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Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: Welcome to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. This week's episode recorded live in Dublin, Ireland.

John Hodgman: Oh, it was like a dream, Jesse, to be in Dublin. Also, because we were only there for about 10 hours.

(Jesse confirms.)

Due to some flight delays. It was a magical time that we had in Dublin, the 10 hours that we had in Dublin—including the 90 minutes or so of the show that were recorded at the Liberty Theatre, along with so many fun litigants, surprised faces in the audience. Hey, Fiona! And of course, Bobby O'Hearn of *No Monster Club* came on the stage with us as well. It was such a wonderful time and can't wait to get back to you, Dublin, but for now I'm very happy that we have this record of a special evening on the stage at Liberty Theatre in Dublin.

Shall we listen to it, Jesse?

Jesse Thorn: Let's go!

(Scene change.)

(Thunderous applause from the audience.)

Dublin, you've come to us desperate for justice, and we're here at Liberty Hall to deliver it. Let's bring out our first set of litigants. Please welcome Paul and Andrea!

(Applause.)

Tonight's case, "Germansprudence". Paul brings the case against his wife, Andrea. Andrea likes to listen to Deutschlandfunk public radio in the house. But Paul listens to comedy podcasts. 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.

John Hodgman: "Yes, the newspapers were right. Snow was general all over Ireland. It was falling on every part of the dark central plain, on the treeless hills, falling softly upon the Bog of Allen, and further westward, softly falling into the dark, mutinous Shannon waves. It was falling too upon every part of the lonely churchyard on the hill where Michael Furey lay buried. It lay thickly drifted on the crooked crosses and headstones, on the spears of the little gate, on the barren thorns. His soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling like the descent of their last end upon all the living and the dead. And the snow whispered to him, 'Deutschland, funk you up.'"

(Laughter.)

“Deutschland, (*sensor beep*) you up. Deutschland, (*sensor beep*) you up. Deutschland, funk you up. It's Tuesday night, and we're in Liberty Hall. Don't believe me? Just swear them in.”

Jesse Thorn: Paul and Andrea, please raise your right hands. Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God or Whatever?

(They swear.)

Do you swear to abide by Judge John Hodgman's ruling, despite the fact that he thinks German public radio are a bunch of sellouts and only listens to Czech public radio?

(They swear.)

Judge Hodgman, you may proceed.

John Hodgman: You may be seated for an immediate summary judgment and one of yours favors. Can either of you name the piece of culture that I quoted as I entered this courtroom here in Dublin, Ireland? Uh, let's see. Paul, let's start with you.

Paul: I really don't know, but I do have a guess in my pocket, which is *Ulysses* by James Joyce.

John Hodgman: *Ulysses* by James Joyce.

Jesse Thorn: It's an Irish book, folks!

John Hodgman: Do you have it in your pocket right now?

Paul: Oh, no, no, I'm sorry.

John Hodgman: Alright, I'm afraid it's inadmissible then? That's fine. Andrea, what is your guess?

Andrea: I think that's from the novel, *The Wonder*.

John Hodgman: *The Wonder*, by James Joyce. No, who wrote that one?

Andrea: Oh, Anne Donoghue, maybe?

John Hodgman: Emma Donoghue, *The Wonder* by Emma Donoghue. A good novel?

Jesse Thorn: Do we have any librarians in the house? Sorry, do we have any non-librarians in the house?

John Hodgman: Deafening silence. *The Wonder* by Emma Donoghue. A book that you recommend?

(Andrea confirms.)

Unfortunately, it's wrong. And while close, your guess is wrong too, Paul. It was *Dubliners* by James Joyce.

(Paul "ahh"s in frustration.)

Specifically, the final novella in that book, *The Dead*. I improved the Deutschland funk you up part. That's not actually from the text. Yeah. In the original text, it's just "Deutschlandfunk" 50 times in a row.

(Laughter.)

I added the extra words. So, who comes to seek justice before me in this fake court of international law?

Paul: I do, judge.

John Hodgman: And Paul, that is you.

(Paul confirms.)

What is the nature of your complaint?

Paul: May it please the court. I bring the case—

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: Wow. Hang on, let me decide. *(Beat.)* It may please me, go on. Thank you for asking for the first time in a decade's worth of podcasting.

Paul: *(Laughing.)* I'm obliged to the court. I bring the case against my wife, Andrea, who blasts Deutschlandfunk in our house without any regard for me and my sanity.

John Hodgman: Blasts it.

Paul: Blasts it, yes.

John Hodgman: At a high level.

Paul: At a high volume and low fidelity.

John Hodgman: And—

(Laughter.)

I see. Has audio engineering in Germany gone downhill?

Paul: *(Laughs.)* I don't know.

John Hodgman: I see.

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Andrea—do I say Andrea (*ann-dree-uh*) or Andrea (*ahn-dree-uh*)?

Andrea: Andrea (*ahn-dray-uh*).

John Hodgman: Oof, got it wrong two times.

(Laughter.)

Emma Donoghue, let me ask you this question. Andrea, how do you respond?

Andrea: I would argue I'm not blasting. In fact, I've invested in high quality speakers to listen to Deutschlandfunk in a pleasurable manner. And I think Paul's complaint is inadmissible.

John Hodgman: Let the record show that Andrea has said that she has invested in high quality speakers to listen to Deutschlandfunk in a pleasurable manner, one of the most German sentences ever to be phrased.

(Laughter.)

Now wait a minute. Neither of you are Irish. It says here that you met in Western Massachusetts.

(Paul confirms.)

Where in Western Massachusetts?

Andrea: We met in Northampton.

John Hodgman: Northampton, Massachusetts. Well, that's the hometown of Monte Belmonte, our summertime guest-time fun-time bailiff, Jesse.

Jesse Thorn: I know that guy!

John Hodgman: Yeah. Why are you here? What's going on? What's—are you such weird stalkers that you would follow us all the way here? In which case, thank you, because obviously we needed the bodies.

(Laughter.)

But what brings you here to Dublin, and how did you meet?

Paul: I am originally from New Jersey. Andrea (*ann-dree-uh*) is originally from Germany, as you can tell.

John Hodgman: Andrea (*ahn-dray-uh*).

Paul: Well, I call her Andrea, but that's besides the point entirely.

John Hodgman: Not really.

(Laughter.)

No, it seems very on point all of the sudden.

Paul: *(Guffaws.)* Well, we—

John Hodgman: *(Interrupting.)* I think I've heard everything I need to in order to make my decision.

(Laughter.)

Paul: But Andrea was—

Jesse Thorn: Please, please listen to what Judge Joan has to say.

(Laughter.)

Paul: Andrea was studying at Smith College for a year abroad from Germany. And I was singing with the Cornell University Glee Club, which is an all-men's choral ensemble. And we would travel to the so-called women's colleges to sing on a joint basis with all four parts.

John Hodgman: Right. To acquire wives.

Paul: That's exactly right, and it was intended, you know, originally for this kind of meeting. And so that's how we met. And Andrea successfully—

John Hodgman: What was the name of—it the Cornell Glee Club or the a cappella group?

Paul: No, the Glee Club. It's not an—it's, you know, tuxedos and Bach and very serious.

Jesse Thorn: It's like an a cappella group but less cool.

(Paul confirms with a laugh.)

John Hodgman: And what part did you sing? Alto?

Paul: I'm a tenor.

John Hodgman: Tenor? Really?

(Paul confirms.)

You know, in the story *The Dead* by James Joyce, in the book *Dubliners*, a tenor—an Irish tenor features very prominently. You should read it.

(Paul laughs.)

Then you would have won the case.

(Paul agrees.)

What was the song that you would sing? What was your best song?

Paul: Well, together we sung the Bach “B Minor Mass”, Andrea and I.

John Hodgman: Both of you?

Paul: Well, we sung it together, and that's how we met.

John Hodgman: Was it—it was like a mixer? It was like a glee club mixer, Smith vs. Cornell?

Paul: Well, we—yes, we sang all four parts together. So, that was the purpose that, you know, the women's—

John Hodgman: Am I living in a 1940s novel?!

(Laughter.)

Paul: No, and it comes from that era! *(Laughs.)* And it just continued on.

John Hodgman: Yeah, I know! Did you all gather around in the Smith College botanical garden and gather around the corpse flower they have there and sing?

Paul: We actually did see that on the weekend, yes.

John Hodgman: Yeah, I don't know about you—Dublin's a historic city with lots to offer, but does it have a corpse flower? Any answers? No. Alright. Now I know. It's a flower that smells like a corpse. It blooms every ten years or something. We'll cut that from the podcast. No, you know what?! Keep it in. Double it, as they say on *Blank Check*. So, you were singing together.

(Paul confirms.)

Your glee club and yours, Andrea?

(Andrea confirms.)

And the song was—what was it?

Paul: The Bach “B Minor Mass”.

John Hodgman: Okay, hit it!

(Laughter.)

Friends of the podcast Paul and Andrea singing their parts from the Bach “B Minor Mass”. When was the last time you sung it together?

Andrea: 12 years ago.

John Hodgman: 12 years ago.

Paul: Yeah. A little rusty.

John Hodgman: And Andrea, can you remember it?

Andrea: I know it very well, but I will, under no circumstance, sing this song. *(Laughs.)*

Jesse Thorn: Would it help if I did the guitar track? *(Enthusiastically singing.)* Da, da, da, da, da, da, da, da, da, da, da-nuh-nuh-dodo!

John Hodgman: Yeah, we'll give you a B minor, a bouncy B minor. Andrea, you refuse to sing?

Andrea: I refuse to sing, yeah.

John Hodgman: Paul, do you refuse to sing?

Paul: Uh, yes.

Jesse Thorn: You know that you could have won the entire case just by singing just now.

(Paul laughs.)

John Hodgman: Why don't you want to sing?

Andrea: Well, we're missing—if there's a soprano and a bass in the audience, who can sing the other parts?

John Hodgman: It could happen.

(Laughter.)

Just raise your hand and pretend.

Jesse Thorn: All the bass does is go bow, bow, bow, bow, bow. It's not a big deal.

John Hodgman: Alright, I understand, Andrea. You have given up on music, and instead you love just the talking of public radio. Is that correct?

Andrea: You might say so.

John Hodgman: Alright. So, you met at Smith College, and then you decided let's move to Dublin. What happened? How did you get here?

Paul: Well, Andrea came here first.

Andrea: Yes. I got a job here in 2012.

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And moved here. And Paul and I were in a long-distance relationship at the time. And so, when he graduated college, I said, “Well, I have a job, and you don't have a job. So, I suggest that you come join me here, where I have a job.”

John Hodgman: Right. And I suspect it was a very strong suggestion.

Andrea: Exactly. And he listened, of course. And—

(Laughter.)

He followed my orders. And we've been here together ever since.

John Hodgman: That's exactly how I ended up moving to New York City. I was never going to live in New York City. I always thought that I would move back to Brookline, Massachusetts, or maybe continue to live in Southern Connecticut. Indeed, New Haven—the Paris of Southern Connecticut. But then I received an order from someone to move to New York City. And that was Andrea, your future wife.

(Laughter.)

Paul: Yeah, makes sense.

John Hodgman: She told me. And so, what do you do now here in Dublin?

Andrea: I work for a popular search engine company.

John Hodgman: Alright. We'll say no more about that.

Jesse Thorn: You can say it. Alta Vista.

(Laughter.)

Wait, sorry. I take that back. You can say it. Ask Jeeves.

(Andrea confirms.)

Paul: And I'm a barrister.

John Hodgman: A barrister!

(Paul confirms.)

That's an officer of the court.

(Paul confirms.)

Well, that's an attorney? A lawyer?

Paul: Yes. It's a courtroom advocate.

John Hodgman: A courtroom advocate. Okay. How am I doing?

Jesse Thorn: I feel like courtrooms have enough advocates. I don't know anybody who's opposed to them.

John Hodgman: How am I doing so far?

Paul: Excellent.

John Hodgman: These robes, you know, these are Canadian barrister robes.

Paul: Yes, I actually brought along for you a tabbed collar and tabs and things like that. But I see you have your own, so—

John Hodgman: I didn't need that (*censor beep*) from you.

(Laughter and applause.)

I came prepared.

Paul: It's excellent. It's quite on point.

John Hodgman: But I'll accept your gift now. Where is it?

Paul: Here you are, Judge.

John Hodgman: Thank you very much. Look at that! So, this is what you would wear in Dublin with robes, barrister robes.

Paul: Yes, I'd wear a robe very similar to what you're wearing and—

John Hodgman: That's very kind. You know, in the United States, it's perfectly acceptable for judges at all levels to receive gifts of any kind.

(Laughter.)

Paul: Yes, I'm well aware.

John Hodgman: There's absolutely no conflict of interest whatsoever. Do you have a private jet that you'd like to take me on a tour of the world on?

(Laughter.)

Paul: Not yet, Judge.

Jesse Thorn: I need an interest free loan on a \$2,000,000 motorhome.

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: Thank you very, that's very kind of you. Jesse, would you please throw that on the bribe pile? Thank you very much. I ordered these from Harcourt's, which was a very famous supplier to the Canadian courts. They told me they were making it for me, originally. And in fact, it has my initials embroidered in the back, J. H.—John Hodgman, that's me. And then it was only when I put this on that I discovered that they had lied to me, because it says here it was made for Mr. Justice John Skowronski, June 27, 2016. They pulled it off of the dead barrister pile and sent it to me.

(Laughter.)

So, now I am wearing the robes of death. The ultimate arbiter. So, I will judge you harshly. What do you like to listen to?

Paul: Um, dumb comedy podcasts.

John Hodgman: Dumb comedy podcasts? You're saying that German public radio gets in your way?

Paul: Yes. It sends me into waves of existential dread, Judge.

John Hodgman: That's its mandate.

(Laughter.)

I believe, Andrea, you brought an audio example of what you like to listen to during the day?

Andrea: Well, I would say Paul picked his evidence carefully.

John Hodgman: Oh, I see. Cherry picked, you might say.

Andrea: To demonstrate perhaps the most difficult to stomach parts of what I like to listen to. And then I brought some counter evidence of what Paul likes to listen to.

John Hodgman: I love the way this is going!

(Laughter.)

So, let's listen to what Paul thinks is a representative example of Deutschlandfunk. May we hear that, Jesse?

Clip:

Announcer: Deutschlandfunk.

Transition: A quick musical stinger on the piano.

Announcer: Deutschlandfunk.

Speaker: (*Speaking calmly in German, similar to an NPR broadcast.*)

John Hodgman: (*Over the audio.*) Can we turn it up?

Little bit more.

(*Jesse cackles.*)

(*The audio ends.*)

Is there any more?

Andrea: I don't know. I think there are five-minute news segments every half hour. Yeah.

John Hodgman: Oh, I was enjoying that quite a bit. What do you enjoy about that, Andrea? I mean, first of all, is that representative of Deutschlandfunk? It sounded pretty Deutschlandfunky to me.

Andrea: It is pretty representative of the every half hour there'd be a news segment.

John Hodgman: Right. What were they reporting on?

Andrea: I think—I have to be honest; I wasn't fully listening. I think maybe Earthquakes?

John Hodgman: Aaah, I think you listen to public radio in the same way I do... not.

(*Laughter.*)

It's just sound in the background.

Jesse Thorn: (*Deeply betrayed.*) Wow.

John Hodgman: Well, I'm not talking about *Bullseye with Jesse Thorn*! That's one of my favorite public radio shows.

Jesse Thorn: The public radio show I host, John.

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John Hodgman: No, I listen to every word. When I'm in a place that carries it.

(*Laughter.*)

Sorry. Rude.

(Jesse agrees.)

No, but I love the sound of public radio in the background. To me, it's almost like ambient noise. It's like a white noise machine or the sound of waves from the ocean.

Jesse Thorn: *(Flatly.)* That's what we're going for.

John Hodgman: Yeah, exactly so. Well, I mean, but it's with me all day long. You know what I mean? And I give money. I don't need to defend myself to you! I need you to defend yourself to me!

Andrea: So, I would say, yes, I agree. And it's just a great way to be up to speed with what's happening in the world. It's like instead of, you know, scrolling on my phone when I wake up in the morning, I can just turn on the radio and see what's up while I'm brushing my teeth.

John Hodgman: You're making a great case for broadcast news, and I appreciate that. What is so distasteful about what we just heard? Do you speak German?

Paul: Well, this is part of the problem. I speak it enough to understand maybe 10-20% of that. But then—

John Hodgman: You only know the words from Bach's "B Minor Mass"?

Paul: Right, exactly, yes. But not enough to actually fully understand it. So, I hear it, and then I don't understand most of it, and so then I feel very, very confused and worried. This is particularly important when they're talking about America, because I feel like I'm overhearing somebody like talking about me behind my back in another language.

Jesse Thorn: They're probably saying nice stuff. I feel like other countries are always saying nice stuff.

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: Yeah, it would be really funny if Deutschlandfunk was mostly talking about you behind your back.

Paul: It would be very bad.

John Hodgman: *(With a light German accent.)* Today in the news, Paul wore a very nice suit to a podcast recording in Dublin.

I don't do a German accent, so I'm—

Jesse Thorn: It's sort of like this; this is what's happened on there is they're going like, (*with a cartoonish German accent*) "Well, Donald Trump did something cool and chill! America is very cool! It's okay! Everything's fine there. Democracy's not ending!"

John Hodgman: "Everything is totally normal!"

Paul: Yeah, that was a real problem, especially in the past few years. It has gotten better, I have to admit, from that perspective in particular. But also, I mean, I will concede to Andrea that she has invested in a speaker as opposed to literally turning her phone volume up to full blast and then sticking it on like the top of the shower kind of door.

John Hodgman: Right, because that's—the sound quality's lower; it's a little bit more abrasive.

Paul: Yeah, much more abrasive.

John Hodgman: With a rich quality speaker, you really get to hear the sonorous sound of a German talking about you behind your back.

Paul: Exactly, the real deep bass boost.

John Hodgman: You feel left out.

(Paul confirms.)

And maybe concerned that Andrea's receiving messages about you from her confederates back home. I understand. And you like to listen to what? Comedy podcasts?

Paul: Yes. In particular, one show which Andrea refers to as The Brothers.

(The audience "oh"s knowingly.)

Jesse Thorn: (*Joking.*) This is *Car Talk*.

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: Let's go to the tape, please.

Clip: mbmbam18:00He put his partially peeled lemon back into his back, almost ashamed of his actions.

John Hodgman: Alright, I've heard it. That's *My Brother, My Brother and Me*, Another Maximum Fun podcast.

Jesse Thorn: Much more successful than us. As you can—you can tell why!

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: And another example that Andrea brought, can we hear that please?

Clip: 18:34 He is a children's party entertainer. Please welcome Big Chunky Bubbles!

John Hodgman: Oh, it's *Comedy Bang! Bang!* starring Scott Aukerman and Big Chunky Bubbles. And any other podcasts you listen to? Any other fun, light, funny podcasts you like to listen to that you might have given as an example about your podcast listening tastes?

Paul: Of course, both me and Andrea have come to this court because we both enjoy—

John Hodgman: (Correcting him.) Andrea (*ahn-dray-uh*)!

(Laughter.)

Paul: We both, of course, enjoy the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

John Hodgman: Alright, I appreciate that. Throw that on the bribe pile, Bailiff Jesse Thorn. Thank you very much. Andrea, what do you feel about those podcasts?

Andrea: I think they're loud, annoying, and not funny.

John Hodgman: Loud, annoying, and not funny.

Jesse Thorn: I take exception to some of that!

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: Seems like you're at a little bit of an impasse here. Do you feel left out when he's listening to the McElroy brothers talk about you behind your back?

Andrea: Well, the problem is they're laughing at themselves so much that I cannot figure out what they're even talking about.

John Hodgman: Mm-hm. Yeah. Whereas there's not a lot of laughter on Deutschlandfunk. Okay. So, what does listening to Deutschlandfunk mean to you, Andrea? Why is it important? It obviously annoys your husband. Is that the sole benefit that you get?

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Or is there another benefit that you get from it?

Andrea: I just really enjoy being caught up with world news and understanding what's happening. Like, for example, I was listening this morning, and I learned that there is a new

law being passed in the EU that new electronic devices that are brought to market have to be repairable. And that just made me feel really good about my day!

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: That's news to me as well. Thank you.

Paul, what is not fair about this situation? Why can't you just listen with headphones to your thing, and Andrea can listen with headphones to her thing?

Paul: Well, I think that would be a very fair judgment, Judge. The difficulty is that Andrea does not listen with headphones but rather blasts it at 6AM with an open door to the bathroom, bouncing off of the tiles and waking me from a deep slumber.

John Hodgman: Andrea, why don't you listen at a more reasonable volume level?

Andrea: I would argue my volume level is actually very reasonable. So, I think it's just a matter of perception that's the problem.

Jesse Thorn: You're saying this is a sensory sensitivity issue for him?

Andrea: Perhaps. Yeah.

John Hodgman: What do you think about his contention that he feels that he's left out and maybe being talked about behind his back, conspired against?

Andrea: I think he's been working on his German in Duolingo for 10 years.

(Laughter.)

And I think that that argument is no longer valid.

Jesse Thorn: Maybe he should use the language learning app that sponsors our freaking show!

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: Babel, language for life. Maybe you'll get a little bit further there. They might even teach you how to pronounce your wife's name!

(Laughter and applause.)

You have one more piece of evidence to share before I make my verdict. Can you explain who submits this evidence and what this has to do with the case?

Paul: I'm not familiar with the evidence, Judge.

John Hodgman: Alright. Well, this is surprise evidence. You were not given your right of discovery. So, this might surprise you. Okay? Andrea, did you submit this evidence?

Andrea: I'm not sure.

Jesse: (*Utterly delighted.*) Ooh! It's a dog in an outfit! Guys, it was a dog in an outfit the whole time!

John Hodgman: Is this one dog or two dogs?

Jesse Thorn: On the right, the dog is gonna do aerobics! And on the left, it just finished jumping from an airplane!

(*Laughter.*)

John Hodgman: Who is this dog, and what does this dog mean to you both?

Paul: This is our dog, Sadie. Sadie is a rescue lurcher. there's plenty of them all over Dublin. And she has been with us for two years now.

John Hodgman: I see. And well, thank you for sharing that. And does she have a preference as to what you listen to?

Paul: No, she's pretty much sleeping most of the time.

John Hodgman: We gotta do—we gotta get a podcast together off of Maximum Fun, specifically for Irish lurchers. Okay? Yeah, let's put that in the IP pile. Alright. So, in the ideal ruling situation, Paul, what would you have me rule if I were to rule in your favor?

Paul: Judge, I'd like the Deutschlandfunk—

John Hodgman: Remember when you said, “may it please the court”?

(*Paul confirms.*)

Let's do that again.

Paul: Judge, may it please the court—

John Hodgman: It does. A lot.

Paul: (*Laughter.*) I'm obliged to the court. The ideal ruling would be that there is a decibel limit to Deutschlandfunk, that it could be—needs to be played only after a certain hour of

day. It can be played any time on the weekend, because it gets funky then. There's all sorts of weird jazz and folk music on the weekend that's great.

John Hodgman: Yeah, it's public radio.

Paul: Yeah, I love that! And then—

Jesse Thorn: Everyone agrees on German folk music. We all know that's great.

John Hodgman: Absolutely not controversial at all.

Paul: And finally, I would say that in common areas, especially where our young son is listening to this radio, I'm concerned that he is going to learn to speak German in a very angry, monotonous, and low tone. And I would like that to be—

John Hodgman: Is there another option?

(Laughter.)

Jesse Thorn: Yeah, describe another type of German.

Paul: So, I'm concerned about the impact on our four-month-old. So, I'd like a communal listening to Deutschlandfunk to be limited to the weekends.

John Hodgman: I see. I understand. And Andrea, it says here that your ideal ruling is that you'd be allowed to keep listening to Deutschlandfunk. Paul can listen to his podcast alone while commuting.

(Laughter.)

In other words, you never have to hear them ever. Alright. I think I have everything I need in order to make my decision. I'm going to go into my chambers think this over. Jesse Thorn will talk to you for a moment, but I want you to think seriously about whether you remember any of the words of that Bach B Minor hymn or whatever it was. Bach "B Minor Mass". Here I go.

Jesse Thorn: Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom. Andrea (*ann-dree-uh*), Andrea (*ahn-dray-uh*), Andrew—what—how are you feeling about your chances right now?

[00:25:00]

Andrea: I think, given the judge's listening habits of public radio, I feel like I have him on my side. Perhaps he might be a bit biased in my favor.

Jesse Thorn: What we just listened to was particularly spectacularly public radio-y. Like, I say that as a literal NPR host. Is it just like that?!

Andrea: No! It's—like, every 30 minutes you have five minutes of news, and then in between that they have like different features, and they bring in different cohosts, and they play music, and you learn about sort of cultural topics and things like that. So, like I said, I think Paul cherry picked his evidence there and that casts Deutschlandfunk in a particularly bad light.

Jesse Thorn: Paul, how do you feel about your chances?

Paul: I think the evidence speaks for itself, Bailiff.

Jesse Thorn: Wow. That's (*sensor beep*) bold!

(*Laughter.*)

You're talking about this dog picture that you forgot?

Paul: Precisely.

Jesse Thorn: You forgot even existed?

Is there a compromise possible here? Could you both just listen—instead of Deutschlandfunk, just listen to Krautrock?

Paul: Yeah, well, we could listen to just *Judge John Hodgman*, I suppose, which I think is right down the middle between the two extremes. But—

John Hodgman: (*From slightly off-mic, hurriedly.*) So ordered, Judge John Hodgman rules. That is all.

(*Laughter.*)

Jesse Thorn: No, sometimes you gotta listen to *Jordan, Jesse, Go!*.

(*Paul agrees.*)

That's how life is. Well, we'll see what Judge Hodgman has to say about this when we come back in just a moment.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

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

Music: “Mass in B Minor” by Johann Sebastian Bach.

John Hodgman: You guys recognize this song?

(Laughter. Paul confirms.)

I don't know the words; do you know?

Paul: You're gonna be waiting a while.

John Hodgman: This is Bach “Mass in B Minor”, here.

(Music volume increases.)

So? Go ahead. *(Sings along wordlessly.)*

Paul: I couldn't possibly spoil this.

Jesse Thorn: Pick it up from there!

John Hodgman: *(Humming.)* Mm-mmm, da-da.

It's very simple. Bach, it's Bach. It's German. Da-da-da, dun-dun—

Boy, oh boy. Showpersonship is dead.

Jesse Thorn: It's like nobody wants to win.

John Hodgman: Alright, I understand you're shy. You only were in the glee club.

(Laughter.)

It's a beautiful piece of music.

(Paul thanks him.)

Someday—

Jesse Thorn: You didn't write it.

John Hodgman: Someday you will sing it for me. I have a feeling. But in the meantime, I have to determine which of you is going to win this case.

So, I like Deutschlandfunk! I don't speak German. But I was grooving on that. And when I said turn it up, I really wanted to hear it. It really felt good. It had a very deep—it was like a kind of an almost ASMR quality to it. But instead of making my scalp tingle, it made my bowels rumble.

(Paul cackles.)

It made me just like—I felt really—I just felt, mmmm. It was a very good feeling to hear it. And I might give that a try myself.

That said, I mean, I am sympathetic to the fact that Paul, you feel left out. Because even though you are married to Andrea, and you've been learning German for all this time, you still don't know it. And she is communing with a culture that is not yours, and you're both in a culture that is not yours. Here you are, you know, in Dublin, and Andrea is listening to the sonorous monotone of her homeland. And you're listening to the maniacal laughter of the McElroy brothers in order to gain some sense of, I don't know, nostalgia. I mean, do you listen to Irish podcasts at all? There are probably good ones, right?

Paul: Mm. From time to time.

John Hodgman: Wow. Yeah, we'll need security to escort you out. I think there's nothing wrong with what either of you are doing, but I also appreciate why—and I'm trying to think of the best way to say this with regard to our friends, the McElroy brothers. Um. Let me put it this way. My wife, who's a whole human being in her own right, doesn't let me listen to a lot of podcasts, 'cause she doesn't like the sound of the people's voices. Even though I consider them to be my close friends. I don't know them, but podcasts are hanging out with your friends. And I feel deep connection and solace when I am listening to a podcast. And I feel like, oh, it's my buddy. I'm not going to talk about the podcast that I listen to, because I have my own podcast to advertise. But also, I'm not going to talk about the podcasts that I listen to, because I don't want any of them to feel like self-conscious about their voices. But sometimes the voice just rubs you the wrong way, you know? And in this case, that's what's happening in both directions.

[00:30:00]

I can't rule in your favor, Andrea, in saying that Paul can only ever listen to his podcasts on his commute alone. He deserves to listen to a podcast at home as much as you do. And the point of being married is you share the mutual annoyance of the other person's habits. That's part of the contract. I can't, however, say that you shouldn't listen to Deutschlandfunk, because it's just hilarious that it's called Deutschlandfunk. What am I missing? I mean, I know what Deutschland is, but funk in German means what?

Andrea: Like, broadcast.

John Hodgman: Broadcast. Okay. Yeah. That's fun. So, what I would say is I'm going to rule in Paul's favor in that the decibel level should be set. And Paul, that means you have to get a decibel meter and actually do the monitoring.

Paul: Perfect. Love that.

John Hodgman: And you push it as far as you can, Andrea. You know what I mean? Because that's your job, in this marriage. Pushing him out of his comfort zone, instructing him to move to Dublin. Pushing him to broaden his horizons. God knows he needs pushing on singing in public. He needs more pushing.

(Laughter.)

You push that decibel level as high as you can, but you set that level and then you keep it. But Paul, you get to listen to your podcasts as well, within reason. But Paul, you gotta learn German. I mean it. And don't mess around with any other language app. Babbel. Language for life.

(Laughter.)

This is the sound of a gavel. *(Bangs gavel three times.)* Judge John Hodgman rules. That is all.

(Cheers and applause.)

Paul: I'm obliged to the court.

Jesse Thorn: Paul, Andrea, thank you for being on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

John Hodgman: Thank you so much.

Jesse Thorn: Let's bring out our next set of litigants. Please welcome James and Paddy.

(Cheers and applause.)

Our case, "Objections in the Mirror, are Closer than They Appear". James brings the case against his fiancé, Paddy. When the two of them are driving somewhere, they often play a common car game where they call out yellow license plates, or yellow reg. James says that when Paddy's driving, he has an unfair advantage. He's using his mirrors! Paddy says he's well within his rights to get a point if he happens to have seen a yellow reg while checking that mirror. 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.

John Hodgman: "On his deathbed with just hours to live, he drew a series of inexplicable imaginary treasure maps. Six of them are hanging in the Louvre, and most people will have you believe he only drew six. But I've always been convinced that he made seven maps. For

decades, my belief has resulted in me being endlessly mocked, derided, and swirled by the entire historian community.”

Bailiff Jesse Thorn, please swear them in.

Jesse Thorn: James and Paddy, please rise and raise your right hands. Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God or Whatever.

(They swear.)

Do you swear to abide by Judge John Hodgman's ruling, despite the fact that he only plays punch buggy, which is where you hit someone if you see a Volkswagen bug?

(They swear.)

Judge Hodgman, you may proceed.

John Hodgman: James and Paddy, you may be seated for an immediate summary judgment in one of yours favors. Can either of you name the piece of culture that I referenced in this courtroom? James, Why don't you go first?

James: it sounded a bit Dan Brown-y, as in *Da Vinci Code* esque.

John Hodgman: A little *Da Vinci Code* esque? Yeah, I can—that's interesting. Yeah, I can put that into backwards writing in the guestbook there. Sure.

Jesse Thorn: I'll also say that if you told me right now that Dan Brownie was the president of Ireland, I would believe you 1000%.

Paddy: It's Dan Skone is the president of Ireland.

John Hodgman: And how many dogs does he have currently?

Paddy: Uh, one at the minute, unfortunately.

John Hodgman: Yeah, unfortunately one of them passed away, right? Very sad. Anyway, but let's not talk about that. Paddy, what is your guess?

Jesse Thorn: No, we should focus on that! It's a comedy podcast, let's talk about dogs that died!

John Hodgman: Paddy, what is your guess?

Paddy: Unfortunately, same to James, I would have guessed Dan Brown, *Da Vinci Code*.

John Hodgman: Dan Brownie, the President of Ireland.

(Paddy agrees with a laugh.)

Both guesses are wrong; indeed, all guesses are wrong. I was—

Jesse Thorn: Wait, hold on, the real president of Ireland is Tom Clancy.

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: That may be true, but in this case they're wrong. There's actually a radio show *Nero's Class*, which was released as a podcast by RTÉ, written by friend of this podcast, Bobby Aherne and featuring a character actor named John Hodgman. That was my role as the historian. I had nothing else to come up with, because I don't—I've never heard of this weird game. I've never heard of this weird—what is the name of the game?

James: I don't really think it has an official name. I would just know it as Yellow Reg. And that's what I would say to any other Irish people here tonight.

John Hodgman: Yellow Reg? Alright, fair enough. And there's some assent from the audience as well who've played the game.

[00:35:00]

Who seeks justice in this court?

James: I seek an immediate injunction that Paddy is no longer allowed to use his mirrors and damages for lost points in the game.

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: Damages for lost—what's the point tally at the current moment?

James: A lot of bruises?

John Hodgman: Yeah, alright, I see. And that's James. You're seeking that injunction.

(James confirms.)

Paddy, how do you defend yourself?

Paddy: I feel that if I were to sacrifice road safety, there'd be no game left to play. So.

John Hodgman: And sacrificing your safety would mean—

Paddy: No mirrors being used, Judge. So, reckless driving and—

John Hodgman: Right. So, let me understand the rules of this game. James, can you explain the rules of the game to me? As you believe they're fairly played.

James: So, I would say usually the game is not played by the motorists so much as the passengers in the backseat, traditionally.

Jesse Thorn: You're saying that traditionally the game is played by children.

(Laughter.)

Paddy: Children at heart.

James: Yes. And the way it works is whenever—

John Hodgman: So, if you're on one of your long road trips in Ireland, say you're going... 35 miles.

(Laughter.)

Like, and you've got hoours to kill, and you gotta distract yourself and entertain yourself as a child in the backseat, you play a little game of Yellow Reg. And that would mean anytime you see someone named Reginald who has jaundice, you punch the other person. Is that right?

James: Well, after turning off your favorite comedy podcast, you cast your gaze out the window. And in Ireland, the registration plate on the back of every vehicle—well, of most vehicles is white. But cars that are British or Northern Irish have yellow registration plate, better known as yellow reges.

(John repeats the term.)

And whenever one sees a yellow reg, you call it. “Yellow reg.” And then you get the treat of hitting someone beside you. *(Laughs.)*

John Hodgman: Woah, woah, woah, woah, woah! Now let the record show that James just hit Paddy on the knee!

Paddy: Is your bailiff not going to intervene? *(Laughs.)*

John Hodgman: Very lightly. And I think in the sentiment of demonstration.

(James confirms.)

Does it ever get rougher than that?

James: I suppose in excitement it could potentially get rougher than that.

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: But James, for the sake of this game, I am going to submit myself and give full consent for a true yellow reg slap or punch on the arm, so that I know what you're dealing with here.

James: Like a worst-case scenario one?

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: I don't think I said that!

Paddy: If we're driving the car.

John Hodgman: But let's just say, it's an exciting moment in the road trip. We've just hit the waypoint of seven miles, and you see a yellow reg. I'm sitting next to you in the car. Oh, I guess in Ireland, I'd be on this side.

(They confirm.)

And I'm in the back seat, and this doesn't give you much of wind up. But on the other hand, they're probably pretty small cars.

James: I'll just hastily add that Paddy is my fiancé, so usually I hit him on the leg, but I'll hit you on your arm instead.

John Hodgman: No, you can—may I?

(Paddy confirms.)

Thank you. Alright.

Jesse Thorn: Let the record reflect that the judge has can-canned.

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: Alright, we're driving along. What kind of car do you have?

Paddy: A Hyundai i30.

John Hodgman: A Hyundai i30? Oh yeah, that's pretty nice. It's a little bit roomier than I would think.

James: Yellow reg.

John Hodgman: That's it?

(James confirms.)

Alright. Let me try it on this side. Paddy, you ready?

(Paddy confirms.)

Alright. Is this okay?

Paddy: Yeah, that's fine. Yellow reg.

John Hodgman: It's nothing.

(Laughter.)

There seems to be no benefit to that game at all. Are you telling me that Irish children in the back of the back seat are just giving each other love pats like that when they get the yellow reg?!

Paddy: Often, if the person's not driving, it can be a heavier punch, I suppose.

John Hodgman: If the person—?

Paddy: If not driving, there's probably less risk involved, so a heavier punch might be allowed.

John Hodgman: So, who does most of the driving in the relationship?

Paddy: 'Tis I.

John Hodgman: That would be you, Paddy. Okay.

Jesse Thorn: Paddy, I don't believe for a second that's how you hit him. I saw that hit, and I also know that you play in a rugby league.

(Laughter.)

Paddy: What happens on the pitch doesn't always happen in the car, so there's a difference.

Jesse Thorn: All I can say is, for a while in high school, my best friend Pete played in a rugby league. He'd go play on Saturdays, and then I'd go hang out with him on Sunday at his house, and it would just be him lying on his sofa going, "Uuuugh."

John Hodgman: Are you going to a rugby match after this show?

Paddy: No, but I have some bruises on my legs if you want evidence.

John Hodgman: But those aren't from playing Yellow Reg, that's from—

Paddy: Hard to say.

John Hodgman: So, your contention, Paddy, if I understand it is: as you are the driver, the motorist as you say—first of all, the game is fairly tame. It's just a light slap, so you don't go driving off the road into the ditch.

[00:40:00]

And you are using your mirrors. Explain.

Paddy: So, James's argument is that when we're driving on a motorway, which has two lanes of traffic traveling the same direction, and—

John Hodgman: Yeah. And you have one of those here?

(Laughter.)

Paddy: One or two. Seven kilometers long. You do it a few times together.

John Hodgman: Oh, it's in kilometers, I apologize.

Paddy: But his argument is that a car approaching from behind, that I can recognize that it is not an Irish registration plate from the front, and then as it passes us, I will know it's yellow and have the advantage of—

John Hodgman: So, you will have advanced information, because you're monitoring the road as a safe driver. So, you know a car is coming up with a yellow plate.

Paddy: Potentially. But often—

John Hodgman: And so, you call it, and you slap him before he can slap you.

Paddy: No, I have to see the yellow reg first, otherwise there's no integrity to the game.

John Hodgman: Yeah, but you've already seen it in the mirror.

Jesse Thorn: But Paddy, what you're telling us is that here in Ireland, the registration is only on the rear of the vehicle. So, you can tell something about the front of the vehicle that suggests that the registration will be yellow on the back?

Paddy: So, cars from the Republic of Ireland, they're both white, front and back. But cars from Northern Ireland, which are rarer—the letter combination is a bit different. So, if you are very carefully on the road looking, you might notice that that might be a yellow reg car, maybe. Sometimes.

John Hodgman: So, this is a game of skill.

(Laughter.)

James: Not the way I play. *(Laughs.)*

John Hodgman: So, you contend, James, that Paddy has an advantage.

James: I think he has a clear and obvious advantage.

John Hodgman: And how many more points does he score in the game, on average? Or what is the damage to you?

James: Well, we've already negotiated a few rules in our version of the game, which is maybe not as played as standard nationwide. In our version of the game, we—

John Hodgman: Have you consulted with the Yellow Reg Commission? The National Yellow Reg Commission of the Republic of Ireland?

Paddy: It's an EU organization, now.

John Hodgman: You could start it. You could start the official rules. But let's see what happens.

James: So, we were traveling in Northern Ireland, where all of the reges are yellow.

John Hodgman: You all must have been extremely slap happy on that trip.

James: So, we came to an agreement that the yellow reg bearing car has to be moving. It can't be parked.

John Hodgman: It can't be parked?

Paddy: No. Because we walked down the street, which was all yellow reges, so. And by the end, we were like, "We have to stop that."

James: And then in addition to yellow reges, there are even rarer red reges and black reges, which are vintage cars in Ireland. So, they are Irish, but they're vintage. So, you see far fewer of them on the road. And for a red one—or for a black—

Paddy: 10.

James: Yeah, for a black, 10. And for a red—

John Hodgman: 10 slaps!

(They confirm.)

James: And for a red, 25.

(Laughter.)

But they are very rare.

John Hodgman: I understand.

Paddy: But rare is good.

James: Yes. And I would say, Paddy is much more prolific at seeing yellow reges than I am. But actually, in his defense—which I shouldn't be doing—I am more proficient at seeing the blacks and reds.

John Hodgman: Why is that?

James: I think it's because I can be absent minded looking out the window, and he has to only look forwards. *(Laughs.)*

John Hodgman: So, you're saying that his advantage of having the mirrors and spotting yellow reges is nullified when it comes to you just staring into the middle distance and seeing antique cars.

James: But the rarity of the black and red—I mean every time we're in a car, we see multiple yellows. But the opportunities to see blacks or reds are so, so rare.

Jesse Thorn: This is like really—this whole thing is like a weird mix of Pokémon and BDSM.

(Laughter and scattered applause.)

John Hodgman: James, what do other people in your life say about this game that the two of you play?

James: Well, actually, it's funny. They are all on my side, I would say. Yes. Like, I—so, I'm a teacher. And I was out—we just went back to school very recently, and we went out for celebratory or commiseratory drinks last Friday night with all of the teachers. And I was explaining that we were coming on a comedy court of law to hear this out. And all of the teachers, who are fair and likeminded people, agreed with me. They were on my side.

John Hodgman: They were—but they're your colleagues.

(James confirms.)

Paddy: A biased cohort. Entirely.

James: And while I was at these same drinks, Paddy was at a barbecue with some of his friends, who are doctors like he is.

Paddy: Oh, he's a doctor.

James: And they were on my side as well.

John Hodgman: Is it true that your doctor colleagues were on James's side, Paddy?

Paddy: They are, as doctor colleagues, quite logical people. And one of them actually gave me a counterpoint to James's argument of my unfair advantage. When reversing the car or using maneuver, at that point I am literally incapacitated.

[00:45:00]

I can't look outside the vehicle. But James suddenly will give me a smack saying, yellow reg. 'Cause—

John Hodgman: While you're reversing the car?

Paddy: Yeah, or doing a maneuver, parking. So, it's something—

Jesse Thorn: What kind of maneuvers are you doing?

John Hodgman: Parking or reversing.

Jesse Thorn: Oh, I thought it was like being followed by one of James Bond's enemies or something.

(Laughter.)

He's like, "Well, I can't see yellow reg! I put out the smoke screen!"

John Hodgman: Also driving on two wheels like that side and also jumping over a canyon. That's another maneuver that happens.

(They agree.)

That seems awfully dangerous, James, to be slapping the driver when he's in the midst of reversing.

James: I mean, maneuvers are done slowly, usually anyway.

John Hodgman: Sure. I mean, when you have your vision wildly impaired because you're looking over your back seat—oh, I'm sorry, in Ireland I guess it's this way.

(Laughter.)

Looking over and you can barely see. And if you're like me, you can barely turn your neck to begin with, and you're terrified about running over a dog or a child. It's a great time to have someone slap you in the leg up to 25 times.

(Laughter.)

James: I suppose the argument I would make is that Paddy is always—well, he's always driving. So, it's his car, and he's always driving. I've only driven it once, actually.

Paddy: But you can drive if you ever wanted to.

(James confirms.)

John Hodgman: Is it a manual transmission or an automatic transmission?

Paddy: It's manual.

James: Yeah, that sounds great. Hyundai i30, did you say?

(Paddy confirms.)

Yeah, terrific. Much bigger in the back than I would have thought.

James: But you know, I might be on a language learning app.

John Hodgman: Yeah, I wonder which one.

James: Well, actually, I'm a language teacher, so I don't really.

John Hodgman: Really?

(James confirms.)

What languages do you teach?

James: I teach German, French, and Spanish.

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: Really?! Do you know Bach's "Mass in B Minor?" Any of the words?

James: Naturally.

John Hodgman: Naturally? Can you sing some?

James: No, of course not. *(Laughs.)*

John Hodgman: I got very excited there for a moment.

Jesse Thorn: Again! It's like no one wants to win!

John Hodgman: Do you listen to Deutschlandfunk?

James: I'd actually never heard of Deutschlandfunk, but I must say, I was—I really liked the sound of it.

John Hodgman: Deutschlandfunk's gonna give it to you. Let me tell you.

(Laughter.)

That's my feeling. So, anyway, we got distracted.

James: So, sorry, yes. So, Paddy's driving. I'm in the passenger seat. Which means that I could be looking at my phone and get a tap of a yellow reg. Or a red reg or a black reg. And that is a risk that I take—

Jesse Thorn: Or a Snorlax. Or—

(Laughter.)

James: And that is a risk that I take any time I get in the vehicle with him. Because we just play this every time we're in the car together. In fact, it's—

John Hodgman: WHY?!

Jesse Thorn: They're in love!

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: Alright. Is that the reason? It's just a fun love game to play?

Paddy: So, during covid times while traveling to work with a colleague, she brought this game back into my life. Because I was driving with her as a passenger being assaulted intermittently.

(Laughter.)

And I was like, "This is fun." So, during covid—

(John guffaws.)

So, during covid we—a lot of road trips or staycations in Ireland, including one up to Belfast. So, it was a perfect time to bring it into our lives again.

John Hodgman: It's probably safer than playing Yahtzee while driving.

Jesse Thorn: You're saying this whole game was just burned into your soul by trauma?

Paddy: Rekindled.

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: Yeah, he was hazed, and so he's passing along the hazing to the man he's going to marry. Do you enjoy it, James? Do you enjoy the game?

James: Yeah, I actually really do. Because the only time we don't play, if we're in a car, is if we're having a tiff of some kind or a quarrel or something.

John Hodgman: Right. That's the only time you don't play Yellow Reg?

James: And it might even be the thing that brings that to an end. If, you know, we feel like—

Paddy: It might warm the soul again.

James: Yeah, there's a—you know, the fraudeur has ended.

John Hodgman: What kind of thing might you be having a dispute about?

(Laughter.)

James: How long is the podcast?

John Hodgman: What kind of actual dispute do you have in your relationship that is not this dumb license plate game?

James: So, we're getting married.

(John congratulates them.)

Thank you. And in our initial discussion of what we would like at our wedding ceremony, I had very granular ideas that I was bringing, and I wanted to get them over the line. So, I offered carte blanche to Paddy to get whatever he wanted out first, right?

John Hodgman: Get whatever he wanted out?

James: As in what he wants at a wedding ceremony. The details he wants at a wedding ceremony.

John Hodgman: Oh, okay. Right. The things that he wants to have at a wedding. You had a lot of ideas.

James: I had very specific ones.

John Hodgman: So, you were holding on to them to give Paddy a chance to express his emotions so that you can say, "Mm, no. Here's what I want."

Jesse Thorn: It sounds to me like you anticipated he wouldn't have a very good plan and in fact would expect to collaborate with you on the plans. And you figured you could lay the trap of having him go, "I don't know. I'd like to do something that you'd like to do." And then you'd be like, "Oh, okay, well here's the 20-point program."

James: I am a teacher, Jesse. This is what we do.

John Hodgman: So, you had a curriculum for what you wanted for your wedding, and you were holding on to it. You said, "But first, Paddy, what do you want?" And what was the conflict there?

[00:50:00]

James: Well, the conflict has been in how valuable I think his response to that question was. So—*(laughs)* I said, "Oh, what do you want in a wedding?"

Paddy: While driving a car.

James: While he was driving.

John Hodgman: Are you ever not driving?

(Laughter.)

Yeah, I know this is the only time. Is the Hyundai idling outside waiting for you to get back in?

Paddy: I'll put money in the *(inaudible)*, maybe.

John Hodgman: So, you turn to him while driving and say, "What do you want our wedding to look like?"

James: "What's important to you in a wedding," I think is exactly how I phrased it. And you said, "Good food, good music." I think that's—

John Hodgman: Yeah! *(Applauds.)* That's great. Good food, good music!

Paddy: Thank you so much.

James: A wise man once said that specificity is the soul of narrative.

John Hodgman: *(Censor beep)* him.

(Laughter.)

And by the way, those are two specific things. Good food, good music!

James: No, they're not! What does that mean? Good food, good music? That means nothing. It means absolutely nothing!

(Laughter.)

Who—

Jesse Thorn: Wow, listen to Mr. Bad Food Bad Music over here! Sounds like a *(censor beep)* wedding to me!

(Laughter.)

James: Who aspires for bad food or bad music at a wedding?

John Hodgman: No, but I think that it might be saying the things that I prioritize are I'd like the food to be good, and I'd like the music to be rocking. I'd like it to be some real Deutschlandfunk up in there!

(Laughter.)

And other than that, it doesn't really matter to me.

Paddy: Thank you, Judge. I feel heard. I feel seen.

John Hodgman: You're welcome. Yeah. But you took it a different way. You took it to be like, "I don't care, make it a party."

James: No, no. I definitely think he cares. And I think he really cares about good food and good music. But, to me, that—so, I guess I'm looking for more concrete details than just good food and good music. Where are we getting good food? What kind of good music will we be playing?

John Hodgman: That's what you're for!

(Laughter.)

Is there a specific kind of food you want at your wedding?

Paddy: Like Jesse said, going to a venue that has bad food is something I don't want to aspire to. I think that I have been given the title of project manager in the last few weeks as well, so it will be my job to find the good food, so.

John Hodgman: In the food and music department, project manager.

(They confirm.)

What are some of the things that you want to have happen at the wedding?

James: I want—I was—oh, okay. So—

John Hodgman: Lock the doors; we're going to be here for a while.

James: So, I had picked a—no, I hadn't picked. I was suggesting—

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: Aaaah-ha-ha! Red reg! 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10!

James: (*Laughs.*) I was ready to suggest a first dance song. And also, I wanted to propose a celebrant that would marry us. A specific person.

John Hodgman: I'm afraid I can't do it.

Paddy: Jesse, are you available?

John Hodgman: Wow, that was fast! Jesse, you can do it. What was the first dance song you wanted to do?

James: So, it's a song by a Japanese British pop star called "This Hell Is Better With You".

John Hodgman: I love it.

(*James thanks him.*)

I guess someone knows it too?

James: Do you want to marry me?

(*Laughter.*)

And the celebrant—so, just before the pandemic, two friends of mine got married in Brussels. And they got legally married in a town hall and then fake married afterwards. And I fake married them. I was their celebrant. So, I wanted to ask. I'm going to ask the bride of that couple to be our fake celebrant, and actually I still haven't done it.

(*Laughter.*)

But Paddy was very much in agreement with that.

John Hodgman: I don't understand where the fight comes in, just because Paddy wants good food and good music, suddenly you need a game of Yellow Reg to—

Paddy: But it led to a period of silence for a period of the journey on the road.

John Hodgman: Yes, okay. It was only broken.

Paddy: But actually, it was at nighttime, so you couldn't see any Yellow Reges. So, my mirrors were useless to me.

John Hodgman: What would you have me order if I were to rule in your favor, James?

James: I would have you order that I am not allowed to call yellow reg when Paddy is doing maneuvers, but he is not allowed to use his mirrors (*chuckles*) in order to gain an advantage.

He can still claim the vision of the yellow reg that stops me from, you know, claiming it. But he's not allowed to hit me for it.

John Hodgman: I see. Paddy, why do you think James cares so much about this?

Paddy: James does not like to lose.

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: James doesn't like to lose.

Paddy: But neither do I, and that's partly why we're both very stubborn people and very suited for each other. I think if I was to have my way, that status quo should be maintained, that I would accept that he has advantages while I'm reversing. That's okay, as long as we don't crash. But I can maintain my advantages of mirrors. But yeah, that would be my version of events.

John Hodgman: Status quo, leave it the way it is. Yeah, alright, I think I've heard everything I need to in order to make my decision. I'm going to get into the surprisingly roomy backseat of a Hyundai i30.

[00:55:00]

I'll be back in a moment with my verdict.

Jesse Thorn: Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom. James, how do you feel about your chances?

James: Really bad.

(Laughter.)

Like the kind of food I want at my wedding, I guess.

(Laughter.)

Jesse Thorn: Paddy, how are you feeling?

Paddy: Pretty good! Surprisingly, yeah, it's—people are more in my favor than it normally happens, which is good!

Jesse Thorn: Like, when you're doctoring? “Boooo!”

Paddy: Hopefully not, because I know Paul works for the IMO, which is our doctor's union, so hopefully he can represent me if needed. So.

Jesse Thorn: Well, Paddy, James, we'll see what Judge John Hodgman has to say about all this when we come back in just a moment.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: We're taking a break from the stage at Liberty Theatre in Dublin. If you're in the Bay Area and you're enjoying this live episode of *Judge John Hodgman*, guess what? The *Judge John Hodgman* live experience is coming to you this month.

John Hodgman: That's right. We are returning to the San Francisco Sketch Fest, our home away from home, on Saturday, January 27th. We'll be at the Palace of Fine Arts at the incredibly reasonable time of 4PM. You can see our show, bring your tweens, have dinner nearby, and be home at a reasonable hour. I cannot wait to see you all there. Get your tickets at bit.ly/JJHOSF24, or just Google "Judge John Hodgman San Francisco Sketch Fest", or go to SFSketchFest.com or bit.ly/JJHOSF24. Whatever you wanna do. Go and get those tickets, and you know what? To do a show, we need disputes. We've got a lot of them, but we could always use more. Submit your Bay Area cases to MaximumFun.org/jjho.

Hey, San Francisco, Oakland, Bay Area, you know someone in your life who's doing it wrong. Let me know about it. Go to MaximumFun.org/jjho, and we'll consider your case for live adjudication on stage. You'll get to come backstage, say hi, get to be on stage with us, and have a really good time. People seem to like it, and we sure do. So, get your tickets, get your cases, come see us live—San Francisco Sketch Fest, January 27th.

Jesse Thorn: And if you have a case no matter where you live, MaximumFun.org/jjho. Let's get back to the stage.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

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

John Hodgman: You may be seated. So, first of all congratulations, you're both adorable. I pronounce you husband and husband.

(James thanks him.)

This is official; this is legal.

(Laughter.)

Check in at the bar on the way out, get your marriage certificate.

(Paddy thanks him.)

Anyone else who's getting married tonight, it's done. Just—we already got your names, check in at the bar. You got your marriage certificate. Just a little bonus to our Dublin crowd. I'm so happy for you. When are you going to get married?

Paddy: What a fun question.

John Hodgman: Sorry, say it again?

Paddy: What a fun question. Still in the process of planning. Probably late next year, early '25.

John Hodgman: Is this an area of dispute?

James: No, we're actually in agreement on that. At the moment we have a long short-list.

John Hodgman: Okay, good. Yeah. The thing that concerns me—I love a long engagement. The thing that concerns me is that I would like you to get married before you die in a car crash.

(Laughter.)

Now, I appreciate that you're an expert driver. I mean, Paddy, you are a—what kind of doctor are you?

Paddy: Geriatrics.

John Hodgman: A geriatric physician who plays rugby and drives a Hyundai i30? It's like you married James Bond. Incredible. And you're an incredible teacher and, you know, servant to the community, so you're wonderful. But what I'm saying is, I'm sure you're a very safe driver. But no matter what, it is not safe to have someone slapping you when you're driving in reverse, under any circumstances. And as well, I can't really rule against James using those mirrors, because a safe driver is always going to be monitoring their surroundings. And if that means some information gets into their head, because they're checking the rearview mirror, the side mirror, the side mirror, rear view, forward, everything else—they're observing stuff when maybe you're in your phone or looking out for one of the coveted red reges or whatever. Paddy isn't doing this specifically to get a game advantage, but simply is absorbing information. Is that correct, Paddy?

(Paddy confirms.)

Yeah. Because if you are using your mirror specifically to look out for yellow reg cars or the fronts of cars that suggest they might have a yellow reg in the back, that would make you a terrible driver. That would make you a terribly distracted driver and a danger to you, your fiancé, and everyone around you. That can't be you, right?

Paddy: That's definitely not me.

John Hodgman: That's not the Hyundai i30 way.

[01:00:00]

So, unfortunately, James, I must rule against you. Paddy is using the mirrors, because he has to in order to drive safely. He also needs to be able to drive safely without being bothered or hit while doing maneuvers, as you say. I think it's distracting enough that you're hitting a driver at all. I am anti punch buggy, I'm anti all of this personal violation of space while driving kind of thing. That said, I think that probably, given the lightness of the slaps that I endured from both of you, that it's probably not life threatening to you or the people around you if you're going forward in the flow of traffic in a more or less calm driving situation. That's a good yellow reg, red reg, black reg situation. But you cannot hit your driver when they're reversing, even if you are engaged to them. And certainly, don't do it if it's your cab driver.

In any case, I wish you both the best of luck. I'm sorry that I can't rule in your favor, James. I really hope that you have truly good food and good music and everything you want. And I will order Paddy to be more specific, to create a menu and a playlist. So, at least you don't have to worry about that. This is the sound of a gavel. (*Bangs gavel five times.*) Judge John Hodgman rules. That is all.

(*Applause.*)

Jesse Thorn: James, Paddy, thanks for joining us on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

(*They thank him.*)

John Hodgman: Bailiff Jesse Thorn!

(*Applause and cheers.*)

Daniel and Gavin, Brian and everyone here at the Liberty Theatre, thank you all so much for coming. This is the sound of a gavel. Judge John Hodgman rules. That's all.

(*Cheering from the crowd.*)

Jesse Thorn: That's it for this episode of the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. Thanks to Reddit users NobodysNews (*chuckling*) and FloofyMonsterCat for naming the cases in this episode. You can name cases, [MaximumFun.Reddit.com](https://www.maximumfun.com) You can chat about this week's episode at [MaximumFun.Reddit.com](https://www.maximumfun.com) or leave a comment on our posts on Instagram, [@JudgeJohnHodgman](https://www.instagram.com/judgejohnhodgman) there.

This week's episode, recorded by Gavin Hales, edited by Daniel Speer. Marie Bardi-Salinas runs our social media. You can follow us on Instagram, as I said, [@JudgeJohnHodgman](https://www.instagram.com/judgejohnhodgman), where you can see the evidence and photos from this show. I would say, John, the greatest show we've ever recorded at a labor struggle themed theater.

(They laugh.)

There are more portraits of like clashes between organizers and Pinkertons—or Irish equivalent—than any other venue we've ever played.

John Hodgman: Thanks to everyone who came out for that show, and we'll have more shows coming to you from our travels around the globe. But for now, that's it! Right, Jesse?

Jesse Thorn: If you have a case, MaximumFun.org/jjho. And we'll talk to you next time on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Transition: Cheerful ukulele chord.

Speaker 1: Maximum Fun.

Speaker 2: A worker-owned network.

Speaker 3: Of artist owned shows.

Speaker 4: Supported—

Speaker 5: —directly—

Speaker 6: —by you!