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Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: Welcome to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. I am Bailiff Jesse Thorn. And this week we are clearing out that docket. It's all gunked up, John! We gotta—

John Hodgman: Docket's all gunked!

Jesse Thorn: We got to wash it out. Hose it down.

John Hodgman: We got to get that de-gunker. We got to get that Goo Gone. You ever used that product Goo Gone?

Jesse Thorn: Oh, Goo Gone's an incredible product. I know all about all the varietal versions of Goo Gone, because my father-in-law—until recently—was the manager of a hardware store. So, I could call him and be like, “What product with goo in the name should I purchase for X?”

(John laughs.)

That and like, “What type of glue do I need to glue this to that,” were his greatest expertises.

John Hodgman: Oh, wow. You could probably still call him. He probably still has that expertise, you know?

Jesse Thorn: *(Chuckling.)* Yeah. No, he left it behind at the store.

John Hodgman: No, he didn't.

Jesse Thorn: Now it's all daiquiris and fishing.

John Hodgman: They had to jack him into the web and remove that information from his wetware?

Jesse Thorn: My father-in-law's the best.

John Hodgman: Hey, as we record this, we just finished our first leg of the *Judge John Hodgman* Road Court Tour. We had a very good time, wouldn't you say, Jesse?

Jesse Thorn: I had a great time. I mean, I'm only going to speak for myself, but I had a fantastic time. I enjoyed visiting beautiful Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where I'd never been before.

John Hodgman: Beautiful city.

Jesse Thorn: And trying their famous C+ cookies.

John Hodgman: *(Laughs.)* You're talking about at Eat'n Park? Those cookies were good!

Jesse Thorn: Eat'n Park, smiley face cookies.

John Hodgman: Famous. Famous, Pittsburgh.

Jesse Thorn: Might as well just bought them at the Kroger.

John Hodgman: Now, let's see if I can remember the 10 locations of Eat'n Park. There's Robinson. There's, uh, Waterside. Waterworks? McKnight Boulevard. I can't remember. We had a good time in Pittsburgh. Great time in Philadelphia, as well in DC, New York City.

And I'll tell you something, some people say a thing that's fun is like “a hoot and a half”. You've heard that before, hoot and a half?

(Jesse confirms.)

Two full hoots. Two hoots.

Jesse Thorn: The extra half hoot is for hanging out with John Hodgman's aunts.

John Hodgman: Yeah, in Philadelphia! That was a lot of fun. Hey, do you hate fun? Well, then I got nothing for you. But if you like fun, you should join us. Right now, we just got back from leg one of the tour, as we're recording. But as you're listening to this in the not-too-distant future, at this very moment Jesse and I are probably on a boat. We're probably on a fast ferry speeding across Lake Michigan, from Michigan to Wisconsin, so that we may join you once again in our beloved Crooked Majestic Theater in the great city of Madison, Wisconsin on Thursday, September 26th.

Followed closely after that by St. Paul at the Fitzgerald Theater. Tickets are still available there, at St. Paul and in Madison—two of our very favorite cities. So, please take a fast ferry to your internet connection, and navigate right now to MaximumFun.org/events. We'll wait while you do it. Right, Jesse?

Jesse Thorn: Waiting, waiting, waiting. They did it, John!

John Hodgman: Good job, everybody. But now we got to de gunk that docket.

Jesse Thorn: Here's a case from Alexandra. “My husband, Josh, calls eggs ‘hot ovum’ constantly. It's disgusting. I also worry this will interfere with the nutritional needs of our son, whom we are raising to be vegetarian. It's hard to find sources of protein that a one-year-old will eat regularly. Even our sister-in-law says she now can't see eggs without thinking ‘hot ovum’. Make Josh stop.”

(John groans.)

A nation of vegetarians just became vegan just from me saying that twice.

John Hodgman: *(Laughs.)* Yeah. I wonder how I'm going to rule on this one. Here's the thing. This reminds me of my very dear friend, Amy Radford, whom I've known since high school. Hi, Amy. Listener to this podcast, lives out there in Seattle, hope to see her in Seattle in January. Amy Radford has said two things—many things that have stuck with me, but two that I think about probably once a week.

One is when she's telling a story of when she was working on a restaurant on the South Shore or North Shore of Massachusetts. And the manager came out one day and said to all the employees, *(leaning into a Boston accent)* “Alright, if anyone asks you if we use real butter, the answer's no. What we use is called Swirl. It's a butter substitute, and it's goddamn delicious.”

(Jesse laughs.)

Best Boston accent I could do, even having grown up there. And then the other thing Amy said was a much more personal cri de coeur, as they say in la belle France. She said something—we were having breakfast at a diner or something. She goes, “All I want in life is an egg heated to perfection. Is that so wrong?”

(They laugh.)

That's my favorite food is an egg heated to perfection. Instead, we got hot ovum, H-O-T O-V-U-M, turn disgusting up to 10. That's my riff on a very famous song of the summer, “Hot to Go” by Chappell Roan.

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Um. Yeah, this is gross. Wouldn't you say, Jesse, hot ovum? First of all, it's wrong. If you go to our friends at the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, who are right about everything except the fact that a hot dog is not a sandwich—unless you're talking about one single egg heated to perfection, what you're talking about is hot ova, not hot ovum. Hot ova. Hot ova. But either way, that's not less disgusting.

Here's what I have to say about this. I mean, it's gross. Right, Jesse?

Jesse Thorn: It's profoundly gross. It's really disgusting.

John Hodgman: And the thing is, though, that Alexandra pulls a maneuver here. It's just—it's simply gross. That's all you had to say. Hot ovum, it's gross. Tell him to stop. But Alexandra pulls a maneuver here that I'd like to highlight. This is a maneuver that litigants sometimes use that I typically do not like, which is the “think of the children” argument. Like when the litigant goes, “I'm worried that if my partner keeps spreading this slander, our child

will grow up thinking a hot dog is a sandwich!” Or whatever it is that they're upset about their partner saying or whatever joke.

And I don't like dragging the kids into it. You know? Your disgust or distaste is enough for the most part. And in this case, your one-year-old is not likely to be grossed out by hot ova in any form, unless you or someone else demonstrates how much it grosses you out. Then they'll mirror your reaction to your disgusting husband, Josh. They'll just grow up saying hot ova like it's normal. Like, “I'd like two hot ova over easy, please.” And then there'll be shunned by everyone and a pariah in their community. But that's for later. That's not for now.

But you're right. You're not wrong, Alexandra, in this case, to think of the children. Because you are, as you say, raising a vegetarian. And that takes a measure of some responsibility. I mean, it's very healthy for kids to be raised vegetarian, but I trust—obviously, you're consulting with your pediatrician to make sure that your kid is getting all of the protein and iron and B12 that's not always easy to source in a vegetarian diet. And I'm sure you're doing that. And eggs, of course, are not a form of protein that you want to turn your nose up at or get your child to turn your nose up at.

So, yeah, I agree. There's no need for you to be grossed out in your own life. And I think Josh needs to stop saying hot ovum or hot ova. From now on, just say, “Hey, look at those eggs heated to perfection.” My favorite food, I would say, Jesse Thorn. You know what my favorite food is? Scrambled eggs, probably. Egg sandwiches the most.

Jesse Thorn: Eggs are the subject of one of my favorite children's books of all time, *Chickens Aren't the Only Ones* by Ruth Heller. Have you ever read that one?

John Hodgman: No, is it a sequel to *Everyone Poops*?

Jesse Thorn: No, it's way better than *Everyone Poops*. Sorry, *Everyone Poops*; you're cute and everything.

John Hodgman: Right. And you're telling the truth.

Jesse Thorn: *Chickens Aren't the Only Ones* is an awesome rhyming book with wonderful illustrations about all the different animals that lay eggs. You know, chickens lay the eggs you buy, the eggs you boil, or fry. Well, that's all there is in the preview on Google.

John Hodgman: (*Laughs.*) I'm sold already! I love it. What's the strangest egg you've ever eaten? I mean, I've had a duck egg, I'm pretty sure. I've probably had a goose egg.

Jesse Thorn: I would love to even eat an ostrich egg. Have you ever had like a sea urchin egg or something?

John Hodgman: Well, I mean—I don't know. I've had caviar, right? So, that's a bunch of different little eggs. That's true. I hadn't thought about that.

Jesse Thorn: I've had caviar. I didn't love it.

John Hodgman: I'm talking about shelled eggs, though. I mean, they used to sell at the Whole Foods in western Massachusetts, they used to sell emu eggs. Which are about—they're about as large as ostrich eggs, maybe a little smaller, but they're a deep like teal color. They're otherworldly. And I said, "What do you use these for?"

And he said—and the guy at the store said, "Party omelet."

(Jesse chortles.)

'Cause they're so big!

Jesse Thorn: Yeah, sure!

John Hodgman: You're making a lot. Look, you know, each one is like a half a dozen eggs in itself. Party omelet.

Jesse Thorn: You know what kind of egg I'd like to eat? Dinosaur egg.

John Hodgman: No, don't eat a dinosaur egg, Jesse!

Jesse Thorn: I want to eat the dinosaur eggs. Otherwise these dinosaurs are going to get loose. They're going to get off the island.

John Hodgman: That's true. Nature does find a way.

Jesse Thorn: If I don't eat those dinosaur eggs now.

John Hodgman: What if that were a plot line in *Jurassic World* or whatever? This guy just goes like, "I'm just gonna eat all the eggs. Simple. Problem solved."

Jesse Thorn: That's Jeff Goldblum in *Jurassic Park 2*. That's like the big difference between—you know, people are always complaining about how his character turns into an action hero in *Jurassic Park 2*?

John Hodgman: In *The Lost World: Jurassic Park Again* or whatever.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah, which is a dope movie by the way. I watched that recently. It's a pretty good movie. Very exciting.

John Hodgman: Yeah, they're all good. Yeah.

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Jesse Thorn: The big difference is he's he all of a sudden he knows how to like use a gun or whatever, and then also he's constantly poking holes in dinosaur eggs and sucking out the inside.

(John cackles.)

Like, he's gonna make dinosaur pysanky.

John Hodgman: I'd watch Jeff Goldblum making eggs all day long, give him another show.

Jesse Thorn: Pysanky is the highest calling of egg by the way. Sorry, omelet.

John Hodgman: What's pysanky?

Jesse Thorn: It's a Ukrainian egg art.

John Hodgman: Oh, sure. Okay. I got you. Very intricate, beautifully decorated eggs.

Jesse Thorn: Those rule.

John Hodgman: And you blow out the—like, you put a hole in it, and you blow out the insides?

Jesse Thorn: Or if you're Jeff Goldblum, you suck it out and swallow it down.

John Hodgman: That's right, nature. So, yeah, Josh, I know it gives you a little chuckle to call these eggs hot ovum, but stop grossing out your family, your wife, your sister-in-law, and eventually your own child, and just call them what they are: eggs heated to perfection.

(Bangs his gavel twice.) That's the sound of a real-life gavel! I just reached behind me and I gaveled it, Jesse.

Jesse Thorn: Alright, here's a case from Nathaniel in Bel Air, Maryland. "This one's for Jesse."

(John "whoa"s.)

John, that's me. That's me, John!

John Hodgman: Well, we got a hot docket coming at ya!

Jesse Thorn: "My dispute is with menswear because it's boring."

(John "wow"s.)

“My brother is getting married in October. The invite calls for sport coat or blazer. I don't know what to wear. This is further complicated by being genderqueer. I want to look queer AF, but well put together. My ideal ruling is that Jesse admits that menswear is boring, and men should express themselves using more colors. Input on the outfit for the wedding would also be welcome.”

John Hodgman: (*Chuckles.*) Yeah. Yeah. Well, I mean, you have to admit, Jesse, that menswear is boring—particularly when you look at the history of menswear. Never have genderqueer, male-identifying people ever put on an interesting suit.

(*Jesse laughs.*)

Or ever had style. You know what I mean? Like, it's impossible.

Jesse Thorn: Hey, John, at the end of the day, if you want to tell—if you want someone to agree with you that menswear is boring, you're going to want to turn to someone who's dedicated roughly 35% of their professional life to menswear.

(*They laugh.*)

John Hodgman: Look, I just want to say: I feel for you, Nathaniel, and I'm sure Jesse does too. It's really hard to figure out what to wear at a wedding, particularly—sport coat or blazer. What do you think about—what's your opinion on that as a suggested dress code for a wedding? Sport coat or blazer.

Jesse Thorn: I think it's totally fine.

John Hodgman: Really?

Jesse Thorn: I think it's relatively clear. I think it is more clear than the sort of business casual or semi-formal, those sorts of things, which tend to result in uncles wearing Tommy Bahama shirts no matter what.

John Hodgman: Uh-huh, uh-huh. Well, can they ever be stopped?

Jesse Thorn: Can uncles be stopped from wearing Tommy Bahama shirts?

John Hodgman: Can uncles be stopped at all? But yeah, right.

Jesse Thorn: Can baby boomers be stopped from complaining about having to put on monkey suits? (*Laughs.*) No, those dudes are insufferable. I'll tell you what. “The invite calls for sport coat or blazer. I don't know what to wear.” Wear a sport coat or a blazer. Done. It's not your wedding. Like, I appreciate and support your identity and your feeling like you want your clothes to express your identity. It's also not your wedding.

One of the central principles of dressing for a wedding is that it is essentially the guest's job to frame the couple being married—or the more-than-couple being married. I don't care about that part. I think your responsibility in dressing for a wedding is not to be distinctive, but in fact, to some extent it is the opposite. It is to show in your dress that you are a member of the community that is supporting the couple who are being married. It is—

John Hodgman: That's a good point.

Jesse Thorn: A wedding is fundamentally an expression of, if not conformity, then at least belonging. That's why there are dress codes at weddings. I think if this were a wedding where the expectation was that everyone wears the wildest thing they can think of—which there are many weddings—then go to town. It's not like—I don't feel that there only has to be one type of wedding. And you know, I'm not into bride- or groomzillas either.

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But I do think that part of what the wedding is about is expressing through ceremony and aesthetics, a coherent community that is in support and celebration of the people being married.

John Hodgman: Mm-hm! Right. I mean, that's why you don't want to wear a white dress to a wedding. You don't—you know, because you might accidentally get married.

(Jesse chuckles.)

You don't want to draw attention from the couple who are celebrating their love. You want to celebrate their love as a supporting character, for sure. But that doesn't mean that Nathaniel can't look great, right?

(Jesse agrees.)

I mean, it's not at all a crime to look great.

Jesse Thorn: No, of course not. And you know, I don't know what Nathaniel's ordinary gender expression is or what the social expectations for Nathaniel's gender expression are in their community. And like, certainly within those bounds, there's plenty of opportunity to be genderqueer. But I think what's really important is to remember that it's more about expressing your membership in this community of people that love the people who are being married than it is about your individual expression, right?

So, if you are going to express your genderqueerness in a community where that will be really distinctive, I would say just think about what is the way to do that that feels true to you, that does not feel like a distraction from everything else. And ask yourself what kinds of choices can feel good and suitable to me, that also feel like they won't simply be a shift in focus of the wedding from the people who are getting married to me.

John Hodgman: Now, here's something in Nathaniel's favor, which is that it is called for sport coat or blazer. I think there's a lot—that gives the person a lot of leeway to—well, I mean a sport coat or a blazer is a little less formal than a suit, right? And introduces the possibility of exactly what Nathaniel is hoping for: a little bit more color, right? Because aren't blazers typically nontraditional colors?

Jesse Thorn: Sport coats and blazers. Well, blazers—you know, the classic blazer is going to be navy blue. But you know, sport coats are often very boldly patterned. You know, I don't know like the rest of—I don't know if this is a summer wedding outdoors or a winter wedding in a meat locker.

(They chuckle.)

Or like, you know, whether this is Palm Beach or Boston, Massachusetts. You know what I mean? Culturally speaking. I would say that it's very possible, for example, that a men's skirt suit, or a masc women's suit would both be appropriate. Like, it really depends on cultural context that is difficult to convey in a four-sentence email from Nathaniel. But I think Nathaniel will have a better sense of that than I.

Like, ultimately—you know, we get a lot of emails that put this on over the years about “what should I wear to this wedding,” And there is a certain extent to which you really just have to read the room, right? Like, you know the people who are getting married. You know—like, look, my best friend Pete got married last year in New Orleans.

John Hodgman: Congratulations, Pete.

Jesse Thorn: Pete is a professional musician. All his, you know, friends and acquaintances—and his wife is a professional costume designer. All their friends and acquaintances work in creative fields in New Orleans and the Bay Area. You know, many of them are in makeup and costume, many of them are professional musicians themselves. And they're really—it would be very difficult to find an outfit that would distract from the couple in that context.
(Laughs.)

Like, if one of the guests showed up in that full-on Bjork swan suit, like probably that would have been fine at that particular wedding.

(They laugh.)

The venue happened to have a lot of taxidermied animals, and they might have had a drink set down on them. But other than that, I think it would have been fine, like culturally speaking.

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So, I think really it's a matter of—like, all dress is communication between you and the outside world about how you are, what you are, and how you fit into that world. Right? And sometimes expressing our individuality is paramount, and sometimes our expression of

membership in a community is paramount. Right? And indeed, by saying they want to look queer AF, they're talking about expressing membership in a community.

But at a wedding in particular, your goal is to express your membership in this community of people who are supporting the people who are getting married. And that's—you know, that's also true in other contexts, like funerals, right? Like, the reason that we all dress in a certain way at a funeral—which is to say we all dress monochromatically, typically in black—is not because black is like a magical color that, you know, magically supports sadness. It's because that is a cultural expectation that allows us all to know if we wear black, we are expressing through our clothes that we are part of this group of mourners who are honoring those closest to the person who has passed away, and also honoring the person who's passed away, right?

And so, for a wedding, your job is similar. It's a different type of event, and many weddings don't require the most conservative forms of dress. But your first and foremost job is to respect the needs of that community and basically behave in a way that is supportive of the people who are getting married.

John Hodgman: I think that Nathaniel can find a way to look amazing.

(Jesse agrees.)

I think Nathaniel can find a way to look queer AF that does not itself distract from the excitement of the day for the couple who are getting married. And I would definitely say that menswear is not boring. At all, not even a little bit. And I wonder if there's some resources that you could point to—whether it's a book, or a look book, or a catalog, or a brand—that might provide Nathaniel some guidance in putting together a look that can be, you know, individually stylish without taking away from the day.

Jesse Thorn: Well, I think that aesthetically—I mean, Nathaniel's name is Nathaniel, so I'm just gonna assume that they're masc identified and looking to express some femininity in their masculinity. Sorry if that's not a correct assumption, Nathaniel.

John Hodgman: We have he/him on the record for pronouns for Nathaniel, so if that's still active, we can—I think that's a relatively safe assumption. And if we're wrong, then we apologize.

Jesse Thorn: I think a great example of this is the looks that Tom Brown has created over the years that involve skirts. And Tom Brown has also created some looks that have some other wonderful stuff, like three-legged suits. He's made some really good three-legged suits.
(Laughs.)

John Hodgman: Sold! Three-legged suit. Got it.

Jesse Thorn: But you know, Tom Brown is a designer whose legacy is sort of twofold. One is creating the—or at least refining and popularizing the silhouette that was most popular. It sort of peaked in popularity 10 years ago, which is to say sort of a shorter coat, thin, short pants—you know, pants that sort of end at the ankle, no break. And narrow lapels. Kind of an

exaggerated riff on a 1960s Ivy League style. You know, sort of looks a little bit like—if you're not familiar with Tom Brown, looks a little bit like what Pee-Wee Herman wears, right?

(They chuckle and John agrees.)

In his suit. And that look is essentially like a way of thinking about or describing the most conservative values of menswear in a new way, right? It's not a dramatic transformation. It's really just shrinking the proportions a little bit. But it has a completely different effect while remaining, essentially, a gray flannel suit, right? One of the things that Tom Brown has done is made really beautiful suits with skirts for men.

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For men's bodies. Or you know, more typical men's bodies. And that aesthetic is one that, you know, in most places—there's certainly there's weddings you might go to where just a bunch of people might flip out because a dude's wearing a skirt, but on the scale of a dude's wearing a skirt—if that kind of genderqueer expression is really important to you, that's something that's going to be really tasteful and beautiful. And also, in its own way, not like loud in a way that says, “Look at me, look at me, look at me, rather than look at the people on the dais.”

And I think that is an example of an expression. Like, I would say if I was going to wear specifically femme-coded clothing—as someone who's, you know, assigned male at birth, using he/him pronouns and stuff, which is what we know about Nathaniel—like, I would think about like what are the ways to do that while leaving everything else on the conservative side, so that this point of difference doesn't overwhelm everything else. You know what I mean? It's not 10,000 points of difference, so that it can still feel respectful to the community expectations there while feeling, again, true to themselves.

John Hodgman: Yeah. You don't want to—your vibe should not be like, “Haha, I tricked you. I'm wearing a sport coat, but look at me.” You know, your vibe, Nathaniel should be, “I look incredible.” And you'll know it when you wear it. And obviously, Tom, you may not want a skirted suit. And Tom Brown is a pretty high price tag for most of us.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah, no, I'm not suggesting that you have to wear the Tom Brown version of this. *(Laughs.)* Just in terms of lookbooks you could look at.

John Hodgman: Yeah, no, I'm looking at Tom Brown's website now, under the sport jacket—sport coat and tailoring section. And there's some—you know, there's some incredible looks in here that might guide you when you're maybe going through eBay or the Put This On Shop or whatever, trying to find a vintage piece that you love or a less expensive suit that you love. But in terms of fitting and styling, this is a good place to start. And certainly none of it is boring.

And you know, I'm sorry, Nathaniel. I think Jesse has been very considerate in not bringing the gavel down on you. But your premise is incorrect. I'm going to bring it down. Menswear

is not boring. It is a wonderful way to express yourself, as you will see when you look as queer AF and as great AF as you are going to when you get to this wedding. And congratulations to your brother. This is the sound of a gavel.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: Let's take a quick break to hear from this week's partners. We'll be back with more cases to clear from the docket on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: Welcome back to the Judge John Hodgman podcast. We're clearing the docket, and we've got something here from Selly. "My girlfriend, Amber, is obsessed with making me eat onions."

(They snicker.)

We're not here to kink shame. "She puts them on everything. Burgers, fish, pizza. Amber says that onion always enhances the flavor. I despise onions. I'm never going to like them, no matter how many times Amber puts them on the food. Adding crunchy, spicy water to my meal is the opposite of enticing. Please, judge, allow me to shut down all attempts to add onion to my palate."

John Hodgman: *(Laughs.)* Spicy, crunchy water. That's a good word painting, Selly. Thank you. And it does make. Onions sound a little gross. Even to me, a person who loves onions! Love them! In fact, if there's a choice—and I know that they're gonna be good and not bad—I'll choose onion rings over French fries every day.

(Jesse agrees.)

Like, a bad onion ring—what kind of onion ring do you like, Jesse? Thick or thin?

Jesse Thorn: I probably—I like all kinds of onion ring. I probably want a thinner one. I do—you know what I really love? I really love like onion strings. Those are really good.

John Hodgman: Yeaah! I love those too.

Jesse Thorn: But I like—I love all kinds. I love like a puffy, sort of tempura one. I honestly even like, you know, the kind of frozen garbage onion rings you'd get at a fast-food store or at the, you know, concession stand at the Little League Stadium.

John Hodgman: I was gonna say the one thing that I don't like is when you have a thick onion ring, and you bite into it, and the whole onion comes out of the batter like a slimy worm.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah, that's too oniony.

John Hodgman: And yet, even then I don't dislike it. Because then I get to have the onion.

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That spicy, crunchy water. And I get a dessert, which is the batter. And speaking of slimy worms, by the way—on the day we're recording, apparently it's the birthday of Slimey the Worm on *Sesame Street*.

Jesse Thorn: Happy birthday, Slimey.

John Hodgman: September 19th is the day we're recording. It's International Happy Birthday Slimey Day. Do you know—I had to look it up. Do you know what Slimey's parents are named?

Jesse Thorn: No, I don't!

John Hodgman: Dusty and Eartha. Eartha.

Jesse Thorn: Eartha is a good one.

John Hodgman: Pretty brilliant. Dusty? Honestly, B+ *Sesame Street*.

Jesse Thorn: Eartha, A+.

John Hodgman: Eartha, A++. As a name for a worm?! Come on!

Jesse Thorn: They got that name out of their Eartha-kit.

John Hodgman: Yeah. But that said, I mean, some people really do find onions to be gross. And obviously, *Judge John Hodgman*, as a settled law, is people like what they like. And there is a corollary: some people hate onions. I don't know. Hey, Jennifer Marmor and Jesse Thorn, I want to ask you this question. Selly gave three cases of onion contamination here: burgers, fish, pizza. Would you—do you enjoy onions on a burger? Either of you? Both of you?

(They confirm.)

Like, you have to have one, or it's fine if there is one?

Jesse Thorn: I strongly prefer—on a burger? Well, I actually can't eat a lot of raw onions, 'cause it's a migraine trigger. But I do like cooked onions on my burger, grilled or...

John Hodgman: You know, caramelized. A little bit.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah, I mean if they're fully caramelized, that's a total dream. But the sort of like fake version of caramelized, just griddled for a while.

Jennifer Marmor: I like a grilled onion on my burger. Raw onion is unnecessary, but it's a welcomed addition.

John Hodgman: I may have posted about this on social media. Someone directed me to my hero, Jacques Pépin, the chef—did a demo on his YouTube channel of James Beard's favorite sandwich. It was just a raw onion sandwich.

Jennifer Marmor: Excuse me?

John Hodgman: A raw—yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jesse Thorn: What else is on the sandwich?

John Hodgman: And it's not even—I mean, this is the thing that maybe Amber doesn't understand, Selly, is that there are a lot of different kinds of onion. Or maybe Selly, you need to get into some like different form factors for onion—because red onion is different than white onion, or Spanish onion, and then Vidalia onion is quite sweet, and then you caramelize it, etc., etc.

James Beard, according to Jacques Pépin, when he had people over, he would make them this sandwich. He would take spongy white bread, cut it out into circles, right? Like, with a glass or a cookie cutter, right? And then thinly cut raw onion to fill up that circle. But before you put the onion between the two pieces of bread, you coat—slather both sides with mayonnaise.

Jennifer Marmor: *(Chuckling on a whisper.)* Oh god.

John Hodgman: Then you put the onion in. Hang on. Hang on. Then—now you have a disc, right? Which is bread, mayonnaise, onion, mayonnaise, bread, right? That's your sandwich. And around the periphery, slather more mayonnaise around the side, so you can dip that in chives.

(Jennifer whispers another "oh my god".)

So, you dust the extra with more onion! *(Whispered.)* I want to try this sandwich so bad.

I'll eat onions all day long. I love them raw. I love them raw on a burger. What about on a pizza? I'm going to say right now, best pizza that there is: jalapeno and red onion and pepperoni.

(Jennifer "ooh"s.)

Jesse Thorn: Wow. Incredible! I don't care if they're on a pizza. I'd eat them on a pizza. I don't need them on a pizza.

John Hodgman: I can't think of a fish that I would put an onion on though. That's where Amber, girlfriend Amber, is going too far as I'm concerned. That's not for me.

Jesse Thorn: I don't like fish, but one of the only things that holds my marriage together—other than, of course, decades of love—is that my wife also doesn't like fish, so she isn't constantly serving me fish and making me try and like it.

John Hodgman: Yeah, I mean, here's the thing. I'm not sold on onions on fish. And you don't have to be either, Selly. And Amber, you don't have to be forcing onions on someone who has an established position, which is: don't like them. If you don't like them, you don't like them! By the way, they're not entirely crowd-pleasers. Like, it's not—like, as much as we all love onions, they're a real flavor. And if you don't like them, you don't like them.

But here's another possibility, Selly. Maybe you should cook for yourself! I mean, there is settled law in *Judge John Hodgman* that the person who does the work, you know, gets to decide. Whether it's if you're driving, you get to pick the music. If you're loading the dishwasher, you're doing it correctly. You're doing it the way you want to do it. And I would imagine that if Amber is cooking and cooking and cooking, and your complaint is, (*petulantly*) “I don't like the onions,” then that puts you in a little bit of a whine category, Selly. But perhaps you already cook for yourself and for Amber all the time. It's 50/50. I don't mean to make presumptions here.

[00:35:00]

But regardless, I would say definitely, Amber, knock it off with the onions. You've tried out everything; you've even tried putting the onions on fish, and Selly is not buying the onion you're selling. So, stop it.

Jesse Thorn: I have to say, my first reaction to this, as someone—I do do the cooking in my household. And you know, I cook in a largely American, Anglo-Franco sort of continuum. You know, there's not a huge number of surprises in my food. It would be hard to exclude onions from savory foods. Like, onions are a base ingredient of almost all savory foods. (*Chuckles.*)

Jennifer Marmor: It's a struggle. It's a struggle.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah, it's how you build the flavor of like any broth, (*laughing*) almost all the sauces. Like, if you're including all the forms of onions—you know, shallots and green onions and chives.

John Hodgman: That's a form. Form. Form.

Jesse Thorn: And all these other alliums.

John Hodgman: Alliums for life.

Jesse Thorn: Like, that's truly probably 75+ percent of the things that you would cook that are savory. Any meat dishes or—I mean...

Jennifer Marmor: It's hard, but it's not impossible. My husband, Shane, really hates onion.

(John and Jesse “oh!” in surprise.)

And like it's a real thing. And we've been together for going on 12 years, and I've found ways to figure out certain dishes. And there are certain things like if they're cooked in a certain way, he can handle it. But I use less than what the recipe calls for.

John Hodgman: Is it a flavor thing or a texture thing or both?

Jennifer Marmor: A flavor thing, 100%.

Jesse Thorn: So, how does he—what is an example of, you know, if you're making—? Like, I'm like—well, if you're making broth. *(Laughs.)*

Jennifer Marmor: Well, you know, we're not big soupy people. So, that I just—

John Hodgman: Yeah, they're not soupy people, Jesse.

Jesse Thorn: But I mean, the broth is the basis of every sauce!

Jennifer Marmor: I know. Well, like I'll use a Kitchen Basics broth. And I've yet to hear a complaint on that, you know. And if I'm making like—

John Hodgman: Jennifer and Shane are not brothy, but they definitely are saucy.

(They laugh.)

Wouldn't you—I mean, right?

(Jennifer agrees.)

By the way, Kitchen Basics is the best—is pretty much the best broth in the biz, though I'm very much into a Better than Bullion mode. That little jar.

Jennifer Marmor: Oh yeah, that comes in the little jar. Yeah, I use that a lot too.

John Hodgman: Yeah, I'm enjoying all that stuff.

Jennifer Marmor: Yeah, because it can stay in the refrigerator, and then I don't have to like make sure I use the entire container of broth on one—

Jesse Thorn: Exactly. Guys, I hate to big-time you here, but I'm all about having a gallon Ziploc bag in my freezer and putting those trimmings in there.

(Jennifer sighs.)

John Hodgman: You love a trims. You love to trims.

Jesse Thorn: I got frozen homemade chicken stock in my freezer at all times.

Jennifer Marmor: You know, I kept that Ziploc baggie of trimmings with all the intentions to make that into a stock. Never did it.

Jesse Thorn: Never did it, huh?

Jennifer Marmor: And then it was just taking up space, and I need to meet myself where I am.

Jesse Thorn: I got an ice cube tray full of stock right now in my freezer.

Jennifer Marmor: *(Chuckling.)* Wow! Aspiration.

John Hodgman: Yeah. Just drop in a cube of stock. Yeah. I mean, look, I'm not sure whether Selly is averse to all flavor of onion. Selly says that Amber puts onions on everything. So, it sounds like maybe it's raw or sauteed onions, and there might be a texture issue there. But either way, whether it is a sensitivity or an aversion or—I hope not an allergy—you know, you know, I couldn't live without my alliums. I'm alliums all day long.

But you don't have to foist onions on your partner if you love them. Sorry about that, Amber. This is the sound of a gavel on you now. *(Bangs his gavel three times.)*

Jesse Thorn: Here's something from Michelle in Pittsburgh. “My sister made a cheesecake for her husband in a heart-shaped pan. The cheesecake cooled in our parents’ fridge. After it's set, she noticed a crescent-shaped crack in the middle of the cheesecake's surface. To this day, she accuses me of taking a spoon to the cake and stealing a sample. I am completely innocent. Please order my family to stop giving me the sarcastic, ‘Yeah, sure, we believe you,’ look whenever it comes up.”

John Hodgman: *(Laughs.)* Alright, I don't have a sweet tooth, but I do enjoy a savory cake, such as cheesecake.

Jesse Thorn: Wow!

John Hodgman: I'm on the record right now. Particularly if it's got onions on it. No, that's not true. By the way, corollary ruling with regard to the onions—

[00:40:00]

I love onions a lot, but if you're on a road trip, you are not allowed to have Funyuns. You can't open a bag of Funyuns in a car, just not—it's not okay! And you know, honestly? You can't open a bag of beef jerky unless there is 100% consent from everybody.

Jesse Thorn: You got some beef jerky on our tour at that gas station.

(John confirms.)

It was veteran-owned. That's like its pitch.

John Hodgman: You know, Jennifer Marmor enjoyed that beef jerky in the back of the car. Did it stink it up real bad?

Jennifer Marmor: No, it didn't.

John Hodgman: Jesse, were you okay?

Jesse Thorn: It was just fine. It reminded me of the wings I eat at the Maryland shore, I believe is what it advertised on the bag.

John Hodgman: *(Giggles.)* I think it was called the feel—like, it said “based on our famous wing recipe.” And then in quotation marks, it said like “the feel of the shore” or “the smell of the shore”? It was something.

Alright, so you know the number one ingredient on the ingredient list was of course beef. You know what the number two ingredient was, Jesse? Jennifer Marmor and I checked it out.

Jesse Thorn: I mean, it wasn't salt?

John Hodgman: No. Hit them with it, Jennifer Marmor.

Jennifer Marmor: Old Bay Bloody Mary mix.

John Hodgman: Old Bay Bloody Mary mix!

Jesse Thorn: Wild!

John Hodgman: Which I didn't know existed. Old Bay seasoning, of course, is that combination of cayenne pepper and I think—I mean, I don't know what else is in Old Bay.

Jennifer Marmor: I think celery salt's in there.

John Hodgman: Celery salt. That's what I was looking for in my brain. Celery salt. Very heavy celery salt. Probably some onion powder in there too, I betcha. Very specific flavor

from the old Chesapeake Bay. And Jennifer Marmor and I—we were in Maryland, so Jennifer Marmor, you scored a bag full of the Utz crab chip, right?

Jennifer Marmor: You know I did.

John Hodgman: Yeah. And did I eat a lot more than I should have of those?

Jennifer Marmor: No. You ate a perfect amount.

John Hodgman: Well, I don't know. It was your bag of chips.

Jennifer Marmor: I was happy to share. *(Laughs.)*

John Hodgman: Let me tell you something. Then we went in—speaking of this, it was on the way to Pittsburgh. We were driving through Maryland on the way to Pittsburgh. Once we landed in Pittsburgh to do the—you went into to advance the show. I went back to the hotel for a while. I came back. I had to get my cord out of the car. That open bag of Old Bay potato chips were quite hot in the sun, having baked in the sun for a night or two. Quite hot!

Jennifer Marmor: *(Laughing.)* I didn't know that. I ate the rest of them after that show.

John Hodgman: But did I have a handful of hot Old Bay potato chips? Yes, I did!

Jesse Thorn: Fresh out of the air fryer that was our rented minivan.

Jennifer Marmor: I bet that enhanced the flavor.

John Hodgman: It was great. It was great. Well, heat gets those molecules moving.

Anyway, that beef jerky did—it had a mix. The second thing on the ingredient list was Old Bay Bloody Mary mix. That was too sweet for me. I don't like sweet jerky. That was too sweet for me. But I do love sweet, sweet cheesecake.

And people have written in probably multiple times a year for every year that we've done this podcast. Which is multiple years! And they're always like, "I know a hot dog isn't a sandwich. Is a cheesecake—but cheesecake is really a pie." Nope, it's a cake. It's totally a cake. I mean, it has a crust, which is unusual for a cake, I'll grant you. But it is served—that crust—in classic cheesecake style, that crust is just on the bottom. Something to give shape to what is, truthfully, it's a set custard according to Serious Eats. A set custard.

And the sides are exposed, you know, so that it's like a cake. Like, literally a cake of something. It's like a cake of cream cheesy goodness, and those sides are nude and exposed—unless you want to slather them with mayonnaise and rub them in chives, which you're allowed to do, I suppose. Give it a try.

But here's the thing, I was consulting Serious Eats about this, because I have a theory about the mystery of the heart shaped pan. Jesse Thorn, Michelle in Pittsburgh—hell with the lid off—says she didn't take a bite of the cheesecake. My question to you is: do you have a theory as to who did?

Jesse Thorn: You're asking me who stole the cookies from the cookie jar? It was not me!

John Hodgman: Then who?

Jesse Thorn: I think—

John Hodgman: I think you're on it. I think you have solved the crime.

Jesse Thorn: I think that it's possible that this was a naturally occurring rift.

John Hodgman: Ab-so-lutely! And all of the bakers in our audience have been screaming this at their phones and their car stereo systems, wherever they get their podcasts. Because this happens with cheesecakes all the time! I mean, Michelle described a crescent-shaped crack. The surface of cheesecakes crack all the time. It's not what you want, necessarily—unless apparently you're making a Basque cheesecake. Did you ever hear that?

[00:45:00]

A Basque cheesecake—like Basque, like the region of Spain.

Jesse Thorn: No, but do you know about Basque cuisine that is not Basque? It's actually a type of Central California cuisine. Sometime when we do a big Fresno show, I'll take you.

John Hodgman: It's not Basque cuisine, but it's called Basque cuisine?

Jesse Thorn: It has a relationship to Basque, like it was developed by Basque people, you know, 100 years ago.

John Hodgman: Okay. I got you.

Jesse Thorn: But it doesn't have that much to do with it. It's like a big, family-style meal. There's a lot of spaghetti involved. Honestly, it's really good. There's sort of like Madeira wine. Marinated lamb is central to it. It's pretty—there's like a bunch of “Basque” restaurants, quote/unquote, in Central California, where they just—you just give them \$20 a person, and they bring you an infinite volume of food. (*Chuckles*). And it's really great.

John Hodgman: By the way—that sounds amazing. And by the way, when I said that Basque is a region of Spain, I might get in trouble with some Basque people. It's an autonomous region of Europe, alright? I apologize for that. But the point is Basque cheesecake? It's supposed to be baked at high heat and kind of get like burned and crusty. And that high heat cracks the surface of the cheesecake on the top. But if you don't want the

cheesecake to crack, according to Serious Eats, what you want—the crack is caused by overbaking, which dries the cheesecake out, or by overmixing. If you overmix the cheesecake, the custard that is going to get set by the baking, you get air bubbles in there. And that causes cracking as well.

So, you just want to fold it lightly. And you may want to cook it in a bain-marie, which is French for Marie in a bath, or a water bath. And that should help you keep that cool, glossy topcoat upon your cheesecake. But Michelle, I believe that you are absolutely innocent. I suspect that what happened was your sister did a bad job. I mean, so nice that she made that heart-shaped cheesecake for her husband. Very nice. But she did a bad job. It cracked while cooling in the fridge. And she got upset about it, and she blamed you, and the whole family has to stop making that sarcastic face. I'm gonna gavel on that.

(Three gavel bangs.)

Jesse Thorn: You know how you can tell that it wasn't me that ate that piece of the cheesecake? Don't like cheesecake. It's gross to me.

John Hodgman: Wow! Texture?

Jesse Thorn: I mean, I'd eat it if you served it to me. It's not like a punishment food. But I would never choose it. Don't like sweet cheese!

Let's take a quick break. When we come back, we've got a case involving a video of a cat. Finally.

John Hodgman: Oh! Here we go!

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: Judge John Hodgman, what would you say is your favorite experience you've had so far on the *Judge John Hodgman* Road Court Tour? What is the favorite thing you have seen, food you have eaten?

John Hodgman: Well, the favorite food that I ate was the scrapple that I ate with you at the Reading Terminal Market in Philadelphia the morning after our incredible Philadelphia show.

Jesse Thorn: We had a devastating ten hours of food consumption where, immediately after the show concluded—it was like 11:30 at night in downtown Philadelphia. We're walking back to the hotel, carrying our stuff from the venue. John says to me, *(chuckles)* “Hey, Jesse, you hungry?”

(John giggles.)

And I had eaten a kale salad for dinner, so I was very hungry. I said, yes. And John said, “Great.” And he like pointed ahead towards the freeway. (*Laughs.*)

John Hodgman: I just found us a place where we could get some late-night Philly cheesesteaks!

(*Jesse “oh boy”s.*)

And then we took them separately back to our separate rooms. And I just—I enjoyed my cheesesteak while watching Roy Wood Jr. promote his new show, *Have I Got News for You* on CNN, where you might see your local podcast judge on there sometime soon, maybe.

Jesse Thorn: I'll tell you what. I destroyed that cheesesteak. I was not expecting to, it was my second dinner. I absolutely destroyed the entire thing. I got it with whiz. The only way to do it. You got American, you chickened out.

John Hodgman: I like American cheese. I don't care for the—I don't like what whiz.

Jesse Thorn: So, I ate the—I housed it. I absolutely housed it. Went to bed, woke up, was like, “I better eat some scrapple now!” (*Laughs.*) I need some corn dust in my stomach to absorb all that whiz.

John Hodgman: I was in my pajamas in my bed.

[00:50:00]

I'd barely opened my eyes when I got a text from you saying, “I'm at the counter, at the Amish diner in the Reading Terminal market, about to eat some scrapple.” And did I move faster than I ever have in my life? Correct. I got over there.

Jesse Thorn: You flew like you were on rocket skates to sit down next to me. I ate an enormous pancake that was fantastic. Not even a huge pancake. It was a fantastic pancake. And I ate the heck out of some scrapple. Scrapple is really tasty. I really like scrapple. It was the perfect crispy exterior and creamy interior. I think that was my highlight. That like disgusting 12 hours of destroying my body.

John Hodgman: Look, I enjoy punishing my body in the great cities of the world while on tour as much as anybody. But if you had to say my favorite part of the tour, it's the moments that I get to spend on stage with the litigants on stage. And then when people yell out their disputes, and we both have to give them justice from the stage. But just visiting with all the listeners to *Judge John Hodgman*, it's so much fun. Whether it's eating cookies from Eat'n Park on stage that an audience member provided, and they didn't turn out to be poisoned in Pittsburgh; or looking at some truly disgusting globs of frozen cranberry sauce that two best friends had put googly eyes on and had named Bob and Barry.

Jesse Thorn: Two best friends, John, who were upset with us that we thought it was weird that they always have edible googly eyes on hand!

(They chuckle.)

John Hodgman: Or singing about trees with the audience in New York City. I mean, something happens that's different every night on the tour.

Jesse Thorn: I love meeting, John, all the briefcase children who come to the shows.

John Hodgman: Yeah, shoutout to Finn, for sure. Yeah. We had incredible kids in every audience, and they always sit in the same spot in the front row for some reason. It's a little scary. But you know, I had a letter from a listener, Selena, saying, "Thank you for the DC show." And she said, "Although I am a Maximum Fun member,"—thank you very much, Selena—"and a longtime fan of *Judge John Hodgman*, my husband's a new listener. And I appreciated him joining in on the fun, trying to outbid the audience member behind us on the baby Marty painting."

Which I completely forgot about. There was a terrifying painting of one of the litigants as a baby that has a backstory you will not believe. I mean, every show is different, and it's all full of surprises as much to me as anyone else. And it's so much fun to visit with folks across the country who listen to *Judge John Hodgman*, and to meet those who have been introduced to the show for the very first time at one of these live shows. It's a great way to introduce your spouse—who is a whole human being in their own right—or another person in your life to the show.

So, please join us on our remaining road court tour shows, won't you? By going to MaximumFun.org/events. That's where you will find ticket links. For Madison, Wisconsin, St. Paul, Minnesota, Burlington, Vermont, Portland, Maine, Turner's Falls, Massachusetts—about to sell out, by the way—Brookline, Massachusetts—too late, already sold out. Seattle, Portland, Oregon, Los Angeles, San Francisco. Listen, the shows will sell out. So, I really am asking you, if you've been putting it off, go over to MaximumFun.org/events, and get your tickets now.

Jesse Thorn: I'm excited to hit Vancouver, British Columbia! That's our first return to Canada in many years!

John Hodgman: Yeah, we haven't been there for a long time. I'm excited to get your recommendations for how I should destroy my digestion and my sleep by eating after the show, after hours with some local food specialties. So, get over to MaximumFun.org/events. Get your tickets now before they sell out. And of course, get your disputes in for these shows. You know, we had Michael and his daughter Bay, litigants for the show in Pittsburgh. They had missed out; they didn't have tickets for the show. And instead they wrote me saying, "I have this dispute about unicorns with wings."

Jesse Thorn: Yeah. We were like, "Okay, well, great! You're in!"

John Hodgman: Yeah. Guess what? You're in the show! Yeah. That's a good way to get into a show that might be sold out or about to sell out. So, give us your disputes as well. MaximumFun.org/jjho for disputes. And of course, MaximumFun.org/events for tickets.

Jesse Thorn: Let's get back to the show.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: Welcome back to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. Here is a case from Heather in Philadelphia. “Franklin, our Siamese cat, loves delicious water from the fridge in a special dedicated glass.” (*Laughs.*)

Do you think that there's a special dedicated glass because the cat prefers it? Or because they got so many letters when they talked on their podcast about how it might be okay for someone to let the dog lick the plate before it goes into the dishwasher?

John Hodgman: (*Laughs.*) I think that this glass—and by the way, I'm just going to tell everybody, as always, our whole episodes are now available on our YouTube channel, [@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod](https://www.youtube.com/@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod). And is there going to be video of this cat drinking from a dedicated glass?

[00:55:00]

Yes. You will want to get over there to see it. And does the dedicated glass have an etching of a TARDIS on the side? Of course.

Jesse Thorn: Oh my gosh. I see the TARDIS now. I was so focused on this beautiful cat.

John Hodgman: I mean, this cat is gorgeous. This is one of the top cats. You know, top cat—you know what I'm talking about?

Jesse Thorn: This is a real top cat.

John Hodgman: It's a real top cat. (*Singing.*) Da-da-dadada-da, top cat!

Jesse Thorn: If you thought it was a snagglepuss, you're wrong. It's a top cat.

John Hodgman: It's a real top cat. This is a gorgeous looking cat. Alright, let's finish reading the letter, and then we'll talk about this.

Jesse Thorn: “My husband does not approve of cats on the counter. Franklin's fur sister, Ellie, supports him. They had a brother named Theodore, who's no longer with us. Yes, they were named after the Roosevelts.”

John Hodgman: (*Chuckles.*) Okay. Remember how Theodore—Teddy Roosevelt, got drummed out of the Republican Party, so he came back as an independent? Remember what he named his own party?

Jesse Thorn: The Bull Moose Party!

John Hodgman: (*Snickering.*) Bull Moose Party.

Jesse Thorn: Man, I can't even begin to recommend enough that PBS documentary about Theodore Roosevelt.

John Hodgman: Yeah, Teddy Roosevelt, true weirdo. But I'll tell you what, not as weird as cats. Cats are weird. Let's take a look at this video of this cat drinking from this glass.

(*Cat lapping sounds.*)

(*Laughs.*) They're drinking from the glass!

(*Jesse giggles helplessly.*)

I thought I was going to see one cat, now the cats—now the one cat took a break from drinking from the glass and is licking his or her brother.

Jesse Thorn: Aww, look at these kitties! They're such beautiful cats!

John Hodgman: And they're on that counter. Look at them.

Jesse Thorn: They're friends too!

John Hodgman: They're friends with each other, and they're siblings, and they're on the counter. And even—ugh. I mean, the thing about cats is that they are such dignified creatures most of the time. And then they have to go poop in a box while you're—

(*Jesse laughs.*)

You know what I mean? That said, I grew up with a Siamese cat and there's—I mean, of all of the cats, could there be a weirder cat than a purebred Siamese? First of all, these things do not shut up. Maybe when they're drinking from their dedicated glass, they'll be quiet for a while, but the rest of the time is like John Goodman in *True Stories*. (*Singing.*) “Meow, meow, meow, meow. Meow, meow, meow, meow. Meow, meow, meow, meow, meow, meow, meow, meow.”

I'll tell you something right now, Heather in Philadelphia. I feel you, because Lolo, the dumb-dumb cat, which is our cat who is truly dumb—truly not a smart cat. The most incurious cat that I've ever observed. A cliché buster! Dumb. She also will drink out of a human glass, if one is available. And it should be next to a window, so that she can look out the window and

stare into the middle distance out the window while lapping at her water from a human glass. If you put that human glass on the floor, won't drink it. Put that water into a bowl? Will not drink. Human glass on the windowsill? That's where that cat gets the water.

And guess what? You want your cats to be well hydrated. So, sorry about that, husband to Heather in Philadelphia. I know you don't like cats on the counter, and with good reason. They poop in a box, and then they mush their paws around in it. And one of the things that cats do—and fortunately, Lolo the dumb-dumb Cat doesn't do this, and I've talked about it on the podcast multiple times now—is some cats like to pick up things and carry them in their mouths, which is on its own delightful. And then they just carry them from room to room for reasons of their own.

And I put a call out to our listeners: please send me videos of cats carrying things from room to room, be it a stuffed animal or a t-shirt or whatever. And I guess they're probably doing this because they're evolutionarily trained to carry their young around in their mouths or whatever. But I put the call out: please send me videos of cats carrying something from room to room. And only one of you wrote back. And that is listener Rachel, who sent not one, but two videos. And if you want to see them, you got to go over to the YouTube, [@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod](#) right now. But let's take a look at those, Jennifer Marmor. We finally got this video. This cat is named Oreo, I'm told. So, let's take a look.

Clip:

Speaker: (*Whispering.*) I see you. Yesss! I caught you red-handed!

John Hodgman: (*Over the clip.*) Oh, there it is!

Speaker: Oh, is that underwear?! No, it's a shirt! Yes!

John Hodgman: It's a shirt. That voice you hear is listener Rachel, who—according to her emails—has been trying to catch Oreo in the act of moving shirts around her apartment for a long time. And you may have noticed, Jesse, that there was a second cat—whose name I do not know—in this video.

Jesse Thorn: Probably Hydrox.

John Hodgman: Yeah, and if you want any proof that cats are weirder than dogs—yeah, it's probably Hydrox. That'd be awesome if it were true.

[01:00:00]

If you want any proof that cats are weirder than dogs, take a look at this next video, Jesse. This is after Oreo drops the shirt.

Clip:

Speaker: And another one! I think this is just your golden hour.

(The cat peeps.)

That's not as good though. Dang it. *(Inaudible)* take a video. *(Inaudible.)*

Jesse Thorn: *(Over the clip.)* What is he doing?!

John Hodgman: *(Laughs.)* For those of you who can't see, you know, cats do this thing where they make biscuits, they call it. Some people call it. You know, where they knead with their front paws, which is to—I think a learned behavior or evolutionarily learned behavior to stimulate milk production in their moms or some—whatever. Whatever it is, it's just this dumb hobby they have now. And Oreo was not kneading this other cat, but Oreo got severely confused, because he or she put their paws on the other cat as if to knead the other cat, but then started kneading the carpet with their back legs. Look, you gotta see the video. You gotta look at this poor other cat looking at the camera going like, “I bet you're wondering how I got here.”

Anyway, cats are weirder than dogs. And if you think that dogs are weirder than cats, you better get to proving it by sending in videos and your disputes to MaximumFun.org/jjho. I want to see more videos of cats carrying things from room to room, cats having weird hobbies. And if you have dogs doing weird hobbies? I'd like to see that too.

Jesse Thorn: The docket is clear. That's it for another episode of the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. The show was created by Jesse Thorn and John Hodgman. Our video editor is Daniel Speer. The podcast is edited by AJ McKeon. Our producer is Jennifer Marmor. Photos from the show on our Instagram account, at [Instagram.com/judgejohnhodgman](https://www.instagram.com/judgejohnhodgman). We're also on TikTok and YouTube, [@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod](https://www.tiktok.com/@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod). Follow and subscribe to see our episodes and video-only content. John, how do you like the decor in the studio now? We're really pumping up the decor here in the MaxFun studio.

John Hodgman: Yeah, it looks terrific, Jesse! You got that neon gavel back there. You've got that *Judge John Hodgman* live justice poster that was designed by Aaron Draplin. And you've got—looks like some creeping vines even! Creeping vines of justice.

Jesse Thorn: If you're wondering if our video guy, Daniel Speer, is one of these millennials, all you got to do is take a look at this and notice that it looks like a fern bar in 1978 in here.

John Hodgman: *(Laughs.)* It looks great, and it looks highly oxygenated. It's terrific, and I'm so glad that we're able to see each other.

Jesse Thorn: I'm here to meet other older singles.

(John laughs.)

Ugh, I just got divorced, and I don't want to meet women at the disco.

John Hodgman: No, you got to go to the Regal Beagle.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah, but do follow us. If you want to see all that stuff, do follow us on YouTube. And tell a friend! You know, a lot of people—if you're listening to this in audio form, probably you mostly consume podcasts in audio form, and God bless you for it. But you probably have a pal that mostly consumes podcasts in video form. Tell them to check out *Judge John Hodgman* on YouTube. 'Cause it's looking pretty fly these days.

John Hodgman: Yeah, absolutely. And by the way, as we record this, it's nearing the end of September. And by the time you're hearing it, it's going to be even closer to the end of September. And finally, I'm willing to admit it: it's spooky season. It's Halloween time. It's fine for the drugstores to put out candy, finally, even though they've been doing it since August.

That means that we need, as always—once a year, we need your Halloween disputes. What are you giving out to kids this year? Only Whoppers or only Maltesers? Those are your choices. Does your so-called friend want you to trick or treat as the back half of a horse? Or for that matter, are you trying to convince your friend, Jeremy Morrison, that to drag you around on Halloween in a wagon while you sweat to death inside of a green sleeping bag, pretending to be the blob? That was my most inspired Halloween costume of all time. How many 12-foot-tall yard skeletons is enough for your yard? We want the answers. We want the disputes. Send us—

Jesse Thorn: Judge Hodgman, when we were on tour, we drove past some backyards. I mean, I'm talking about—I guess probably we were in rural Pennsylvania, semi-rural Pennsylvania. We drove past some backyards that just had six of those 12-foot Halloween figures in no particular configuration or theme other than Halloween. Just people who like big stuff.

John Hodgman: Yeah! People who like big stuff. We like big stuff, especially big feuds. Give us your Halloween disputes at MaximumFun.org/jjho. And by the way, if you're on your way to our Madison show or our St. Paul show this weekend, send us your disputes for there! MaximumFun.org/jjho, or get your tickets at MaximumFun.org/events.

[01:05:00]

Will I be giving a brand-new Great Lakes beach report? Based on our travel across the Great Lake of Michigan? Absolutely, I will be. Go see us at the show, and see a bunch of stuff that you'll never hear on the podcast ever in your life, because it's all live. And it's all on the road court, MaximumFun.org/events.

Jesse Thorn: 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!