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Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: Welcome to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. I'm Bailiff Jesse Thorn, and it is a very special time of year. Perhaps the most special time of year! Sorry, Christmas and Easter—

John Hodgman: Eat it, Arbor Day.

Jesse Thorn: 4th of July. It's MaxFunDrive! It is the two weeks of the year when we celebrate members like you.

John Hodgman: Just like all the shows on Maximum Fun, *Judge John Hodgman* could not exist without your support.

Jesse Thorn: It's easy to become a member, and it starts at just five bucks a month. You can do it right now at MaximumFun.org/join. Look, you get stuff too!

John Hodgman: You do?

Jesse Thorn: Yeah, we'll get into that later. But suffice it to say you get stuff too. But most of all, you get the satisfaction of knowing that you make this show possible. That's MaximumFun.org/join.

John Hodgman: Jesse, we have a corker of the case this week, do we not?

Jesse Thorn: Indeed! This week's case, "Flushed to Judgment". Trish brings the case against her friend Marlow. Trish flushes soup down the toilet in order to get rid of it. Marlow wants to stop Trish from ever flushing food ever, ever, ever again. Even if it's a liquid. Trish says this is a perfectly reasonable way to dispose of soup. Who's right? Who's wrong? Only one can decide.

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

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

John Hodgman: "Soup first, or noodles first? No. First, observe the whole bowl. Appreciate its gestalt. Savor the aromas, jewels of fat glittering on the surface, shinachiku roots shining, seaweed slowly sinking, spring onions floating. Concentrate on the three pork slices. They play the key role but stay modestly hidden. First, caress the surface with the chopstick tips. Why? To express affection."

Bailiff Jesse Thorn, please swear them in.

Jesse Thorn: Trish and Marlow, please rise and raise your right hands.

(Chairs squeak.)

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

(They swear.)

Jesse Thorn: Do you swear to abide by Judge John Hodgman's ruling, despite the fact that his jaw is wired open, and he can only eat solid foods?

(They chuckle and swear.)

Judge Hodgman, you may proceed.

John Hodgman: How could I only eat solid foods if my jaw were wired open?

Jesse Thorn: It's the opposite of having your jaw wired shut. So.

John Hodgman: For a liquid diet, yeah. I can only eat pre-chewed solid foods, I guess.

Jesse Thorn: That's how it works, John. Opposites are when something is the reverse of the other thing.

John Hodgman: Right. Now I realize why I sleep in a nest. Trish and Marlow, you may be seated for an immediate summary judgment of one—

(Chairs squeak.)

Because birds—you know, like Bailiff Jesse Thorn in his cute little bailiff suit is going to feed me pre-chewed food in my wired-open jaw, like a bird.

Jesse Thorn: Oh, got it. Got it. Like a bird.

John Hodgman: That's what I mean. That's why I sleep in a nest. Also, it's very comfortable. You should try it. Sleep in a nest, everybody.

Meanwhile, Trish and Marlow, you may be seated, for real this time, for an immediate summary judgment on one of yours favors. Can either of you name the piece of culture that I referenced as I entered this courtroom? We'll say how about Marlow. Why don't you go first?

Marlow: Oh boy.

John Hodgman: Oh boy!

Marlow: (*Snickering.*) I'm gonna go for *Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul*.

John Hodgman: *Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul*. I was thinking—well, I'm not saying that's wrong. Yet. I'm writing it down. You can see I'm writing it down. (*Scribbling sounds.*) But I do have a thought about that later. Trish, why don't you guess now?

Trish: I'm just going to still go with my pre-prepared answer, because I think it's a good story that people should know, and it's the Italian children's story *Strega Nona*.

John Hodgman: *Strega Nona*, writing another good one. That's about—that's soup in that one, right?

Trish: It's actually pasta.

Jesse Thorn: It's spaghetti. It's pasta. It's a pasta pot.

(*Trish laughs.*)

Big Anthony. Big Anthony has a hard time managing that magic pasta pot.

John Hodgman: I said I couldn't remember. Okay. But it's got a pot. It's got a pot in it. And did you—and that was your pre-prepared answer?

(*Trish confirms.*)

Aaaand you're the soup flusher?

Trish: Yes. (*Chuckling.*) Don't say it like it's a bad thing!

John Hodgman: Uh-huh. Did you think that maybe the obscure cultural reference might be about soup?

(*Trish confirms.*)

Uh-huh. And *Strega Nona*'s about pasta.

Trish: That's correct.

John Hodgman: Alright. *Strega Nona*, great story. Interesting guess. *Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul*—I don't know, do people remember the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* books, Jesse Thorn? Is that still a thing that happens?

Jesse Thorn: I think at this point, in most of America's thrift stores, those books are structural.

(They laugh.)

John Hodgman: All guesses are wrong. *Strega Nona*'s is a good story. *Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul* can suck a matzo ball as far as I'm concerned. But the answer was a quote from a movie that we referenced fairly recently on the podcast.

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A movie about the quest for perfection in a specific kind of noodle soup called ramen, and that movie is called *Tampopo*, 1985. *Tampopo*.

Jesse Thorn: One of the best movies. What a great movie that is.

John Hodgman: It's a terrific movie that deserves more attention, and you should go watch it, and then you'll just want to eat ramen for the rest of your life. And why wouldn't you? Because kind of the most—I mean, is there a more delicious food, honestly? I mean, there are plenty.

Jesse Thorn: Pizza is up there. But besides that, I have a hard time thinking of any.

John Hodgman: It's hard to—there are only a few foods—Trish and Marlow, feel free, to weigh in on this. Like, there are only a few foods where I feel like, yeah, I could eat that for the rest of my life. And here they are: ramen. Like, to the exclusion of other foods. Right? If you had to pick one. Ramen, breakfast sandwiches, pizza, BBQ. Oh, tacos for you, right Jesse?

Jesse Thorn: Oh, love—well, I'm going to go with pupusas.

John Hodgman: Pupusas. You got any to add? I could do any one of those for the rest of my life probably.

Marlow: Yeah, I think mashed potatoes, scalloped potatoes (*laughing*) with veggies. I love fried chicken. Oh my gosh, and like queso, cheese dip. (*Laughs.*) Tortilla chips.

John Hodgman: You're telling me that if you could get full nutrition out of queso, you would be willing to just eat that with a spoon for the rest of your life?

Marlow: Yeah, probably. I mean, honestly, I'd probably be willing to bathe in it. (*Laughing.*) I could—if that was the only food I could ever have for the rest of life? Perfectly content.

John Hodgman: Let the record show: Marlow, fan of soft foods. Soft food.

(They laugh.)

You could have your jaw wired open and enjoy all of those special foods.

Marlow: But I'll tell you what. I throw the leftovers in the trash. I can tell you that.

John Hodgman: Look, thank you for trying to get this podcast back on track.

(They laugh.)

Trish, we'll save your forever food for later. That's a tease, because it's time to hear the case Who comes seeking justice in this court?

Trish: That would be me, Trish.

John Hodgman: Trish, you're the soup flusher! How is it that you are seeking justice against Marlow? You're flushing soup down the toilet! It would seem to me that you are accused of a food crime here. But what is the justice you seek?

Trish: I seek justice against Marlow, because this has been a year or more in the making of her teasing me about being wrong when I firmly believe that I am correct, and that I would like her to have to flush all future soup. *(Chuckling.)* Because it's unreasonable that she's requesting that I change my pattern, and now as a result I would like a verdict that she must change her pattern.

John Hodgman: So, let me understand this. What kind of soups are you flushing down the toilet?

Trish: Think of a chicken noodle soup, where you've got some left over, because you weren't hungry enough to finish all of it.

John Hodgman: I don't understand that concept, but okay. I know that people do stop eating sometimes. So, chicken noodle soup. Marlow, when did you first discover that Trish was flushing her chicken noodle soup down the toilet?

Marlow: Yeah, so I'll give you the full story. Our group of friends meets up usually every week on Wednesdays. We hang out, we paint—like, with watercolor. Trish is a very talented visual artist, and so we learn from her. But another thing that we'll do is to bring a weird food item for everyone to try, and that's called Try Club, and it's very fun.

(Everyone giggles delightedly.)

And so, one time, Trish brought a food to Try Club that was like some strange fruit that none of us had ever eaten before that was—

John Hodgman: Trish, do you remember what fruit it was?

Trish: Yes, it was palm seeds in a syrup.

John Hodgman: Palm seeds—I've never heard of that either.

Trish: Yeah, it's commonly sold in the international grocery stores. I got it from our local Korean store.

John Hodgman: And so, these would be seeds or a fruit?

Trish: It's like a fruit, but also a seed. It's very hard to describe. It's kind of gelatinous.

John Hodgman: Okay. Thank you very much. Continue, Marlow.

Marlow: Yeah, so it wasn't bad. It was fine. But at the end of the night, Trish was like, “Does anybody want to take these home?” And everybody said no, and Trish said no too. So, she's like, “Okay, I'll just get rid of them.” And mind you, we're standing in the kitchen at this moment—in someone else's house, our mutual friend's house. We're in the kitchen. She's holding this food item with food waste in it, because none of us want it. So, she starts walking away from the kitchen with this can.

And in order, she said, “Okay, I'm just going to throw it out,” and then exits the kitchen. And she's walking down the hall, and we're all like, “Where are you going?!”

John Hodgman: All of Try Club is agog.

Marlow: All of Try Club is confused! Where are you going? She goes, “Oh, I'm going to flush it down the toilet.”

John Hodgman: Wow.

Marlow: Now all of Try Club is yelling.

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Everyone. (*Laughs.*) Chaos. Chaos. Yelling. Berating her. She's seeing—her face is just surprised as if this is a normal—like she walked out of there like it was a normal thing to go flush stuff down this toilet! And apparently this was the first day that Trish learned that other people don't do that.

John Hodgman: Wow. Hang on. I'm looking up these palm seeds and syrup. Apparently they're good for a snack. According to the internet, they are the immature fruits of the Nepa palm or mangrove palm, which grow in soft mud and slow-moving tidal and river waters. Where'd you discover these, Trish? Had you had them before?

Trish: No, I had just seen them in YouTube videos where people were trying them. And I saw them at the grocery store, and I'm like I want to try them too! So, I brought them to Try Club.

John Hodgman: So, you brought them to Try Club, that makes sense. And now, wait a minute, did everyone in Try Club try it? Or did they just look at it and say, “Get rid of it.”

Trish: Everyone in Try Club almost always tries it, unless it's olives. And then they throw a fit.

John Hodgman: Try Club doesn't like olives?

Trish: (*Chuckling.*) Everyone's got bad opinions in Try Club.

John Hodgman: How many olives have you flushed down the toilet?

Trish: Oh, I eat them all every time.

John Hodgman: Okay. Alright. And so, how long ago was this, would you say?

Trish: Oh, easily over a year ago at this point. Yeah. We've been painting together for about two years.

John Hodgman: And you paint together once a week, and this is Art Night? Try Club at Art Night?

Trish: Yes.

Jesse Thorn: Are there any other notable clubs or associations going on in this event? Like, it also a meeting of the Lady Lions the Red Hat Society?

John Hodgman: Yeah, subgroupings. It sounds like a popup restaurant. Like, Try Club at Art Night, a Trisha & Marlow Concept.

(They laugh.)

You know, what restaurants are called now.

Jesse Thorn: Have you heard of Try Club at Art Night, a Trish & Marlow Concept? It's my favorite softball team.

(They laugh.)

John Hodgman: Trish, you sent in a photo of Art Club. There are one, two, three, four, five of you, including you and Marlow there. These photos obviously will be available on our *Judge John Hodgman* Instagram page, as well as our show page at MaximumFun.org, our headquarters, as well as all of our social medias. And I see here, one, two, three, four, five of you. Four of you are holding up—looks like watercolors or some other kind of painting of beautiful little trees. Marlow, you get extra credit cause you also painted a bushel of apples, it looks like. And Trish, you're standing in the background with nothing except two thumbs up. I was just wondering, why didn't you paint a tree or a bushel of apples?

Marlow: Yeah, weren't you working on something else?

Trish: Yeah, I had a big art project I was doing ahead of a deadline. And so, everyone else painted their things, and I was painting for my deadline.

John Hodgman: Oh, are you an artist by trade?

Trish: No, actually, I have a pretty technical role, but I paint in my free time, and I take it very seriously.

John Hodgman: Very nice. I also enjoy in this photo the profound foregrounding of a screw top bottle of wine, which I—

Trish: I thought about trying to remove it, but there's—the AI for removing stuff in Adobe is very iffy, so I did not.

John Hodgman: No, I mean, it's just you have a remarkable depth of field that I can see all of your faces behind this big bottle of wine. But I can imagine that enjoying a glass of wine as part of Try Club at Art Group—Art Night, I mean.

Marlow: I would argue that it's integral. (*Laughs.*)

John Hodgman: Integral Wine at Try Club at Art Night. Okay. So, getting back to the case at hand—or down the toilet, as it will. Trish, how did you feel when all of Try Club was like, “That's disgusting, and so are you”? That's what they said. It says here that that's what they said.

Trish: I realize this is an audio format, and so me giving the death stare does not help. (*Laughs.*)

Marlow: That is what we said.

John Hodgman: Well, we're on video now, too. Check us out on YouTube at [JudgeJohnHodgmanPod](#) on YouTube. You can definitely see me quail in the deadlights of your death stare.

Trish: So, I cannot describe how viscerally that I just feel like they're wrong. When they were getting so upset about me walking to someone else's toilet to flush this extra fruit, just like—it feels so innate to who I am and how I do chores that it just feels like they're all wrong. Like, it's just such a snap thing for me. I know Marlow's wrong when she teases me every single time.

John Hodgman: How does she tease you every single time? What does she say? “Hey, soup flusher.”

Trish: No, it's little things like her buying me a can of soup for my Christmas gift. It was a tree ornament! *(Laughs.)* Or time I say something that she even moderately disagrees with me, she will say, “Oh, it's like your soup opinion.” Like, she's just constantly bringing it up as an example of how wrong I am.

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And I just feel like she's wrong!

John Hodgman: And now you are simmering with rage, as it were.

Trish: Basically. Yes, I just really want her to have to flush soup. *(Laughs.)*

John Hodgman: Even the words “I just want her to flush soup” sounds gross. Trish, don't you hear what you're saying?

Trish: To me, the term “flush” does not insinuate something disgusting. It is just a part of doing a chore.

John Hodgman: Okay. Like when you flush your countertops after cooking or flush your kitchen floors, you know, once a week.

Trish: Precisely. *(Chuckles.)*

John Hodgman: Right. Like, how often do you flush your bed sheets?

(They laugh.)

I try to flush them about once a week, but I'll go by with two weeks, ‘cause I want to conserve water. You know what I mean?

Marlow: I tend to exclude the toilet from not-toilet related chores. *(Chuckles.)*

John Hodgman: You two are not roommates, right?

(They confirm.)

How do you know each other?

Marlow: I think we met through friends of friends. So, one of the ladies that comes to Art Night, she used to throw a lot of game nights at her house. And my partner and I had just moved into the city, so—

John Hodgman: And so, you're all just having Art Nights and Try Clubs and wine nights in the city. And the city in this case is Atlanta, Georgia?

Marlow: It is.

John Hodgman: Whew. You have fun down there. Seems like everything is fun.

Trish: We do.

Marlow: It is. It's great.

John Hodgman: And so, a year ago you saw Trish flush the palm seeds down the toilet. But how long ago—how long have you been friends together?

Marlow: It was pretty deep into our friendship that this happened.

Trish: I'd say two or three years now that we've been friends.

Marlow: Yeah, but we knew each other well. If Trish was still a stranger and that happened, I definitely wouldn't have berated her as much.

(They laugh.)

John Hodgman: I guess my question is if Trish was still a stranger when she flushed the palm seeds, would you have deepened your relationship at all with her? Or would you have even said like, "Mmm. That person's a soup-flusher, and I don't want to have anything to do with her."

Marlow: Honestly, that is such a good question. I think I would have to give it some thought. I think I would need to sit with it for a little bit. I think I probably would have left and been like, "Wow."

John Hodgman: Look, you know I'm an expert on palm seeds and syrup, 'cause I looked at the internet for about seven seconds. So, you can take it on authority when I say palm seeds and syrup are not soup. How did you learn that Trish was also flushing soup?

Marlow: Yeah, so when she came under attack for the palm seeds and syrup, she said, "You guys don't ever flush food down the toilet?"

And we're all like, "No, of course we don't do that. We have sinks, and most of us have garbage disposals right now."

And she goes, "Oh no, yeah, I flush like all soups or liquid food waste." And so, then it was an uproar again. We're yelling, everyone's yelling.

(Trish chuckles.)

Everyone's shaming Trish.

Trish: My mom was living with me at the time. She was living with me just briefly, and then when I went home I was recording a video of me flushing it—because they wouldn't let me flush it at my friend's house. And I'm like whatever, I'll take it home, and I'll flush it there.

(John “wow”s.)

So, I did. *(Laughs.)*

John Hodgman: Wait a minute, wait a minute. Let me just understand. You were going to flush the palm seeds in syrup. Try Club was aghast and said no. So, you said, “I'll show you, and literally show you.” And you took the extra palm seeds home to video flushing them down the toilet at home to send them to the group out of spite.

Trish: Yes. Correct.

John Hodgman: As part of Spite Night? Spite Night at Try Club at Art Night?

Trish: I like that. I feel like that would be very natural for our group to have Spite Night.

Marlow: Yeah. You're on it.

John Hodgman: I think that my ruling right there. Okay, so you get home with the palm seeds, and you're going to show them what for.

Trish: Yes, and my mom was living with me at the time. And so, I was able to like get her to tell me if she would flush things, because I had to get this from somewhere. It didn't just happen.

John Hodgman: That was going to be my next question! What's wrong with your mom?

Trish: My mom was like, “Yeah, flushing soup is a normal thing.” And so, every time I've had to refer to it—flushing soup, not flushing liquid waste. It's a lot easier to just say flushing soup. So, just to get back to your original question.

John Hodgman: Mm-hm. Mm-hm. And so, what other things do you flush besides soup then? If soup is a catch all term.

Trish: Leftover cereal, milk that's gone bad, any juice in the fridge that's extended over two weeks, just feels a little uncomfortable to drink. So, that goes in the toilet as well.

John Hodgman: Do you not have a sink?

Trish: *(Chuckling.)* I do have a sink.

John Hodgman: Is the toilet closer to the kitchen than the sink?

Jesse Thorn: Is your juice chunky?

Trish: No.

John Hodgman: Okay. Why don't you pour the juice and the spoiled milk down the drain?

Trish: I can't tell you how naturally it comes to me to just walk to the bathroom. And my house isn't that big. It doesn't take that much effort to go.

John Hodgman: Force of habit is what you're saying.

[00:20:00]

Trish: Yeah, that's a nice way of putting it.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: Judge John Hodgman, it is the MaxFunDrive! The most fun-derful time of the year.

(They laugh.)

John Hodgman: It's absolutely true, Jesse. It's the two weeks when we at Maximum Fun all come together to invite you—I'm speaking to you, person listening right now—to support this show as a member. Look, the only reason this show has been able to keep going for now over 650 episodes is because of listeners like you who became members of Maximum Fun and support the podcast.

Jesse Thorn: People I think sometimes think that we're making our money from advertising, or I don't know, grants.

John Hodgman: That's right. So many grants.

Jesse Thorn: *(Laughs.)* Yeah, but the truth is that 70% of Maximum Fun's budget comes from memberships. So, it's just people who listen to the show and think that it's worth paying for. When you become a member—go to MaximumFun.org/join and sign up for five or ten bucks a month. You tell that form what shows you listen to. The money that you are giving to Maximum Fun goes directly to those shows.

John Hodgman: Look, I'm sure you have had something that you love canceled over the past year. Maybe it's your favorite TV show, your favorite podcast, maybe your favorite completed Batgirl feature film that will never be seen, because corporations want to take a tax write-off more than they want to create media that people enjoy.

Jesse Thorn: Can I tell you what, John? I was talking with our bookkeeper, and she's new to the project. And I had told her last year was a rough year for podcasts. She took a look at the books, and she said, “Oh, I see what you mean, Jesse.”

(They laugh.)

And there's a reason that podcast networks are going out of business. There's a reason that your favorite shows that were, you know, frankly being funded by like speculative money from venture capitalists are getting canceled. And it's because these are tough media times across media, not even just podcasting. But luckily, with Maximum Fun, there is a direct way to pay for the content that you love to be created.

John Hodgman: Yeah. Luckily you're our bosses. And you decide whether we get to keep going, because we can only do it with your help. Will you join us at MaximumFun.org/join? Please say yes!

Jesse Thorn: And it's not just a matter of joining. You can also upgrade or boost your membership if you're already a member. The memberships start at five bucks a month, which is really accessible, I hope. At five bucks a month, you get access to a monumental library of bonus content that is only for Maximum Fun members, including years and years of *Judge John Hodgman* bonus content that's only available to members. Including episode two—both episodes!—of “Kinding Them With Kindness”, the only podcast where Richard Kind tells you what to do with your life.

John Hodgman: *(Chuckles.)* We'll talk more about that later, trust me. But if you're already a member, I will say thank you for supporting independent media for all these years. I can't say it enough. If you're already a member, you already know just how important you are to Maximum Fun and keeping it going. And I'm so grateful. And if you are already a member and you're able to, you can upgrade your membership now and get some cool thank you gifts while you do it!

Jesse Thorn: Have you seen the pins this year, John?

John Hodgman: These are some top pins—beautiful enamel lapel pins.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah, if you join at the \$10 a month level, you get access to these pins. Ours is really cool. We've made sure that it looked real. It says, “Friend of the Court”.

John Hodgman: That's right.

Jesse Thorn: People will know. You'll be wearing it at the grocery store. Somebody will say, “Excuse me. Is that—?”

And you'll say, *(smugly)* “Yes it is. Thank you for noticing.” And you'll feel great about being the person that supported the show that that other person at the grocery store loves. I see these pins exclusively as a medium for love connections, frankly, John.

John Hodgman: That's right. I had a little love connection with regard to an enamel pin from a previous MaxFunDrive when I was on a certain Jonathan Coulton Cruise recently, and it was a great conversation piece. And the fact is, I'm happier than ever about this year's pin. Because if you are contributing \$10 a month or more to Maximum Fun, you are definitely a friend of the court. This is truth in enamel pin advertising.

Jesse Thorn: I'll tell you what. We have had a lot of new shows at Maximum Fun this year. I don't know if you just saw. There was a big article by Jason Zinoman, the *New York Times* comedy critic, about our new show, *Valley Heat*.

John Hodgman: Incredible.

Jesse Thorn: That was pretty awesome. I've been listening to some new—a lot of people excited about *Black People Love Paramore*, one of our shows. A lot of great new shows at Maximum Fun. Jordan, my cohost on *Jordan, Jesse, Go!*, has a new show called *Free With Ads*. Lot of action.

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If you're one of the people who is already a member or was already a MaxFun listener but has added some new shows to the rotation, why not bump your membership up a little bit? So those shows get cut in. Or if you just have a little bit more means this year, you can give your membership a boost, also at MaximumFun.org/join.

But I don't want to focus too much on the different levels, because the honest truth is this: the difference that makes a difference to us is the difference between supporting the show and not supporting it. Any level means the world to us. Every level means the world to us. Everybody that goes to MaximumFun.org/join, what you are saying is, “This is content that's worth paying for. Like, this adds something to my life. I think it's worth paying for.” And that means everything to us. Both, you know, as creators—like, emotionally—but also simply in the practical matter of being able to make this show, book studios, and pay Jennifer, and pay for a new video editor, and get video equipment, and all of those things that are involved in making our program. They all come from folks who have joined. And if you're able to join at a super high level, God-or-Whatever bless you.

(*They chuckle.*)

But really, we are grateful to every single person who becomes a member. It's MaximumFun.org/join. If you think it's worth paying for, pay for it. Please.

John Hodgman: Yeah, I have to say that, you know, in this time when so many great things have been canceled, Maximum Fun as a network is not only sustaining and thriving thanks to its membership, but expanding and creating more and more incredible high-quality podcasts from people whose voices you're not going to hear anywhere else. And it's all because of your membership and your support over the years. It makes me very, very proud to be part of this network and very, very proud to be—quite honestly—a member. (*Chuckles.*) Because I am.

Long ago, I went to MaximumFun.org/join, and I'm so happy to be supportive of all the other shows in the network.

So, MaximumFun.org/join is where you ought to go if you'd like to become a member for the very first time. If you'd like to boost your membership or upgrade your membership level or just learn a little bit more, get a link that you can share with your friends or buy a gift membership: MaximumFun.org/join. There are so many ways for you to support Maximum Fun and the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast for that matter. And it all begins at MaximumFun.org/join.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

John Hodgman: I have many questions. I have to find them—I just have to ask them. Juice that you don't like anymore, milk—

Trish: Yeah, spoiled milk, cereal.

John Hodgman: Leftover cereal. Do you have a garbage disposal in your sink? Yes or no?

Trish: Yes, your honor.

John Hodgman: Well, alright. And then soup, obviously. Anything that sort of moves in the liquid or colloidal area is going to that toilet.

Trish: Very specifically, it has to be able to flow on its own for it to be considered for the toilet. But I cannot tell you how subconscious this decision is. Like, it is not like I have actively thought to myself, “Hm, should this go in the toilet?”

John Hodgman: And yet, you did create a soup disposal decision tree.

Trish: That is correct.

John Hodgman: That you shared with the court. This is also in evidence submitted by you, Trish.

(Trish confirms.)

It says, “Prepared by Trish, January 24, 2024.” Very official. And this is your attempt to break down what is a normally subconscious automatic process of judgment?

Trish: That's correct. I realize that this now, after going through all of this with my friends, does not come as naturally for some people. And I thought you would need the guided illustration.

John Hodgman: Well, I appreciate it. Because I'm—you know, each of the things that you do flush are different sort of cases of whether or not it's okay to flush in my mind. I mean, I

won't reveal my judgment yet, but some of those things are okay to flush, and some of those things are not okay to flush. And some of them are like, “Why would you bother flushing?”

But setting that aside, this is a picture of your brain, Trish, that you have submitted to us. Number one thing you determine is soup viscosity. Does it run on its own, or does it require, quote, “prodding”? If it requires prodding, immediately goes in the trash, right?

(Trish confirms.)

How do you prod a soup? Like, how do you determine soup prod-ability?

Trish: Yes, I have a couple examples. So, my grandmother—I grew up with my grandmother living in my home, and she would very commonly make stew and chili. And these were both very thick. You could not slide them out of the bowl on their own. You would need to use like a spoon to push them.

[00:30:00]

John Hodgman: Are you trying to tell Judge John Hodgman the difference between a soup and chili?

Trish: No, I'm just saying that these are things that cannot be flushed.

John Hodgman: That was the subject of the very first segment, the very debut of *Judge John Hodgman*.

Trish: No, I thought the debut was about those folks that wanted to like wash their hands in a certain sink with a certain soap.

John Hodgman: That was the first episode of *Judge John Hodgman* proper, but the show began as a segment on a little podcast called—what is it called, Jesse?

Jesse Thorn: *Jordan, Jesse, Go!*, babyyy.

John Hodgman: And the very first segment was “Is Chili a Soup”? And I said it is not, as you well know, and as you have pointed out. You can prod it. It's not a soup.

Trish: Yeah, exactly.

Marlow: Your honor, I just want to call to attention one thing.

John Hodgman: I'll allow it.

Marlow: I've heard reference to this thought tree, this algorithm that she uses. Number one is, if you'll notice, everything ends up flushed at the end.

(They laugh.)

The other thing is—

John Hodgman: We haven't done a t shirt for a while, but “everything ends up flushed” might be a candidate for some merch.

Marlow: I would be honored. *(Chuckles.)* The other thing is, every time I've heard reference to the rules about flushing, it's usually quickly followed with Trish saying, “Oh, but I didn't follow the rules last time.” So, she's giving you this flow sheet, but I think—

John Hodgman: So to speak.

Marlow: You know, now that we're sworn in here—and I would just remind Trish that she is under oath—how often are you breaking the rules of the flow sheet?

Trish: I don't have a number for you.

John Hodgman: Why don't you contemplate that just so that people understand the rules. ‘Cause we've—so far we've only gotten to: if the soup requires prodding, it goes in the trash. If it runs on its own—which is just also a fairly disgusting way to think of things, giving soup an agency that I don't want it to have.

Jesse Thorn: HA. No one wants autonomous soups!

John Hodgman: If it runs on its own, first of all, catch it. And then determine its meat content. If it is 50% or more meat, you remove the meat with a spoon and then flush it. If it is less than 50%, you determine fat content at room temperature. So, that means you're letting the soup cool completely. And if it has visible fat, you scrape the fat layer and then flush it. No visible fat, then it gets flushed. The only soup that doesn't get flushed is prod-able soup. Otherwise you're doing some manipulations before you flush the soup. Is that correct, Trish?

Trish: Yes. There are some edge cases present. I just want to address that for anyone who actually sees this flowchart. I'm aware.

John Hodgman: Everyone's going to see the flow chart.

Trish: *(Chuckling.)* Okay. Well, I just needed them to know that I didn't not think about it.

John Hodgman: That's the front part of the t-shirt. That's what's on the front of the t-shirt is the flow chart. On the back, it says, “Everything flushes in the end”.

(They giggle.)

Jesse Thorn: Why do you think that we started a YouTube channel? We started a YouTube channel so we could show the flowchart.

Trish: There were at least six more steps in the original version and recurrence, so I just had to like narrow it down. *(Laughs.)*

John Hodgman: How dare you withhold from me complexity in your decision tree?

Trish: Well, it would have been kind of bothersome to have to go through all that on an audio format. So. *(Laughs.)*

John Hodgman: Well, I understand. You're not wrong, Trish. You're not wrong, but I do initially order you produce the full first draft of the flowchart, which is now available on our show page and our Instagram. And we're going to show it—I can't see it now, but when this posts, it's going to be on YouTube right now. Let's take a look at it. Okay. I can only imagine that in the future I am astonished. Thank you for sharing that.

But in the meantime, Trish, I interrupted you. You were about to say something.

Trish: No, just to get back to your point, everything does end up in the toilet as long as it doesn't require prodding. *(Laughs.)* See, you're struggling to find issues with my argument because there are no issues with it!

Marlow: I don't think that's true.

John Hodgman: Oh, no, no, no, no, no. I'm trying to quickly make a mental flow chart of all of my arguments.

Marlow: I just want to bring us back to reality here. This is a flow sheet about putting food in the toilet. Still.

(They laugh.)

And it's just—it's just not where it goes! That's not where it goes.

John Hodgman: I know! You object on principle.

Marlow: Yes! *(Laughs.)* Also, you know, her plumbing! Who knows what's going on down there?!

John Hodgman: Well, I do have that question, Trish. Have you experienced plumbing problems?

Trish: Never once.

John Hodgman: Never once.

Trish: In my entire lifetime of flushing soup, never once had an issue with plumbing.

John Hodgman: And you've been doing this since you were but a child.

[00:35:00]

(Trish confirms.)

Do you remember the first time you ever flushed soup?

Trish: It was cereal. And yes, I do remember. *(Laughs.)* Because I was a child, and I asked my mom, “Where does this go?”

And she said, “In the toilet.”

And I went to the toilet, and I thought it was so charming. So, I just did it for the rest of my life.

Marlow: Is cereal soup?

John Hodgman: That is a question that we dare not broach.

(They laugh.)

Let me get back to this flowchart for a second. So, you're telling me that if—and is this always meat content? Or is it just chunks?

Trish: Meat content, because vegetables can go down the toilet just fine.

John Hodgman: No, they can't!

Trish: *(Tittering.)* Sorry, I'm laughing at your face.

John Hodgman: If they could, that pea soup would be going down!

Trish: I think that you're having a bias in judging this case, sir.

John Hodgman: What would be my bias?

Trish: That you don't want me to flush soup.

John Hodgman: Can I tell you something right now, Trish? I shouldn't have to establish my impartiality in this situation, but you have leveled a meaningful accusation.

Trish: Sorry.

John Hodgman: And I will say this.

Trish: I got a little spicy.

John Hodgman: Well, I hold you in contempt, but just so you know where I'm coming from, I will say this. You can flush juice down the toilet all the live long day. I don't care. I don't know why you would do it, because you have a functional sink, but there is no problem with regard to flushing pure liquids down the toilet. The reason I hesitated with regard to milk is the fat content. Now, you have pointed out in your flowchart that if there—if your soup has cooled and fat has congealed at the top, that you will scrape off that fat and put it in the garbage—as you well should do! Because you know you should not be dumping fat down your plumbing.

(Trish confirms.)

Marlow: So, I would love to interject here and add a level of detail, even to the concept of juice going down the toilet. Trish is on septic.

(John “woah”s.)

She is not in the city plumbing. So, even with juice—I mean, what are the implications of pouring sugar into a septic system? Much less fat, vegetables, and cereal or whatever else food she's putting in there?

John Hodgman: Well, I'll take that question first. As someone who has been the proud—I won't say owner, but companion of a septic system, because it's really—really, it has a life of its own. But I'll tell you, you still shouldn't be putting grease down your septic system, because that will cause—it will congeal and cause blockage. And I know about the fatberg, because I did do some intense research, which is I went to one plumbing website. Which had a page called, “Can you flush food down the toilet?” And I decided this person was an expert, because they are a plumbing and heating company in New Orleans, Louisiana. The proprietor is named Al Bourgeois, and he sounds like an expert to me. And he was like, “Do not flush any oils or fats down the toilet, because—” Or frankly, put them down your drain, even your garbage disposal, because it will cause a fatberg.

Jesse Thorn: Don't even put them down your pants!

John Hodgman: That's—excuse me, Al Bourgeois says that's where you should put them.

Jesse Thorn: Oh, okay. He sounds like a fun guy.

John Hodgman: Yeah, well, New Orleans. Let the good times roll.

(They laugh.)

Marlow: Maybe having to walk to the bathroom and flushing—you know, as an added couple of steps onto the food disposal process, we could just add a couple more steps, and you can just bury it in the yard.

John Hodgman: Do you live in a fairly—in a rural community or—? Is that why you're on septic? No.

Trish: I live in an old 1950s ranch style house in a suburb of Atlanta called Decatur. And it's pretty urban, I would say.

John Hodgman: But you're just not on the sewer.

Trish: I'm just not on the city sewer, because it's an old house.

John Hodgman: Got it. Marlow, you mentioned that Trish reports that even though she's created this flowchart, she sometimes doesn't follow it. And she flushes her own rules down the toilet from time to time. Is that correct?

(Marlow confirms.)

What kind of transgressions have you made, Trish? What rules have you broken in the flushing department?

Trish: I don't recall ever breaking a rule, so therefore there's been no rule breaking. *(Laughs.)*

Marlow: I would remind you that you're under oath. Okay?

Trish: Okay, well, sometimes I have—I don't want to admit this under oath. *(Laughs.)* Sometimes I have paint water. I won't flush turpentine; I know better. But sometimes I got acrylic paint water. It's gonna go down the sink when you're washing your brushes anyways, so if I've got a lot of really ugly paint water, I'll just toss it in the toilet.

Marlow: What were the last three soups that you flushed?

[00:40:00]

And did they all follow the rules?

Trish: Oh, I was sick recently. And they all followed the rules, because they were all Progresso cans that I couldn't finish, because I was sick. *(Laughs.)*

John Hodgman: What were the—I don't mind buzz marketing Progresso. They're pretty good. What were your—they're my brand of split pea. What were the ones?

Trish: One of them was split pea. One of them was—

John Hodgman: Wait, you flushed split pea?! You said that you couldn't flush split pea. It was prod-able.

Marlow: See?!

John Hodgman: Oh-ho-ho! This is an exciting show of *Matlock*.

(They laugh.)

Trish: Their split pea—if you've had it, you know it's runny.

John Hodgman: Oh, Progresso split pea is in a category of its own. It runs on its own.

Trish: It runs on its own.

John Hodgman: Gross.

Marlow: Oh, just more and more stipulations and conditions, so you can just weasel your little soup into the toilet.

Trish: This is correct. The other one was creamy chicken noodle, and then the other one was the one that was like chicken dumpling.

Marlow: Creamy chicken noodle didn't have any fat to remove then?

Trish: No, and it was room temperature! *(Laughs.)*

John Hodgman: I think the emulsification of the fat in the dairy is such that the fat would not separate out. I mean, when you're talking about a chowder of any kind or a cream of mushroom or a cream of chicken. Ugh.

Trish: Mm. Those can be flushed.

John Hodgman: I would—okay. So, Marlow, aside from your innate sense of disgust, you have three particular critiques—one of which involving the flow chart. Which, the more I say flow chart in this context, the more nauseated I get. What are the other two points that you wanted to raise about this practice?

Marlow: Yeah. So, I mean, I think any normal, sane human being knows that it's disgusting to flush food down the toilet. But just in case, you know—

John Hodgman: That's what we're trying to establish.

Marlow: Yeah. So, I just want to call your attention—

Jesse Thorn: Wait, is this a mental competency hearing?

Marlow: It could turn into that, Jesse.

Jesse Thorn: Can I just say hashtag #FreeBritney?

(They laugh.)

Marlow: No, I just—I want to bring attention to the sound that it probably makes to plop soup into the toilet.

John Hodgman: I mean, you very skillfully deployed the word plop there.

(They laugh.)

I think that counts as an onomatopoeia, and it grossed me out, so I hear you. But you haven't—I hear you, but you haven't heard it. You're presuming that there is a bad sound.

Marlow: I am.

Jesse Thorn: Are you responding to a sound that you have uncontrollably playing in your mind when you consider the possibility of this happening?

Marlow: Yeah, I can hear it really clearly in my brain.

Jesse Thorn: What kind of sound is it?

(Marlow makes a combination of snarling, popping, and slorping sounds that ends in a laugh.)

John Hodgman: Uuuh, I guess we didn't give the listener a warning there.

Marlow: But louder!

Jesse Thorn: I think the warning was, I said, "What kind of sound is it?"

(They laugh.)

John Hodgman: I don't think that's going to stop those letter writers from writing those letters.

Jesse Thorn: It wasn't going to be a beautiful horn solo, Judge Hodgman.

John Hodgman: I'll tell you what. I'm going to give the listeners a real big warning now. 'Cause I'm going to ask Marlow to make that sound more loudly and longer. Because I couldn't quite get it. And if you don't want to hear the sound of Marlow imitating soup plopping into the toilet bowl, you might want to fast forward five or—five seconds. Not more than five. Well, I don't know. How long can you keep it up, Marlow?

Marlow: *(Laughs.)* I don't know. I don't know if I can do it louder. I'm going to try.

John Hodgman: I'm going to count down so that people will know when to pause or whatever. Three, two, plop.

(Marlow repeats the noise, this time with extra choking and burbling. Jesse loses it.)

Gross.

Jesse Thorn: I may never eat soup again!

John Hodgman: So gross. So gross. But again, that's imaginary. That said, Trish, does it sound like that when you're flushing soup down the toilet?

Trish: I have never once thought about how it sounded when I've been flushing soup.

John Hodgman: But you've heard it!

Trish: I've heard it.

Jesse Thorn: Well, you have the sense when you're flushing soup down the toilet to wear those giant airport tarmac guy headphones over your ears.

(Trish agrees playfully.)

John Hodgman: It's also the case that, you know—and I don't want to be—I mean, this is for the kids in the audience. It's not just soup that plops in the toilet.

Trish: I didn't want to say it.

John Hodgman: I know. And yet, you know, there is that saying of how he thinks his soup doesn't stink, if you know what I mean.

(They laugh.)

There is a perception bias when you're making the sound and the smell that you don't really hear it or smell it the way someone else is, or if you're imagining it at Art Night or whatever. And then what was your other concern? There was a second concern besides noise.

Marlow: Oh, a big one. Splashback.

John Hodgman: Please don't say big one. That's another thing that I would like to—I would just like to take off the board, take it off the vocab.

Marlow: Important one. Splashback.

John Hodgman: Splashback.

Marlow: 'Cause if you're pouring soup—

[00:45:00]

It's gonna like—liquid, it bounces like equidistant to however far away from the waterline. It's gonna at least go like that high.

John Hodgman: I don't know enough about liquid physics, but I think that is a threat. I mean, Trish, what's the average height from which you are plopping your soup?

Trish: I make the effort to go closer to the toilet bowl when I'm flushing my soup.

John Hodgman: Okay, again, but why?

(They laugh.)

I mean—

Trish: Because I don't want splash back!

John Hodgman: Well, no, I understand that!

Jesse Thorn: Judge Hodgman, it's like when you're boiling pasta. You want to get it close to the boiling water, so that you don't burn yourself.

John Hodgman: Of course, I understand that! But again, it's like you have a sink! I mean, when you're at the point where it's like, "I need to get really close to this toilet bowl so as to not splash soup back up in my face," that could be a moment where you're like, "Maybe my mom was wrong." I don't know.

Trish: That's a fair, judgment, yeah. But it still comes naturally to me to walk to the toilet and do my flushing routine. It's not a big deal.

John Hodgman: Have you ever violated your own rules for soup disposal?

Trish: I have flushed split pea soup down my toilet.

(Jesse cackles.)

John Hodgman: After plopping that soup down the toilet, how can you look yourself in the bathroom mirror knowing that you violated your own rule?

Trish: Funnily? Just it's easy. I just look at myself, and I'm like, "You did the thing that you normally do."

John Hodgman: *(Laughs.)* That is a great way to start the day! Marlow, how is this, in any universe, your business? It's not your septic system. It's not your house. It's not your rules, right? I mean, how does this affect you such that you even have standing to bring this case against your friend, Trish?

Marlow: Well, I just—you know, in the index incident of which we're all talking, right? She was going to flush food down the toilet, and it was not her house. It was our friend's house.

John Hodgman: And did she get it down there? Or did you all like grab her and wrestle her to the ground before she could flush it down the toilet?

Marlow: No, yeah, she never made it. We shamed her so much.

John Hodgman: She never made it. I mean, how did you feel when you were shamed in that way, Trish?

Trish: It's not uncommon that my friends will find a way to shame each other about silly topics. I felt kind of well-loved by my friends, which is why when I was writing out this case that—

John Hodgman: Are these healthy relationships?

(They laugh.)

Marlow: We actually really are.

John Hodgman: I feel when my friends shame—when Mommy and Daddy shamed me, I know they love me.

Trish: It's all the teasing. But no, when I was writing out this case, the specific ask isn't that they stop teasing me about it. Because I like it when they tease me; it shows me that they love me, and it's funny. But—

John Hodgman: Yeah, your specific ask is not that they stop teasing. It's that they start flushing.

Trish: Precisely, thank you.

John Hodgman: It says here your ideal ruling would be for Marlow to have to flush soup down her toilet.

Trish: Every time. Moving forward.

John Hodgman: And why? Every time?! Why?!

Trish: For one, she's on city plumbing. Like, why not?

John Hodgman: Oh, she can really live it up now!

Jesse Thorn: If she was on the sewer system, she'd be flushing meat. She'd be flushing vegetables. Baby alligators. Judge Hodgman, can I ask you a question?

John Hodgman: You may.

Jesse Thorn: You live in New York City.

John Hodgman: That's true.

Jesse Thorn: Brooklyn, New York City.

John Hodgman: Alright. Getting a little too precise, but okay.

Jesse Thorn: As a West Coaster, I was shocked to learn one day from, I believe, our mutual friend Kurt Andersen—the host of the former public radio program *Studio 360*—that in New York, because of sewer laws, almost no one has a garbage disposal. Do you have a garbage disposal?

John Hodgman: So, for many years, it was understood that garbage disposals were not to be allowed in Manhattan in particular. And we did not have one when I lived in Manhattan. We do have one now, in Brooklyn. And I believe that that ended up being a literal urban myth. Now I think that no one cares. I don't know why. Maybe there's been an improvement in disposal technology or whatever, but I definitely use a garbage disposal in Brooklyn for sure. But Jesse, that raises a good point. Trish and Marlow, do you have garbage disposals?

Marlow: You're never gonna believe this answer.

John Hodgman: I will decide.

Trish: I do have a garbage disposal.

Marlow: Trish has a garbage disposal, I do not.

John Hodgman: Wow. That's quite a reversal.

Marlow: Yeah, and she's the one flushing food.

John Hodgman: And can you imagine? She's the one!

Jesse Thorn: So, Marlow, you have the—I'm gonna say it—moral fortitude to pick up the little strainer thing—

[00:50:00]

—when it's full of tiny pieces of chicken and little noodles and bring it to your trash can?

Marlow: I do.

Jesse Thorn: What a hero.

Marlow: I know.

John Hodgman: Under what circumstance, Trish—even if I were to find in your favor and say, go for it, flush your soups—what possible reason would I have to order Marlow to do something that she finds disgusting?

Trish: Spite.

John Hodgman: Fair. I think I've heard everything I need to in order to make my decision!

(They chuckle.)

I'm going to go look up the laws of garbage disposals in New York City, so I can know what I'm talking about by the time I come back and render my verdict.

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

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

Trish, how are you feeling about your chances right now?

Trish: *(Sighing.)* To get the verdict that I actually want? Very low.

Jesse Thorn: I'm glad that you said that with the appropriate amount of shame. Marlow?

Trish: I mean, I'm hopeful! It would be really great if I could just watch Marlow just once flush soup down the toilet. But I recognize, and I'm realistic.

Jesse Thorn: Marlow, how are you feeling?

Marlow: I feel pretty confident. I am concerned about the judge's comment that it's okay to put juice down. It makes me feel like there's some compromise in which I'm going to have to flush something that doesn't go in the bathroom. But I think overall—I think my chances are good. I've made the arguments that I could make, you know. It's up to Judge John Hodgman now.

Jesse Thorn: I really appreciate your viscosity distinctions here. You're like, “Juice? I don't know. Kern's Nectar? Definitely not.”

(They laugh.)

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

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: We're taking a quick break to talk about the MaxFunDrive, which is on right now. We've been doing all kinds of cool, fun stuff for the MaxFunDrive. I know, John, me and Jordan from *Jordan, Jesse, Go!* have—sorry, Jordan and I. Jordan and I!

John Hodgman: *(Chuckling.)* You know what? I give up. Go ahead! Me and my grammar pedantry are finished correcting you on this. It's 2024. It's the MaxFunDrive. Have some fun with it, Jesse! Say whatever you want.

Jesse Thorn: We're even putting on a live show here in Los Angeles. We've been doing all kinds of stuff. There was a whole series of *Go Fact Yourself* episodes featuring MaxFun hosts that dropped all across the network.

John Hodgman: Crossover event! It was great.

Jesse Thorn: I made—me and Jordan made a podcast with the guys from—Dave and Graham from *Stop Podcasting Yourself*, called, *Jordan Stop Jesse Podcasting, Go Yourself*.

John Hodgman: *(Laughs.)* Wow. Talk about an Avengers-level crossover of podcasting talent.

Jesse Thorn: But we have something reeeally special from *Judge John Hodgman* for Maximum Fun members.

John Hodgman: That's right. So, we mentioned before we have a members only bonus episode this year. We recorded—we got a chance to sit down again with Richard Kind. Now, Richard Kind is someone whose face and voice—let me put it this way, you know his voice from *A Bug's Life* and *Inside Out* and so many other great animated films. And you know his face from *Red Oaks*, where I met him, from *Mad About You*, from *Spin City*, and of course you know his face from every Mitsubishi Delica you've ever seen out in the wild. Richard Kind is one of the most incredibly funny, thoughtful, and—well—ferociously talented

character actors. And I'm so lucky that we have him on speed dial and that every time we want to sit down with him, he'll come and sit down and just—

Jesse Thorn: He just wanders in there and is like, “Steven Sondheim?! Here's six anecdotes!”

John Hodgman: (*Laughs.*) I don't think Richard Kind has ever walked into a room without being mid-anecdote.

(*Jesse laughs.*)

And once again, we went to you, our membership, to say, “Hey, do you have any questions, and do you seek any life advice from Richard Kind?” You gave us your questions, and he gave you some answers along with all kinds of sparkling conversation. It's “Kinding Them With Kindness Part Two, Look Who’s Kinding Now?”, and it's just the tip of the bonus content iceberg. We have a library full of bonus content.

Jesse Thorn: You know what's bonus content that's close to my heart?

John Hodgman: What's that?

Jesse Thorn: *Shooting the Bries.*

John Hodgman: *Shooting the Bries* with me and Jordan. This is an annual podcast where me and my friend Jordan eat cheese and talk about it, and we've got plans for *Shooting the Bries* '24 already.

Jesse Thorn: This is how this came about. I, of course, host *Jordan, Jesse, Go!* with Jordan. I host *Judge John Hodgman* with John. John, one day on the show was talking about working at a cheese shop, and I remembered that Jordan used to work at Silver Lake Cheese here in Los Angeles. Like, when we first moved to LA, he worked at Silver Lake Cheese. And I said—

[00:55:00]

“Great news! We’re making a cheese podcast!” And our colleague Jesus Ambrosio, produced it. It is a very, very special program with actual cheese content. Like, I can't emphasize enough. There is real cheese stuff in here.

John Hodgman: May I give you a cheese tease for this year's ep?

Jesse Thorn: I'd love a cheese tease.

John Hodgman: Jordan and I are talking about eating some of the spiciest cheeses on earth.

Jesse Thorn: Oh! Oh-ho-hooo!

John Hodgman: We're going to—it's going to be a *Hot Ones*, but cheese. This is what we're thinking. I guess I'm committed to that now. I'm a little scared. I'm a little scared. 'Cause there's some cow Carolina Reaper pepper jacks out there, but we're going to have a good time, and you're going to have a good time too. It's called bonus content, members only. It also includes all of our bonus content episodes from all the years past, including the perennial fave, Jesse Thorn supercut reacting to pets, laughing at pictures of dogs. And speaking of supercuts, Jesse—I'm gonna promise you, the listeners, something extra. A bonus-bonus episode, if you will.

Some of you may remember that when we went on tour last fall, I would open some, if not every evening, doing an impersonation of the musical recording artist, Tom Waits. And we taped all of that. And I'll tell you what, if we reach network-wide 6,000 new upgrading or boosting members by the end of this, the first week of MaxFunDrive, then we will release a super cut of all of my Tom Waits impersonations. All of them. It's going to be long. It's going to be very Waits-y. It's going to be very gravelly. 6,000 members by the end of this week, we're going to release an extra bonus-bonus episode right into the feed. John Hodgman sings Tom Waits interminably.

All of our bonus content shows from *Judge John Hodgman*, including this year's “Kinding Them With Kindness Part Two, Look Who's Kinding Now”, as well as aall of the bonus content shows from all of our Maximum Fun shows are available right now, if you're a member. And if you're not yet a member, you can become one right now by going to MaximumFun.org/join.

Jesse Thorn: John, I've been doing this a long time. You and I have been doing this a long time, and I was doing it a long time before you and I started doing it together.

John Hodgman: That's right.

Jesse Thorn: This year, Maximum Fun became a fully worker-owned cooperative, which means that the owner of Maximum Fun, but I'm only the owner of Maximum Fun to the same extent that Jennifer Marmor is the owner of Maximum Fun, that Danny Baruela or Stacey Molski or KT Wiegman or any of our colleagues at Maximum Fun are the owner of Maximum Fun. I'm really proud of that.

(John agrees.)

Like, one of the things that I really wanted was for people who joined MaxFun, who already—I think, I hope—knew that, at MaxFun, creators own their shows. I wanted them to feel good that this business is owned by its workers. So, when you go to MaximumFun.org/join—you know, you give your \$140 to NBA League Pass or whatever. Goodness knows where that money's going.

John Hodgman: I know. I don't know why I even have one. 'Cause I don't ever watch sports, but there I go. \$140 to the NBA every year.

Jesse Thorn: Whatever it is, right? That money tends to accumulate with the capital, you know? It's just how it works. The money rolls up, right? At Maximum Fun, when you become a member, you know that you're not just directly supporting the shows that you like, but you're directly supporting the folks who work on them.

John Hodgman: And the dogs. Maximum Fun is a family of creative people, both on the mic and behind the scenes. And many of them are dog lovers. And if you don't become a member, those dogs are going to starve. Not to be dramatic!

Jesse Thorn: Junior, don't listen to John.

John Hodgman: No, Junior isn't going to starve. No dogs are going to starve. But I'll tell you, you know, one of the things that has been so exciting since we've become an employee-owned cooperative is that now on every level, it's been what's true for the creators and for the listeners since the beginning: everyone has a stake in this family of podcasts. You know, I've been getting a lot of letters from people who have just started listening this year, which is extremely exciting to me. I'm so glad you found the podcast. And you might now just be hearing about the MaxFunDrive and how Maximum Fun has always been creator-owned, and now how Maximum Fun is also employee-owned. And you might have just begun to sense just how Maximum Fun is different. We are not merely a podcast network. We are a family of friends and colleagues. We do not compete with each other. We support each other. We like each other. We listen to each other's podcasts.

[01:00:00]

We can't wait to get onto each other's podcasts! And I share Jesse's excitement that that sense of community now extends to our employees who make everything go. You know, it's absolutely true that your memberships for the health insurance and the salaries and the ability for all these creative people that you don't get to hear from on mic all the time, but they get to live and thrive in a community that supports them and where they can do their work for a good living and have a stake in the ownership. It's an incredible experiment. And I dare say it's an experiment that, in contrast to a lot of other podcast companies and media companies and networks recently, has been proven to work where others have failed. Because we believe in each other, and we believe in you, the listener. And we love that you believe in us enough to support us directly with your memberships.

I've said in the past just how meaningful this show been for me, not merely because it created a lifeline through difficult times—my opportunity to speak to my friends, Jesse and Jennifer; my opportunity to speak to my friends, you the listeners; and to interact with you! But also to sustain me during times when I think we all felt that it was quite bleak. I want to make sure that everyone knows how grateful I am to all of you who have been members in the past, but I also want to make sure to let the new listeners know this is what it's all about. A long time ago, during the MaxFunDrive, I said that if there is a creator that you like and you want to support, and you're able to, support them in the way they ask you to. Support them in the way they ask you to. And we are now asking for your support—old listeners and new.

MaximumFun.org/join is where you can go and show us that you value the work we do, that you value the work the Maximum Fun producers and staff and community managers and

everyone else who works on the enterprise—that you value their work enough to pay them. It's something that's woefully missing. Compensation for work performed, unfortunately, is woefully missing in this new economy. But I'm glad to say that it's never been missing in the support that we've had from our members, and I hope that will include you this year by going to MaximumFun.org/join.

Jesse Thorn: That's MaximumFun.org/join.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

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

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

John Hodgman: Well, I was doing a little research in my chambers, and I have some more specific information for you. In fact, Kurt Andersen was correct, and it was not an urban myth. Garbage disposals were banned in New York City across all five boroughs until 1997. Trish and Marlow, you weren't even born yet, I betcha. I do remember the day. I do remember the day, now that it's refreshed in my memory, in 1997 when they were like, “Yeah, you can have garbage disposals now.” Everyone in New York had a disposal party. It was terrific. We were all so excited. I also went back to revisit that famous website, from the plumber in New Orleans, Al Bourgeois. And Al Bourgeois's website specifically says, “Which Foods Not to Flush” as a list. And it says, “Short answer, all foods.”

So, why should I go against Al Bourgeois? Well, for one thing, this is a point of connection between Trish and her mom. It is a family tradition that she shares. And I appreciate, perhaps more than some, the feeling of an initial transgressive thrill when your mom instructed you to flush your cereal down the toilet. That's an exciting thing to do as a child. I bet it still feels great to do it.

Trish: It does.

John Hodgman: But I can tell you this right now. I understand this temptation, because those of you who read *Vacationland*, my book—which is called *Vacationland*; it's available wherever you get books. When my wife, who is a whole human being in her own right, and I took over a home in Western Massachusetts that not only had a septic system just like you got, Trish, but also a garbage disposal? Because we had been living in New York, we hadn't had one for a long time; we were very excited about it. And indeed, we flushed a whole bunch of cereal. Well, we didn't flush it. We disposal-ed a whole bunch of cereal down the sink. And this was a catastrophic plumbing failure, because all that cereal just swelled up and became a cereal tumor in the pipes. And we had to have a plumber come and cut it out. And he had to tell us, “Cut it out.”

[01:05:00]

And he also told us, “You shouldn’t have a garbage disposal at all here, if you have a septic system.”

And we're like, “Why?”

He said, “Because you're going to put the wrong stuff down. You're going to be tempted to put the wrong stuff into your septic system.” Now, I bet there are going to be a lot of people who are going to be angry, Trish, that you suggested that if you were on the city sewer, you might just be flushing meat down the toilet willy nilly. But you're not on the city sewer. So, please don't send me those letters, everybody! That is something that I'm willing to leave to ambiguity at this point. But what is true is that you're on a septic system, and maybe you shouldn't have a garbage disposal. And maybe you aren't entitled to any drains at all! Because when you go to the EPA—that's the Environmental Protection Agency—dot gov—and I know how you feel about the nanny state, Trish. I know you and your mom are like, “You can't tell me not to flush cereal down my toilet!”

Jesse Thorn: “I'll flush down all the incandescent light bulbs I want!”

John Hodgman: Exactly. They do have a list that is more specific than Al Bourgeois, in terms of what you should not be flushing down the septic system. And that includes cooking grease and oil—which you are trying to mitigate—non-flushable wipes, photographic solutions, feminine hygiene products, condoms, dental floss, diapers, cigarette butts, coffee grounds, cat litter, paper towels, pharmaceuticals, and household chemicals like gasoline, oils, pesticides, antifreeze, and paint! These are all the things that should not be going into your septic system, according to the EPA, via any hole in your house—garbage disposal or not. And the reason for this, aside from the fact that Cheerios will clog up your pipes, is that your septic system is a living ecosystem that has live organisms in it that are digesting the things that you have digested and are breaking them down to go out into your leech field.

And according to the EPA.gov, various things that you might pour down the drain—whichever way it goes, particularly toxins and other things—can kill these organisms and harm your septic system. So, that's like chemical drain openers, oil-based paint solvents, or large volumes of toxic cleaners. And then it recommends also get rid of your garbage disposal, which will reduce the amount of fats, grease, and solids that enter your septic tank and could clog the drain field, according to the EPA. Like, it will reduce your temptation to put this stuff into your septic system. Your septic system is a sensitive stomach.

Basically, my verdict is this. I think you should be concerned about what you're actually sending down your pipes, because you're on a septic system. And as someone who has dealt with septic emergencies in the past, both actual and metaphoric, it's not something you want to have happen. But it's your septic system. It's your risk. It's your property. It's your prerogative to flush soup down. And I absolutely agree with Marlow that thinking about you flushing pea soup down your toilet is a highly charged image that I wish I didn't have in my head. But Marlow, that's your problem. Noooooone of this is your business. Everything that happens in Trish's home is Trish's business. And the fact that it causes you to think about stuff and to think about sounds and to replicate sounds that are gross, that—you have to use discipline there. But I urge you as a septic system owner to take your flowchart and show it to

a septic professional and make sure that this is all copa-septic (*copacetic*). Alright. I'll see myself out.

(Jesse chortles.)

That was not okay. I'm seeing myself out for saying, "I'll see myself out" too. That's another crime. A pun and a cliché. Oh, and there I accidentally triggered balloons, because I counted to two using a Macintosh computer.

Jesse Thorn: Uh, that happened!

(They chuckle.)

John Hodgman: In any case, I don't want your septic system to have problems. But I do think your flowchart—when you follow it and don't just blow it off, because you want to prod some soup down for fun—when you follow your routine, I think that it's probably okay. If I were you, I would check with a septic professional. And then Marlow, if I were you, I'd do my very best to flush the memory of all of this down the toilet of your mind and try to forget this ever happened.

[01:10:00]

You can't be flushing things down in other people's houses though, Trish. You understand that, right? The next time you go to Art Night, no flushing. But otherwise, I'm grabbing my big gavel. I rule in Trisha's favor, this is the sound of a gavel.

Sound Effect: A particularly chuggy toilet flush.

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.)

Trish, how are you feeling?

Trish: I really just wanted to see Marlow have to flush soup exactly once in my life, and now that I have been given the verdict that I'm allowed to maybe flush soup in my own home, maybe one day I can convince her to give it a try at my house!

Jesse Thorn: *(Chuckles.)* Marlow, how are you feeling?

Marlow: Honestly, I'm perplexed at the little spark of joy that just *(giggling)* ignited in me to do something naughty and put food down the toilet at someone else's house! I don't know, that was surprising even for me. I'm gonna have to digest that a little bit, I think.

Jesse Thorn: Trish and Marlow, we sure appreciate you coming on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. Thanks.

Marlow: Thank you.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: Another *Judge John Hodgman* case is in the books. We'll have Swift Justice in just a moment. First, our thanks to Redditor u/ironymaiden_ for naming this week's episode "Flush to Judgment". I think that's a repeat for u/ironymaiden_, don't you think, Judge Hodgman?

John Hodgman: Yeah, absolutely. Good job, u/ironymaiden_.

Jesse Thorn: You can see from the name that's, kind of their thing.

John Hodgman: They know how to—yeah, absolutely. What was the pun that I made? Oh, copaseptic. Yeah, that's my new Reddit name, u/Copaseptic. u/CopasepticHodge.

Jesse Thorn: Oh boy. Well, if you want to join the conversation with Copaseptic, it's [MaximumFun.Reddit.com](https://www.reddit.com/r/MaximumFun). That's also where we ask for our title suggestions. You can chat about this week's case. Evidence and photos from the show are posted on our Instagram. That's [@JudgeJohnHodgman](https://www.instagram.com/judgejohnhodgman) or [Instagram.com/judgejohnhodgman](https://www.instagram.com/judgejohnhodgman). We also post them on this episode's page at [MaximumFun.org](https://www.maximumfun.org). We're on TikTok and YouTube now! [@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...). So, watch every single episode of our show on YouTube. On our YouTube channel, catch highlights and special exclusive stuff on both YouTube and TikTok

John Hodgman: Yeah, definitely tune in there and watch us accidentally trigger a fireworks display just by raising two thumbs. There we go. Woo! We had a good time with that, discovering that new feature that no one asked for. Hey, I'm a Mac.

Jesse Thorn: And video of every single *Judge John Hodgman* premieres live every Wednesday morning at 9AM Pacific, lunchtime, noon Eastern. So, you can watch live if you subscribe and ask for those notifications and so on and so forth.

John Hodgman: Watch while you're having lunch on the East Coast, and then flush your soup down the toilet after it's terrific. And speaking of cool screen names, thank you to BahiaHonda76 over there on Apple Podcasts. Left a wonderful five-star rating. They say that the show is, quote, "Fun, light, and above all just." Unquote. Thank you very much. Leaving reviews, over at Apple Podcasts or wherever you have a chance to review, really, really, helps people discover the show. If you're listening to us over there, why don't you give us a rating and review? And if you listen to podcasts another way, you can rate and review, or you can just say to a friend, "Hey, this is a good podcast. *Judge John Hodgman*." It really helps us.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah. Send a friend a favorite episode. It's a big deal. It makes a big difference for us. The *Judge John Hodgman* podcast, created by Jesse Thorn and John Hodgman, Nattie

Lopez, our social media manager. Our video editor, Daniel Speer. Our podcast editor, AJ McKeon. Our producer, Jennifer Marmor.

John Hodgman: Let me just bust in here for a second. I just want to say, I recognize these names, right? I know these incredibly talented people. I know Natty, I know Daniel, I know AJ. Of course, I know our friend, Jennifer Marmor, who is the incredible producer of this show. Me and my friend, Jesse, we've been making the show for a long time. I know these people! I know how talented they are. And my question to you is Jesse, how do they get paid?

Jesse Thorn: From members of Maximum Fun. And you know what? Like, I want to point something out. This bit of our show where we list the people who work on the show, it's a longer bit than it used to be. The reason is that we've been able to, because of your membership and support, add our social media manager, add our video editor. You know, every single episode of Judge John Hodgman is now on YouTube because of your support. We're so grateful to have Daniel's help on the show. And we've got to keep that support growing, so we can keep those services growing. I want to keep growing the payroll of *Judge John Hodgman* so we can make a better and better program. And the way that we're able to do that is through your support.

John Hodgman: Yeah, it's so exciting that over the years when other companies have been contracting—

[01:15:00]

Maximum Fun and the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast has been able to expand and do more—not just sustain, but grow. And that's because you, the Maximum Fun members, have made it possible. If you've never been a MaxFun member, all I ask is give it a try. It starts at just five bucks a month. That's just like a little bit more than a buck a show if you only listen to *Judge John Hodgman*! If you're listening to more Maximum Fun podcasts, you get an even bigger bargain at that five bucks a month level, and you get bonus content and the satisfaction of knowing that you've contributed to keeping something you love going. If you are a member already and you're able to support a little bit more, we certainly would appreciate it. You can upgrade your membership a level and get some fancy swag that you can learn all about over at MaximumFun.org/join. Or even if you can't upgrade a level, just boosting it by a few dollars a month or so, it all helps.

Please do it now before you forget. Did you forget? Here I am to remind you!
MaximumFun.org/join.

Jesse Thorn: At MaximumFun.org/join, you can check out all the thank you gifts, the “friend of the court” pin, our new tote bag, Maximum Bag.

(John laughs.)

This is a bag so sized that you can fit in it the unit of measurement we use at MaxFun, John—you can fit a medium sized dog into it.

John Hodgman: Ah, a medium sized dog. How many medium sized dogs? One? Great. I'll take it. Max Bag.

Jesse Thorn: And a lot of other stuff, but it's all stuff that's only available during the MaxFunDrive and only available to MaxFun members. Go to MaximumFun.org/join. That's MaximumFun.org/join. And don't put it off. Just go for it. Just do it. Now, Swift Justice, where we answer small disputes with quick judgment. Adelaide Shawn from the MaxFun subreddit says, "My wife is a couple years older than I am. We're both in our late 50s, and she hates it when I say that I am getting old. It makes her feel really old. Can I petition the court for permission to describe myself as getting old?"

John Hodgman: Thank you, first of all, Adelaide Shawn, for making me feel relatively young. If your partner says, "I don't—when you say something like 'I'm getting old' makes me feel old," then you can't say it. You can say it to yourself. You can think about it. Maybe talk about it with a therapist! But there's no reason to bum out the person you love by saying things that she or they or he have already indicated they don't want to think about. So, yeah. You can describe yourself as getting old here, there, everywhere, but just when you're with your partner, just focus on feeling relatively young. Like me, Judge John Hodgman, a guy with a bad beard.

Hey, today we heard about an exciting food disposal system that remarkably was not from a weird dad. And this one, we out that it's pretty gross, but you know, functional. What are some other disputes you have though, that give you the ick? Did you go on a date with someone that was going great until they said or did something that made you go, "Ooh, cringe"? Did you maybe say "cringe" out loud? Does your roommate—

Jesse Thorn: Ugh, cringe!

John Hodgman: Exactly so. Does your roommate want to watch gory movies, and you can't stand to watch gory movies? 'Cause cringe or ick? Do you love to keep fresh flowers in your home, but your partner can't stand the smell? Or do you like to keep a corpse flower in your home that blooms every however many years and smells like a decaying body?

Jesse Thorn: Do you live in an arboretum?

(They chuckle.)

John Hodgman: Tell us about your icky disputes at MaximumFun.org/jjho.

Jesse Thorn: And of course, we'll take any old dumb dispute at MaximumFun.org/jjho. No case too big or too small. We judge them all. Just think about your life, think about your friends and enemies, and type it all into that text box at MaximumFun.org/jjho. 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!