

[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, "Car-edible Witness". Nicole brings the case against her partner, Scott. Nicole says Scott razzes her too much because of her road trip snacking system. Scott says her messy snacks deserve to be razzed. Who's right? Who's wrong? Only one can decide.

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

Please rise as Judge John Hodgman enters the courtroom and presents an obscure cultural reference.

[00:00:31] **John Hodgman:** "There are very few things I don't eat with ranch. I just like it, and it helps make some things easier to eat. So, I always have it with my meals. When we got our food, I asked for some ranch. The waiter said they didn't have any and offered to bring out some kind of sour cream and dill sauce. *(Disappointedly.)* I tried it, and they just weren't the same. I told Michael I'd be right back, took my wallet, and left the restaurant. I had seen a convenience store close by when arriving. So, I went, bought a bottle of ranch, and came back. Michael looked shocked but didn't say anything and ate his food."

Bailiff Jesse Thorn, please swear them in.

[00:01:06] **Jesse Thorn:** Nicole and Scott, please rise and raise your right hands.

(Chairs squeak.)

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

(They swear.)

Do you swear to abide by Judge John Hodgman's ruling, despite the fact that he's watching his carbohydrates intake—and so, when you're on tour with him, and you buy some snacks at a gas station or whatever, and your thinking is that he's gonna eat half of them, he doesn't eat any of them, and then you eat all of them?

(They confirm with a laugh.)

Judge Hodgman, you may proceed.

[00:01:37] **John Hodgman:** Although it is possible, Jesse, for me to get a little cup of ranch dressing and just sip it. Just sip a little cup of ranch.

(Jesse "glug, glug!"s cheerfully.)

That's good for me. That's good for my triglycerides. Just a little cup. Num-mm-mhm.

[00:01:51] **Jesse Thorn:** Down it goes.

[00:01:52] **John Hodgman:** A little demitasse of ranch. Okay, Nicole and Scott, you may be seated.

(Chairs squeak.)

For an immediate summary judgment, one of your favorites can either of you name the piece of culture that I referenced as I entered this courtroom? Uuh, let's say Nicole. What's your guess?

[00:02:06] **Nicole:** Well, I was going to guess a Mountain Goats song, but that doesn't—

[00:02:09] **John Hodgman:** Always a good guess.

[00:02:12] **Jesse Thorn:** Yeah, they don't always rhyme. But...

[00:02:16] **Nicole:** *(Laughs.)* Yeah, so I guess that's my guess, even though I know it's definitely not that.

[00:02:20] **John Hodgman:** There need to be more condiment-based Mountain Goats songs, though, I think. Yeah.

(They chuckle.)

[00:02:25] **Jesse Thorn:** I think we'll save that for the John Darnielle/Weird Al collab album.

[00:02:30] **Nicole:** I'd listen to it.

[00:02:32] **Jesse Thorn:** It's called *We Know Our Market*.

[00:02:33] **John Hodgman:** The best ever death metal ghost reaper sauce out of Texas? No, that's what it was. What song are you going to guess though? If you were going to guess a Mountain Goats song. Just so you can give me a little—something from the new album?

[00:02:44] **Nicole:** Yeah, the new album. Yeah. As he's getting into like saxophone experimentation, why not ranch also?

[00:02:50] **John Hodgman:** Yeah. Some people get into flutes. John gets into sax. *Jenny from Thebes* is the name of the new Mountain Goats album. Alright, now, Scott, what's your guess?

[00:03:01] **Scott:** You know, I came in with a prepared guess, and I don't think it works either. So, I'll just go with that. I was going to do Season 7, Episode 5 of *The Simpsons* when they do “You Don't Win Friends with Salad”. So.

[00:03:16] **John Hodgman:** “You Don't Win Friends with Salad”, Season 5, Episode 7. What happens in that one?

[00:03:21] **Scott:** That's when Lisa becomes a vegetarian.

[00:03:24] **John Hodgman:** Oh, gotcha.

[00:03:25] **Jesse Thorn:** Great episode.

[00:03:27] **John Hodgman:** And that pertains to this case because why, Scott?

[00:03:30] **Scott:** Well, when we go on road trips, Nicole tends to enjoy road trip snacks, including things that maybe most people wouldn't consider—

[00:03:38] **John Hodgman:** Salad? Road trip salad? Alright, we'll put a pin in that and come back to it. Because all guesses were wrong. I was referencing a Reddit post from the very popular “Am I the (*mumbles the swear word*)” Reddit that I may have referenced in our episode recently with Nick and Amelia from the *Doughboys* podcast, “Condiment Crimes”, which had a lot to do with ranch, which I believe that you enjoy. Is that correct, Nicole?

[00:04:04] **Nicole:** I do. Yeah. It almost feels like it's mandatory here in the Midwest to enjoy it.

[00:04:08] **John Hodgman:** Yes. And for the person who posted this post on Reddit, it was absolutely Reddit—the “Am I the erk-hole” entry was called “Am I the erk-hole because I brought a bottle of ranch into a restaurant?” This young woman is invited on a date by Michael, who takes her to a hole in the wall—quote, “hole in the wall Polish/Hungarian place where they don't have ranch dressing”. So, she goes across the street to the convenience store to get herself a little demitasse of ranch. And at the end of the date, she's completely befuddled when the guy goes, “Yeah, I don't ever want to see you again.”

(Nicole laughs.)

Quote her: “I told him I wouldn't have had to do it if they had ranch or any dressings like a normal restaurant!”

(They laugh.)

This one was a banger from about eight months ago. I promised I wouldn't get back into “Am I the erk-hole”, but I did it for you.

[00:05:02] **Jesse Thorn:** Would she have settled for a different dressing? Is that the implication? Like a vinaigrette or a honey mustard or something?

[00:05:09] **John Hodgman:** I have to go back. And maybe you missed this in the original quote. “There are very few things I don't eat with ranch. I just like it.” And here's the part that

makes me want to vomit. “And it helps make some things easier to eat.” So, I don't think she would have gone for a honey mustard, because this is really an issue of lubrication. Buttermilk lubrication.

(Nicole laughs.)

The original post was deleted, but you can find it if you want to read it. It's a wild ride. But Nicole, you seek justice in this case, correct?

(Nicole confirms.)

And it's because you like to snack in a car, sometimes with a ranch. What's your car snacking system?

[00:05:47] **Nicole:** So, we tend to go on quite a few road trips—like, to see friends and family and for work. And so, I like to bring things along...

(John offers “to eat”.)

Yeah, to eat on the way, so that we're not hungry.

[00:06:02] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, but this was not invented in North Dakota.

[00:06:06] **Nicole:** Oh, no road trip snacks are not original. I don't agree with the lubrication idea, but I do like foods that are adequately moistened in different ways.

(John “wow”s distastefully.)

Like, I don't like dry food. I know; I'm sorry. It's the accurate way to describe it. But I don't like dry food very much. So, things that I can dip or things that I can dress. A common thing for me to pack would be a Tupperware, a salad, a little cup of dressing—eating it with a fork, not with my hands.

[00:06:38] **John Hodgman:** Right, when Scott is driving and you're the passenger, you might sit there—

[00:06:41] **Nicole:** No. Usually I'm the driver. Um.

(Jesse “wow”s.)

[00:06:43] **John Hodgman:** *(Laughs.)* See, I knew what she was going to say, Jesse, but maybe you didn't.

[00:06:52] **Jesse Thorn:** You're forking and driving?!

[00:06:54] **Nicole:** Yeah. I mean, we have like long, open, straight roads. So, forking and driving is not as dangerous as it would be—I wouldn't do it in the city normally.

[00:07:03] **John Hodgman:** DWF, driving while forking. I knew what this was about, because I remember when I got your email originally, Nicole. I was like this cannot be. And I'm like are you talking about eating a salad while driving? And your explanation was, "Well, I live in North Dakota." And then I was like, wait a minute, okay. This is a case that might be worth hearing, because I have never been to North Dakota, but I can imagine—and you explained—that it's long straightaways with five miles of visibility, no humans live there, and there's a lot of cruise control going on. I'm not saying that I'm finding in your favor. I'm just—I'm doing a little of your argument for you.

Scott, however, you're not from North Dakota.

[00:07:49] **Scott:** No, no, I grew up in California, in the Bay Area.

[00:07:52] **John Hodgman:** Right, so you obviously take issue with your spouse.

[00:07:57] **Scott:** Yeah. I mean, the ironic part of this is, we were on a road trip when we heard the—Linda Holmes coined "little weirdsies". So, I'm not mad about Nicole eating a salad. I just think it's weird, and I think I should be allowed to say so.

[00:08:10] **John Hodgman:** I appreciate your going to Linda Holmes as cover for your preference, but I don't think that it's a little weirdsie to prefer that you be alive. What is the most outrageous thing you've ever seen Nicole eat while she was driving?

[00:08:24] **Scott:** I mean, the salad is up there. One time we had fries. And Nicole—well, I was passenging, and Nicole wanted me to apply ketchup to each fry individually before she would eat it. Because she didn't want a dry fry.

[00:08:37] **John Hodgman:** I mean, there are a couple of terms that have to be sent immediately over to Emily Brewster at Merriam-Webster. Dry fry and passenging. I've never heard passenging before, and I love it! Maybe that's something that everyone talks about in North Dakota or San Jose, where you're from, but that's a new regionalism to me, Scott. I like it.

[00:08:56] **Jesse Thorn:** I think they invented that at the Tech Museum of Innovation in SanJose.

[00:09:00] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, probably so. What about dip? Does she ever dip anything besides making you dip stuff in ketchup?

[00:09:05] **Scott:** Yeah, if it's anything that is, you know, dippable, she'll have the container of a dip. If you go to fast food or something.

[00:09:11] **Nicole:** I would say ketchup is out of the ordinary. I'm not normally a ketchup fan. Normally, I do want a ranch or a honey mustard or—like if the option was to have dry chicken nuggets or chicken nuggets with a dip, I would only eat them if there was a dip. I wouldn't eat a dry nugget.

[00:09:29] **John Hodgman:** Nicole, let me ask you this question, is ranch the main one?

[00:09:37] **Nicole:** So, for me, it used to be. But after we had our daughter, I can't eat dairy. So, now I've had to expand my—

[00:09:44] **John Hodgman:** I'll ask you a different question. Is vegan ranch the main one?

[00:09:49] **Nicole:** Vegan ranches, unfortunately, are all bad. They're not. You need—

[00:09:53] **John Hodgman:** That's not true! How dare you?

[00:09:55] **Nicole:** You need the buttermilk! For me. To my taste, the buttermilk is intrinsic.

[00:09:59] **John Hodgman:** But outside of your food sensitivities—which I'm sorry that you have to make that adjustment—you would agree that ranch is the main one.

[00:10:07] **Nicole:** Yeah, especially, I do think it's regional. I think—

[00:10:10] **John Hodgman:** I love that you just know what I'm talking about. People had a hard time understanding the concept of the “main one” when we talked about this on “Condiment Crimes”. Ranch is the main one. Jesse, put it down in the log. Ranch is the main one.

[00:10:27] **Jesse Thorn:** So logged.

[00:10:28] **John Hodgman:** So logged, thank you. I have a question. On these road trips, do you ever leave North Dakota?

(Nicole confirms.)

In the car?

[00:10:37] **Nicole:** So, Scott prefers to fly if we're leaving the state. But then usually we'll rent a car and drive it.

[00:10:44] **John Hodgman:** Has anyone in North Dakota ever driven across the border of North Dakota into another state?

(Nicole confirms.)

I object. I don't believe you.

[00:10:54] **Nicole:** (*Laughs.*) No, that's mostly how people interact is driving through from Montana to Minnesota or vice versa.

[00:11:02] **John Hodgman:** Every—Jesse Thorn, let me tell you something. You and I went to Maine together. Remember how we went on vacation together for a weekend?

[00:11:09] **Jesse Thorn:** It was wonderful.

[00:11:10] **John Hodgman:** Sometimes I don't go to Maine with you. Sometimes I go to Maine with my wife, who's a whole human being in her own right. I'll never stop saying it, whatever you say on Reddit! Sometimes I go to Maine with my wife, and when we do, every year, she plays the license plate game—where she tries to spot every license plate in the United States driving around or going through parking lots. And like, we'll go to Acadia National Park, one of the most popular national parks, and we won't go see the Cadillac Mountain or anything. We'll just cruise the parking lot, looking for plates. Every. Year. Nicole. Alaska? No problem. Hawaii? Hawaii! An island! No problem. South Dakota? Forget about it. Oh, by the end of June, we've seen South Dakota twice. North Dakota? Not once. Not one time! What are you doing in North Dakota? Why aren't you coming to Maine?

[00:12:05] **Nicole:** Maybe we have enough natural beauty here.

[00:12:07] **John Hodgman:** How dare you? How dare you?

[00:12:08] **Nicole:** Acadia National Park, I hear, is gorgeous, but we have the least visited national park in the country. And it's gorgeous. Teddy Roosevelt National Park.

[00:12:17] **John Hodgman:** Mm! Quite a brag! What about jalapeno poppers?

[00:12:22] **Nicole:** Absolutely. I haven't had them much. Because, again, no dairy. But while I was eating dairy, jalapeno poppers were up there, and they must be dipped in ranch.

[00:12:32] **John Hodgman:** Scott, is this a problem that has solved itself since you've had a baby?

[00:12:35] **Scott:** No. I mean, we haven't been doing as many road trips, but we still do them. And it's—you know, it still is an issue that we'll be going somewhere and then, you know, Nicole will want to eat a salad while driving or eat something that makes a huge mess. And it just—I don't know. It seems to me like there are certain foods that are better designed for road trip snacking, and they're ones that aren't going to drip all over you, aren't going to make a mess, easy to eat. I don't know. It just seems like there's got to be some better solutions here.

[00:13:05] **John Hodgman:** You think there could be better arrangements. What is the arrangement now? Nicole, can you describe how you eat dippables while you're driving?

[00:13:14] **Nicole:** Yeah, the most common way is for whatever the dipping sauce is to either sit in between me and Scott, so that we can share it. Or even more common, he'll hold it, and I can dip food in it. Or pretty often he'll dip something in it and hand it to me to eat.

(Jesse cackles.)

And a lot of times—not always, but a lot of times it's a food that he has packed for us. So, he's assisting in the dipping but then giving me a hard time about it.

[00:13:48] **Jesse Thorn:** Does he ever help you with dabbing?

[00:13:51] **Nicole:** *(Laughs.)* Not yet, but I bet if I asked he would. He's very accommodating.

[00:13:54] **Jesse Thorn:** Scott, do you think that if Nicole asked you on your drive home to hold a napkin and dab the corners of her mouth, you would be willing to do it?

[00:14:04] **Scott:** I mean, we drove here separately. So. But in the hypothetical that we were heading home together—I mean, it'd be kind of rude not to, I suppose.

[00:14:14] **Jesse Thorn:** *(Laughs.)* Yeah, I mean, it's right there in *Emily Post's!*

[00:14:16] **John Hodgman:** Nicole, you're saying that Scott often packs and plans the dippables?

[00:14:24] **Nicole:** Yeah, he's the main person in charge of food in our household. And so—

[00:14:29] **John Hodgman:** Right. And so, he's kind of a hypocrite objecting to your behavior in this way, because he's enabling it.

[00:14:34] **Nicole:** It's almost like he likes setting me up to make fun of me.

[00:14:37] **John Hodgman:** Have you ever heard of vaniljsås? V-A-N-I-L-J-S-A-S with a circle over the A?

(They haven't.)

It's a vanilla sauce. It's one of the most common sauces in Sweden. Nicole, do you know what the capital of Sweden is? Stockholm is the answer. Stockholm. Have you heard of the Stockholm syndrome?

(Nicole confirms with a laugh.)

Yeah. That's when the captive becomes enamored of the captor and puts a little vanilla sauce on their food for them, even though it's dangerous, and they don't want to be doing it.

[00:15:12] **Jesse Thorn:** And afterwards dabs the corner of their mouth.

(They laugh.)

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.

[00:15:25] **Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:15:29] **Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:15:31] **John Hodgman:** One of you sent in some evidence, correct?

[00:15:33] **Scott:** Yeah, I sent in some evidence.

[00:15:35] **John Hodgman:** Let's take a look at this photo. I'm looking at a photo that Scott has submitted. Okay. This is a photo—I presume these are your be-gloved hands driving, right Nicole?

(Nicole confirms.)

Driving a Subaru. Is the Subaru in motion? Hard to tell because it's a photo.

(Nicole confirms.)

Yeah. You're really digging yourself a hole with your soup spoon here. Because you're driving and you've got one be-gloved hand wrapped around what looks like maybe a Yeti coffee mug or something. And the other, an open mug of Campbell's soup with a spoon sticking out of it, which you're pressing into the steering wheel to drive. Is this true or not?

[00:16:19] **Nicole:** That's all true.

[00:16:20] **Scott:** Well, it's not Campbell's soup. That was oatmeal in there.

[00:16:22] **Nicole:** It's a Campbell's soup mug, but it was porridge—yeah—in the mug.

[00:16:26] **John Hodgman:** Honestly? Yeah, okay. I mean, because the—actually, that makes a small difference in your favor, Nicole, because I was thinking that there might be some piping hot tomato soup. But with oatmeal, the slosh factor is a little lower, I suppose.

[00:16:42] **Nicole:** So, I would—if it had been tomato soup in there, there wouldn't be a spoon in there. Because I will sip on a soup on the road. But for something thick like a porridge, it—yeah, needs a spoon.

[00:16:54] **John Hodgman:** Your defense is, “Yeah, no, it wouldn't be soup. I need a spoon to eat my porridge while I'm driving.”

(Nicole confirms with a laugh.)

This—not only does this seem unsafe, it seems wildly unsafe. Don't you agree? Not only because both hands are occupied with hot cylinders, but also, you're wearing these gloves. And they're not leather driving gloves. They're little—they're knit gloves for the North Dakota winter, I suppose. Or probably for the North Dakota summer. But they're knit gloves, which are slidey on your steering wheel. They're not gonna—they have no grip to them, right? They look like slidey knit gloves.

[00:17:32] **Nicole:** Yeah, they're probably a little bit slippery. I don't think I've dropped a whole mug of soup.

(Scott agrees.)

Probably spilled coffee, though.

[00:17:38] **John Hodgman:** Scott, was this photo staged?

[00:17:42] **Scott:** No. So, after we knew we were coming on the podcast, we were just running an errand. And I saw that, and I was like, “Oh, I gotta send this in.” Because this is the whole thing. Like, this is like not a normal way to road trip snack. And if—I'm honestly surprised I'm the one being taken to court here.

(Nicole giggles.)

It probably should have been the other way around.

[00:18:01] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, well, you're being taken to court for your razzing. Nicole, describe the razzing.

[00:18:08] **Nicole:** Well, so—like I said, it seems like he sets me up to then razz me. Because in this case, he had made not only the porridge but the coffee. He made them both. I put them in vessels too.

[00:18:19] **John Hodgman:** You were just following orders?

[00:18:22] **Nicole:** *(Laughs.)* No, I was just running behind eating breakfast, and so I did it on the road. But...

[00:18:28] **John Hodgman:** But you think that he—you think that this was a frame job?

[00:18:32] **Nicole:** I don't know that it was intentionally a frame job, but it seems like a lot of times he will be so nice to make breakfast, make food, make me coffee most days—but then

give me a hard time about bringing it with or if I spill it on myself. Like, I have spilled coffee.

[00:18:50] **John Hodgman:** Which—you've spilled coffee?

[00:18:53] **Nicole:** Like, dribbled it on my shirt or spilled it in the car, like on the seat.

[00:18:58] **John Hodgman:** Right, and what happens when you spill coffee? You decide to hit the cruise control and then get some packet of Shout Wipes and start working on your blouse?

[00:19:08] **Nicole:** *(Laughs.)* I have a Tide To Go pen that usually...

[00:19:10] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, but whatever you do, you never stop. You never stop going forward. You don't pull over to safety at any point?

[00:19:18] **Nicole:** Not unless it's really—if it was—if the whole cup spilled or something like a huge spill. But usually it's just a little dribble, so then I'll just dab. I do the dabbing myself, though.

[00:19:32] **John Hodgman:** I guess you should be thankful, Scott, that you're not asked to dab.

(Nicole laughs.)

[00:19:36] **Scott:** Your Honor, can I just respond to the accusation that I'm setting her up? There have been times where I packed what I thought were good snacks for a road trip, like mixed nuts or jerky. And then Nicole complains that it's not the right snacks. So—and then it's like, oh, well now we have to bring something that she would rather have, because then she wasn't happy with the snacks. So, I think it's less an issue with I'm trying to set her up, but more that she's made clear these are the snacks I want on the road trip. And I'm going to do that.

[00:20:01] **John Hodgman:** And you have no choice but to make them for her. Yeah, I understand. What's wrong with mixed nuts and jerky, Nicole?

[00:20:06] **Nicole:** They're dry.

[00:20:07] **John Hodgman:** Dry.

[00:20:08] **Nicole:** And you can't dip them. It doesn't—

[00:20:10] **John Hodgman:** You gotta dip.

[00:20:11] **Nicole:** You gotta dip. Or like a yogurt isn't dry, so I'll eat that.

[00:20:17] **Jesse Thorn:** I could see a college student dipping jerky, if there were ranch on hand.

[00:20:21] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, I would totally dip jerky into some ranch. That's perfect for my lifestyle. Not sure I would do it while driving.

[00:20:28] **Jesse Thorn:** If you were Dan McCoy and Stuart Wellington and you were in college in Indiana, you'd dip jerky. In a second.

[00:20:35] **John Hodgman:** Yeah. They're a couple of jerky dippers for sure. I dare them to defy. I dare them to deny it. Jerky dippers, over there at the Flophouse.

Nicole, you brought Scott to court. Which is wild. Specifically, to make me order to cease and desist the razzing that he does. What form does the razzing take? Imitate the razzing, please.

[00:20:59] **Nicole:** Well, it's usually like gentle but nonstop. Like, it won't... he won't not give me a hard time for like packing a yogurt or if I spill a coffee on myself or something. It just opens the gates. And I—

[00:21:16] **John Hodgman:** What is it? Do your imitation of Scott.

[00:21:18] **Nicole:** My imitation of Scott?

[00:21:20] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, he's a low-key San Jose guy. Do a little imitation. Give me a 'tayche (*imitation*).

[00:21:24] **Nicole:** Well, my imitation of Scott usually starts with like an "um, actually". Like, "Well, actually you should have seen this coming."

[00:21:33] **John Hodgman:** Wait a minute, are you married to Dan McCoy? That was a pretty good imitation of Dan McCoy.

(*Nicole laughs.*)

You're saying that his unrelenting low-key razzing is a distraction to you? Might make you a less safe driver?

[00:21:47] **Nicole:** Yes, yeah, absolutely. 'Cause then I have to put all my energy into pushing back against the razzing.

[00:21:54] **John Hodgman:** Scott, are you allowed to eat in the car?

(*Scott confirms.*)

What kind of snacks do you like?

[00:22:02] **Scott:** You know, I'm more of a salty/savory guy. So, like I'd be happy with the mixed nuts, jerky, or even (*inaudible*) chips. I like some easy snackable fruit. Like, I'm not gonna want a snack on a peach. It's gonna drip everywhere. But like blueberries or grapes or something would be great.

[00:22:16] **John Hodgman:** Dry hand food for the most part, right?

(*Scott confirms.*)

Dry hand food. Do you enjoy a road trip where you're required to dip fries in ketchup and keep handing them to Nicole? Is that fun for you?

[00:22:28] **Scott:** You know, I'm not going to come here and say that it's like my highlight of the week or anything, but Nicole does make a point is that there's not a lot in between towns here. So, you got to do something to pass the time aside from, you know, listening to podcasts or counting how many cows are on each side of the road.

[00:22:42] **John Hodgman:** How many are there?

[00:22:44] **Scott:** Oh, it depends.

[00:22:45] **John Hodgman:** On last count.

[00:22:46] **Scott:** Oh, well, it's more of a game of who can accumulate the most without going by a cemetery, because then you lose all your cows.

[00:22:54] **John Hodgman:** And when you pass a cow, do you go "cooow"?

[00:22:57] **Scott:** Sometimes you call them out like, "Hey, cows."

[00:22:58] **Nicole:** "Moo, cows."

[00:22:59] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, right? Jesse Thorn, do you remember when we were on that road trip, when we were on tour?

(*Jesse confirms.*)

And you and Laura Volk kept saying, "Hey, there are cows over there." What did I say?

[00:23:09] **Jesse Thorn:** I don't know, John. What did you say?

[00:23:10] **John Hodgman:** You don't remember how much I hated seeing cows?

[00:23:14] **Jesse Thorn:** You didn't like seeing cows.

[00:23:16] **John Hodgman:** I've seen them all. I've seen them all. I've seen jerseys. I've seen Holsteins.

[00:23:18] **Jesse Thorn:** Oh yeah, you would list every type of cow that you've seen. Now it's come rushing back to my mind. You'd list every kind of—it's okay, I don't really enjoy seeing cows. I mostly like seeing goats.

[00:23:29] **John Hodgman:** Hereford, Simmental, Aberdeen, Limousine, Belgian Blues, Bifalo, Brangus, Chillingham, Red Angus, Belted Galloway, Brown, Swiss. I've seen them all.

[00:23:40] **Jesse Thorn:** The dream would be to be driving down a road, maybe in North Dakota—one of the Dakotas—and you look out your window, and there's a goat standing on a sheep.

[00:23:52] **John Hodgman:** That would be incredible. That I would look out—I would definitely count that.

[00:23:56] **Nicole:** Goats love to stand on things, they do.

[00:23:59] **John Hodgman:** They do love to stand on stuff.

[00:24:00] **Jesse Thorn:** And sheep love to do nothing much!

[00:24:03] **Nicole:** (*Laughs.*) Be stood on.

[00:24:04] **John Hodgman:** I'll tell you what. If I was driving through anywhere, and I saw a Hungarian grey steer with those big old horns, I would count that. That would count. Otherwise, I'm not interested.

[00:24:16] **Scott:** You might be interested in a Dexter. They're like mini cows.

[00:24:20] **John Hodgman:** I might be interested in a Dexter, that's true. How often do you see those around North Dakota?

[00:24:25] **Scott:** There's some folks that raise registered ones south of Bismarck here.

[00:24:28] **John Hodgman:** So, there's one ranch?

[00:24:29] **Scott:** Yeah, they got a good herd of them.

[00:24:32] **John Hodgman:** You're kind of making Nicole's argument for her that this place is so boring that you got to take your life in your hands every time you drive around just for a little excitement.

[00:24:40] **Jesse Thorn:** Or you could have Dexters but not register them.

[00:24:43] **Nicole:** Ooh, unregistered? (*Chuckles.*)

[00:24:45] **John Hodgman:** Rogue Dexters?!

[00:24:47] **Scott:** Now we're talking exciting!

[00:24:49] **John Hodgman:** Nicole, I maligned North Dakota there just a minute ago, and I apologize for that. What's it like there? I'm very curious. I've never been to either of the Dakotas. What's it like?

[00:24:59] **Nicole:** So, North Dakota is beautiful. However, the interstate system kind of flattens a lot of it. But it makes it really speedy to get around. So, most of our road tripping time is on I-94 between Bismarck and Fargo, which is not the most scenic drive. Getting off of that, gorgeous, lots of kettle lakes, lots of wildlife area. But most of our drive is very, very flat and very straight. And you can see for a very long, long distance.

[00:25:33] **John Hodgman:** But this is not why you live in North Dakota. I understand you're still trying to win this case about eating salad while driving.

(*Nicole laughs.*)

Give me some facts about North Dakota that make me want to take a road trip there. Like, Scott did well with the Dexter mini cows. Tell me about—you're from North Dakota! Tell me about it.

[00:25:50] **Nicole:** I am from North Dakota. So, you could road trip out here and meet my family.

[00:25:54] **John Hodgman:** I'd like that.

[00:25:56] **Nicole:** We also have Teddy Roosevelt National Park, like I mentioned. Also, very scenic and beautiful. Our state parks are gorgeous. I am a painter, so I in the summer spend a lot of time painting outdoors or teaching kids and adults about making art about nature. So, there's lots of unique opportunities for that here.

[00:26:21] **John Hodgman:** I'm sure it's a beautiful place to paint.

[00:26:23] **Nicole:** It is! It has great light.

[00:26:24] **Jesse Thorn:** Do you know that I once wrote an entire radio essay for my NPR show, *Bullseye*, about paintings of cows?

[00:26:31] **Nicole:** No! I'll have to go back and listen to that. That sounds great.

[00:26:34] **Jesse Thorn:** 18th and 19th century were really great centuries for paintings of cows where the cow looks kind of rectangular.

[00:26:42] **Nicole:** Did you go back to medieval paintings at all? Because their interpretations of animals are always really entertaining. It looks like people that have never seen animals before doing paintings.

[00:26:52] **Jesse Thorn:** I love that. I love it.

[00:26:52] **John Hodgman:** I remember that radio essay very well. In fact, (*clears throat*) I know a portion of it by heart. And it goes like this: Dutch Malted, Galilee, Porro, Derry Shorthorn, Parda Alpina, Montbeliarde.

[00:27:02] **Jesse Thorn:** Oh no! We're listing cows again! Ugh! We gotta get some fries and some ranch and put them in Hodgman's mouth.

[00:27:11] **John Hodgman:** British White Cattle, White Park Cattle, Lakenvelder. Oh, there's that Hungarian Grey again. Scott, you are not from North Dakota, and you have some background in the condiment world, is that not so?

(*Scott confirms.*)

Yeah, it says here you used to make and sell hot sauce and mustard.

[00:27:32] **Scott:** Yes, yes. I admit I used to be in the restaurant industry, and then now I work more on the farm side of farm to table. So, I kind of need a little creative outlet for the cooking side. So, I do some small batch hot sauce and mustards just kind of for fun.

[00:27:45] **John Hodgman:** Just for you now, or are you still selling it?

[00:27:47] **Scott:** I'll sell at farmers markets. Um, yeah, it's Morningside Heights Provisions is my little brand.

[00:27:53] **John Hodgman:** Sure. Named after a neighborhood in Manhattan. Makes sense.

[00:27:57] **Nicole:** And our neighborhood here in Bismarck!

[00:27:58] **Scott:** Our neighborhood in Bismarck is the Morningside Heights neighborhood as well.

[00:28:00] **John Hodgman:** Oooh! Now I'm getting to learn a little bit about Bismarck. What's going on in Morningside Heights? They have a coffee shop? They have a comic book store? What?

[00:28:06] **Scott:** No, no, it's mostly just residential. But we've got a park. Yeah, an arts park.

[00:28:11] **Nicole:** A nice park.

[00:28:12] **John Hodgman:** And—but you moved to North Dakota. Why, Scott? To be with Nicole or is that where you met?

[00:28:19] **Scott:** No, Nicole and I met in California. And I have a degree in soil science. So, North Dakota provided a lot of interesting opportunities for work that were harder to come by in California. And also, seasons seemed interesting to me.

[00:28:34] **John Hodgman:** Sure. And it's her family is there too, right? I mean, it's her home.

(Nicole confirms.)

[00:28:39] **Jesse Thorn:** It's a good place to spend that dirty money.

(They chuckle.)

[00:28:43] **John Hodgman:** You were out there in California, and the love of your life said, “Move back home with me to North Dakota. You can serve me salad in our Subaru.”

And you were like, “Yeah! Sounds hot!”

[00:28:50] **Scott:** Well, that part wasn't really on the table at the time. ‘Cause when we were in California, Nicole—

[00:28:55] **John Hodgman:** None of it's on the table! That's the point!

(They laugh.)

[00:28:59] **Scott:** Nicole doesn't like driving in cities. So, in California, I did most of the driving. And then when I moved out here, then she started taking over. So, I didn't really know that the whole car salads were even off the table, as it were.

[00:29:09] **John Hodgman:** Why don't you get—why don't you drive and give her some car salad time?

[00:29:15] **Scott:** You know, she says she likes driving more than I do, and that might be true. But mostly she gets car sick when she passenges, to use that word again.

[00:29:22] **Jesse Thorn:** Nicole, does your car have passive safety systems like responsive cruise control or lane correction?

[00:29:28] **Nicole:** No, no. My car's a little bit older than that.

[00:29:33] **John Hodgman:** It's a Subaru, right? That's what I noticed in the evidence.

(Nicole confirms.)

What are we looking at? A Forester or an Outback here?

(Nicole confirms Outback.)

What year is it?

[00:29:40] **Nicole:** *(Thoughtfully.)* What year is my car?

[00:29:41] **Scott:** 2011.

[00:29:42] **John Hodgman:** Oh, yeah, that's a vintage. Why do you ask, Jesse, if it has those safety systems?

[00:29:49] **Jesse Thorn:** Well, those are systems that are one step short of a self-driving vehicle. So, in a context where you have no reason to expect that a car will cut you off or do something unexpected on the road or that there will be unexpected road conditions, you could get away with having one hand on the wheel in relative safety.

[00:30:11] **John Hodgman:** Just as long as that one hand is also gripping a mug of oatmeal. You know what I'm talking about? Meal on the wheel, that's the rule. Ten and two meals on the wheels.

[00:30:23] **Nicole:** So, I don't have any corrective things in my car, but North Dakota builds a lot of rumble strips into the sides of roads. So, they obviously don't trust their drivers either to—

[00:30:34] **John Hodgman:** How would you even know they're there unless you're rumbling those strips all the time, Nicole?

[00:30:39] **Nicole:** I've rumbled one or two, but I know that they're on the interstates and most of our highways.

[00:30:45] **John Hodgman:** How many strips does Nicole rumble, Scott?

[00:30:48] **Scott:** Not very many. Once in a while.

[00:30:50] **John Hodgman:** Do you fear for your life, Scott?

[00:30:54] **Scott:** You know, honestly, no. Nicole is, in general, a very safe driver. And we've been driving in inclement weather conditions. Like, we got hit with a snow squall while driving last year. And that was terrifying. And Nicole had nothing in her hands except the wheel.

[00:31:06] **Nicole:** I put my coffee down for that.

[00:31:08] **John Hodgman:** Oh, okay. Alright, good.

[00:31:10] **Scott:** It's, to some degree, context-sensitive based on the driving conditions. I don't worry about it myself. I feel like if something were to come up, she would probably just drop whatever she was holding. And hopefully it wouldn't scald her.

[00:31:19] **Nicole:** Or make you hold it.

[00:31:22] **John Hodgman:** As a Californian who's adapted to North Dakota style lackadaisical driving, do you buy the argument that this is a relatively safe way to move from place to place while snacking on soups or meals?

[00:31:36] **Scott:** You know, there's probably safer ways to snack.

[00:31:39] **John Hodgman:** What is this about if it's not about the safety of you and others on the road, Scott?

[00:31:43] **Scott:** I mean, I guess there is a safety argument. But I think that that's maybe more minor here. I think the bigger thing is, you know, some foods are just more acceptable as road trip foods. Like a burrito, or something that's like wrapped up. So, the idea that like Nicole's gonna be sitting here with a fork and a salad with like dressing, it just—it's comical to me. And then the bigger issue I think to me is that inevitably she spills on her shirt and then gets in a bad mood, and that kind of permeates the car trip for the next 20/30 minutes. And it's like, well you kind of brought this on yourself.

[00:32:14] **John Hodgman:** Psh! Nicole, you just got razzed.

(Nicole agrees.)

I just heard some razzing in real time.

[00:32:19] **Nicole:** And also, the last time that I spilled on my shirt on a road trip, it was because you wanted sandwiches, and the sandwich fell apart on me. So.

[00:32:26] **John Hodgman:** Yeah. I wouldn't say—Jesse, would you eat a burrito, a mission style burrito if you were driving a Subaru in North Dakota?

[00:32:33] **Jesse Thorn:** That's a two-handed food, John.

[00:32:34] **John Hodgman:** That's what I thought, too.

[00:32:36] **Jesse Thorn:** Simply too girthsome.

[00:32:37] **John Hodgman:** I don't know what a Bismarck burrito looks like. I presume it has lettuce and French fries in it, Scott?

[00:32:46] **Scott:** Probably lettuce, unfortunately, but no French fries.

[00:32:49] **John Hodgman:** There's one solution to this, Scott, which is making your wife wear a car poncho.

(Scott agrees.)

You know what I mean? A ranch poncho—or I guess not ranch anymore. A honey mustard smock.

[00:33:02] **Scott:** Yeah, I mean, it seems like that would kind of solve my main issue here. Except then it might bring up another issue, which is trying to deal with getting Nicole to wear a smock every time we drive.

[00:33:12] **John Hodgman:** Nicole, should I order you to wear a special food smock—a bib—while driving?

[00:33:17] **Nicole:** No, that sounds pretty terrible. I do have a vintage knit poncho, but I think spilling on that might make me cranky.

[00:33:25] **Jesse Thorn:** Nicole, you're a painting teacher. Admit that you have a full supply of smocks.

[00:33:31] **Nicole:** I do have quite a few smocks, but—

[00:33:33] **John Hodgman:** And not a small collection of ponchos either, I betcha!

(They laugh.)

[00:33:38] **Nicole:** I do have a couple ponchos. It seems like the paint and the food always spills wherever the smock is not covering, though.

[00:33:44] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, but if you got a full-body poncho, then—I mean, this would probably be a good solution for you. I mean, why not stop and have a meal somewhere?

[00:33:56] **Nicole:** Usually, it just adds time to an already kind of long, boring trip. And so, we would rather get there sooner and maybe—like, Fargo actually has lots of great restaurants, so maybe eat food when we get there. So, the snacks are just to get us there.

[00:34:12] **John Hodgman:** Right. So, there's not a lot in between?

[00:34:17] **Nicole:** Not a lot. There are a couple like truck stops and fast food restaurants off the road, but not really much for sit down.

[00:34:27] **John Hodgman:** Right. I would stop at that truck stop and maybe get some biscuits and gravy. You know what I mean? Biscuits and sausage gravy, and then you can bring them in the car and dip the biscuits into the sausage gravy as you drive.

[00:34:39] **Nicole:** That sounds great! (*Laughs.*)

[00:34:41] **John Hodgman:** Have you ever considered rigging up some kind of device?

(Nicole has not.)

You can rig up a mechanism, surely, where you can put some dips. I mean, this is not something that you could sell. It sounds like something you would see in the Sharper Image catalog or SkyMall, except for the fact that it would be illegal immediately, because it's dangerous. But you could surely put something together where you could have a dip cup that isn't your husband.

[00:35:06] **Nicole:** I've seen dip cups for cup holders, but unfortunately Subaru—I'm a big fan of Subaru, but not enough cup holders as it is. So, I didn't want to give one up just for dips.

[00:35:17] **John Hodgman:** You've seen dip cups for cup holders for cars for sale?!

(Nicole confirms.)

Where?!

[00:35:23] **Jesse Thorn:** The Midwest.

[00:35:24] **Nicole:** Probably in a truck stop.

[00:35:27] **John Hodgman:** Oh my goodness. I guess it's very common, right?

[00:35:30] **Scott:** I don't know that it's very common. I don't think I've seen anyone else eat a salad while driving.

[00:35:35] **Nicole:** No, but definitely fries and dipping them.

[00:35:39] **Scott:** Yeah, I guess the dips. Yeah, I remember during covid that people were selling dip holders that would attach to your air vent.

[00:35:44] **John Hodgman:** Here I was thinking that I had invented something! But it's—I mean, for heaven's sake!

[00:35:50] **Nicole:** But we could attach the salad to the steering wheel, and then that's still your invention.

[00:35:53] **John Hodgman:** I'm never gonna drive in—I'm never gonna drive in the Midwest again. These people are just dipping their food while texting, I betcha!

[00:36:02] **Jesse Thorn:** This salad wheel invention, I love. If it had a gimbal so that it maintained its level. You could also potentially—I don't know if you're familiar with these motion sickness eyeglasses that have a blue liquid inside of the hollow frames to maintain your line of horizon sight. I think you could do that, but with salad!

(Nicole laughs.)

[00:36:26] **John Hodgman:** Yes, Jennifer Marmor has been sending us pictures of these anti-motion sickness goggles that—

[00:36:36] **Nicole:** Yeah, I've seen those, because I got really sick on a train. And so, I think the next time we have to go on a train, I'm gonna get those glasses and definitely eat a salad at the same time.

[00:36:45] **John Hodgman:** Or you could get them and let Scott drive for a while and eat your salad and not be sick.

(Nicole concedes.)

What's more embarrassing, a car salad smock or car salad goggles?

[00:36:55] **Nicole:** Well, they're both embarrassing, and they both would take a little bit of prep, because I would have to put contacts in to wear the motion sickness goggles. And I would have to make sure nobody was going to see me if I was wearing the poncho, the food poncho.

[00:37:09] **John Hodgman:** Nicole, if I were to rule in your favor, you'd like me to order that Scott stop razzing you?

(Nicole confirms.)

Okay. Scott, if I were to rule in your favor, what would you have me order? I mean, it seems like you're okay with Nicole eating all of these dippables and drippables.

[00:37:26] **Scott:** Realistically, I don't think Nicole is going to change how she wants to eat her food, because she has pretty strong preferences, and that's fine. I guess what I would ask is that, yeah, maybe there's a smock situation or just figuring out how to prevent her from spilling on herself and bringing the mood down on the road trip. Because it's kind of a bummer when she's in a bad mood for 20 minutes because she spilled on herself. So, I guess I'd seek an injunction on her grumping up the car.

(Nicole laughs.)

[00:37:54] **John Hodgman:** I think I've heard everything I need to in order to make my decision. I'll be back in a moment with my verdict.

[00:37:59] **Jesse Thorn:** Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom.

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

Nicole, how do you feel about your chances?

[00:38:05] **Nicole:** Not great. *(Laughs.)*

[00:38:09] **Jesse Thorn:** Scott, how are you feeling?

[00:38:10] **Scott:** I'm still surprised I'm the one that was being brought to court here. I think Nicole's position is wildly out there. So, I guess I'm hoping that the judge will be just.

[00:38:21] **Jesse Thorn:** What's the weirdest thing you've ever eaten while driving, Scott?

[00:38:24] **Scott:** Ooh, that's a good question.

[00:38:26] **Jesse Thorn:** You're from the Bay Area. Have you ever tried to eat a burrito while driving?

[00:38:29] **Scott:** You know, not while I was driving. Maybe when I was in the passenger seat. Oh, one time I ate a—it was a lamb Seekh kebab wrapped in naan that I ate while driving and that was pretty good.

[00:38:39] **Jesse Thorn:** That does sound really good. I'd love to eat that right now. Well, we'll see what Judge Hodgman has to say about all this when we come back in just a moment.

[00:38:47] **Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:38:51] **Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:38:54] **Jesse Thorn:** Judge John Hodgman, we're taking a quick break from the case, and we're headed to the San Francisco Bay Area in January.

[00:39:00] **John Hodgman:** That's right, because San Francisco Sketch Fest is coming right up! We are going to be returning to San Francisco to bring live justice to the Palace of Fine Arts on January the 27th at 4PM. I love a 4PM show. Everyone does. Come and see us. Go to SFSketchfest.com to get your tickets now, not only to our show but everything that SF SketchFest has to offer, which is everything. A ticket to SF SketchFest show, whether it's ours or someone else's, makes a wonderful gift.

And in the wonderful gift department, I just wanted to point out two quick things. Our livestream is still for sale at VanFreaksRoadshow.com. You can still get that live show throughout the end of this year, VanFreaksRoadshow.com. But also, some people noticed while watching the livestream that when they go to the merch store of the livestream, not only is there a lot of great *Judge John Hodgman* merch, but there is also the, the last few *Ragnarök* survival kits in existence.

This is the DVD copy of my *Ragnarök* one person show from 2012 on Netflix, as well as survival mayonnaise, my custom-made all-gender fragrance, a clipping of my mustache in a little test tube, everything you need to replicate my DNA, a really, really weird, long video that I put on a thumb drive. We only made 500 of these. There are only a few of them left. We decided to sell them off at VanFreaksRoadshow.com. You get the livestream, you hit the merch store, and they're at a discount. They're only 55 bucks. So, if you've been wanting to see the *Ragnarök* show—because Netflix took it down, and they will never show it again—this is your last chance to see it. I'm only mentioning it because people asked. VanFreaksRoadshow.com, SFSketchfest.com.

You got any gift suggestions for the holidays, Jesse Thorn? Last minute impulse buys that people can get maybe at the Put This On Shop?

[00:40:59] **Jesse Thorn:** Absolutely! The Put This On Shop is full of awesome treasures, big and small—mostly literally physically small. Because it's easier to mail something small. We just posted a whole passel of bracelets suitable for men and women.

[00:41:16] **John Hodgman:** I have to say of all the things at Put This On Shop—this is one of the most curated of curated spots. There's so many cool things here, so many items that are beautiful and carefully chosen and affordable, whether you want a large Native American turquoise and coral silver ring—which is pretty beautiful and fancy—or something as simple as a bunch of early 20th century dog breed pins, PutThisOnShop.com is a great place to go.

[00:41:41] **Jesse Thorn:** And if you're in Southern California on the 16th of December, we'll be at the South Pasadena Flea Market. You can find the information on Instagram or wherever. It's a great little flea market, great place to buy some gifts for friends and family. Not just from us, but there's lots of great vendors there. So, if you're in LA, we'll see you at the South Pass Flea Market on the 16th.

[00:42:01] **John Hodgman:** So, pull over and get out your scratch paper and write these things down. SFSketchfest.com for San Francisco SketchFest. We'll be there live in January. VanFreaksRoadshow.com for the Van Freaks livestream, as well as that old *Ragnarök* survival kit. PutThisOnShop.com for all of your Put This On Shop delights that can be sent to

you in the mails. And live selling of cool stuff with your friend Jesse Thorn at the flea market in South Pasadena. Let's get back to the case.

[00:42:31] **Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:42:32] **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.)

[00:42:41] **John Hodgman:** Truly the world is upside down, and I have gone mad. Jesse, that's what I took away from this. Because I—this is one of those situations—

[00:42:50] **Jesse Thorn:** I could have told you that as soon as you started listing types of cow.

(They chuckle.)

[00:42:55] **John Hodgman:** This is one of the situations where I made a joke in what I might term the old “areas of my expertise” style of taking an idea such as dipping poppers in ranch dressing while driving and taking it and extrapolating it out to its most ludicrous conclusion, which is a vent-mounted dip cup for your car. And I made that joke. And then Scott and Nicole reflected back at me that that's a real thing that people have. And I realize it is a different driving culture where you are. And I also realize there's a market out there, Jesse. I love your idea for the salad gimbal. The salad gimbal, if I understand it, Jesse, is a salad plate that maintains its attitude, position—you know, its horizontal attitude. And you suction cup it to the middle of the steering wheel, so it's right in front of you, and it's got a fork attached to it maybe with a little—like a curly, retracting cord or something. So, you never lose it.

[00:43:59] **Jesse Thorn:** Maybe a microphone arm type device.

[00:44:01] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, exactly. And then it maintains its horizontal attitude, no matter how you steer the car. You're going around a curve or whatever. But here's the one thing. It's voice activated, because at a certain point, you're going to need to put your fork in that salad. And if it gimbals, it'll just spill onto your lap. So, you need to say, “Hey Siri, stabilize the salad gimbal.” I'm sorry about that, Scott and Nicole, but we got the copyright on that. We got the patent on that going, and we're going to get that money from the sharks.

[00:44:31] **Nicole:** I look forward to buying one.

[00:44:33] **John Hodgman:** I have to say that what you're doing is not safe. I have to say this because I believe it, and I have to say this before I eat garbage all over every piece of social media that we post this on. This is not—it's not safe! I get you that you're in a place where there aren't that many humans around, and you have high visibility, and you're on cruise control. But I'll say this. In a 2011 Subaru Outback—was it?—without a dedicated dip cup holder? Extra not safe. So, what I'm saying to you, Nicole, is: I respect your Bismarckian culture, and I understand that you have more visibility and there are straight roads. And if you

had a car that had—that was looking out for you while you were eating a salad, then I might say it's none of my business. But that's all I would say. And I wouldn't say it to you on a podcast either, and I'm not saying it now! Don't drive and be distracted. This is the official policy of the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast, and I mean it!

But that is not entirely the issue here. Because even Scott himself, who has been so vanilla-sauced into his Stockholm syndrome that he doesn't feel that he's at any risk, is like, “The real issue here is I don't like it when Nicole eats a food and gets it on her clothes, and then she's in a bad mood for 20 minutes.” So, I'm going to order you to wear a poncho if you're going to eat in the car. I mean, I don't know what else to do. It's not safe for you to be eating in the car, but one thing that might dissuade you from doing it is having to wear a salad smock of shame. You can get one, I'm sure, at any smock dispensary in Bismarck.

(Nicole laughs.)

[00:46:28] **Jesse Thorn:** Or you can get one of your dad's old dress shirts and wear it backwards.

[00:46:32] **John Hodgman:** And I will encourage Scott to not razz so long as—well, I think this will solve the razzing. And I hope it also solves the eating while driving. And then I also want to add one more thing to the sentence, which is that you drive your vehicle to Acadia National Park and let us know, so we can see you in the parking lot, and we can mark off that license plate.

[00:46:58] **Nicole:** We'll park and eat a salad while we wait.

[00:47:00] **John Hodgman:** Yeah! You park and eat a salad. What a wonderful idea! Park, have a little salad, and be on your way. Another great idea. Park at a truck stop and get some chicken fried steak! These are the great things to do on a road trip! Park and look at the natural beauty of the interstate.

(They laugh.)

This is the sound of a gavel.

[00:47:26] **Music:** “Da’ Dip” from the album *Controversee* by Freak Nasty.

I put my hand up on your hip

When I dip, you—

John Hodgman: *(Awkwardly spliced in as plain speech.)* Drive.

—we dip

(Music fades out.)

[00:47:] **John Hodgman:** Judge John Hodgman rules. That is all.

[00:47:32] **Jesse Thorn:** Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom.

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

Nicole, how are you feeling about this judgment?

[00:47:39] **Nicole:** I think it's fair. I maybe should have seen it coming that it wasn't going to go in my favor, but I think I'll be shamed out of—I don't think I want to wear a smock, so I think I'll have to eat standing still on the side of the road somehow.

[00:47:54] **Jesse Thorn:** I mean, you could look at this as an opportunity to wear a smock.

(They laugh and Nicole agrees.)

Scott, how are you feeling?

[00:48:03] **Scott:** You know, I think it's a fair ruling and the idea of, you know, taking a break to park and have a meal that seems like safer but also probably better for, you know, digestion and mental health and everything. So. And a road trip to Arcadia sounds fun too.

[00:48:17] **Jesse Thorn:** Nicole, Scott, thanks for joining us on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

[00:48:21] **Nicole:** Thank you.

[00:48:23] **Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:48:24] **Jesse Thorn:** Another *Judge John Hodgman* case is in the books. In a moment, we'll have Swift Justice. First, our thanks to Redditor JackalKaboom for naming this week's episode "Car-edible Witness".

[00:48:37] **John Hodgman:** I love it when a Redditor just uses their regular name. You know what I mean?

(Jesse agrees.)

Like, I'm on Reddit. I'm John Hodgman. I don't have anything. And you know, Jackal Kaboom. You got a name like that. Just use it. Don't come up with a handle. It's cool.

[00:48:50] **Jesse Thorn:** Chat about the show on Reddit at [MaximumFun.Reddit.com](https://www.maximumfun.com/reddit). That's where we ask for our title suggestions as well. Evidence and photos from the show are posted on the webpage for this episode of the program at [MaximumFun.org](https://www.maximumfun.org), as well as on Instagram. We are [@JudgeJohnHodgman](https://www.instagram.com/judgejohnhodgman) there. *John Hodgman* created by—

[00:49:12] **John Hodgman:** I was?

[00:49:13] **Jesse Thorn:** (*Chuckling.*) *Judge John Hodgman.* John Hodgman created by Mr. and Mrs. Hodgman.

(*John laughs and agrees.*)

Judge John Hodgman created by Jesse Thorn and John Hodgman. This episode was engineered by Dave Thompson at Prairie Public in Bismarck, North Dakota, edited by A.J. McKeon. Marie Bardi-Salinas runs our social media. Our producer is Jennifer Marmor.

Now, Swift Justice, where we answer small disputes with quick judgment. StarsGo on the Maximum Fun subreddit says—another classic example of someone—just use your regular name! If your name is Stars Go.

[00:49:49] **John Hodgman:** Yeah, that's Starlee Kine's cousin.

[00:49:53] **Jesse Thorn:** Yeah, that's how being a cousin works. “If my family eats ice cream between December and March, my ex-husband says we're eating it out of season. Is ice cream season a thing?”

[00:50:04] **John Hodgman:** So, let me understand this. StarsGo will sometimes eat ice cream between December and March. And StarsGo's ex-husband says that StarsGo is eating it out of season?

(*Jesse confirms.*)

The ex-husband says this?

[00:50:18] **Jesse Thorn:** Ex-husband says that.

[00:50:21] **John Hodgman:** Right, okay. Here's my verdict. StarsGo, I'm glad you're divorced.

(*Jesse agrees with a “bingo”.*)

You don't need this person in your life.

[00:50:26] **Jesse Thorn:** StarsGo bingo!

[00:50:27] **John Hodgman:** Eat ice cream when you wanna. Don't eat it in the car, though. Eat it in the car only if it's parked. Get some ice cream and eat it in the car when you're parked. We've talked a lot about food to eat in the car, but there are probably more disputes about car trips and road trips that we haven't heard yet.

I've been getting some of your wonderful disputes about group travel, like when you go on a family vacation or whatever. That's also a road trip situation a lot of the time. If you and another person are trapped in a car for hours, you know you're gonna have a squabble. So, let's get your road trip cases up in here. What member of your touring band hogs control of the stereo system? What car game is the worst? Why does your weird dad insist on playing it? Do you want to take the scenic route even though your partner prefers the quickest route? Send your car trip disputes to me, Judge John Hodgman. Send them at MaximumFun.org/jjho. MaximumFun.org/jjho. There's a form you fill out. It couldn't be easier. And it doesn't just have to be road trip disputes, right, Jesse?

[00:51:29] **Jesse Thorn:** No! Any kind of dispute! This whole show runs on your disputes, so put some fuel in our tank at MaximumFun.org/jjho. And we'll talk to you next time on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

[00:51:41] **Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

[00:51:43] **Sound Effect:** Cheerful ukulele chord.

[00:51:44] **Speaker 1:** Maximum Fun.

[00:51:46] **Speaker 2:** A worker-owned network.

[00:51:47] **Speaker 3:** Of artist owned shows.

[00:51:48] **Speaker 4:** Supported—

[00:51:49] **Speaker 5:** —directly—

[00:51:50] **Speaker 6:** —by you!