

[00:00:00]

**Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

**Jesse Thorn:** Welcome to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. I'm Bailiff Jesse Thorn. This week, "Knee High Crimes and Misdemeanors". Liana brings the case against her boyfriend, Charlie. Charlie recently moved in with Liana and her three daughters. The adjustment into the household has gone well, except for one thing. Charlie can't stand Liana's system for sock storage. Liana says she and her daughters have been storing their socks just fine until Charlie came along. She wants Charlie to leave her socks alone. 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:** The body looks like a skeleton wrapped tightly in hairless skin, skin the brown of a roasted turkey. It gleams with a glaze of ice that is left un-defrosted to protect it. Black lines on its back and ankles appear to be tattoos. Its mouth is frozen in an expression that displays a few worn, chipped teeth. This mouth, which is roughly 5,300 years old, is perhaps the most spectacular archaeological piehole of the late 20th century.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn, please swear them in.

**Jesse Thorn:** Liana and Charlie, 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 we're on the *Judge John Hodgman* road court tour, he is wearing probably gross cotton socks instead of cool Merino wool socks, like me and our engineer, Matthew Barnhart.

*(They swear.)*

So, they're probably super stinky. Judge Hodgman, you may proceed.

**John Hodgman:** How dare you?

**Jesse Thorn:** Probably! I haven't sniffed them!

**John Hodgman:** Well, you know, maybe we need to make that part of our preshow ritual.

**Jesse Thorn:** Socks sniff?

**John Hodgman:** You will eventually apologize to me.

**Jesse Thorn:** A sniffing circle?

**John Hodgman:** That's exactly right. But look, I wear clean socks every day. But you're absolutely right, the woolen socks, you don't have to change them every day, and probably are more efficient for touring for that reason. We're here to talk about socks. We're here to talk to Charlie and Liana. They're not here to sniff our socks! They're here to answer a simple question. Charlie and Liana, you may be seated for an immediate summary judgment in one of yours favors.

*(Chairs squeak.)*

Can either of you name the piece of culture that I referenced as I entered the courtroom?  
*(Buzzes lips thoughtfully.)* Liana, why don't you go first?

**Liana:** Uhh, I cannot think of an old, old piehole reference. But—

**John Hodgman:** It's not—I added the word piehole!

**Liana:** Oh! *(Chuckles.)* It was a good add.

**John Hodgman:** Yeah, but rest of it was quoted directly... I'm going to give you both a hint here—from a 2003 article in *Smithsonian Magazine*, if that helps.

**Liana:** I'm going to go with it is an archaeological article by an archaeologist.

**John Hodgman:** *(Snorts a laugh.)* Oh, would it be in *Smithsonian Magazine*? Did I give the game away?

**Liana:** From the *Smithsonian Magazine*. The article was in a 2003 edition.

**John Hodgman:** I love the way you play, Liana, but I'm going to say this. One of you has got to name the thing that this article is about, or else we got to hear this case.

**Liana:** Alright. I'm going with woolly mammoth.

**John Hodgman:** Woolly mammoth. We were talking about wool earlier. So, I see there's something there. Woolen socks, woolly mammoth. Alright, Charlie, it's your turn to guess. You have 5,300 years to think about this now. So.

**Charlie:** I think it's an article about a bog man.

**John Hodgman:** It is not an article about a bog man. All guesses are wrong, though neither of you were particularly that wrong. It's an article about an Alps man, not a bog-man.

*(Charlie sighs in defeat.)*

The recovered body of the so-called Ötzi iceman found in the Tyrolean Alps.

**Jesse Thorn:** Classic iceman.

**John Hodgman:** Classic iceman, yeah. Ötzi.

**Charlie:** I've heard of him.

**John Hodgman:** Yeah. About 5,300 years ago, it is speculated that he got into a little bit of a scrape, a little bit of a tussle. He had a—what you call it?—an arrow tip lodged in one of his shoulder blades. Was running away, went hiding in the Tyrolean Alps, fell asleep, and froze to death.

**Charlie:** Poor guy.

**John Hodgman:** Or something bad happened to him, got into an avalanche. Anyway, perfectly preserved as these things go, so long as you don't mind having skin the color of a roasted turkey. Until he was discovered by a couple of hikers in 1991. Now, why am I talking about this Ötzi iceman? Well, because thinking about socks, I went back to revisit one of my favorite things I've ever found. And even though I've been to Toronto many times, it's so magical I refuse to see it in person. Much like the Museum of Jurassic Technology, I prefer it as a thing of the imagination than a thing of reality.

[00:05:00]

I can't help but feel I will be underwhelmed or disappointed on some level should I visit that magical Museum of Jurassic Technology in Los Angeles, or if I should visit the Bata Shoe Museum in Toronto, which has been a museum of shoes for decades now. Founded by the daughter-in-law of the founder of the Bata Shoe empire. And I wondered to myself, does the Bata Shoe Museum have an exhibit on socks? Oh yes, they do! The exhibit, in fact, is called “Socks, Socks, and More Socks”.

*(They laugh.)*

Where they have on exhibit not only a reconstruction of the Ötzi iceman's shoe, which was found by archaeological reconstructors to be quite comfortable to wear. Why was it comfortable? Because it was stuffed full of grass, considered to be the first example of a historic sock. Let's go to the case.

Who brings this case before me? Who seeks justice here?

**Liana:** That would be me.

**John Hodgman:** Your boyfriend Charlie doesn't like the way you store socks. What's the system in your house?

**Liana:** I have all of our socks—excluding Charlie's, because he was before all this, and he has his own sock situation.

**John Hodgman:** Right. He's on a sock boycott of your system.

**Liana:** Yeah. Well, somewhat. But me and the kids, all the socks are in a box, a communal box.

**Charlie:** Sock box.

**Liana:** Sock box, next to the shoes in the living room. And then when you need socks, you just grab two random socks. Because we all wear the same socks, and nobody wears matching socks.

**John Hodgman:** Wait, so you're just saying it's communal—

**Jesse Thorn:** (*Interrupted in faux distress.*) Wh-WAH!?

(*Liana laughs.*)

**John Hodgman;** I'm sorry, I will hold for Jesse Thorn's reaction. I apologize.

**Liana:** I did not think this was a weird system!

**Jesse Thorn:** Two random socks?!

**Charlie:** Random! No—

**Liana:** Yeah, well, they're all—I mean, most of them are fairly alike. But these are—I mean, most—

**Charlie:** False.

**Liana:** This started with the three kids. And so, they sometimes would get like random character socks and whatever. And a big—I don't know—fashion thing for the kids in elementary school and kind of—not so much now that they're in high school, but in elementary school, they wore random mismatched socks. On purpose, you'd wear mismatched socks. So, why bother? And so, they all go in a box, and they just grab random socks.

**John Hodgman:** So, let me understand. You have three daughters who are now in high school, right?

**Liana:** Well, one's in college, and two are in high school. Yes.

**John Hodgman:** Okay, great. Great. They are adults or nearing adulthood. Congratulations. Well done.

**Liana:** Thank you.

**John Hodgman:** You've got a box full of communal socks, because you all more or less wear similar socks. Not that—I mean, socks are sized. But I mean, among the four of you—pre-Charlie—you all wore similar socks, right? Same socks?

**Liana:** Yes. Yeah, same socks.

**John Hodgman:** So, you just put a bunch of clean socks in there. It doesn't matter whether they match or not. Doesn't matter—like, what if one's an ankle sock and one's a tube sock?

**Liana:** No big deal. You're wearing pants. It's only if you're wearing—I mean, why would you wear socks in the summer anyways?

**John Hodgman:** May I ask you a question? Have you worn an ankle sock on one foot and a tube sock on the other foot ever in your life, for real?

**Liana:** Yeah, but I very rarely wear socks. It has to be in the single digits for me to wear socks. *(Laughs.)*

*(Jesse blows air through his lips.)*

**John Hodgman:** Jesse, I noticed you're making lip noises in the sound of a slow raspberry. Not a raspberry of disgust, but a raspberry of maybe exasperation, or “I don't even know what to say.” Tell me what's going through your mind.

**Jesse Thorn:** I think that was the sound of my entire conception of how the world works deflating.

*(They laugh.)*

**John Hodgman:** Charlie, it sounds like you have an advocate in the person of Bailiff Jesse Thorn. Tell me why what Liana is doing is all wrong.

**Charlie:** Alright. So, she's—yeah, the yellow box full of socks. And like, we're talking full of socks.

**John Hodgman:** It's fun to say those two words together, right?

**Charlie:** It was, yeah. That was good. So, you know, a mound of socks. They're spilling over into—because, you know, you come in the front door, there's a shoe rack, and then the sock box. And so—

**John Hodgman:** Yeah. This is in Philadelphia, right?

**Charlie:** Well, we live in Doylestown. So, north of the city.

**John Hodgman:** Oh. Because a Philadelphia sock box is another thing. We can't talk about it on the podcast.

*(They chuckle.)*

**Charlie:** No, no, no.

**Liana:** Yeah, we'd never.

**Charlie:** So, yeah. And also, with four—now five—people, there's a lot of shoes. So, it's kind of like just a—it's a plateau of socks and shoes, and they're getting mixed up. And she didn't mention that they put on their socks, they go out the door. They come home; they take off their socks immediately upon entering the house. They will—they're not sock people. They take off their socks. And where do they put them? In the sock box.

*(Liana giggles.)*

**John Hodgman:** They take off their dirty socks and put them in the sock box.

**Charlie:** They put them right in the sock box!

**John Hodgman:** And by “they”—the horrible they you're referring to—it is just Liana's three daughters, or also Liana?

**Charlie:** I'm pretty sure it's just the daughters. Liana almost never wears socks, if she can help it. They're—yeah, sock hater.

**John Hodgman:** Not the three wonderful young women who have accepted me into their home. They is what you mean to say. Is that the word you want to choose again? They?

[00:10:00]

**Charlie:** Uh—yes.

**Jesse Thorn:** Just go full “those people”.

*(They laugh.)*

**John Hodgman:** Does your oldest daughter live at home?

**Liana:** She did. She just moved out. Well, she moved to college. She's still living at home, but she's living at college right now. She moved out in August.

**John Hodgman:** Is she nearby, or is she—?

**Liana:** She's like an hour away. She has her own stock situation now until she's home for the summer.

**John Hodgman:** Okay. *(Chuckles.)* How long ago, Charlie, did you and Liana start dating, and how long ago did you move in?

**Charlie:** Been dating almost three years, and I moved in I want to say a year ago.

**Liana:** Two!

**Charlie:** Two years ago.

**John Hodgman:** Okay. So, you moved in about two years ago seems to be the consensus, right?

*(Charlie confirms.)*

Alright. Let's take a look at the sock box. You sent in some photos. Who sent in the photos, if I may ask?

**Liana:** Me.

**John Hodgman:** Liana. Okay. Exhibit A, the sock box before Charlie moved in. And this photo will obviously be available on our show page at [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org), as well as on our Instagram account, [@JudgeJohnHodgman](https://www.instagram.com/JudgeJohnHodgman) on Instagram. Oh, do I ever plead for you to follow us there and like, share, and subscribe, et cetera, et cetera. Social media is how people discover the show now. Now that that's all that's left of culture. *(Strained laugh.)*

Anyway, sorry about that. Liana, this place—this looks like a mess. Sorry about it.

**Liana:** *(Chuckles.)* Well, yeah, this is like—I tried to find a very like candid shot. Like, I was taking a picture of my kid. So, this is just like a random day, how we would live if people weren't coming over.

**John Hodgman:** Well, credit to you for not trying to stage a sock box. Yeah, you could have had—it's true, Charlie. She could have put up a real glamor photo of the sock box in perfect order. But what I see here—

**Jesse Thorn:** I know that when—John, when I was looking at houses to buy a few years ago here in Los Angeles, a lot of them had a really perfectly staged, almost manicured sock box in the living room. (*Chuckles.*)

**John Hodgman:** Yeah, you want to sell a—if you want to move a real estate, you got a stage of sock box nice. But this is what I see. I see like a green—a smaller bin than I imagined; and I really do think that this is a bin more than a box. At least it's not a cardboard box.

**Jesse Thorn:** It specifically is a bin that looks like it fits into a modular piece of furniture that is not present.

**John Hodgman:** Yeah, exactly. (*Chuckles.*)

**Charlie:** Yeah. Oh yeah. I threw away the furniture; kept the bins because it's like a nice bin, you know.

**John Hodgman:** Wait a minute, two years ago you moved in there. You're like, “That's gotta go.”

(*They laugh.*)

**Jesse Thorn:** “Nice bin though!”

**John Hodgman:** “We'll keep the bin now.”

**Charlie:** (*Laughing.*) It was in the basement.

**John Hodgman:** Where can I put my unsightly milk crate and my wrapped 12-pack of bottled waters? The other things that I see in here. Are those your possessions, Charlie, or are they also part of the general decorative scheme of Liana and daughters?

**Charlie:** That was there when I got there.

**John Hodgman:** That was there when you got there.

**Liana:** Yeah, that was the shoe crate before Charlie built us a shoe rack. We had a milk crate for shoes and a bin for socks. Which sounds weirder out loud. And then waters, yeah.

**John Hodgman:** And then waters. I mean, look. At that time, before Charlie moved in, had you been living by yourself for a period of time? I mean, by yourself as the only adult in the house?



**Liana:** Yeah, and three kids who are in and out all the time.

**John Hodgman:** And three kids. Yeah, I mean, we're all doing the best we can.

**Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

**John Hodgman:** Hello, I'm your Judge John Hodgman. The *Judge John Hodgman* podcast is brought to you every week by you—our members, of course. Thank you so much for your support of this podcast and all of your favorite podcasts at [MaximumFun.org](https://MaximumFun.org)—and they are all your favorites. If you want to join the many member supporters of this podcast and this network—boy, oh boy, that would be fantastic. Just go to [MaximumFun.org/join](https://MaximumFun.org/join).

(ADVERTISEMENT)

[00:15:00]

**Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

**Jesse Thorn:** Can I ask, is this set up—you said it's in the living room; is it approximate to the front door? And I mean, I want to be clear, I'm asking this as a—I've received many emails informing me that I'm a horrific monster, because I typically wear shoes in the house. But is this by the front door? Because I noticed that there is white or off-white carpeting.

**Liana:** Yeah, it's directly to the left of the door.

**Charlie:** Yeah, right when you walk in, right there on the left.

**John Hodgman:** It's wall-to-wall carpeting. Which, again, it's not—

**Liana:** It's very old carpeting.

**John Hodgman:** Look, it's not my choice, but we're all doing the best we can. At the time you developed this sock bin and shoe crate system, you had three children who are even younger than they are now! I think you did a good job. But then we have the after photo. Now, honestly, who sent in this photo? Was it you, Charlie, or Liana?

**Charlie:** That's also Liana.

**John Hodgman:** Okay, so tell me what I'm seeing here, because I'm now seeing a closeup. It seems a little bit neater, but it's so closeup, I can't really tell what's changed. So, explain to me what's happened between then and now.

**Liana:** So, to compromise, I have the sock box inside of like—it's one of those like storage ottoman things that you get at Costco, and so it's hidden. So, sock box is now hidden inside a larger box that has a lid.

**John Hodgman:** Boxes within boxes. And next to the nice pile of socks—and there's some mushroom socks, and they look like cozy socks. Socks with mushrooms on them, socks with some blue flowers on them.

**Jesse Thorn:** Yeah, you asserted that these socks were all about the same.

*(Liana laughs.)*

These are almost all colored and patterned socks. And they're very different thicknesses. Like, it would be hard to pick a more heterogeneous group of socks.

**John Hodgman:** Yeah, Liana, I hope you don't take this the wrong way, but you got some motley socks.

**Jesse Thorn:** There's probably some support hose in here, I don't know. There's some like basketball compression socks. Yeah.

**John Hodgman:** It's just a bunch—oh, and they're in—now they're in a yellow bin. I've just made this out.

**Jesse Thorn:** There's some stirrups and sanitary socks in here, because you're a baseball player from the 1940s.

*(They giggle.)*

**John Hodgman:** There's so much sock stimuli coming at me that—I almost couldn't—my brain couldn't parse this top-down photo that they are in a yellow bin. So, that's a bin update as well.

**Liana:** I don't remember if it was the same bin or not. We had like a couple of these bins in different colors that used to be like a toy box kind of thing, the bins *(inaudible)*.

**John Hodgman:** Right. Well, until Charlie got rid of all the toys.

**Liana:** Until Charlie moved in. He needed room for his stuff.

**John Hodgman:** “We don't need any more toys in here! Time to grow up and move out, kids. Charlie's here. You can keep these bins for your socks, though. They're your toys now.”

What's the case that's next to the sock bin, inside the hideaway ottoman?

**Jesse Thorn:** The one that definitely looks like it's a book of CDs.

**Liana:** Oh no, no, no, no. That's one of the kids' binders for school.

**John Hodgman:** Oh yeah, yeah, Five Star brand.

**Liana:** Yes, yes, yes. Oh, I wish it had CDs.

**Jesse Thorn:** I wish it was CDs too. I could really listen to *Jagged Little Pill* right now.

*(Charlie agrees.)*

**Liana:** My youngest one is into the '90s music so hardcore. It's great.

**John Hodgman:** Just to clear it up right away, you ought to know it's not ironic. Moving on. Liana, how did your original system come to be? What was its genesis?

**Liana:** Well, we have three kids, and even from when they were like little and started wearing socks—like, they're two years apart, so they all vaguely wore the same socks. And I wasn't gonna—everybody's laundry is done at the same time, and you kind of sort the laundry amongst the three of them, even though they start sharing stuff at a weird point in their lives.

[00:20:00]

And I wasn't gonna sort socks; that's crazy. And then I'd have to buy so many socks. And they're always losing socks, and then the socks are everywhere. So, I just find socks, I wash them, and they go in the bin. And then as we're on our way out the door and we're going, “We gotta go, we gotta go, we gotta go, we're late,” they just grab socks.

**John Hodgman:** They just grab socks!

**Liana:** Yeah.

**John Hodgman:** Now, there seems to have been an upgrade since then. Since you moved in, Charlie. The bin is no longer green; it's now yellow. So, that's a plus. Unless you're a green lantern. That's a comic book thing. It's now inside a hideaway ottoman next to some school supplies. Is this acceptable to you, or is this still unacceptable to you?

**Charlie:** I mean, this was like last—like, I feel like you did this for the podcast. Yeah, you know what I mean? Because I don't think you've given much thought to the system.

*(Liana cackles.)*

**John Hodgman:** Is that true? Is that true? Did you game the system for the podcast, Liana?

**Liana:** I mean, like it is—the podcast did make us talk a little bit more about the socks. And this was like, “Well, we have this new storage ottoman; I can hide the sock box.” So.

**John Hodgman:** Well, I mean, is this—that seems to be a potential solution, Charlie. Why isn't it? Why is Liana still wrong?

**Charlie:** She's still wrong, because—so, it's the—I mean, they're not folded and that's... fine.

*(Liana and Jesse laugh.)*

They're not paired or anything, you know what I mean?

**Jesse Thorn:** I don't know if the microphones picked up that audible shutter that Charlie just let loose.

“That’s—ough-ahh-ough-ah—fine.”

**Charlie:** But it's the inclusion of the dirty socks going back in. And then there's—sometimes there's a smell associated with it. I mean, you know. So, I mean, the new box might contain that.

**John Hodgman:** When you come home, what's the first thing you do? Open up the ottoman, and stick your face in the sock box, and give it a sniff? Purity test?

**Charlie:** No, I take my shoes off. But not my socks.

**John Hodgman:** Alright. Well, right. We're gonna talk about your separate sock system in a moment here. But Liana, is it or is it not true that dirty socks are going into the sock box?

**Liana:** It does have—since it's been in the box within the box, it has not happened. But that is—again, it's very, very recent. So, it hasn't been fully tested yet. But when the sock box was just next to the shoes, then yes. A lot of times the kids would come in; they took off their shoes, they took off their socks, and things can get mixed. And sometimes you'd have to sniff the sock before you put on the sock. *(Laughs.)*

**John Hodgman:** Yeah, I know. That's why when I'm on tour with Jesse, I always have to knock on his hotel room to have him sniff my socks before I put them on. Make sure that they're okay.

**Liana:** Yeah, you can't smell your own.

**Jesse Thorn:** Quick check in.

**John Hodgman:** So, had you ever had—over the two years that Charlie was living there in total disgust and before the hideaway ottoman came into your lives, did you ever tell the kids, “Please put your dirty socks somewhere else”?

**Liana:** Oh yeah, theoretically they're supposed to put their socks downstairs, like in the basement. Like, there's like a landing area; they're supposed to put them there, and then they get washed when we do laundry.

**John Hodgman:** So, you have a basement, and the laundry's in the basement?

**Liana:** Yes.

**Jesse Thorn:** And there's no hamper anywhere else in the house?

**Liana:** I mean, there's hampers. But like—

**Jesse Thorn:** In their bedroom, but—

**Liana:** Yeah, you're going to go upstairs and take your socks off?

**John Hodgman:** Why is that—? Why is that less reasonable than going to the basement to take your socks off? I can't imagine a place I'd least like to take my socks off!

**Jesse Thorn:** Yeah, I can't imagine a place I'd least like to have bare feet!

**Liana:** Oh no, you don't go into the basement! You just take them off, and you throw them down the stairs. (*Laughs.*)

**John Hodgman:** Oh, well that's a game. That's fun!

**Jesse Thorn:** Then you dump your marbles. And ball bearings.

**John Hodgman:** Where's the basement door in relation to the front door?

**Liana:** Maybe like, I don't know, seven feet from it.

**John Hodgman:** Too far to walk?

**Charlie:** Seven steps.

**Liana:** Yeah, it's not far. It's not a big house.

**Charlie:** Yeah, it's in between the living room where the sock drawer is and the kitchen.

**Jesse Thorn:** How did it come to be that this practice of returning dirty socks to the clean sock bin began?

**Liana:** Do you have kids, Jesse?

**Jesse Thorn:** I have three kids, yes.

**Liana:** Do they put all their things away when you tell them to? All the time? Have you been in their room lately?

**Jesse Thorn:** They don't like, uh, use a tissue and then put it back in the tissue box.

*(They laugh.)*

They might leave it on a side table. You know what I mean?

**Liana:** Well, I mean, that's like the socks. Like, a lot of times they're not in the sock box. Like, they're just kind of spread out throughout the living room. And then somehow people just move them.

**Jesse Thorn:** To be fair, two of my three children are real Lianas who refuse to wear socks under any circumstances.

**Charlie:** Well, and this was what came up when I talked to the girls about this, and I was like, “Hey, can you put your socks directly in the box when you get home?”

[00:25:00]

And they were like, “Why would—?”

**John Hodgman:** I bet they were thrilled to have that conversation. With their mother's new live-in boyfriend.

**Jesse Thorn:** *(Yelling cartoonishly.)* “You're not my real dad! SOCK FASCIST! This is why I listen to Rage Against the Machine!”

*(They laugh.)*

**Charlie:** Their perspective was, “Why on earth would I not do this?”

**John Hodgman:** So, Charlie, let's turn to your system then. What do you do with your socks, and what should we all do with our socks?

**Charlie:** Yeah, so I walk in the door. Shoes come off, the socks will stay on, and then I usually keep them on while I, you know, putter around after work, go in the kitchen. You know, I don't really like that feeling of bare feet on like tile. Because every little molecule, you know, you feel. We have cats, so sometimes there's like cat litter on the ground.

**John Hodgman:** How many cats do you have?

**Charlie:** Two. Two cats. Fish and Disco.

**John Hodgman:** Fish and Disco. Good names for cats. Whose cats were they originally?

**Charlie:** They were—

**Liana:** Well, Fish was there already. You never saw Fish for the first six months.

**John Hodgman:** Yep. Disco, we adopted.

**Liana:** And then we got Disco when you moved in.

**John Hodgman:** Okay, so, alright. Fish and—so, Disco was adopted by the two of you. Alright, got it. And do either of them ever carry socks from room to room in their mouths? And do you have video of it that you can send me immediately?

**Charlie:** The dog, occasionally, will pick up a stray sock and, you know, worry it. We have various toys for that, but she loves a sock.

**John Hodgman:** Did I ask you if the dog carries socks around?

**Liana:** Right?

**Charlie:** I'm sorry, your honor.

**John Hodgman:** Dogs carry things around all the time.

**Liana:** Not impressive.

**John Hodgman:** I'm looking for cats carrying things around. In their mouths. From room to room. They can't just be worrying it or playing with it. They've got to be moving it around with purpose. I'm sorry to get upset about this, Charlie. But you misunderstand what I'm asking for here. Cats. Carrying socks from room to room. Yes or no? Don't wait for the translation! Yes or no?!

**Charlie:** No.

**John Hodgman:** No. Okay. Thank you, Charlie. I appreciate it. Alright, wait a minute. So, you come in. You leave your socks on, because you don't want to walk around on cat dander and stray litter, of course. And when you do finally take your socks off, when is that in your routine?

**Charlie:** Usually, later on in the evening. I usually—you know, when I go upstairs to change into my relaxing home attire.

**John Hodgman:** Soft clothes. Soft clothes, as Paul and Janie Haddad Tompkins would say.

**Charlie:** Mm-hm. Yep. I change into my soft clothes, put the socks in the hamper.

**Liana:** (*Gasps.*) Such a liar!

**John Hodgman:** Oh! You have been accused of lying. Tell me the truth, Liana. How—

**Liana:** This happens. This happens sometimes. And yet, when I was perhaps somewhat staging the updated photo of the sock box within a bigger box, I had to clean up a little bit around it, because I wasn't sure to take a wide angle or small shot. And so, I was cleaning up around it. There were quite a few socks I had to pick up, and the majority of them, I believe, were yours, Sir Charlie.

**Charlie:** What I meant to say is that I do occasionally take my socks off and put them on the ground, wherever I am.

(*Liana giggles.*)

**John Hodgman:** Wherever you are, which could be near the clean sock bin or anywhere?

**Charlie:** Well, strangely enough, I never throw them towards the sock bin. I usually—they'll be, you know, under the coffee table in front of the couch, or sometimes under the kitchen table.

**Liana:** And so, then I gather up all the socks, and I wash all the socks, and then all the socks that I have washed go into the sock box. And then eventually somebody's like, "I have no socks!"

And I'm like, "Look in the sock box."

**John Hodgman:** Including Charlie's discarded under-coffee-table socks?

**Liana:** Oh yeah.

**Charlie:** Yep, she'll throw them in there.

**John Hodgman:** Well, why wouldn't she? You failed to put them away.

**Charlie:** You're not wrong.

**John Hodgman:** You want to get rid of the sock box altogether, Charlie? What's going on?

**Charlie:** Yeah, I would like a sock boxless life. I feel like it—



**John Hodgman:** Even though you have benefited from it!

**Charlie:** Yeah, I would take that hit.

**John Hodgman:** I mean, you have. You have. Because what happens to the socks that you strangely discard underneath the coffee table unless Liana comes and cleans them up for you?

**Charlie:** You're right. I mean, I do occasionally—I clean my own socks too.

*(Liana confirms.)*

I'll go—I'll do a run. You know, on laundry day, I'll go and gather my socks.

*(Jesse laughs.)*

Because I don't know what's clean and what's dirty over there. I can't—I couldn't be—

**Liana:** You just wash them all.

**John Hodgman:** That's true, Charlie. I mean, it seems like you're giving yourself extra work by, dare I say, segregating your socks and punishing the socks that don't belong specifically to your feet. You could just wash all the socks, and then you could fold them up and put them away. You could be getting rid of the sock box yourself, simply by making this your chore, rather than taking or being taken to an internet court. How do you respond?

**Charlie:** I-I-I don't—I don't wanna.

*(They laugh.)*

**John Hodgman:** Once again, I appreciate your honesty.

**Jesse Thorn:** Well played, Charlie. Well played.

**John Hodgman:** I do acknowledge your honesty there.

**Jesse Thorn:** Liana, have you ever considered matching socks?

**Liana:** No! No. Uh-uh. Why?! No.

[00:30:00]

The only time I do that is if I'm doing like Charlie and my's laundry, and like his are so easy, because they're like the same socks. So, I'll do his sometimes, if I have time. But I, honestly—what is it—who's seeing your socks? Who cares?

**Jesse Thorn:** Well, okay. First of all, everyone sees your socks. Your socks definitely show.

*(Liana laughs.)*

Pants don't naturally—don't magically extend when you bend your knee. They lift and show your socks. So, I'm going to dismiss that line of argument. It's absurd. And you know that. Don't try and fool me. What I mean is not pairing the socks that you already have, but what if you went to—or ordered online—actual matching socks? So, let's call them navy blue socks, right? The classic, simplest sock to wear. Or if we're talking about athletic socks, just white tube socks. And that way the socks would always match and be ready. You wouldn't have to pair them. You could just keep them in a bin and also probably do something about the gross, dirty ones. But let's leave that part aside.

**Liana:** But that'd be so sad. You wouldn't get to wear like the cool like Teenage Mutant Ninja socks. Or what about the Totoro socks? Or sometimes you want fuzzy socks. And—

**Jesse Thorn:** Or sometimes you want a crossover event?

*(John agrees.)*

**Liana:** Exactly, right? Like, if we have to wear socks, they should be fun socks.

**Jesse Thorn:** Do the other members of your family resent socks as much as you do, Liana?

**Liana:** I don't know! *(Laughs.)* I think I might have raised them too. It might have rubbed off.

**Charlie:** They're not fans.

**Liana:** I mean, my middle daughter has kind of taken to trying to segregate her own socks. Like, she does her own laundry now, and she has insisted I buy her her own socks, which are very boring and plain and easy to match. Even though, again, hers still end up various places and then washed and put into the communal sock box, because I'm not separating them.

**John Hodgman:** So, let me ask you in the light of that—I mean, if the sock box system were perfected—right?—and there were no dirty socks going in there, and there were only ever clean socks for the kids and your beloved Liana to grab and mix and match however they like. But there were no dirty socks going in there, there were no socks outside of the sock box, and meanwhile you were policing your own socks, and they were in a completely different sock ecosystem. If it's a completely separate system, if the streams never cross, and the sock box is working the way it's designed to work by only housing clean socks—and all the dirty socks go into the basement or whatever, and you never have to touch them or think of them or see them—is it still gonna bother you that there is this sock box?

Are you as upset about this as Jesse Thorn is?

**Charlie:** So, I would be fine with the sock box existing under those conditions. It's really like the dirty socks kind of—you know, like a bad apple spoils the bunch. It's just now you have less than 100% clean socks, which is—I don't know how to deal with that.

**John Hodgman:** And even if that ottoman is closed, you know that there's one adulterant sock in there at least. And it haunts you all day long?

*(Charlie confirms.)*

**Jesse Thorn:** It's important for Liana to focus on stanking up the shoes directly, without the intermediary force of the socks.

*(They laugh.)*

**Liana:** I'm not like running. *(Laughs.)*

**John Hodgman:** You mentioned, Liana, that I believe it's your middle daughter who is now asking you to buy matching socks for her. Right?

**Liana:** Yes. Yeah. She has her own specific socks now that she washes and puts in her drawer.

**John Hodgman:** But she's doing it on her own.

**Liana:** Yeah. Oh yeah. Which I'm fine with. I mean, you're taking care of it.

**John Hodgman:** She's developing her own system.

**Liana:** She is.

**Jesse Thorn:** And she's doing that like with her money from her afterschool job? *(Laughing.)* Like, she's delivering newspapers so she can finally have her own socks?

*(Charlie laugh.)*

**Liana:** I bought her the socks. I will buy them socks. It's just we have so many socks.

**John Hodgman:** I know, but how do you feel knowing that this middle daughter is rejecting the sock box and by extension you?

**Liana:** She is the middle daughter, so I expect it.

**John Hodgman:** Has the older daughter got a sock box in her dorm room or wherever she's staying?

**Liana:** I fully expect that they are wadded up underneath her bed.

**Charlie:** Yeah, probably.

**John Hodgman:** Okay. And does the younger daughter resent the middle daughter for having socks that match?

**Liana:** I don't think she—I think the youngest daughter usually wears the mismatching socks. Like, I feel like she's the biggest proponent of that.

**Charlie:** Yeah, yeah. She's very free and easy with sock choosing.

**John Hodgman:** How does the middle daughter feel about you throwing her clean socks into the sock box if she doesn't put them away herself?

[00:35:00]

**Liana:** Oh, she gets annoyed by it when she finds them in there. And then I go, “Well, how do you think they got there?” And then she just walks away.

**John Hodgman:** Charlie, Liana and her daughters have lived with the system for years. You're not being forced to participate. And you're in a delicate position as a relatively new member of this household. Why are you making this a conflict? What does it mean to you?

**Charlie:** It just seems like chaos in a way. Like, I would like some order to the socks, like some kind of inner logic to how they're placed. 'Cause it just seems like madness.

**John Hodgman:** Liana, how big of a home is this?

**Liana:** It's not very big. It's a townhome with a basement and two stories.

**John Hodgman:** Charlie, I mean, you're in a world that is dominated by four people who have lived there for a long time and share what is arguably a very close bond. Mother and daughter. Do you feel like there is nothing in this house that you can control?

*(They laugh.)*

**Charlie:** No. No, I do not—I don't feel that way.

**John Hodgman:** It's weird, because there isn't anything you can control in this house. I don't know why you don't feel that way.

*(They laugh.)*

**Charlie:** You're very right about that. Yeah, maybe I just would like a little bit of control about this. You know, this little area.

**John Hodgman:** How have you expressed your frustration with the sock box system before coming on this podcast?

**Charlie:** I would, uh—I would bring it up to them.

**John Hodgman:** Did you hold a big family meeting? Did you turn your chair around, and sit down, and get them all to sit in front of you, and say, “Alright, Charlie's here. There's gonna be some new rules.”

**Charlie:** No, you know. They would come home, tear their socks off, throw them in the bin. And I would say, “Hey, could you guys like put them in the basement or upstairs?” And they would say no. And that was pretty much it. You know, I couldn't really push too much. My position is delicate, as you said.

**John Hodgman:** What's the mood like in the house? How do your daughters feel about Charlie living there, if I may be so blunt, Liana?

**Liana:** *(Laughs.)* They love Charlie. There was an adjustment period of me being at work and getting—

**John Hodgman:** Why? I can't imagine why!

**Liana:** *(Laughs.)* Right, getting phone calls of, “Charlie said that I should do the dishes, and he's mad because I didn't do the dishes.”

I was like, “Well, I mean, he's allowed to ask you to do adult things. That's alright.”

But I think like they've come around to it, and it seems fine. But they—

**Charlie:** The middle one took about a good nine months of like solidly bullying me.

**Liana:** Again, middle child.

**Charlie:** But she's—I think I won her over.

**John Hodgman:** How would she bully you?! I want to know!

**Charlie:** She was just like—she was very—she was mean. You know, than the way that like 15-year-old girls can be mean.

*(Liana and Jesse laugh.)*

Like that.

**John Hodgman:** How is it that you came to move in? Liana, did your daughters say, “Please, Mom, we want a weird dad. The weirdest possible.”

**Liana:** I mean, kind of! (*Laughs.*) I mean, that was their qualification for any guy I brought into the house. But no, I mean, he was living in Philly. And that's like kind of far. And then his lease was going to be up, and he was already over a lot of the time. Aaand we let him stay.

**John Hodgman:** How did you meet?

**Liana:** I thought he was breaking into a dog store.

(*They laugh.*)

**Charlie:** Yeah, so we worked—

**John Hodgman:** Oh my gosh. Wait, wait say that sentence again. I don't want—not for the edit; I just want to hear it again.

**Liana:** (*Laughing.*) I thought he was breaking into a dog store, and so I called the store.

**John Hodgman:** “I thought he was breaking into a dog store, so I called the store.” Go on. Alright, I'm listening.

**Liana:** Do you want to start it out?

(*They laugh.*)

**Charlie:** So, we worked across the street from each other in a shopping center. And I worked at a pet store that specialized in dogs, and sometimes like at eight at night, they would have—

**John Hodgman:** Also known as a dog store.

(*They laugh.*)

**Charlie:** Well, it's not a pet store. It's just the—but, okay.

**John Hodgman:** No, I understand.

**Jesse Thorn:** Okay, so you've already eliminated one of the two of you. So, if—Liana—you didn't work at Hot Dog on a Stick, I'm gonna be really bummed.

(*They laugh.*)

If two people fall in love across the street from each other in a shopping center, one of them's gotta work at Hot Dog on a Stick.

**Liana:** Oh, and they did have wiener dogs at their dog store.

**Charlie:** That's true. Yeah. And so, there's late nights where there would be a dog—like a class going on with a trainer, and I would just be minding the register and not really doing anything. So, I started to bring my guitar. And I would go outside where there was no one out, because most of the stores were closed. And I would just play my guitar, by the front door. And then—

**John Hodgman:** Yeah, so, Charlie's out there doing his dog store busking. And you notice him how, Liana?

**Liana:** We were closing, and there were no customers in. Because we thought we were the only store open that late. And there were—it was like empty.

**John Hodgman:** And also, the internet.

**Liana:** Yeah. And it's Monday night, and it was dead.

[00:40:00]

And my friend who was closing with me was like, “There's a man standing outside the dog store playing guitar.” And we were like—we were very confused. Because we were like this is the worst place and time to be busking. Like, there's no people; there's no foot traffic. And we were bored. So, we opened the door, and we sat on the bench outside our store and listened to him play and then clapped for him. And then he went inside the dog store, which we thought was closed. So, we were like, “Did that man just break into the dog store?”  
(Laughs.)

**John Hodgman:** Right!

**Liana:** Like, this is the weirdest—he plays a song, and then breaks in. Like, the weirdest burglar.

**John Hodgman:** There's an itinerant troubadour who is living in the dog store and occasionally coming out to play—what song did he play? Do you remember?

**Liana:** I have a little video clip, but no—it was a country song.

**Charlie:** Yeah, I think it was probably like a Lefty Frizzell song or something.

**John Hodgman:** Yeah. We're going to need that video clip right away to put it on our social media. Sorry.

*(They laugh.)*

**Liana:** Okay. I will send that along.

**John Hodgman:** This meet-cute is going to get blown up. That's an incredible story. I love that story.

**Liana:** We didn't think anybody would believe us that this was happening, and then we were like, "Well, we better save this for the police, possibly." Yeah.

**John Hodgman:** Right, right. I think I've heard everything I need to in order to make my decision. I'm going to go in my chambers. I'll be back in a moment with my verdict.

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

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

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

**Liana:** I feel like I've made a compelling case. I think that busy working moms everywhere with lots of kids who are slightly messy will understand.

**Jesse Thorn:** The trump card. The trump card is being played.

**Liana:** It's being played. It's thrown down!

**Jesse Thorn:** Think about these busy single mothers. What about our firefighters and teachers?

*(They laugh.)*

**Liana:** Do it for the children.

**Jesse Thorn:** Charlie, how do you feel?

**Charlie:** I'm kind of 50/50, because I know it can kind of go either way with weird dads and they're weirdies, you know? But I think I made some good points. I think the central tenant is strong, you know. And I'm willing—I'm open to compromise.

**Jesse Thorn:** We'll see what Judge Hodgman has to say about all this when we come back in just a moment.

**Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

**Jesse Thorn:** Hey, it's John and Jesse. I am Jesse.



**John Hodgman:** I am John. If you were confused, now you know. We are the cohosts of the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast, a listener-supported podcast in the Maximum Fun network. And you know one of the things we've been having fun with our listener members lately is our Members Only Mailbag, right Jesse?

**Jesse Thorn:** This is a monthly show that we record just for members of Maximum Fun. It is all of the freewheeling good times you have come to expect on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast, plus roughly 35% more freewheeling good times.

**John Hodgman:** The deal is, if you're a member, you write us a letter at [MaximumFun.org/jjho](https://MaximumFun.org/jjho). You don't have to have a dispute, just a comment or a request or ask us to sing a song in a meow-meow voice or whatever. And in the Members Only Mailbag, we have to do it. And it's called the Members Only Mailbag, because it's available to members for free in the bonus content feed once you become a member at [MaximumFun.org](https://MaximumFun.org) for as little as \$5 a month. And that's not all you get in that bonus content feed.

**Jesse Thorn:** Not at all! If you become a member at \$5 bucks a month, you get access to all of the bonus content for every Maximum Fun show. Sometimes going back, as in the case of *Judge John Hodgman*, many years. If you want to listen to the episode of *Jordan, Jesse, Go!*, where Jordan and I went on Craigslist and bought a paddle boat and then recorded an episode illegally on MacArthur Park Lake—

*(They laugh.)*

You can do that. Or you can listen to *Judge John Hodgman* bonus episodes. Like, for example, we've done two episodes of our show *Kinding Them With Kindness*, which is the only life advice podcast cohosted by Richard Kind.

**John Hodgman:** The incredible character actor Richard Kind. You may think that you missed that, but you haven't, because it's all there waiting for you in your bonus content feed when you become a member. And let's make that “when” now.

**Jesse Thorn:** And when you become a member of Maximum Fun, you're not just getting bonus content—although you are. You're also—every single time you listen to this show, you'll know that you are supporting the creation of this thing that you like, and you're supporting an outfit that does it right. Right? Like, our show is creator-owned. Maximum fun is owned by its workers. And we are supported by you, the audience. Becoming a member is very easy. Go to [MaximumFun.org/join](https://MaximumFun.org/join).

**John Hodgman:** That's [MaximumFun.org/join](https://MaximumFun.org/join). Don't wait. Do it today. And thank you so much for your support.

**Jesse Thorn:** That's [MaximumFun.org/join](https://MaximumFun.org/join).

**John Hodgman:** Let me say it one more time. [MaximumFun.org/join](https://MaximumFun.org/join)!

**Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

**Jesse Thorn:** Well, Judge Hodgman, I have to say—

[00:45:00]

We had a pretty awesome time in the Midwest on the road court tour.

**John Hodgman:** Baby kangaroos. Can we talk about baby kangaroos for a second?

**Jesse Thorn:** Okay. So, we went to a petting zoo in a mall outside of St. Paul, Minnesota.

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

**Jesse Thorn:** This is a petting zoo recommended by many listeners of *Judge John Hodgman* to me. We had to carve out a special block of time in our travel schedule to make it there. It was pretty tricky. We had to like get up early on a day when we went to bed at one o'clock in the morning in order to make it there in time and then make it to the theater in time. It could not have been more worth it. You'll have to follow our social media feeds to find out all the different animals that I petted there. But let's just say that one of them was the world's largest rodent.

I had left my phone number at this place just because I was like, “If anybody wants free tickets to the show tonight, I had such a great time; I'm glad to give anybody—” The people there were so sweet. If anybody wants free tickets, you're welcome.

**John Hodgman:** Terrific people over there at Sustainable Safari in St. Paul.

**Jesse Thorn:** I get a text. I look at my phone. It says, “Hi, this is Melissa. I coordinate the health care at Sustainable Safari, where you were earlier today. I have some baby kangaroos living at my house. Would you like me to bring them by?”

And I was like—I'm like, “Tonight????” Question mark, question mark, question mark, question mark? So, I was like, “I mean, yes. I don't mean to speak for everyone else and the theater, but yes. Yes, definitely, yes.” We checked in with the people at the Fitzgerald.

They said, “As long as someone is with them all the time, as long as they're not loose.”  
(*Laughs.*) They gave the kangaroos their own dressing room.

**John Hodgman:** Thank you to the Fitzgerald Theater in St. Paul for this as well.

**Jesse Thorn:** They checked in with their house dog, Vienna the dog.

**John Hodgman:** That's right. One of the cutest dogs on Instagram, [@ViennaDog](#).

**Jesse Thorn:** The sweetest dog in the world. Everybody was okay with it. So, we brought those baby kangaroos on stage with us in St. Paul. Oh my gosh. And we get to hold them. Probably the highlight of my tour—indeed, perhaps the highlight of my touring life with

*Judge John Hodgman* was the moment when they placed the little papoose of baby kangaroo into our producer Jennifer Marmor's arms. Jennifer had, by that point, been away from her own baby for roughly a week. And I just saw her turn into a mother so hard and fast. Just the—her eyes basically turned into hearts that were extending in and out. She immediately started like rocking it and cooing to it. It was one of the best things I've ever seen in my life. We also petted them, and they're very soft. Kangaroos are soft.

**John Hodgman:** And you're right, Jesse. There is video evidence of all of this heart-melting cuteness across all of our social medias. [@JudgeJohnHodgman](#) on Instagram and on our YouTube channel as well. Go check it out. Now, we can't promise baby kangaroos at all of our upcoming tour stops, but I can promise you—

**Jesse Thorn:** Although, if you have baby kangaroos, get at us!

**John Hodgman:** Yeah. Oh, of course. Yeah, if you've got baby kangaroos, for sure. But I can promise you lots and lots of surprises, because every show is different. At every show, we have new local litigants and a whole new improv storyline emerges that we never saw coming. And if you have baby kangaroos, bring them.

We're going next to Burlington, Vermont, then Portland, Maine, then two homecomings for me. I'm going back to the Pioneer Valley of Western Massachusetts to meet our friend Monte Belmonte on stage at the Shea Theater in Turner's Falls. And then our big sold-out show in Brookline, Massachusetts at the Coolidge, followed early next year by our shows in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, Seattle, Washington, Portland, Oregon. Soon to be announced show at the San Francisco SketchFest. And wrapping up finally, the road court ends in Los Angeles, at Dynasty Typewriter.

All those shows have tickets available for you now at [MaximumFun.org/events](#).

**Jesse Thorn:** And remember that Los Angeles show also features a comedy podcast called *Jordan, Jesse, Go!* that I've heard is pretty good.

**John Hodgman:** Who knows what you'll see! And by the way, if there's someone in your life who's never listened to the podcast before, this is a great way to introduce them to it. Everyone goes home having a good time. And if you want to get into that sold out show in Brookline, go to [MaximumFun.org/jjho](#), and give us a Brookline-based dispute for us to adjudicate. We might hear it on stage, and we might be able to sneak you in the back door.

We do need your disputes for all of these shows. [MaximumFun.org/jjho](#). If we pick your case to be adjudicated on stage, we will meet you and greet you and be grateful forever after. So, remember those links. [MaximumFun.org/events](#) for tickets. And—?

**Jesse Thorn:** [MaximumFun.org/jjho](#) for all of your cases.

[00:50:00]

Let's get back to the case.

**Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

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

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

**John Hodgman:** Okay. So, first of all, I want to say congratulations to you both, both for being adorable and meeting in a very adorable way, and for blending a household successfully. Which is not something that I've had to do, but I can only guess at the amount of complications—both external and emotional—that are involved in that. And it does seem that with the exception of this one box of dirt, you've organized a household that seems to be functioning where everyone feels heard and seen and appreciated.

I mean, you know, what you're asking is a challenging thing here, Charlie. Because you are entering a world that is not your own, initially. I mean, you've been there for two years, but even though everyone loves Charlie—that's what I hear anyway—you know, when you start laying down the law in an established household where you are the outsider is, um—uh, some people could do it a lot less delicately than you did. And some people can be real jerks or whatever about it, putting a strain on the family. And it doesn't sound like that has happened here.

That said, what has happened here is that you have discovered something that perhaps you didn't know about yourself, which is that you are tidy. You said, “I didn't think I was being particularly precious about these things. I didn't think that that would describe me before I—” And this is a direct quote from you. “Before I moved into this Doylestown townhome dirtier than the dog store I used to live in.”

*(They laugh.)*

**Charlie:** That's a direct quote. Direct quote.

**John Hodgman:** “I used to live with dogs, but nothing prepared me for the feral lifestyle of Liana and her three daughters.” That's a direct quote from you, Charlie. I don't know if you remember saying that, but we can play it back if you want. But I mean to say only—obviously, you didn't say that. But it's like—you know, like when you live alone or when you live an entwined and entangled life with a partner for a long time, you develop your own sense of what's tidy, what's messy, and what's not. And that can be very different to someone who just enters your home all of a sudden. And they say. “Oh, you know what? It smells like cat pee in here.”

You remember how we were talking about how we have a cat, and it is my constant terror that people can smell this cat's pee, and we can't. Do you know what I mean? That is a true fear that I have. Because I know, as an only child who then entered into a life with another person very happily more than 25 years ago, that you don't know what you smell like until you live with another person. And sometimes you smell like cat pee, and you gotta make an

adjustment in your life. And sometimes you realize that the other person smells like cat pee! Or shall I say, has a different standard of clutter than you do.

And I'm going to say that, Liana, I'm breaking with my own bailiff here and agreeing strongly with you. No one's looking at your socks. No one cares if your socks are mismatched. Very few people. Now, this isn't to say that it's not a principle worth upholding. But I would argue that if your socks match, that's because you want them to. Because it makes you feel good. I would not feel good walking around with one Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles tube sock on my left calf—shapely calf, I might say—and a Roblox ankle-high on my right. I would feel bad about myself. I would feel uncomfortable. I would feel it. But I agree only a few people would really notice, especially if you're a child.

Actually, I take it back. In fact, the children are more likely to be judged for their wardrobe choices than adults. Because children are—at least socks, that is—because children are often wearing shorter pants longer into their lives than adults do. And so, people do see those socks. And people will look at those mismatched socks, and they won't judge the children. They'll judge, unfortunately, the mother most of the time. Or the parent in general. But for adults, no one cares. No one's thinking about you the way you're thinking about you. Unless it's Charlie, and he's just moved in, and he's seeing things a different way.

All of which is to say that I think that your sock box solution, as a system in theory, is absolutely fine. I think it's a good idea. A good streamlining for your laundry situation to have clean socks available for going out, especially if your kids don't like to wear socks in the house. And that it's fine for them to be mismatched.

[00:55:00]

Because, honestly, who should care? And if people are looking at your kids—you're saying it's a trend in their school, so they look cool there—but if there are adults in the world who are looking at those mismatched socks going like, “I don't think their parent is doing a good job,” then they can go—

**Jesse Thorn:** Then they can go suck a soiled sock.

**John Hodgman:** Yes, thank you. Then they can go suck a soiled sock. Thank you very much, Bailiff Jesse. Because what you're doing is you're providing clean socks for your kids. They know they're cared for, and it's a system that works until it doesn't.

Now you have to admit that the system has not been working. If dirty socks are going into the clean sock bin, here I must side with Charlie. The system that works in theory that doesn't work in practice needs to be fixed. So, again, I think in theory, the sock box works. In practice, however, you must acknowledge—we all must acknowledge—that it doesn't. Charlie and you are now melding lives—have been for two years. And it's important to respect each other's standards and patterns of cleanliness and tidiness. Two different things. It's also important to keep your mind open to when someone says there might be a better way.

And in this case, I do think that your sock box idea, good as it is, has not yet been perfected. And your own kids are figuring that out too, because your middle daughter already is like, “You know what? I’m getting to be a grownup now. I would like to wear my own matching socks.” And your own middle daughter, though not a 100% every-time practitioner of this, understands that if there’s a better way for her, she’s got to be responsible for it. And she has to do her own laundry. And if she doesn’t, it goes into the box. Also very good. But the fact that dirty socks are going back into the clean sock box? That means the project is not working.

And I would say that there is a very simple solution. Obviously, the idea of putting a dirty sock bin next to the clean sock bin, it’s intriguing. You could give it a try. I bet you it wouldn’t work, because it’s too close. You know, socks get thrown. And also socks move on their own. We all know this. We’ve all lost socks in the dryer. Where are they going? I would say one solution is—I mean, seven steps to the basement door doesn’t feel like a long way when you’re coming in the door, but if you’re coming into the door, and you want them to take their socks off, it’s got to be right by the door. Even closer than the clean sock box. Maybe set up a little place to sit down, take off your shoes, put your shoes on the shoe tree that Charlie created. And Charlie, why don’t you build a dirty sock box in there? Not in the same ottoman. Everyone knows that socks mixed in the same ottoman never stay apart. That’s a saying.

But there’s an even simpler solution. And one that I would encourage—nay, order—that you undertake in your house. Charlie, I appreciate that on an intuitive level, the chaos in the sock box upsets you in the same way that it upsets Jesse Thorn. And me! Though, to a much lesser degree. And I would say that there’s such a simple way for you to resolve this issue in your home and live up to the incredibly charming dog store busker that you started out as. A superhero, if you will. A romantic comedy lead. Just you take care of the socks, dude. Just make socks your thing. Make socks your thing. Grab them, clean them, fold yours, sock box the others. Or take orders. You fold your own socks and put them away however you like it. The little one’s clean socks go in the sock box. And perhaps you even go so far as to separate, wash, fold, and present back to Liana’s middle daughter her clean, paired, navy blue or whatever matching socks they are.

And then you’re not on a podcast. You’re in the not-quite-stepdad hall of fame. Which is a better place to be than a podcast, let me tell you. So, my order is—and I’m not sure who’s winning this one or not, ‘cause I can’t do all the math, ‘cause my brain doesn’t work that way anymore. But I love the sock box. But Charlie, if it’s broken, you got to make it work. This is the sound of a gavel.

**Clip:**

**Speaker:** (*Sadly.*) A sock?!

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

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

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

Charlie, how are you feeling?

**Charlie:** Well, I feel like I got some spiritual—a spiritual victory. But I'm gonna—I just kind of—now I got to do the laundry.

*(They laugh.)*

I feel like I lost.

[01:00:00]

**Jesse Thorn:** Don't worry. Laundry is one of the easiest and most satisfying of chores. Liana, how are you feeling?

**Liana:** I feel very good. I think he made very good points. I feel vindicated somewhat. *(Laughs.)* And I'm very excited for you to become like Zen with the socks.

**Charlie:** I will do my best.

**Jesse Thorn:** Thank you guys. You were a joy.

*(They thank him.)*

**Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

**Jesse Thorn:** Another *Judge John Hodgman* case is in the books. Before we dispense some Swift Justice, our thanks to Redditor u/mkbecker for naming this week's episode, “Knee High Crimes and Misdemeanors”. Join the conversation over on the Maximum Fun subreddit—that is [MaximumFun.Reddit.com](https://www.reddit.com/r/MaximumFun)—if you want to name a future episode, or just see all the great ideas that people post. Or! Chat about this week's episode. There's always a good chat about every episode.

Evidence and photos from the show are on our Instagram account. That's [@JudgeJohnHodgman](https://www.instagram.com/judgejohnhodgman). Follow us there. You can also find them on the webpage for this week's episode. You can find us on TikTok and YouTube, [@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJmKdHodgmanPod), where in addition to content from the show, there's all kinds of cool other stuff as well. How about share a clip from the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast on TikTok or on Instagram? We really appreciate when you tell somebody about the show.

**John Hodgman:** And we don't—it's not just that we like it. It really helps people discover the show. And that's not an easy thing to do these days!

**Jesse Thorn:** It's all that's left that helps people discover the show.

*(John laughs.)*

So, please tell somebody, share something.

John, we have an Apple podcasts rating here.

**John Hodgman:** That is absolutely right, Jesse. And we say thank you to Atomic Adams, who left these kind words for us over on Apple Podcasts, plus a five-star rating. Thank you very much. Atomic Adams writes, “Hands down, my favorite American comedy podcast!” Exclamation point! Atomic Adams also says they “love the community that is built up amongst the commenters on YouTube and Instagram. And it's a lot of fun.” You know what? The comments are not toxic. They're a lot of fun. I drop in there all the time.

**Jesse Thorn:** It is fun. We also have, by the way, not just on Apple podcasts but also these days on Pocket Casts—which is a platform that a lot of our listeners use—you can leave ratings for podcasts. And that is a big new deal, and we would be very grateful to you if you left a review for *Judge John Hodgman* on Pocket Casts.

**John Hodgman:** And if you're listening on Spotify, you can leave a comment on individual episodes now. And that also helps people discover the show. But you know what also helps people discover the show? Talking about it. Tell a friend today about the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

**Jesse Thorn:** It makes a big difference to us. *Judge John Hodgman*, created by Jesse Thorn and John Hodgman. This episode, engineered by Jay Powell at Philly Podcast Space in Philadelphia. Our social media manager is Nattie Lopez. The editor, AJ McKeon. Our video editor, Daniel Speer. Our producer is Jennifer Marmor.

Alright, let's get to Swift Justice, where we answer small disputes with quick judgment. Here's one from SZ. “When returning an opened bag of chips to the cupboard, I think you should be thorough in removing the air from the bag. Or is it enough to just fold over the top once and clip it in the middle?”

**John Hodgman:** Obviously, when you're trying to store food product, the more air you can get out of the bag, the longer it will last. But SZ, I got to tell you something. You're never going to make those chips crisp again. It's never going to happen, no matter how much air you get out of there. Once it's open, you got to eat them, and as quickly as possible. Don't get party size for yourself. Share it with friends, but those chips are never going to get better. And they're not even going to stay the same. The only exception, of course, is if you're on tour with Jesse Thorn and Jennifer Marmor, and Jennifer Marmor gets a bag of Utz crab chips. And the two of you eat half of them in the back of the Chrysler Pacifica, and then you leave it open in the back of the Pacifica for the afternoon, and it gets to be about 100 degrees in there. Well, then you have a whole new snack, called Utz hot crab chips! Otherwise you're splitting hairs. You should be splitting potato chips in your teeth. Eat em up, SZ.

So, speaking of tour, we just wrapped the first two legs of the *Judge John Hodgman* road court. And yet, you know, the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast has three legs. We will be heading to New England starting November 6th. If you live in or near Burlington, Vermont, Portland, Maine, Berners Falls, Western Massachusetts, or Brookline, Eastern Massachusetts, we want and need you there. And we want to need your cases. Our show in Brookline is sold



out. So, if you missed out on tickets, there is only one way to get into the show, and that's to come to us with a great dispute for us to hear live on stage.

[01:05:00]

And if you're going to be in any of these other spots, and you have a dispute that you'd like to be adjudicated on stage by us, let us know, won't you? Submit all of your disputes at [MaximumFun.org/jjho](https://MaximumFun.org/jjho). That link again for your disputes, [MaximumFun.org/jjho](https://MaximumFun.org/jjho).

**Jesse Thorn:** And of course we wanna hear any of your disputes at that URL. [MaximumFun.org/jjho](https://MaximumFun.org/jjho). No case too big or too small; we judge them all. [MaximumFun.org/jjho](https://MaximumFun.org/jjho). And remember, if you are a member of Maximum Fun, we have an all-disputes-answered guarantee on the Membo Mailbag. So, send them in [MaximumFun.org/jjho](https://MaximumFun.org/jjho). Let us know you're a member, and use that secret passcode. 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!