

[00:00:00]

Jesse Thorn: Welcome to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. I'm Bailiff Jesse Thorn. This week, Property Cousins". Matthew brings the case against his cousin Kasey. Matthew says Kasey is too caught up in buying rundown buildings without a proper plan. He thinks Kasey should step back from the attempted acquisitions and strategize better. But Kasey says he does have a plan! And he says these buildings are vital. 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: They don't look like Presbyterians to me!

Bailiff Jesse Thorn, please swear the litigants in.

Jesse Thorn: Matthew and Kasey, please rise and raise your right hands.

(Chairs squeak.)

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

(They swear.)

Do you swear to abide by Judge John Hodgman's ruling, despite the fact that he's due for major renovations?

(They swear.)

Judge Hodgman, you may proceed.

John Hodgman: I am due for major renovations. I got cat scratch fever!

Jesse Thorn: Oh no. Got scratched by a cat.

John Hodgman: Scratched that. You know what the name of the cat was? This is all off mic, by the way. You know what the name of the cat was, you guys? Kyle. Ugh!

Kasey: Oh, it would be a Kyle. Weird.

John Hodgman: Ughhh! Blame Kyle.

Kasey: Kyle is a Derek.

John Hodgman: You know what? Leave it in. Before we started officially recording, I was explaining that my friend's cat Kyle scratched my hand during a friendly game of cards. I wasn't playing cards with the cat. I was playing cards with humans, trying to pet a cat and show it affection. And it, fairly reasonably within cat logic, just wailed on me, on my hand. And now I think I got cat scratch fever. But we'll leave that aside. Matthew and Kasey—I almost called you both Kyle. Kyle and Kyle, you may be seated for an immediate summary judgment on one of your favors. Can either of you name the piece of culture that I referenced as I entered the courtroom? I'll repeat it for you because it was so swift!

“They don't look like Presbyterians to me.”

Matthew, what's your guess?

Matthew: My guess is *Children of the Corn*.

John Hodgman: *Children of the Corn*. Now, Matthew, of the two of you, you're the one who has admitted to listening to *Judge John Hodgman* in the past.

Matthew: That's true.

John Hodgman: So, take a moment to explain to Kasey what's happening here.

Matthew: At the beginning of every show, there is an obscure cultural reference. And if you guess what it's from, you will win immediately. Is that correct, Judge?

John Hodgman: That is the basics. As well, you might tell Kasey that the obscure cultural reference usually has some connection to the case at hand.

Matthew: That's also true. Which makes my guess—

John Hodgman: So, my question to you, Matthew, is what are you doing? What does *Children of the Corn* have to do with anything?

Matthew: (*Laughs.*) Honestly, it just popped into my head, Judge.

John Hodgman: I love it.

Matthew: Is there a church in *Children of the Corn*?

John Hodgman: Maybe there's a church in *Children of the Corn*. Alright. I wasn't going to write it down, but now I am. *COTC*, *Children of the Corn*. Also my favorite *Children of the Corn* subreddit. All right, Kasey, you get the idea of what this game is all about, right?

Kasey: I am. And Ruggs is honestly more suited to this than I, but—

John Hodgman: Ruggs, of course, is the nickname for Matthew. Is that Ruggs with one G or two?

Kasey: Two Gs.

John Hodgman: Two Gs. Rugs-guhs. All right. I'm going to call you Ruggs from now on. Jesse Thorn, make a note.

Jesse Thorn: So noted.

John Hodgman: Matthew is Ruggs with two Gs. Alright, you heard Ruggs's guess. You got a guess? Here's the quote again. "They don't look like Presbyterians to me." Here's a hint. We am/is/are and be them who as are known as the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. Does that bring it home for you?

Kasey: *Ghostbusters 1*.

John Hodgman: *Ghostbusters 1!* Also known commonly as *Ghostbusters*. I'm writing that down. And why? Oh, because of church?

Kasey: Well, there's a marshmallow man—Stay Puft Marshmallow Man steps on a church.

John Hodgman: That's true. And also, this case is about you, Kasey, acquiring old properties that used to be churches or banks, just like those *Ghostbusters* acquired an old fire station in Tribeca, New York—which is there now with the Ghostbusters sign right out in front of it. You can go see it. You ever see that? Kasey, ever come to New York City to see the Ghostbusters HQ?

Kasey: I've never been, but I would love to.

John Hodgman: Yeah. Check it out sometime.

Jesse Thorn: I have a friend who had an apartment across the street from it. It was the most exciting thing in the history of the world. Just look out her window and see the Ghostbusters' house.

Kasey: That would be cool.

John Hodgman: Oh my goodness. And see all the people coming by to check it out?

Jesse Thorn: I'm sure.

John Hodgman: Yeah. Well, that's a good guess. I'm putting that down. I wrote it down. I actually did write it down this time, but I'm going to tell you—and Matthew, did you want to revise your guess? Because I did give you that extra hint. And you know that you're wrong.

Matthew: I am wrong.

Jesse Thorn: Judge Hodgman, a lot of people go past that Ghostbusters house, but only a few people travel down that dusty road that connects with the church where the Electric Mayhem live.

John Hodgman: Are you guessing the obscure cultural reference and getting it right, right now?!

[00:05:00]

Oh-ho-ho! Let the record show, if you watch it on video, Jesse just calmly took a sip of victory out of his mug. That is absolutely right, Jesse Thorn. And you explained it better than I ever could! The line is “They don't look like Presbyterians to me,” as delivered by Fozzie the Bear, as he and Kermit stumble across an old church in the countryside running from Doc Hopper, the villain of the piece. And it is rocking and rolling with the unmistakable... mmm—how would you describe the rock and roll of Dr. Teeth and Electric Mayhem, Jesse Thorn?

Jesse Thorn: Rollicking?

John Hodgman: Rollicking. The rollicking semi-psychedelia of Dr. Teeth, Floyd, Zoot, Janice, and Animal playing a song in their decommissioned church that they have bought and are turning into a coffee house. This really was an incredible movie of the '70s.

(Chuckles.)

Also, one of the most meta—the first introduction young John Hodgman ever had to the concept of meta. Because that's the scene where they read the screenplay to the movie to bring everybody up to speed as to what's happened so far. Ever seen the *Muppet Movie*, Kasey or Ruggs?

Matthew: Yeah, I think we saw it together.

John Hodgman: Weeell, you missed out. Jesse wins! Immediate summary judgment in Jesse Thorn's favor, of course. But now we have to hear the case between Ruggs and Kasey. I gotta get that in my head. Ruggs, Ruggs, Ruggs. That's your name now. Ruggs forever after. Ruggs brings the case against Kasey. We mentioned this case back a few episodes ago, on our cricket themed episode. It was our Swift Justice, and Ruggs wrote in that he wanted me to ban his friend Kasey from buying more banks and churches. And it was just such an incredibly provocative request that my order was that I would enjoin Kasey from buying more banks and churches until such time as he could explain himself here on this podcast.

So, welcome. Welcome. Welcome from Central Ohio, I believe you both are. Is that correct, Ruggs?

Matthew: Yes, thank you. Thank you for having us.

John Hodgman: So, Matthew, what is your relationship with Kasey?

Matthew: Kasey's my cousin. His mom is my mom's sister.

John Hodgman: First cousin, then.

(Matthew confirms.)

And in what way does this give you any standing whatsoever to have even a comment on Kasey's property buying habits?

Matthew: Well, because—you know, it would inevitably involve me helping him out with these things.

John Hodgman: How so?

Matthew: Because I would have to go down there. These properties involve a lot of work; they're basically crumbling. And he has big dreams for them. But you know, he's starting basically from scratch. And I just—you know, I tend to get roped into Kasey's little projects and missions, as he calls them.

John Hodgman: Because of the Cousin Code? Cousin Code means you have to help somebody rebuild a church or whatever?

(Matthew confirms.)

I think that's the plot of *The Bear*, Jesse.

Jesse Thorn: I believe that's the plot of the prestige television show, *The Bear*, John.

John Hodgman: *The Bear*. Okay, Cousin Kasey, do you own—

Jesse Thorn: Have you seen this show, *The Bear*?

John Hodgman: *The Bear*?

Jesse Thorn: Everybody's talking about *The Bear*.

John Hodgman: *The Bear*.

Kasey, do you currently own any buildings?

Kasey: I'm happy to announce, yes. I've picked up one of my three necessary portfolio properties.

John Hodgman: (*Chuckling.*) Hang on, here we go. You have identified three necessary portfolio properties.

Kasey: Good. That is correct.

John Hodgman: Alright, so you're not just doing this willy nilly.

Kasey: Oh no.

John Hodgman: You're picking—you have three properties in mind that you want as part of your portfolio, and you have purchased one of them.

(*Kasey confirms.*)

Tell me about the property that you purchased. I believe I have some photos here. This is the property in Dayton, Ohio, I believe.

(*Kasey confirms.*)

Alright. Tell me about it.

Kasey: The warehouse is awesome. It's an old steel workers' building, built by the men and women that made the backbone that made our country strong. And when—I feel when they built this building, they built it to stand for generations. And I'm happy to be one of those generations that will own it for a time.

John Hodgman: I understand warehouses are awesome, but why do you need a warehouse? Or want. I don't care about need.

Jesse Thorn: He's trying to throw a party. He's David Byrne, and it's 1983.

Kasey: We do have the 1970s *Mad Men* style conference room that would be great for themed parties.

John Hodgman: I'm gonna say—I just want to say that there are photos of this, of the exterior and the interior of this warehouse available for your perusal on the *Judge John Hodgman* Instagram page, as well as the show page at MaximumFun.org. And I see the conference room that you are referring to. It has red wall-to-wall carpet. It's got an incredible drop popcorn ceiling with fluorescent lighting, but also some incandescent lighting and a drop midcentury modern fixture that I've never seen before. It's got terrific old office chairs.

I mean, if you wanted to cosplay *Mad Men*—

[00:10:00]

I'm thinking because of the sheer emptiness and desperation in this picture, I would say a little bit more *Severance* from Apple TV. But yeah, this is a pretty incredible room. Okay, go on.

Kasey: So, just a little history behind this. I've spent—I've lived the last 10 years in a bus with my patient, kind, generous, understanding, significant other.

John Hodgman: Mm-hm. And this is not a metaphor for anything. This is—you're actually talking about a bus.

Kasey: Yes, yes. An actual bus.

John Hodgman: An actual bus. Are you talking—are you a schoolie? Is it a school bus that you've headed out to live in?

Kasey: No, no. It's more like a—it's not like a Prevost or anything, but it's more similar to like a tour bus. I wish it was a Prevost, but it's not. It's a Tourmaster.

John Hodgman: I don't even know what that word is. Pre-Prevost? What?

Kasey: They're the super nice like million-dollar buses. This is not that.

John Hodgman: How do you spell those?

Jesse Thorn: That's the kind of bus that your friend loans you the money to buy, and then doesn't ask you to repay the loan because you're on the Supreme Court.

John Hodgman: *(Laughs.)* Okay. Got it.

Kasey: And if—you know, if you are touring, especially to Central Ohio—if you have to come back here for your sixth time, and you are not on a Prevost, I will volunteer my bus to shepherd you around. Not to sway your favor in this ruling, but just as a kind generosity.

John Hodgman: Oh, Prevost! Look, I don't want to buzz market this high-end motorhome company, but I do have to say that the first—the link that comes up is titled Prevost: The Ultimate Experience.

(Jesse cackles.)

Okay. We're talking about a very, very fancy full-size tour bus/RV living experience. Got it.

Jesse Thorn: You're saying you've already had the ultimate experience, and now you're just chasing the dragon?

(They laugh.)

John Hodgman: Why do I not have photos of this? Can I order you guys to send in some photos of Kasey's bus?

Jesse Thorn: There are a couple of photographs, one of which is deeply intriguing to me.

John Hodgman: Oh, forgive me. You're absolutely right. I see two photos down below. We'll get to them in a moment. I mean, the whole topic of you living in a bus is a thing, but let's just stipulate for the moment you live in a bus, and you would like to collect three specific properties—one of which is the warehouse, which you have gotten. You acquired it because it has a cool conference room, and it has a history to it. And I think that's where I started interrupting you. You were going to tell me about the history of this building, this warehouse.

Kasey: The motivation behind a warehouse in general is—living in this bus, we had an incident when we were gold mining outside of Yosemite where we cracked the bus.

John Hodgman: Stop!

(Jesse honks out a laugh.)

Just give me a minute to catch up. I'm trying to ask you about this warehouse. I haven't even gotten to the other two properties.

Jesse Thorn: All of a sudden we're claim jumping over here!

John Hodgman: Yeah, I just processed you live in a bus. You had an incident. Let me write down some topics to return to. Bus. I'm gonna put—I don't know what that thing is in that picture, but we got to talk about that antenna. Is that an antenna?

Kasey: It's a mast.

John Hodgman: A mast, okay. Bus mast. We'll get to that, and then also gold mining, did you say? Or panning for gold?

Kasey: Mining.

John Hodgman: Of course. Okay. You had an incident with the bus—

Jesse Thorn: You can't pan with dynamite, Judge Hodgman.

(They laugh.)

John Hodgman: You had an incident while gold mining with the bus. What happened to the bus?

Kasey: To get closer to the claim, we tried to go over some bridges that really aren't designed for this type of weight. And we broke the bus. We nearly cracked it in half.

John Hodgman: How did you not break the bridge? How did the bridge break the bus?

Kasey: The bridge actually held quite well, surprisingly.

John Hodgman: Okay, but explain to me how going over an old bridge breaks a bus nearly in half.

Kasey: Oh, because a lot of the bus hangs behind the rear axle, so—and the bridge was small and narrow enough that we couldn't make that turn coming off of it.

John Hodgman: Oh, okay. Alright. I got you. And that's the moment when you realized, “Hey, maybe bus living isn't for me. I've been living in a bus for almost a decade, but now that I'm turning this bridge on my way to a gold mine and I broke it in half, maybe I need to get three properties, including a warehouse.” Correct?

Kasey: No, at that point I was not a warehouse fan. I was still a bus fan, but my bus needed to be fixed. It had a crack down the center. And for that reason—it's got a full slide that couldn't come out. And my bed's attached to that slide, so I can't even sleep in my bed with a cracked bus.

John Hodgman: I gotta write down slide now?

Jesse Thorn: Uh, Judge Hodgman. Full slide.

John Hodgman: When you say a full slide, is this some specialized bus terminology—like a pop out or something like that? Or are you talking about like a playground slide that comes out of your bus so you can slide down it?

Kasey: (*Chuckling.*) You know, what drew me to this bus—there's a wall that comes out from behind the driver to in front of the bathroom.

So, it's a 45-foot bus, and about 40 feet of this bus will kind of pop out and make a double wide, I suppose.

John Hodgman: Okay. So, it's not like a playground slide or a water slide. You're talking about a section of the bus that pops out to—

[00:15:00]

Yes, yes. I understand. I've witnessed these things in the past. Got it. So, that's what the slide is in this case.

(Kasey confirms.)

Hey Ruggs, are you still there?

Matthew: I'm still here.

John Hodgman: You may want to go take a break.

(They laugh.)

Kasey: If you can just shake your head and look with disdain, that's typically what comes to my head.

Matthew: Oh, I'm shaking my head.

John Hodgman: Okay, we're going to ask you a question about the bridge on the way to the gold mine real quick. How do you get to the point where you're turning the bus, and the bridge is too narrow. Why don't you just stop and straighten it out?

Kasey: I was uncomfortable with the bridge from the beginning. But my good friend, JR—who was managing this gold mine at the time—said, “Oh, this bridge was around during World War II, so it can hold tanks.” But I don't think there were many tanks in Yosemite National Park. But I don't know, he convinced me it was a good idea.

John Hodgman: JR, the manager of the gold mine, lured you across a bridge that was going to break your bus. I'm going to say right now, I still don't understand how your bus almost broke. I can't picture it. I don't get it. And I maybe never will. And I don't want to talk about it anymore. So, I'm banning myself from talking about it. Suffice to say, bus almost broke, slide was damaged. Warehouse. Go on.

Kasey: So, the bus needed to be repaired. so I brought it to the home of all buses—beautiful, sunny Elkhart, Indiana. I brought it to the factory where many of these buses are made.

John Hodgman: They call that the tour bus's graveyard, Jesse. Elkhart, Indiana.

Kasey: And I found—they were able to bring my bus into the factory and eyeball it and look at the damage that was done. And they decided that they could fix it. It could be re-mended. So, while they re-mend it, we were still obviously living on the bus. But the cool part—this is when I started to enjoy living in a warehouse—is they would work from like 6AM to 3PM, and then they're done. Lights out. But when the lights are out, then I can sneak out of my bus, turn all the lights on. And I have like a big list of all these things I've always wanted to do to my bus, but I've never had the facilities for it. And then I'm in this multimillion-dollar

warehouse where they build buses, and I have access to a paint booth, and I have access to a metal shop and a fabrication shop. So, from 3AM 'til—

John Hodgman: Wait a minute, is this part of the deal when you bring in a cracked bus to the dealer? You're allowed to use their tools?

Jesse Thorn: Like *The Borrowers* or something?

John Hodgman: He's like a bus Borrower, Jesse. Sneaks out.

Kasey: These folks at this particular place were accommodating to me. They were really nice people.

John Hodgman: They knew. They knew that you were sneaking out in the middle of the night and using their stuff.

Kasey: Yes. Yes. Yeah, they did.

John Hodgman: What did you want to add to your bus that you were sneaking out at—you know—from 3PM to 3AM in Elkhart, Indiana? What did you want to add to it?

Kasey: I needed a manner in which I could establish a cellular tower for when we're in the gold mine. So, in case we have a collapse, we can call for a rescue.

John Hodgman: Understood. That goes—I don't need any further explanation. That's great. Is that what the mask was for?

(Kasey confirms.)

Oh, I put it together.

(Kasey laughs.)

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

John Hodgman: So, you're in Elkhart, Indiana, going through the warehouse in the middle of the night, installing a 65-foot mast. And that's when you discovered the beauty of a warehouse. Because it has things you want for your bus in it, right? Is that why you started thinking warehouse and dreaming of warehouse dreams?

Kasey: Correct. And we weren't just living in the bus in the warehouse, because they had to take the slide out in order to fix it. And our bed is attached to there. So, fortunately, they were kind enough—when the slide had come out, we had to move out of the bus. The manager of

the warehouse had recently been let go, and his office opened up. So, we ended up kind of living in his office, working on the bus. And I just grew to enjoy warehouse life.

John Hodgman: Warehouse livin’.

Jesse Thorn: Hashtag #WarehouseLife.

John Hodgman: Ruggs, let me just—I gotta take a break from Kasey for a second. You ever feel like you need to take a break from Kasey, Ruggs?

Matthew: Yes. Often.

John Hodgman: You guys have known each other since childhood, I presume. Has he always been this way?

Matthew: He has. He's always been a bit of a mad scientist type guy. He's always doing a project. And I think he's not always looking for a project that he can finish. He wants to be doing the project.

John Hodgman: Matthew—or Ruggs, I should say. Excuse me, I apologize. I have a note here, it says—from Jennifer, “When Kasey was asked how he spends his time, his answers were both vague and informative.”

(Jesse cackles.)

“Saying he works on projects and doing different, quote/unquote, ‘missions.’”

What are your missions, Kasey?

Kasey: Well, your honor, the missions typically find me. So, I can't tell you what my next mission is.

John Hodgman: Absolutely. Good note, Jennifer! Vague. Kasey, I'm going to ask you again. Be informative. Give me an example of one of your missions.

Kasey: I suppose one of the missions that I gave as an example to Jennifer was like the reverse heist.

[00:20:00]

John Hodgman: Go on.

Kasey: We have—we're all huge gamers. And we have—one of our particularly loud, boisterous friends was in desperate need of a PlayStation 5 and no way to get one. So, we

formulated a way in which to magically get him one, I suppose? And that was the reverse heist. That was the first one.

John Hodgman: You were going to sneak one into his life, into his house. That's the reverse heist part. Jennifer also said that when trying to schedule her pre-interview, that she had to work around your schedule, Kasey, because you were attending... Ice Cream College.

(Jesse cackles delightedly.)

Kasey: That is correct, your honor.

John Hodgman: I know that it's correct. Jennifer would not lie to me. This is the part where you elaborate. What is Ice Cream College?

Kasey: Well, it is pretty much what it sounds like. It's a college in which you can learn—

John Hodgman: *(Interrupting.)* No, it's not! No, it's not.

(Jesse "uuuum"s loudly.)

It's three words that pose a question, not an answer. Please.

Kasey: It's a college in which you can learn to make, manufacture, and distribute ice cream.

John Hodgman: Got it. Okay. Who runs this college? State of Ohio?

Kasey: University of Madison, Wisconsin—with my major professor being Scott Rankin, a brilliant dairy scientist, I suppose.

John Hodgman: Now, Kasey, I'm not mad at you. I'm just mad at the world. Jesse Thorn and I were in Madison, Wisconsin, doing a wonderful show at the Majestic Theatre last fall. No one told me, Jesse. Did anyone tell you? That the University of Wisconsin is an ice cream college?

Jesse Thorn: John, I didn't get the memo! Nobody copied me on that memo!

John Hodgman: I mean, we played a matinee. We got out of the show early. We could have bopped over to audit a class at ice cream college.

Jesse Thorn: We had all night for lecture halls!

John Hodgman: Ruggs, I'm going to let you pick this up for a second. Because we haven't heard from you. And I'm afraid to ask Kasey any more questions. You seem to exist on Earth. Can you tell me a little bit about this warehouse that Kasey has acquired and the other two properties that he's got in his sights?

Matthew: Sure. Okay. So, over the last couple of years at least, Kasey's been going on auction sites and hunting down old, abandoned churches and banks. 'Cause he wants—really, he wants to live in a castle. That's his idea.

John Hodgman: Okay. Let the record show Kasey is nodding and putting his thumb up.

Matthew: So, like this all—his bus broke, he's in the warehouse, he came to like it? That's not necessarily his motivation or what we've heard. He's always talked about having a lair or a headquarters. And he's been searching these auction sites for these broken-down buildings. Usually they're in distressed areas of cities. You know, industrial sites. The industry's gone.

John Hodgman: Yeah. No, I saw a link to the Google map view of this warehouse that Kasey bought, and it's a pretty haunted looking situation.

(Matthew confirms.)

Yeah, it's a pretty grim, post post-apocalyptic looking stretch of Dayton, Ohio here.

Matthew: Yes, exactly. And that's how they all look. He's shown us multiple properties. Churches, banks.

Jesse Thorn: Basically, anything that could be turned into a nightclub for vampires. If a blood fountain can be installed, it's perfect for Kasey.

John Hodgman: Anything you might find on Zillow Goes Wild: Dark Edition.

Kasey: I do need to look for things that are a little more distressed, but with good bones. If it has good bones, the rest is child's play! You know, a little spackle here, a little mud here. Boom, bam, boom. You got a beautiful place.

John Hodgman: Yeah, but Ruggs is saying you need Ruggs to put in the spackle and the mud. Mud, I don't think is advisable as a construction material. But are you capable of fixing up these places without Ruggs's help?

Kasey: Oh, yeah. Yeah, I am. But you know, just despite all of Ruggs's, you know, machinations towards this, in the end he will end up being there, helping out. And that's why he's trying to stymie this at the beginning, because he—you know, he knows.

John Hodgman: How is it going to happen that he's just going to show up?

Kasey: It just always works out that way.

John Hodgman: It just always works out that way? You don't put any subtle pressure on him, you don't make any requests? He's like—it's like a strange attraction? He can't help but show up and help you?

Kasey: Ruggs, do you have an answer to that?

Matthew: Yeah, it's not a strange attraction at all.

(Kasey cackles.)

He's asking everybody to help. When Kasey finds out somebody's, you know, a carpenter—hey, now I know a carpenter. Even if you met him once. So, he'll be calling them, “Hey, come down here! I'm getting a warehouse. Come do work on this.” You know.

John Hodgman: And they have the right to say yes or no.

(Kasey confirms.)

And do they ever say no?

Kasey: Yes, they always say no.

John Hodgman: So, why can't you say no?

Matthew: Well, because he's my cousin, and I have to deal with it. I think he should just take a step back now that he's got this warehouse—which he bought spur of the moment.

[00:25:00]

And he told me himself, it doesn't serve his needs. He can't put his bus in there. It doesn't fit. A lot of the equipment and the electrical needs just aren't there. So, it's really a fun project for him, and that's fine. But do that project instead of getting yourself mired in all these other money pits.

John Hodgman: Well, Ruggs raises a good point here, Kasey. You want to live in a castle, and I understand that. But you're buying a warehouse, and you are eyeing a church and a bank. Why don't you just wait for the correct property, a castle?

Kasey: Well, I think the fundamental problem is our country isn't old enough for good castles. We have very few good castles. Yeah.

Jesse Thorn: They don't build them like they used to, John. It's just a bunch of—just a bunch of mud and chicken wire these days.

(They laugh.)

John Hodgman: So, given that there aren't a lot of castles for sale here in the United States of America and you're speaking, I guess, a little bit more metaphorically—describe what your castle would look like, your ideal castle. Obviously, you need to drive your bus into it.

Because that's the way all—that's like medieval European castles. You always had a bus depot in a castle. That was normal.

Kasey: The ideal castle obviously would have a moat. And that moat would have—

Jesse Thorn: As they say on the playground, doi.

John Hodgman: Go on.

Kasey: I'm embarrassed to bring that up, because it's so obvious. And that moat should, rather than detract or hold people off, I'd want the moat to invite people. So, like rather than like alligators and stuff, I'd put like dolphins in it that you could swim with. As part of, you know, calisthenics or just for enjoyment.

Jesse Thorn: That would be for aerobic health, John.

Kasey: Stone. Needs to be built of stone. Needs to have amazing parapets and towers. And that's really it. I mean, I've got simple needs.

John Hodgman: (*Laughing.*) So, when I was like, “So, when you say castle, we're speaking metaphorically here,” you're like, “No, no. Literally. It has to have a moat in parapets, and I don't care about anything else.” You don't even care if you can drive your bus in it! Well, it probably has a central courtyard where you could.

Kasey: Yeah, it'd be nice to have the bus. And then of course, you know, we need falcons that we can put on the parapets.

John Hodgman: Yeah. There is a photo of you handling a falcon. Is that you handling a falcon, Kasey?

Kasey: That is. That is.

John Hodgman: And that is at—it seems to be on the grounds of an actual castle. There's definitely parapets. Where is this photo taken?

Kasey: Yeah, and that's what got this whole dream started. I spent some time in Scotland learning falconry with my amazing significant other. And we lived in a castle while learning falconry. And we said, “This is the life for us. Like, we should do this full time.”

John Hodgman: Yeah, and you're definitely the kind of person who just lets his dreams go unfulfilled. You're definitely the kind of person like, “I have a funny idea. Yeah, I'll never do that.”

(They laugh.)

And then you just go—you live in a bus with a mast! Why don't you just move to Scotland and live in a castle with falcons?

Kasey: I mean, that's not a bad idea though.

John Hodgman: I'm getting two thumbs up and fireworks over there from Ruggs. Why is that out of your reach when buying a—I mean, obviously buying a castle in Scotland is perhaps a little bit more expensive than buying a decrepit warehouse in Dayton, Ohio. I acknowledge this. But that's a worthy dream, is it not?

Kasey: No, that is. That is. I think the only problem is it'd be tough to get—I could get my bus there on a container ship, but the roads are very narrow and very winding. It would be tough navigating and traversing the highlands.

John Hodgman: Your bus is broke in half, sir.

Kasey: No, it's patched now! It's a full bus!

John Hodgman: You can't try—everyone knows once your bus is broken in half, it's always broken in half. Now, this church that you almost bought—you put a bid on, you got outbid. And we have some photos of the church that are also available at every place you find the photos. We've talked about it before. You know where to go. [Instagram.com/JudgeJohnHodgman](https://www.instagram.com/JudgeJohnHodgman) or the show page at MaximumFun.org.

And this is a big church. Was this also in Ohio, this church?

Kasey: As a matter of fact, it is! Yeah.

John Hodgman: And there's a photo of you standing in front of a stained-glass window and standing wearing gloves, a boiler suit, and a respirator mask at the pulpit of what I think this used to be—it looks like it might have been a Catholic church when it was... consecrated. Why are you wearing that respirator mask? Or is that not even you?

Kasey: That is me. At the time I was testing for asbestos. I was gathering samples in the church for asbestos.

John Hodgman: Sure. Don't leave that to the professionals. Do it yourself.

Jesse Thorn: It's a pretty fair-sized church too. I mean, I'm judging by how big I guess these windows are. But it's not a tiny building. This isn't the Electric Mayhem's church.

Kasey: 15,000 square feet, I believe—if you include the basement.

John Hodgman: Could you drive your bus in it?

Kasey: (*Sighs.*) Not in its current condition, but that's probably the first modification I was going to make is some type of bus entrance.

John Hodgman: But you can't make it, because someone bought it out from under you.

Kasey: This one, yes.

[00:30:00]

John Hodgman: How did that feel?

Kasey: It was heartbreaking. Fortunately, when I was investigating this bus, I made great friends with the neighbors. They called the cops on me.

John Hodgman: Listen to this guy expertly laying out the bait for me! “I made great friends with the neighbors. They called the cops on me.” Pregnant pause. Waiting for me to jump on that cheese and get my mouse neck snapped under the trap of whatever new story you're going to try to tell me.

Kasey: (*Laughing.*) I'm trying to connect the stories.

John Hodgman: I don't care. I don't care about your friends, the neighbors, or why they called the cops on you. I mean, I really do care. I really want to ask. But I'm going to try to keep this on track. I'm not going to break my bus turning on your bridge, sir!

Kasey: So, after I lost this in the auction, I'd pretty much given up on it. One of—the cop neighbor contacted me and was like, “Hey, I saw a post in a forum that says, ‘Oh my god, what have I done? I bought a huge church. I can't believe how easy it was to bid on this thing. I'm overwhelmed. It's an elephant. What should I do?’”

He sent me a screenshot of this, and I then, you know, started a little investigative journalism to find out who this person was. I've since located the person, reached out to them, and we're gonna meet. And maybe they are overwhelmed. Maybe this is too much for them. Maybe they're like, “Well, you know, what kind of idiot buys a 15,000 square foot church with no plan?” And I can be that idiot. Maybe they could just transfer it to me!

Jesse Thorn: My wife and I once bought a zoo.

John Hodgman: (*Snorts a laugh.*) What did you say when you bought the zoo? Did you say anything to yourself out loud?

Jesse Thorn: (*Beat.*) Yeah, I thought to myself, “Oh, we bought a zoo.”

John Hodgman: HA! There are a lot of churches for sale, Kasey. You don't need to have the neighbors call the cops on you and then befriend them to get a Craigslist listing from a guy who regrets buying a church. There are a lot of churches for sale. There are a lot of guys who

regret buying churches for sale. There's an abundance of them. Why did you buy a warehouse when you could have bought a church? Or I guess my question really is: why do you have a portfolio of three properties when you really only need one castle?

Kasey: The warehouse—I was obviously saddened by the loss of the church. And you know how they say the way to get over one building is to get under another. So, I walked through this warehouse. I was like, “This is cool.”

And the guy's like, “You want it?”

And I was like, “Yeah, sure.”

And he's like, “Well, how about this?”

And I was like, “Oh, let's do that.”

And we shook hands. And you know, I knew there might be an injunction coming in the near future against me buying any more buildings, so.

John Hodgman: Now that you've bought this warehouse, are you done?

Kasey: No, no, no, no. I mean, I still need the church and the bank.

John Hodgman: Why do you need all three? That was the question that I started with.

Kasey: Well, because they're very specific properties for very specific purposes. And—

John Hodgman: (*Overlapping.*) Yes, one is for storage, one is for worship.

Jesse Thorn: (*Overlapping.*) Worship, banking.

(*They laugh.*)

John Hodgman: Sorry, Jesse, we both got there at the same time. I apologize. We broke our bus on the bridge. Why do you need a bank, a church, and a warehouse? Is it like *SimCity* that if you get all three, then you unlock the ability to build a space center or something?

Kasey: I think another overreaching life goal is to have my life here more closely mimic my life in, you know, one of my favorite video games, *GTA 6*. And I do have those things in the game. So, if I could get them in the real world, that would also be cool. But that's not the over—that's not the overarching reason behind it.

Jesse Thorn: I had no idea that *Grand Theft Auto 6* was *Busytown* themed.

(*They laugh.*)

John Hodgman: I'm going to stop you there, Kasey. Is it fair to say—because what I'm asking you is why do you need all three properties? And you keep answering me by saying, “Well, I need all three properties.” And you don't really explain why. Vague and not very informative. Is it fair to say that you want all three properties simply because you just want a bank, a church, and a warehouse? Is that enough? Is there any reason beyond just wanting those three things?

Kasey: Uh, no, your honor. I want five properties. I need three.

John Hodgman: There we go. Here we go, Ruggs. Does this come as news to you, or is it just news to us?

Matthew: No, it's not news to me.

John Hodgman: If you had to name his five properties, Ruggs, what would you name? We know that three of the answers are bank, church, warehouse. What are the other two?

Matthew: The other is an actual castle. And then an otter facility. He does want an otter facility.

John Hodgman: No, no. It's not an otter facility. You're just riffing.

Matthew: No, I swear. He's wearing an otter shirt right now.

(They laugh.)

John Hodgman: Goodbye. Goodbye! I'm done.

Jesse Thorn: I got to finish this one out. Judge Hodgman's having a meltdown over there.

John Hodgman: The people on YouTube can see this. The people on the *Judge John Hodgman* YouTube channel can see this. But the people who are listening don't know that Kasey just opened his outer shirt, Superman style, to reveal that he's wearing an otter t-shirt.

[00:35:00]

Jesse Thorn: Kasey, do you have purposes in mind for these buildings?

Kasey: Well, the YMCA I was looking at had an Olympic-sized swimming pool. We were going to turn that into an actual otter sanctuary in Iowa, because they need them in Iowa.

John Hodgman: Why do they need otters in Iowa?

Kasey: They are otter deficient.

Jesse Thorn: What is a bank for?

Kasey: Oh. Well, we've talked about the reverse heist. We are all—we're all big gamers, my whole crew, my friends and family. And anytime we get an opportunity to get everyone to play games—like, we've done escape rooms and stuff. We think escape rooms are fun, but like—

John Hodgman: I hear you. I get it. If you have a bank, then you can create a business where people break into the bank.

Kasey: Yes! Yes! A heist room. Can you imagine, your honor?!

John Hodgman: I can imagine it; I can see it. I'm writing you a check for \$1,000,000.

Kasey: This is going to be huge. This is going to be huge.

John Hodgman: I'm not, actually. This is not a promise to invest in your business. But if this were *Shark Tank*, I would be 100% in. Alright, Kasey, stop talking for a minute. Ruggs?

Matthew: Yes.

John Hodgman: Until Kasey purchased this warehouse, all of this talk was hypothetical, correct?

Matthew: Yeah, but I know him. So, I knew he was actually trying to make it happen.

John Hodgman: And it has. It did happen.

Matthew: Yes, it has. Yeah.

John Hodgman: Now that you know that he's capable of closing the deal on a decrepit warehouse, what are you afraid is going to happen next?

Matthew: I think that he just will get so mired under all of this stuff. Instead of going in one or two directions, he's going in every direction. And I'm concerned about his general happiness. I mean, I've seen him, you know, in the last few years. And he's a generally happy person, but—

John Hodgman: Seems pretty happy!

Matthew: Yeah, he's got this need, you know. He's got this—he's searching for something. And he's doing it at such a fast pace that I'm worried about him just in general, his mental health. Really. Because if he ends up buying these three decrepit buildings, you know, nothing's going to happen with them, and he's going to get nowhere. So, I think he should just step back, focus on one of these projects. Go in that direction, see what happens, and then,

you know, reassess and maybe go in another direction later. But he has to pick something, or else he's not going to go anywhere.

John Hodgman: Kasey, how does that resonate? When you hear your cousin saying this about you, how do you feel?

Kasey: Oh, I think that's true. I do typically bite off more than I can chew.

John Hodgman: There's another complaint here. Which is that, Kasey, you feel that Matthew isn't funny enough? What is this all about?

Kasey: Oh no, I feel he's extraordinarily funny. Whereas I might be out there doing too many things, I feel Ruggs doesn't use his talent enough. He's very naturally funny. He just has that comedic talent. We used to be in a comedy troupe together, and like he would walk on stage and just bring it all down. Like me, I have to work on these things like really hard to get an eek of funniness. So, I would ask that Ruggs use his skills more. Like, I'll dial mine back, but he needs to dial his forward a little bit. Otherwise, I think there's a statute I referenced in the Ohio Revised Code for useless or unused or abandoned properties. I would like you to impart those skills to me, because I could use them.

John Hodgman: Ruggs, you seem to be suggesting that somehow Kasey is unhappy, but Kasey seems to be a very happy dude. Is that—? And Kasey just gave me a happy thumbs up and a smile.

Matthew: I guess maybe it's more he's just unsatisfied. Throughout his life, he's accumulated stuff, accumulated friends, ideas. He likes adventures for adventure's sake. He likes things for the story of it, not necessarily for the follow through.

John Hodgman: What a recipe for a miserable life. You're right, Ruggs.

(Jesse cackles.)

Jesse, I didn't even think about it this way. Unlike Ruggs and you and me, who are perfectly satisfied with our lives in every way and have been for years and absolutely want nothing further than what we got—which is, honestly, I'm very happy with what I've got. But this guy still wants stuff. This guy still has ambitions! Ugh! He doesn't need a warehouse; he needs to be put in a home!

Matthew: Well, I also think that I—you know, we want answers too. Because when we asked Kasey, as you said, all these answers are vague. And it jumps from one thing to the other.

John Hodgman: Kasey, did you buy this warehouse because you knew that you were going to come on this podcast?

Kasey: *(Laughing.)* No.

Matthew: No, and in fact—yeah, the injunction thing, he didn't know that I filed this injunction or the request. He did not know about it up until Jennifer contacted him.

John Hodgman: Right. See, 'cause what I'm trying to balance here is this idea that you maintain that he has all these fantasies. And he never—he's all over the place, and he lacks direction, and he's got multiple different dreams.

[00:40:00]

And he can't chase down even one. And yet, he has. He bought the warehouse. And if you had said to me, you know, “Kasey only bought the warehouse because Judge John Hodgman had provisionally ruled against him, and he wanted to prove that he could do this one thing,” then I would be like, well, I can't motivate Kasey throughout his life. But if he actually did it, then there's some evidence here that he is capable of achieving his dreams no matter how unusual, atypical, and potentially asbestos-filled they might be. See what I mean?

Matthew: Yeah, that's a good point.

John Hodgman: So, my next question is: is he hurting anyone?

Matthew: No, I don't think he's hurting anyone.

John Hodgman: Is it worrying to you?

Matthew: Yeah, it worries me.

John Hodgman: Yeah, why?

Matthew: Well, I guess it's just we have different perspectives on life. And it confuses me of why he would be doing this. He has all this equipment, but he's not using it. And then he's buying buildings that aren't going to help him use that stuff. So, it's just confusing, I think.

John Hodgman: Your question is why, and it's a reasonable question. But it's only taken me the span of not yet an entire episode of a podcast to realize you're never going to get an answer, are you?

Matthew: No, I'm not. No.

John Hodgman: Matthew, I understand that if I were to rule in your favor, you want me to order Kasey to hold off on new property acquisition for a year or two.

(Matthew confirms.)

Before expanding. Is that correct?

Matthew: Yeah. I think that's fair.

John Hodgman: And Kasey, you want me to transfer Matthew's comedy—you want me to transfer Ruggs's comedy skills to you?

Kasey: Not all of them, your honor. Just his comedic timing and delivery. He can keep the rest.

John Hodgman: And if I were unable to do that, due to the factor of impossibility, what would you have me rule instead?

Kasey: That he use it. That he use it. You know, give him a one-year opportunity just to use it to benefit others around him. Because, you know, comedy is best when it's shared. And then maybe if in the year he hasn't used it, maybe I could have it then.

John Hodgman: Ruggs, do you want a career in comedy? Or do you want—or even an amateur career in comedy?

Matthew: No, not particularly. I mean, it's fun to do stuff like that. But I mean, I use my timing and delivery in life just having fun with people. But no, I didn't have any overarching ambitions like that.

John Hodgman: You don't feel a need to physically manifest your comedy by buying a YMCA and turning it into an otter sanctuary, for example.

Matthew: That's right. Yes, your honor.

John Hodgman: Let me ask you a question. If I were to order in Ruggs favor and order you to take a step back for a year or two, can you see yourself doing that?

Kasey: It depends on the opportunity. I don't feel like I could pass an opportunity if it were to find me.

John Hodgman: How gold did you get out of that gold mine, by the way?

Kasey: You know, less than an ounce. Although I still have some dirt that needs to be classified.

John Hodgman: You still have some dirt that needs to be classified?

(He confirms with a laugh.)

I'm going to take a break now and go to Dirt Classification College. 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.)

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

Kasey: Uh, relatively slim, being that my counterclaim is more ephemeral than real. Although I still feel that if it's ruled—you know, there's those things that “if you believe, you can achieve” type of thing. And if I believe I have—

Jesse Thorn: *(Interrupting.)* No, it's clear what your perspective on the world is, Kasey.

(They laugh.)

The belief “if you believe, you can achieve” is apparent in spades!

Ruggs, how are you feeling about your chances?

Matthew: I don't think my chances are great, because it's a tough ruling. And I think the judge can see that Kasey is not one to listen to authority. But I think it's good, because I've gotten a few answers that I was looking for.

Jesse Thorn: 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.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: It's *Judge John Hodgman*. I'm Jesse Thorn. What have you got going on, John?

John Hodgman: Well, Jesse, I'm very excited that we can now announce the comedy stage lineup at the Solid Sound Festival. This is the every-other-year festival of art and music that is hosted and curated by those wonderful fellows known as the band Wilco in North Adams, Massachusetts. Way out west, in the west of the east, not too far from Williamstown, not too far from Albany, only a couple hours' drive from Boston itself. North Adams is a wonderful town with a great big old electrical parts factory in it that isn't an electrical parts factory anymore. It's a great, big, beautiful installation art museum called Mass MoCA. And every other year at around the end of June, Wilco comes and takes over the whole thing and builds a bunch of stages and performs a bunch of great Wilco songs. And they invite a bunch of other artists to come and perform and show their art and their music and their storytelling.

[00:45:00]

And they invite me, for some reason, to curate a comedy stage. Which happens indoors! Which is wonderful for any kind of music festival, because comedy outdoors does not work

as well. But it's always indoors in a wonderful auditorium there, and we have a wonderful bit of comedy coming for you right this very June. Yes, I will be there as host. That's the most boring part. The best part is this: my cohost, of course, will be the wonderful Jean Grae, occasional guest bailiff of this very program. Along with such comedic talents as geniuses named like Dave Hill, Sydnee Washington, Brittany Carney, and Todd Barry. We'll all be there performing for you.

Jesse Thorn: (*Whispering.*) Todd Barry.

John Hodgman: Todd Barry, very famous stand up. Todd Barry.

Jesse Thorn: One time I drove Todd Barry around in my 65 Dart for SF SketchFest. And the whole time I drove him from the hotel to this one party, he goes, “Hey, man, this is a deathtrap, man. Comedian Todd Barry dies in deathtrap car at SF SketchFest.”

John Hodgman: That will not be the headline at Solid Sound, because Todd Barry never dies; he kills. This is an incredible lineup. And if you don't know these comedians—you know me and Jean, of course, from the show. But Dave Hill, Sydnee Washington, Brittany Carney, Todd Barry—look them up, get to know them. We're going to—the auditorium roof is very high, but we're going to bring it down.

Go to SolidSoundFestival.com to join us for one day—Saturday is when all the comedy happens—or the whole weekend. It's a really wonderful time. And I'm really looking forward to seeing you there. And by the way, speaking of New England, a regional in the southeast portion of Canada, I just got to say it again: Paul F. Tompkins is performing at the Waldo Theatre in Waldo Borough, Maine. It's such a weird, unusual chance to see PFT really up close, and one of the rare times in the state of Maine. Get thee to it. Go to Paul F. Tompkins. You know, search him up, find his thing, buy the tickets, tell him I say hi. I wish I could be there. I can't. But I'm really excited that he's going to be there.

Also, Paul F. Tompkins, I want to say a special thank you for being on our show during MaxFunDrive, and also thanks for leaving those Coke Zeros in my refrigerator here in my office. I'm enjoying them for free right now. Jesse, what do you have going on?

Jesse Thorn: Hey, I got some really cool stuff going on *Bullseye with Jesse Thorn* right now. I hope everyone will take out their podcast apps and subscribe. We just had Alison Brie, the great Alison Brie, and Keita Takahashi, the creator of—one of the most brilliant video game people of all time, the creator of *Katamari Damacy*, among other totally amazing games.

Coming up on *Bullseye*—I believe it will be next week—an interview that I just recorded that I just loved getting to do with Cole Escola. They are one of the funniest human beings on Earth. They have a show running in New York right now called *Oh, Mary*, where they play Mary Todd Lincoln—like, an insane, drunk Mary Todd Lincoln.

John Hodgman: This is a show that's been on my shortlist for a long time. I cannot wait to see this show. And I can't wait to listen to this on *Bullseye*.

Jesse Thorn: It is so funny. Oh my gracious! And they are such a brilliant person in addition to being brilliantly hilarious. Cole is truly one of my comedy heroes. So, listen to that interview. That's all on *Bullseye with Jesse Thorn*.

And let's get back to the case!

John Hodgman: (*Singing.*) Let's get back to the case.

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: So, first of all, I'm going to dismiss the countersuit right away. Which is that Kasey wanted me to redistribute comedic talent from Ruggs, who's not using it, to Kasey, who wants it. Even if I were capable of doing that—and I want you to take this in the right way, Kasey—the reality is Ruggs is funnier than you, and you'll never be funny.

(*Kasey agrees.*)

I mean, you are astonishing good company. But you remember when I asked Jesse Thorn, after you made that reference to the movie *We Bought a Zoo*?

Jesse Thorn: I do.

John Hodgman: And I said to Jesse, “What did you think? What did you say when you bought that zoo?” And I want everyone to go back—and we should put this time code into the episode notes, so people can go back and find this moment. The pause that Jesse deployed before saying, “I said to myself, ‘We bought a zoo,’” was the perfect amount of time. And he knew to pause. And not to pat myself on the back, but I knew Jesse very well. And I knew to set him up for that.

[00:50:00]

And I knew he was going to do something really funny with it. And he did it, and he did it by not saying something for a while, and then saying exactly the right thing. That's an element of comedic genius that I believe Ruggs has, which is called laying back. You don't lay back, Kasey. You lean in. I will say this. You're not a hack, but you take a different approach to life. You—and I want you to take this as not an insult. You're wacky. You're finding the wackiest things to do. Eccentric is a nicer term for it. And in both cases, I respect these impulses. Life is a theater to you, and you're trying to make it as interesting and fun and dramatic as possible for yourself.

And what I like about you is that you're—to a degree, you're not trying to make the world wacky for anyone else but yourself. It is okay to curate a life for yourself that is as wild as your dreams can contemplate. And it is equally okay to invite people to participate in this strange life that you're curating for yourself, or this atypical life, or this fun life of actual and economic misadventure. But it is not okay to rope people in without their full consent.

Now, here's, Ruggs, where I think I need you to do some work. You know yourself. You have found a place in your life where you are perhaps not completely satisfied such that you have zero dreams or ambitions left—like, that's not who I think you are, right? You're not someone who's like, “Well, I didn't get to be a comedian, so I gotta bring this guy down back to normal. I gotta make him be as boring as me, or else my choices are wrong.” That's not where you're at. I think you are genuinely sort of befuddled and concerned about, you know, where the wackiness begins and ends in the life of the cousin that you care so much about. And that's a reasonable thing to feel concerned about. And like, I don't understand why you're getting these texts and kind of having to roll your eyes a little bit. Like, “Now what? A bank? A space station? How's he going to get up there?” I get it.

And I believe that you are just genuinely happy in your life, and you're doing what you want to do. I don't think anyone—believe me when I say to you—I don't think anyone should be forced to be funny. That's a horrible, horrible thing to ask of someone. If you feel like being funny, be funny, whatever. You have a happy life. And you have to just accept that Kasey has a happy life too, by his own definition. And part of that acceptance is—look, I know cousins is going to be cousins, but you need to disentangle yourself from this feeling of cousinly—I don't know the adjectival form of cousin, but there is one, I betcha—cousinly obligation. He's a grownup. You got to let him do his thing. If he's not hurting anyone, he's got to do his thing.

And if he's hurting you, then you have the right to just say no. You understand what I mean? I don't think he's doing anything consciously to hurt you. I don't think—I don't even know if he's hurting you! Do you know what I mean? But it's like if he's putting obligations on you that you don't like or trying to rope you into his otter fostering scheme or whatever it might be—like, he can build a theater in his warehouse, but that does not give him the right to insist that you perform in it. You don't perform for him. Ever. You're an adult who is entitled to your life and the boundaries that you set. And I get it, because I'd be worried too if my cousin might be buying every municipal building around me and putting me into some kind of—what's the Jim Carrey movie?—*Truman Show* situation where the whole world is controlled by your cousin, and you're the only one normal one left. But that's not gonna happen. That's not gonna happen. You don't have to go over and do electrical work for your cousin.

I didn't like it, Kasey, when you're like, “Well, you know, this guy always just shows up.” You are presuming that your cousin is gonna come help you, and perhaps you're not aware that as a charismatic oddball—and I've followed more than my share of charismatic oddballs into various misadventures that have made my life more exciting and interesting, do you know what I mean? But then sometimes you gotta tell the charismatic oddballs, “Uh, I'm okay, dude. Thanks.” Look, I want you to have everything you want in life. Jesse Thorn, did I ever tell you about the time that I left my wallet at the Coolidge Corner movie theater when I was working there one summer in college?

Jesse Thorn: What happened?

John Hodgman: I would work my shift, and I left my wallet. And then I—but I forgot—I just forgot my wallet there, and I went to go get my hair cut. And the guy who was cutting my hair, his name was Ivan.

[00:55:00]

And I was in the middle of the haircut. I'm like, "I can't believe I forgot my wallet!" I got all freaked out. I had to borrow his phone to call and make sure my wallet was okay. 'Cause I don't love to live in ambiguity. And they found it. It was fine. I sat back down to resume the haircut. I said, "I can't believe I've just walked out of there without my wallet."

And Ivan said, "You're a dreamer. Keep dreaming."

That's what I say to you, Kasey. You're a dreamer. Keep dreaming. But make the world that you want as weird as you want it to be. But don't hurt your spouse. Don't hurt your cousin. Don't implicate others in stuff that they don't want to be a part of. You know, be sensitive when someone says, "You know, I don't want to get a text about every caste/bank/library/decommissioned post office or whatever you're going to buy. And the thing that I will order you to do, since I'm not ordering in Ruggs's favor—sorry Ruggs, I feel you. But I am ordering to you to do this. If you're going to be wacky, get serious. I mean, I do think that accumulating properties with these ideas and then just letting them rot in place—I don't see how that could possibly make you happy. I want you to live in a castle with a falcon, and/or make ice cream in a warehouse, and/or—and this is the one I really like—buy a bank and start an anti-escape room. A reverse escape room.

So, I am ordering you—as an authority figure—to buy a bank, maybe with the proceeds of selling that warehouse, and start that business as soon as possible. You will probably—I don't know! It's just such a great idea. And I think that I'm going to give you two years to do that. And if it's not done in two years, that's your life. I don't know. Who cares. You'll know that I'll be disappointed, and maybe that'll be meaningful to you. This is the sound of a gavel.

Clip:

Speaker: I'd buy that for a dollar!

(Howls of laughter.)

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.)

Ruggs, how do you feel?

Matthew: I feel good. I think the judge nailed that right on the head there. So, I feel good about this. And I've gotten some answers. So, thank you very much.

Jesse Thorn: Kasey, how are you feeling?

Kasey: Wow. That was an incredibly insightful ruling. Yeah. I think the ruling is great. And I can—I respect, and I will follow it. Absolutely.

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

Matthew: Thank you so much.

Kasey: Thanks for having us.

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 Redditors u/FlooffyMonsterCat and u/NicWester for naming this week's episode "Property Cousins". You can join the conversation about this episode and our show and our network in general over there on Reddit, [MaximumFun.Reddit.com](https://www.reddit.com/r/MaximumFun). John, that's a good vibe corner of the internet. Good vibes only there at the Maximum Fun subreddit. It's great.

John Hodgman: Every post on the Maximum Fun subreddit is a lot of fun to hang around in, and I go over there aall the time. And I just want to say like, you know, the folks who are suggesting these titles, they're really, really creative, really, really fun to read. This week's title, it wasn't a legal pun; it was just a reference to *Property Brothers*, one of the things that I like. And so, that's—and a couple of people thought of it, and it's always nice to realize that some of your weird obsessions are resonating against someone else. But that's (*inaudible*). You go in there, you make some puns, you have some funs. You never know what we're going to pick for the show, so go on. It doesn't have to be a legal thing necessarily, although that tends to be what it is. Have fun over there. Maximum Fun, if you will. [MaximumFun.Reddit.com](https://www.reddit.com/r/MaximumFun).

Jesse Thorn: Evidence and photos from the show are posted on our Instagram account, [@JudgeJohnHodgman](https://www.instagram.com/JudgeJohnHodgman). John, I also have a new Instagram account. I have disentangled my menswear Instagram account, [@Put.This.On](https://www.instagram.com/put.this.on)—

John Hodgman: Which is a great follow, by the way. People should follow it.

Jesse Thorn: It's true. my new personal brand Instagram account, my podcasting and comedy related Instagram account, is at—?

John Hodgman: @WeBoughtaZoo.

Jesse Thorn: No, it's [@JesseThornVeryFamous](https://www.instagram.com/JesseThornVeryFamous).

John Hodgman: Oh, that's great! [@JesseThornVeryFamous](#). I'm going to follow it right now.

Jesse Thorn: Follow and subscribe to [@JudgeJohnHodgman](#) and, of course, at [@JesseThornVeryFamous](#) and [@JohnHodgman](#) and [@Put.This.On](#) over on Instagram.

John Hodgman: And we just want to say thank you to Apple Podcast listener, iTriumphStill. That is their handle on Apple Podcasts.

[01:00:00]

They gave us a five-star rating. iTriumphStill says about the show, quote, “Every Thursday when my kids have nap time, *Judge John Hodgman* is my companion—a reward for almost making it through another week. This podcast is a comforting, entertaining, unmissable part of the week.”

Thank you for using our podcast to put your kids to sleep. Very soporific podcast! We love making it for you. And if you're listening to this on Apple Podcasts right now and you're still awake, why don't you give us a rating and review? It really does help new listeners to find the show.

Jesse Thorn: And hey, look. If you're not listening on Apple Podcasts, that doesn't mean there's nothing you can do. Why not share this episode with a pal? You can share it—if you don't know what podcast app they use, you can share the YouTube version of the show with a friend and say, “Hey, here's a great thing I heard.” Maybe you have a friend who's a warehouse enthusiast.

John Hodgman: That's right. Our YouTube channel is really taking off! So, you can share it right there off of YouTube. That's [@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod](#) on YouTube and TikTok.

Jesse Thorn: *Judge John Hodgman* was created by Jesse Thorn and John Hodgman. This episode, engineered by Dan Lovelace and Steve Moussa at the Sycamore in Plain City, Ohio. Our thanks to them. Our social media manager is Nattie Lopez. Our video editor, Daniel Speer. Our audio editor is AJ McKeon. Our producer, the ever-capable Jennifer Marmor.

Now, Swift Justice, where we answer your disputes with quick judgment. u/MoeDownJoe on the Maximum Fun subreddit says—by the way, you know what my new podcast is going to be?

John Hodgman: No.

Jesse Thorn: Just saying Reddit usernames out loud.

John Hodgman: There you go.

Jesse Thorn: “My mother wants me to respond in the affirmative to every text message she sends. I feel that modern apps for texting make this redundant and pointless.”

John Hodgman: You know, over there in the *New York Times Magazine* column, I got to reiterate a piece of settled law, which is: don't end texts with a period. And don't get pedantic when you're younger person in your life says, “Hey, you don't end the text with a period. That means you're mad.”

And then the older person goes, “That doesn't mean I'm mad. That means I use proper punctuation!”

And I was like, yeah, you know what, pedant dad? That's wrong. Your young person in your life is trying to teach you how to speak a new dialect of English that has developed in this very informal way on text. Which means if you end it with a period, it means you're mad. Don't put a period, or maybe put three dots or something. Learn to speak the language that you're using. So, I'm very forgiving, typically, of young people who don't want to text the way their parents want them to. With this exception. Respond to your mom. Don't leave your mom or dad or stepdad or person in your life who cares about you hanging. Leaving it on red or whatever is not enough. You need to at least just tap a thing that says thumbs up or heart or exclamation point, something that lets them know that you're alive and out there and receiving the message. It's meaningful to these older people who care for you.

So, sorry about that, u/MoeDownJoe. You don't have to respond in the affirmative. Just saying yes every time would be weird, inaccurate, and maybe a kind of torture for your mom. But if your mom texts you, just let her know that you got the text. She cares about you.

Jesse Thorn: John, Jen, did you see that screencap I sent you of a text that my mom sent me about the Maximum Drive?

John Hodgman: Yeah.

Jesse Thorn: It was pretty great, right?

John Hodgman: It was pretty good.

Jesse Thorn: We're not going to read it on the show. It had some expletives in it, among other things, but mom texts are fun.

John Hodgman: Yeah. Mom texts are fun. And did you give her a thumbs up?

Jesse Thorn: I think I gave that one a heart. I hearted that one.

John Hodgman: That deserved everything.

Jesse Thorn: I also read it out loud to my therapist.

John Hodgman: That's a nice thing to do if your parent or parental equivalent texts you and you love them and you love what they said. Not only heart them back, but just say, "I read this to my therapist."

Jesse Thorn: And screen cap it and send it to John and Jen. (*Laughs.*)

John Hodgman: Yeah. Today we learned about Ice Cream College. And frankly, I'm still furious that it took us so long to learn about Ice Cream College. Kasey said it's a real thing. I intend to find out next time we get to Madison. But while we're waiting for Madison, I want to hear some more disputes about ice cream. And it doesn't have to be just ice cream. It can be ice milk, sherbet. It could be froyo. Any frozen sweet treats. Look, it's still a little chilly here in the springtime in Brooklyn, but I'm getting ready for some of that water ice talk. I'd love a—it's going to be summertime soon. I want to hear all about your refreshing, frozen, sweet treats. Is your Ice Cream College—(*giggles*) I just want to say, this line was written by Jennifer Marmar. Credit where credit is due. Is your Ice Cream College rivals with the Local Frozen Yogurt University?

[01:05:00]

Oh, I hate those snobs at FroYo U! Did your roommate take the last It's-It that you were saving? Hey, here's one for you. Tell me more about regional ice cream treats and why they're so good. We want your cold confectionery disputes at MaximumFun.org/jjho, which happens to be the website where you can submit all of your disputes.

Jesse Thorn: That's MaximumFun.org/jjho. No matter what your dispute is, that is the lifeblood of our program. So, please gen something up. Go to MaximumFun.org/jjho, and send it in. 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!