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**Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

**Jesse Thorn:** Welcome to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. I'm Baillif Jesse Thorn. This week, "Case at the Bat". Jennie brings the case against her friend, John. Jennie is a lifelong fan of Major League Baseball's Oakland Athletics. The team's ownership is planning to move them to Las Vegas, Nevada. When this plan was announced, Jennie joined other A's fans in boycotting the team. Now, well into the season, Jennie misses going to baseball games. John says it's the perfect time for her to switch allegiances to the San Francisco Giants. She can get back to her hobby while supporting a less problematic team. Jennie doesn't want any of her money going to MLB. 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:** "We want two Anís del Toro."

"With water? You want it with water?"

"I don't know," the girl said. "Is it good with water?"

"It's alright."

"You want them with water?" Asked the woman.

"Yes, with water."

"It tastes like licorice," the girl said, and put the glass down.

"That's the way with everything."

"Yes," said the girl. "Everything tastes of licorice. Especially all the things you've waited so long for, like absinthe."

"Oh, cut it out."

"You started it," the girl said. "I was being amused. I was having a fine time."

"Well, let's try and have a fine time."

"Alright, I was trying. I said the mountains look like a podcast. Wasn't that bright?"

“That was bright.”

“I wanted to try this new drink. That's all we do, isn't it? Look at things and try new drinks?”

Bailiff Jesse Thorn, please swear the litigants in.

**Jesse Thorn:** Please rise and raise your right hands.

*(Chairs squeak.)*

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

*(They swear.)*

Do you swear to abide by Judge John Hodgman's ruling, despite the fact that he has yet to go to a baseball game with me?

*(They chuckle and swear.)*

Judge Hodgman, Guy Branum went to one with me.

**John Hodgman:** I'm not against it! I want to go to a baseball game with you, Jesse. Next time I'm in Los Angeles, if it's in the season, I'm gonna go with you. Okay?

**Jesse Thorn:** Great. You may proceed.

**John Hodgman:** I wanna go. Alright, thank you very much. Jennie and John, you may be seated for an immediate summary judgment in one of yours favors. Can either of you name the piece of culture that I referenced as I entered this courtroom? I rolled into this courtroom here at WERU FM in Orland, Maine, with Joel Mann. Hi, Joel.

**Joel Mann:** Hey.

**John Hodgman:** Let's do it alphabetically. Jennie.

**Jennie:** Um, because there were a lot of shes and hers in it, I'm gonna go with *A League of Their Own*.

**John Hodgman:** *A League of Their Own*, a famous baseball movie, Joel. Jesse Thorn, that's a famous baseball movie.

**Jesse Thorn:** Famous baseball movie, *A League of Their Own*, starring Madonna!

**John Hodgman:** Madonna, Geena Davis, Tom Hanks, and Lori Petty in a star-making role that earned her above-the-title billing in the movie *Tank Girl*. You ever see *Tank Girl*, John?

**John:** I have not.

**John Hodgman:** Let's put that down as your guess, and then you can make your own guess, too.

**John:** There we go. So, it has to be *Tank Girl*.

**John Hodgman:** It's not *Tank Girl*. You can do another one.

**John:** Okay, great. (*Chuckling.*) I have no clue. I think I was going to go with *Major League*, but judging that you—yeah, judging that you rolled in here with hot dogs, I'm going to go with a ballpark frank commercial ad from 1997.

**John Hodgman:** Not for one hot second did I—not for one red-hot hot dog second did I consider, for whatever reason, quoting a baseball movie. And Jesse, there are a lot of them. Right? There are a lot of baseball movies I could have quoted from. Now, probably I should have quoted from a movie that I've never seen, based on a book I've never read, called *Moneyball*. Because isn't that about the Oakland Athletics, Jesse Thorn?

**Jesse Thorn:** That is a film and a book about the Oakland Athletics and the unusual management practices of their general manager, Billy Beane—their former general manager, Billy Beane.

**John Hodgman:** Here's the top quote. “Playing the old way when you're at a disadvantage is a surefire way to lose.” And in this case, you both surefire lost, because all guesses are wrong.

(*Jennie chuckles.*)

I replaced an important phrase from this quotation that I gave you in my reading of a piece of literature. I replaced an important phrase with the term podcast. What I should have said was, “Alright, I was trying. I said the mountains looked like white elephants. Wasn't that bright?” Now do you know what I'm quoting from? No, of course you don't. Joel, do you know?

**Joel Mann:** Not a clue.

**John Hodgman:** You should have guessed *Hills Like White Elephants* by Ernest Hemingway. Famous short story by Ernest Hemingway, famous short story writer and novelist. And a very intense short story about reproductive rights. You should read it. That's my reading assignment for you. But why did I choose *Hills Like White Elephants*, Jennie?

**Jennie:** Because that's what the A's were called when they were at the in Philadelphia. And so, their mascot's been Stomper the Elephant since.

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**John Hodgman:** That's right. Whenever what's-his-name bought the Philadelphia Athletics,

**Jesse Thorn:** Connie Mack. Cornelius McGillicuddy, full name.

**John Hodgman:** Some local wag said that he bought himself a white elephant, and then just—he owned it. Clearly, I've only one Wikipedia page. I am not a baseball fan. And this dispute involves two Bay Area baseball teams, right? Right, Jennie?

**Jennie:** Yes.

**John Hodgman:** You're a fan of the Oakland A's,

**Jennie:** I have been for my whole life except for right now, I suppose.

**John Hodgman:** Which we're going to get to in a moment. And John, you're a fan of the San Francisco Giants, right?

**John:** That is absolutely right.

**John Hodgman:** And Jesse Thorn, people who are watching on our YouTube channel can see that you are wearing a hat that merges these two great—and for now, Bay Area—teams. Correct?

**Jesse Thorn:** That's correct.

**John Hodgman:** And you like baseball, right?

**Jesse Thorn:** I'm a passionate baseball—lifelong, passionate baseball fan.

**John Hodgman:** And your most favorite team is?

**Jesse Thorn:** The San Francisco Giants. But my father grew up in Kansas City and lived for about 20 years in Oakland and Berkeley and was a huge A's fan. So, I grew up in a split-loyalty household.

**John Hodgman:** And am I famously known for following sports and baseball?

**Jesse Thorn:** I would say you're more well known for your athletic prowess in general, just for being a jock.

*(Hodgman agrees.)*

But now that you're getting a little bit older, your fandom has in some ways superseded your individual athletic accomplishments.

**John Hodgman:** I'm not just a guy who reads a half a Wikipedia page and then fakes it, right?

**Jesse Thorn:** No, and you're also more than just a great pair of calves.

**John Hodgman:** Well, the joke's on all of you, in fact. Because I know nothing about sports or baseball. And so, this is a historic episode of *Judge John Hodgman*, because I am recusing myself.

**Jesse Thorn:** Holy cow.

**Jennie:** Alright!

**John Hodgman:** Yeah. "Holy Cow," as once was said in baseball by Harry Caray. See, I know a few things!

**Jesse Thorn:** That'd be Harry Caray. Yeah. There you go.

**John Hodgman:** But I'll tell you what. I'm recusing, Jesse.

**Jesse Thorn:** "How about that?!" Mel Allen would say.

**John Hodgman:** Anyway, the point is, I am going to ask you guys some questions. We're gonna have some wonderful conversation. I'm gonna learn a lot. And I will offer some thoughts. But Jesse Thorn, when it comes down to final judgment, you're gonna have to make this call.

**Jesse Thorn:** Wow. Okay.

**John Hodgman:** This is a game day call. This is a game day decision that I just made. Is that okay with you?

**Jesse Thorn:** Yeah. That's okay with me. I want the audience to know I just found this out. But yeah, I'm in.

**John Hodgman:** Jennie, you seek justice in this court. And you mention that you are not currently an Oakland A's fan, though you have been one your entire life. Please explain this paradox to me!

**Jennie:** So, I went to my first A's game when I was six. And I don't know what it was about it, but I loved it. Growing up, we went to multiple games a year, because it's the more affordable team to go to. (*Chuckles.*) I got to live through some of the more recent historic stuff with the A's. Granted, I'm younger than the last time they won the World Series.

But—and so, I've been a fan this whole time. I've been a season ticket holder for years. And then last year, it came out—it was leaked to the media that the ownership was kind of making a backdoor deal to move the team to Vegas while they were saying they were negotiating in good faith to keep the team in Oakland.

**John Hodgman:** They were lying, is what you're saying.

**Jennie:** They were lying, yeah.

**John Hodgman:** They were lying. And?

**Jennie:** So, been a huge fan movement. Last year there wasn't an all-out boycott, but this year after—in the offseason, there was a whole bunch of stuff with all of the owners voting to move the team to Vegas, a bunch of money being spent in Vegas elections. The owner—

**John Hodgman:** Strange, because Vegas is normally known for its fair dealing and its aboveboard practices. Yeah, exactly.

**Jennie:** (*Sarcastically.*) And very frugal, too! (*Chuckles.*)

And there's just been a whole bunch of shady things happening with the ownership. And as much respect as I have for the players and the institution, I've joined a bunch of fans who have organized a boycott of the season.

**John Hodgman:** So, this is sort of like your own version. This is like the Oakland A's version of “release the Snyder cut”. You're mad at this mega corporation for destroying something that you love.

**Jennie:** Yeah. If you've ever seen the movie *Major League*, it is that movie. It is just that movie.

**John Hodgman:** Let me—(*conspiratorially*) can I tell you something?

**Jennie:** You've never seen it.

**John Hodgman:** Never saw it. And I worked in a video store. I mean, I worked at a video store when that movie was out and then out on VHS. Was that with—Sheen's in that one, right? Isn't Sheen in that one?

**Jennie:** Yeah. He plays a nearsighted pitcher.

**John Hodgman:** He's got to wear glasses. He never wore glasses before. They put glasses on, and he's good. I'm more interested in the real-life movie of your life, which is real.

[00:10:00]

You know, based on my Wikipedia page reading, the Oakland A's are going to cease being the Oakland A's and become the Las Vegas Athletics, starting in the season—beginning in 2028. And in fact, are they still playing even in Oakland right now, Jennie?

**Jennie:** They are right now, but they made a deal to move up to Sacramento. They're actually going to be playing in a AAA ballpark there until the Vegas one is done.

**John Hodgman:** To get away from the mad fans in Oakland?

**Jennie:** I—I think so. (*Chuckles.*)

**Jesse Thorn:** They're at least expired on the Oakland Coliseum, or is expiring on the Oakland Coliseum. And for understandable reasons, the City of Oakland and County of Oakland, who I believe co-own the Coliseum—they were hesitant to renew under the previous terms. (*Chuckles.*) I believe that they offered to renew if the A's were willing to relinquish the brand to the City of Oakland for a future team. But the A's were not willing to do so. So, the A's made a deal to move to a minor league stadium in Sacramento.

**John Hodgman:** Got it. Yes, if a team moves—even if they change their name—they retain the franchise history. Such as the Carolina Hurricanes, the sport I do know about—extinct hockey—like, the Hartford Whalers became the Carolina Hurricanes. But they're still technically the Hartford Whalers as part of that team history, that franchise history.

But if they wanted to, they could relinquish the Hartford Whalers brand, and Hartford could start a new hockey team and call them the Whalers—much as Winnipeg did with the Jets. (*Stammering.*) The Jets became something else. And there is a Winnipeg Jets, but it's not the same team. See how averse I am in this?

John, how does Jennie's boycott affect you?

**John:** Well, I have had the privilege of being Jennie's best friend since we met while I was playing baseball with her brother in fifth grade, which is really cool. So, kind of a tie there. But watching her go through the pain of giving up the thing that she loved most is honestly brutal to watch. She is—she loves baseball. She loves the traditions behind it, and she loves supporting the A's. We would argue about it constantly. Because being a Giants fan, there's a lot that we could argue about. But it's just been a shame seeing her so impacted by this whole ordeal with their ownership. And it's been for probably a few years that she's been feeling it. But now it's just gotten to the point where she's clearly looking for another option.

**John Hodgman:** We're in the middle of baseball season right now, Jesse Thorn. Correct? The Boys of Summer?

**Jesse Thorn:** That's correct.

**John Hodgman:** And so, you're not going to any baseball games. Are you watching the A's at all, Jennie? Or listening to them on AM radio while you mow the lawn or anything like that?

**Jennie:** I attended the opening day boycott. Oakland is one of the few stadiums that allows tailgating. So, a whole bunch of fans went and just stayed in the parking lot the whole night. *(Chuckles.)*

**John Hodgman:** But as a show of protest. You didn't follow the game.

**Jennie:** Correct. They actually wouldn't let anybody air the game in the parking lot. They called it unsanctioned and sent security to take it down.

**John Hodgman:** So, what did you do?

**Jennie:** We had it projected up.

**John Hodgman:** Oh, oh, so you were watching. Okay, got it. So, you're still following the team. Just in the parking lot, not at the stadium.

**Jennie:** Yeah, I've been to two games this season. And one of those was a reverse boycott, where—one of the arguments that the MLB has been making is that the A's don't have any fans, because we stopped going to games. So, they've organized two reverse boycotts—one last season, one this season—where A's fans show up.

**John Hodgman:** Like, how come—hey, Jesse Thorn. Sports is confusing enough to me. How come this boycotting is so complicated?

*(Hodgman and Jesse chuckle.)*

**Jesse Thorn:** It's necessarily complicated. Because protesting against the team by not going to games is an effective way of depriving the team of revenue, but it also provides the team with fuel for its argument that no one is coming to the games, and that's why we have to move.

*(Hodgman affirms.)*

And so, these reverse boycotts have been a way for the Oakland A's fans—and the A's have one of the most passionate fan bases in professional sports—to show that, despite the fact that the team has been doing everything in its power to drive them away, that they still love their team even though they have contempt for their team's venal ownership. And those reverse boycotts—I mean, the one last year, I remember very vividly watching the footage from that game as I was sitting at the breakfast table on my phone.

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And there was a moment that was repeated in the reverse boycott game this year where, as a coordinated effort, there was a moment of silence in the stadium. That is, coordinated by fan groups, not by the team.



And it was honestly—like, for somebody that— *(He chokes up.)* Wow. *(Voice strained.)* For somebody that—like I grew up going to the Coliseum with my dad. And for somebody that has that kind of relationship to the team and the place and those people was very powerful. And I was, you know—then as now—very moved by the passion of those A's fans.

**John Hodgman:** Jennie, you hear that Jesse Thorn is choking up talking about this? Talking about your team? Talking about your fandom?

**Jennie:** I'm not crying; he's crying. *(Sniffles.)*

**John Hodgman:** You're crying too?

**Jennie:** *(Playfully defensive.)* No!

**John Hodgman:** Right. Doesn't sound like it at all. You're absolutely right. You're definitely stoic about it. It's—you know, to quote the famous sportsman, Rosey Grier, it's alright to cry. Crying lets the hurt out of you.

**Jennie:** But there's no crying in baseball.

**John Hodgman:** No, no, there is crying in baseball. That was an ironic—that was an ironic line in *Major*—not *Major League*, *League of Their Own*. *A Major League of Their Own!* What if you fused those two movies? Sounds fun, right?

*(Jennie chuckle.)*

In any case, Jennie, clearly this team means a lot to you. And I have photos here that we'll share on our show page and at [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org) as well as on our Instagram and all of our social medias of you attending games as a young person. And as a person of your age now, even attending a game without even going to the game, there's a cutout of you. What's that all about?

**Jennie:** So, in 2020, when the Oakland A's were still pretending like they were going to stay in Oakland, they did a—you could donate \$50 to the Oakland Community Fund. Which is a charitable organization that donates money to neighborhoods and kids and stuff like that to keep Oakland the town and the community. And could donate 50 bucks and submit a picture of yourself, and they would do a cutout of you that would be randomly placed in the Coliseum. And I lucked out *(chuckles)* and ended up right behind home plate. So, I got to like stare at myself every game.

*(They laugh.)*

**John Hodgman:** *(Beat.)* Tell me of what the Oakland A's mean to you. What do you love about going to the games? What have you loved about going to the games before this started to poison your fandom? And you know, what do they mean to you?

**Jennie:** Well, kind of like what Jesse said—it's the fandom. It's the camaraderie, the traditions. The Coliseum is not in the best state of repair. But it's mine. I learned how to keep score in the program sitting next to my dad. We switched off every inning. (*Chuckling.*) I remember when my brother decided he was a Giants fan and didn't want to go to games. And so, it was this whole like fighting thing about it. Every time we had an exchange student, we took them there. I got to go to—the A's had an over 20-game win streak. I went to three of those games, I think. Two or three. And it's just so fun being around people who love baseball so much and have the same silly traditions that you do. And it's been a family thing for decades.

**John Hodgman:** You mentioned that in 2020 the Oakland A's were still pretending that they would stay in town. But it's not the A's who are making this change; it's the ownership.

(*Jennie confirms.*)

So, name and shame the owner. Who's the villain in this piece?

**Jennie:** John Fisher and Dave Kaval.

**John Hodgman:** So, John Fisher is the villain of this piece. He's the one who's selling out and moving to Las Vegas for big money, right?

**Jennie:** Yes.

**John Hodgman:** What are some of the quirky traditions that the A's fans have?

**Jennie:** (*Laughs.*) We are very passionate about something called the dot race, which is where there are three different colored dots that go around a track on the big screen—usually in between the third and fourth inning. And you root for the color of the dot that you want to win, and everyone has really big feelings about it.

**John Hodgman:** So, normally—I have been to sports events where sometimes someone dressed as a hot dog races someone dressed as a milkshake or whatever. But you're talking about dots that represent—

**Jennie:** Literally just dots.

**John Hodgman:** And are they representing Oakland colors? Kelly green, Fort Knox gold, and—what's the third one? White?

**Jennie:** Although now I think they changed it to two different types of green and gold. Because...

**John Hodgman:** Gotcha. And which dot do you root for?

**Jennie:** I root for the dark green one.

**John Hodgman:** And that dark green one is also going to Las Vegas? They're taking all the colors too?

[00:20:00]

**Jennie:** I don't even get to keep the dots.

**John Hodgman:** All the colors and all the themes. Oh, I'm so sorry.

*(Jennie laughs.)*

Let's turn to the Giants fan in residence here, who is not Jesse. John, you grew up in the Bay Area, same area as Jennie, but you are a Giants fan. Why?

**John:** That's kind of funny. Yeah, I didn't have the same kind of family tie to being a Giants fan. My parents were not from the Bay Area, so I really had to figure out a team to root for. And as a, you know, eight-year-old who clearly was not an athlete but liked sports, baseball was kind of great for it. Because it's statistics and nerd things on top of sports.

**John Hodgman:** Yes.

**John:** So, fell in love with it, and then had to pick a team. And to me, I just kind of picked the Giants and fell hard into loving that team. Which is funny, because—you know you hear the passion of the A's fans. You can see it in Jesse's response earlier. You know, it was really to see that the A's fans had such a passionate base. But it was also something that I was able to kind of build love on the Giants side as well.

**John Hodgman:** So, John, where exactly did you grow up in the Bay Area? The Giants play in San Francisco/ Across the Bay is Oakland, if you don't know the geography of that part of the world. John, where did you grow up?

**John:** So, yeah, if you don't know the Bay Area, I'm in the East Bay in Danville. That's where I grew up. And Jennie was from Danville as well.

**John Hodgman:** Is that traditionally A's territory, Danville?

**John:** Yeah, I see Jesse nodding his head. It is definitely leaning Oakland A's for sure.

**John Hodgman:** Was it controversial for you to become a Giants fan?

**John:** I would say so, yes. Because most of my friends were A's fans. So, I definitely got the brunt of a lot of jokes, especially—to Jesse's point, at one point we had the arguably worst stadium in the Bay, or at least it was just on par with the Oakland Coliseum in its awfulness.

**Jesse Thorn:** No, it was worse.

*(They laugh.)*

**John:** Thank you. I thought so too. Candlestick was rough. And then we built this beautiful new, at the time—what?—Pac Bell Park was I think the first name. And it was stunning, and it was like, oh, this is such a nice place to watch the game. And then we just got made fun of for having the fancy park, because everyone's like, “Oh, you just care about sushi at baseball games!”

**John Hodgman:** So, you zigged where everyone else appropriately zagged, because you love new stadia?

**John:** Honestly, it was just that I loved the players on the team at the time. Because when I was growing up, I was a first baseman, and they had a first baseman named JT Snow, and I just thought he was awesome. And so, to me, that was kind of the reason to play. And then I started pitching. And at the time we had Robb Nen too as a closer. And I was like, this guy's so cool. And so, just fell right into that.

**John Hodgman:** Jesse Thorn, did John make the right decision?

**Jesse Thorn:** No, because he's from Danville!

*(Jennie cackles.)*

**John Hodgman:** He's supposed to like the A's? He can name two players on the team! That's more than I can do.

**Jesse Thorn:** That's true. No, that's fair. And look, I'm the last person who would dispute that JT Snow is very pretty. He is and was a beautiful man, much beloved by people across the Bay Area—especially those with an appreciation for beautiful men.

**John Hodgman:** *(Chuckles.)* Jennie, did you make fun of John for wanting sushi at the stadium, as it were?

**Jennie:** Oh yeah! *(Laughs.)*

**John Hodgman:** And you're trying to get Jennie to come be a Giants fan. Why?

**John:** We have watched the A's go through one of the biggest kind of shifts or transformations in fan loyalty. To really being taken—or excuse me, having something taken from them. And I love arguing with Jennie or like having little spats about which team is better and being able to—

**John Hodgman:** Which team is better?

**John:** Oh, definitely the Giants.

**John Hodgman:** Jesse Thorn, which is the better team right now?

**Jesse Thorn:** I actually haven't looked—I have had to divorce myself from following the A's as well. Like, I followed the A's pretty closely until two or three years ago, when this stuff started to go down.

**John Hodgman:** So, you're mad also at Major League Baseball. Right, Jennie? It's not just the ownership of the A's. This is why you don't want to become a Giants fan.

**Jennie:** Yes, Rob Manfred has been—who is the commissioner—has been just as complicit as John Fisher and Dave Kaval in this. All of the MLB owners voted to move the A's to Vegas.

**John Hodgman:** Jennie, Oakland Raiders football squad, where do they play now?

**Jennie:** They also play in Vegas.

**John Hodgman:** When you—when or if you lose the Oakland A's, what will be left for Major League Sports in Oakland?

**Jennie:** There's two soccer teams. There's the Oakland Roots and the Oakland Soul.

**John Hodgman:** Ooh!

**Jennie:** There's also a new minor league team, who is unaffiliated with the MLB, called the Oakland Ballers.

**John Hodgman:** Okay, that's—wait, what sport is that?

**Jennie:** That's baseball.

**John Hodgman:** Baseball, okay. Well, why not become a fan of the Giants, Jennie?

[00:25:00]

**Jennie:** 'Cause their owner's complicit. The problem with this is, is my best friend's a fan. My favorite manager the A's ever had is currently managing the Giants.

**John Hodgman:** Who's that person?

**Jennie:** His name is Bob Melvin. If you look at the evidence, there's actually a picture of me with him.

**John Hodgman:** With Bob Melvin?!

**Jennie:** Yeah!

**John Hodgman:** Oh, okay. Oh, that's—oh, look at this wonderful picture of you and Bob Melvin. And now he's with the Giants.

**Jennie:** Yeah.

**John Hodgman:** That monster.

*(Jennie laughs.)*

Should I shred this picture?

**Jesse Thorn:** Bob Melvin, by the way, a San Francisco native. Native San Franciscan.

**John Hodgman:** Okay, gotcha.

**Jesse Thorn:** Don't pump your fist! You're from Danville!

*(They laugh.)*

**John:** I know, I'm a traitor as well.

**John Hodgman:** Yeah, you shouldn't be following—why aren't you following the Danville Danvillains, anyway? That should be your team.

**John:** I would if we had them.

**John Hodgman:** Yeah. Look, your friend John is a turncoat and a trader. Bob Melvin is a turncoat and a trader. They're both supporting Major League Baseball. Why are you even still talking to John?

**Jennie:** *(Giggles.)* He's pretty great.

**John Hodgman:** He's a pretty good guy?

**Jennie:** Yeah.

**John Hodgman:** John, why do you think that she needs to sacrifice her principles and come be part of the sushi club?

**John:** Well, I think when they had the reverse boycott, we were all so emotional as Giants fans watching that, that it turned from, “Oh, we can make fun of them, and this is silly,” to “this is devastating to watch”. And there are better things to be had if you just join the Giants for a little bit. Even if the A's ended up figuring out what they needed to do, you could get the

joys that you get of watching Major League Baseball with friends. And you could hate the owners a little bit, and that's still okay. But at least you would be getting the traditions that you kind of crave.

**John Hodgman:** Do you miss Major League Baseball? Aside from the fact that it's a shorter season, do you miss the big—the show, Jennie?

**Jennie:** What I miss more is being able to go to a bar and ask them to turn on the game. The Ballers games are only televised on Friday, in network.

**John Hodgman:** But you're not prepared to go to any other Major League Baseball games and spend money at the stadium, correct?

**Jennie:** Correct.

**John Hodgman:** And at what point—now listen, (*conspiratorially*) let me ask you a question, John. The Oakland A's, they're going to move to Vegas, right? There's no stopping this. Right, John?

**John:** They're moving to Vegas.

**John Hodgman:** They say Moneyball talks.

**Jesse Thorn:** At this point, the only thing standing between the A's and moving to Las Vegas is the A's demonstrated incompetence in every area of business.

**John Hodgman:** But it seems more likely than not that the plan will—some version of the plan will happen. They will not stay in Northern California, right?

**Jesse Thorn:** The reality is that the cartel that controls Major League Baseball has too much invested in it. I think at this point, even if the A's were sold—if the Major League Baseball forced Fisher to sell the A's because of his incompetence, or if they had to stay in Sacramento or find a new way to be in Las Vegas, baseball is too invested as an industry in maintaining this fiction that they need billions of dollars in subsidies to build stadiums to allow a local investor to purchase the A's.

**John Hodgman:** Yeah, they can't let anybody call their bluff. So, they got to do it.

**Jesse Thorn:** Exactly.

**John Hodgman:** So Jennie, given the seeming inevitability that this is the last season the Oakland A's will play in Oakland and that the next three seasons will be played in Sacramento—as the Oakland A's, but in another city—it seems likely that maybe you've seen your last in person Oakland A's game for your entire life.

**Jennie:** Yeah, I only cried a lot. It's fine.

**John Hodgman:** How do you—tell me more though about how you feel about that.

**Jennie:** It sucks. For the opening game, opening home game, I was on BART.

**John Hodgman:** Bay Area Rapid Transportation. It's your train, your subway version.

**Jennie:** So, I was BARTing into the game, and I was just talking to the people next to me. And it's a guy with his little daughter, a guy probably in his 50s or 60s, and me. And we are all just talking about growing up A's fans. Like, the guy with his daughter, they came in from Stockton to be able to see the game, but they spent it in the parking lot. Some of the people did end up going in partway. Which is totally fine, because you don't miss an opening day. I haven't missed in seasons, and (*chuckling*) it was a big cry-fest, actually.

**John Hodgman:** So, this opening day was the one you were describing where everyone tailgated in the parking lot and refused to go into the stadium.

(*Jennie confirms.*)

The front office shut you down, or tried to shut you down.

**Jennie:** Someone sent security to tell us that it was—the organizations that were projecting it are called Last Dive Bar and the Oakland 68s.

[00:30:00]

And we were told that it was an unauthorized viewing of the game, that they didn't have the permits or whatever to be able to project it. So, security came and shut it down.

**John Hodgman:** They sent in— By security, you mean goons.

**Jesse Thorn:** The Pinkertons.

**John Hodgman:** Hired goons came through.

**Jennie:** Yeah, although they didn't really seem like they wanted to. (*Laughs.*) The employees are all mad too; they're all gonna be out of jobs.

**John Hodgman:** And they threw a bunch of people in FCC jail, right? For illegally broadcasting the product.

(*Jennie laughs.*)

**Jesse Thorn:** Yeah, without the express written consent of Major League Baseball.



**John Hodgman:** And you seem to have made your peace with the fact that the boycott is not going to be effective in keeping them there. How long will your boycott of Major League Baseball extend?

**Jennie:** As John can testify to, (*chuckles*) I tend to take where I spend my money fairly seriously. So, as Jesse's been calling it, the cartel—as long as they show that there's no interest in fans or the communities that house these teams to have any say, then that's my plan.

**John Hodgman:** Forever.

**Jennie:** Yeah.

**John Hodgman:** Until Major League Baseball changes, and they put another Yale scholar in charge.

**Jennie:** Yeah. You know, burn the whole thing down.

**John Hodgman:** So, Major League Baseball, if you're listening, I have a bachelor's degree.

*(They laugh.)*

What are you going to do instead?

**Jennie:** Now I'm watching the Ballers. I'm going to—they're in Raimondi Park, in Oakland. I've been going there.

**John Hodgman:** You ever follow the Portland Sea Dogs?

**Jennie:** No.

**John Hodgman:** Portland, Maine, Sea Dogs. You ever go to a Portland, Maine, Sea Dogs game, Joel?

**Joel Mann:** No, I haven't.

**John Hodgman:** Alright, well, there's a seat there for you. Joel's not there. You can get over there. Jennie is there—I mean, come on, Jennie. Are you ever gonna become a Giants fan?

Why are we even here?

**Jennie:** Honestly, part of this is I don't know what I want the ruling to be.

**John Hodgman:** Ohhh!

**Jennie:** 'Cause I do miss going to ball games with John. As much as I love the Ballers. It is a shorter season that is not televised nationally. And yeah. I mean, going to baseball games with John is one of the things that I've done for a long time. It's one of my favorite things to do. And I don't know. He hasn't—the couple times I've invited him to baller's games, he hasn't come with me. So.

**John Hodgman:** What?! John! Why don't you go to Ballers?!

**John:** I will absolutely go to a Ballers game if I can get you to come to a Giants game.

**John Hodgman:** Talk, talk, talk, talk. Chatter, chatter, chatter.

**Jesse Thorn:** Judge Hodgman, this is something that you and I have talked about. It is a wonderful experience to go to a low-level minor league baseball game. It's a great time. I really strongly recommend that John go to a Ballers game. But just like you and I have talked about going to a game in New York, there's a big difference between going to a Brooklyn Cyclones game and a New York Mets game, right? They're two very different experiences. Both highly recommendable, but one is not really a substitute for the other.

**John Hodgman:** You can see the ocean from the Brooklyn Cyclone Stadium. I've been to that one.

**Jesse Thorn:** I'm into it. I'm excited about it. We're going.

**John Hodgman:** But I mean, you know, look. John, when I talk about talk, talk, talk, talk, talk, I'm guilty. Haven't I said to you, Jesse Thorn, that I'd go to a baseball game with you a lot of times?

**Jesse Thorn:** You have.

**John Hodgman:** And have I done it?

**Jesse Thorn:** No, sir.

**John Hodgman:** 'Cause I'm all talk John, just like you. A chatterer sees a chatterer. You know what I mean?

**John:** That's true. We can just suss each other out. I am wearing a minor league baseball hat though, 'cause I also love minor league baseball, but it's just not the same.

**John Hodgman:** John, (*stammering*) what else can you get to tempt her over? You got a mascot, right? Is that Crazy Crab gonna show up?

**John:** (*Chuckles.*) It's Lou Seal. He's a big seal. He's an adorable mascot. So, you're not missing out on, you know, an adorable mascot.

**John Hodgman:** What happened to Crazy Crab?

**John:** They still have the Crazy Crab sandwiches. Which of course, you know, the food is great at the stadium. I know I'm going to get (*inaudible*) for it.

**Jesse Thorn:** John is obsessed with—we can't skip over the Crazy Crab, because this is too important for John Hodgman.

**John Hodgman:** Yeah.

**Jesse Thorn:** The Crazy Crab in the early 1980s, I believe, was an anti-mascot. The Giants for many years considered themselves too classy to have a mascot, as the Yankees still do. And so, they didn't.

**John Hodgman:** Pure class. The Yankees are pure class.

**Jesse Thorn:** (*Laughing.*) Yeah, exactly. Let me turn my baseball cap backwards and flip somebody off to tell them about how many championships we have. But yeah, the Giants introduced an anti-mascot as a sort of heel mascot, named the Crazy Crab.

[00:35:00]

But he was so despised! (*Chuckling.*) He was so successful that they had to remove him essentially for his own safety.

**John Hodgman:** Yeah. People were coming from Philadelphia to throw batteries at this Crazy Crab who's so hated.

**Jesse Thorn:** But these days there's a ballpark sandwich named after him that is probably the best thing to eat at the stadium.

**John Hodgman:** That's nice.

Anything else? Any other fun stuff that can—you know, what are the quirky traditions of the San Francisco Giants fans, John?

**John:** Just like the A's, there's a big set of passionate Giants fans that kind of get written off as not existing because of how nice the stadium is, or all of the luxuries of being by the bay and watching baseball. When I go to Giants games, I sit and talk to people—who just like Jennie—have years and years and years of traditions of going to opening day and remembering how great it was to see Barry Bonds play. And there's a lot of rich history in that stadium that has been built that I think she would really enjoy if she just let herself.

**John Hodgman:** Would you say, John, that the Giants organization treats its fans better—obviously, better than the Oakland A's—but like, intrinsically well?

**John:** Absolutely. I do not want to speak for the Giants ownership, but they treat fans really well. And they have pretty much listened to the fans' concerns and replaced certain operations individuals to make the team better year after year after year. And while it's maybe not the best we've ever been, there's dedication into making us better. And you can see that by adding someone like a Matt Chapman to the team, getting new management under Bob Melvin. I think so.

**John Hodgman:** Jennie, do you think if I were to order you—or in this case, Judge Jesse Thorn, because I have recused myself—if Judge Jesse Thorn were to order you to become a Giants fan, that your fellow Oakland A fans would disown you?

**Jennie:** No, fan groups have all been—and the more public fans have all been very open about some of them still go to every home game. Some of them boycott every game. One of the cool things, though, that's been happening is the Sell Flag Tour, where there's been a bunch of—

**John Hodgman:** What's that?

**Jennie:** So, for the reverse boycott last year, the fan organizations, Last Dive Bar and Oakland 68s, gave away shirts that said “sell”, because that was a sign in the stadium. ‘Cause we want John Fisher to sell the team.

**John Hodgman:** To sell. Yeah.

**Jennie:** Yeah. And so, this year for the opening day boycott, they gave away flags. And someone came up with the idea of we should have a sell flag at every MLB park. And so, they've organized this tour where they're mailing this one flag from park to park from fan to fan who's volunteered to take it to Major League parks. And there's like a map on Google Maps that you can toggle on that shows you where the sell flag's been. It's pretty cool.

**John Hodgman:** Do you feel like you could maintain a membership of a fandom in exile? That that could be fun for you?

**Jennie:** Yeah.

**John Hodgman:** Could you do both? Like, would you have to choose between to Giants Games but also being a member of this anti fandom?

**Jennie:** I feel like I would personally have to choose, just because of the morality of giving money to an organization that allowed my team to move and bowing to the wishes of a guy who is terrible at business.

**John Hodgman:** He's the son of GAP founders Donald Fisher and Doris F Fisher. Did you know that?

**Jesse Thorn:** It's ironic, because he purchased the team, or obtained the team, indirectly from the previous owners, the Haas family, who were the founders of Levi's—or the owners of Levi's, which has long been privately held. And the Haas family was famously community oriented. Whereas, John Fisher, this owner of this—or this former, you know, family inheritor of family money derived from this rival fashion business competitor in the San Francisco Bay Area has been just the opposite. And I'm just waiting on whoever inherited the Esprit fortune to come in and save the day. *(Laughs.)*

**John Hodgman:** So, Jennie, if I were to rule in your favor, it says here that you want me to rule that the Ballers are enough for you, and chitter-chatter John will stop talking the talk and start walking the walk, and walk over to a Ballers game with you. That's your ideal ruling?

**Jennie:** I think so.

**John Hodgman:** Mm. But seem a little bit unsure of yourself. You seem like maybe you want Judge Jesse to rule in John's favor, that you should tailgate a Giants game and get a personalized Giants jersey.

**Jennie:** I do not want that part. *(Laughs.)*

**John Hodgman:** You don't want the Giants jersey?

**Jennie:** No.

**John Hodgman:** Would you settle for a full-size replica of the Crazy Crab costume?

*(Jesse chortles.)*

[00:40:00]

**Jennie:** I would. Yes. I would settle for a full-sized—

**John Hodgman:** I don't know why I said full-size. It's only one size. One size fits most.

**Jennie:** My only hesitation is that baseball's been—for my whole life, I played softball all through—from kindergarten through the end of high school. This is the game that I'm comfortable with. This is really the only game I watch. And I'm so used to it being my life from April to October and being able to walk in anywhere and watch a game and have it be part of my summer—and you know, spring and fall and all that, you know, year.

**John Hodgman:** There's an obvious solution here, of course. You don't want to give money to Major League Baseball, right?

*(Jennie confirms.)*

John, why don't you just pay for her to go to the game? Cheapskate.

**John:** I know. I'm chitter-chatter and cheapskate, but I got to step up and just take her to a Giants game.

**John Hodgman:** Watch it. Yeah, maybe a season's worth.

**John:** Yeah, new season tickets for the Giants, huh?

**John Hodgman:** Would that satisfy your ethical boycott of Major League Baseball? If John spent the money?

**Jennie:** No, 'cause then it's money being spent on my behalf.

**John Hodgman:** It's all—well, okay, but let's say he buys the ticket for someone else, and then that person falls down.

**Jennie:** Then yes. Then I go would go.

**Jesse Thorn:** Let's say that person is taken out of the running by a certain crab.

*(They laugh.)*

**John Hodgman:** Jennie, I know fans usually have a lot of rituals and traditions and ways that they use to sort of affect the game in one way or another. Do the Oakland A's have anything like that?

**Jennie:** Probably what the A's are best known for is the drums. In the bleacher seats, up until last year, we've had huge amounts of drummers come. And they have—I can't speak to their coordination, because I don't understand how rhythm works. *(Chuckles)*. But they have really cool things. So, like if there's a full count, there's a certain routine they do. If there's—at the start of each inning, and it's just loud and fun.

**John Hodgman:** We're talking about people bringing in like a drum kit?!

**Jennie:** Yes.

**Jesse Thorn:** Yes.

**Jennie:** Multiple people, like a whole section of people.

**John Hodgman:** We're talking about like a whole snare, tom-tom, the bass drum?

**Jennie:** I don't know if I've seen a bass drum. But. *(Laughs.)*

**Jesse Thorn:** Generally, each person's bringing in one of those. But yes, absolutely. My close friend, Jim, who was a co-founder of, my cohost Jordan and my sketch comedy group, Prank the Dean, was one of the original A's drummers.

**John Hodgman:** Whoa!

**Jesse Thorn:** And in fact, some of the first show IDs for *The Sound of Young America*, the show that preceded *Bullseye*, were Jim playing drums in our dorm room and us making up versions of A's chants that were about *The Sound of Young America*, including a version of "oh-we-oh, Olmeeedo" that was about Olmedo Sáenz, an A's player, that went (*struggling to fit the many syllables into the same rhythm*) "oh-we-oh, *The Sound of Young America*".

I didn't say they were really creative versions, but. (*Laughs.*)

**John Hodgman:** What's the rhythm that they play when there's like a full count, or what's—Like, is it a distinctive rhythm, Jennie?

**Jennie:** It is. But, again, I don't understand rhythm. So, I just know that it sounds different, but I could not mimic it for you.

**John Hodgman:** Jesse Thorn, is there a particular—is there a rat-a-tat you know off the top of your head?

**Jesse Thorn:** There's a whole—I mean, there is a complex system of rat-a-tats that has developed over dozens and dozens of drummers. And you know, I was just at Dodger Stadium here in Los Angeles. You're not even allowed to bring a sign in.

**John Hodgman:** Yeah, I was going to say, why is this allowed?

**Jesse Thorn:** In Oakland, it is a very passionate system of incredible fans who truly dedicate their lives to this. It's a really amazing thing.

**John:** As a Giants fan, I am jealous of the drums. It's just really cool to watch so many passionate fans out there with coordinated drums, and it's awesome.

**John Hodgman:** Jennie, do you think the drummers will go to Las Vegas? Or is this the end of that tradition?

**Jennie:** The drummers actually started boycotting last year.

**John Hodgman:** Oh, they're already on top of it.

**Jennie:** Yeah. So, they've actually—they now attend the Oakland soccer teams, the Roots and Soul, and the Ballers. But no longer in the Coliseum.

**John Hodgman:** And you don't drum—do you, Jennie?

**Jennie:** No. I love music; I don't know how it works.

**John Hodgman:** John, do you drum?

**John:** Oh, I do not drum. I could not offer my drumming expertise.

**John Hodgman:** Why don't the Giants get some drummers, Jesse? It seems like a lot of fun.

**Jesse Thorn:** (*Chuckling.*) Tickets are too expensive.

**John Hodgman:** Got it. Jennifer Marmor, could maybe hear some Oakland A's drummers drumming, so we can get a sense of what it sounds like?

**Clip:** A fun, high energy, complex and high-tempo collection of many drummers playing together.

[00:45:00]

**John Hodgman:** Wow, that's amazing! That is incredible to hear. Now I understand. You gotta get some drumming over there in San Francisco, John. Learn to drum. John, tell me more about how it feels for you, watching your friend Jennie deal with this boycott. How do you feel about it when you see her struggling with obviously a very emotional situation?

**John:** Been through the ringer the last year or so with a lot of things. And watching her not have a vent for that, not having the things that she loves so much—I miss seeing her enjoy those things. And being as somebody who's currently doing them more on my own, because my best friend come to the Giants games, I would love just to enjoy that with her and give her kind of that space and watch her enjoy her favorite thing again. Which I have missed.

**John Hodgman:** On the other hand, John, you mentioned that you, from Danville, started rooting for the Giants. You've been picked on your whole life, ostracized by the Oakland A's fans. Now the Oakland A's fans are having their fandom torn away from them by this first-class Princeton creep. And you gotta feel some pleasure, right? You gotta feel some pleasure in their pain.

**John:** I think I did until moments like the reverse boycott, and you saw how badly it went. Like, it was so easy to fall into feeling so thrilled about the fact that I finally have one thing to one-up all the people who had made fun of me for being a Giants fan on. And it quickly went away into, “That’s not fair. That's too much.” So, I think they deserve better things, absolutely, as dedicated (*inaudible*) sports fans.

**John Hodgman:** “Better things”, meaning they finally root for the correct team, the San Francisco Giants, is what you're saying.

**John:** Correct. Sponsored by the Crazy Crab mascot.



**John Hodgman:** Alright, I think I've heard everything. Look, it's the—I'll offer my opinion, but the final judgment is in Judge Jesse's hands. So, I don't know. I'm gonna I'm gonna go into my, uh, dugout. That's a thing—right, Jesse Thorn? It's where players go to rest and figure out their—do their podcasting?

**Jesse Thorn:** Yeah, you might go all the way back to the clubhouse, but sure.

**John Hodgman:** Maybe I'm gonna go back to the clubhouse for a moment. I'll consider my opinion, my amicus brief. And then Judge Jesse Thorn will render his decision.

**Jesse Thorn:** Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom. John, how are you feeling about your chances?

**John:** I'm feeling pretty good. I think that Jennie really wants to watch baseball again. And I'm excited to watch it with her.

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

**Jennie:** Like I said earlier, I really don't know what I want the ruling to be, because I just miss. But! Not to influence your ruling, JT Snow is currently affiliated with the Oakland Ballers.

**Jesse Thorn:** Oh, yeah! That's right! (*Laughs.*) I forgot about that.

**John:** Wow. I think I played myself.

(*Jennie agrees.*)

**Jesse Thorn:** Put a quarter in your ear, son! You played yourself. We'll be back with Judge John Hodgman's advisory remarks and my ruling in just a moment.

**Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

**Jesse Thorn:** The *Judge John Hodgman* Road Court Tour is hitting the road in September, starting with a show at the City Winery in New York City. John, we have all kinds of fun stuff ready, locked, and loaded for this amazing tour. It is going to be a great time. I hope everybody is buying their tickets.

**John Hodgman:** Yep! We're going to New York, Philadelphia, Washington DC, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania—first time show! Ann Arbor, Michigan, first time show. Free show at the library. Madison, Wisconsin. The second? Third time show? I'm not sure (*inaudible*) are there in Madison, as well as in St. Paul. Burlington, Vermont. First time show, Portland, Maine. Come on! Joel Mann's gonna be there. Right, Joel?

(*Joel confirms.*)

Turner's Falls, Massachusetts—Monte Belmonte. And homecoming for me in Brookline, Massachusetts. Plus Vancouver, Seattle, Portland, Oregon, Los Angeles, and San Francisco Sketch Fest. All tickets are on sale now at [MaximumFun.org/events](https://MaximumFun.org/events) and going rather swiftly. That's [MaximumFun.org/events](https://MaximumFun.org/events). And if you live in or near those cities, and you have a dispute—I don't know! Keep it to yourself. Right, Jesse?

**Jesse Thorn:** No! Go to [MaximumFun.org/jjho](https://MaximumFun.org/jjho) to share your disputes with us. We need them, baby! Send them to us. If you live in one of those places, send us a dispute. And please let us know that you live in or near one of those places and can get out to the show. Because we would love to have you be part of the road court experience.

[00:50:00]

And John, guess what?

**John Hodgman:** What?

**Jesse Thorn:** Just announced, supporting *Judge John Hodgman* at Dynasty Typewriter in Los Angeles, *Jordan, Jesse, Go!*.

**John Hodgman:** *Jordan, Jesse, Go!* Supporting act of—frankly, I mean, the dominating act. This is going to be an incredible night of comedy at Dynasty Typewriter in Los Angeles. And you know, look—

**Jesse Thorn:** Maybe we'll bring back our new quiz game, “What is Boat Words?”

**John Hodgman:** (*Cackling.*) I would love to do that.

**Jesse Thorn:** That's where I just wrote down a list of boat words from when I read this book about boats and then said, “Which one of these is a real boat word?” Loblolly boys.

**John Hodgman:** (*Laughs.*) *Jordan, Jesse, Go!*, of course, where *Judge John Hodgman* all began. Be there for the big reunion. And please come to any of our shows. I often say it: it's better when you're there. Tickets available at [MaximumFun.org/events](https://MaximumFun.org/events). Submit your cases at [MaximumFun.org/jjho](https://MaximumFun.org/jjho).

**Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

**Jesse Thorn:** Please rise as Judge John Hodgman reenters the courtroom and presents... remarks leading into my verdict. (*Chuckles.*)

**John Hodgman:** Uh, boy, that was a remarkable rest. Thank you very much. I've never—I just went back to the clubhouse, and I took a little nap. A seventh inning stretch, if you will.

**Jesse Thorn:** Sometimes you got to hit the showers and then hit the spread!

**John Hodgman:** Now I'm refreshed and willing to offer my thoughts on this. Now, listen, I mentioned earlier that I like baseball. Does that mean—and I'm not pure chatter. I want to go to a baseball game with Jesse Thorn. I mean, my journey with baseball was: I always liked baseball growing up. Because when I was growing up, I lived in Brookline, Massachusetts. And the team was the Boston Red Sox. And in the 1970s and '80s. But the Boston Red Sox, were they good or bad then? (*Beat.*) They were bad! I still like going to a baseball game. And Jesse Thorn, I will go to a baseball game with you. But I have to divorce myself completely from the outcome.

I realized that I don't think I have ever gone to or watched sports game on television where the team I was rooting for won. And Jesse Thorn, I am telling you: I'm going to go to a baseball game with you, but you better be prepared for your team to lose. Because if I'm there, they lose. The emotions that get caught up in sports are too intense for me. And I'm very, very happy for you, Jennie, that you've had those intense emotions and that they have been so positive for you, in contrast to me. And that's great! And I know—and I love people who love sport.

But I equally sympathize and empathize with the fact that this—how emotional it must be for you to have the thing that you love and grew up with being torn away from you. And I don't know what Judge Jesse is going to rule. But I do sense two things in you. One, your complete resolve to deny your patronage to Major League Baseball. And unfortunately, I think it's gonna be forever. Because now that the scales have fallen from your eyes, you know that this is a cartel that is—you know, they don't have a Commissioner John Hodgman.

But if you and Jesse and John and everyone else in this group chat that's name starts with J found a loophole, and you went through that loophole, and you saw a Major League Baseball game? Giants or otherwise? I wouldn't think any less of you. Alright. I'm handing it over to Jesse Thorn. That's all I've got to say.

**Jesse Thorn:** Well, Judge Hodgman, heavy hangs the head that wears the powdered wig.

**John Hodgman:** Or the split baseball cap!

**Jesse Thorn:** It's hard to make jokes when there's a lump in your throat. And there's been a lump in my throat this entire episode. As deeply emotionally affected as I was by the question of whether someone's mom's ashes should be poured into the toilet at Disney World, I think this is the *Judge John Hodgman* case in a decade plus that we've done that is closest to my heart.

You know, I've had this kind of barrage of images and memories in my head as we have been recording this. And gosh, where is this familiar from? And it occurred to me that every time I fly home—and I still consider San Francisco my home, though I've lived in Los Angeles for more than 15 years, I think. Every time I fly home, I fly from Burbank to Oakland. And I take the BART into the city. And the Oakland Airport has a little—

[00:55:00]

—you know, shuttle that runs to the Coliseum BART station. And so, every time I go home, and I have to, you know, be in San Francisco and struggle with the changes that have happened in that wonderful city, I start it by standing on that BART platform and looking at the skyway that connects the BART station with the Oakland Coliseum. And I think of not just all the games I went to by myself as a kid and as a teenager, but all the games I went to with my dad. All the times that my dad's best friend, Ed—who lived in Oakland and Berkeley his entire adult life—had season tickets. (*Chuckling.*) He got season tickets when he went to MacArthur. And because he used a wheelchair, he had really good season tickets. Because this Coliseum was so old that it was barely accessible. So, the only wheelchair accessible seats were really good.

So, he could just buy cheap season tickets and get these great seats. And I would ride on Ed's wheelchair across that skyway into the Oakland Coliseum. And I also—every time, I think, gosh, maybe I should go to another—one last A's game. And then I think about the last A's game that I went to with my two siblings and my dad before he passed away. (*Beat.*) And what a special experience that was to share with my dad.

So, I have no shortage of emotional investment in this case and no shortage of connection and empathy with the state that Jennie is in. And that's to say nothing of the fact that I would say that that time when the Giants were moving out of San Francisco was a greater emotional difficulty for me than my parents' divorce as a child. (*Chuckles.*) The darkness and pain of feeling like this thing that you were deeply invested in was betraying you can hardly be overstated.

But I think for most sports fans, what they are rooting for is their community. And that is why I so deeply hear Jennie saying, “This was Oakland's team.” Right? This was the team that was left. This was—for a kid from Danville, this was us. Right? It's not about the owner. It's not even about the players.

**John Hodgman:** Well, except for one kid from Danville.

**Jesse Thorn:** (*Laughing.*) Yeah, that's true. But it's not about the owner. It's not about the—it's not about the letter on the hat. It's not about even the players. Ultimately, it's about those people sharing that experience together. That time at the ballpark is a special experience that you can't replicate anywhere else. So, what I'm going to suggest to you is this is your best friend since childhood. And he wants to share this experience with you, just as I want to share the experience of baseball with my beautiful friend, John Hodgman.

I want you to accept that invitation from your friend. You don't have to root for the Giants. You don't have to root for the other team. Just be there, and enjoy being in a beautiful place with tens of thousands of people who are pointed in the same direction, and all the positive vibes of sports fandom and particularly baseball fandom and particularly baseball fandom in the Bay Area. Know that you will be welcomed as a former A's fan in a San Francisco Giants community. Giants fans love A's fans. Don't worry about it.

And I think that when you do this, it will be a bit of a comfort to the hole in your heart. And I don't think that hole in your heart is ever going to go away, because I can't imagine what my life would be like now if the Giants had skipped town when I was 11 years old. However, I

think that one day, you might say, “Look, this is my community—my best friend from Danville and all these people that I share the Bay Area with. And they want me to be part of this.” And maybe you will feel like you can be. That's my ruling. In conclusion, play ball.

**John Hodgman:** Well, it sounds, John, as though you have won the case. I'm going to try to bailiff this up a little bit. Is there joy in Danville today?

**John:** There is joy in Danville. I think the ruling was really thoughtful, and I think it's exactly what Jennie and I need to go enjoy some baseball.

[01:00:00]

**John Hodgman:** Jennie, you heard Jesse refer to me as his beautiful friend. How do you feel about Judge Jesse's ruling?

**Jennie:** I think it's fair.

**John Hodgman:** We will find a way to put a ticket in your hand, such that you don't even know where it came from.

*(Jennie laughs.)*

You know, like there's one thing that we can do even better than the cartel, and that is a money launder for a ticket. Like, you're not going to know where this money came from.

Well, Jennie, John, thank you so much for being a part of the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. And Jesse Thorn, thank you so much for being such a wonderful judge and, dare I say, beautiful friend.

**Jesse Thorn:** Thanks, pal. Another *Judge John Hodgman* case is in the books! We'll have Swift Justice in just a moment. First, our thanks to Redditor u/DrColossusOfRhodes and also u/Beejtronic for naming this week's episode, “Case at the Bat”.

**John Hodgman:** That's what you call in baseball a goal in one. That was so hot.

**Jesse Thorn:** Join the conversation on the Maximum Fun subreddit. [MaximumFun.Reddit.com](https://www.reddit.com/r/MaximumFun) is where you can chat. I feel like this is like the 12th for u/DrColossusof— No offense to u/Beejtronic, but u/DrColossusOfRhodes is a colossus of naming *Judge John Hodgman* cases.

**John Hodgman:** But there are so many talented people there who are coming up with incredible, incredible titles. And I hope you keep them coming, because I really love reading them, honestly.

**Jesse Thorn:** Evidence and photos from the show, posted on our Instagram account, [@JudgeJohnHodgman](https://www.instagram.com/JudgeJohnHodgman). We are also on TikTok and YouTube, [@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...).

Follow and subscribe to see our episodes and our video-only content. This week, you can see my Giants and A's hat on the YouTube.

**John Hodgman:** Yeah, look, great. And Jesse's wonderful finger tattoos as well.

**Jesse Thorn:** *Judge John Hodgman* was created by Jesse Thorn and John Hodgman. This episode, engineered by Aaron Figueroa at Bay Area Podcast Studio in Fremont, California. By Jesse Boynton at the Olympic Recording Studio in Denver, Colorado. And of course, by Joel Mann at WERU Community Radio in Orland, Maine.

Our social media manager is Nattie Lopez. Our podcast, edited by AJ McKeon. Our video producer, Daniel Speer. Our producer is Jennifer Marmor.

Now, Swift Justice, where we answer small disputes with quick judgment. u/IrkO70 on the Maximum Fun subreddit asks, "My partner opens the dishwasher after it started running in order to add a forgotten dish. I think the dishwasher should not be opened after starting! That forgotten dish should just go in the next load. Who's right?"

**John Hodgman:** I don't know how u/IrkO70 got past my boycott on dishwashing disputes. But it's time for—it's time to end some boycotts, I guess. So, I'll let this one in, even though the dishwasher is running. My answer is: don't open the dishwasher and put a dish in mid-cycle. Right, Joel?

**Joel Mann:** No, it's perfectly fine to open it up and put anything in you want, at any time.

**John Hodgman:** Even though you brought me this nice gavel, I'm ruling against Joel and u/IrkO70's partner. Don't—just let it go. Let it run through. (*Bangs his gavel three times.*)

Today, we talked about a Bay Area based dispute. And a little reminder, of course, we're coming to the San Francisco Sketch Fest early next year. I'd like to hear more hyper-local cases. What are disputes that can only happen in your city, town, or township? Do you live in Tuscola, Illinois? I don't even know if I'm pronouncing that right! And you're beefing with someone in Arcola? I know I'm pronouncing that right. What about high school rivalries? What about which pizza place is best in town?

Send your hometown cases to [MaximumFun.org/jjho](https://MaximumFun.org/jjho). And speaking of local disputes, if you're one of the cities along our road court route, send those cases in now to [MaximumFun.org/jjho](https://MaximumFun.org/jjho), and we'll consider your case for live adjudication when we come to your town or near it on the *Judge John Hodgman* Road Court Tour.

**Jesse Thorn:** We will accept any dispute at [MaximumFun.org/jjho](https://MaximumFun.org/jjho). No dispute too big or too small. And before we go, I want to head off a dispute at the pass. Because I'm concerned that my friend, Be Lindbergh—the host of the podcast *Effectively Wild*, the number one baseball nerd podcast—who you met backstage at a *Judge John Hodgman* show in New York, along with his charming and beautiful wife, Jessie, may bring a dispute against us if we don't address this now.

**John Hodgman:** Let's do it.

**Jesse Thorn:** I heard Jennie say the MLB. It is correctly styled MLB, because it stands for Major League Baseball.

[01:05:00]

And you wouldn't say the Major League Baseball. I know that Ben's hand was burning up with need to write an email to us about that very topic, because that is exactly what he is pedantic about. And as they say on *Effectively Wild*: how can you not be pedantic about baseball?

**John Hodgman:** (*Laughs.*) I might even listen to that podcast. How about that?

**Jesse Thorn:** So, Ben, we've addressed it! Love you, guy. Okay, anyway. 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!