

[00:00:00]

**Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

**Jesse Thorn:** Welcome to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. I'm Bailiff Jesse Thorn. This week, "Krispy Kreme and Punishment". Steven and his sister-in-law, Jess, bring the case against their significant others, Joanna and Owen. When someone brings a box of donuts to the office, Joanna and Owen like to cut off a small piece instead of taking the entire donut. Steven and Jess think this is criminal. There's nothing worse than a box full of donut pieces. 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:** I'd never done a crazy thing in my life before that night. Why is it that if a man kills another man in battle, it's called heroic, yet if he kills a man in the heat of passion it's called murder?

Bailiff Jesse Thorn, please swear the litigants in.

**Jesse Thorn:** Steven and Jess, Joanna and Owen, 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 if he was at work and saw a box of donuts, he would probably just crinkle up his nose and walk past it towards the gin?

*(They swear.)*

Judge Hodgman, you may proceed.

**John Hodgman:** They don't bring enough gin to office parties, that's what I have to say. Office break rooms don't have enough gin in them.

**Jesse Thorn:** The all-staff meeting doesn't have enough gin. *(Laughs.)*

**John Hodgman:** Owen, Joanna, Steven, and Jess, you all may be seated for an immediate summary judgment and one of yours favors.

(Chairs squeak.)

Can any of the four of you name the piece of culture that I referenced as I entered the courtroom? There was an awkward pause there, because I was trying to figure out how we were going to do this. Because this is a complicated one. I mean, we really need a bulletin board with a bunch of red threads connecting your index cards. Because we got—and people who are watching on the YouTube, they can see this. We got—from my left to my right, we got Owen, Joanna, Steven, and Jess. And Owen and Jess are married, and Joanna and Steven are married. And yet Steven—oh, and Jess and Joanna are siblings. And yet Steven and Jess are arrayed against Owen and Joanna.

Oof! What a rom com this is! Maybe French farce or something, I don't know.

**Jesse Thorn:** Judge Hodgman, they're very small on my screen, and I've already decided not to be able to tell them apart.

**John Hodgman:** That's fine. That's fine, but we'll give each of them a chance to speak now, so maybe our listeners can determine what their voices sound like. Each of them will get a guess, and we'll start—well, I was going to start with you, Owen. But I forgot there's also baby Violet in the studio, who is Owen and Jess's child, who is seven weeks old. Which is a first. We've never had a seven-week-old child in the courtroom before, so let's see how it goes.

**Jesse Thorn:** We usually have to have twins, like on *Full House*.

(They laugh.)

**John Hodgman:** Yeah, exactly. Because of labor law. One of them has to be tutored while the other one is acting. Owen, you were checking the baby. Baby Violet is okay?

(Owen confirms.)

What's your guess?

**Owen:** I don't know, so I'm going to guess *Lord of the Rings Extended Edition*.

**John Hodgman:** *Lord of the Rings Extended Edition*. *LOTRXE* is what I'm writing down, even though it's wrong. Joanna, what's your guess?

**Joanna:** I'm going to guess that it's from an *Agatha Raisin* mystery novel. I'm going to go ahead and say number seven.

**John Hodgman:** Wait a minute, did we skip—? Did we go into an alternate reality all of a sudden? *Agatha Raisin*?! What's that?

**Joanna:** It's a book series that Steven and I have started listening to fall asleep.

**John Hodgman:** Alright. You represent one side of the case, Owen and Joanna. You are the donut cutters, correct? I just want to get this imprinted into my brain.

*(They confirm.)*

Alright. And we'll explain what that means in a moment. But moving on to the donut non-cutters. I'm going to throw in a wild card, because I had another great cultural reference. And speaking of cutters, I'm going to throw that one in too. Just because everything here is so—because we have a baby in the courtroom, might as well do some nutty stuff. Here's another one. Here's another cultural reference for you. This one featuring cutters. “These college kids out there, they're never going to get older out of shape, because new ones come along every year, and they're going to keep calling us cutters. To them, it's just a dirty word. To me, it's something else I never got a chance to be.”

**Jesse Thorn:** Oh, *(whistles)* I love these cultural references, John. You're pandering directly to me.

**John Hodgman:** I know you got both of them, Jesse. I know you have both of them hard. But now it's Steven's turn. Or Steve. I was invited to call him Steve if I wanted to. So, let's go, Stevie.

**Steven:** That's the one that hurts the most.

*(They laugh.)*

**John Hodgman:** That's the cut. That's the cut that cuts the deepest. Cutter—non-cutter.

**Steven:** You know, I got no idea on either one. So, the last one made me think it's gotta be something sports related. So—

**John Hodgman:** Yeah, that's fair. How about something sports related? I'll put that down.

[00:05:00]

**Steven:** Yeah, we'll go with that.

**John Hodgman:** Name a sports related thing, please. It's a movie. It's a movie. Sports related movie.

**Steven:** Okay, the movie *Draft Day*? Is that a movie?

**John Hodgman:** *Draft Day*, starring Griffin Newman of *Blank Check*. I'm writing it down, as wrong as it might be.

*(They laugh.)*

And finally, we come all the way now to Jess, also known as Jessica, mother of baby Violet, spouse of Owen. I'm just doing this to get this cemented into my brain. And now you've heard three guesses that are all wrong. So, that's three things that you can eliminate from the entire universe of words. You've heard two cultural references. They are both from movies.

**Jess:** *Race Day!* I don't—no idea. (*Laughs.*)

**Jesse Thorn:** *Race Day.* I like that one.

**John Hodgman:** Honestly, for a new parent of a seven-week-old, I'm gonna give some grace to *Race Day*.

(*Jess thanks him.*)

And I'm gonna say that's an honorary win.

**Jesse Thorn:** I gotta say, from now on—as far as I'm concerned—if you can generate a high-quality movie title from an alternate universe version of *Seinfeld*, like *Race Day*, then you win.

(*Laughter.*)

Jennifer Marmor's with me. She's nodding up and down. She knows about *Seinfeld* movie titles. (*Laughs.*)

**John Hodgman:** Anyway, I give you credit for *Race Day*. That was pretty good. All guesses are technically wrong, however. I was looking for either *Breaking Away*, which is the bicycling movie about cutters.

**Jesse Thorn:** (*Softly.*) Oh, what a wonderful movie.

**John Hodgman:** Or—a really, really wonderful movie, which we've talked about a lot. And another movie we've talked about a lot, which stands the test of time—*Wayne's World*. Now, if I understand correctly, Steven and Jess—siblings-in-law—you bring the case against Owen and Joanna. What is the nature of the justice, or injustice, that you seek me to redress?

**Steven:** Well, I initially brought the case against my beautiful wife, Joanna. And I sought an injunction that you, Judge, in your honor, would decide that she cease splitting shareable foodstuffs in a workplace environment. Any sort of shared environment.

**John Hodgman:** This came up because of donuts, correct?

**Steven:** So, we were at a party.

**John Hodgman:** What kind of party, sir?

**Steven:** Like a Yuletide party, Christmastime party.

**John Hodgman:** Sure, sure. A pagan festival.

**Steven:** Yeah, any number of things were being observed. That's why I started with Yuletide, but yes, the changing of the seasons.

**John Hodgman:** A holiday festival in Maryland. Which is where you are.

**Steven:** In Maryland. There was a plate of cookies, and I made a comment aloud to other party goers. And I said, "I'm really proud of everyone at this party that we don't have a bunch of halves and thirds of cookies on this plate. If someone wants a cookie, they're taking a whole cookie."

**John Hodgman:** Now, before you said this at the party, did you do one of these? (*Clinks his glass repeatedly.*) "Everybody, everyone be quiet. I want to say something I'm proud of at Yuletide. No one messed up the cookies for once. Steven out!"

**Steven:** It was less formal. Less formal than that. More of an offhand comment to two or three people. But then overheard—it became a conversation among a group of even five or six, perhaps.

**John Hodgman:** Your offhand comment got out of hand.

**Steven:** Well. I felt like it was mostly in hand. But then my wife observed the conversation that was going on. Excuse me,

**John Hodgman:** Excuse me, your beautiful wife, Joanna, as you said before.

**Steven:** That's usually how I refer to her, yes.

*(They chuckle.)*

**John Hodgman:** Please use the proper nomenclature from now on.

**Steven:** Yes, your honor. So, my beautiful wife joined in the conversation.

**John Hodgman:** Joanna.

**Steven:** Joanna, she joined in the conversation.

**John Hodgman:** She has a name. She has a name, sir.

*(Laughter.)*

Your beautiful wife, Joanna, joined in the conversation. And what did your beautiful wife Joanna say?

**Steven:** Well, people were complaining.

**Joanna:** I can say what I said, because I joined in because Steve—I actually overheard him say, “I hate those people.”

**John Hodgman:** People who split cookies, huh?

**Joanna:** Yeah. And so, then I joined in the conversation by saying, “Your wife, your beautiful wife is one of those people.” Yeah.

**John Hodgman:** Joanna—you—is one of those people.

**Joanna:** Yeah. So, what do you have to say to that?

**John Hodgman:** And that's when you filed for divorce, isn't it?

*(Laughter.)*

**Steven:** On the spot.

**John Hodgman:** That's when you split the cookie of your marriage.

**Steven:** Well, and you know, we handled it in the moment—or so I thought—to a degree, and then we came home. And the following day, we're sharing this disagreement with our cohabitants-in-law.

**John Hodgman:** Mm-hm. Yeah. Now let's be clear. Owen and Jess are married. Steven, you are married to your beautiful wife, Joanna.

[00:10:00]

*(Steven confirms.)*

Joanna is a sibling to your beautiful sister, Jess. And you all live together under one roof in a situation comedy called your life.

*(They confirm.)*

Alright. So, you went back to speak to your cohabitants. And what happened then, Steven?

**Steven:** Well, and as I noted in the initial filing of the case, they were split within the marriage as well on this issue. And the lines on which we are split, I would say, are pretty unusual for our cohabitation unit.

**John Hodgman:** Alright, we'll get into why it's atypical. But the line, as far as I understand it is, that—Steven, you and your sister-in-law, Jess, believe that cookies, donuts, and other communal treats at a party should not be cut.

**Jess:** Anything that is a—would be considered a single serve unit. So, donut, cookie, yes.

**John Hodgman:** Right. This is Jess speaking right now, for those listening.

**Jess:** Cupcake, muffin. Those items, not to be split. Things like a cake, obviously you can't eat an entire cake. Or if you can, congrats to you. But—

**Jesse Thorn:** Speak for yourself.

**Jess:** But that would be a lot.

**John Hodgman:** I would not choose to, but I defend my ability to do it if I have to.

**Jess:** Yeah, I would not expect to take—yes, I would expect someone to take like a slice of a cake, but not to break what would be considered an individual item.

**John Hodgman:** Jesse Thorn and I are both prepared to take the *Matilda* challenge—eat that whole piece of cake in front of the whole class.

*(They laugh.)*

Eat that whole cake. Show the Trunchbull. We'll show that Trunchbull.

**Steven:** I raised my hand, your honor. It might be helpful with four.

**John Hodgman:** Why? Why? You have certainly spoken quite a bit.

**Steven:** I'm a rambler. I just want to make sure to add into our case that it's not just you shouldn't split food anywhere, anytime. It's especially when it's a communal environment, like a party with over 10 people or a workplace.

**Jesse Thorn:** So, if you have cookies at home—if you have a sleeve of cookies at home, it's okay to eat half of one of those cookies.

*(Steven confirms.)*

But when they're out on a plate at a party, it's not okay to eat half of one of those cookies.

**Jess:** I would side eye someone taking half of like an Oreo out of the sleeve and leaving like the cookie but taking the frosting. That's not to say that wouldn't happen in our house, because we also have a four-year-old. But generally like splitting a food in a household I will side eye, but I'm not going to go to battle over it. It's mainly in a setting where there is more than your cohabitants.

**Steven:** Yeah. We're not trying to go into other people's households and say, "No splitting."

**Jesse Thorn:** I felt like "leave the cookie, take the frosting" was sort of where *The Godfather 3* went wrong for me.

*(Laughter.)*

**John Hodgman:** Take the cookie, leave the frosting, jump the shark, hire your daughter. That was the full line from *The Godfather 3*. Which was a weird line, very self-referential. But it was meta. We used to love meta in those days.

**Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

**Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

**John Hodgman:** Joanna, then let me ask you. You are in favor—here's the question. If presented with a box of donuts, what is your preference to do with those donuts in a communal setting?

**Joanna:** Probably take half of a donut.

**John Hodgman:** And why?

**Joanna:** I don't have a very big sweet tooth, and I will say—a Krispy Kreme? I will take a whole Krispy Kreme, because they're basically air. But like—

**John Hodgman:** And they're little.

**Joanna:** But most often it's Dunkin Donuts, and it can get kind of heavy for me. So, I just would prefer to take half of a donut.

**John Hodgman:** What donut would you split? Would you split—I mean, obviously you would split a regular toroid donut that has a hole in the middle. But what if it's like a jelly donut or a Boston cream? Would you cut that in half?

**Joanna:** No, I wouldn't cut that in half. That's too messy.

**John Hodgman:** Yeah, because gross. Yeah. Okay. Gotcha. Gotcha.



**Joanna:** Yeah. But like my favorite donut is also a sour cream donut. And typically there's only like one in the box. And so, I also feel like I'm being helpful, because if somebody else also likes sour cream donuts, then I'm like leaving them some.

**Jesse Thorn:** What else do they make donuts out of in Maryland?

**Joanna:** You've never had a sour cream donut?

**John Hodgman:** I've never heard of that before. Is this very common?

**Joanna:** I think they just use—like how you use sour cream in baking sometimes, like they just use sour cream in the baking of the donut.

**Owen:** The main ingredient is still sugar, don't worry.

**Joanna:** Yeah, so they're like cakier.

**John Hodgman:** But it's not like you had a big, gooey pocket of sour cream in there.

**Joanna:** No, not at all.

**Jesse Thorn:** Judge Hodgman, I don't even acknowledge baked donuts, to be honest with you. If you're not going to fry it, don't bother.

[00:15:00]

**John Hodgman:** Yeah, I hear what you're saying. Absolutely. Owen, do you actually have an opinion on this, or are you just sitting on that side of the table?

**Owen:** Well, it's funny, because I want to clarify something. I would never split a donut, but that's because I eat them in increments of two, so it's not really a concern.

**Joanna:** Yeah, he eats a lot.

**John Hodgman:** So, why are you sitting on the other side of the table with your beautiful sister-in-law, Joanna, and against your beautiful wife, Jess?

**Owen:** Well, it's the principle of the thing. I think that people should have the freedom to take fractions of donuts or other pastries without being judged over it.

**John Hodgman:** Even in a communal setting?

**Owen:** Well, I guess they can be judged, but they have that right.

**Joanna:** They shouldn't be told to stop I think is what Owen's saying.

**Jesse Thorn:** There are no communal settings in America, John.

*(Laughter.)*

It says it in the constitution.

**John Hodgman:** Alright. So, Jess, that's your husband speaking, your beautiful husband. Tell me why it's not okay to split a donut in a communal setting. I mean, I feel like Joanna's argument—your beautiful sister Joanna's argument, is pretty well considered that if there's one sour cream donut in the box, why not leave some behind for someone else to taste if they ever were curious about this new iteration of donut? Seems to be pretty generous, honestly.

**Jess:** I think a lot of it comes down to when I was working in a large corporate setting, and you'd get like the instant message, “Oh, there's donuts in the break room!” You're like, oh, great. I'm going to go over after I finish this call and grab one. And you go over, and it's just a box that has the nasty ones remaining and then halves of things. And there's maybe like one like tier-three donut remaining. And at that point, it's just like, well, am I being wasteful by not taking any of this? Like, these all look like they've been picked over, and also just not seeing how the donuts are distributed. I don't trust that everyone properly sanitized their hands or took a splitting instrument to divide the object.

**John Hodgman:** A donut splitting instrument like an adze or a hatchet.

**Jess:** Yes, just hatchet through the break room table.

**Jesse Thorn:** Judge Hodgman, you and I both know that all donuts are split with a sad, white, plastic knife.

**John Hodgman:** It's true. It's true. That somehow bends in all directions.

**Jesse Thorn:** Jess, what would you say are the tiers of donuts?

**John Hodgman:** Here we go! This is my question. Thank you, Bailiff Jessie.

**Jess:** My favorite go-to is a double chocolate. So, it's like a chocolate cake donut with chocolate icing. That's like tier one for me.

**Owen:** And the glaze.

**Jess:** Yeah, well—yeah, it's glazed.

**John Hodgman:** You're getting a, you're getting a mezza-mezza hand signal from Bailiff Jesse Thorn on that one.

**Jesse Thorn:** Not fried.

**John Hodgman:** Not fried. But people like what they like, yeah.

**Jess:** So, my top one. My mid-tier is anything that's like kind of a cake donut with a frosting and sprinkle. So—

**John Hodgman:** A homely donut.

**Jess:** Yeah. Like a normal, like strawberry frosted, chocolate frosted, vanilla frosted, they're kind of tier two. Tier three, it's old-fashioned. I'm sorry!

*(John “woah”s.)*

Like, when I want a donut, I want something sweet to counter the coffee that it's normally paired with. So, I won't put sugar in my coffee, because I'm getting the sugar from the donut.

**Joanna:** An old-fashioned donut is perfect with coffee. I don't know what you're talking about.

**John Hodgman:** May I say, that was just then beautiful wife Joanna—and whole human being in her own right, by the way.

*(Laughter.)*

Chiming in with the absolute truth. An old-fashioned donut, a fried old-fashioned donut dipped in coffee? Even I, a person without a sweet tooth will delight in that from time to time, Jess.

**Jesse Thorn:** Also, what kind of madness is it to suggest that an old-fashioned donut is not sweet?

**John Hodgman:** Steven, how did this living arrangement come about?

**Steven:** Tasked again with explaining. I'm gonna get accused of being wordy. So—

**John Hodgman:** *(Interrupting.)* You know what? I'm gonna take it away from you.

*(Steven thanks him.)*

Owen, we haven't heard enough from you. How did you all come to live together? You and your wife and her sister and your sister's beautiful husband, Steven.

*(Laughter.)*

**Owen:** There was a house. It has six bedrooms. It has a clearly demarcated left half, right half—well, left 1/3rd, right 2/3rds.

**Jesse Thorn:** Well, they run a tape line down the middle.

*(Laughter.)*

**Jess:** Chalk.

**Owen:** Tape and a wall with some doors.

[00:20:00]

And they live on one side, and we live on the other.

**Jess:** To clarify, it's a house that had their garage converted to an in-law suite. So, there is like an entire townhouse slapped onto the side of a single-family home.

**John Hodgman:** And which part do you and your little family occupy, Jess?

**Jess:** We're in the single-family home side of it.

**John Hodgman:** And so the in-law suite is now occupied by you or by Steven and Joanna?

**Jess:** By Joanna and Steven.

**John Hodgman:** Okay, and who owned the home originally? Or did you all buy it together? Or rent it or whatever, take possession of it? Squat? Maybe you're all squatters. I don't know.

**Owen:** Don't tell anyone.

**John Hodgman:** How did it come to be?

**Jess:** Flashback to covid times. Joe and Steve were headed back to school. And rather than—there was going to be a gap in the lease for their apartment and their move to a new area. During that gap, they knew we were going to have a baby and said, “Hey, that sounds fun. Let's go live with a baby.” So, at that point—

**John Hodgman:** So, you already were living in this home, and then Joanna and Steven joined you.

**Jess:** Yes. So we had a townhouse. They occupied the basement and then moved out for a couple years. My husband and I were looking for a new home and at one point uncovered this house that had this very unique living situation of essentially a townhouse smushed on the side of a house. It solved a lot of the main friction point we had with the townhouse, of there not being enough kitchen space.

**John Hodgman:** Oh, I thought you were going to say enough siblings inside of it.

**Jess:** Well, so in this like in-law suite setup, they have a full kitchen, their own basement, two bedrooms and two bathrooms and a living room.

**John Hodgman:** Let me see. You experienced some living together in one space, and it was fine. And you liked it. And then when you were moving, Owen and Jess, you found a house that was like that's enough room for all four of us if we wanted to do it again. And you invited them to join you.

**Jess:** Yes. I sent Joanna a text and I said, "Hey, do you want to live together again?"

And she said, "If it's not in a basement."

And I said, "Well, it's a whole house on the side of another house."

**John Hodgman:** Right. I just needed to know who was there first, because if I rule that someone's getting kicked out, that's going to affect my decision.

**Jess:** Oof. Yeah, I don't think we want them kicked out.

**John Hodgman:** Well, it's not your choice, okay?

*(Laughter.)*

I'll decide. How about that? You came here—

**Jess:** John, we have a mortgage to pay! We need their rent. *(Laughs.)*

**John Hodgman:** None of this matters to me. All I care about is justice. And so, you invited your sister, Joanna—your beautiful sister, Joanna—to move in. And Owen, you were cool with this?

**Owen:** Very.

**John Hodgman:** And Steven, obviously, you were. Free house.

**Steven:** We pay! We pay rent. Below market value, but above nothing.

**John Hodgman:** Ohhh, you're getting kicked out.

*(Laughter.)*

Okay, so Steven, I'll let you talk now. You're all living together under one roof with two little kids, I may add. Any pets?

**Steven:** Four cats.

**John Hodgman:** Oh boy. Give me some names.

**Steven:** Romeo and Ruben, mine and Joanna's cats, Pixel and Athena.

**John Hodgman:** And do these cats—are they kept separated, or are they also free flow through the home?

**Steven:** When Romeo and Pixel and Athena lived together during the pandemic, there was confrontation. And since then we've added Ruben to the mix, and we've only tentatively had some, you know—

**Joanna:** Had some play dates.

**Steven:** Yeah, some play dates, but not a permanent—

**John Hodgman:** So, they believe in the separation of families. They have not yet been brought along to your enlightened philosophical state of (*inaudible*) living.

**Steven:** Yes. They're more old-fashioned American, you know, anti-communal living.

**John Hodgman:** They're nuclear family cats. Yeah, okay I got you. Alright. And so, that's a lot going on under one roof. And you come to me—you're telling me the biggest conflict the four of you could have is splitting donuts in half?

**Joanna:** Surprisingly, yeah. (*Laughs.*)

**Jess:** Yeah, I mean, that was kind of like a little bit of the friction with the shared kitchen situation was splitting of food and groceries. And then that's not an issue in the current household structure, because there are two fridges, and they can cook their own stuff, and we can cook our own stuff. But in the context of hosting where one might supply donuts or cookies.

**John Hodgman:** Right. Or cookies, right.

**Jess:** Any kind of like potluck-ish thing where you have these special little treats, the splitting then is friction.

**John Hodgman:** I know when I go to the potluck and there's a casserole there—

[00:25:00]

I take half the casserole and leave the other half for someone else to try. But I always considered that to be polite.

**Jess:** Yeah. I think from my perspective as a host, when I've had to clean up after events, it is very frustrating to me to find halves of things. Because they don't always preserve well either. Whereas like if the donut remains intact, it's like—

**John Hodgman:** It has a little bit of a longer shelf life (*inaudible*).

**Jess:** Yeah, like it'll last a little bit longer, whereas it would dry out otherwise.

**John Hodgman:** Just a little tiny bit. But if you cut that in half—yeah, right, exactly. You expose those, yeah. Go ahead, Steven. I see you raising your hand. I'll allow it.

**Steven:** Thank you very much. Only this past Saturday morning, I was our household's representative at a mutual friend's child's birthday party. And there was a half of a bagel cut vertically that was remaining on the plate with all the other bagels for the entirety of the party. And then in the end, as I was assisting our mutual friend clean up, I had to end up being the one to throw away the half of a bagel, who had clearly been depreciating in value over the course of the party.

**John Hodgman:** Well, hang on. When you cut a bagel to put cream cheese on it, in the traditional way, how would you describe that, Bailiff Jesse Thorn?

**Steven:** (*Answering before the question is finished.*) Horizontal.

**John Hodgman:** Or was that—? Or Steven.

(*Steven apologizes with a chuckle.*)

That would be horizontal, right? Where you're—? Okay, so vertically you're talking about—you're looking the bagel dead in the eye of its hole.

(*Steven confirms.*)

And then you're cutting it—and you're splitting that eye in half.

**Steven:** Yes, you are, Judge.

**John Hodgman:** Into two semi circles, right. Of absence. Of void. Right, okay. Got it.

**Steven:** And I'm not saying that, you know, whoever did that is a criminal. But I am saying that, you know, I feel like the consensus opinion—it's okay for there to be some social norms, things to moor our society. And if—I hope we can all agree that whoever did that should not have done so.

**John Hodgman:** Are you hoping that someone is going to break down in tears in a confession right now?

*(Laughter.)*

Do you suspect that it might be someone at the table? Because you were the designated rep.

**Joanna:** Because we weren't there!

**Steven:** Yeah, I was the only one there.

**John Hodgman:** If you saw—let me ask you this, Jess. If you saw your beautiful younger sister, Joanna, cut a donut in half, and you saw how she handled it, would you eat that other half a donut? If it were a chocolate on chocolate?

**Jess:** So, that's where it gets into the premise of having a sharing partner where I am okay with it.

**John Hodgman:** Okay. Wow. Here we go. Let the record show that Steve just got very excited about the sharing partner concept.

**Steven:** Yes. I've been talking about a consenting splitting partner for a couple months now.

**John Hodgman:** Well, you know, when you have four adults living together as a family under one roof, you do have to lay some—you know, write out some boundaries.

*(Chuckles.)*

Okay, let's hear about it.

**Jess:** So, my thing is if I were to be like, “No, I don't want this entire piece of cake,” I could look to Owen and be like, “Hey, do you want to share this piece?” And we go, and we take the plate, and I'll eat my part while he's chasing the toddler, and then I'll pass him the plate to have his. Or vice versa. So, like if there's something where it's like, oh, you have a coworker and you're like, “Hey, I want to try half of that cupcake. Like, I'm torn between these two flavors.”

And you have someone that's game to say, “Yeah, let's go halvesies on each and swap”? Totally fine. It's the idea of cutting it with no game plan of what happens to that other half afterwards.

**John Hodgman:** Cutting it for a ghost partner is not allowable to you.

*(Jess confirms.)*

Beautiful sister, Joanna, you raised your hand in objection to what your beautiful older sister just said.



**Joanna:** So, I have been told that if I don't find a consenting splitting partner, that I'm supposed to take the whole thing, and only eat the half I want, and then throw away the rest? Which I find criminal, because I'm like I could leave that half for maybe somebody else to take it eventually and try to reduce food waste rather than throw it out immediately.

**John Hodgman:** Why don't you just wrap it in a little napkin and put it in the glove compartment and bring it home to your brother-in-law, Owen?

**Joanna:** I might eventually! Like, if I go back at the end of the day and it's still there, I'll take it home.

**John Hodgman:** Owen, if I were to rule that you are your sister-in-law, Joanna's, perpetual consenting half eating partner?

**Owen:** I'd allow it.

**John Hodgman:** I feel like we're making our way to a solution.

*(Laughter.)*

Well, let's go back for a moment, Steven, to this initial Yuletide party when you discovered that your beautiful wife, Joanna, was someone who would be willing to split a cookie and leave the other half behind. How did you feel when you discovered this truth about your spouse, who's a whole human being in her own right?

**Steven:** Well, here's what it comes down to for me.

[00:30:00]

You know, I think that my beautiful spouse, who is independent and a whole human being in her own right and currently the breadwinner of our couple—go her—as I'm finishing graduate school, I think that she is a very considerate person.

**John Hodgman:** I presume that to be philosophically consistent, you are morally opposed to her splitting the bread with you.

*(Laughter.)*

**Steven:** I'm going to leave that one alone.

*(Laughter.)*

**Owen:** He's a consenting partner.

**John Hodgman:** Consenting splitting partner?

**Steven:** I don't know that people who do tend to split donuts—especially, you know, into different quantities—are as considerate or as intentional in their desire to reduce waste. Because what I have experienced in a workplace where there's a sharing of donuts—the prime example I think of is when I worked at a school, had Krispy Kreme donuts brought in fairly often. So, it would be a box of 12 donuts, all the same donut. And there would be multiple halves left behind that ended up being thrown away. And someone else who didn't bring the donuts in had to be the one who threw them away.

**John Hodgman:** Had to be the one who threw them away instead of bringing them home to Owen to throw into his open mouth.

**Owen:** I don't think I can defend having a second donut when there's already a half of that same type available. So, I'm gonna concede the point on that.

**Jesse Thorn:** But let's be frank, in situations where there are multiple types of donut, those half donuts are always coconut donuts.

**Jess:** Exactly. That's tier like 10, like worst donut in my opinion.

**Jesse Thorn:** Or it's like a donut with walnuts on it or something.

**Steven:** This may be a good time for the evidence that Jess submitted.

**John Hodgman:** Well, Steven, I believe I will decide when it's the best time for Jess to produce her evidence. Thank you very much. Jess, what is your evidence?

**Jess:** My evidence is an audio recording of my four-year-old and his take on the splitting of donuts.

**John Hodgman:** Let's go to the audio tape!

**Clip:**

**Jess:** Hey, Russell. When you go downstairs, would you rather have one whole donut or two half donuts?

**Russell:** Two whole—one whole donut.

**Jess:** One whole donut? Okay. Thank you!

**John Hodgman:** Well, that is pretty damning, Owen. Your own son has thrown your side of the argument under the bus. How do you respond?

**Owen:** Well, I'm not saying that people prefer halves. I'm just saying that it's important that people feel comfortable taking halves if that's what they prefer.

**John Hodgman:** Look, one of you is going to be kicked out of the house. That's the way the game is played. Owen, are there any foodstuffs that should not be split in half and left behind?

**Owen:** I don't know. Can you name any that you think would fall into that category? And I'll say, "No, I'd still eat that."

**Jess:** I had a list.

**John Hodgman:** Alright. So, just to be clear, Jess is going to read a list of foodstuffs, and Owen is going to determine whether they are splittable or no. And then I will listen without comment. And then I will give you my answers after you've already answered.

**Jess:** Danishes.

**Owen:** Split.

**Jess:** Cupcakes.

**Owen:** Split.

**Jess:** Boston cream donuts.

**Owen:** No, I don't think so.

**Jess:** Eclairs.

**Owen:** Yeah.

**Jess:** Cannoli.

**Owen:** Sure.

**Jess:** Donuts?

**Owen:** Yup.

**Jess:** Muffins?

**Owen:** Yep.

**Jess:** Cookies under four inches in diameter?

**Owen:** Mm. I'm trying to visualize that.

**Jesse Thorn:** It's a small cookie.

**Owen:** I don't know.

**John Hodgman:** Alright, you know, I'm going to save this for my verdict. I'm going to go through all of these myself in my verdict. But before I step into my chambers—Steven, have any other friends or family members weighed in on this matter?

**Jess:** Um, they won't. I tried to corner people at my baby shower, a time where people are there to celebrate me and should humor me in everything I want to do, and they would not weigh in on this. They said, "That sounds like a family matter."

**John Hodgman:** Steven, Jess—I mean, why is this important? What is the harm, really, in letting your beloved spouses and siblings and siblings-in-law do what they like? Shouldn't everyone like what they like?

**Jess:** The harm is germs coming into an already germ-infested household.

**Steven:** I would say, you know, Jess has been an ally of convenience for me in this thing. Because I'll be honest, the germ element is not important to me so much as it is—

**John Hodgman:** Wow! You just threw your ally under the bus. She might form an alliance now with her sister and husband and kick you out of the house!

**Steven:** No, I've very much enjoyed, you know, arguing our case together.

[00:35:00]

**Jess:** Yes, grovel some more, please. (*Laughs.*)

**Steven:** My feeling about it is that the—it's the setting that you're in. It's more of like a social grace towards other people thing than it is about like the grossness element.

**Jesse Thorn:** Steven, if I've learned anything as the cohost of the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast, it's that a significant portion of our audience is currently labeling you a murderer for not caring that much about germs.

(*Laughter.*)

I can only imagine that a solid 25% of our audience, when someone extends their hand to shake hands, just does that like "too slow", slick hairstyle move before they touch hands.

**Owen:** I thought you did care about germs. Didn't you go see that play?

**Jess:** About handwashing?

**Steven:** We did see a very good play about handwashing when we were in London on that trip.

**Jesse Thorn:** Look, we all (*laughs*)—when you're in a foreign country, you gotta enjoy the arts.

**Steven:** It was on the West End. It's highly reviewed.

(*Laughter.*)

**John Hodgman:** But you talk about the social grace of it. I don't understand. Wouldn't the social grace extend to not eating a whole—not eating and wasting a half of a thing instead of leaving it behind for someone who might come down later at the brunch and say, “Oh, I wanted half a cinnamon roll!”?

**Steven:** Yeah, I think that those occurrences are, you know, lucky. But in my experience, especially depending on the setting you're in, not a guarantee. And in fact, less likely than the half a thing sitting out and then having to be disposed of. You keep emphasizing when I say having to, but the alternative to someone throwing it away or dealing with it who's not the splitter is food being sat there to rot for (*chuckles*) who knows how long?

**John Hodgman:** Joanna, you have presented an argument that on the one hand, you only want half of a donut or a cookie or whatever. You don't want to waste the other half, so you leave it behind for others. Then your other argument is, uh, “You want two halves? Just have two halves of different flavors.” Which is it?

**Joanna:** Normally the two halves, I would say, happen at home. So, like if I'm making myself like a dessert and I want to taste a little bit of the various options.

**John Hodgman:** And do you assign the other half of the donut or the cookie or whatever to a consenting split partner like Owen or whatever?

**Joanna:** No, I mean, because I know that—yeah, Owen or Steve will eat it eventually. Or if it's still there for, you know, breakfast or whatever the next day.

**John Hodgman:** No. No next day donuts, okay? First of all, preliminary ruling from now on, no next day donuts. Alright, I'm going into my chambers in order to chew this over, so to speak. 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.*)

Okay, I'm working really hard to remember who's who. Owen, how are you feeling about your chances in the case?

**Owen:** I'm feeling good, but I think I'm just biased, because it's my opinion on the matter, and I assume other people feel the same way. But if that's the case, then I'm definitely winning.

**Jesse Thorn:** (*Teasing.*) Owen, you've brought a lot of negative uptight vibes to this whole recording.

(*Laughter.*)

You just don't seem like a chill dude or like you have a positive attitude.

**Owen:** Alright, thanks for that.

(*Laughter.*)

**Jesse Thorn:** How about... I'm gonna go to Joanna. Joanna, how are you feeling?

**Joanna:** I feel good, because I read a judgment that the judge made not so long ago in the *New York Times* about somebody splitting bananas. And he wrote in that basically that the husband needed to learn some distress tolerance. And so, you know, I just feel good about my chances that it might be a similar situation, where the people distressed by the donuts maybe you just need to learn some distress tolerance.

**Jesse Thorn:** Jess, how are you feeling?

**Jess:** I'm feeling pretty good considering I'm coming from a germ perspective, and I'm often faced having germs come into my house unwillingly from a toddler. So, I'd rather not have it come from my workplace as well.

**Jesse Thorn:** Steven, how are you feeling?

**Steven:** Um, I'm just happy to be here.

(*Laughter.*)

**Jess:** We can tell.

**Jesse Thorn:** Steven says, "I'm just here so I don't get fined."

(*Steven agrees while the others laugh.*)

Well, Steven, Jess, Joanna, Owen, 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:** We're taking a quick break from the show. And of course, John, you've been talking about this on the show, but tickets now available for the Solid Sound Festival?

[00:40:00]

**John Hodgman:** Tickets are available for the Solid Sound Festival. Of course, I'll be there with this incredible economy line up of my friends and yours, Eugene Mirman, Dave Hill, Todd Barry, Brittany Carney, Sydnee Washington, and the genius Gene Grae. But I just need to point out—

**Jesse Thorn:** John, wait, hold on. Do you think Dave Hill—Dave Hill, one of the funniest guys in the world—

*(John confirms.)*

And Dave Hill From Before, as he introduces himself in all of his social media videos. Do you think Dave will be following up on his tours with Tenacious D by doing BMX based comedy? *(Chuckling.)* Because he's been doing a lot of comedy on a BMX bike lately.

**John Hodgman:** I would not be surprised if Dave broke out a BMX bike on stage.

**Jesse Thorn:** There's definitely going to be sweet solos, right? Like he's definitely ripping into some guitar solos. But I think he may also do those solos on a BMX bike.

**John Hodgman:** Yeah, Dave is going to be dropping some delicious licks, as will all of these incredible comedians on the comedy stage on Saturday afternoon. And that's in the afternoon! If you come and see us all day long, we have three big shows all day long with all these comedians. You're not going to miss a lick of Wilco by the way, because they play in the evenings—Friday night, Saturday night. And I just need to say, I didn't even realize until someone mentioned it to me—some friends of friends are going to be at this thing—that Iris DeMent is going to be playing, and I love Iris DeMent. “Let the Mystery Be” is one of my favorite songs, and I didn't even—there's so much talent at this thing that it didn't, for some reason, even register that I'm going to get to go see my hero, Iris DeMent, play.

Solid Sound, it only happens every other year. It happens at Mass MoCA, which is the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art. It's a beautiful museum made out of an old electric parts factory in a beautiful part of Western Massachusetts. Go to [SolidSoundFestival.com](http://SolidSoundFestival.com) to see the lineup and get your tickets.

I also want to give a shout out to my friend, Christopher Frizzell, who was, long ago, the editor in chief of *The Stranger in Seattle*. He's an incredible writer, incredible editor. And now he runs incredible book groups online and in person. And you know, it's been one of my projects to read *Middlemarch* this year by George Eliot. And it is an incredible book which you will enjoy if you read it! But my enjoyment of it has only been enhanced by going to Chris's *Middlemarch* book club on zoom every Saturday afternoon. There are only a few left. It might be over by the time you hear this, but go over to [FrizzLit.com](http://FrizzLit.com) and see what else he's got going on. Because Chris is amazing, and if there's a book that you've been wanting to read and you want to just hang out with some people online who love reading books, it's going to be a really fun experience for you. So, I have to really suggest you check him out and check out his Substack. And check out my Substack! Hodgman @sub—whatever it is. [Hodgman.Substack.com](http://Hodgman.Substack.com) or the other way around.

**Jesse Thorn:** I want to mention, John, something really special that you and I can take 100% full credit for and give no credit to the actual artistic people involved. Which is this: there is an amazing program in the Maximum Fun Network called the *Beef and Dairy Network*. *The Beef and Dairy Network* is a comedy podcast that pretends to be an industry podcast for the beef and dairy industry. So, all of its interviews are beef related. And for many years, one of the themes on *The Beef and Dairy Network* podcast is that the seed money to start the program was lent to Ben Partridge, the show's host and creator, by—quote—"the American actor Ted Danson", unquote. And in recent years, Ted Danson in the world of the show has been demanding that the loan be repaid in grain, because grain captures the power of the sun. (*Chuckles.*) So, he will only accept repayment in the form of grain.

Now it has been really difficult for Ben to get together enough grain to satisfy the American actor, Ted Danson. And on the latest *Beef and Dairy Network* episode, something incredible happened, which is Ted Danson appeared on the program to demand his grain. Now—

**John Hodgman:** Wait, the American actor Ted Danson?

**Jesse Thorn:** The American actor Ted Danson prepared his crows and rang his dark bell. (*Laughs.*) Those are two things that happened on the show. And look, I'm not saying who helped Ted Danson know that he should go on *The Beef and Dairy Network* podcast, but I'm just going to say it's two of the hosts of one of your favorite podcasts who happened to have his email and ask him really nicely. And as it turns out, Ted Danson—besides being a genius, is also one of the nicest dudes ever. And he totally got it and was totally amazing on the show.

**John Hodgman:** Yeah, it was an amazing thing.

**Jesse Thorn:** You don't need to know anything about *The Beef and Dairy Network* to listen to this episode. It is a breathtaking piece of comedy. It also features an extensive interview with a dental expert who talks about how many celebrities (*laughing*) have implants made of cow teeth.

[00:45:00]

Dental appliances made from cow teeth.



**John Hodgman:** So, just take your number two pencil and write down these names. *Beef and Dairy Network*, Ted Danson, Christopher Frizzell, Iris DeMent. These are just things and people that we absolutely love, and we bet you will too. Write those things down, and go search for them. Now, shall we get back to the episode?

**Jesse Thorn:** Let's do it!

**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:** People sometimes ask me how much sort of writing I do on the verdict before I deliver it, and the answer is basically none. I kind of have been thinking about the case, and I've sort of been thinking about what the crux of the case is, and I formulate an opinion. And then I give it some consideration while Jesse's talking to the litigants, and then I just sort of freestyle it. And in this case, I've done zero preparation, and I don't even know what I'm talking about, because I've just been trying to remember your names.

*(Jesse laughs.)*

There's just so many of you in this alternative lifestyle house in Maryland, and I'm just trying to remember—I mean, you're all beautiful, and you're all spouses, and you're all siblings, and you're all everything. And I'm just trying to remember where you stand on every issue and everything else.

**Jesse Thorn:** They didn't even bring their housekeeper, Alice!

*(Laughter.)*

**John Hodgman:** But I do have to come up with a decision, and I do have to vote one of you out of the donut house. Who shall it be? There are some weirdos who are rooting for the baby. Owen's kept a silent profile this entire time. Joanna's made some good cases, so has Jess. Steve didn't come to make friends. And guess what? He made one anyway, because I'm your friend, Steve. Even though I've been giving you the—I've been giving you the business.

Let me respond to something Joanna said, first of all. Joanna, you're not wrong that I did rule recently in the *New York Times Magazine* about cutting things in half. In this case, it was a husband and wife, and the wife had recently had a baby. And during the time she was pregnant, she was unable to tolerate bananas, because they made her nauseated. And now that the baby is born, she is reintroducing bananas into her life, but she can only eat half a banana at a time, which means— They have a banana tree, you know, where the bananas hang down. Not a literal tree, but like a little wooden hook, and then you hang the banana bunch on it. And she's cutting the bananas in half and like giving that banana a haircut and eating half the banana. And the husband was like, "That's gross to me."

And I agreed with him. It was gross. A) the food waste is gross. B) baby bananas exist. I mean, why not just get smaller ones? But I said, “Why don't you do practice some distress tolerance? Your wife just grew a human in her body! So, leave her alone on this, because that half a hanging banana is gonna be the least of the messes that you have to deal with for a while.” And Owen and Jess know this to be true. And so do all of us, because baby Violet threw up in the podcast!

*(Laughter.)*

I have to mention that because people don't maybe necessarily know that I do write that column for the *New York Times Magazine*, and that was a fun one to write. But I will not say that it was an applicable judgment in your defense, Joanna. Because what I was saying to Half a Banana Wife's husband is, “Uhhh, take it easy, dude. She just had a baby.” Someone else just had a baby! Your sister. Your beautiful sister, Jess. So, if Jess wanted to eat half a cookie and you were mad at her, I would be telling you, “Take it easy.” You know what I'm saying?

**Joanna:** Fair enough.

**John Hodgman:** But you know, you only have one baby named Steve, and he's a grown man.

*(They chuckle.)*

But you're not wrong to look at precedents in this courtroom, because this case falls between two of the biggest fake legal precedents that we have. People like what they like. Some people just want half a cookie. Some people just want half a donut, right? Some people just want half a cinnamon roll. But also! Be mindful of the work you leave for others. When you have—and Steve is nodding really hard right now. When you take a half a cookie or half a donut and you leave it behind, you're leaving behind something that someone else might enjoy eating, but more often than not just has to clean up.

So, let's get to the quiz. Jess gave her beautiful husband, Owen, a quiz of which single-serving foods are splitable in his opinion, and which are not. We registered his answers. Now it's time for me to give my answers, the definitive ones. I wrote them all down here on a piece of paper. Look. Danish: do not split. Cupcake: do not split. Boston cream donut: do not split. Éclair: do not split. Cannoli: do not split. Donut: I'll reserve that for last. Muffin: do not split. Four-inch cookie or smaller: do not split. Donut: DO NOT SPLIT!

[00:50:00]

*(Someone claps.)*

Now, why? It has been established, and you have all witnessed it in your office parties. Half a donut is garbage. A whole donut is a treat, even to me. Half a donut is something that someone has mangled with their grubby fingers. If you didn't see him do it, you can only assume the worst. And paradoxically, half a coconut donut is twice the garbage.

*(Laughter.)*

Science doesn't know how that happens. Now, I understand and appreciate all of the arguments that you have mustered, Joanna. Also, never put mustard on a donut. And there are situations in which splitting a donut or a bagel or a slice of pizza or a Danish or an éclair or a cannoli are—is perfectly acceptable! But it's a very specific situation. And it's one that's been accounted for in Steve and Jess's cosmology. If you are there with someone who wants to split that thing with you and you offer to do it and they say yes, or if you have a brother-in-law like Owen, who's like Mikey—he'll eat anything. And you know that he's going to eat it no matter what, you split it. But if you don't have that person around, if you're in a communal situation, like an office party or a cocktail party. Or I mean, whatever kind of like—whatever kind of donut party you have in your weird love house.

*(They chuckle.)*

And you're leaving it behind, and the person the other person has not seen you split it? I don't care how many people come down the stairs the next morning saying, “I was hoping for half a cinnamon bun!” That person is a unicorn. Most people are like, “I wonder who touched that cinnamon bun. Should I eat it?” Unfortunately, no. You shouldn't eat half that cinnamon bun unless you've seen who split it and unless you've decided to split it with them. If you cannot make eye contact and have made a prior arrangement for someone to eat the half the thing that you don't want, just take the whole thing. Eat it. And if you must, if you can't finish it, if you really don't want it, wrap it in a napkin, throw it in Owen's mouth when you get home.

This is the sound of a gavel.

**Clip:**

**Homer Simpson:** Donut. *(Garbled eating sounds.)*

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

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

*(Chairs squeak.)*

Steven, I'm gonna start with you. How are you feeling?

**Steven:** A relief you can hardly imagine, Bailiff.

**Jesse Thorn:** Why's that?

**Steven:** Well, I made an offhand comment during one of the breaks in this recording that I felt like I was becoming the villain. And I had that banana splitting case in the back of my mind this whole time, so.

**Jesse Thorn:** Jess, how are you feeling?

**Jess:** Relief going into Saturday where this verdict will be tested, because there will be donuts and bagels at a children's birthday party.

**Jesse Thorn:** Joanna, how are you feeling?

**Joanna:** You know, disappointed. Only slightly. You know, I like to win. I think most people do.

*(Jesse laughs.)*

But you know, I'll take the judgment. I will be more responsible about my preferences and eat what I want and figure out what to do with the rest.

**Jesse Thorn:** Owen, you look pretty chill about the whole thing.

**Owen:** I do worry about the precedent being set, because it just feels like it will lead to more wasted food. But personally, I'm looking forward to all three of them bringing me their leftovers.

*(Laughter.)*

**Jesse Thorn:** I mean, I think at the end of the day, the primary result of this is everyone's going to come up to you and say, "Hey, you want to split this with me?" And you'll just say yes to everyone.

**Owen:** It's a win.

**Jesse Thorn:** Steven, Jess, Joanna, Owen, thank you for joining us on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

*(They thank him.)*

**Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

**Jesse Thorn:** Another *Judge John Hodgman* case is in the books! We'll have Swift Justice in just a second. First, our thanks to Redditor u/TaakoSalad. That's T-A-A-K-O, John. That's Justin's character on the first arc of *The Adventure Zone*.

**John Hodgman:** Yes, I know. Yes, that's correct.

**Jesse Thorn:** They named this episode “Krispy Kreme and Punishment”. If you want to name a future episode, join us on the Maximum Fun subreddit. [MaximumFun.Reddit.com](https://www.reddit.com/r/MaximumFun).

**John Hodgman:** Now, Jesse, I rarely do this, but I just want to shout out an honorable mention to Redditor u/Wildcard\_71 for suggesting “Torus Reform”, which I really liked a lot, because a donut—or a traditional donut—is in the shape of a torus. If you don't know, look it up. But I could not deny “Krispy Kreme and Punishment” by u/TaakoSalad. That was the one for this one. But hey, I love seeing all of the fun names that you come up with. We both do. We all do. So, get over there to the Maximum Fun subreddit. And when we put out a call for case names, suggest a pun or two.

[00:55:00]

**Jesse Thorn:** Evidence and photos from the show are posted not just on this episode's page on [MaximumFun.org](https://www.MaximumFun.org), but also on our Instagram, [@JudgeJohnHodgman](https://www.instagram.com/JudgeJohnHodgman). We had a lot of cool stuff going up on that Instagram. So, if you're not following it, you're missing out. It's not just evidence, but lots of cool video stuff as well these days. You can—

**John Hodgman:** Dank memes, even.

**Jesse Thorn:** Some very dank memes. If you have a dank meme, please tag [@JudgeJohnHodgman](https://www.instagram.com/JudgeJohnHodgman) when you post your *Judge John Hodgman* dankness. Because we're having—it's a Dank Meme of the Week over there at *Judge John Hodgman*. I love dank memes. (*Laughs.*)

**John Hodgman:** D-M-O-T-W!

**Jesse Thorn:** I'm sorry that they've taken us so far away from democracy, but I enjoy when they're about my podcasts.

(*John laughs.*)

Anyway, we're on TikTok and YouTube, [@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJmKdLWpYkGpYkGpYkGpYkG) as well. You can also see all that short—there's original video content! Not just stuff from this show. And make sure that you're following us, hit the subscribe button on YouTube, and hit those alerts so that you can enjoy the live premieres of the video of every *Judge John Hodgman* episode!

**John Hodgman:** Also, this week I got a new video camera with a wide-angle lens, which means I have to angle my computer even further away from my disgusting pile of bankers' boxes. But you do get to see more of my weird office, so.

**Jesse Thorn:** You are committed to those bankers' boxes. Those bankers' boxes have been in the background of your webcam shot since we have been doing this podcast. (*Laughs.*)

**John Hodgman:** I would say like seven years ago, I'm like, "I'm going to clean out my files." And I put them all in bankers' boxes, and I've done nothing with them since. And they're just sitting over there. I gotta get a clerk. A court clerk.

**Jesse Thorn:** Yeah! Get a court clerk. I love it. Just get one of Clarence Thomas's adopted children or whatever.

**John Hodgman:** Hey, follow and subscribe to see our episodes and video only content over at the YouTube. We're having a lot of fun over there and enjoy interacting with you on premiere day. And speaking of following and subscribing, I want to say thank you to Catherine Sings who follows the show and subscribes as it were on Apple podcasts. Catherine Sings gave us a five-star rating over there. And not only does Catherine sing, she also writes poetry. In her review, she wrote, "*Judge John Hodgman* is a winner. We listen to him while we eat dinner. As Bailiff Jesse really adds to the case, if you give less stars, then you're off base!" So, listen to Catherine Sings. Give us five stars on Apple podcast, or leave a review wherever you listen to the podcast. It really does help people discover the show. Even simply telling a friend who maybe isn't on social media. Ohhh, what a joy that might be.

**Jesse Thorn:** We're going to get an email from our friend Lin-Manuel Miranda. I once had an extended discussion with him about how strongly we feel about whether people's doggerel verse scans. The scanning of doggerel verse.

**John Hodgman:** This Catherine Sings poem may not scan, but it does track.

**Jesse Thorn:** Very grateful for it.

*Judge John Hodgman*, created by Jesse Thorn and John Hodgman. This episode, engineered by Andrew Eppig and Molly Mountain at Clean Cuts in Baltimore, Maryland. Our social media manager is Nattie Lopez. The podcast is edited by AJ McKeon. Our video editor is Daniel Speer. Our ever-competent producer, Jennifer Marmor.

Now, Swift Justice, where we answer small disputes with quick judgment. You ready for this, John?

**John Hodgman:** I'm ready for it.

**Jesse Thorn:** Get your judgment ready. Mr. Laverne on the MaxFun subreddit writes, "My friend says that a plain omelet is the same thing as scrambled eggs. I say they are obviously different."

**John Hodgman:** They may not be obviously different. And boy, oh boy, was I ready for this one.

**Jesse Thorn:** Uh-huh. You've been ready since the first take. Ready!

**John Hodgman:** I probably think about scrambled eggs and omelets about nine hours out of every day. I love them, and I love making them. I love taking the snotty chaos of eggs and heating them into beautiful order. Scrambled eggs you would traditionally cook all over low heat, very slowly to create very creamy curds. An omelet is cooked over medium heat. And yes, an omelet without fillings is still an omelet. You're creating a kind of a flat wafer of egg. It's the kind of thing where you put the egg in the pan, and it's over medium heat, and you keep bringing the edges in and letting the uncooked egg flow out until you have sort of a flat egg, and then you fold it over. But it's a completely different beast than traditional scrambled eggs. And by the way? It's better than traditional scrambled eggs, as far as I'm concerned. So, literally, Mr. Laverne, let me say to your friend: eat it. Get a good, plain omelet and eat it.

**Jesse Thorn:** John, are you a slow scrambled eggs or a fast scrambled eggs guy?

**John Hodgman:** I'm a fast scrambled eggs guy. And in fact, I'm a high heat scrambled eggs person now. You know, when you see people scrambling eggs in an Asian stir fry tradition?

[01:00:00]

That is a high heat over a refined—not in butter, but refined oil. Like, a high heat, high smoke point oil—in a wok, for example. But I just like—I slam that heat into the pan. I put in some canola oil or some sunflower oil, and I scramble those eggs really fast, and I find that they come out really tender and delicious to me. And they bubble up, and they're great. That's how I do it. Now, are those scrambled eggs or an omelet? Ah, let's fight about it. How about that? How about we hear some more cases about eggs? Do you keep some backyard chickens, and your hens are laying too many eggs, and you don't know whether to start selling them or not? Let me know. What about egg chairs, which is the best one? Arne Jacobsen or the Ovalia egg chair? What is the best way to make scrambled eggs in your opinion? I'm going to say, Gordon Ramsay, eat it. I don't like his way of doing it. It's gross. Whatever your dispute around eggs is, send it to us at [MaximumFun.org/jjho](http://MaximumFun.org/jjho). let's get scrambling. [MaximumFun.org/jjho](http://MaximumFun.org/jjho) for your egg disputes. And I don't know, any other disputes? Or all other disputes!

**Jesse Thorn:** You know, our friend J. Kenji López-Alt, he adds a starch slurry to his scrambled eggs.

**John Hodgman:** I know.

**Jesse Thorn:** Keeps them tender.

**John Hodgman:** You know what? Call him up and get him on that egg thing, 'cause I'd like to talk to him about it. I'd like to talk to Kenji about his eggs.

**Jesse Thorn:** And I'll tell you this. If you're a member of Maximum Fun, tell us you're a member of Maximum Fun! Because right now, on our monthly mailbag—which is a special episode of *Judge John Hodgman* only for members that you will find in your bonus content feed—we are answering all member questions. We'll see how long we can do this. I think we may be able to keep this up. If you're a member, let us know. You will get an answer to your

question—either on this show or on the member mailbag show, because we are nothing if not willing to provide fan service. If you're a member, we're here for you. We will decide it for you. If you're not a member, you know what to do. Go to [MaximumFun.org/join](https://MaximumFun.org/join), and we'll talk to you next time on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

**Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

**Transition:** Cheerful ukulele chord.

**Speaker 1:** Maximum Fun.

**Speaker 2:** A worker-owned network.

**Speaker 3:** Of artist owned shows.

**Speaker 4:** Supported—

**Speaker 5:** —directly—

**Speaker 6:** —by you!