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Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Monte Belmonte: Welcome to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. I'm summertime fun-time Guest Bailiff Monte Belmonte. This week, "May it Freeze the Quart"! Christina brings the case against Charlie. Christina and Charlie love the gelato at a local shop in Edinburgh, Scotland. When their favorite flavor is in stock, Christina wants to bring their freezer drawer to the shop and buy enough containers to fill it entirely. Charlie Haggan Das-not (*does not*) condone that behavior and is not a la mood (*a la mode*) to cart gelato in a freezer around Edin-brrrrr!

John Hodgman: (*Groans.*) Oh god-or-whatever.

Monte Belmonte: He wants to take Christina to sundae school and dessert the gelato. Who's a soft serve? Who's lactose intolerant? Who's 32 flavors? And then, one can decide. Please rise as Judge John Hodgman banana splits the courtroom and presents an obscure cultural reference.

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

John Hodgman: (*Singing.*) Bum, bum, ba-dum-bum, bum-bum. Ice cream man, upon my street I hear your truck outside, really neat. Ice Cream Man, upon my block, I love your chimes, sir. They really rock.

Go for it, Monte!

(*They both sing.*)

Ice Cream Man, ring your bell.

Monte Belmonte: Ding, ding!

John Hodgman: Play the music I've learned to love so well. Ice Cream Man—

Monte Belmonte: Ding, ding!

John Hodgman: Ring your chimes.

Monte Belmonte: Ding, ding.

John Hodgman: In the afternoon, so fiiiine! Summertime fun-time Guest Bailiff, Monte Belmonte, swear them in!

Monte Belmonte: Christina and Charlie, please rise and raise your right hands.

(Chairs squeak.)

Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole milk fat truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you Ben and Jerry, or Fudgy the Whale, or whatever?

(They swear.)

Do you swear to abide by Judge John Hodgman's ruling, despite the fact that the ice cream-named Supreme Court Justice, Breyer, has—for obvious reasons—recused himself?

(They swear.)

Judge Hodgman, you may proceed.

John Hodgman: Christina and Charlie, you may be seated. Can either of you name the piece of culture that I referenced as I entered this courtroom? We'll start with you, Christina.

Christina: Is it an Andrews Sisters classic called “Ice Cream Man”?

John Hodgman: Your guess is that it's a song called “Ice Cream Man”, which is a terrific guess.

(They laugh.)

Charlie: As we were singing it.

Christina: By the Andrews Sisters.

John Hodgman: In your case, you're guessing by the Andrews Sisters. By the Andrews Sisters. I wonder if people even know who the Andrews Sisters are. Charlie? What's your guess?

Charlie: I don't know. I mean, it was beautiful, but—is it, um—is it “Ice Cream Man”—?

Christina: Buttering up the judge.

John Hodgman: Flattery will get you everywhere.

Charlie: Is it a song called “Ice Cream Man” by someone that is not the Andrews Sisters?

Monte Belmonte: Whew, he's correct.

John Hodgman: “Ice Cream Man” by—how do you indicate “not” in mathematics? Tilde? Like a little—yeah, not Andrews Sisters. Anyone but the Andrews Sisters.

Charlie: Yeah, I'll hedge my bets.

John Hodgman: Yeah, exactly. What are you—this is not roulette, of course.

(They laugh.)

So, in this sense, Charlie, an answer was correct. It is a song by “Ice Cream Man” by a non-Andrews Sisters performer. But in the spirit of our competition, I cannot award you a summary judgment in your favor. The answer that I was looking for was “Ice Cream Man” by Jonathan Richman and the Modern Lovers, a song that I came to love so well many summers over and over and over again, listening to Monte Belmonte and his children—Atticus, Enzo, and Pax—guest hosting a very fun children's radio rock and roll show called *Spare the Rock*, normally hosted by Bill Childs and his kids who are Ella and—?

Monte Belmonte: Liam.

John Hodgman: Long running Saturday morning children's rock and roll show originating there in the Pioneer Valley of Western Massachusetts. Now I believe Bill Childs is out there in Texas, right?

Monte Belmonte: I never can keep track of him. Is he in Texas? Is he in Minnesota? I think the station of note is in Texas now.

John Hodgman: He's all over the place, but good for him. In any case, Monte and Atticus and Enzo and Pax would occasionally guest host that show, and Monte burned several compact discs of their guest hosting, which I then inserted into my compact disc player in my old car—where they still live, Monte.

(Monte “aw”s.)

And those radio shows of you all, the three and then four of you, hosting those fun songs—including Jonathan Richman's “Ice Cream Man”—played back-to-back—

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—I happen to remember in your playlist with Tom Waits's “Ice Cream Man”.

Monte Belmonte: Another great ice cream song.

John Hodgman: Yeah. I've spared the Waits and spoiled the child in this case.

(They laugh.)

It's just definitely—it's part of the aural landscape—aural. A-U-R-A-L. How do you say it in a Scottish accent, Charlie?

Charlie: That'd be ohr-al.

(They say the word back and forth with John attempting the accent.)

The aural landscape.

John Hodgman: Of my summer over and over and over again. We're recording now at the end of June. We're going straight into the summer; it's been hot. It's been hot here in much of North America. I don't know how you've been faring there in Edinburgh, birthplace of Gelato. What's it like out there in the summertime? Charlie, Christine, answer the question.

Charlie: It's been cold and wet so far, and we've just had our first and maybe our last day of summer.

(John laughs.)

Monte Belmonte: There can only be one, I hear, when it comes to things in Scotland.

Charlie: Usually there is only one.

Monte Belmonte: *(Quietly.)* The *Highlander*? Yeah.

John Hodgman: Yeah. The *Highlander*. One day. *Highlander* style. I got you there, Monte. Very good. Movie that I've never seen. Don't yell at me. You know, we're talking about summertime and summertime treats, including gelato—that famous Scottish dessert—starting now, I guess.

(Christina chuckles.)

Let's talk about it. Okay. To paraphrase *Good Mythical Morning*, “Let's talk about that.”

Who brings this case before me?

Christina: I do, Judge.

John Hodgman: You are Christina, and you have a very light Scottish accent.

Christina: Oh, I'm American. So, it'll be trace, if anything. *(Laughs.)*

John Hodgman: Yes. I knew that.

(Christina laughs.)

Where are you from? Where are you from in America?

Christina: I grew up in the Midwest. My parents are from the East coast. So.

John Hodgman: Oh, okay. Where in the Midwest?

Christina: Ohio.

John Hodgman: Why are you so cagey about it, by the way?

Christina: I think 'cause I was wondering if you were wondering about my accent. I think it's a bit of a hodgepodge.

John Hodgman: How long have you lived in Scotland?

Christina: It'll be three years coming up soon. Yeah.

John Hodgman: Okay. And what brought you out there? The love of your life?

Christina: No, no. I found him here.

John Hodgman: Oh, just by accident.

Christina: Yeah. (*Laughs.*) I was at a point where I could leave the kind of—I was done with working in Washington, DC. And I could have an adventure. So, I did. I moved abroad.

John Hodgman: Ohhh, I get it. Monte, now I know why she's being so cagey. See, (*stammering*)—see, she's laughing. She doesn't—you don't know what I'm thinking about, Christina.

Christina: (*Chuckles.*) True. And I won't ask.

John Hodgman: It says here, Charlie is Scottish and met Christina at work. Are you both international spies? Charlie, you too? Or just...? Okay, let's move on.

(*They laugh.*)

You clearly don't want to answer the question. This is very exciting to me. It says here you learned about the names Hodgman and John put together, John Hodgman, through a podcast called *I, Podius*.

Christina: That's absolutely correct.

John Hodgman: That's the one, Monte, that I recorded with Elliott Kalin about the British television show from the 1970s, the miniseries about ancient Rome called *I, Claudius*.

Monte Belmonte: I love *I, Claudius*. I remember it as a child. And I love that you did that podcast.

John Hodgman: Let's talk about ice cream. Gelato. What's the problem in Edinburgh with the gelato?

Christina: Well, there's not exactly a problem. I had the best gelato I've ever had in my life last summer at a local gelato shop, and it was a special flavor. So, it's not on the regular flavor list. It comes up every now and then. The first time I had it, it was really life changing. And so, for months and months, I went back to the shop to see if it was back on the specials list, and it was not coming back on. So, I wrote to the owner, purveyor of said gelato shop, and asked for it to come back, please.

And I wrote, I think, so imploringly that he brought it back the day after receiving an email. So, I woke up to this email at like 7AM that my favorite flavor would be available that day. Very exciting.

John Hodgman: For national security reasons, I presume you cannot name the favorite flavor?

Christina: (*Chuckles.*) I'm happy to name the flavor. I actually think it helps my cause if many people go buy it, because maybe it'll be part of the regular menu eventually. It's walnut stracciatella.

John Hodgman: Walnut stracciatella? May I say? Sounds delicious.

(*Monte agrees.*)

Christina: Delicious doesn't cover it, frankly. (*Laughs.*)

John Hodgman: Well, you know, I have a reputation that I've started, because I talk about it, that I don't like sweets. But I do like ice cream, particularly savory ice cream, like a pistachio. And walnut stracciatella, that sounds bene to me. That's how you talk about gelato in Scotland, right? Benee.

Monte Belmonte: (*Dramatically.*) Molto bene.

John Hodgman: Molto bene. That sounds—some Scottish walnut stracciatella is for me. Alright. So, you wrote the purveyor. And we might as well buzz market the name of this shop. What's it called?

Christina: Joelato.

John Hodgman: (*Snorts.*) Sure.

(*They laugh.*)

Christina: If you were named Joe and you opened a gelato shop, I think it writes itself. So.

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Monte Belmonte: Not if you were named Joel, but then opened an auto shop.

Christina: Right. That's a different local chain.

Monte Belmonte: That's like our main man.

John Hodgman: That would be really funny if they were right next to each other.

(They chuckle.)

Charlie, let me ask you a question. Did you grow up in Scotland? Or are you from Ohio and just better at the accent?

Charlie: No, I grew up in Scotland. I grew up in the southwest of Scotland in a small town called Khukuri.

John Hodgman: Oh, wonderful. And is gelato something that you grew up with?

Charlie: Actually, yes. There was an ice cream factory not far from where I grew up, called Cream of Galloway.

John Hodgman: Cream of Galloway. And did they make gelato, or did they make ice cream? Or did they make that kind of UK ice cream that is made with lard? Do you remember that?

Charlie: No, not that one. Not that one.

(They laugh.)

John Hodgman: Non-dairy ice cream. So, you haven't heard of that lard? Maybe that was just a myth. If anyone knows about this myth of there being lard in UK ice cream or British ice cream or whatever in the '70s or what have you, that's what I always heard. But I guess I was wrong. But in any case, Charlie, is Joelato a well-known gelato shop in Edinburgh?

Charlie: I think in Edinburgh, yeah. He's got a couple shops.

John Hodgman: Okay, so you emailed him saying, Please bring back the walnut stracciatella." Next day, you receive an email back saying what?

Christina: Saying, "I've made it for you this morning. It will be on the menu in both our locations. Enjoy."

John Hodgman: Whoa! And so, then what happened?

Christina: I know. And so, then I remember just popping up maybe out of bed as if it were Christmas morning and saying—like, so excited and saying, “We have to bring the whole freezer drawer with us, so we can fit as much as possible and know that we can fit it in our drawer, so we can have a drawer full of walnut stracciatella.”

John Hodgman: Aha. And this is where the dispute comes in, correct, Charlie?

(Charlie confirms.)

What did you not like about Christina's plan?

Charlie: I was—so, firstly I was very pro-obtaining as much of this ice cream as possible, because it is absolutely delicious. It is a life changing flavor. Taking the freezer drawer out of the freezer to the ice cream shop, I felt just slightly tips a little over the edge for me. So, I would rather acquire a lot of ice cream and bring it back.

John Hodgman: And you did send in a photo. We have evidence of your freezer, which, you know, humans who live in North America will not be surprised to learn that when they talk about a Scottish freezer drawer, it's—you're holding up a bottle of scotch for scale in this photo?

(Christina confirms.)

And it's a diminutive freezer compared to a lot of North American. You don't freeze your Glenfiddich, do you, Charlie?

Charlie: No, no. No, we don't.

John Hodgman: Only when you're glad to see me? Okay, fine. Don't even know what that means.

(They chuckle.)

So, you wanted to take out the freezer. Okay, I see it here. And all these photos are obviously available in the MaximumFun.org—the show page for Judge John Hodgman, as well as our Instagram, [@JudgeJohnHodgman](https://www.instagram.com/JudgeJohnHodgman). We're looking here at the freezer drawer. It's a little bit taller than a bottle of Glenfiddich, laid on its side. And you want to bring this drawer to Joelato to fill it up with containers of walnut stracciatella—to the exclusion, presumably, of anything else that you might want to freeze—and have a full drawer.

And the reason for bringing the full drawer is not to keep it frozen as you get it back to the house, but to make sure that you are maximizing all—getting as much gelato into that drawer as possible. Is that right?

Christina: Yeah, maximization and precision. Because you'll see the drawer is like a bit—it's not a perfect rectangle shape. It kind of swoops up at the back. And so, these Styrofoam containers the ice cream comes in, it's not clear how they'll precisely fit in the drawer. So, I thought we could figure out do we need like two larges and a small? Three larges and a small? And just figure out what optimally fit in our freezer drawer. And we only have to do it once, because once we know, we know. And we can just repeat the pattern.

John Hodgman: And do you ever have anything else in your freezer?

Christina: Yes. Yeah. I think you can see in one of the pictures that it's quite a full freezer.

John Hodgman: Monte Belmonte, you live out there in the Pioneer Valley. That's in North America.

(Monte confirms.)

You have a garage fridge?

Monte Belmonte: We have a chest freezer.

(Christina gasps.)

Because we get a quarter of a cow every year and we freeze the cuts. So, instead of like going to the supermarket week after week and getting beef, we like—we know the cow that's out in the pasture that meets its end. And one quarter of that cow dies in our freezer every year.

John Hodgman: And you could hear—I mean, Christina, obviously you're living in one of the greatest cities in the world.

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It's not unreasonable that you would pick up a little bit of a lilt of an accent as you're living there every day. But when you gasped, that was a pure Ohio gasp.

(They laugh.)

That was just like—obviously, Edinburgh is not giving you something. When you hear about a chest freezer, that's like a little taste of home. Right?

Christina: I mean, think about all the ice cream that could fit in there.

John Hodgman: Think about all the ice cream you could fit.

Monte Belmonte: But I wouldn't be able to bring it with me to Joelato. I would—you know.

John Hodgman: No. No, but you could potentially, Christina—if you wanted—take measurements and work this out in paper.

Christina: Yeah, I think the curve of the drawer is really what's stumping me. It's been a while since I've done calculus. And I don't know, it's too many different shapes fitting together. So, I thought why don't we just bring the drawer? It's not heavy. We don't live far from the ice cream shop. So, we could just—

John Hodgman: So, you're not—yeah. 'Cause that would—you're obviously one of those field agents. You're not doing math like the analysts all the time. Got it.

Christina: (*Laughs.*) Right. It's all automated now, Judge.

John Hodgman: Okay. I got it. Is your objection to this, Charlie, the spectacle of bringing in a freezer drawer into Joelato? Are you afraid that you'll be embarrassed?

Charlie: No, I just don't think it's—I just don't think we need to bring the drawer to acquire as much ice cream as is reasonable to fit in our reasonably small freezer.

John Hodgman: But don't you want to know what your maximum storage capacity is?

Charlie: I mean, as a point of interest, yes. As a practical point of acquiring ice cream, I don't think it's entirely necessary.

John Hodgman: So, your position is not so much the spectacle of bringing a freezer drawer into gelato's shop. It's more like we've got enough ice cream; why are we hoarding all the walnut stracciatella? Is it true that you still have ice cream in the fridge? Excuse me, gelato?

Christina: Yes, that's true. I think, there's probably a natural balance where we're not—we might have eaten more or at a faster rate than we have so far if we knew we had a full drawer of it. But we're probably meting it out slower, because it's in limited supply in the freezer.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

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Speaker 1: City pop to me is like a feeling.

Speaker 2: City pop is beautiful music.

Speaker 3: It's music that makes me emotional.

Speaker 4: There's so many different sounds that fall into the city pop category.

Speaker 5: It just feels very home to me.

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(Music fades out.)

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Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

John Hodgman: What do you have in the freezer that's not gelato at this point?

Christina: Yeah, a lot of frozen veggies. Frozen fruit. I think you'll—

Charlie: Cake icing.

Christina: *(Chuckles.)* Cake icing. Sure. I think I have—I'm probably the worst abuser of the freezer space. So, I feel like I can accommodate the ice cream. So, I have a habit of—if we have leftovers and they're freezable, I'll just throw them in the freezer. So, I feel like we'll use it to the max that it's available. But right now it just holds kind of those stock items that you want on hand, plus cake icing. *(Laughs.)*

John Hodgman: You have two drawers. How many drawers do you want to fill with walnut stracciatella?

Christina: Well, so we have three. It might be hard to see in that picture. We have one big bottom drawer. I don't want to fill the big bottom drawer.

John Hodgman: Let me get out my jeweler's loop so I can see the fullness of your freezer.

(They laugh.)

I'm sorry. I'm making fun of your freezer. It's fine. It's a perfectly wonderful freezer.

Christina: Yeah, we do okay.

John Hodgman: Okay, you've got three. You've got a top drawer, which is pretty—

Christina: It's like ice cubes and flat things.

John Hodgman: Right. That's where you freeze your, that's where you freeze your seven ice cubes per week.

Charlie: It's about the thickness of an ice cube, yes.

Christina: And then the middle drawer.

John Hodgman: Yeah. And then you have a medium drawer. And then you have a deep drawer. So, which one of these drawers—which one are you going to devote to walnut stracciatella?

Christina: Middle, which I think is like a reasonable kind of Goldilocks solution, you know.

John Hodgman: This is a romantic relationship between the two of you?

Christina: It is.

John Hodgman: Is it a marriage type relationship, or no?

Christina: It will be next April.

John Hodgman: Oh, congratulations.

Christina: Thank you.

Charlie: Thank you.

John Hodgman: I'd like to go to Edinburgh in April. Well, in April, it's probably very wet and cold, isn't it?

Charlie: It's going to be touch and go, yeah. *(Chuckles.)*

John Hodgman: Okay, never mind, I'm not coming.

Christina: Hey, hey, let's get the—(*laughs*).

Charlie: But we will be serving walnut stracciatella there.

John Hodgman: Is that actually something that's been arranged? Have you talked to Joe about the walnut stretch in your wedding?

Christina: Yeah, we floated the idea. And then any venue we talked to, we had to be able to bring in outside ice cream. So, we've actually settled with a venue who will let us bring outside ice cream to the venue. So, we just need to talk to Joe and see if he can make it happen for next April.

John Hodgman: Excuse yourself. Outside gelato.

Christina: Outside gelato, please. Yeah. Thank you. Gosh.

John Hodgman: How far away is Joelato from your home?

Christina: Well, there's two locations. The closer one's about a 20-minute walk, would you say?

Charlie: Yeah, 20/25 minutes.

Christina: Yeah. And you could take a bus to make it 15.

John Hodgman: These containers are insulated, obviously. So, you're getting it home—

Christina: Yeah. It doesn't get as hot in Edinburgh either, so it's never like a scorcher getting it home. Yeah.

John Hodgman: Why don't you just keep the ice cream out on your windowsill?

Christina: (*Chuckles.*) Honestly, some days it feels like we could.

John Hodgman: Don't you have some concern, Christina, about leaving some walnut stretch behind for others?

Christina: Ummm, no. I think that if the demand outpaces the supply, then that is good for my ideal scenario—which is walnut stretch on the menu as often as possible.

John Hodgman: Walnut stretch forever.

Christina: Yeah.

John Hodgman: Have you talked to Joe about why walnut stratch is a sometime treat and not an everyday food?

Christina: Yeah, we have. I think this is when he started looking at us like we were a little loopy.

John Hodgman: Looking at us or looking at one of you?

(They laugh.)

Christina: Joe, being a purveyor of fine gelato, sources all the ingredients carefully for the product. And he said that he can't get a consistent enough supply of quality walnuts.

John Hodgman: Do you think that when you get married, maybe you'll take a honeymoon to a walnut farm in Italy and get as many walnuts as you can for Joe of Joelato?

Charlie: *(Laughing.)* Yeah, that's the plan, that's the plan.

John Hodgman: So, you are facing a kind of perpetual scarcity of walnut stracciatella. There is no chance that Joe is ever going to make this a regular, because he can't get the nuts. Joe simply doesn't have the nuts for it.

Christina: I think that, you know, if he becomes powerful enough, he could exert some influence over his supply chain. So, he could maybe improve the supply of quality walnuts coming in.

John Hodgman: You're saying that Joe of Joelato owes it to you to corner the market on Italian ice cream quality walnuts?

Christina: *(Laughs.)* I'm saying if we get—you know, we started talking about if I clear them out of walnut stratch every time they have on the menu. And I'm saying, yeah, if we keep demand up, that might put Joe in a position to get a better-quality supply of walnuts.

John Hodgman: I'm looking at Joelato.co.uk right now. Is Joelato this young-looking fellow with the glasses?

(Christina confirms.)

He's a nice-looking guy.

Christina: He's a lovely guy.

Charlie: He's really nice.

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Christina: And we should say his wife—who's a whole human being in her own right—also I think owns and runs the business with him.

John Hodgman: So, you want walnut stracciatella all the time. You want to create a stockpile.

Christina: Yeah, hoarding mentality.

John Hodgman: Alright. Does that feel healthy to you, Charlie?

Charlie: Yeah, I'm all for having access to walnut stracciatella at all times. I just think there are other ways to do it than dedicating an entire freezer drawer.

John Hodgman: What would be a more efficient way?

Charlie: Well, I think we could just monitor our levels of walnut stracciatella, and then once we get below a certain level, we—like, one of us is on high alert.

John Hodgman: You know the war is over.

(They laugh.)

Charlie: Not for walnut stracciatella!

John Hodgman: I mean, this is a real cultural clash between Ohio and Scotland. Like, I should have everything I want in my chest freezer in my third refrigerator outside, why wouldn't I? And Scotland's over here going like, “We don't deserve anything.”

Charlie: You don't want too much of a good thing, John.

John Hodgman: I think that's a reasonable thought. I mean, don't you think, Christina, that there's a possibility you could get sick of this ice cream? I'm going to call it ice cream from time to time. Don't get mad at me, everybody. I'm trying to host a whole podcast here. I can't keep all the words straight all the time.

Christina: No, it's okay. I've done the same while we're recording. I know what you're saying, and I think for most foods, yes. But this is the best ice cream or gelato I've ever tasted. And it's probably one of the best flavors of food I've ever tasted. I think I was—when I originally wrote to Joe, I tried to think of some meals I've had that are better. And I think I had like two or three I could name. But like this was—I screamed aloud when I had it. It was—it's so good. I just don't think I'm going to get sick of it.

John Hodgman: When did you first have it? How long ago was this?

Christina: Was that a year ago?

Charlie: It must have been about a year. It was in the Stockbridge shop. And then we...

Christina: But yeah, I did shout across the little park to ask if—

(John begins to cackle.)

—the couple across from us who were also eating ice cream, to see if they were also having walnut stracciatella. Because I wanted to like talk to someone else who was experiencing this. And they weren't, having the same flavors. *(Laughs.)*

John Hodgman: Charlie, when your fiancé yelled across a park to strangers asking, “Are you also eating this *(censor beep)!*?” did you rethink your decision to marry an American at that time?

Charlie: Absolutely not. That cemented the decision.

John Hodgman: I see. Alright. Christina, you appreciate that what you're doing here by buzz marketing not only Joelato but this particular flavor, is that you're making it even more challenging for you to corner the world's supply on this stuff. I mean, all of our seven listeners in Edinburgh are now going to rush to get this stuff off of Joe.

Christina: I think, you know, anything that helps the overall demand signal for Joe is good. Joe runs a local business, so if he sells out of walnut stretch because of this episode, then that's good for his overall business. It keeps him, you know, doing well. And then if he keeps selling out of it, then surely he'll—again, he'll find a way.

John Hodgman: I'll pose this question to all three of you—Monte, Charlie, and Christina. Have you ever had a food that you loved so much, and you ate so much of it that you got sick of it?

Monte Belmonte: *(Sadly.)* Yes.

John Hodgman: Monte, that was yes with a purpose. Let's hear about it.

Monte Belmonte: When I was a kid, I had a terrible diet. And my parents were not helpful and steering me in the correct direction. So, every morning, I would have one of those little oatmeal pies with cream in the middle of it. But I would also, frequently, bring them for lunch. So, I was having like two oatmeal pies a day. And then finally I just hit this breaking point. And I was like, “I can't put another one of these oatmeal pies in my mouth ever again.” And I don't think I have.

John Hodgman: Yeah, I hear what you're saying. It's not haggis, Monte, but there was a time when I did too much scrapple. Too much Pennsylvania scrapple. What about you, Charlie? Do you have any foods that you've eaten too much of and got sick of them?

Charlie: Yeah, I think I go through cycles with porridge.

(Beat.)

John Hodgman: Of course you do.

(Charlie giggles.)

Do you like any other flavors of ice cream that Joe makes, or no?

Christina: I like other flavors, but it's hard to enjoy it as much knowing that walnut stracciatella exists. But yeah, he makes really excellent flavors across the board. This, to me, is just his standout.

John Hodgman: When you go to the freezer and you open that medium middle drawer, and you see it—picture it in your mind's eye. Charlie, close your eyes. And you open it up, and like frosty air comes out, and you pull open the drawer, and it's just full.

[00:30:00]

Even within that weird curve at the back of the drawer, every inch of it is full of containers with walnut stracciatella in there. What are you feeling, Charlie, when you see this in your mind's eye?

Charlie: I am wondering where everything else that was in that drawer has gone, but I honestly delight at the same time.

John Hodgman: Mm. Delight.

Charlie: Delight. And a little bit of hunger.

John Hodgman: Christina, how do you feel when you see?

Christina: I feel at ease, like relaxed. And I also feel joyful. I think I was thinking while I was visualizing this, that if the drawer's full, then I know when we have people over for dinner, we can offer them walnut stretch, because we have plenty to share.

John Hodgman: Because right now, with the supply not secure, if you have people over, you won't waste any stretch on them.

Christina: I did share some this winter with a friend who came over. And Charlie was out, so it was just the two of us. And then when he came home, I had to tell him that I shared some walnut stretch with my friend. *(Laughs.)* I felt so guilty about it, because it was like our limited supply.

John Hodgman: And what was Charlie's response?

Christina: I think he was very like understanding. I don't think he was upset. But you know, when I say I want to evangelize about it, like I want to share it with people. I want other people to taste it too.

John Hodgman: Well, it's the way I feel about Maine. And—as I mentioned in my book, *Vacationland*, available wherever books are stolen—it's like the most wonderful thing that I want to share with everyone and also hide from everyone. So, the stakes of this case are this: right now, Joe has walnut stracciatella, probably more than you can store.

Christina: In theory, when he makes it, it's more than we can store. Yeah.

John Hodgman: Okay, so you don't have a delivery date in mind. There's no specific—

Christina: No, this—one of his shops is really near my office, near our house. So, we just swing by every now and then to check on its availability. *(Giggles.)*

John Hodgman: Sure. So, you want to have that freezer drawer—you want to finish up the stretch you have now, so that freezer drawer will be empty and ready to go for the moment that resupply is possible. And if I were to rule in your favor, you would take that freezer drawer over, and you would buy as many containers as can fit into that drawer.

(Christina confirms.)

And Charlie, what would you have me rule if I were to rule in your favor?

Charlie: If you were to rule in my favor, I would have us put in place a rota system.

John Hodgman: Go on.

Charlie: Whereby one of us is responsible for monitoring the level. We have two boxes of ice cream in the freezer at all times. And one of us is responsible for monitoring how much is in the second box. How much is left. And then once that box gets below—

John Hodgman: So, one box is full.

Charlie: One box is full. And then—it's like when you buy toothpaste. You never buy one. You buy two.

John Hodgman: I disagree, strongly.

(They laugh.)

But I mean, I'm rethinking my life now that you mentioned it. That's just not how I've done it, but okay.

Charlie: Okay, so the system—one of us would keep an eye on the level of walnut stretch that's left in that second box. And once that box is finished, it's that person's responsibility to continue visiting Joelato and buy the backup box.

John Hodgman: And who's going to be the stretch monitor?

Charlie: We alternate.

John Hodgman: *(Beat.)* Why?

Charlie: Um... because...

John Hodgman: Why not you just do it, 'cause this is your scheme?

Charlie: Because we both get to enjoy the ice cream.

John Hodgman: If it were part of your vows in April—next—that one of you would have promised the other, “I will always make sure there is at least one full box of stracciatella—walnut stretch in the freezer,” Christina, would that be enough for you?

Christina: It just doesn't have the same whimsy as bringing the drawer. *(Laughs.)*

John Hodgman: Here we go! He we go.

Christina: It feels like a chore, and I think this should be like abundance and enjoyment.

John Hodgman: What's the whimsy? What's the whimsy part? Explain that to me.

Christina: I mean, I think part of the enjoyment is just how I am sort of taken aback by how absurd my reaction to this ice cream is. Like, it's just over the top. But I guess I'm just leaning into that, I suppose. If it feels like a chore, it's not going to feel like a fun, exciting treat that we get to have.

John Hodgman: It feels fun to you to fill that drawer up.

(Christina confirms.)

You know, Christina, the most efficient walnut stretch storage solution is to take that drawer and have them put the walnut stretch directly into the drawer. Like, you would want to wash it out, make sure it's nice and clean first, then get that stretch into the drawer, and then put it in a cooler. And then—

Christina: Have a taxi waiting, get home as quickly as possible.

[00:35:00]

John Hodgman: Perhaps, yeah, perhaps. Why aren't you pushing for this weirdest option?

Christina: I really just don't want to alienate Joe. I feel like I'm on the edge of alienating him with how much I love this ice cream. So, I like really—I need to maintain a good relationship with Joe.

John Hodgman: How would it be alienating to him to buy as much as you can get?

Christina: I guess—keep in mind Joe is also a Scottish man, so equally reserved as Charlie. And one time we showed up and the walnut stretch was on the menu. He was there scooping behind the counter. And I sort of introduced myself as the person who wrote him that email. And I think he was like a little taken aback by my enthusiasm.

John Hodgman: Don't you think then—how much difference do you think it will be? In terms of alienating him with your American enthusiasm, how much difference is there, practically speaking, going to be between showing up with the drawer and saying, “Fill it up,” versus showing up in the drawer and saying, “I need to see exactly how many of your containers can fit into this drawer.” I mean, it seems about the same on the whimsy scale. Do you know what I mean?

Christina: Yeah. Yeah, that's—I think that's fair. I've also thought about—I'm not a huge fan of Styrofoam. It's not a good shape and not a good material to use. So, I thought about, you know, maybe asking Joe if we can bring a better container. I'm just not sure how he would charge us for the product if it's not in one of his pre-measured containers.

John Hodgman: And having a simple conversation about that with him feels un-whimsical to you?

(They laugh.)

Christina: It just feels like that might—no, plenty whimsical, but so much whimsy that it might make him feel kind of worried about me as a customer. So.

John Hodgman: Right. You're not—it would be both whimsy and walnut stretch overload, perhaps.

(Christina agrees.)

You know, Christina, the ultimate whimsy—I mean, this is really what I should be ruling, of course—is for you to show up at gelato with a box of tiny little jam jars and have them fill them each up with walnut stretch, then fill up your drawer with little jars. You'll have your little drawer of frozen jars. Sounds like a great solution, doesn't it? I think so.

Christina: *(Laughs.)* I think I could just buy a bunch of ice cream and do the filling into little jars at home, so as to not be off putting.

John Hodgman: That's a fun arts and crafts thing for you to do.

(They laugh.)

Charlie, if I were to order in your favor, you would have me impose this rotation system, this stracciatella rationing. And also, it says here for Christina to have to tell this story at the wedding where they'll be serving gelato.

Charlie: That's right.

John Hodgman: Why do you think Christina won't want to talk about this story?

(Christina laughs.)

Like, how is this a punishment for her?

Charlie: Yeah, no, I just want to give Christina the opportunity to evangelize further before we eat the ice cream on our wedding day.

John Hodgman: Alright. I think I've heard everything I need to in order to make my decision. I am going to take a bus 50 minutes to my chambers, and I'll consider my verdict while enjoying a stracciatella float. I'll be back in a moment with my verdict.

Monte Belmonte: Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom.

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

Christina, I do have another follow up question on the whimsy. Is the whimsy the sheer taking of a drawer for a walk?

Christina: *(Laughs.)* Yeah, I think that's included for sure. It's not the sheer—that's not the sheer element of it. I think it's probably showing up to the Joelato counter with the drawer.

Monte Belmonte: Holding a drawer and then walking away with a drawer filled with walnut stracciatella. Charlie, Christina mentioned that when she had her first taste of the walnut stracciatella, that she screamed across a quad. Did you scream as well?

Charlie: I don't recall. I don't recall screaming, but I did, join in the sharing of our feelings to the strangers in the park.

Monte Belmonte: So, you could say, "I scream, you scream, we all scream for gelato"?

Christina: That's accurate, yeah.

Monte Belmonte: Well, we'll see what the judge has to say about this when we come back in just a moment.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Promo:

(Fantastical tinkling and sparkle sounds.)

Narrator: *(Echoing.)* Somewhere, in an alternate universe where Hollywood is smarter.

(Harp chords fade into applause.)

Presenter: And the Emmy nominees for Outstanding Comedy Series are *Jetpackula*. *Airport Marriott*. *Throuple*.

[00:40:00]

Dear America, We've Seen You Naked. And Allah in the Family.

(Applause fades into harp chords.)

Narrator: *(Echoing.)* In our stupid universe, you can't see any of these shows. But you can listen to them on *Dead Pilots Society*.

(Rock music fades in.)

The podcast that brings you hilarious comedy pilots that the networks and streamers bought but never made. Journey to the alternate television universe of *Dead Pilots Society* on MaximumFun.org.

(Music fades out.)

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

John Hodgman: Hey, while we're taking a break from the case—Monte Belmonte, for those of our listeners who are just enjoying meeting you for the first time, tell them a little bit about who you are and where they can find you.

Monte Belmonte: I'm on every day on the public radio station of note for Western Massachusetts, NEPM—New England Public Media, formerly WFCR. Five College Radio, for the folks who may have gone to school out here in Western Mass or vacationed here over the summer many times. And the show is called *The Fabulous 413*, which is the area code of this area. And my cohost, Kaliis Smith, and I travel all the highways and byways of the four counties of Western Mass uncovering stories. I like to say it's like *Mr. Rogers's Neighborhood* for grownups, where we're introducing you to your neighbors. There's fewer puppets, but there are puppets once in a while as well.

John Hodgman: (*Laughs.*) That's my chief complaint. But I only write five-star reviews. Only write five-star reviews for *The Fabulous 413*, wherever I get my podcasts, because it's a wonderful show.

Monte Belmonte: Appreciate that.

John Hodgman: And Monte is our summertime fun-time guest bailiff, and I hope that we'll get to talk about more summertime stuff. In the meantime, Monte, I need not remind you that when this summer is over—I know it seems impossible. When this summer is over and we move into early November, I and Jesse Thorn and Jennifer Marmor will all be joining you, Monte, at the Shea Theatre in Turner's Falls, Massachusetts, right there in *The Fabulous 413*.

(*Monte cheers.*)

The triumphant return of the *Judge John Hodgman* show, a live show, to Turner's Falls, November 8th. I really hope that Perry Von Vicious can come around.

(*Monte agrees enthusiastically.*) He might be wrestling in Japan, but who knows? And all of our friends from Western Massachusetts, please show up. We're going to have a good time. Time at the Shea Theater in Turner's Falls. And is that our only stop on the tour? Mais non, as they say in gelato Edinburgh.

We start out—we're going to be all over the place come this fall. New York City, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Washington DC, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Ann Arbor, Michigan, Madison, Wisconsin, St. Paul, Minnesota, Burlington, Vermont, Portland, Maine, Turner's Falls, Massachusetts. And culminating in a great big show, very exciting to me, in my hometown of Brookline, Massachusetts—just imagine Brookline without the extra N—at the Coolidge Corner Theater where I used to sell tickets and rip tickets and sell concessions at the movie theater when I was, you know, 19 years old. It's gonna be a real grand homecoming on November 10th. And all of these shows are going to be terrific. It will have been a full year since we've been on the road before. And so, I hope that you all go over and get your tickets at the events page at MaximumFun.org. That's MaximumFun.org/events.

It's the *Judge John Hodgman* road court. And we can't wait to go out there and see you, because it's better when you are there. By the way, if you have disputes for any of these locations—and I say them again! New York City, Philadelphia, Washington DC, Pittsburgh, Ann Arbor, Madison, St. Paul, Burlington, Portland, Turner's Falls, and Brookline. If you live in one of these places, and you have a dispute that you might want us to consider to be adjudicated on stage—boy, it would be great if you submitted it now at MaximumFun.org/jjho. Just tell us that you want your case to be considered for the live show. Tell us, uh, “This is for the live show” or something, and then I'll understand what's happening when I get your email in my email box, which is where they all go to. MaximumFun.org/jjho.

And one more reminder, go over to NewEnglandPublicMedia.org, NEPM.org, check out *The Fabulous 413* there or wherever podcasts can be heard.

Monte Belmonte, you're a delight; let's get back to the case.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Monte Belmonte: Please rise as *Judge John Hodgman* reenters the courtroom and presents his verdict.

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

John Hodgman: Well, obviously I did not take a bus 50 minutes to my chambers. A) I'm in my chambers, and B) I have the great pleasure of living in a walking city, like Edinburgh. And it is a great pleasure, because so long as there is not societal collapse, I don't need to store months of food in my freezer or my refrigerator or in my garage freezer or my garage refrigerator. Because I don't have a garage. Well, there is a garage across the street, but I think the guys there would be—it's a public garage. I think they'd be very confused if I plugged in a chest freezer over there and started filling it with venison or whatever.

[00:45:00]

I'm sure the people in Brooklyn have done weirder things. And while I am someone who does sort of take pleasure in a well-stocked pantry and enjoying the gracious feeling that Christina articulated by saying like if someone comes over, I have champagne in the cupboard. If someone comes over, I can feed them some of my favorite food, the walnut stracciatella, but not very much. They get one spoonful, that's enough.

(They laugh.)

Christina: Tiny jar.

John Hodgman: I also take great pleasure in not wasting space or food and only having—you know, I'm lucky enough to be able to have enough and maybe a little bit more for a guest. And I enjoy, more than almost anything else in the world, walking to the supermarket to reprovision. And I don't mind little jars, so long as they are not wastefully expensive. Because I enjoy living in a world in which my garage fridge and basement freezer chest are across the street at a store, and I get to go outside and do a thing and then come back.

So, my inclination would be for you to resist the completely natural and, I dare say, Ohioan impulse to hoard what you love the most. I'm not gonna touch upon the economic ripple effect. Or, dare I say, fudge ripple effect.

(They laugh.)

Oh, Monte. Monte, you got me. You've gotten into my soul. Of the artificial raising of demand upon the walnut supply that goes into the stracciatella that might... you know, you seem to believe that if you show more demand that supply might magically occur. But then again, there is the ripple effect of us talking about in the podcast and everyone rushing out to

Joelato and getting that stuff before you. And the walnuts are a finite resource. You know, or they're not infinite, in any case. I'm not sure what effect the hoarding would have upon the actual availability of walnut strach for you or others in the future, but I do worry a little bit about what effect it will have emotionally on having all this walnut stracciatella. Because with that abundance—right?—comes initial joy. But as it gets whittled down, to my mind, it would be increasingly anxious. And we don't know when the next time you'll be able to get some, right?

So, one argument might be, well, when he has it next, I'll enjoy it. And when he doesn't? I'll look forward to the next time he has it next. I might say, I might suggest—and I can see Charlie is nodding there. This may be a particularly Scottish point of view, his denial of pleasure. I don't know. I think that it might be a somewhat more emotionally sustainable place to be where, when the good things are there, you enjoy them fully. When they're not available, you look forward to when you can. As opposed to ultimately what I feel is an anxious impulse, which is to get as much as I can and hide it away just for me.

(Christina chuckles.)

You say that you're going to feel more comfortable sharing it with your friends, but not if you're down to your last mini jar of it. Then you're going to be like Gollum in a cave. You know, looking at it and calling it your precious.

I mean, I do see a lot of arguments for why you wouldn't go through with this. And there's another cultural issue too, which you have already identified in your relationship but also, you know, in your ambivalence about how Joe's gonna take it when you show up at his place of business with a freezer drawer. You know, there is, I think—and it's evidenced in the evidence you gave me, which is the photograph of your fridge—that, you know, city living in Scotland is not country living in Ohio. And I don't even care if you live in a city in Ohio. It's still country compared to density.

I'm about to move—you know, I'm about to spend some time in a wonderful place that I like to hoard to myself and feel anxious about when the supply is dwindling. It's called Maine.

[00:50:00]

That is a place where I do have a fridge in the garage, and we do stock it up. Because it is a car ride—you know, half an hour car ride to get to the supermarket. And it's really exhausting. You know what I mean? I mean, it's just—you know, to think about keeping people fed all the time, you're lucky to live in a city where you don't have to think about that. Where as long as civilization exists— And I get it. It may not exist for much longer.

(Christina laughs.)

I have a feeling that you two are the only thing keeping us, the world—some of whatever your secret missions are; you're standing between societal collapse and non-societal collapse. But in any case, Every bit of your world and your city and the size of your fridge suggests it's

not built for Ohio-style stocking up. And that may be why Charlie is a little bit uncomfortable with this idea. I don't know.

All of that said, this is just—you know, this is just my observation, right? This isn't my judgment. I don't know if you're going to go through a pleasure/panic cycle once you have a drawer full of stracciatella. Maybe it won't work out that way. And maybe this is a once in a lifetime opportunity. You've got to line into Joe. Joe seems to be basically on board with supplying you what you need of your horrible drug. Joe cannot make any promises about when he's going to resupply the walnut stretch, because the walnuts are somewhere else.

So, I'm going to say that you should fill up the drawer, and let us know how it goes. Monitor your feelings about it. Decide whether you're happier that way over time. Keep a walnut stretch journal. You know, you don't have to be a man to journal. A men's journal magazine would have you believe that it's only men who are journaling. But in fact, women also journal. And I think that it will be a worthwhile experiment as to restock as full as you can. And then while you enjoy—each time you enjoy the walnut stretch, write down how you feel about the supply going down. And then evaluate. Which way is happier? Which way is happier?

Because that's the thing. Like, you know, life is hard. And there is no sin—if you find something that gives you joy, there is no sin in making that last as long as possible. And I think that you should give it a try and really see that if it's more sustainable joy feeling the anxiety of your horde dwindling, or more sustainable joy enjoying it when it exists and knowing that it'll be there down the road, because you haven't fully alienated Joe with all of your weird antics. But here's what I'm gonna say: don't take your drawer for a walk. You can figure this out without bringing the drawer into the shop. Sorry about the whimsy.

(They laugh.)

I think that you and Charlie should get together and do some math and figure out what the dimensions of the drawer are. You already have containers—or get a container from Joe, right? An empty container from Joe. Tell him what your plan—first of all, tell him what your plan is. I know that you live a life of total secrecy to protect your loved ones, but go into Joe and say, “Look, when you get this walnut stracciatella in, I want to buy as much as I can to fill up this drawer. Here's a picture of it. Can I borrow or take measurements of your containers to figure out how many I can fit in there? And then can I buy those in advance?”

I think that's the way to do it. And then, as I say, keep your stracciatella log. There's gotta be an ice cream log pun in there, right Monte?

Monte Belmonte: There's gotta be.

John Hodgman: There's gotta be. But all I can think about is poop, so let's forget about it.

(They laugh.)

Christina: Joelogo.

Charlie: I love it.

Monte Belmonte: Perfect. Perfect!

John Hodgman: Ohhh! Wow, Charlie. And you thought you were gonna win this game. Joelogo wins it once and for all. But I do insist, not only do you have to tell the story about this at the wedding, Christina, but I do insist that you work it into your vows—that you will keep each other stocked with walnut stracciatella and all the things that make you happy in the world, to the best of your ability. ‘Til death do you part, god-or-whatever. This is the sound of a gavel.

[00:55:00]

Clip:

Derek Zoolander: I think I know what would help right now.

Speaker: What?

Derek Zoolander: FROZEN CHOCOLATA GELATO!

John Hodgman: Judge John Hodgman rules. That is all.

Monte Belmonte: Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom.

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

Christina, Charlie, it seems like a banana split decision and that you have both won. You get a drawer full of walnut stracciatella. Both of you win with that. The only little loss for you, Christina, as you don't get to take the drawer for a walk. How are you both feeling about the judge's decision?

Charlie: I think you put it nicely. I think there's no way of losing this. We end up with a freezer full of ice cream, and we see how it goes. And maybe down the line, we put a more efficient system in place. We'll see how it goes.

Monte Belmonte: Thank you so much, both of you, for being on the show. I only wish we got to hear a little more of your Scottish accent there, Charlie. It's beautiful.

Charlie: Thank you very much.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Monte Belmonte: Another case in the books. Before we dispense some Swift Justice, we want to thank Redditor u/knumbknuts for naming this week's episode, "May it Freeze the Court". Join the conversation over at Maximum Fun subreddit over at [MaximumFun.Reddit.com](https://www.reddit.com/r/MaximumFun).

John Hodgman: Now, Monte, I have to say, that's actually a combo of two titles. u/knumbknuts submitted "If it Freezes the Court", which is good. But I also liked u/Think_Leg6864, "Order in the Quart". Which is an imperial measure, obviously. Not metric, so I don't know what they use in Scotland. And so, we combined them much like a Harold's Ice Cream mix in.

Monte Belmonte: Right! Home of the original mix in!

John Hodgman: Yeah. Into "May it Please the Quart", but I need to acknowledge both u/knumbknuts and u/Think_Leg6864 and indeed all of the wonderful people over there at the Maximum Fun subreddit who suggest names and titles and puns for our show. It's all over there at [MaximumFun.Reddit.com](https://www.reddit.com/r/MaximumFun), which is a nice place to meet other listeners and Maximum Fun members. It's a good place to hang out. That's where we always ask for the title suggestions to keep an eye out there as well. You want to talk about our evidence for the show?

Monte Belmonte: Evidence and photos from the show are posted on our Instagram account at [Instagram.com/JudgeJohnHodgman](https://www.instagram.com/JudgeJohnHodgman). We're also on TikTok and YouTube, [@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod](https://www.youtube.com/@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod). Follow and subscribe to see our episodes and video only content.

John Hodgman: And by the way, Monte, just to remind: if people wanna listen to more Monte Belmonte—and guess what? You do—all you need to go is to go over to [NEPM.org](https://www.nepm.org), [NewEnglandPublicMedia.org](https://www.newenglandpublicmedia.org), or listen on to the radio every weekday afternoon!

Monte Belmonte: Monday through Friday.

John Hodgman: *The fabulous 413* is the name of the show. Monte Belmont is the name of the cohost. Your cohost's name is—?

Monte Belmonte: Kaliis Smith.

John Hodgman: Kaliis Smith. I've been on the show, and it's a delight. And you can listen to it also at [NEPM.org](https://www.nepm.org), New England Public Radio, which is a great station.

Monte Belmonte: Or wherever podcasts are available, as they say.

John Hodgman: Hey, speaking of podcasts, I want to thank TravelGirl82 over on Apple Podcasts, who wrote us a very nice review. And on the topic of joy, no less. "Joy-bringing, and a great source for memorable mantras," is the headline. "This podcast brings me joy. I didn't realize how much it informed my parenting until I overheard my five-year-old tell their friend that they, quote, 'needed to be mindful of the work they leave for others'."

Monte Belmonte: Wow. You're making a real difference in the world.

John Hodgman: “The same child has also lately grown fond of shouting to the sky, ‘UGH, why do people like what they like?’”

(Monte laughs.)

That's a good question. Thank you to the J Squad. That's Jennifer Marmer, me—John Hodgman—sometimes Joel Mann up there in Maine, and sometimes Jean Grae, and sometimes our wonderful friend, Jonty Monte Belmont.

Monte Belmonte: Jonty Beljante.

John Hodgman: Jaunty Monte Belmonte. If you're listening to us on Apple Podcasts, why don't you give us a rating and a review over there? It really does help new listeners find the show. Or just tell your friends about your favorite episode. Tell them how our settled law has affected your personal life or your children's screaming at the sky.

Monte Belmonte: I know I say “people like what they like” all the time, and it's all because of you, Judge John Hodgman.

John Hodgman: UGH! Why do they like what they like, though?!

Monte Belmonte: *(Laughs.)* Judge John Hodgman was created by Jesse Thorn and John Hodgman. This episode was engineered by John Vick at Finiflex Sound Studio in Edinburgh. Our social media manager is Nattie Lopez. The podcast is edited by AJ McKeon. Our video editor is Daniel Speer, and our producer is the wonderful Jennifer Marmor.

Now let's get to Swift Justice, where we answer your small disputes with a quick judgment. u/Janus1172 on the Maximum Fun subreddit says, “When my dad uses the butter at our home, he scrapes the knife lengthwise across the top.”

[01:00:00]

“Our tray measures tablespoons along the bottom. I would like him to make vertical cuts to preserve the size consistency of each pad.” What say you, Judge John Hodgman?

John Hodgman: I don't understand this question at all, I'm sorry to say. *(Laughs.)*

Monte Belmonte: Do you want to scrape the top of the butter like this? Along the horizon? Or cut it vertically along where it's clearly measured?

John Hodgman: This is why we have a YouTube channel, because now that you did a visual demonstration, I get it. So, do you scrape the knife along the top of the stick of butter, or—right. The tray, the butter tray that they have, the butter dish has tablespoons measures on it. Well, obviously if you're measuring tablespoons out for a recipe, use the tray. And obviously,

when you scrape across the top, you are committing a great crime. Because that's messing up the shape of the butter. For those of you who would later—for those in the house who would later want to use the tablespoon measure.

I understand why you want to scrape across the top of the butter. It's usually a little bit softer. It's usually easier to butter toast—you know, to scrape that off like that. But the truth of the matter is, particularly if you have a European or Scottish style butter that has a high culture and has a high butterfat content—which is what you should have. Butter is joy—you can leave it out on the counter and keep it soft. Just put it in the fridge at night. But you don't have to keep it in the fridge all the time. It doesn't have to be hard. You know what? Life has to be hard, but butter doesn't.

Monte, it's been so great to have you here today. It's so wonderful to anticipate summer as it approaches and seeps into and under my sweaty robes right now.

(Monte laughs.)

It's really summertime and in honor of summer and gelato, let's hear more about cool stuff. Cooling! Is someone in your neighborhood helping themselves to your aloe plant to cool off their sunburns, and you want them to stop foraging? Are you an Icee fan in a home full of Slurpee devotees? Does your loved one wear a neck fan everywhere, and you're embarrassed to be seen with them? Monte, do you have a—remember how the Sharper Image used to sell a pith helmet that had a fan built into it?

Monte Belmonte: Yes, I do remember that, actually. I love the Sharper Image stuff. I never wanted that particular item, but yeah.

John Hodgman: Well, see, that's our dispute. Because I did.

(Monte laughs.)

Send us all of your cold cases to MaximumFun.org/jjho. And, of course, we want to hear all about all of your disputes on any subject. No case is too small, so please remember to submit your cases at MaximumFun.org/jjho. Monte, I'll talk to you soon. And everyone else, take care. We'll talk to you next time on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

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!