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Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: Welcome to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. I'm Bailiff Jesse Thorn. This week, "Junk, and This Quarterly". Simon brings the case against his wife, Liz. Liz is an avid subscriber to the *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*, and she keeps a big stack of back issues right next to the toilet. Simon says toss the magazines! Liz doesn't care what Simon says, she's gonna read them! Eventually. 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: "People ask me, 'Aren't you proud of yourself?' I tell them no. Not in the slightest. I've done so much harm and made so many charlatans quite rich. I opened a Pandora's box, and I released a Frankenstein's monster."

Bailiff Jesse Thorn, please swear the litigants in.

Jesse Thorn: Simon and Liz, please rise and raise your right hands.

(Chairs squeak.)

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

(They swear.)

Do you swear to abide by Judge John Hodgman's ruling despite the fact that he has a competing interest—having been the former food and wine columnist for *Men's Journal Magazine*, the premier American magazine of men's journaling?

(They swear.)

Judge Hodgman, you may proceed. Do you like how I stole your old joke?

John Hodgman: Simon and Liz, you may be seated. I love it! But I must clarify. I, myself, have a fondness for magazines. Indeed, I was a magazine-er, having written for *New York Times Magazine*. As I still do! The *Judge John Hodgman* columnette appears there every week. You can submit disputes to that at MaximumFun.org/jjho. But I was also the food, and I have to—slight correction, specifically non-wine/alcohol columnist.

(Jesse thanks him.)

Even I could not stretch my imposter syndrome to encompass wine expertise. That tested my fraudulency for *Men's Journal*. Thank you Mark Adams for putting me on the road. It was an incredible opportunity to eat a lot of free food.

But this dispute is about magazines. So, Simon and Liz for an immediate summary judgment in one of yours favors, can either of you name the piece of culture I referenced when I entered the courtroom? I was quoting a person. I wonder if either of you know who that person is and what they were talking about. Simon, why don't we start with you?

Simon: I would say that was Mark Lewisohn, writing in the first of his three-part series on the biography of The Beatles, *Tune In*.

John Hodgman: Very specific! Very—very prepared and very obscure to me.

Jesse Thorn: Bad news, it was Peter Guralnick, writing in *Last Train to Memphis*, the first of his multi volume biography of Elvis Presley!

John Hodgman: Okay! So, you're a music guy. Established, Simon. But this is about magazines, specifically magazines regarding cats and dogs and other animals. Because Liz, you are a veterinarian, correct?

Liz: That's right.

John Hodgman: Not a hobbyist.

(Jesse cackles.)

You don't have a subscription to the *Journal of American Veterinarian Medical Association* just because you're a lurker.

Liz: *(Laughing.)* That's right.

John Hodgman: I have a feeling, since I came up with this obscure cultural reference, that it might have more to do with cats and dogs and other animals than it does with The Beatles. Although I guess The Beatles are animals, too. Okay, I see your point now. I've come around to you, Simon. Good guess.

But now, Liz, it's your turn to guess. What is your guess, if I may ask? Would it help if I told you that it was an article—it's from an article in the *New York Times*. That's a newspaper that has a magazine called the *New York Times Magazine*. I believe it was 2019. September 25th, 2019.

Liz: September 25th?

(They all giggle.)

What was that?

John Hodgman: Great question. Great question.

Liz: I read the *New York Times* every day!

John Hodgman: Great question. Access your memory palace. Go back to the September room. Hmm, 25th. I don't know what page it is, because I got it on the internet edition.

Jesse Thorn: Judge Hodgman, you weren't counting on our litigant being Marilu Henner.

John Hodgman: No, I wasn't. Does she have perfect recall? She does! I forgot about that.

Jesse Thorn: I believe she has perfect recall. Yeah.

John Hodgman: That's incredible. I wish I had Marilu Henner here to ask.

Jesse Thorn: I wish we had Judd Hirsch here. That would be great.

John Hodgman: No. Hey, you know what? I love Judd Hirsch. I love Marilu Henner. We've got Simon and Liz, the best. So, now it's time, Liz, for you to guess. I bought you as much time. Did you have a guess prepared?

Liz: No, I did not. I wanted it to be relevant to actually what you were saying. (*Laughs.*)

John Hodgman: What's your favorite TV show?

Liz: Oh my gosh, my favorite TV show.

John Hodgman: It's gotta be *All Creatures Great and Small*.

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Liz: (*Laughs.*) Sure.

John Hodgman: So, your guess is *All Creatures Great and Small*?

Liz: I just haven't seen it.

John Hodgman: What?!

Liz: I haven't seen it. I know, tragic. I've read it, to be fair. I read it. I read it when I was small.

John Hodgman: That is fair. Is that your guess, *All Creatures Great and Small*?

(Liz affirms.)

Season four, season finale, would you say?

Liz: Of course!

Simon: September 25th, 2020.

John Hodgman: Terrific guess. All guesses are wrong. The quote is from Wally Conron. I don't know if I'm pronouncing his name correctly. C-O-N-R-O-N. As quoted in the New York Times 9/25/2019, with regard to his deepest regret: creating the Labradoodle.

(Simon laughs and Liz gasps.)

He's a dog breeder, and he was tasked with breeding a relatively hypoallergenic guide dog for a vision impaired woman whose husband was very allergic to dogs. So, he came up with this idea to—well, you know, when a poodle and a Labrador love each other very much, they get together with Wally Conron and they create a Labradoodle. And he did not—he was not very happy. Because the demand skyrocketed, leading to some even worse than usual breeding practices to create as many labradoodles as possible.

And this is a quote from him. “I find that the biggest majority of these dogs are either crazy or have a hereditary problem.”

(Simon laughs.)

And Ann Murphy counters—Ann Murphy, of course, being the president of the Australian Labradoodle Club of America—begged to differ, quoting, “All dogs are crazy!”

(They laugh.)

Liz: I feel like I can't comment on that, because I'd be insulting so many of my patients.

John Hodgman: You got a lot of Labradoodles come through. I know, exactly. Wally Conron has said this over and over again. It's his deepest regret, creating the Labradoodle. But you know, I've met many Labradoodles, and they're very spirited and fun. And I'll leave it at that!

Alright. So, who seeks justice in this courtroom?

Simon: That is me.

John Hodgman: Simon, you want Liz to get rid of her big magazine pile. This is a big magazine pile in the bathroom. How long has it been there?

Simon: It has been there for as long as I can remember.

John Hodgman: It's your earliest memory?!

(Simon laughs.)

Liz: He is a goldfish.

Simon: In this house. You know, we've been in the house now for ten years almost.

John Hodgman: Okay, and you're married. And how long have you been married for?

Simon: For 12 years.

John Hodgman: And I believe you're in San Antonio, Tex-ass. Sorry. I didn't mean to say Texas that way. I don't even know why that came out that way. Terrific.

Simon: That's what we say.

John Hodgman: Yeah, that's right. Go Colin Allred. So, anyway. And it bothers you.

Simon: Yes.

John Hodgman: You find it to be unsightly.

Simon: Yes.

John Hodgman: Let's take a look at it. You sent in a photo of this. And all the photos, of course, will be available at the *Judge John Hodgman* show page at MaximumFun.org, as well as on our Instagram. And here's the pile of magazines. Ooh, Liz, this does not look good.

These are—first of all, I can't keep saying the *Journal of American Veterinary and Medical Association* or whatever. It's very hard to say. So, I'm going to go by their own Abbreviation, which is *JAVMA*.

Liz: That's right.

John Hodgman: *JAVMA*'s a thick book, you know?

Liz: And it comes out every two weeks, so they really—

John Hodgman: It comes out every two weeks! I mean, this looks like the—I don't know, like the *Vogue* holiday issue. I haven't seen thick magazines like this since the '90s. This is unusual. They must have a lot of advertising in *JAVMA*.

Liz: No, it's actually all research articles, so they tend to be pretty long. So—

John Hodgman: They don't have a bunch of perfume inserts? Dog cologne?

Liz: You don't want to smell what they had to offer.

Jesse Thorn: John, in his mind, is just absolutely expensing dinner at Le Cirque to *JAVMA*.

John Hodgman: Absolutely. Doing it right now. Oh, this one will be on *JAVMA*. But I mean, Jesse Thorn, is there or is there not dog cologne?

Jesse Thorn: Sure, I believe that there's dog cologne. I don't know that there's dog cologne, but it seems like there would be.

John Hodgman: Should we come up with our own brand of dog cologne?

Jesse Thorn: I think so!

John Hodgman: I mean, I'll ask a veterinarian. Liz, should we put cologne on dogs or what? Is that good for them or bad for them?

Liz: The only context in which I use dog cologne, because I do use it regularly, is—

John Hodgman: Oh, here we go!

Liz: (*Chuckling.*) Is after we have expressed their anal glands. They smell really bad, and you have to mask it. That's no joke. That's a medical thing.

Simon: That's why I wear cologne.

John Hodgman: I learned a lot in so short a time just then. So, only for after glands use. Got it.

Okay. How many—this is a tall pile of printed material. I'm guessing that there may be between 20-25—30, maybe even—issues here.

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Is that right?

Simon: I think it was more. What, did we would count 45, maybe?

John Hodgman: 45? It's almost reaching the seat.

(Simon confirms.)

You could almost put a cup of coffee on top of there. It's almost a side table of *JAVMA*. And so, Liz, you're a subscriber. Tell me a little bit about *JAVMA*. What does that give you? The news on the latest dog models or what? Like, they tell you what dogs are coming out this year? Reviews?

Liz: *(Laughs.)* No, it is actually research articles. So, it's—you know, they're medical articles. And so, I'm a member of the AVMA—so the American Veterinary Medical Association. And so, we receive this. It's one of the main publications. There are lots of different veterinary medical publications, but this is the—

John Hodgman: You get it for being a member.

Liz: Yes, exactly.

John Hodgman: Is this the premier professional journal of veterinarians?

Liz: Yes, I would say so.

John Hodgman: Or is it the fiery young upstart?

Liz: *(Chuckling.)* It is the premier.

John Hodgman: Okay. So, you have to have it for professional reasons.

(Liz confirms.)

(Stammering.) And what's—how often do you sit down and read a *JAVMA*? Maybe once every morning, perhaps? Or maybe what we call a regular schedule?

Liz: So, um. That is the intention. And you know, some of these articles, they're very long articles; but you can kind of get the information you need from reading, you know, the abstract or maybe the results or conclusion depending on what you're interested in. The problem is that over the last—you know, for no particular reason, four to eight years—I've taken to doom scrolling news articles on my phone.

John Hodgman: Oh, okay. Instead of working through your stack of *JAVMAs*. That's right.

Liz: That's right. So, yeah, they have been slightly neglected. And you know, I do feel like it's important information. It's a little complicated, because they're also available digitally. So, whenever I search for a relevant topic, I can find it on my digital kind of veterinary boards type thing.

John Hodgman: Got it. But they are abstracts. So, Jesse, you probably know this in academic journals. They're quite long and detailed, the articles, but there's often what's called an abstract. What on the internet they call a tl;dr.

(They laugh and Liz agrees.)

Which stands for Toilet Length... Deep Reading.

Jesse Thorn: I'm not familiar with abstracts. I'm familiar with "Verses From the Abstract", the Tribe Called Quest song.

John Hodgman: Ah! There we go! Of course!

Jesse Thorn: *(Rhythmically.)* "Back in the day, when I was a teenager."

John & Jesse: *(Falling in and out of sync as John struggles with the words and eventually transitions to meowing.)* "Before I had status, and before I had a pager. You could find the abstract listening to hip-hop. Pops used to say it reminded him bebop. I said, well, daddy, don't you know that things—" Et cetera.

John Hodgman: "Cycles!"

Jesse Thorn: "The way that Bobby Brown is just amping, like Michael."

John Hodgman: Yeah, I remember that. We're old. Yeah. Great song!

(Jesse agrees.)

Simon, it looks like you've opened one of these magazines that you have deigned to touch to show a certain page, a certain diagram. We have this in the Exhibit A, underneath the caption "dumb pile". *(Chuckles.)* Did you select this page to feature for us?

Simon: No, no. So, after we went through the process of submitting the story and getting interviewed and selected, I came in a few days later, and that's what I found looking at me. So.

John Hodgman: Oh, okay. This is just what you discovered.

Simon: Yes, exactly. And that's why I consider that passive aggressive. I think she was trying to, you know, throw it in my face, prove a point. You know, she's reading it, but look at what she's reading.

John Hodgman: Why don't we look at what she's reading? Liz, can you explain what this diagram is illustrating?

Liz: I can! I can. This poor German Shepherd, up top—

John Hodgman: Figure A. There's figure A, B, C, and D in this.

Liz: Yeah, has EPI. So, he does not digest his food well. And so, he has diarrhea with fat in it. That's what they're giving us a picture of.

(John “wow”s.)

And I had a case of EPI that I was treating.

John Hodgman: *(Deadpan.)* I'm so sorry to hear that.

(They laugh.)

Liz: In a dog.

John Hodgman: I never treat a dog unless I have had the same thing as the dog.

Liz: And so, I was reading this relevant article and, you know, was mid-reading this article. And I left it open to resume at a later date. This was not a passive aggressive move. This is medical research.

John Hodgman: Just to be clear, this diagram shows—figure A, B, C, and D. Figure A is it looks like an illustration or maybe a photograph of a German Shepherd. And figure B is a photograph of what you call *(hesitantly)* diarrhea with fat in it. Boy, oh boy.

Have I made the children who listen to this show very happy today or what? Then figure C is another German Shepherd, and figure D is what, Liz? I'll make you say it.

Liz: So, C is actually the same Shepherd after treatment. And D, which is the perfectly formed stool, is that Shepard's stool after treatment. *(Chuckles.)*

John Hodgman: Oh God-or-Whatever, I can't believe we finally—after how many years, we got someone to say perfectly formed stool on the podcast.

Jesse Thorn: 10 out of 10. Even the East German judge agrees.

[00:15:00]

John Hodgman: Holy guacamole. Holy—well, okay, so this is the same German Shepard now looking much more hale and hearty.

Liz: That's right.

John Hodgman: I mean, I don't know. If I were coming to relieve myself at the toilet, and this was facing me face-up on a stack... Simon says it was passive aggression. You say just relevant reading information. What's the truth?

Liz: Well, I mean, I have a good story. I can actually tell you the dog's name, the case that I'm working on. The dog's name is Sherman.

John Hodgman: So, you have gleaned some information from these journals, but you suggest that you don't read them regularly. Before Sherman came into your office, when was the last time you looked at one of these 40 journals?

Liz: Six months, maybe?

John Hodgman: Six months. And may I verify that you were researching Sherman's condition while, yourself, sitting down in the bathroom?

Liz: *(Laughs.)* Yes.

John Hodgman: Not to be too personal. But I mean, you put them there.

(Liz agrees.)

Generally, when you're sitting down in the bathroom, you're not working through the stack. That's not a euphemism. That's a real thing. You're not reading the magazines.

(They laugh.)

So gross. So gross.

Liz: Unfortunately. But I have this kind of optimistic idea that one day I will.

John Hodgman: What's the oldest issue in the stack?

Simon: December 2020.

John Hodgman: Yep. December 15, 2020—volume 257, number 12. We will not post this on our Instagram, because it has your name and address on it. Because you are, after all, a subscriber. But it has a wonderful, almost impressionistic painting of three very curious-looking pigs. But I mean, is the information in this issue of *JAVMA* even still relevant? I mean, are you really going to go back and read this one?

Liz: Okay, so—you know, veterinary medicine doesn't have as much funding as human medicine. They don't redo the same studies every few years. So, usually the information is going to be pretty relevant. As to whether or not I'm going to get to it—again, that's kind of the optimistic idea, that I'll get to this valuable information.

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John Hodgman: Obviously, you're reading these magazines in private. So, Simon, you can't verify how often or not-often that Liz is actually reading these. So, Liz, I need to rely on you to be honest here.

(She agrees.)

You haven't read these magazines. You got four years' worth of *JAVMA* under your toilet, and you don't really read them. And you only read about German Shepherd poop because you knew you were going to be on this podcast.

[00:20:00]

And you needed to come up with something to say, right? That's my accusation. That's my accusation.

Liz: That is untrue. I actually stumbled across that article, and then—because I was actually reading it. So, I guess prior to that it had been six months. And then I stumbled across the article, and I went, “Hey, I'm actually treating a case of this right now. This is relevant.” Thus proving my point.

John Hodgman: Have you read any other articles in any of those *JAVMAs* within the past year?

Liz: I read other articles in that particular *JAVMA*, since that was the one I picked up, and I was leafing through.

John Hodgman: Is this one still on top of the pile?

Liz: *(Chuckling.)* Yeah, it would be.

Simon: And we've added more since then that are now in a pile next to the fridge instead of in the bathroom. So, there's four or five after *(inaudible)*.

John Hodgman: *(Disappointedly.)* Whoaaa.

Jesse Thorn: Wait, when you say you read other articles in that same issue, do you mean that there was one instance of reading, wherein you read this one that was relevant and also looked at some other ones, then put it down and never touched it again?

Liz: That would be a fair characterization, yes.

John Hodgman: Realistically, in the current configuration, how long will it take you to get through the information that—you don't have to read cover to cover. But like, how long does it take for you to—all these words sound gross at this point. But let's just say process one issue.

Liz: (*Laughing.*) Okay. Okay, and I will point out that this is the, you know, veterinary journal. So, I treat dogs and cats, and I only read articles that are relevant to dogs and cats. Because really I'm looking for, you know, what's clinically relevant for me.

John Hodgman: Yeah, of course.

Liz: So, like, half the articles right up front.

John Hodgman: Yeah, of course. We all skip the bird section.

Liz: So, you know, I can probably get the valuable information that I want out of one issue in maybe half an hour.

John Hodgman: Half an hour?

Liz: Yes.

John Hodgman: And on a daily basis. So, I'm just trying to do the math here. Simon, what is your career? Are you a mathematician? Are you a magazine mathematician by any chance?

Simon: I am not. I've been a stay-at-home dad, and I'm in grad school right now.

John Hodgman: For what, if I may ask?

Simon: Social work.

John Hodgman: Oh, wonderful. But hey, both very admirable careers. Good jobs. Literal good jobs. But Simon, let's do the math together then.

Simon: Yes.

John Hodgman: Half an hour. That's 40 issues. That's 20 hours of reading. And then you're getting every—you're getting a new one every-every other week?! It's worse than you thought, Simon.

(They laugh.)

Liz: See, that's how it piles up so quickly!

(Simon “wow”s.)

You were giving me less credit.

John Hodgman: Simon, what magazines do you want to stack next to the toilet?

Simon: There aren't—I would like to replace it, but there's nothing I want to put there.

John Hodgman: Nothing at all?

Simon: Nope, not yet. I mean, like she said, maybe once I get my social work degree, I'll have my own magazines that I can start piling up next to it—depending on what the verdict is. But as of now, nothing. Magazines are not my thing.

Jesse Thorn: Judge Hodgman, this is the problem with the American magazine industry. You can only subscribe to magazines relevant to your advanced degrees!

(Liz laughs.)

John Hodgman: Absolutely. That's why I subscribe to *Cat Fancy*, because I'm a professional cat fancier.

Jesse Thorn: That's why I subscribed to *The Journal of People Who Went to Broadcasting School for Three Weeks*.

(They laugh.)

John Hodgman: I love magazines, but they are a scourge. They do come into your house, and they never leave. Simon, let me clarify, this is a shared bathroom?

(Simon confirms.)

Is it the only bathroom?

Simon: It is the bathroom for our bedroom.

John Hodgman: Do you have children who are not fur children? Because I know you have a lot of animals.

Simon: Yes, we have non-fur—we have two non-furred, 15-year-old boys. Twins.

John Hodgman: Oh, okay. Do they have their own bathroom?

(Simon confirms.)

I bet that's a hellhole.

(Simon and Liz laugh.)

Simon: Betrayed.

John Hodgman: Just so I know, is there—potentially, is there a half bath somewhere? Or you know, like a small—or a third bathroom that could become the home to your *JAVMA* collection, Liz?

Liz: No, it would be more like the guest powder room, so I feel like that would be an even a worse lateral move.

(Simon agrees.)

John Hodgman: Why? Because you don't want to reveal to your guests that this is one of your things?

Liz: Oh, yes. That's right.

John Hodgman: So, there is some shame associated with your pile of *JAVMAs*.

Liz: Yes. To be fair, both professional shame and maybe like a little bit of a hygiene issue, if I'm honest. *(Laughs.)*

John Hodgman: Why professional shame? Are you afraid that guests will come in and go, “Oh my gosh, she is not keeping up with her *JAVMAs*!”

Liz: That's right!

John Hodgman: “I'm not bringing my dog or cat to her anymore.”

Do you have your own practice? Or do you work in a practice, or what?

Liz: I work in a practice.

John Hodgman: I'm just going to tell everyone. Liz is the best veterinarian. If you see some *JAVMAs* around, you should be happy.

[00:25:00]

Don't be like judging her like, “Oh, she's not reading her *JAVMAs*.” She's got the subscription. She's working on it. So, *(sighs)* Simon, it says here that you are not opposed to piles of things in your house *per se*, but that you favor what is—I think this is a quote from you—“piles with purpose”. What does a pile with purpose mean to you?

Simon: Well, just a pile of things that are used at some point. So, it doesn't—I'm not—we're not opposed to piles. We say we're pile people. Some things are just it's easy if it's in a pile. You know, you have easy access. If you can sort of—if you know the, I guess, geography of the pile. And so, I don't—piles in and of themselves that are, you know, rotated through are fine.

Jesse Thorn: What are some other examples of the piles in your home?

John Hodgman: In fact, we have some evidence, Jesse, if you'd like to take a look. But I'll let Simon describe what we're seeing here. These are Exhibit B, “piles with purpose”. First example, bathroom.

Simon: Yes, so this is our shared bathroom. And that pile there—basically, from the Tylenol on the right all the way to the left is Liz's pile, and to the right is mine. And so, contained within that pile, I assume, is everything that she needs to—

John Hodgman: I mean... you're definitely pile people.

(They laugh.)

I mean, I don't know how to describe this other than a big pile of—you know, sundries, hygiene supplies, vitamins, pills, deodorants, et cetera. And you say that on the left is Liz's pile of—what?—everything on earth?

(They laugh.)

Simon: Yeah, basically. And the thing is, I should take credit—or not credit, but some blame—because it is my job to sort of maintain the pile. You know, so I take things down, clear off the surfaces, and then reassemble it into, I guess, a more ordered pile. But then over time—

John Hodgman: Which version is this in your mind?

Simon: *(Laughing.)* This is at the very end. This is just before it was ordered.

John Hodgman: Uh, okay. Because this feels—I mean, look, we've discussed it many times on this podcast that the people have different sensitivity to clutter. And I have a very low tolerance for clutter. And it would seem that you have a very high tolerance. And I say that respectfully. But may I ask—let's look at a couple of other purposeful piles here. Jesse, are you seeing this bathroom now?

Jesse Thorn: This bathroom is wild.

(John cackles.)

This is a—first of all, alright, this is a sizable bathroom. These two are living like monarchs in this bathroom.

John Hodgman: San Antonio. Everything's bigger in Texas.

Jesse Thorn: It's a gargantuan corner bathroom, and they have probably—I'm going to call it six feet of counter space in this bathroom. Not counting the sinks! Just six feet in between the sinks.

John Hodgman: No, this is a corner situation, double vanity. There's a sink on either end of this corner, L-shaped countertop. Every centimeter of which is filled with a thing.

Jesse Thorn: There are cabinets in this bathroom! I want to be clear. I can't emphasize enough that immediately underneath this layer of bathroom product is a set of cabinets.

John Hodgman: Yeah, what happened to the cabinets there, Simon? Did you accidentally fill them up with sand or something? You can't fit anything in there?

Simon: No, they are full. But if you were to open up one of those cabinet doors, it would—things would fall out, that's for sure. The drawers though, they contain—they're good.

Jesse Thorn: You have more bathroom things than the things that are on this counter?!

Simon: *(With quiet shame.)* We do.

John Hodgman: The best part of this is that—

Jesse Thorn: *(Interrupting urgently.)* What are you doing in this bathroom?! I mean, besides studying.

(They laugh.)

Simon: It is interesting, because like neither of us are—we're not actually—we're not high maintenance people. We don't take long to get ready or anything like that. So, it doesn't really—*(laughing)* it doesn't make sense! Now that we're talking about it more, I'm confused too.

John Hodgman: One of the beauties of this photo, which—do you want us to share this with the world?

Liz: We are not ashamed. We're not ashamed of who we are.

John Hodgman: Okay. One of the beautiful things about this photo—which you can see on our Instagram page, et cetera—is that not only is this L shaped counter covered in stuff that you use every day in the bathroom, normal stuff. But also, it's up against an L shaped mirror, so the whole thing is doubled.

(They laugh.)

Jesse Thorn: Yeah, this is like a *Last Dragon*, Bruce Lee, bathroom mess fighting against Kareem AbdulJabbar and a house of mirrors.

John Hodgman: Now, this is the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast, and you forgive me for being naturally judgmental. So, I will—

[00:30:00]

But let me dial it back for a second to say that, as we've discussed in the podcast many times, people have different tolerance levels for what you might call clutter. And that's fine. This is well beyond my tolerance level, but I don't live in your house. My question is: do you have equal—like, when you both look at this bathroom situation, are you both equally okay with it?

Liz: We are. We have a matched high tolerance for clutter.

John Hodgman: Okay, well, yeah, it would seem so. Because look at these other photos too. Boy, oh boy. Are you pile people or what? There's the closet. There's a bunch of clothes piled on top of—again, what I can only presume is drawers full of other clothes.

(Simon agrees through laughter.)

Liz: There's a reason for that!

John Hodgman: And I mean—what's the reason for that?

Liz: Okay. So, Simon does the laundry. It's very sweet of him.

John Hodgman: That is very nice!

Liz: I work long hours, and so—and I don't like to add more work for him. So, if I've worn something for a few hours, and then I think to myself, “This is not dirty. I'm going to wear this again,” instead of putting it in the hamper to be washed, I put it on top of the dresser.

Jesse Thorn: I think *Judge John Hodgman* listeners know that what you're supposed to do is take it off and put it in a shared bin by the front door, so that other people can pull it out of there and put it on later.

John Hodgman: That's a reference to our very controversial, apparently, sock box episode that came out recently. So, when you take off clothes that you intend to wear again—instead of putting them in the hamper, you say you put them aside so that you will wear them again. By putting them aside, meaning you throw them from across the room to land on top of this dresser, maybe.

(Liz giggles.)

It's hard for me to see where the dresser ends. So, Simon, why are these piles with purpose? Whereas Liz's pile is purposeless?

Simon: Okay, because we go through that fairly regularly. But there's also stuff on the bottom of there that might be as old as some of the magazines. And then the bathroom, same thing. It's stuff that is used, and—

John Hodgman: It's routinely touched and used by you. It has purpose in your life, whereas these magazines have no purpose in your life.

Simon: The bathroom pile and the clothes in the closet, those are hers.

John Hodgman: But you understand the purpose of those piles. But the *JAVMA*, the purpose eludes you.

Simon: That is correct.

John Hodgman: And why is that so hard to understand? It's professional research that your wife is doing on the toilet.

(They laugh.)

Simon: No, and I've seen her have to—you know, to solve a case and be, you know, nose deep on the computer, finding the answers that she needs to find. What she's not doing is going page by page through this stack of *JAVMAs* to find it. She looks it up.

John Hodgman: Well, it's a good point, Liz. Because you mentioned that so many *JAVMAs* are coming in the house every other week. I mean, *Cook's Illustrated* is on a quarterly basis at this point! They can barely put one out. *JAVMA*'s pumping out thick magazines every other week. And they're colonizing other bathrooms. Isn't this stuff online?!

Liz: Yeah, so it's a little complicated. If I have a specific case, I will research—I'll look online. And all sorts of journals are online, and I can find that information. So, looking through *JAVMA* is more about finding information. It's the information that you didn't know you didn't know. You know, coming across an article, like a study that you didn't know was out there, you might use that information at a later date—as opposed to researching a specific thing.

John Hodgman: Interesting. But you acknowledge that you're not keeping up with your subscription and your research. Your important research, correct?

Liz: Yes, currently.

John Hodgman: Let me—okay, but it's been—I mean—

(Liz chuckles.)

You still have 2020 issues in there. What's your plan to get back—I hate to say it to a veterinarian—on the horse and get through these magazines and get up to speed and up to date?

Liz: That is a good question. I will say—okay, so we do have like continuing education requirements, and some of it can be self-study. So, last year I went to a bunch of conferences, so I didn't need any self-study hours. But this year I do plan to do some self-study hours, and it will consist of reading the *JAVMAs*.

John Hodgman: So, okay. And what—so, tell me what your proposed schedule is.

Liz: Well, basically before the end of December, I'm going to do three hours of self-study, so I'll probably go through about six of them.

John Hodgman: So, three hours, so that—you're going to knock off six before the end of the year.

Liz: Yes.

John Hodgman: And as of this recording, That's 10 weeks from now, if I'm doing the math correctly. Check me, Simon! December has four weeks. November has four weeks, more or less. We have about two weeks left here in October. So, that's 10 weeks.

Simon: That checks out.

John Hodgman: So, that's—and it's every other week. So, that's five new issues.

[00:35:00]

Jesse Thorn: Judge Hodgman, Simon is in graduate school for social work. He's doing calculus and stuff.

John Hodgman: Yeah, no, I know. It's just anyone's got to be better at math than me at this point in my brain dysfunction. But that's five. So, you're going to knock out six issues, but get five more in the meantime. So, you will have effectively eliminated one. This is going to go on forever. Does that sound acceptable? Does this pace sound acceptable to you, Simon?

Simon: No, it sounds undoable.

John Hodgman: Is there another place where the magazines can be?

Simon: I mean, of course. We've got plenty of places to put magazines, but it's just going to be then they would just be there. And then I think the argument would be that just she wouldn't have ready access to them.

Liz: Yeah. I didn't want them to be out of sight, out of mind. So, it's kind of like a guilt trip.

Simon: In sight and out of mind. (*Laughs.*)

Liz: This is like, you know, a visual reminder of what I'm not doing.

John Hodgman: Do you really—? I mean, that can't be good for your digestion, to feel guilty every time you approach the toilet! How do you feel when you see those magazines, good or bad?

Liz: That's a good question. You know, like I said, I have—I just have this kind of optimistic idea that one day I'll have time to read them. And so, I want to keep them around for that reason. And sometimes I do have—I'm busy. So, I don't have a lot of free time, but one day I'll have free time.

John Hodgman: Simon, do you believe her?

Simon: No! She had shoulder surgery. She didn't read a single one of them. What else?

Liz: I was on a lot of drugs. I didn't realize that the plan for reading them when I was recovering from shoulder surgery was not a good plan.

John Hodgman: What could be more fun than reading about dog poop while on medical-grade pain relievers? Sounds like a great afternoon to me!

What's so offensive to you about this pile? So I can understand what you want me to do here, Simon. Is it that the pile is next to the toilet? Is it that the pile will never be addressed? What do you feel when you walk into the bathroom, and you see all those magazines next to the toilet?

Simon: I mean, if I'm honest, clearly I have a willful blindness to things like this. So, I don't—it doesn't really bother me too much, but you know, we wanted to—

John Hodgman: Oh, we're wasting our time here. Then goodbye.

(*They laugh.*)

Simon: Right, I can—I can say that.

John Hodgman: Adjust your willful blindness, brain blackout all piles of magazines. Eh, it's gone.

Simon: I mean, there is going to come a point when it is even—see, and you say that we didn't have it, but the pile has been there—I think we must have gotten rid of some of the pile at some point.

Liz: I think you're right. I think you're right, yeah.

Simon: Right? So, we have cycled through, so there's precedent already.

John Hodgman: Did you get rid of magazines—like, you finally read them, and you recycled them? Or did you give up on some?

Liz: So, some magazines disappeared at one point. (*Laughing.*) I think that—yeah, I think he thought I wouldn't notice, and I didn't.

John Hodgman: Did you dispose of a bunch of *JAVMAs* without permission, Simon? Yes or no?

Simon: I do not recall. And she can attest that I have a terrible memory!

John Hodgman: What are you talking about, you do not recall?!

Liz: He is a goldfish.

Simon: I mean, if she didn't, it was obviously me.

John Hodgman: What would you have me rule then? That all the magazines go away, or only up to a certain point in time? What are you looking for here? What's the relief you're looking for, so to speak?

Simon: I think it would be fair to have a certain number of magazines there and just cycle through them.

John Hodgman: What would that number be?

Simon: Um. I don't know. I think six months' worth is good. So, that would be 12, at two weeks. And you have two weeks to read the one on the bottom before it gets taken away.

John Hodgman: And what are you going to do? Are you going to set a timer? You're going to keep track of this?

Simon: Absolutely.

John Hodgman: What would this do for you? Why do you even have any standing here? Why would that be beneficial to you?

Simon: I have no standing. It wouldn't be beneficial to me until they get to the point where they—see, they used to be on top of the toilet. Then I moved them to the floor.

John Hodgman: When did the magazines break your back, Simon? When did they fall on you? And when did you move them?

Simon: It was probably around a year or so ago.

John Hodgman: Okay, wow. So, alright. And Liz, I hate to ask this, but at this point—when you consider your pile of *JAVMAs*—isn't it likely at this point that Simon has at least once peed all over them, given their proximity to the toilet?

Liz: (*Chuckles.*) I do have some hygienic concerns. That's fair.

John Hodgman: Dooo you have to read them on the toilet, Liz? I'll just be blunt. Is it important to you that you be able to reach down or behind you at any given moment? Do you have to—like, is that what you want to do?

Liz: You know, probably not. It's more just a matter of where else to put them.

[00:40:00]

And that seemed the best place for them to be contained and not kind of obviously in the way.

John Hodgman: You said, though, that you have a lot of places for magazines. What would be an alternate place?

Simon: I mean, they would just vanish. I mean, they would have to be like in the office or somewhere where they—

John Hodgman: Wait, there's an office?!

Jesse Thorn: There was an office this entire time?!

Liz: (*Chuckle.*) Yeah, okay, but it's his office!

John Hodgman: What's in—what piles of purpose are in his office?

Simon: (*Laughing bashfully.*) Oh yeah, actually I forgot about those piles when we were talking about the ones earlier. There are—well, that's more organized, but there's—

John Hodgman: I'm not sure I believe you. But go on. They're books.

Simon: I mean, old, you know, documents related to the house and taxes, and—

John Hodgman: Let me ask you this. Let's just say, for the sake of argument, you got one of those— And I don't know what your living room looks like. But I'm presuming that every

cabinet in your home is full of stuff. So, there's no room for these magazines, or else they'd be there. Right, Simon?

(He confirms.)

What if you got one of those ottomans that has storage inside? You pop off the top. It's like you put your feet up on top, but then you take your feet off, pop off the top, and it's just a storage cube. Right? Just hypothetically. And you put all the current issues of *JAVMA* in there and pop the lid on. Would that be okay with you, Liz?

Liz: Yes. I mean, that would be a compromise, yes.

John Hodgman: That would be a compromise, but it doesn't sound like you want to make a compromise. So, I will ask you again: why do your magazines about dog poop need to be next to the toilet? What do you get out of this?

Liz: Yeah, I think the idea is that, again, it's just like a reminder. You know? So, it's just I can see them, so it reminds me, "Oh yeah, I need to read those."

John Hodgman: What about declaring *JAVMA* bankruptcy and throwing them all away and starting fresh? How would that make you feel? When I propose that, what's your reaction?

Liz: Yeah, that is definitely—so, he wants to throw them away. And so, I'm willing to compromise in any other way, but I don't actually want to throw them away. Because I do—

John Hodgman: Yeah, but you're not—but Liz—respectfully, Liz, you're not answering my question.

John Hodgman: When I propose throwing them all away and starting fresh, how does that make you feel?

Liz: It makes me feel anxious about the idea of losing the opportunity to absorb that information.

John Hodgman: Mm-hm. Mm-hm. I see. And so, you need to have them right there, so you know that you'll see them every day. Let me ask you this question without getting too personal. Let's say your feet are tired. So, you need a place to sit down for any reason. You choose the toilet, and you're doomscrolling about the state of the world—which is bad—and you have this pile of homework next to you. That's gotta be a miserable morning for you, right? How do you feel when you're just scrolling terrible information, and you have unfinished work next to you, and you know that even if you ran into the other bathroom, there's even more work there for you? Is that a good feeling? How would you describe it?

Liz: That's fair. That's stressful.

John Hodgman: Yeah! Okay, I think I've heard everything I need to in order to make my decision. I'm going to go into my private office and peruse some old copies of *Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine*. 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.)

Liz, how are you feeling about your chances in the case right now?

Liz: I'm worried. You know, I feel like I don't have a lot of logical room to stand on, so I'm making more of an emotional appeal.

Jesse Thorn: Mm-hm. *(Chuckling.)* Nothing stirs the heart like a pile of medical journals.

Liz: And my desire to be a better veterinarian. Yeah.

Jesse Thorn: Got it. Simon, how are you feeling?

Simon: I'm feeling confident.

Jesse Thorn: Why is that?

Simon: Well, I just don't think she has a leg to stand on. There's no—no matter what, even if we put it in Ottoman or put him somewhere else, they would just—she could never read them faster than they will be replaced. And it will just continue to grow and grow and grow.

Jesse Thorn: Liz, for the past 15 years, everyone else in the world has been looking at their phones when they sit there. Can you not put these inside your phone?

Liz: I mean, that's an interesting question. Yes, I have access to them digitally. That is very true. But then you would have to make the choice to actually go to the AVMA website and look at the journal online, instead of—you know—doing scrolling news articles.

Jesse Thorn: Well, 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.

Promo:

Music: Playful, retro rock music.

Narrator: This season on *The Adventure Zone*, *Abnimals!* Get ready for a brand-new crime fighting trio, here to protect the anthropomorphic, muscular animal citizens of

River City. Featuring Justin McElroy as Ax-o-Lyle, the firefighting axolotl. Clint McElroy as Roger Moore, the debonair cow of mystery. Griffin McElroy as Navy Seal, the raw seal that has never served in the Armed Forces. And Travis McElroy as every other swole critter in River City. This swear-free, Saturday morning cartoon inspired story airs every Thursday on MaximumFun.org or wherever you get your podcasts.

(Music fades out.)

Promo:

Music: Cheerful music.

Emily Fleming: I'm Emily Fleming.

Jordan Morris: And I'm Jordan Morris.

Emily: We're real comedy writers.

Jordan: And real friends!

Emily: And real cheapskates.

Jordan: We say, why subscribe to expensive streaming services when you can stream tons of insane movies online for free?

Emily: Yeah, as long as you're fine with 25 randomly inserted, super loud car insurance commercials.

Jordan: On our podcast, *Free With Ads*, we review streaming movies from the darkest corner of the internet's bargain bin.

Emily: From the good to the weird to the “Holy! Look at VanDamme's big ol' butt.”

Jordan: *Free With Ads!* A free podcast about free movies that's worth the price of admission.

Emily: Every Tuesday on MaximumFun.org or your favorite pod spot.

Music: *Free with ads!*

(Music ends.)

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: Judge John Hodgman, we're taking a break from the case and to prepare for our upcoming trip to New England.

John Hodgman: New England, we're coming for you! And it's a triple homecoming. As I return to Brookline, my actual hometown, as well as two adopted hometowns of Western Massachusetts and my beloved and painful Maine. And we're also, for the very first time ever, going to Vermont.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah, in November, we're bringing justice to the Higher Ground Ballroom in Burlington, Vermont, as well as the State Theater in Portland, Maine, the Shea Theater in Turner's Falls, Massachusetts, and the Coolidge Corner Theater in Brookline, Mass.

John Hodgman: (*Cupping his hands around his mouth.*) Klaxon! Klaxon! Klaxon!

Sorry, Jesse, but Brookline is already sold out! And Turner's Falls with special guest Monte Belmonte is about to sell out, too. So, go and get your tickets right now at MaximumFun.org/events. And by the way, if you did miss out on Brookline, may I suggest Portland, Maine, is just a short drive away! Why not make a weekend out of it? It's off-season. Hotel rooms are going to be relatively inexpensive. You can check out Eventide Restaurant, go to the Green Hand Bookshop. They've got a great section on Edward Gorey. Go to Flea for All where you got that jacket that time, Jesse.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah, I got a nice jacket.

John Hodgman: It's a terrific city, and it's going to be a great show at the State Theater. And we'll have Joel Mann in house, playing bass with the Night & Day Trio, offering you the finest in coastal Maine jazz.

Jesse Thorn: Tickets available right now at MaximumFun.org/events. We're also coming to the West Coast in January and February. So, you can get your tickets to Vancouver, Seattle, Portland, and Los Angeles, where we will have a very special opening act: *Jordan, Jesse, Go!*.

John Hodgman: It's gonna be a hoot, and I dare say a holler! MaximumFun.org/events for tickets to all of our upcoming shows. And if you have disputes in these cities, please send them in at MaximumFun.org/jjho. If we pick your dispute to hear live on stage, guess what? You can hang out with us and eat some of our greenroom crudités! You absolutely can have all the cherry tomatoes, 'cause I hate them! Listen, everybody, we've had so much fun on the road with our *Judge John Hodgman Road Court*, and it's a great way to introduce someone who's new to the show or who's never heard it before. So, please go and get your tickets now at MaximumFun.org/events and submit your disputes at MaximumFun.org/jjho.

Jesse Thorn: And before we leave this segment, I would like to mention that John Hodgman has a brand-new Maximum Fun podcast called *E Pluribus Motto*.

John Hodgman: That's right.

Jesse Thorn: With our friend Janet Varney. Now this basically was a—this was—? How did this happen? This was like the two of you had a shared a fever dream or something. (*Laughs.*)

John Hodgman: Janet Varney said, “Hey!” During a recent MaxFun drive, Janet Varney said, “Hey, if we hit a certain membership goal, would you like to do a podcast about all of the United States mottos with me?”

And I said, “I absolutely would! But can we also do state birds and songs and state muffins?” All of the state trivia and other information that you might want to know, you will learn it as we go state by state and Commonwealth by Commonwealth on *E Pluribus Motto*, available right now at MaximumFun.org. And the only reason that we did it, of course, is that we did meet that membership goal. And we're so happy about that that we decided to go ahead and make a very long podcast!

[00:50:00]

I mean, it's—what? 50 States? Well, let's say 46 States and four Commonwealths and some territories and districts as well. And it's a lot of fun.

Jesse Thorn: Janet, if you don't know, is not only the host of the great Maximum Fun podcast, *The JV Club*, and one of the co-founders and co-operators of San Francisco's SketchFest, as well as one of the stars of television's *You're the Worst*, she's also—this is most relevant to my seven-year-old—the voice of Korra in *The Legend of Korra*. So, there's a thousand reasons that you should be paying attention to what Janet has to say, and that's all beside the fact that she is one of the funniest people I know. So, I am really excited about *E Pluribus Motto*. It launched with two launch episodes, so that you can binge a little bit as we get the show started. So, search your podcast app for *E Pluribus Motto*. I think you're going to have a great time.

John Hodgman: Yeah, we recorded them in order of the adoption of the official motto. So, it's like Connecticut is first, and then I think we go to Rhode Island? Well, you'll find out. Everything you need is over there at MaximumFun.org. Not least of which is MaximumFun.org/events for those tickets to the *Judge John Hodgman* shows in New England. See you there!

Jesse Thorn: 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: So, Simon. Judge John Hodgman says: sit down, because you have no standing. Zero standing. You have zero standing. Right? I mean, you have established—not only through your words, but through your pictures—that you share an equal, high tolerance for clutter that extends far beyond this spot next to the toilet. You try to make a distinction between piles of purpose versus purposeless piles. But when you compare your double vanity to the pile of magazines next to the toilet—to my eyes, same amount of clutter, not really distinct. And indeed, they serve a purpose. A real purpose! To make Liz feel bad every morning.

(They laugh.)

Because she didn't do her homework, and she's behind. And yet, even though you have no standing, I cannot throw this case out of court and rule in Liz's favor automatically. Because, Liz, you are confronting a problem that I have great sympathy with. One problem that I have had all my life is letting homework pile up—procrastination—and feeling awful about it. Feeling awful about it. All. The. Time. Procrastination is one of the most insidious bad habits to get into, because it ruins your quality of life far more when you're not doing the thing you're putting off than the small hassle of doing the thing that you're putting off. Which is such an improvement of your quality of your emotional life. There's that. And then there's also addiction to phones, which is a real issue that we all have.

And with regard to your defense, Simon—that we like to stay on top of things by looking at our phones: particularly now, I say don't. Jesse and I share a good friend in David Rees. David Rees is the co-creator and costar of the show that we made for Hulu and FX called *Dicktown*—available now on Hulu—and potentially an unnamed secret project that seems to be coming into focus! More on that later!

But David has a side project, a podcast called *Election Profit Makers*, with his childhood friend Jon Kimball. And if you listen to that—and you should, because it's a lot of fun. Unless you want to put election news aside for a while, which I don't blame you. But he's always hectoring Jon Kimball for remaining an active user of the website we used to call Twitter.

And there's one of the most explosive moments in podcasting history, as far as I'm concerned, was when David said to Jon, “Why are you still there? It is only causing you heartache. It is only causing you pain. It is not a force for good in the world. It is terrible. Why are you still using this application that we used to call Twitter?”

And Jon admitted quietly a hard truth. He said, “Because I think I might make a difference.”

You've never heard a childhood friend laugh harder at a childhood friend.

(They laugh.)

And even Jon had to laugh at himself. Because of course, scrolling through not just news, but at this point misinformation, propaganda, clickbait, ragebait—

[00:55:00]

—all of the stuff that social media has arranged itself to connect to your brain and make it hard for you to put your phone down? That is not making a difference. Witnessing all of this stuff does not make a difference. And certainly, posting your takes on this stuff does not make a difference. What makes a difference is action in the real world.

And if you want to make a difference in the real world, take action in the real world. Find an organization that is dedicated to the things that you—and I'm not ordering you to do this; I'm just saying. It's what we call on the *Judge John Hodgman* the “help in the way you're asked to help” principle, rather than the way that you want to help or feel compelled to scroll-through-help. You know what I mean? Like, find an organization that is aligned with your principles, see what they want you to do in the real world, and do that. If that's how you want to engage in this world. We need engagement in this world.

But what you're doing on your phone when not reading your veterinary magazines is not good for anyone, especially you. When by contrast, reading about dog poop in a magazine is going to help some dogs! That's very valuable! Think of Sherman! Think of Sherman. And it's critical.

Like, I really feel you. As an old magazine-er, you said something that really resonated with me and I think is true, and something that we've lost to a degree, which is that your phones and your computers and your digitized information are great when you're doing a specific search for something that you already know you need to know about. But browsing through a magazine, much like browsing through a bookstore or doing all the kinds of browsing that we used to do of curated collections of articles or information or whatever, that helps us discover and make connections that we didn't know we—as you put it, you learn about the things you didn't know you needed to know about, or you didn't know that you didn't know about.

And something about paging through a physical magazine is conducive to that kind of intellectual discovery that the screen can't replicate. So, to me, the solution here is obvious. Not just in terms of how to make Simon a little bit happier about the bathroom arrangement, because Simon's going to forget we even spoke about this in five minutes, it turns out!

(Simon laughs.)

But it will increase happiness for you. And that is: read the magazines! Don't bring your phone into the bathroom. Sit down, for whatever reason you might sit down, and spend that ritual every morning skimming through one magazine and then recycling it. Magazines offer a different kind of torment, right? Because anyone who has a magazine subscription, or ever has, has had them pile up. And you feel like I'm never going to get back to this. And I have a family member who is preoccupied, driven to distraction, by the numbers of *New Yorkers* they haven't finally gotten around to reading.

And the only solution for that is to read them! Read them. You will do net good in the world. And you know, you say you need 30 minutes to process one magazine. I suspect you can get that down to 15 or 20. Like you know, we were already skipping the bird and herpetological sections. Like, give it a good, solid skim. Or read one article. Get it done within one—shall we say—sitting. Put it on the other side of the toilet, Simon grabs it, throws it away.

Then you're going to be done—we think they got 45 in there, right? So, in 45 days. Maybe you take a weekend off, a couple weekends off, right? So, like in two months, you will have processed 45 of them, and you will be a smarter, even better than you are veterinarian. You know, you don't need to become a better veterinarian; you're great at it. But you'll be even better, and you'll feel good. And it'll also, I think, be good. I mean, it'll be good for your—not to be gross about it, but it'll be good for your waste processing. You know what I mean?

Like, your gut is very attuned to your emotions. It's gonna—you're gonna have a better time on the toilet if you do your homework. Man, let that be what I'm remembered by.

(They laugh.)

Liz: Sage advice.

John Hodgman: Just every day, 15-20 minutes. Process one magazine, get rid of it. You will—as I say, in two months, you'll get rid of all the 45 that you got there. You will have brought in eight.

[01:00:00]

And you're going to be ahead of the game! And you're going to feel so good. And you will be making a difference. This is the sound of a gavel.

Sound Effect: A drawn out, chugging toilet flush sound.

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.)

Liz, how do you feel?

Liz: I feel really good. Actually, that is—I think that's going to give me the impetus to do what I wanted to do in the first place, which is to read the journals. And maybe it'll get me through—let's just say the next month is going to be stressful for everybody. And yeah! No, I think that's great advice. And I think, you know, Simon's beef was more on principle. So, the principle that I would never read them, so what was the point? And I think this is good, because then I feel like he'll be satisfied.

Jesse Thorn: Simon, are you satisfied?

Simon: Yes. And just to clarify, it wasn't principle; it was evidence, the fact that she never read them. Yeah, so I'm feeling that.

Jesse Thorn: Simon, Liz, thank you for joining us on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

Liz: Thank you so much.

Simon: Thank you.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: Another *Judge John Hodgman* case is in the books. We've got Swift Justice coming up right around the corner. But first, our thanks to Redditor u/baltinerdist, who named this week's episode. You can join us at [MaximumFun.Reddit.com](https://www.reddit.com/r/MaximumFun), not only to submit some names for our next episode, but also to chat about this one. It's a very pleasant, positive community there at [MaximumFun.Reddit.com](https://www.reddit.com/r/MaximumFun).

John Hodgman: Hey, I'm a member of that community, and I enjoy checking in and chopping it up with people about the cases. In a fun and productive way.

Jesse Thorn: It's fun! Evidence and photos from the show are on our Instagram, at [Instagram.com/judgejohnhodgman](https://www.instagram.com/judgejohnhodgman), as well as on the page for this episode at [MaximumFun.org](https://www.maximumfun.org). You can find us on TikTok and YouTube where you can watch full episodes of *Judge John Hodgman* just by looking for *Judge John Hodgman* Pod, [@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJmHodgmanPod). So, make sure to smash those like and subscribe buttons and tell a friend.

If you got a friend who enjoys YouTube and isn't a podcast person, tell them they can watch *Judge John Hodgman* right there on the YTs.

John Hodgman: You can also watch Jesse Thorn and I eat some pawpaws, and Jesse pet some capybaras. The two very popular videos that we put up recently!

Jesse Thorn: That's true. Those pawpaws were pretty good! I like—spoiler alert, but I like pawpaws.

John Hodgman: You know, I give pawpaws five stars! And speaking of five stars, I want to say thank you to SAS235 over there on the Apple podcast application for the very kind review. SAS235 said, "I don't miss a show. It's one of my favorites. Smart, fun, funny, and just the right level of nerddom. My wife, who's a whole human being in her own right, even likes it." Five stars, they gave us!

Jesse Thorn: Judge Hodgman, you know what just the right level of nerddom is?

John Hodgman: No, what?

Jesse Thorn: You're a nerd, and I'm artsy.

John Hodgman: That's right. I am a nerd. Jesse's artsy. And thank you, SAS235, for that five-star review. Hey, if you're listening to us over there on Apple podcasts, why don't you go and leave us a review right now? Dare I ask for five stars? Well, if that's the way you feel, yes, I do ask it! Because not only do I love reading your feedback, but it really helps new listeners find the show.

And guess what? You can now rate and review the show on Pocket Casts as well. And/or! Leave a comment on Spotify or as mentioned, our YouTube page <http://www.youtube.com/@judgejohnhodgmanpod>. If you go over there, you can watch me eat a Maine-style, fluorescent-red hot dog, fresh—and cold, out of the bag. Five-star content.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah, uncooked, just straight out of that package. (*Chuckles.*)

John Hodgman: Straight out of the pack.

Jesse Thorn: And not just take a bite. You took a bite, thought about it, then wolfed down the rest of it.

John Hodgman: It's called commitment.

Jesse Thorn: *Judge John Hodgman* was created by Jesse Thorn and John Hodgman. This episode was engineered by Ernest Ibarra at Chatterbox Studio in San Antonio, Texas. Our social media manager is Nattie Lopez. The podcast is edited by AJ McKeon. Our video editor is Daniel Speer. Our producer is Jennifer Marmor.

Now Swift Justice. Are you ready for this, John?

John Hodgman: I am.

Jesse Thorn: This one comes from our members only mailbag, the Membo mailbag. If you're a member of Maximum Fun, you can listen to our monthly members only podcast, *The Membo Mailbag*, by subscribing in your bonus content feed.

Okay, here we go. Erika from Mount Kisco, New York—thank you for being a member, Erika—writes, “My 12-year-old son, Ewan, believes that if you go into a food store, you have to buy something. But I browse in stores all the time without buying. Who’s right?”

[01:05:00]

John Hodgman: Look, you can browse in stores aaall the time without buying. Bookstores, clothing stores, knickknack stores, gift shops. But I'm going to say something. If you're going into a food shop of some kind, that stuff's perishable. Get a water or something! Your son is

more ethical than you are, Erika. Ewan's right! Just get a water, stay hydrated, help the business. And I would say even in a bookshop, you can probably find something that you like there. But I mean, just get a little something to support the business that is putting a roof over your head for a minute. But whatever the case, Erika, I echo my friend and cohost, Jesse Thorn. Thank you for being a Maximum Fun member.

If you're a member, you can send us a letter about anything. We'll read it on *The Membo Mailbag*. If you're not a member. You can become one right now by going to MaximumFun.org/join. Otherwise, your point of contact for me, Judge John Hodgman, is always MaximumFun.org/jjho. And while you have that page open, won't you send us a dispute? Our live show is coming soon to Vermont, Maine, and Massachusetts, and we're looking for your New England style beefs.

Jesse Thorn: Send them right in! MaximumFun.org/jjho, and make sure to let us know you're within hailing distance of one of those live shows. Because we do need your cases to make those live shows sing. And you know what? No matter what, MaximumFun.org/jjho. No matter where you are or how big your beef is, send it to us. That's MaximumFun.org/jjho. And we'll talk to you next time on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Transition: Cheerful ukulele chord.

Speaker 1: Maximum Fun.

Speaker 2: A worker-owned network.

Speaker 3: Of artist owned shows.

Speaker 4: Supported—

Speaker 5: —directly—

Speaker 6: —by you!