn:** Welcome to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. I'm Bailiff Jesse Thorn, and with me is Judge John Hodgman!

[00:00:07] **John Hodgman:** And this week, we are presenting a special episode recorded live at the Wilbur Theatre in Boston with incredible guest Marsha Bemko, executive producer of GBH's *Antiques Roadshow*. Jesse, she was a lot of fun.

[00:00:19] **Jesse Thorn:** Oh my gosh, you could not have a more fun or a more Boston-y guest than Marsha Bemko, who came in like a whirlwind and was absolutely delightful.

[00:00:30] **John Hodgman:** Four words: Cape Cod, my friend! Also, we kept it pretty Boston-y with Josh Kantor, our musical guest who is also the Fenway Park organist.

[00:00:38] **Jesse Thorn:** Yeah, you know you're doing it right in Boston when you got Fenway's organist playing the keys for you. That was an awesome time. And hey, guess what? If people have a fun time listening to this or our other live shows, and they want to see a live show, but maybe they didn't get a chance to on the tour, or maybe they want to see an all-new live show—

[00:00:59] **John Hodgman:** Then too bad for them, because there's no opportunities available!

[00:01:02] **Jesse Thorn:** That's incorrect! Because our tour grand finale at the Opera House in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, was recorded for your enjoyment. We are going to be watching it live on a livestream on Saturday night, but it will also be available for two weeks thereafter. If you want a ticket, all you have to do is go to [VanFreaksRoadshow.com](http://VanFreaksRoadshow.com). And the live recording includes our music performances. It includes our special guests. It includes some pretty monumental props. These are definitely our biggest props of all time.

[00:01:36] **John Hodgman:** Can I say backstage antics?

[00:01:38] **Jesse Thorn:** Yeah, there are some backstage antics, that's true. (Laughs.) You get to take a live look in. And we even have meet and greets for that show. We did—we had a lot of fun doing meet and greets on our tour, and so we're doing meet and greets via the internet for this livestreaming show. So, go get a ticket. [VanFreaksRoadshow.com](http://VanFreaksRoadshow.com) is where to do it. Even if you went to one of the other shows, this is an all new, all different show. So, you'll really enjoy it. [VanFreaksRoadshow.com](http://VanFreaksRoadshow.com) for that livestream.

[00:02:09] **John Hodgman:** Now, let's go to the stage at the Wilbur Theatre in Boston, Massachusetts.

[00:02:15] **Jesse Thorn:** People of Boston, you asked us for live justice, and we are here to deliver it! The court of Judge John Hodgman is now in session!

(Raucous cheers and applause.)

Let's bring out our first set of litigants. Please welcome to the stage, Cheev and Lucy!

[00:02:35] **Music:** Energetic piano.

[00:02:46] **Jesse Thorn:** Tonight's case: "Order in Décor". Cheev brings the case against his mom, Lucy. Cheev says Lucy has too much stuff in her house! He wants her to try to declutter. She says no! 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.

(Cheers and applause.)

[00:03:13] **John Hodgman:** (Singing in a Tom Waits impression.) "Davenports and kettledrums, swallowtail coats, tablecloths, and patent leather shoes, bathing suits, and bowling balls, and clarinets and rings! All this radio really needs is a fuse. A tinker, a tailor, a mother's things."

[00:03:43] **Jesse Thorn:** It always goes on longer than you—

[00:03:00] **John Hodgman:** (Singing over him.) "A gallon of scallops and rocks. Oh, and this one is for bravery. This one is for me."

[00:03:57] **Jesse Thorn:** It's been literally every show on the tour.

(Laughter.)

[00:04:01] **John Hodgman:** (Singing.) "And everything's a dollar in this box!"

(Cheers and applause.)

Bailiff Jesse Thorn, please swear them in.

[00:04:14] **Jesse Thorn:** Cheev and Lucy, 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?

[00:04:22] **Lucy:** Whatever.

[00:04:24] **Cheev:** I do.

[00:04:25] **Jesse Thorn:** Do you swear to abide by Judge John Hodgman's ruling, whether or not it sparks joy?

(Laughter.)

[00:04:31] **Cheev:** Yes.

[00:04:32] **Lucy:** As best I can.

[00:04:34] **Cheev:** I do.

[00:04:35] **Lucy:** Judge Hodgman, you may proceed. Cheev and Lucy, you may be seated for an immediate summary judgment in one of your favors. Can either of you name a piece of culture that I referenced as I entered this courtroom? Lucy? Your son's name is Cheev, is that correct? Cheev?

[00:04:49] **Lucy:** It's not what I named him.

[00:04:50] **John Hodgman:** (Laughs.) What is it? What is your actual name, sir?

[00:04:55] **Cheev:** My first—my government—

[00:04:56] **John Hodgman:** Your given name?

[00:04:57] **Cheev:** Oh, Andrew.

[00:04:58] **John Hodgman:** Andrew. But you go by Cheev.

(Cheev confirms.)

Okay, cool. You notice how cool your mom is?

(Cheev confirms.)

She just calls herself Lucy. Is that a nickname, Lucy?

[00:05:11] **Lucy:** Sort of.

[00:05:11] **John Hodgman:** Oh, sort of?

[00:05:12] **Lucy:** Never mind.

[00:05:13] **John Hodgman:** Oh, no! I will mind, thank you very much! Do you have a different given name, or is that short for a Lucille or something like that?

[00:05:21] **Lucy:** Well, it's just that I was named after a Mary Lou.

[00:05:25] **John Hodgman:** You were named after a Mary Lou, but you call yourself Lucy.

(Lucy confirms.)

Okay, great. Well, then you both renamed yourselves. Very good. Cheev, do you have a guess for the cultural reference?

[00:05:36] **Cheev:** Well, I think that was your Tom Waits voice, maybe?

[00:05:39] **John Hodgman:** Thank you. Yes, it was my Tom Waits voice.

[00:05:42] **Jesse Thorn:** Maybe. Could have been Clint Eastwood or Arnold Schwarzenegger, one of his other famous impressions.

[00:05:49] **Cheev:** But I don't really know any of his songs.

[00:05:53] **John Hodgman:** Alright. I need to in order to make my decision.

[00:05:55] **Lucy:** “Rain Dog”!

[00:05:56] **John Hodgman:** Uh, that was a Tom Waits song called “Soldier's Things” from *Swordfishtrombone*. Thank you very much. 1980—blah blah blah. I don't even remember the date. It's a wonderful song. I changed the word “soldier's things” to “a mother's things”. I also changed the words from “his rifle, his boots full of rocks”, to “a gallon of scallops (scal-ups) and rocks”. Or as you might say in this commonwealth, scallops (scoll-ups). In any case, we have to hear your case. So, who comes to this court seeking fake justice?

[00:06:24] **Cheev:** I do, your honor.

[00:06:26] **John Hodgman:** Cheev, what is your problem with your mother?

[00:06:30] **Cheev:** Mom has too much stuff in her house, and eventually it's gonna fall to me to deal with.

[00:06:35] **John Hodgman:** Mom has too much stuff in her house, and in anticipation of her death—

(Laughter.)

[00:06:41] **Cheev:** Well, in anticipation of her moving, for whatever reason.

[00:06:44] **John Hodgman:** Rrrright. In anticipation for her moving into her grave, so that you can get your hands on that house, Cheev. Lucy, how do you respond? Do you have too much stuff?

[00:07:01] **Lucy:** I don't have too much stuff, but I have been told that I'm sort of like a gaseous element that given the space, I will fill it. And that has happened.

[00:07:11] **John Hodgman:** And so—and you have a home. You have a home somewhere in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts?

(She confirms.)

And how large is the home would you say?

[00:07:19] **Lucy:** Four bedrooms.

[00:07:21] **John Hodgman:** Four bedrooms, okay. And they're all full.

(Lucy confirms cheerfully.)

Let the record show Cheev nodded, and Lucy eventually said yes. But—and you are living there by yourself?

(Lucy confirms.)

Right. No animals in the house?

[00:07:35] **Lucy:** There would be three dogs.

[00:07:37] **John Hodgman:** Three dogs. Okay. We'll get to the dogs in a moment. But let's take a look at the house. Cheev submitted some photographic evidence which we're going to share, obviously, available at our Instagram, [@JudgeJohnHodgman](#), at [MaximumFun.org](#) on our show page. Can we see the piece of evidence, please?

Alright. This is a half-finished basement. A minor gasp from the crowd. This is in your basement, ma'am?

(Lucy confirms.)

Has this has been staged by Cheev?

[00:08:00] **Lucy:** No, but it doesn't look like that anymore.

[00:08:02] **John Hodgman:** Oh, what happened?!

[00:08:04] **Lucy:** Well, I needed to move some things, because I train my dogs in the basement.

[00:08:08] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, it's pretty messy. There's a fun poster up in the corner that says, "It's all about the beer, baby." Can you tell me the story of that?

[00:08:17] **Lucy:** The children did that.

(Laughter.)

[00:08:21] **John Hodgman:** Cheev, did you make a poster that said “it's all about the beer, baby” in the style of an *Austin Powers* poster?

[00:08:28] **Cheev:** One of my high school friends worked on a booze cruise out of Rockport or (inaudible), whichever one is not dry—

[00:08:32] **John Hodgman:** I see. So, this is your garbage down here.

(Laughter.)

[00:08:36] **Lucy:** Some of it.

[00:08:37] **John Hodgman:** Okay, well, we can take that away right away. You can take that home with you now, Cheev.

[00:08:41] **Cheev:** Excited to.

[00:08:42] **John Hodgman:** Anything else you wanna clear out of here?

[00:08:44] **Jesse Thorn:** What about these two basketballs? So much basketball is being played in the house.

[00:08:46] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, there's two basketballs—two basketballs. One of them looks like it's gone very moldy.

[00:08:54] **Jesse Thorn:** I'm going to be honest with you, I do not begrudge you the possession of Advil liquid gels, but this may be too many Advil liquid gels.

(Laughter.)

What would you call this? A palette of Advil liquid gels?

[00:09:10] **John Hodgman:** Let's go to the next piece of evidence. Now, slightly more of a gasp. This is the back basement, Lucy. What's going on in here? Cheev, why don't you talk about it? You can tell me what you see, or you can tell me what bothers you.

[00:09:28] **Cheev:** My wife Kathy thinks it looks like a thrift store with all of the shelves and various—we got jars and kitchen stuff on the middle one. Lots of paper and maybe picture frames on the far left. There's a lot on the right for as much as is there, including that Ranger Rick chair. I think that's been—a lot of that's been—

[00:09:50] **John Hodgman:** (Fumbles for words.) Well, I mean, I was trying to make my eyes go fuzzy, so I could see the magic 3D picture in all of this. Somehow it was gonna resolve into a Ranger Rick chair. But now I see it's way over there in the corner. Okay.

[00:10:06] **Cheev:** And I think some of this on the far right has been cleared out but—at least, last time I was there, then some more stuff had materialized, though.

[00:10:12] **John Hodgman:** There's a stack of aluminum roasting pans over there in the corner, which I think—Lucy, how would you feel if I got you rid of those?

[00:10:21] **Lucy:** I'm good with it.

[00:10:22] **John Hodgman:** Yeah. That's cool. How do you feel about the fact that your son has provided—has taken pictures of your basement and is trying to shame you in front of Boston?

[00:10:33] **Lucy:** I'm not ashamed! (Laughs.)

(Cheers and applause.)

[00:10:39] **John Hodgman:** Let's go to the next picture. This is your office, I believe. Or an office. I'm curious there. I mean, there's a lot of stuff in here. But I'm curious about all these ribbons. What's going on with these ribbons?

[00:10:50] **Lucy:** Well, that's all about the dogs.

(Scattered cheers.)

[00:10:53] **John Hodgman:** Oh! So, you have three dogs. What kind of dogs do you have, and what are their names?

[00:10:59] **Lucy:** They are Louisiana Catahoula Leopard Dogs.

[00:11:01] **John Hodgman:** Tell me the names of the dogs.

[00:11:03] **Lucy:** Toblerone, Semisweet Mocha.

(Laughter.)

Oh Henrietta.

[00:11:22] **John Hodgman:** Oh Henrietta.

[00:11:24] **Lucy:** 'Cause it's a girl.

[00:11:24] **John Hodgman:** No, I understand.

(Laughter.)

Why do you wanna get your mom in trouble here, Cheev? Look at this!

[00:11:32] **Cheev:** No, I just wanna get rid of the stuff!

[00:11:33] **John Hodgman:** The stuff!

[00:11:34] **Jesse Thorn:** Cheev, more importantly, why are we gendering our chocolate bars?

[00:11:40] **Cheev:** I did not name the dogs.

[00:11:43] **John Hodgman:** Would you say that this represents all of your home, Lucy? That your whole home is like this?

[00:11:48] **Lucy:** No, not all of it.

[00:11:50] **John Hodgman:** No, indeed, there is some more evidence that we received. Was this from you, Lucy, or from Cheev?

[00:11:54] **Lucy:** It was all from Cheev.

[00:11:55] **John Hodgman:** It was all from Cheev. So, you don't want to win your own case, because let's look at the next piece of evidence. Very tidy kitchen. That—I mean, when you look at this, isn't that like one of the greatest mom kitchens of all time? Like, I totally want to come home from college and hang out in that kitchen with all my friends from high school. Why did you submit this piece of evidence, Cheev?

[00:12:15] **Cheev:** I actually don't think my mom is that messy. I think it's a volume issue. I think there's too much. I think she has more stuff than one person needs.

[00:12:24] **John Hodgman:** Well, yes. And most do! But it does seem to be confined to certain areas of the home. The basement in particular. What's the problem there, if she can live in a perfectly tidy life in the kitchen? And next slide, please. The living room looks very nice.

(Jesse “aw”s, because he has seen a dog.)

Very tidy. About as tidy as a house with three Catahoula Leopard Dogs can be. I mean, there are some bones on the floor and (inaudible) and whatnot. There's one dog on the couch right there. Who's that?

[00:12:54] **Lucy:** Toblerone.



[00:12:55] **John Hodgman:** Toblerone. I figured. That looked like Toblerone to me. I forgot to ask why the dogs are getting blue ribbons!

(Laughter.)

I didn't know that there were feats of strength. I didn't know that dog weight pulling existed.

[00:13:12] **Lucy:** Neither did I, 'til Smoke came.

[00:13:14] **John Hodgman:** 'Til Smoke came. Is Smoke still with us?

(Lucy confirms.)

Cheev, if you want to take a walk around the block at this point, I've just got many questions for your mom.

[00:13:24] **Cheev:** Smoke does have his own brand of wine. Or at least he was featured on a wine label.

[00:13:30] **John Hodgman:** Wow! There are a lot of left turns. A lot of left turns in Boston. Hard to drive around this town. The roads were originally cattle paths. There are no straight lines! (Chuckles.) Next slide.

(The crowd "aw"s and Jesse squawks with delight.)

Okay, so let me guess. Smoke, Toblerone, Oh Henrietta, in order. That's the way I want them, one, two, three! Dog show style! Well, these are all adorable dogs, and you're all having so much fun at home. And you're retired, is that correct, Lucy?

(Lucy confirms.)

What are you retired from, if I may ask?

[00:14:04] **Lucy:** Occupational therapy.

[00:14:06] **John Hodgman:** Ah, wonderful! Yeah.

(Scattered cheers and applause.)

What do you want to move out of this house?

[00:14:12] **Cheev:** Uh, if I had my druthers, we'd downsize everything to just like one and a half bedrooms, whatever mom will take with her to the—to wherever she would move to.

(Laughter.)

Like a condo! Like a condo.

[00:14:28] **John Hodgman:** Lucy, are you planning to move any time soon?

[00:14:29] **Lucy:** I am not.

[00:14:32] **John Hodgman:** No.

[00:14:35] **Jesse Thorn:** Cheev, a sort of boxy pine condo? Below grade?

(Laughter.)

[00:14:42] **Cheev:** Mom's mom is 96 and probably the best at crosswords of all of us, so maybe we have 30/40 years to clear this out.

[00:14:49] **John Hodgman:** Why aren't you gunning for her place?

[00:14:59] **Cheev:** I didn't ask Gram Sal to write an affidavit, but I think when she brought you the three bags of things, and she said, "Now four bags of things have to come out of the house." Right?

[00:15:01] **Lucy:** She did say that.

[00:15:02] **John Hodgman:** Why is she bringing three bags of things to you to begin with? What things did your mother bring?

[00:15:08] **Lucy:** It's just—people like to—I have a big house, so they say, "Here, hold these things for me." Actually, my mother was just saying, "Last chance to go through this, and then it's—" (Snaps.)

[00:15:18] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, it's just like when Cheev was in high school. "These aren't my drugs. Someone just gave them to me to hold."

(Laughter.)

[00:15:23] **Jesse Thorn:** Yeah, 100% you're just describing a drug dealer at an airport.

[00:15:29] **John Hodgman:** Your mother has no plans to move. So, why do you care?

[00:15:33] **Cheev:** When mom moves out of the house—and it's gonna be emotional; it's gonna be a big deal, whatever it is. Whether it's to a one-bedroom condo or a pine box condo. And—

(John "wow"s.)

And I would rather focus on those big feelings than the stuff.

[00:15:49] **Jesse Thorn:** Lucy, it sounds like you're not all that attached to the extra stuff in your house. You seem pretty ready to let go of some of the things that we pointed out. So, tell me why you haven't been the one to get rid of those things.

[00:16:06] **Lucy:** I have better things to do!

[00:16:09] **John Hodgman:** Would you be averse to Cheev coming in and cleaning out some stuff from the basement?

[00:16:15] **Lucy:** I like it when we do it together, so we can have those emotional conversations.

[00:16:19] **John Hodgman:** Right. When would you like to begin decluttering, if you were to do it sometime in the future? Do you have an idea?

[00:16:25] **Lucy:** Well, I don't mind doing it in small bits. I just don't want to make it part of my—you know, a great big project that's going to take away from my enjoying being retired.

[00:16:37] **John Hodgman:** How often do you see your mother, Cheev? You live here in the same commonwealth?

(Cheev confirms.)

Yeah. How often do you see your mother?

[00:16:43] **Cheev:** Every three—I go visit every three or four weeks, I would say. And maybe she'd come see me in between then.

[00:16:51] **John Hodgman:** Would it be annoying to you if every three or four weeks Cheev came and took some stuff away?

[00:16:56] **Lucy:** That's kind of what happens.

[00:16:59] **John Hodgman:** Would you like me to stop it? I have that power.

(Laughter.)

[00:17:05] **Lucy:** (Chuckles.) It's fine. I understand that getting rid of some of the stuff is a good thing to do, but I'm not going to settle down and pack up all that stuff and...

[00:17:16] **John Hodgman:** Got it. Well, Cheev, if I were to rule in your favor, what would you have me rule?

[00:17:20] **Cheev:** Like, a strict more out than in. Because it's true, we've had some good successes, but it seems like when I come back the next time—mom calls it backsliding. It feels like there's—more stuff has accumulated. So, a more out than in rule. And I want to offer the help that you're asking for, but you help so many other people. I would like to help you around the house. I just think it's too much. It's too big a house for one person. So, that'd be my other ask. If you—I don't know if you can—

[00:17:55] **John Hodgman:** Order her to leave her home?

(Laughter.)

[00:17:56] **Cheev:** No, no! Just—I don't know if you can encourage her to ask for or accept some more help from me.

[00:18:04] **John Hodgman:** It says here, Lucy, that if I were to rule in your favor, you would like me to rule, quote, “Let me have my stuff. Let me live my life. He should be enjoying my company!” Exclamation point, end quote.

(Laughter, cheers, and applause.)

And it sounds like the audience is on your side. Does that represent your point of view, would you say?

(Lucy confirms.)

Okay. I think I heard everything I need to in order to make my decision. I'm going to go into my chambers. I'll be back in a moment with my verdict.

[00:18:35] **Jesse Thorn:** Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom.

(Applause.)

Lucy, how are you feeling about your chances in the case right now?

[00:18:46] **Lucy:** Oh, I think they're pretty good. I think everybody has their own amount of clutter and can empathize with how it can accumulate. And to be told what to do... by your child...

(Laughter.)

[00:19:01] **Jesse Thorn:** Lucy, do you know that when you said you wanted to get together with your son to have emotional conversations, it sounded like a threat?

(Laughter.)

She's shrugging innocently. Cheev, how are you feeling about your chances?

[00:19:17] **Cheev:** Well, I don't think I'm gonna win this one.

(Laughter.)

But I feel good to—sometimes to have an emotional conversation in Massachusetts, you gotta bring your family members to court.

(Laughter and cheers.)

[00:19:33] **Jesse Thorn:** We'll see what Judge Hodgman has to say about all this.

Please rise as Judge John Hodgman reenters the courtroom and presents his verdict.

[00:19:40] **John Hodgman:** Well, I don't think I'm going to get a line better than that one, Cheev. I'm really... I'm really pissed off now. You really—I forgot to ask. Are you an only child?

[00:19:51] **Cheev:** No.

[00:19:52] **John Hodgman:** Oh, okay. Then never mind. Anyway, I like you less. Anyway.

(Laughter.)

I like you fine. Anyway! You know, the other thing you said that impressed me was that, you know—your obvious—your expression of true care for your mom. You really came out of the gate making an argument that sounded like, “Yeah, I'm trying to salvage as much scrap wood as I can from my mom's basement, so I can build a platform to dance on her grave.”

(Jesse and the audience laugh heartily.)

And I'm now convinced that you love your mother, and you wish the best for her. I don't share your concern, insofar as all the photos were submitted by you. And it's obvious that your mom has a very tidy space in her life, and a very cluttered area in her life. And she seems very happy that way, correct?

(Lucy confirms.)

And by the way, when you've got three Catahoula Leopard dogs, and a—I mean, look, I don't know your age. I'm betting that I'm a little bit younger than your mom, but she's about five times as vibrant as I am. Like, I couldn't handle those three dogs. So, I appreciate that. When I fantasize about retirement, which—I think about spending the time as I want to spend it, not the way Cheev wants me to spend it. I am cognizant of the fact that the back basement in particular seems to be a possible haven for rodents and maybe dead bodies.

(Laughter.)

There's a lot going on down there, and I think it might be time to consider cleaning it out. But I don't think that you should take too much of your mother's time to do this. Nor do I think you should worry so much. I think that it's going to be a long time before this is an issue. You should concentrate on getting your grandma to stop dropping contraband off. Maybe you can start by going over to your grandma's house and getting rid of some of that stuff before it finds its way over to your mom's house and stem the tide that way. And then, I would say every third time you go over, have an emotional conversation. And if you survive it, ask if you can take out one bin of stuff every third time. Otherwise, just—what is it you wanted to do? Let your mother have her stuff, live her life, and enjoy her company.

This is the sound of a gavel. (Bangs his gavel three times.) Judge John Hodgman rules, that is all.

(Cheers and applause.)

[00:22:25] **Cheev:** Thank you.

[00:22:26] **Transition:** Bold, warm piano.

[00:22:27] **Jesse Thorn:** Cheev and Lucy, thanks for joining us on the Judge John Hodgman podcast.

[00:22:34] **Transition:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:22:40] **Transition:** Relaxed piano.

[00:22:41] **John Hodgman:** Now, before we get to Swift Justice, we actually have a surprise for you this evening. We have been very lucky to tour with two incredibly talented people. One of them is Stephen Colón, who's sitting over there and has been recording all of these shows for our podcast.

(Applause.)

And the other is our tour producer, Laura Volk, who's been keeping us on time and on schedule and getting everything set up. All of that while balancing the beautiful cognitive dissonance of the fact that she's a—probably a more talented person than we are in every respect.

[00:23:15] **Jesse Thorn:** (Enthusiastically.) Definitely more talented than we are, yeah.

[00:23:17] **John Hodgman:** Yeah! And an incredible musician who has a band called Skout—S-K-O-U-T. And they just released a new single, called “Pearls”. And here to perform that song for you and us now, please welcome Laura Volk.

(Cheers and applause.)

[00:23:38] **Laura Volk:** Hi! I'm Laura. I write music under the name Skout with a K. S-K-O-U-T. I've been on the road with John and Jesse for about a month, and when they discovered I played music, they were like, "Well, you gotta play your new song for our Boston crowd, they're gonna love you."

(Cheers.)

Thanks! So, if you do like it, it would mean the world if you streamed this song or followed me on social media. And if you hate it, you can blame John and Jesse, because this was their idea. So, thank you so much. This is a song called "Pearls", and it's about how sometimes we think about people who we know weren't right for us.

[00:24:12] **Music:** "Pearls" performed live by Skout.

*New York or West L.A.*

*Then we were gonna settle on the coast some day*

*You'd be all the air I breathe*

*Young love, but we'd beat the odds*

*The most exceptional exception that there ever was*

*These days it's hard to see*

*How a love like that could ever fit me*

*I was never gonna wear those pearls you liked*

*Never gonna hang on your arm all night*

*Never gonna be the one to play golf on Sundays*

*I would never find a way to impress your dad*

*Fit in with your friends but despite all that*

*Some days I still pretend*

*All that we could've been*

*All that we could've been*

*Life's short, least they say it is*

*So, why do you and I feel like 100 years ago?*

*No point in peddling*

*What ifs, the maybes and the coulda-beens*

*I was never gonna wear those pearls you liked*

*Never gonna hang on your arm all night*

*Never gonna be the one to play golf on Sundays*

*I would never find a way to impress your dad*

*Fit in with your friends but despite all that*

*Some days I still pretend*

*All that we could've been*

*All that we could've been*

*Well, I don't miss you*

*No, I don't wish you*

*Were still mine*

*All this time*

*Cause I don't recognize*



*That girl who was just trying*

*To fit in to her skin*

*I found a love and life that feels right*

*I was never gonna wear those pearls you liked*

*Never gonna hang on your arm all night*

*Never gonna be the one to play golf on Sundays*

*(Maybe Saturdays)*

*I would never find a way to impress your dad*

*Fit in with your friends but despite all that*

*Some days I still pretend*

*All that we could've been*

[00:27:24] **Laura Volk:** Thank you so much, I'm Skout. It was a pleasure, thank you!

(Cheers and applause.)

[00:27:26] **Jesse Thorn:** Laura Volk! The band is Skout! The single is called “Pearls”. Share it, stream it.

[00:27:38] **John Hodgman:** [SkoutMusic.com](http://SkoutMusic.com). I know I said earlier that before we move on to Swift Justice we have a surprise for you. And that was true. That was it. And now, before we move on to Swift Justice, we have another surprise for you! We have this very special guest. As you know, as I mentioned before, the name of our tour is Van Freak's Roadshow. For all the reasons that I gave before—our mutual love of the *Antiques Roadshow* and the Japanese market only adventure van, the Mitsubishi Delica. I'll see you outside in the Mazda Bongo later on. I'm sorry we couldn't get a Delica, but we have the next best thing, a Mazda Bongo.

But in terms of the *Antiques Roadshow*, we have the first best thing! Isn't that correct, Jesse?

[00:28:18] **Jesse Thorn:** That's absolutely correct. Our special guest tonight is executive producer of GBH's *Antiques Roadshow*. She's been running the roadshow for over 20 years. Please welcome to the stage, Marsha Bemko.

(Cheers and applause.)

[00:28:29] **Transition:** Spirited, upbeat piano version of the *Antiques Roadshow* theme song.

[00:28:34] **John Hodgman:** Wow, round of applause also for Josh Kantor, who learned the *Antiques Roadshow* theme after rehearsal, in about 35 seconds. Marsha Bemko, welcome to our stage. Thank you for being here; it's such a thrill for both me and Jesse.

[00:28:50] **Marsha Bemko:** It's such a thrill for me to be here and to have your show named after us. Love that! Yeah.

[00:28:57] **John Hodgman:** That's right. Our—yes, yeah. So, how did you get involved with GBH's *Antiques Roadshow*?

[00:29:02] **Marsha Bemko:** I'll give you the short story. (Laughs.)

[00:29:04] **John Hodgman:** I betcha you won't!

[00:29:08] **Marsha Bemko:** (Laughs.) I got involved with the *Antiques Roadshow* because—let's see, we're in season 28. Back in—24 years ago. Somebody asked me to do it. I said no. They convinced me to do it. And then I fell in love with the *Antiques Roadshow*. And I stayed, and I've been there ever since. Like, 24 years later.

[00:29:26] **John Hodgman:** Did you have any background in collecting or appraising or putting stuff in the back basement, taking stuff out of the back basement? The junk and stuff business?

[00:29:36] **Marsha Bemko:** (Chuckling.) No, I'm very tidy!

[00:29:38] **John Hodgman:** The beautiful junk and stuff business?

[00:29:40] **Marsha Bemko:** No, I don't have any of that kind of experience. I'm very, very tidy. Had no antiques experience, but I love making the show. And I know a little bit more now. (Beat.) I've learned some.

[00:29:51] **Jesse Thorn:** I think our show is—you know, it's about the conflicts but also about the feelings behind the conflicts and getting to know the people behind the conflicts. I think that's sort of similar to the *Roadshow*, which is about the objects and their histories certainly but also about the people who are on camera. Are there any like particular special people who blew your mind that you've met through the roadshow, through them walking in the door of a convention center or whatever?

[00:30:20] **Marsha Bemko:** We don't do our show in convention centers anymore. Just making—getting that right. Okay.

[00:30:23] **Jesse Thorn:** Or whatever!

[00:30:24] **John Hodgman:** You should probably watch the show, Jesse.

(Laughter.)

Probably check it out. Sometimes they do it up in Maine with me. Come up to my house in Maine.

(Marsha confirms.)

[00:30:32] **Jesse Thorn:** I've never been on. So.

[00:30:33] **Marsha Bemko:** John had his own private roadshow. Yeah.

Special people. I've had so many special people, special stories. I've had people I've cried with. I've had people I've laughed with. We've had—so, we were in Boise a couple of years ago. And we travel with two IT people. Back in the old days, we didn't have to do that. We used paper. But anyways, the IT people like to take turns coming, because it's good to come to *Roadshow*. So, one of our IT people came, Eric. And he brought his partner with him, Jeff, from Boston. The only time Jeff has ever come to an *Antiques Roadshow*.

And we have this rule, by the way. We use 110 volunteers at *Antiques Roadshow*. And we have a rule with the volunteers. Don't talk to our guests. Why? Because otherwise they say things like, "Oh, what a great painting by Picasso!" And they didn't know it, so they wreck it for us. We don't like that.

[00:31:30] **John Hodgman:** Right. You want to hide the information.

[00:31:31] **Marsha Bemko:** They need to shut up.

[00:31:32] **Jesse Thorn:** Can it, volunteers!

[00:31:35] **Marsha Bemko:** Damn it, volunteers! Keep quiet!

[00:31:38] **John Hodgman:** Yeah. You want the guest to be totally in the dark.

[00:31:40] **Marsha Bemko:** Totally in the dark.

[00:31:42] **John Hodgman:** So that when you reveal that their stuff is worth money or nothing, they fall down. If it's worth money, they fall down. If it's worth nothing, they go "Hmm! Well, I sure treasure it! It means a lot to me!"

(Laughter.)

Kind of like that cash register I brought on the *Antiques Roadshow* that time in Maine.

[00:32:04] **Marsha Bemko:** Listen, it means a lot to you just because it wasn't worth a lot of money, John. It's okay.

[00:32:09] **John Hodgman:** You're re-traumatizing me, but.

(Laughter.)

So, anyway, volunteers can't talk to the guests.

[00:32:13] **Marsha Bemko:** So, what happens is that the guest comes in, and she goes to the arms and military table. And she has special forces badges, which are worth quite a bit of money.

[00:32:25] **John Hodgman:** Okay, making a note!

[00:32:27] **Marsha Bemko:** Yeah, like you know, \$10,000 for a couple badges.

But as I'm getting pitched this story, the volunteer, Jeff, starts—he's listening in on what this guest is saying. And she's saying how her relative had saved General Gavin's life, because he killed the sniper that was aiming for him. And sure enough, that was Jeff's grandfather.

What?!

[00:33:00] **John Hodgman:** He was alive because of the *Roadshow*. (Chuckling.) That's my takeaway.

[00:33:02] **Marsha Bemko:** Yes. (Laughs.) He's alive, because that guy saved—

So, it was just the biggest coincidence ever. They're friends. They went out for breakfast the next day. And I think that's just one of the most unusual coincidences at *Roadshow*, yeah.

(Applause.)

[00:33:24] **John Hodgman:** I know Jesse was like, “What are all the human stories, blah, blah, blah.” What's the weirdest stuff you ever saw?

[00:33:31] **Marsha Bemko:** (Laughs.) Okay! We see all kinds of weird stuff. We even see the kind of stuff we cannot put on public television, right? We air at 8PM here.

[00:33:39] **John Hodgman:** Well, the kind of stuff you can't put on public television. Why, Marsha, that's gotta be pretty racy! If you can't put it on public television!

[00:33:49] **Marsha Bemko:** It's very racy, actually. Okay.

(John affirms.)

But this is racy for *Roadshow*, and you gotta go—

[00:33:55] **John Hodgman:** I mean—I take it back. I know public television gets pretty racy. I saw *I, Claudius*.

(Laughter.)

You can get away with a lot of stuff. Get away with a looot of racy stuff.

[00:34:05] **Marsha Bemko:** It's all in the name of education.

(John agrees.)

[00:34:08] **Jesse Thorn:** And I saw the MacNeil/Lehrer news hour.

(John confirms.)

Thank you, John.

[00:34:14] **John Hodgman:** It took a minute to sink in. Slash fiction. I got you.

[00:34:20] **Marsha Bemko:** Okay, so, one of the sillier things—and you gotta go check this out on our website and watch it if you haven't seen it—are these little ceramic things called Potty Babies. Okay?

[00:34:30] **John Hodgman:** Go on.

[00:34:31] **Marsha Bemko:** Oh, go on, yes! And what they are is they're German. It's this tradition at Christmastime for the little—to give chocolates. And then, the little potty things are pooping chocolate, chocolate nuggets.

[00:34:46] **John Hodgman:** The little Potty Babies are pooping chocolate in Germany?

[00:34:47] **Marsha Bemko:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, into the potties.

(John affirms.)

They were made in Germany. The little potties.

(John affirms.)

Yes, yeah, and they're—

[00:34:59] **Jesse Thorn:** Sorry, I gotta get this workflow down.

(Laughter.)

So, the pooping babies—

[00:35:03] **Marsha Bemko:** Yeah, the pooping babies.

[00:35:04] **Jesse Thorn:** Are pooping into—pooping chocolates into tiny potties for Christmas.

[00:35:12] **Marsha Bemko:** Yeah! Yeah, don't you want some? (Laughs.)

[00:35:15] **Jesse Thorn:** The reason for the season.

(Laughter.)

[00:35:20] **John Hodgman:** Jesse, we've got to start a band called The Poopin' Babies. But before we do, we're going to hear as many cases as we can in 15 minutes. Marsha Bemko, would you stick around and help us render some judgments and appraise some litigants?

[00:35:32] **Marsha Bemko:** This will be such a treat, thank you. Yes.

[00:35:34] **John Hodgman:** Of course! Thank you very much. Marsha Benko, everybody.

(Cheers and applause.)

[00:35:37] **Transition:** Cheerful piano.

[00:35:41] **Transition:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:35:44] **Transition:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:35:46] **Jesse Thorn:** Judge Hodgman, are you enjoying this live show from Boston, Massachusetts? I am.

[00:35:50] **John Hodgman:** I'm enjoying it again and for the very first time. Let me tell you something. I had such a good time on the road with you, Jesse Thorn, and with everyone who came out to the Van Freaks Roadshow. And I happen to know that the people who came out for the Van Freaks Roadshow also had a really good time. And every night, they saw a different show. And that means a whole lot of people on the tour and in the world never saw our show at the Opera House in Williamsburg.

[00:36:19] **Jesse Thorn:** We talked about this show. It will be streaming live starting Saturday night and running until December 3rd. So, you can watch it on your own schedule. It is a really fun show with really special, unique cases, musical performances from John and myself and our pal Jonathan Coulton, working with John. It is a really great time, and I hope

that everybody will go to [VanFreaksRoadshow.com](http://VanFreaksRoadshow.com) and get themselves a ticket to that stream, because it is a blast and a half!

[00:36:49] **John Hodgman:** I dare say, with the holidays coming up, if you're a *Judge John Hodgman* longtime listener, and you're a fan of Jason and his Sadness Tree from waaay back in year one, you're going to want to see this episode.

(Jesse chuckles.)

There is some real Sadness Tree action.

[00:37:05] **Jesse Thorn:** It really looks gorgeous. I'm so impressed. The folks who put it together did such a beautiful job making it a really great thing to look at. It sounds beautiful. It is a real concert film, so I hope people will go to [VanFreaksRoadshow.com](http://VanFreaksRoadshow.com) and get themselves a ticket. Let's get back to the stage in Boston, Massachusetts for Swift Justice.

[00:37:26] **Transition:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:37:28] **Transition:** Cheerful piano.

[00:37:31] **John Hodgman:** Alright, let's put 15 minutes on the clock. And we're going to start hearing cases right away. Bailiff Jesse Thorn, you want to bring in the first litigants?

[00:37:38] **Jesse Thorn:** Please welcome to the stage Annette and Ben!

[00:37:39] **John Hodgman:** Annette and Ben, welcome to the court of Judge John Hodgman. Who seeks justice in my fake, internet court?

[00:37:45] **Annette:** I do, your honor.

[00:37:47] **John Hodgman:** Annette, What is the nature of the justice that you seek?

[00:37:50] **Annette:** So, I just want Ben to agree that, in case I die first—hopefully not soon—that he will send my body and he will come to Uganda to bury me there in my own culture.

[00:38:07] **John Hodgman:** In Uganda, where you are from?

(Annette confirms.)

No one—who's dying?! Why are we talking about this?!

(Laughter.)

Cheev is trying to push his mom into the tomb! You're both young, vibrant people! Alright, you want to—so, thinking well ahead. You would like to be—

[00:38:26] **Annette:** Yes, your honor, there's a context to this!

[00:38:27] **John Hodgman:** You would like to be buried in Uganda when you pass away.

(Annette confirms.)

And your husband, Ben—you don't want to—you don't want to honor your wife's wishes?  
(Chuckling.)

[00:38:40] **Annette:** Uh, not at all.

(Laughter.)

I do want to honor wishes. But I think there's more to it.

[00:38:47] **John Hodgman:** So, it says here that you have an issue or a problem with funerals here in the United States.

[00:38:53] **Annette:** Yes, I do!

[00:38:54] **John Hodgman:** Okay. Tell me more, please.

[00:38:55] **Annette:** Yes. So, there's a little bit of background. So, we've been married for 19 years. So, when I moved here, the year that I moved here, Grandma—Ben's dad's grandma died. So, you can imagine I'm adjusting to a lot of cultural things.

(John affirms.)

And so, when we go for the funeral, and they say grandma has died. So, we go all the way to Michigan, and when I arrive I'm expecting to see a body. There's no body. I'm like what's going on here? And then we're just at the house eating and looking at albums. Nobody's crying.

I am frightened! I'm on the phone with my dad. I'm like, "Dad, I don't know what's going on here!" So, anyway.

[00:39:38] **John Hodgman:** It seemed weird. It seemed strange to you.

[00:39:39] **Annette:** It's so strange as compared to my culture.

[00:39:42] **John Hodgman:** Did you believe that it was possibly a false funeral?



(Annette laughs.)

[00:39:45] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, I was going to say, maybe a classic Michigan prank funeral?

[00:39:50] **Jesse Thorn:** No body, no tears?!

[00:39:52] **Annette:** No body, no tears. But anyway, so fast forward. The next day, there's a funeral. We see the body. Okay.

(John “phew!”s with relief.)

Nobody—people are crying, but they are not sobbing and no wailing. In my culture, people are throwing themselves down! Did not—

[00:40:09] **John Hodgman:** Yeah. No expression of emotion.

[00:40:12] **Annette:** I came back. I have been, ever since—every time I'm like, “Listen, honey. Like, you have—I have to be buried at home.”

[00:40:20] **John Hodgman:** You don't want to go that way, the Michigan way.

[00:40:23] **Annette:** No, I have to go with the whole village throwing themselves down.

[00:40:28] **John Hodgman:** You don't want to go silently into that good night.

[00:40:30] **Annette:** Yes! That's all I want!

[00:40:31] **John Hodgman:** You want a habeas corpus. Show them the body.

(Annette confirms.)

I understand. So, what happens in Uganda, typically? It's more demonstrative?

[00:40:38] **Annette:** Exactly. So, in my tribe—different tribes do different ways. In my tribe, we are called Bagisu. It's all over the—it's too much, but whatever. (Laughs.) So—

[00:40:52] **John Hodgman:** Not enough, as far as I'm concerned.

[00:40:54] **Annette:** So, if you died, we mourn for three days. Right?

(John “wow”s.)

So, they'll bring your body to your home. Because even if you moved in the city, we still have like, you know, our central homes. Like, my dad retired, and we have our whole village home. So, that's where they would bury everybody.

[00:41:10] **John Hodgman:** What's going on in his basement? Too much stuff?

[00:41:14] **Annette:** (Laughs brightly.)

So, they bring your body, and everybody is running to just mourn you. Even strangers. It will be like people are passing by the road, and they'll be like, "What is happening there? Oh, somebody died." They'll come and cry like they know you. It's that here.

So, they will mourn for three days, but also not just mourning. Like, in the evening, people are dancing like it's a whole party. It's crazy. They touch your body. They do all—like, you go out like a celebrity. So, I want all that!

(John laughs.)

So, when—yeah, so in Ben's culture—in American culture, to be politically correct, White culture.

(Laughter.)

You're lucky if you're—

[00:41:57] **John Hodgman:** That's fair. We're inarguably the capital of Whiteness in the United States, Boston, Massachusetts.

[00:42:04] **Annette:** There's some funerals I've gone to with my friends. I don't even see the body! That's—mm-mm.

[00:42:08] **John Hodgman:** Not enough.

(Annette confirms.)

Ben, let me ask you a question. Actually, no. Annette—

(Laughter.)

Your father is still alive?

[00:42:17] **Annette:** Yes, both my parents.

[00:42:18] **John Hodgman:** Have you discussed this plan with him?

[00:42:21] **Annette:** Yes. Unfortunately, the entire family. It's so sad. My parents, my siblings. I have seven siblings. Everybody's on his side!

[00:42:30] **Jesse Thorn:** What?!

[00:42:30] **Annette:** It's so unfortunate, because in my tribe—in my culture, if you are married, you are supposed to be buried at your husband's home. So, Ben uses that. And the entire family—(inaudible) family WhatsApp. I was looking for my younger family members, who are a different generation, to support me. So, everybody except the young ones, they're like, “Oh, absolutely! They have to bury you there.” I'm like no! Because we're not living in the cultural context. That was like—people were getting married from the next village. I'm like 7,000 miles away!

[00:43:14] **John Hodgman:** Alright, Ben. You want to put your wife in the cold, emotionless Michigan dirt. Tell me why.

[00:43:21] **Ben:** I love Annette deeply. Our 25 years together have been—

[00:43:24] **John Hodgman:** So do I, and so do all of us.

[00:43:27] **Ben:** —have been a joyful adventure. And I want to be clear, I'm not insisting that Annette gets buried here. I hope I'm not in the position of having to grieve my wife's loss. All I ask is that a living and breathing Annette today gives a little more thought to potential, future, grieving, devastated Ben when she is no longer with us on this earth.

More—just to think a little bit more about what that might be for me.

[00:44:06] **Annette:** I do, your honor. I do. I do!

[00:44:12] **John Hodgman:** Do you find that the Michigan style of mourning the dead to be emotionally productive for you?

[00:44:19] **Ben:** I was fine with funeral services. I've been to my own family. I've also—I went to her grandmother's funeral before she went to mine, and it certainly was a very cross-cultural experience for me. But going into this relationship, I knew it was cross-cultural, and there would be surprises along the way. And—

[00:44:38] **Annette:** I thought of other things cross-culturally, your honor. And I lived cross-culturally for 19 years. But this one, uh-uh.

(They laugh.)

[00:44:48] **Jesse Thorn:** But you are—you are, Annette, asking to cross the cultural interpretation of everyone else in your family.

[00:44:56] **John Hodgman:** Marsha Bemko, do you have a thought, a question? An issue you'd like to raise? How's it done in Boston? Drinking, right?

[00:45:04] **Marsha Bemko:** (Laughs.) How's this done in Boston? Happy wife, happy life. And I'm somebody's wife, so I would want you to do what the wife wants. However! The cultural thing where you're supposed to stay with the husband's family really tears me up a little, because—

[00:45:22] **Annette:** But that's not—your honor, it's not true. Because culturally, the wife is supposed to cook, but he cooks.

(Laughter and applause.)

[00:45:33] **Jesse Thorn:** Ben, it sounds like—Ben, it sounds like part of the challenge for this, for you, is that this is going to be—this would be a very complicated thing for you to handle while you are also grieving. Would it be possible, or would you suggest that Annette purchase some sort of postage paid envelope?

(Laughter.)

[00:45:56] **John Hodgman:** Wait a minute, wait a minute, wait a minute. I have to step back into this courtroom.

[00:46:02] **Jesse Thorn:** That you could keep in your back basement!

[00:46:04] **John Hodgman:** As much as I respect the New England tradition of taking the most painful experiences in our lives, packing them in boxes, and shipping them away forever, and as much as I appreciate—truly, Ben—the very, you know, painful even contemplation of this idea, never mind what it might feel like down the road, I think that you have to obviously honor your beloved's wishes. I have to ask out of fairness, Ben, do you have plans for how you'd like your body to be honored and celebrated?

[00:46:45] **Ben:** I have no strong feelings about what happens to my body after I'm no longer on this earth.

[00:46:49] **John Hodgman:** Oh, he's made it easy for you.

[00:46:51] **Annette:** Yeah, it doesn't help my case.

[00:46:55] **John Hodgman:** So, let me put it this way: since you have no strong feelings, obviously you're getting a Ugandan funeral, you're getting a Ugandan funeral, anyone who wants a Ugandan funeral gets one today!

(Cheers.)

I rule in Annette's favor. Sorry, Ben. It'll be very, very hard, but I hope that it might help you process. And I trust that it won't happen for a long, long, long, long, long time.

(Annette "aw"s.)

Because just like Lucy, you're gonna live forever.

(Cheers and applause.)

[00:47:19] **Transition:** Upbeat piano.

[00:47:20] **Jesse Thorn:** Thank you, Annette and Ben. Please welcome to the stage Elizabeth and Suzanne!

[00:47:25] **John Hodgman:** Elizabeth and Suzanne. Welcome to the court of Judge John Hodgman. Who seeks justice in this court?

[00:47:31] **Elizabeth:** I do.

[00:47:33] **John Hodgman:** And what is the nature of the justice you seek, Elizabeth?

[00:47:36] **Elizabeth:** So, this is my Aunt Suzanne. And being from Massachusetts—as well as she is—in referring to myself as well as all the aunts in my family, we would like her to introduce us and herself as Aunt (ahnt) Suzanne and not what she calls Aunt (ant) Suzanne.

(Laughter and scattered applause.)

[00:47:55] **Jesse Thorn:** Let the record reflect that Suzanne did a "rock out" move.

[00:48:01] **John Hodgman:** You're from Massachusetts, you say?

(Elizabeth confirms.)

I never would have guessed. Where are you from?

[00:48:09] **Elizabeth:** I was raised in Medford, Massachusetts.

(Scattered but enthusiastic cheers.)

[00:48:11] **John Hodgman:** Fantastic. Now, Suzanne, you are also from Massachusetts?

(Suzanne confirms.)

Where are you from?

[00:48:18] **Suzanne:** I'm from Newton, Massachusetts.

[00:48:19] **John Hodgman:** Newton, Massachusetts.

(Scattered cheers.)

[00:48:21] **Suzanne:** And you're my rival.

[00:48:22] **John Hodgman:** And I have heard of Newton in passing.

(Laughter.)

Are you originally from Massachusetts?

[00:48:34] **Suzanne:** Yes. I was born in Boston, raised in Newton.

[00:48:37] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, I can hear some Boston, but you want to be called Aunt (ant) Suzanne.

[00:48:43] **Suzanne:** No, I don't really care when anybody calls me, okay? (Chuckling.) When I lived in Massachusetts—I grew up in Massachusetts—I said aunt (ahnt), okay? But I moved to Washington. I moved to New York. And when I moved to New York, there were all these aunts (ants). Aunt Mildred. Aunt Jo. Aunt Fae. And so, when I talked about Aunt (ahnt) Mildred, nobody knew what I was talking about!

[00:49:11] **John Hodgman:** Right, because that was Aunt (ant) Mildred. But you are Aunt (ahnt) Suzanne, aren't you?

[00:49:16] **Suzanne:** No, no, no. (Laughs.) I don't think anybody should tell anybody how to pronounce something.

(Scattered, enthusiastic cheers.)

And I think we have to respect accents. Okay? Just respect them.

[00:49:30] **John Hodgman:** Well, I think that that's what your nice—niece, sorry.

(Laughter.)

I think that's what your niece, Elizabeth, wants is to respect the accent. And in Boston area you would say—I mean, right, Marsha Bemko? Tell me about this. Am I misremembering?

[00:49:49] **Marsha Bemko:** If you're from Boston, it's aunt (ahnt). It's an ahnt. There's no ants in Boston.

(Laughter.)

[00:49:55] **Jesse Thorn:** And how would you know? I mean, I'm hearing your voice; I don't think you're from Boston.

[00:49:59] **Marsha Bemko:** That's because I have a tainted accent. But I am a Bostonian.

[00:50:03] **John Hodgman:** How do you have a tainted accent?

[00:50:04] **Marsha Bemko:** I have a tainted accent, because I married a man from south of us—like New Jersey.

(John “oh no”s.)

(Laughs.) I know, I know! It's Jersey. It's okay. He's been here a long time. It's—most of the Jersey's out of him now. But some of it's in me, and there's a little Jersey in there.

[00:50:24] **John Hodgman:** Where? I don't hear—

[00:50:27] **Marsha Bemko:** (Cackles.) He corrupted my perfect Boston accent!

[00:50:29] **John Hodgman:** Why is it important to you that your ant/ahnt say ahnt instead of ant? She would prefer to be called Aunt (ant) Suzanne.

[00:50:38] **Elizabeth:** But everybody that is an aunt (ahnt) that lives in Massachusetts, we refer to each other as ahnt. My ahnt.

[00:50:45] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, but they're everybody else. There's only one—

[00:50:47] **Elizabeth:** But when she's here, I would like—I would appreciate if we were referred to as ahnt, like we are.

[00:50:57] **Suzanne:** And I don't really care whether you call me ant or ahnt, okay? It doesn't matter! I respect whatever you want to call me, you can call me. I mean, when I went to New York and people, you know, referred to me as Aunt (ant) Suzanne, I said, “Ants!?! That's creepy!” It took me a really long time to come around to my tainted accent. (Laughs.)

[00:51:18] **John Hodgman:** You know I have an Aunt (ahnt) Linda here in Massachusetts, but in Philadelphia I have five ants. And tomorrow, at our show in Brooklyn, my Aunt (ant) Beth is gonna be there, and please never tell her that I am also creeped out by the word ant.

(Laughter.) I like ahnt better. That said, Elizabeth, I think your ahnt/ant makes a good point. You shouldn't tell people how to pronounce their names or their titles. You wouldn't call her Aunt Suzanne (Ant Sue-zahn), would you? No. It's Aunt Suzanne (Ant Sue-zan), now and forever. I'm sorry, Elizabeth, but that's the way it is. That's what makes her unique. (Bangs his gavel four times.)

[00:51:54] **Transition:** Spirited piano.

[00:51:55] **Jesse Thorn:** Thank you, Elizabeth and Suzanne. Please welcome to the stage, Sarah and David!

[00:52:00] **John Hodgman:** Sarah and David. Sarah, it says here that you have been a litigant on the show before.

(Sarah confirms.)

What was the nature of the case?

[00:52:11] **Sarah:** I wanted my husband to stop wearing pants that look like an American flag.

(Laughter.)

[00:52:16] **John Hodgman:** And it says here you're now divorced? Is that—?

(Laughter.)

[00:52:20] **Sarah:** No, he followed your verdict; he doesn't wear them anymore. It was great! It was the best thing for our family.

[00:52:24] **John Hodgman:** Good, 'cause it's tacky. But that is not what brings you here today. You seek justice in the state court.

(Sarah confirms.)

What is the nature of your complaint?

[00:52:32] **Sarah:** This is a dispute about where to go on a family vacation.

[00:52:35] **John Hodgman:** I see! What are the options? This is your father?

[00:52:40] **Sarah:** This is my father. He's representing basically everyone else in the family besides me.

[00:52:43] **David:** The whole family.

[00:52:44] **John Hodgman:** Got it. David what are the options?

[00:52:47] **David:** Well, we have branches of the family. Some are in Washington, some here in Boston, some in Denver. Each with various numbers of children and all that. So, we've tried—basically, the answer to your question is New Jersey.



(John “woah”s and the audience laughs.)

And (chuckling)—and let me just say, this year was particularly—you know, reconciling all of these contrary and difficult wishes has always been difficult. My son and daughter-in-law, who live in Washington, had their first child this year. And so—

(John congratulates them.)

Thank you! And they—we more or less gave them a veto on location. Sarah wanted to go to the Cape.

[00:53:31] **John Hodgman:** Which one?

[00:53:31] **Sarah:** Cape Cod!

[00:53:34] **John Hodgman:** The Cape of Cod.

[00:53:35] **Jesse Thorn:** Canaveral.

(Laughter.)

[00:53:37] **David:** Yeah. Canaveral. And they—for reasons I think are not terribly unreasonable, they don't want to fly with the baby—the one-year-old. That's the only way they could do it. They can't drive, but they didn't want to fly. And we figured, well, they get their way this year, because they're the new parents in the family.

[00:53:56] **John Hodgman:** And you say—and you say, Sarah, no.

[00:53:59] **Sarah:** I would like to go to Cape Cod.

[00:54:01] **John Hodgman:** How do you propose this happen without abandoning the—what's the relation again?

[00:54:05] **Sarah:** I think they should just fly with the baby. It's not a big deal. By the way, for the record, this is my younger brother. I have two children. I have taken them on a plane for family vacations. Multiple times. It's not that big a deal.

[00:54:16] **John Hodgman:** Have you ever been to Cape Cod?

(Sarah confirms.)

I mean, not in your life, but on this family vacation?

[00:54:18] **Sarah:** Oh, as a family, no, no. We always come up with these compromises and end up in New Jersey.

[00:54:23] **John Hodgman:** Where are the other compromises?

[00:54:25] **Sarah & David:** Rhode Island.

[00:54:26] **John Hodgman:** Judging from the tenor of your voice, I take it that's a mistake you'll never make again?

[00:54:29] **Sarah:** Well, they're—none of these places is good. We should obviously go to the Cape. It's a much nicer place to go on vacation.

[00:54:36] **John Hodgman:** Any other places besides Rhode Island?

[00:54:36] **Sarah:** Multiple different places in Rhode Island.

[00:54:38] **John Hodgman:** Woah, okay.

[00:54:39] **David:** And we have been to New Jersey.

[00:54:42] **Sarah:** And New Jersey.

[00:54:42] **Jesse Thorn:** I didn't even know there were multiple places in Rhode Island.

(Laughter.)

[00:54:47] **David:** There are. There are. I think it's worth mentioning that my wife—who is really the most important figure in making this decision for many reasons—is from New Jersey. And to her, it's very—to her—

[00:55:00] **Sarah:** She doesn't believe in Cape Cod.

[00:55:01] **David:** (Chuckling.) The summer is the Jersey Shore, is what the Shore is supposed to look like. And all these other places, they can be very nice. But—so, she's—

[00:55:10] **John Hodgman:** There is—let the record show, there's a smattering of applause for your side.

[00:55:13] **David:** It was just a smattering.

[00:55:15] **John Hodgman:** They're just—you know, the kind of applause like, “I hope no one can see who's applauding!”

(Laughter.)

Where on the Jersey Shore do you want to go?

[00:55:24] **Sarah:** Well, again, we've settled on this—

[00:55:26] **John Hodgman:** (Interrupting.) David. I'm asking David.

(Laughter.)

[00:55:30] **David:** We're going to a—

[00:55:33] **John Hodgman:** We're going? The decision hasn't been made, sir!

(Sarah cackles.)

Where are you proposing to me that you go in New Jersey?

[00:55:44] **David:** I'm asking you for permission to go to Avon by the Sea. Because it's a lovely—it's a very nice—

[00:55:47] **John Hodgman:** Avon by the Sea. Avon by the

[00:55:54] **Sarah:** (With disgust.) North Jersey.

(Laughter.)

[00:55:55] **David:** It's very nice. Nice beach.

[00:55:57] **John Hodgman:** Marsha Bemko. What are we gonna do with these people?

(Laughter.)

[00:56:01] **Marsha Bemko:** Well, like I said before, my husband's from down there, Jersey. Yeah, mm-hm, Cape Cod, my friend.

(Cheers and applause.)

It has the most beautiful beaches in the world!

(Sarah affirms.)

Yeah, the most beautiful beaches in the world are here in Massachusetts. That's where you go.

[00:56:22] **Jesse Thorn:** We were talking to Marsha before the show, like running through what was gonna happen. And she just goes, "I have opinions! Is that okay?!"

(Laughter.)

[00:56:31] **Marsha Bemko:** I'm on the Cape Cod side, okay.

[00:56:33] **David:** I see that.

[00:56:34] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, I'm gonna say Cape Cod.

(Cheers and applause.)

[00:56:37] **Transition:** A live piano cover of “Vacation” by the band The Go-Go's.

[00:56:38] **Jesse Thorn:** Thank you, Sarah and David. And Marsha Bemko, thank you so much for joining us here.

(Marsha thanks them.)

*Antiques Roadshow* can be found on your local PBS station and online at [PBS.org](https://www.pbs.org). The next season begins in January with Anchorage, Alaska.

[00:56:54] **John Hodgman:** Anchorage, Alaska!

[00:57:00] **Transition:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:57:03] **Jesse Thorn:** Huge to the wonderful crew at the Wilbur Theatre and to everybody at WGBH in Boston. GBH was so helpful, and the whole crew at the *Roadshow* was so helpful at making this tour special. We had a number of *Roadshow* experts along the way. And to have Marsha, the boss of the entire program for literal decades, was a joy—not least because she, herself, is a joy. (Laughs.)

[00:57:25] **John Hodgman:** And if you'd like to see another *Roadshow* appraiser—perhaps the dandiest of them all—make sure to go to [VanFreaksRoadshow.com](https://www.vanfreaksroadshow.com) and join us for the livestream from the Opera House in Williamsburg, Brooklyn for that and so many other surprises—including me and Jesse Thorn with you in the chat throughout the stream this Saturday night. Go to [VanFreaksRoadshow.com](https://www.vanfreaksroadshow.com). Now Jesse, hit me with the credits!

[00:57:50] **Jesse Thorn:** *Judge John Hodgman* was created by Jesse Thorn and John Hodgman. Marie Bardi-Salinas runs our social media. This week's episode, recorded by Stephen Colón and edited by A.J. McKeon. Our producers on this episode are Laura Volk and Jennifer Marmor. We're on Instagram, [@JudgeJohnHodgman](https://www.instagram.com/judgejohnhodgman). Follow us there for evidence and other photos from the show and check out the Maximum Fun subreddit. That's at [MaximumFun.Reddit.com](https://www.maximumfun.com), to discuss this week's episode. We'll talk to you next time on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

[00:58:23] **Transition:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:58:24] **Sound Effect:** Cheerful ukulele chord.

[00:58:26] **Speaker 1:** Maximum Fun.

[00:58:27] **Speaker 2:** A worker-owned network.

[00:58:28] **Speaker 3:** Of artist owned shows.

[00:58:30] **Speaker 4:** Supported—

[00:58:31] **Speaker 5:** —directly—

[00:58:32] **Speaker 6:** —by you!