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Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: Welcome to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. I'm Bailiff Jesse Thorn. This week, "It's Justice Not Cricket". Nate brings the case against his friend, Aatif. Nate and Aatif are both obsessed with the sport of cricket, but they disagree over a controversial cricket maneuver called Mankading the batter. Nate says it's perfectly acceptable. Aatif says it may technically be allowed, but all the same, it's just not cricket. Who's right? Who's wrong? Only one can decide. Please rise as Judge John Hodgman enters the courtroom and presents an obscure cultural reference.

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

John Hodgman: Personally, I'm always delighted to see my grandfather being remembered. I'd Hodgman, or Hodgmanning, stay and keep alive his memories and legacy as a great podcaster, deeply respected and admired by everyone I've met and those who knew him and experienced life with him.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn, please swear them in.

Jesse Thorn: Aatif and Nate, 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 his favorite sport is gin?

(They swear.)

Judge Hodgman, you may proceed.

John Hodgman: Nate and Aatif, you may be seated for an immediate summary judgment in one of your favors. Can either of you name the piece of culture that I referenced as I entered this fake courtroom? Aatif, let's start with you.

Aatif: Grandfather clocks?

John Hodgman: Grandfather clocks. I'm going to write it down. I'm just going to say that this quote has something to do with the case at hand. So, I'll just put in grandfather clocks, but I'm going to give you a chance to revise that, because I'm a sporting gentleman.

Aatif: Something to do with the case at hand.

John Hodgman: Yeah. Nate, do you have a guess?

Nate: That's a tough one. It has something to do with this case? Um—

John Hodgman: “I'd love to see the Hodgman or Hodgmanning stay.”

Now I'm going to be honest with you. When I'm saying Hodgman and Hodgmanning, that's not in the original quote. I'm covering up. This is not a quote about a podcaster. You understand what I'm saying? Named Hodgman.

Nate: Yeah. I'm going to say King Ralph.

(Aatif laughs.)

Jesse Thorn: Always a good guess. I wrote that on like half of the fill in the blanks on the SATs.

John Hodgman: As a cricketophile and an American anglophile as you are, Nate, I'll write that down. That's appropriate. But it's definitely wrong. Aatif, did you want to take another guess, or do you feel like you would just want to go ahead with this thing?

Aatif: W. E. G. Grace.

John Hodgman: Wow! You stumped me. That's an obscure cultural reference for me! Who's W. E. G. Whatever?

Aatif: W. E. G. Grace is like a legendary English cricketer from the early 20th century, I think. Yeah.

John Hodgman: A legendary English cricketer from the 20th century, the ancient history. Indeed. You're on the right—what's a good cricketing term for track? You're in your crease. Is that a thing?

Aatif: Kind of. Yeah.

John Hodgman: Okay. Good enough. That's what I'm going to say. But you're wrong. All guesses are wrong. Why would I be talking about W. G. Grace when the whole topic of this thing and the Wikipedia article I had to read for homework is about the famous Indian cricketer, VeenuMankad, right? That's what this is all about. The quote was from BhajMankad, who was referring to his grandfather, the famous Indian cricketer, Vinoo Mankad. He gave the quote to the *Indian Express* in January of 2023 in response to the suggestion by the Australian Cricketers Association to dissociate the name Mankading from the move in question here.

The move in question, I understand, refers to running out the batter on the non-striking end, which Vinoo Mankad did in 1947 to the great alarm and disgust of many Australians with whom India was playing that game of cricket at the time, I believe. I don't know what any of those words mean. I think we're going to find out. But in this case, I did change the name to

Hodgman and Hodgmann for my signature move, which is also frowned upon when guesting on other podcasts—which is plugging my stuff too early in the podcast.

(They chuckle.)

Like, not waiting till the end and saying things like *Vacationland* is now available in paperback. Please check out *Dicktown* on Hulu. [Hodgman.Substack.com](https://www.hodgman.substack.com), whatever it might be. I usually put it in awkwardly at the beginning. That's called Hodgmanning now. But we're here to talk about Mankading, and we're here to talk to Nate and Aatif. Who seeks justice in this court?

Nate: I do.

John Hodgman: That would be Nate.

Nate: Nate Hays. I write for [EmergingCricket.com](https://www.emergingcricket.com) about cricket, about American cricket in particular. And yes, I seek justice.

John Hodgman: And what part of England is that accent from?

Nate: *(Laughs.)* This is—I'm actually from the Washington, DC, area. And I currently live in North Carolina.

John Hodgman: You are an American cricket enthusiast.

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(Nate confirms.)

Why shouldn't I throw you out of this court right now, weirdo?

Nate: You probably should.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah. That's very weird.

(Nate laughs.)

John Hodgman: That's very specific. Adorably so, I dare say, Nate. You love cricket. We'll get to why you love cricket so much in a minute. But your dispute is with your friend Aatif—and what is your dispute?

Nate: Well, basically there's this mode of dismissal that is perfectly within the rules of cricket. It's—

John Hodgman: Woah, woah, woah, woah! English please, so to speak. Mode of dismissal. I know what you're talking about! But people listening to this podcast would be like, "Oh, mode of dismissal. That's like Hodgman shutting down that weird North Carolingian cricket guy just then." You're talking about something in cricket.

Nate: Yes. Let me emerge from my nerdy hole here for a second.

John Hodgman: If you would, sir.

Nate: Let me compare it a little bit to baseball. Basically, what's happening is the equivalent of a runner getting picked off of first base. The non-striker—there are basically two bases which are kind of both home plate, and you have to be safe at both of those to score. Or you have two batters batting in the middle, and what happens is the batter who's batting from the end the bowler is bowling from—or the batter who is running from the end that the bowler is bowling from, the bowler being the pitcher, leaves a little bit too early. He gets a head start. And the bowler, who's about to deliver the ball, gets him out by hitting the stumps behind the batter—behind the non-striker, and it is confusing, I will admit.

John Hodgman: Oh, no, no, I followed every—I've absolutely followed every word of what you just said.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah, I understood it from the first part, and then the rest of it was all superfluous to me, because I already understood what was happening.

Nate: Well, it's good that I led with that then. But essentially, it's considered unsporting by a lot of people in traditional cricketing nations—particularly England and Australia—and by many others. As the game becomes shorter, as the shorter format of the game becomes more popular, the goal of the game is to score as many runs as you can per ball. And so therefore, people will leave a little bit early to try to get closer to the other end a little bit quicker. And I think it's perfectly fair that a bowler picks off that guy when he tries to do that.

John Hodgman: Alright. I think I understand. I think I understand. I'm gonna clarify this by talking to Aatif for a second. Aatif, you are friends with Nate?

Aatif: I am indeed. I'm always looking for people who are spreading the gospel of cricket around the world, as Nate does so well in North America. So, that's—yeah, it was an instant friendship.

John Hodgman: And you are in North Carolina, the cricket epicenter of the world. You are actually in another country, correct?

Aatif: I am. I'm in the north of London. Well, I live in the north of London, in England. And yeah, very much the sort of—the beginning place, the birthplace of this sport that sort of captivated the hearts of billions of people around the world.

John Hodgman: And you are a cricket commentator?

Aatif: That's right. I work on a program called *Test Match Special*, which is the oldest cricket broadcasting service in the world. It's been around for almost—100 years almost. And yeah, I've been a part of that for the last six years. It's a dream job. You get to travel, you know, the world essentially and sit in the best seat in the house, watch a game of cricket, sit next to a legend, and get paid for the privilege. It's awesome.

John Hodgman: And watching a game of cricket takes four or nine days?

Aatif: It can take up to five days depending on the format of the game.

(John “wow”s.)

But it can also be as little as, you know, a couple of hours, depending on the format you're watching.

John Hodgman: That's all I know about cricket pretty much is that it's a lazy game. It takes a long time.

(Aatif “woah, woah”s in protest.)

And you get—(chuckles) you get chilly, because you play it with sweaters, I guess.

Aatif: Well, you're out there for a long time. If you're there for five days, you're going to see a variety of climates. (Laughs.)

John Hodgman: I love a leisurely pace. Don't get me wrong. I'm complimenting cricket. I'm not criticizing.

Jesse Thorn: I love about cricket that they took one of baseball's best qualities—which is that it's boring—and then expanded it by tenfold.

(They chuckle.)

John Hodgman: I have a feeling that cricket came before baseball, though, Jesse. I hate to break it to you.

Jesse Thorn: I believe they developed in parallel.

John Hodgman: Alright. Fair enough. I'm not the cricket expert. These two are. So, Aatif, I'm going to ask you. So, this is what I understand about this maneuver that Nate was trying to explain. I'm the bowler. I'm going to throw the—I'm going to throw—pitch the ball, bowl the bowl, whatever it is—at the batter on the other end, right?

(Aatif confirms.)

And there's also a batter like off to my right, waiting to run, as soon as I pitch it. And if he, or she, or they, get too far from where they're supposed to be, I could—theoretically; this is the point of contention—instead of bowling the ball, just throw it at the wicket behind me, and get that batter out, correct?

Aatif: Theoretically, yes.

John Hodgman: Right. That's what happens. I mean, it did happen in 1947.

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Among other times Vinoo Mankad did this. And it was very controversial to the point that the maneuver itself, is known in cricket as Mankading or Man-cating or however it's pronounced around the world. As a term, not as the guy. Now, it's problematic to a degree, because it is considered to be an unfair move.

Aatif: I wouldn't say unfair, but it's certainly not within what is referred to and has become quite a negative catchphrase in cricket, “the spirit of the game”. Now, when we say spirit of the game, it sounds like a very sort of poncey, old school, like really—you know, it takes cricket back to that sort of exclusionary stage where it was just for sort of rich, old, White guys who could play cricket, and everybody else was just there to watch. And obviously, that's not what cricket is anymore. It's a game that's played all over the world and played very, very well—much better than England sometimes in other parts of the world.

The crux of my argument today isn't going to be that this move is illegal, because by the letter of the laws of the game, it is legal. The crux of my sort of argument is that it doesn't serve the game. It doesn't add to the value of cricket. Now, I understand the sort of the base reason behind why it exists. It's not the same in my mind as stealing a base in baseball. It's a very different thing. Cricket is a game that's not just played at an elite level by elite, highly paid multimillionaires around the world as it is, but it's also played at a very casual level by hundreds of thousands of millions of people, in fact, every weekend. In England, we have more than 40,000 cricket clubs in action every weekend, Saturday and Sunday, playing in their local parks.

If this rule became more widespread and more mainstream—because despite the fact that it's happened, and there's been so much discussion about it, it's only actually happened a handful of times in the history of cricket. Which is not a lot, considering there's been thousands and thousands and thousands of cricket matches, right? If this becomes more mainstream, I think it could become very problematic. I feel like the rule in its current form—it just tilts the balance too far away from what makes a sporting contest.

John Hodgman: So, just to boil it down, you are Mankading skeptical, if not anti. And Nate, you're like, “It's cool, do it whenever.” Yes?

Nate: Yes, and no. There's some—let's say yes. Let's say yes. *(Laughs.)*

John Hodgman: Yes. Yes is the answer. Yes is the answer. At this stage of the conversation, that is the answer. You are the one who ostensibly is in favor of this maneuver. And Aatif, you are against it. And my ruling today is going to change the world of cricket forever.

Aatif: I think you're the only person in the world who hasn't weighed in yet, so I feel like it's important that you do.

(Nate laughs.)

John Hodgman: And how did this come up in between the two of you? When was the first time you had a fight about it?

Nate: We've discussed it very politely with each other. He actually had a post—he had just a tweet that went viral. And he got a lot of support from a lot of people that you wouldn't really necessarily want to be have support from, which was kind of funny. But at the same time—

John Hodgman: What was the nature of the tweet, Aatif?

Aatif: Well, so, essentially, there was an instance in the under 19's Women's World Cup, where a Pakistani player used this maneuver against a player from the Rwandan team. A Rwandan team that was playing for the very first time on this platform. The Pakistan team were very much in control of this match. It didn't feel like a necessary maneuver. It's, again, within their rights to do so, but they did it. And it just didn't—you know, it didn't sit very well with me. So, I wrote something along the lines of, "I didn't enjoy that bit of cricket." And I think, within cricketing terms, it's almost become like a colonial—

John Hodgman: Is that what you wrote? Is that what you wrote? "I didn't enjoy that bit of cricket."

(Nate laughs.)

Aatif: Something along those lines, you know, which it's not—

John Hodgman: Explosive.

Aatif: Well, I mean, it can be in cricketing. It was in that instance, because—

John Hodgman: That's very strong wording for cricket, I believe.

Aatif: Well, the thing is like people—it's become this sort of colonial battleground almost, right? So, where sort of Indians and Pakistanis and, you know, people from the ex-commonwealth would look at, you know, somebody from England as someone coming from privilege and having the right to say something like this and looking down on somebody for trying to export the right. And it becomes this whole argument about colonialism. Where for me, it was just simply I'm just thinking about, you know, the kids who play on a Saturday,

right? So, I just didn't like the idea of something like this that will be contentious creeping into that game at large.

So, I said that, and then again it was turned into a whole, “What does this English guy know? You know, he's—” I mean it turned into all—people were calling me a race traitor. People were calling me all sorts of things, simply for having a small opinion on this thing.

John Hodgman: Because you have some Pakistani ancestry yourself.

Aatif: I have, yeah, complete Pakistani ancestry. Both my parents are born in Lahore in Pakistan, and I adore Pakistan. Big part of my identity. But I do consider myself, you know, British. And I really—you know, English cricket is sort of where I've—you know, where I work, right? I work around the English cricket team, the men's and women's teams.

John Hodgman: So, Nate, Aatif made this comment about the unsporting nature of the Pakistani team with regard to the Rwandan team, and was getting attacked on all sides.

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And you were like, you know—and obviously, this is involving class, this is involving race, nationality, world sport. And you're like, “Well, I'm in North Carolina; it's time for me to weigh in.”

(Aatif cackles.)

Nate: Honestly, I led—when I messaged him about it, I led with some sympathy. Because he had been tweeted into everybody's eyes by Piers Morgan, who agreed with him.

(John “oh boy”s.)

Very enthusiastically, and I thought that was—knowing Aatif, I thought that was hilarious. So, of course, I reached out to him and was like, “Hey, I kind of feel for you right now.” And then we had a discussion about it ourselves. But yeah, I wanted to—as a North Carolinian, I feel like it's my birthright to weigh in on things.

Jesse Thorn: America will be heard for once.

Nate: We will be heard. On cricket.

John Hodgman: Finally. Finally. And how did you guys originally meet, Aatif?

Aatif: Oh yeah, we met on what used to be called a Twitter space; I think it's called an X space now. But we were chatting about cricket into the late hours of the English night. I think it must have been sort of late evening in North Carolina as well. And so, we were just chatting, and then I got invited to play in this competition—to play in a competition,

remarkably enough, in New York. And that's where Nate and I met for the first time. And like, it was like (*snaps*) meeting a long-lost old friend, and it was great immediately.

John Hodgman: Never knowing that you would soon become bitter enemies on the opposite side of cricket's great divide that would finally be settled on an American podcast. I think, Jesse Thorn, that I need to I need some expertise that I do not have. Do we have, perchance, an expert witness who can clarify some questions that I have at this juncture?

Jesse Thorn: We do, indeed. One of our favorite pals, host of the long running podcast, *The Bugle*, and professional cricket commentator, Andy Zaltzman. Andy, welcome to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

Andy Zaltzman: Thank you for having me. Hello, everyone.

John Hodgman: Andy, you have been—thank you so much for being here. It's great to have you on the podcast. And I just need—as a longtime listener to *The Bugle*, I just am so excited that you're here. And if you *Judge John Hodgman* listeners are not listening to *The Bugle*, you should be listening to it immediately.

(*Andy agrees.*)

I'm Hodgmanning! I'm getting the plugs in early, Andy, because, you know. So, you've been listening along. Let me ask you a question, a simple question first of all. What is cricket?

Andy Zaltzman: Well, that sounds like a simple question, but in fact it's a very complicated question. Because what it is, is asking what is a human being?

(*The other laugh.*)

Because cricket is—cricket is without any question the greatest thing ever invented by human beings. Okay. So, you need to start from that as your basic, basic fact. It's a sport that explores every layer of the human condition. Achievement, failure, teamwork, individuality, hope, despair. Often within the space of about three minutes in your five-day game. Its sheer length we talked about. You know, the five-day format. Yeah. Test cricket. Gives you five days off from absolutely everything else you're doing. From your family, from news, from tax demands, legal summons, medical appointments. No other sport gives you that!

(*Jesse laughs.*)

Baseball might give you three hours 162 times in a regular season, but not five days in a row. So, fundamentally, it's a journey into what it means to be alive on this planet in, in the last—I don't know, what's—? Well, since cricket was—I think cricket was invented basically when the dinosaurs tried to block the asteroid, and it wasn't too successful.

(*John laughs.*)

And that's pretty much the origin of it.

John Hodgman: They were protecting the wicket of the planet Earth. Yeah. So, the wicket is three sticks with two little sticks on top of it. There are two of them. They're on either ends of a cricket grounds or something.

Andy Zaltzman: Yeah, so they're 22 yards apart. Obviously. I think that was originally a farming—it's a length called a chain, which is obviously a tenth of a furlong, which is even more obviously a nakedmile.

John Hodgman: (*Playfully.*) We all know, we all know this. Don't get me wrong.

Andy Zaltzman: Obviously, you don't have to be a rocket scientist to know that. In fact, if you're a rocket scientist and you're using chains and furlongs, you probably should resign instantly before something terrible happens. So, the two sets of stumps are—yeah, 22 yards yards. We still use yards in cricket, because why not? And yeah, so that's—yeah, that's the basics.

John Hodgman: And on one end, there's a batter or a bats person, and on the other end, there's a bowler. And the bowler—and there's similarities to baseball in the sense that someone is throwing a ball at someone else, and they're trying to deflect the ball, and if the ball knocks over the stumps or the wicket or whatever, then that's good for the bowler's team.

Andy Zaltzman: Yes, that's broadly it. So, that's—I guess, the big difference with baseball, where there's no wickets to aim at. But the Mankading we're talking about is the wickets at the bowler's end.

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John Hodgman: The non-striking end! Because the batter is not batting, but striking?

Andy Zaltzman: Well, there's two batters—one of which is batting, and one of which is non-striking batting.

John Hodgman: Why not say non-batting?

Andy Zaltzman: Well, because they are batting. Because batting, you know, is—although it might seem like batting is just face—you know, having a ball bowled at you and then trying to hit it, actually, batting is more of a state of mind than that. So, once you're out—

(*John laughs.*)

Once you're out on the pitch, you are batting, even if no one's actually bowled at you.

John Hodgman: Even if you're not striking.

Jesse Thorn: John, a lot of people would presume that batting would involve a bat, but that's true roughly half the time.

(They laugh.)

Andy Zaltzman: Well, you still hold your bat. You don't like just throw it off the pitch. You've still got it, and you're communing with it. You're feeling the sensory nature of its wood going through your paws into your very soul.

John Hodgman: Much like my big gavel back here, which I'm going to hold.

(Andy laughs.)

Now, if this were a cricket bat, and I were batting, and I was in the striking position, what's the thing called? The ball? Bowl? It's a bowl?

(Andy confirms.)

Right. And that gets bowled to me, and I hit it. Then I started a-running.

Andy Zaltzman: Well, you don't have to run. It's not like in baseball. You can choose to run in cricket. Also, you can hit in a 360-degree arc. You can hit the ball anywhere. Whereas in baseball, you have to get it in the—what? Within the—

Jesse Thorn: Fair territory.

Andy Zaltzman: Yeah. Fair territory. So, 90 degrees. So, so there's a great—wider range of ways to hit the ball in cricket than there are in baseball. You can try and hit it hard. You can try and hit it delicately. You can just defend it, if you don't think you can score runs from it. So, the idea is to hit the ball into a gap and then run to the other end. That's one.

John Hodgman: Can I just say something right now? If I were ever to be recruited to a test of cricket, I would never choose to run. In life, I never choose.

Andy Zaltzman: Well, there's—some quite prominent players have taken a pretty similar approach to that.

John Hodgman: Andy, you and Aatif know each other?

Andy Zaltzman: We do. We work together on the same the same BBC commentary team. I do the statistics.

John Hodgman: So, what is your take on—well, let me ask you this question. Very technical. With regard to cricket, what is law 38?

Andy Zaltzman: Law 38. Okay. So, being run out as—you compared it with being thrown out in baseball. So, if you are running between the two sets of stumps, there's a line in front of them. And to complete your run, you have to cross the line, put something down on the ground—whether it's your bat or your foot or any other part of your body. If you fancy it, you can dive in arse first, if you want, or sort of just roll your snout along the ground, whatever suits you.

John Hodgman: I'd probably call a cab.

(They laugh.)

Andy Zaltzman: That's that's the the rule that's related to the Mankad, is running out. So, yeah, I think the reason people get frustrated with Mankads is the contest in cricket is between the bowler and the batter. And the bowler bowls the ball; the batter has to do something with it. The Mankad, the ball has not yet come into play, which is why it is unsatisfying. So, the batter at the non-striker's end is trying to shorten the amount they have to run by doing a process called backing up, where they leave their ground as the bowler bowls. But if they leave it too early, they're out of their ground and can be run out by this means known as the Mankad.

John Hodgman: And is this mode of dismissal covered under rule 38? Is it legal in the game?

Andy Zaltzman: It's very legal. I don't think anyone is disputing that it's legal. There's some argument over convention. Now, if you follow British politics at all, Judge—

John Hodgman: Well, I listen to *The Bugle*.

Andy Zaltzman: *(Laughs.)* Well, you'll know that a lot of things we do in this country, we don't like to write down. We have an unwritten constitution. We have parliamentary conventions that no one has ever written down. We find that the easiest way.

John Hodgman: That way there's no proof. There's no proof you ever had a constitution.

Andy Zaltzman: Exactly! But we can just basically make it up as we go along. And there's a convention in cricket that you warn the batter at least once before you then run them out through the Mankad. However, there's no stipulation in the law that you have to do that. It's a legitimate form of dismissal, but I think the reason people don't like it is because it's not really what the game is about. That contest between a bowler bowling the ball, and then the batter hitting it, and the fielding side trying to catch it or then run the player out. So, that's why it's a frustrating form of dismissal, I think.

John Hodgman: And do you share that frustration? What do you feel about it?

Andy Zaltzman: I do share that frustration! And ideally, it's the kind of thing that shouldn't happen. Because you know, the non-striking batter shouldn't leave their crease—whether they change the law so that you can't leave your crease.

John Hodgman: To clarify to the listeners who may be as confused as I am—

Andy Zaltzman: Yeah, no, that's what cricket is all about.

John Hodgman: Leaving the crease is a little bit like leaving a base. Like, you're leaving your safe spot. You're not where you're supposed to be. You're getting ready to run.

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You're anticipating what's going to happen. And if you get into a zone, then if this were a sporting world—if this were Aatif's world—the bowler might say, “Hey, dude,” or you know, “Get back over there. I'm warning you now. But if you don't, I'm gonna go back and hit this wicket over here and run you out.” Okay.

Andy Zaltzman: So, fundamentally, I think maybe a tweak of the laws to just say the non-striking batter cannot leave their ground until the ball is released.

John Hodgman: Did you see the match that Aatif referred to when he got, frankly, eaten alive on social media?

Andy Zaltzman: I didn't see that one actually, but it's something that crops up in cricket, I think, with increasing regularity—as you said, because of the short forms of the game.

John Hodgman: Well, because Nate wants it to happen all the time!

(They laugh.)

Nate is like, “Let's do this Tar Heel State style.”

Jesse Thorn: Andy, different sports have different relationships with rule changes. I think NBA basketball and NFL football are much more likely to change their rules than Major League Baseball. Why hasn't that happened?

Andy Zaltzman: Well, that's a good question. Many sports are reluctant to change. These laws have existed for—in cricket's case—in various forms for hundreds of years.

John Hodgman: Strange to imagine a British institution being hidebound and reluctant.

Andy Zaltzman: *(Laughs.)* Hidebound by either the laws we have bothered to write down or the ones that we haven't. We love being hidebound. It's some kind of S&M thing, I think. You know, deep in our national psyche.

(They laugh.)

But cricket's laws change pretty slowly.

John Hodgman: Now, I have to say, during my extensive research of about 35 minutes this morning: in fact, I believe that the rules were changed. And one of you cricket experts will confirm or deny this—that in fact, this maneuver, this mode of dismissal, the Mankading—was officially made part of law 38 as a legal maneuver as of 2022. Is that—I see you nodding, Nate. Is that correct or no?

Nate: It was clarified a little bit more as a legal maneuver. Yes.

John Hodgman: I'm just pointing out to Andy that in fact, you know, there has been a rule change. And to Andy, I presume your frustration and perhaps eternal quest for vengeance—the rule has been adjusted to allow for and incorporate this mode of dismissal.

Andy Zaltzman: Yeah. Well, it—I mean, it is—you know, it's legitimate. I mean, the law—I guess it doesn't have that element that I think would really help with these things of just saying the non-striker cannot leave until the ball has been released by the bowler. I think that would just clarify things and basically would remove the Mankad from the game. And we could remember Vinoo Mankad as one of India's finest cricketers in the early years of Indian international cricket, rather than his legacy being this irritating and seldom used form of dismissal. So, there was a tweak, but I'm not sure it was necessarily a tweak that will end these disputes and debates in a world that needs peace, Judge!

John Hodgman: You take Aatif's side, Andy. You're also his friend and colleague. You're obviously corrupt and biased.

(They laugh.)

Andy Zaltzman: Coming from an American, is that a compliment or an insult?

(Jesse cackles.)

John Hodgman: Welcome aboard, is what I'm saying. But at the same time, you are undeniably charming, illuminating, and wonderful. So, it all balances out. As long as you're entertaining, even a criminal can be president. No comment.

(They laugh.)

But let me ask you this final question as a world authority on cricket.

Andy Zaltzman: Universal authority, I'd say.

John Hodgman: Indeed. Given that I am but a lowly New Englander, the only bowling I know from is Candlepin. Why, I'm not someone born and bred in the birthplace of cricket—which is to say somewhere between Durham and Raleigh, North Carolina. Nonetheless, do I not have, at this point, the authority—if not the mandate—to change the rules of world cricket forever on this podcast? To finally make an adjustment, one way or the other? To eliminate or enshrine this mode of dismissal that we call, rightly or wrongly, Mankading?

Andy Zaltzman: I think you have that authority. Yeah, I mean, you'd have to run that past the Marylebone Cricket Club, the MCC, based at Lord's in London, who are the custodians of the laws of the game. But I think if you ask nicely, you can probably—

John Hodgman: You'd be very surprised to learn that I'm texting with them right now, and they say it's fine.

Andy Zaltzman: I'm sure they'll go with that. And also, you know, let's not forget, international cricket began in the United States. A game between the USA and Canada in 1844.

[00:30:00]

So, if you find yourself watching baseball thinking, “Well, this is too short. Why is it only going on for a few hours? Why is there not enough going on in it?”, cricket is very much saying to America, “Here's what you could have had.”

John Hodgman: Andy Zaltzman, I'm going to reverse Hodgman you by giving the plug at the end of the segment.

(Andy laughs.)

People can go listen to your podcast, *The Bugle*. And what else do you have going on? Where else can people find you? Where else should people find you?

Andy Zaltzman: Well, if you're in the UK in March, we're doing various live *Bugle* shows dotted around the place. Details at TheBuglePodcast.com. I'm also hosting the News Quiz on BBC Radio 4, which you can find through the BBC Sounds app. And then I'll be doing a standup tour later in the year. Details, TBC.

John Hodgman: And that would be TheBuglePodcast.com. We're going to hear more about—I see Nate got very excited to talk about the first American cricket game. Unfortunately, we're going to have to take a break and say goodbye to you, Andy. But we'll be back in a moment. Jesse, you want to take us out?

Jesse Thorn: We'll have more of the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast, including more with Aatif and Nate, when we come back in just a moment.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: Welcome back to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast and our conflict between Aatif and Nate.

John Hodgman: So, how—Nate, how did you come to cricket? We've heard a lot about cricket from two people in Eng-land. You are not there. You are in North Carolina. What is going on? Why are you here? Why should you—and I!—get to change the rules of this game?

Nate: Well, I was introduced to the sport by some Indian friends who showed me in 2015 some plays that had happened—actually, a sequence of events that happened in the World Cup at the time. It was a very famous sequence featuring Pakistan versus Australia with some very aggressive bowling. And at the end of—cricket can get so aggressive. At the end of—this bowler was bouncing the ball up at the batter, right at his head. And at the end of every time he would—at the end of his run up, because the bowler to get up the pace runs up to the crease—he would finish 15 or so feet away from the batter, clapping in his face like this. (*Clap, clap, clap.*)

And I thought that intensity right there between the batter and the bowler, I've never seen Nolan Ryan finish his pitch and then, you know, just a few inches away from Tony Gwynn's face, (*clap, clap*) clapping in his face. But that would be great.

John Hodgman: Would that be legal in baseball, Jesse Thorn? For the pitcher to get up and clap in the batter's face?

Jesse Thorn: John, it wouldn't be in the spirit of the game.

(*They laugh.*)

John Hodgman: Okay, fair enough! And so, you really first encountered cricket in 2015. So, really, a lifetime of generational cricket knowledge, lore, and love in you. I mean, we're talking almost a decade at this point.

Nate: Almost a decade. I've always loved sports. I grew up with baseball. I played baseball in college, and I was just very happy to find something new that was really grabbing my attention, and I just dove right in, and I learned how to play and—

John Hodgman: What position do you play? Are you an all-rounder or a one-rounder?

Nate: I joke that I'm a fielding all-rounder, which means that I field a lot and bowl and bat seldomly. Because I'm not particularly great at either of those, but I'm a good fielder. I'm better at batting than bowling, but I would consider myself a batter who bats number seven.

John Hodgman: What is the scene like in North Carolina? What's the cricket scene like?

Nate: We actually have one of the greatest communities in the country. If you ask me, I think it's the best community in the country. We have something in the USA called Major League Cricket, which just launched this year.

John Hodgman: (*With faux disbelief.*) Major League Cricket! What a nerve! What a nerve!

Nate: It's huge!

John Hodgman: Well, I know, but it's not major in the context of the world!

Nate: That depends. In cricket, the leagues—the professional leagues are so short that you can get the very best players in the world to play in multiple leagues, and that's what they've done here. They actually have many of the best players in the whole—it's actually a really big deal right now, Major League Cricket. In the cricketing world, it's pretty huge.

John Hodgman: I love it! Aatif, is that true? Is Major League Cricket a big deal in the cricketing world?

Aatif: Most definitely. I mean, just as Nate says—I mean, the cricket calendar is a little bit different. So, you have your sort of international games of cricket. But in baseball, for example, you'll have one player who plays for a team year-round, right? But in cricket, in T20 cricket, these leagues that exist—they allow you to play for like four or five different teams over the course of a year. So, as Nate says, some of the very best players in the world and the most popular players in the world came over to play in America and spoke really highly of their time in America—playing in Texas, playing in North Carolina. Like, it was really well received, really well produced, really well attended. It was great fun.

The only sort of downside is the way it clashes with some other leagues in the world, because there's a finite amount of days in a year, and there's just not enough days in the year to watch cricket.

Jesse Thorn: And Judge Hodgman, just to clarify—

[00:35:00]

D20 cricket is cricket where the outcomes are determined by the roll of a 20-sided die.

John Hodgman: Yeah, that's what I imagined. It would have to be. It would have to be. Yeah, get your dice bag, cricketers.

Aatif, to take an airplane across the Atlantic Ocean to see some hot feces cricket played anywhere in the United States, where's the top cricket being played right now?

Aatif: It's probably in North Carolina, I think.

(John whistles.)

Just because they've got a beautiful—in Morrisville, they've got that beautiful stadium. And you know, it was so picturesque to watch during the Major League. But it's not just specific to that. I think Texas is quite a hotbed for it as well. I think it's where the headquarters of the Major League Cricket are happening as well. This summer, the hot ticket is going to be New York, right? Eisenhower Park in New York, which is going to host a World Cup match

between India and Pakistan. So, that's kind of—that's probably going to be the most watched cricket match of all time. And it's happening on your shores! You should go.

John Hodgman: I'm going to now!

Jesse Thorn: Nate, what proportion of this American cricket is played by people who live abroad? What proportion is played by first generation immigrants who grew up playing the game elsewhere? And what proportion is played by people who were born in the United States, like you, and perhaps even grew up playing baseball or something like that?

Nate: We have a large South Asian diaspora in the USA right now. And they are the ones—them and the Caribbean diaspora—are the ones who mostly play cricket in the USA. But mostly, almost exclusively it's, you know, children of immigrants.

Jesse Thorn: I'd love to better understand the cultural context of this. So, in the baseball analogy that's playing out in my head, the spirit of the game argument is a very lively one in baseball right now—largely because of a sort of combination of intercultural and intergenerational conflicts where a lot of younger players in particular, but especially younger players from the Latin American countries where baseball is very popular, like Venezuela and the Caribbean countries where baseball is very popular, like say Cuba or the Dominican Republic—often play a—let's say a more expressive form of the game that for many years in baseball was looked down upon as—

John Hodgman: I think there's a lot of mime involved.

(Jesse laughs.)

Like, they're always running into walls.

Jesse Thorn: There's a lot of what I would broadly characterize as “enjoying yourself”.

John Hodgman: Oh, I see. Having fun.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah. But enjoying yourself in a way that could otherwise be interpreted as showing up your opponent is certainly how certain older people might interpret it. So, what's the cultural—both of you have very sort of mixed cultural contexts for this. With Nate, you being a native-born American White dude, and Aatif, you being a native-born Britain of Pakistani ancestry. So, what is the colonial and cultural context in which this is going down?

Nate: Well, unlike baseball, where—like you said—it's very much related to kind of where the players come from. And as we've seen in baseball, there is an argument to kind of tone it down a little, just because we have those fall leagues in South America that end often in large brawls that we see in viral posts. Unlike that in cricket, it's not so much cultural difference; it's difference in format, I believe. So, you have the traditional cricket format, which we've talked much about the long, multi-day games.

Now there hasn't been a Mankad in the multi-day games since 1979. So, with the game getting shorter, to appeal to more people, they have a shorter game called T20.

And with that game, instead of—the strategy is a little bit different. The onus is on the batting side to score faster. And because of that, anybody who's seen leaving their crease early at the non-strikers' end is a threat to adding to that score faster, because you have a limited number of balls to score your runs.

John Hodgman: Let the record show, if you're not watching on YouTube, Nate is running back and forth between wickets while he's giving this—it's very impressive. He's just racking up runs, racking up runs.

Aatif, how do you feel about this American coming in saying, “This is the way cricket should be”?

Aatif: I kind of agree with a lot of what Nate is saying.

John Hodgman: Unbelievable!

Aatif: I think it all makes sense. Almost all of it makes sense. My only contention, really, is that this incident that has this massive—that can potentially have this massive impact on a game of cricket, it's disproportionate to the level of skill and to the—

[00:40:00]

You know, the punishment doesn't fit the crime for me. So, right now, if you're out Mankaded, you could be out. Now you could be the star player of your team. It could be a really crucial moment in the game. And all of a sudden the game's lopsided, and the whole momentum has gone a completely different direction. You might get a completely different result. And this end result is not satisfactory for either team, really.

John Hodgman: Yeah, but if you get run out this way using this maneuver, it's because you're outside of your crease. I don't know what I'm saying! But it is still a choice that that non-striking batter is making. It is a risk they are taking, correct?

Aatif: Absolutely. You're bang-on there, as is Nate when he's—

John Hodgman: Hang on, Aatif. Hang on. Hang on a minute. Jesse, did you hear that? I'm bang on.

(Jesse agrees.)

I'm so excited. I've never been bang on before in my life!

Aatif: I agree that batters shouldn't do it, but I feel like the punishment of people being bowled out—being given out and having to, you know, be removed from the field of play for

that is far too harsh. I like to go with what Andy suggested, sorry—which was you tweak the rules that if the batter is pulling up, you just—it doesn't count, or there's like a different penalty, like a run penalty.

John Hodgman: Nate is shaking his head vigorously now at the suggestion of a tweak. Why, Nate?

Jesse Thorn: He's also wagging his finger, Judge Hodgman!

John Hodgman: That's true. That's allowed. A permissible wag.

Nate: Well, here's the thing. I agree that nobody really wants to see a game decided based on somebody's leaving the crease early and getting out. However, do you want to see a game decided by penalty runs? Do you really want to see a game decided by penalty runs? Because that could happen. If your solution is you can't leave the crease, and if you do, we're going to award penalty runs. Penalty runs, first of all, does not exist anywhere outside of England, I don't believe. I can't believe it. I can't imagine an American sport having penalty runs. Penalty points awarded.

John Hodgman: You're saying—I don't even know what penalty runs are, but you're just saying the alternative is chaos.

Nate: The alternative is taking runs away from the batting team.

John Hodgman: The alternative is worse than the thing that it'd be (*inaudible*).

Nate: And not just that. Jesse mentioned that baseball very seldom changes rules. Before they changed their rules a couple years ago, they tested these rules for years in the Atlantic League—which is an independent minor league. And these were rules that affected every single ball. With this, how are you going to test this when it's only happened 14 times?

Jesse Thorn: And that is why Nate is so passionate that he's wagging his finger in the camera, a move that we American sports fans know as Mutombo-ing.

John Hodgman: Aatif, what is Nate missing here?

Aatif: I think possibly—right?—and I don't mean to sound patronizing or in any way minimizing his experiences.

John Hodgman: I really wish you would, actually, but that's fine.

Aatif: I don't mean to like downplay his experience in cricket, because he's, you know, got a wonderful mind for cricket. I love talking to him about cricket, all things cricket in all detail.

Jesse Thorn: You're a native-born Englisher. It is your birthright to patronize.

Aatif: Yeah, I mean—well, I think when you grow up with something, right? And I've—you know, there's a couple of things in my life that I love more than cricket. You know, and I probably couldn't say them out loud in front of a group full of people, but I—you know, when I grew up with it, I grew up with, you know, just that reverence for the game. You know, that respect for the game. Like, I remember every time—even now, I've been working in the field for a long time in a professional capacity. Every time I set foot on the ground of play, you know, it's a special feeling to me. I've done it hundreds of times.

John Hodgman: Do you think there's a threat that if run off, non-striking batter, whatever it is, Mankading, however you want to call it—that if it starts getting practice in North Carolina, the hotbed of cricket, that it's going to become more and more popular and more and more used, and it's going to degrade the game? Yes or no?

Aatif: Well, it's already becoming more popular, and it's happening in North Carolina.

John Hodgman: Because people are being little stinkers, right? They're being little stinkers.

Aatif: I think, you know—look, it's within the laws of the game, but it should never be the focus. In a game where a bowler takes five wickets and a batsman scores 100 runs, or someone takes the most spectacular catch, that should be the news story.

John Hodgman: Nate, what is the spirit of the game for you? And why does Mankading fit into it?

Nate: The spirit of the game isn't really for me to decide, but what I will say is: this is a game for athletes. This is a game for nerds. Cricket. It's always being pitched this way. It's always being pitched. This is a good game for—

John Hodgman: Bowled. It's being bowled this way. Please.

Nate: It's being bowled. It's being bowled this way. Yeah. It's being delivered to us this way. And in my opinion, this isn't like we're arguing about a batter who just got out and walked across the pitcher's mound and made the pitcher mad. This is a mode of dismissal. This is one of the ways you can get out in cricket. This is written in the rules. And I think from a nerd point of view, from like a nerd *D&D* point of view and from an athlete point of view, when is it ever discouraged to to exploit a loophole in the rules that happens all the time?

[00:45:00]

John Hodgman: In cricket—I mean, Aatif, Nate mentioned earlier that one of the things that attracted him to the game was its sheer aggression. The running at the batter and the clapping in his face and everything else. But that's not deception, right? That's not being a little stinker. Is cricket less stinky than baseball?

Aatif: I would say so. I mean, I've had the pleasure of watching a game of baseball with Nate, actually. We went to Yankee Stadium. And you know, I had a great time. Very much enjoyed watching the baseball. But all it did for me was—other than the fact that it was a

very enjoyable game—it's a world apart from cricket. It's a completely different thing. Like, it's helpful sometimes when you're making a general comparison to say things like, “Oh, you know, stopping short,” or whatever it is, right? But at the same time, it's a different game with different rules, different dynamics, different vibe, right? If I can use that word.

John Hodgman: Nate is trying to baseball-ify cricket. Yes or no, Aatif?

Aatif: Totally. *(Laughs.)*

John Hodgman: Totally. That's right. Thank you. Thank you. You know, Nate, if I were to rule in your favor, you would want me to rule and essentially reassert the existing rule that running off a non-striking batter is fine and actually people should be doing it more often!

Nate: Yes, that the best way to stop it from happening is simply be responsible at your own—at the non-striker end. Yes.

John Hodgman: Yeah. You see it as a disincentive structure for a non-striking batter to leave the crease in a fast-paced game.

Aatif, two quick questions before I get to your final ruling. One, what do you think about this fast-paced game, this T20 that that Nate was talking about? Is this good for cricket or no?

Aatif: Brilliant for cricket. It's opened up cricket to a whole new world. I mean, just a couple of days ago, I was watching Japan vs the Cook Island play a game of cricket. I didn't even know the Cook Islands was a country.

It's cheaper to put on. It's more exciting for advertisers. It's more inclusive. It's brilliant.

Jesse Thorn: It allows people to enjoy the sport who can't take five days off from responding to court summonses.

(They laugh and Aatif confirms.)

John Hodgman: And even though that shorter form game might actually encourage more Mankading?

Aatif: Yeah, this is the thing, man. Because it's become the financial and the sort of the attention center of cricket now, T20 cricket—because that's where all the money is. That's where all the big players are drawn. Less wear and tear on your body, more achievement, more exposure, whatever it is you want to say, right? It has now become the big boy format and the big girl format in cricket. So, you need to—you know, you need to hold that to the highest possible standard of play. And for me—you know, Mankading—you know, it's becoming more frequent. I know it's only happened 14 times in history, but it's becoming more frequent.

John Hodgman: Should we call it Mankading, or should we get rid of that name?

Aatif: Well, see, if you go by the gentleman's family, right? So, I know his grandson is quite—you know, like he takes great pride in that phrase, right?

John Hodgman: He's into it.

Aatif: Right, he's into it. But there's other members of his family who are not into it, who think that we don't like this. Call it run-out at the non-strikers end and talk about the guy's actual career as an all-round cricketer.

John Hodgman: So, if I were to rule in your favor then, Aatif, what would I be ruling? No Mankading allowed? No runoff non-strikers end allowed? Ever?

Aatif: No, not necessarily. You could have Mankading, but it wouldn't be a mainstream thing. It would be an outlier that wouldn't pick up.

John Hodgman: How would I enforce that? Don't do it? Like, tell people, "Please don't?"

Aatif: You tweak the rules. You know, as we're frequently doing in cricket, you tweak the rules, right? To make it that you have to either make a warning mandatory or the consequence is not the batter getting out. It's something else.

John Hodgman: The rule you would like me to instill is that mandatory one-warning.

(Aatif confirms.)

And then if the non-striking batter or the batter on the non-striking end leaves the crease again, fair game to run them off.

Jesse Thorn: Fair game to run them off.

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

Jesse Thorn: Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom.

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

Nate, how are you feeling about your chances?

Nate: I think I've presented my case pretty well. Yeah, I think I have a pretty good chance here. Just, I think there's a lot unknown if you change the rule. And if you do the rule with the warning first, you can give that warning at any time. The fans might not even know it's happened. And then you'll have the same—you'll still have the same outcome with the same dissatisfaction.

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

Aatif: Pretty good. Feel pretty good. I think, you know, despite the fact that I've been a little bit uneven about the way I've presented my argument—and no doubt about it, Nate has presented his much cleaner and more tidier than me. I think he has an uphill task here, because had I been arguing against the rule fundamentally, I would understand. You know, but to talk about the significance of it and the impact it has on it, I feel pretty good about having explained the emotive side of the romance of cricket, the appeal of cricket, and where I want to see cricket go in the future.

[00:50:00]

I don't want to go backwards to Mr. Mankad's days; I want it to go forwards into an Eisenhower Park era.

Jesse Thorn: Well, we'll see what Judge Hodgman has to say about all this when we come back.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: Judge Hodgman, we're taking a quick break, and the MaxFunDrive is right around the corner.

John Hodgman: The MaxFunDrive is right around the corner, which is a temporal metaphor for next week—for two weeks!

Jesse Thorn: This is the time when we will ask you to join Maximum Fun by going to MaximumFun.org/join. This is the one time a year we do it, and it is also our most special time of year, in that we fill it with podcast delights!

John Hodgman: We fill MaxFunDrive with fun. It's right there in the middle! So, not only are we going to have special episodes for you in these two weeks, not only are we going to have bonus content episodes that are available only to members, not only are we going to have—you know—all kinds of all kinds of reminders to you about all the cool stuff you can get if you become a member or if you upgrade your existing membership, not only are we going to remind you of the special mission of Maximum Fun being an employee-owned cooperative of artist-owned podcasts. This is a total unicorn in the podcast world that thrives only because of your support! But also we're going to get up to some hijinks.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah, antics! We've got antics planned!

John Hodgman: We got live streams planned. We got *Get Your Pets* planned. We've got maybe impromptu stuff planned, and it's all going to be happening over on our brand spanking new YouTube page over at YouTube. And it's [JudgeJohnHodgmanPod](https://JudgeJohnHodgmanPod.com). You're already over there, I hope, watching our whole episodes and our special internet only Swift Justice shorts.

But also, during the MaxFunDrive, you never know when I might just pop up there and do a little do a little live streaming of of *SimCity* 2013 edition. I haven't done that for a while. I'm definitely going to be getting over there and talking to your cats and dogs and other pets. And I hope maybe Jesse Thorn will bring not only his wonderful extant dog, but the brand-new dog member of his family, Junior, right?

Jesse Thorn: Yeah, Junior's gonna make an appearance; there's no doubt about it.

John Hodgman: You haven't met Junior yet, listeners. And you're gonna meet Junior. Junior's gonna—we're gonna have a Junior debut, Jesse, how about that? We're gonna have a debutante ball for Junior during the MaxFunDrive live stream over on the YouTube page.

Jesse Thorn: I already got him his gown.

John Hodgman: Yeah, it's going to be so much fun over there. And you never know when we might pop in there and do something fun and special. So, now more than ever, get over to the youtube.com website. Go to [JudgeJohnHodgmanPod](#) and subscribe and like and do all the things you're going to do. And hit those notifications! 'Cause then you'll know that something's happening. And then we can talk to you a little bit more about the MaxFunDrive starting next week and why it's so important.

Listen, we've got a lot of new listeners. I'm very excited to hear and see, because we've been getting all these wonderful reviews from new listeners. And I'm so glad you're here. If you're listening for the first time this year and you haven't experienced a MaxFunDrive, it really is MaxFun! And it really is precisely the way that this show gets supported and thrives year over year. So, I look forward to hanging out with you on YouTube, on the podcast, and everywhere else.

Jesse Thorn: The way you'll be able to do it is just by going to [MaximumFun.org/join](#). We hope that you will, and let's get back to the case.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

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

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

John Hodgman: It's complicated that this great player is now associated with this legal maneuver that is nonetheless—because of unwritten rules of proper etiquette, is really looked down upon by a lot of people, including you Aatif, as being unsporting and not in the spirit of the game. First, let's just honor the player and separate it from the maneuver. I'm happy for his family to be glad of that association, but as we're talking and going forward, we're just going to call it (*inaudible*). And there is something complicated. You know, obviously what's fascinating about cricket is that it is—you know, as you pointed out, Nate, it is athletic in ways that are surprising for a sport that is still played while wearing sweaters.

(Nate chuckles.)

And it is also highly nerdy. I didn't even know that they used a 20-sided die in it. Thank you, Jesse, for that. It's also so sort of associated, for obvious reasons, with British and, frankly, colonialism. And yet it is truly a global sport that is adopted and loved around the world.

[00:55:00]

And you know, part of the complication of calling this term after the name of Vinoo Mankad is that, you know, he was a non-White player in Australia who, you know, did this maneuver that the Australians thought wasn't cool. So, there has been a long association—based on my 35 minutes of research—about the complication of like maligning this particular, you know, maneuver with the name of this very famous Indian player. Obviously, you ran into this too Aatif, when you made your critique of the Pakistani team. And you know, Pakistani fans of the game were mad at you for critiquing the team that shares your ancestry. You know, so there's a lot going on.

Not least of which is the fact that into this multicultural post-colonial stew, a young man from Washington, DC, has come to North Carolina to reinvent cricket for Long Island! Or whatever it is your mission to do there, Nate. And part of you—you're looking at this kind of from a money ball point of view, right? Like, this is a game that you come to as an enthusiast but without the same cultural gravity and connection that someone like Aatif has or Andy. And you're looking at it and you're like, "Well, it's in the rules. Why not do it? In fact, I've got a fun idea. I think it'll even be better in this new fast-paced version of the game if you do have it, because it will actually create a disincentive that will increase game quality. And you won't have those horrible penalty runs." See? I listened!

But on the other hand, there is this element of like this new guy coming in to reinvent a game and the spirit of a game that you don't understand, because in the United States, we're all little stinkers. In sports, it's part of the game—stinking it up. I really, really, really want to call up whatever the governing body is for cricket and say, "Look, Aatif is right. This is a controversial move. It's always been an unwritten rule to give a warning to the non-striker batter or the batter in the non-striking position, or whatever it's called." In fact, Vinoo Mankad did give a warning the first time. And then, you know, didn't. And that was what was so controversial. But Nate's right! It's unenforceable. Even if—what's the governing body that we're talking about?

Nate: MCC.

John Hodgman: Even if they're like, "Hey, we got a call from a podcaster in America. He's right. We should change this."

(Nate laughs.)

Someone over there who probably knows a lot about cricket would be like, "It's unenforceable. How would you know? How would you know that the warning had been given? When would the warning be given?" I think that it's hard, because it does feel like the

game is changing, Aatif. Cricket is being played in America at a highly competitive level, and the game is getting shorter. It's changing. This is what happens with games. And it's probable, I have to say, that as more little stinkers like Nate get into this game, they're going to look at this legal maneuver and be like, "Why wouldn't I use it? That's cricket."

And you would say, "It's not the spirit of cricket." And it's like, you know, Nate doesn't care. I mean, Nate, you care. Of course, you do. And more and more players, if they are coming to this shorter form game and they see an advantage in it, that's how it's going to be played. And I get it. I don't think that that's so hot. But other than eliminating that possibility altogether, I don't see how your one warning rule is going to change it. Sometimes change is unavoidable. The method by which cricket was spread to the world—right?—is not a wonderful history. And because time moves forward, people can enjoy this game that was brought to them by imperial colonialism and a very, very harsh history. You know, like that's what moving forward is to a degree. Evolution. Claiming of the game by the people who play it and playing it differently and making it their own.

Who am I, a podcaster, to run off that non-striking batter? It's in the rules! Law 38. What I think is worth preserving is this conversation—dare I say fight—that you and Nate are going to get into it year after year. Because cricket is a nerdy sport, just like baseball, for nerds to fight over. Why would I eliminate an opportunity for you two to get on the wireless or the phone or whatever, however you communicate to telegraph across the Atlantic, and get all snippy about it with each other? Have a little chat, if you will.

[01:00:00]

I don't love sports. I love technicalities. I love these gray areas where all of these issues of sportspersonship, the spirit of the game, the rules of the game—can you knock this thing off? What is the history of this? You know, why is it called Mankad? All of these things. And what does it mean that it's called—you know, named after this player? And that sort of thing. This messiness, I think, is part of what makes sports exciting, even for me. And yes, I do think that there is a threat, unfortunately, Aatif, that especially now that listeners of *Judge John Hodgman* are going to become cricket players and cricket fanatics—and I guarantee you, because of this conversation, they're all going to be chanting, "Mankad, Mankad, Mankad." They're going to want to see it!

I'm part of the problem. But then look at me. Of course, I am. Unfortunately, I cannot intervene. I don't think the solution of the one warning will suffice. I don't think banning it is within my remit. And I do think that it's fun how messy it is and how complicated it is and how harsh it is. This is the most I've been interested in a sport in years! And it wouldn't happen if you guys didn't have this dispute. I will say there should be more dogs in cricket, but otherwise, I rule in Nate's favor. Gotta keep it status quo. This is the sound of a gavel.

Sound Effect: A cricket—the insect—chirping.

John Hodgman: Judge John Hodgman rules, that is all.

Jesse Thorn: Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom.

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

Aatif, how are you feeling?

Aatif: You know, I mean, I think it's—I respectfully disagree, but I accept. You know, it's something that is quite contentious.

Jesse Thorn: Nate, how are you feeling?

Nate: I feel great, of course, because the ruling was in my favor, but even if it hadn't been, the monologue that I just heard—I would have been happy with either decision just based on how beautifully that was put.

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

Nate: Thank you for having us.

Aatif: Pleasure.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: Another *Judge John Hodgman* case is in the books. We'll have Swift Justice in just a second. First, our thanks to Redditor u/Shed1 for naming this week's episode, "It's Justice Not Cricket".

John Hodgman: Yeah, because you say, "It's just not cricket". That means it's just not fair. Yeah. It's just not done. Just-ice not. I liked that one. I picked it.

Jesse Thorn: Join the conversation at the Maximum Fun subreddit. That's [MaximumFun.Reddit.com](https://www.reddit.com/r/MaximumFun). We'll be asking for title suggestions at [MaximumFun.Reddit.com](https://www.reddit.com/r/MaximumFun), so join us there and suggest them. Or just look at other people's suggestions, 'cause they're fun! Evidence and photos from the show are both on the episode page at [MaximumFun.org](https://www.maximumfun.org), and on Instagram, [@JudgeJohnHodgman](https://www.instagram.com/judgejohnhodgman). So, follow us there. And! If you wanna see our beautiful faces, a reminder, go subscribe to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast on YouTube! Full episodes are being posted there, as well as special shorts that you won't hear or see anywhere else—besides on Instagram. I think we're posting those on Instagram too.

John Hodgman: Go to [YouTube/judgejohnhodgmanpod](https://www.youtube.com/judgejohnhodgmanpod) and smash that like, subscribe, and the notifications button. That's what they tell you to do! Hey, before we get outta here, I just want to apologize to a listener—a new listener named Amy. Amy wrote a five-star review of *Judge John Hodgman* on Apple Podcasts saying, quote, "I didn't really know what to expect from this, but what I got was dry humor, wordplay, and a big slice of actual justice." Which is a very nice thing to say. Thank you, Amy, for that. But Amy did go on to write, quote, "I realized I cannot use this to help me get to sleep, because I end up listening to the whole show." (Chuckling.) So, I'm sorry. I do apologize for keeping you awake, Amy. And to some degree, I apologize for wordplay. But thank you for so much for listening.

And if Jesse and I have been keeping you awake and you haven't already, please consider going over to Apple Podcasts and leaving a review there or letting anyone know wherever you can about listening to the show. It really helps people discover the show. And you may know that Apple Podcasts in particular did an update. So, if you were subscribed to the show before, you might not be following it now. So, maybe go over to the Apple Podcasts if that's what you use, and re-follow us or do whatever it takes to let people know when you're over there. Leave a review. It really, really, really helps.

Jesse Thorn: And hey, if you need a podcast to fall asleep to, there is a Maximum Fun podcast that's fall-asleep-to-it themed. John Moe's *Sleeping with Celebrities*, where celebrities go on and talk about the most boring thing that they really know a lot about until you fall asleep.

John Hodgman: Yeah, it's terrific. It's really great.

Jesse Thorn: *Judge John Hodgman* was created by Jesse Thorn and John Hodgman. This episode, engineered by Aamir Yaqub at BISON Studios in London, England.

[01:05:00]

The podcast, edited by A.J. McKeon. Our video editor, Daniel Speer. Our producer, the ever-capable Jennifer Marmor. Now, Swift Justice, where we answer your small disputes with quick judgment.

Matthew from Columbus, Ohio, writes, "I seek an injunction on my cousin Casey. He needs to stop buying abandoned churches and banks until he explains what his plan is." (*Laughs.*)

John Hodgman: This is one of the most delightful letters I've ever gotten in my life! That's it. That was the entire sentence of the entire email. And I will absolutely order this injunction on Casey until he can explain what his plan is, buying all these abandoned churches and banks. But I also mandate that Casey and Matthew appear on the podcast as soon as possible, so that we can get to the bottom of this. Injunction granted pending a full hearing.

Jesse Thorn: You know, John, it's springtime—the season of new beginnings, and I imagine that there are some new beginning related squabbles out there in our audience.

John Hodgman: Some spring related squabs, is what you mean.

Jesse Thorn: Spring cleaning, disputes related to flowers blooming.

John Hodgman: Jennifer Marmor asks, "Does your weird partner insist that the Easter Beagle is real?" That's a *Peanuts* themed dispute, absolutely. Or how about this, since we were talking about sport—March Madness is coming up. That's a sports thing, right, Jesse?

Jesse Thorn: It is! Judge Hodgman, I'm headed to spring training this week.

John Hodgman: There we go.

Jesse Thorn: I'm going to see what conflicts I have with our former MaxFun colleague, Nick White, with whom I'm going to spring training. I think there could be something good. I don't know if you saw, but Judge John Hodgman legend, Joey Votto is currently a baseball free agent, hasn't signed with a team. And he recorded a very funny social media video where he was driving through a car wash, looking mad, and he said, "This is not spring training."

John Hodgman: (*Laughs.*) Joey Votto, go on *Judge John Hodgman*. Spring has sprung, spring your spring disputes to us at MaximumFun.org/jjho. And Jesse, it says here we're eager to hear about all your disputes. Is that correct?

Jesse Thorn: Big or small, we judge them all. MaximumFun.org/jjho. We are always grateful to hear your disputes. So, please, look at the people around you and think about what problems you have with them. Then go to MaximumFun.org/jjho.

John Hodgman: We'll talk to you next time on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast!

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

John Hodgman: I gotta say, I watched a compilation of bowlers running off non-striking batters. Those sneaky little (*censor beep*).

(*Everyone laughs.*)

It was fun! It was fun to watch. You know what? Bleep out the bad word, but leave that in the edit!

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!