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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, "Squatters Rights". Diane brings the case against her husband, Will. Will grew up attending a summer camp deep in the wilderness of Ontario. And last year, he bought it. Diane loves being a camp director and living off the grid, except for one thing: the communal outhouse, called The Fort. Diane wants a proper toilet in their cabin, but Will says privacy is impractical! 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:** "Sitting there before me in the living room—shirtless, barefoot, and wearing only an old pair of jeans—sat my biblical companion, Michael Rapunzel: the great guru of the commune known as the Brotherhood of the Spirit; the lead singer and songwriter for the rock band Spirit and Flesh; the Pied Piper of Western Massachusetts; and the Grand Wizard of Warwick, sitting with a half-empty bucket of Kentucky Fried Chicken right in front of him."

Bailiff Jesse Thorn, please swear the litigants in.

**Jesse Thorn:** Will and Diane, 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, as far as I know and want to know, he does not use the bathroom.

*(They swear.)*

Judge Hodgman, you may proceed.

**John Hodgman:** *(Dramatically.)* We shall maintain the taboo of our excretions, Jesse! I shall never admit that I use the bathroom. And that way we can continue to travel the world together.

**Jesse Thorn:** *(Laughing.)* Indeed.

**John Hodgman:** And indeed, inhabit a podcast together. Will and Diane, you may be seated.

*(Chairs squeak.)*

For an immediate summary judgment on one of your favors, can either of you name the piece of culture that I referenced as I entered this fake courtroom? Let's start with you, Diane. What's your guess?

**Diane:** I have no idea. So, I'm just gonna say *Wet Hot American Summer*? *(Laughs.)*

**John Hodgman:** *Wet Hot American Summer*, a great summer camp movie.

**Diane:** Great summer camp movie.

**John Hodgman:** For a summer camp themed case. I love that guess.

**Jesse Thorn:** Captures the tone of the film perfectly.

*(They laugh.)*

**John Hodgman:** No comment on its rightness or wrongness yet.

**Jesse Thorn:** Judge Hodgman, I'm an expert on this one. Because a guy I know wrote the foreword to the published screenplay of *Wet Hot American Summer*. I won't say who it was, but it rhymes with Messy Torn.

**John Hodgman:** Oh!

**Diane:** Really?!

**Jesse Thorn:** Did you really write the foreword?

*(Jesse confirms.)*

Oh, alright! Alright, that's a good plug. Go out and get that. The published screenplay of *Wet Hot American Summer*. In fact, let's make that your guess too.

**Diane:** That's what I meant. That's what I meant. That's what I meant.

**John Hodgman:** The movie and the published screenplay.

**Diane:** Actually, can I change it to—I would like my answer to be the intro to the published screenplay of *Wet Hot American Summer*.

**John Hodgman:** Jesse Thorn's introduction. Okay. Three guesses.

**Diane:** Yes, correct.

**John Hodgman:** Alright. I'm not gonna comment on the wrongness or rightness of all guesses yet. For now, Will, it is your turn to guess. What is your guess, sir?

**Will:** The best I've got is some kind of Tom Cruise movie.

**John Hodgman:** Some kind—? What? Why?

**Jesse Thorn:** (*Chuckling.*) Again, captures the tone.

**John Hodgman:** What's the reasoning behind that guess? We're talking about your summer camp, we're talking about toilets, uhhh—we're not talking about stunts. Or missions impossible.

**Will:** I was just thinking of the one where he's in his underwear, sliding through the living room.

**John & Diane:** (*In unison.*) *Risky Business?*

**Will:** Yes, that's the one. And I have no idea why that movie popped into my mind.

**John Hodgman:** Well, because he was not even wearing jeans in that. But he was shirtless and shoeless and risky and business.

**Will:** And my wife can vouch for the fact that my cultural connections are entirely arbitrary.

**John Hodgman:** No, you don't have time to be watching movies at summer camp.

(*Will confirms.*)

If those kids are lucky, you're gonna screen a 16mm print of Shirley Jackson's *The Lottery*.

(*Will laughs.*)

And that's it. In the multipurpose room.

**Diane:** That is what they used to do; they used to do the films, and they would have to tape them together. Right?

**Will:** Tape the 16mm, yep.

**John Hodgman:** (*Overlapping.*) Sure, splice even. Yep. Well, we'll talk more about your summer camp in a second. Because right now I gotta tell you, all guesses are wrong. The quote that I read to you is a 2009 blog entry by a person named Tom Devine of Northampton,

Massachusetts—who I do not know personally. Might be a listener to the show. Maybe I've met him 1,000 times. Sorry, Tom, if I have. But Tom was describing his brief membership—

[00:05:00]

—in a western Massachusetts commune that was called Brotherhood of the Spirit, and later the Renaissance community.

Now, Jesse Thorn, just last week we performed live in Turner's Falls, specifically at the Shea Theater. Which I only recently learned—and frequently forget, because it's so weird—but the Shea Theater in Turner's was the high church and epicenter of the Renaissance Community at its height in the 1970s. And at that time, the commune that this person, Michael Rapunzel, had started in a treehouse in Leiden, Massachusetts had grown to hundreds of members and dozens of profitable businesses. They basically had taken over Turner's Falls.

And that's—(*chuckles*) we'll talk more about this later, Jesse, but it was around that time that Michael had changed his name to Rapunzel to focus less on being a commune leader and more on being a drug- and booze-addled rock star with a band called the Spirit and Flesh. Now, why he would change his name to Rapunzel to become a rock star when his literal birth name was Michael Metelica is just one of the strange decisions that this guy made that led to the commune eventually hating him and paying him \$10,000 to leave the commune forever. Which he did in the 1980s, and then he went out to the Hudson Valley and passed away from cancer in 2003.

**Jesse Thorn:** And that's when our friend Monte Belmonte took it over?

**John Hodgman:** Yeah, exactly. (*Chuckles.*) The Brotherhood of Spirit, aka the Renaissance Community, does not exist—at least not in any recognizable form now. I think some of their businesses are still around. But the Shea Theater is now a community theater where we perform as live *Judge John Hodgman* shows from time to time, along with a lot of other great community events. There's no more cult interners.

But this was a completely unknown and wild history to me, even when I was spending huge parts of my life in the Pioneer Valley and performing at the Shea. And if you want to learn more about it, there's a documentary about this, the Brotherhood of the Spirit, that's called *Free Spirits*. You can get it at [AcornProductions.net](http://AcornProductions.net).

And that's where you can also find a photo of Toilet City! Jesse Thorn. I think I texted you Toilet City, right? Wanna take a look?

**Jesse Thorn:** You have texted me a photograph of Toilet City, John.

**John Hodgman:** Would you open up your phone, and look at Toilet City for me, and describe what you see?

**Jesse Thorn:** Yeah, I see whatever algorithm lives inside my phone being ruined forever.

*(They laugh.)*

So, it's a photograph of some... hippies.

**John Hodgman:** Yeah, you can say it. Hippies.

**Jesse Thorn:** And just classic, old timey hippies. Some of them shirtless, others wearing peasant blouses. And it's a mixed gender group, and—*(laughing and hamming up the joke)* you can never tell with these long-hairs.

**John Hodgman:** *(Scoffing.)* I know, really.

**Jesse Thorn:** And they appear to be sitting on—one, two—five different toilets. It's five people sitting on five different toilets, hanging out, and reading newspapers and magazines, and chatting.

**John Hodgman:** Right, this was the Brotherhood in Spirit communal toilet circle. The toilets are arranged in a circle, so that you have to look at other people while they are doing their business. And it says the caption is, “1971, boys and girls using these toilets,”—quote—“to get over their hangups.” But also to erode their individual sense of privacy and make them more submissive to the cult, I think! And this is kind of what you got going on up at your cult/camp. Right, Will?

**Will:** Well, our toilets are more in a row. And we have six toilets, so we're all facing—

**John Hodgman:** Uh-huh. Not to brag.

**Will:** We're all facing the same direction, not each other. We're not savages.

**John Hodgman:** Oh, we're going to be looking at a photo of your Toilet City in a second.

*(Jesse laughs.)*

But let me get a little bit of background in here. So, Diane, you and your husband, Will, purchased a boy's summer camp in Ontario. You bought a camp. Why did you not buy a zoo?

**Diane:** Because that movie was already taken. So, yeah.

**John Hodgman:** When did you buy this summer camp and why?

**Diane:** We bought this summer camp I think in November of 2023?

*(Will confirms.)*

**John Hodgman:** Oh, okay. Recently!

**Diane:** Recently. Yes. I mean, it was—you know—a year-long process of getting there. But yes, we bought it. We actually met through this summer camp as well.

**John Hodgman:** Oh, okay! Well, Will, you have history with this camp, correct?

**Will:** That's right. I started as a camper when I was 12 years old.

**John Hodgman:** So, tell me about this camp and your history with it. What's the name of the camp?

**Will:** The name is Camp Pathfinder. It's located on an island in Algonquin Park, Ontario. The camp specializes in wilderness canoe tripping. We go on canoe trips all over Ontario in handmade, wooden, cedar, canvas canoes.

[00:10:00]

And then come back to Pathfinder Island, where we have fun and poop together.

*(They all stutter into laughter.)*

**John Hodgman:** I can hear the sound of every listener clicking their keyboards as they rush to the URL. And I encourage them to check it out. It looks like a lot of fun.

**Jesse Thorn:** This episode of our show is a real skibbity nightmare.

*(They laugh.)*

**John Hodgman:** What is the body of water that these handmade canoes ply?

**Will:** We go—Algonquin Park is a region of thousands of small lakes connected by trails, called portages. And so, we go from lake to lake. The camp itself is on a lake called Source Lake.

**John Hodgman:** Oh! Like the Source Community, another commune north of—in Laurel Canyon, in Los Angeles in the '70s.

**Will:** We are really struggling to not be cult-like. The Source Lake is called that, because it is the source of the Madawaska River, which flows towards the sea.

**John Hodgman:** So, these portages are areas where you carry the canoe, right? You get out of the lake, and you carry it to the next lake.

**Will:** That's right.

**John Hodgman:** Okay, got it.

**Jesse Thorn:** The Source Family were known as the Source Family, because they were the source of Green Goddess Dressing, which they invented in the '70s.

**Diane:** Really?!

**Jesse Thorn:** Yeah!

**John Hodgman:** They pumped it out at the Source Family restaurant on Sunset Boulevard. The Source Family also has a great documentary. I mean, these are good documentaries you can be watching. You should be showing them at your camp in fact, I think, is probably a good idea.

**Will:** We'll put it in the queue right after *Deliverance*.

**John Hodgman:** What are the ages of your campers? (*Chuckling.*)

**Will:** We start at 7 years old, and we go up to 16 years old.

**John Hodgman:** And you were—you started at 7 years old.

**Will:** I started at 12, but then I was a counselor and a senior staff person as well.

**John Hodgman:** And when and why did you decide to buy it?

**Will:** Oh gosh, I became a schoolteacher, and continued working at the camp well into my 30s, and then met Diane while I was working at the camp. Because her family has a cottage across the lake. So, I paddled over in a canoe and asked her out one day. We ended up getting married at the camp, and have—as we've had a family, we've continued going back to the lake each summer. And so, when the opportunity became available, it was sort of a dream for our family.

**John Hodgman:** And we'll decide how much of a dream it was. But you did it, and you spent a last summer there as the director of the camp.

**Will:** That's right! It was our first—we completed our first summer as owners and directors.

**John Hodgman:** And it says here that the camp is off the grid. How off the grid is it? What is life like at Pathfinder Island? Which really sounds like a CD ROM game from 1997, but.

(*They laugh; Jesse gets a real kick out of it.*)

**Will:** We're accessible by boat, so we get all of our food and supplies brought over to the island on pontoon boats.

**John Hodgman:** I trust everything is No Name brand from Loblaw's?

*(Will laughs.)*

**Diane:** I love that you know them!

**John Hodgman:** Oh! I can't stop thinking about them.

**Jesse Thorn:** They came to visit us once in Canada! People from No Name brand came and visited us, and I still use my No Name brand water bottle and flip flops when I go to the pool.

**John Hodgman:** I have my No Name pack of playing cards. It just says "king" on one side.

**Will:** It's a very comfortable yellow on all the labels.

**John Hodgman:** Yeah, it's a—look it up. No Name Canadian brand groceries, everybody. If you haven't heard me rant about it—particularly their evaporated milk can has a beautiful cow on it.

**Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

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**Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

**John Hodgman:** Let's get back to whatever we were talking about.

**Will:** We were talking about how Camp Pathfinder is not a cult.

*(Diane laughs.)*

**John Hodgman:** You get your food canoed in, correct?

**Will:** Motorboat, but yeah.

**John Hodgman:** Motorboat. Oh, okay. Well, they're lucky. And do you have electricity?

**Will:** We have a cable that brings electricity under the lake. And we've got electric service in just a couple of buildings. But none of the sleeping areas have electricity. Just the kitchen and the office, that kind of thing.

**John Hodgman:** Do you have a well? Do you have running water, or what?



**Will:** We pump water out of the lake, and we run it through a rigorous filtration process.

**John Hodgman:** Mm-hm. Okay. Everyone in this—everyone. Alright. Gotcha.

**Diane:** It's tested regularly, so that it's—

**John Hodgman:** Hey, Diane, I wasn't going to say anything about drinking this disgusting lake water. I was going to let it pass.

Diane, when Jesse introduced this case, he said that you love spending summers at the camp, apart from this toilet issue. That may or may not be true. That's just something I wrote.

*(They laugh.)*

So, let me ask you, did you love spending the summer at the camp—overall, apart from the toilets?

**Diane:** I did. I did. Well, I grew up going to my family's cottage across the lake. It's a pretty small lake. Because the camp and my cottage is in—

**John Hodgman:** Well, it's getting smaller every day with all these campers drinking it.

**Diane:** *(Laughing.)* It's true. It's true. So, my family has a cottage there from the—we got it in the '50s. It was my grandfather and grandmother's. And then—so, I started going up when I was a little kid. So, the place is very near and dear to my heart, the lake is. And so, yeah, I do love it up there. And I love—

**John Hodgman:** Well, I mean your family cottage probably has a working toilet, right?

**Diane:** Um, it had a—

**John Hodgman:** Or does it?

**Diane:** No! *(Laughs.)*

**Will:** I think you should describe the cottage outhouse.

**John Hodgman:** Yeah. Please describe the cottage outhouse!

**Diane:** So, it has an outhouse—a single use outhouse, composting outhouse, built and designed by Will, sitting right here next to me, my husband.

**John Hodgman:** You're saying that until you met this young swain who canoed across the lake to woo you, you didn't have any bathroom in your grandparents' cottage?

**Diane:** We had an old septic toilet that went to like a big tank underground.

**John Hodgman:** Septic tank, yeah.

**Diane:** It was a septic tank. (*Chuckling.*) Could not withstand very much.

**John Hodgman:** Could not handle the poops anymore.

**Diane:** No, no.

**John Hodgman:** It was all done.

**Jesse Thorn:** Honestly, I would hate to drive that pontoon boat.

(*John snorts.*)

**Diane:** There is that boat, the poop boat!

**John Hodgman:** You mean there's a boat that goes around emptying septic tanks all around the lake system?

**Will:** It's a very special boat.

**Diane:** Yes, it's a very special boat.

**John Hodgman:** Why is there not a sitcom set on this poop boat, Canadian poop barge?

**Diane:** *The Poop Deck* really has a meaning in that one.

**John Hodgman:** Yeeees! Now, you are not Ontarians, either of you.

**Diane:** No, we live in the great state of New Jersey.

**John Hodgman:** Was your family Ontarian? Is that why they had the cottage up there? Or are they just—?

**Diane:** My grandfather was from Rochester, which is somewhat close-ish. So, yeah.

**John Hodgman:** The expanded Ontario universe, we'll say. Okay.

**Diane:** Yes. Rochester, I think, expands further north, because they just wanted to be colder.

**John Hodgman:** Got it. Well, I'm not talking about your family camp experience anymore. I'm talking about summer camp for boys, adventure canoe trip, living the whole summer on

Pathfinder Island. Do you love it? Set aside the toilets! We're going to talk about them in a second. Do you love it? Yes or no?

**Diane:** I do. I really do. I love being on the lake. I love the community. Yes.

**John Hodgman:** Right, right. Okay. That sounded a little rehearsed. But okay.

**Diane:** Nooo! I really do. I genuinely love it. And we have three daughters that are—

**John Hodgman:** Did they spend the summer with you?

**Diane:** They did. They did.

**John Hodgman:** How old are they?

**Diane:** They are—it's her birthday today, our youngest. She's seven today. Seven, nine, and 13.

**John Hodgman:** Oh, wow. And they wanted—they enjoyed spending a whole summer at a boy's canoe trip camp?

**Diane:** The oldest went to like a girl's camp.

**John Hodgman:** Oh, they were somewhere else.

**Diane:** For one month, and then was with us for one month. But yeah.

**John Hodgman:** Alright. Got it. I'm glad there's so much love on Pathfinder Island, but let's go down to Toilet City. Diane, you submitted some photographic evidence of what is now known—

[00:20:00]

—and has always been known, I think—as The Fort. And let's take a look at that evidence. Exhibit A.

**Jesse Thorn:** (*Singing softly to the tune of "Paradise City" by Guns N' Roses.*) "Take me down to the toilet city, where the boys are canoeing, and the holes are (*sensor beep*)."

(*They giggle.*)

**John Hodgman:** (*Singing along.*) "Yeah, yeah, take me homeee."

Alright, "Exhibit A: the boys' communal outhouse, AKA The Boys' Fort, along with the camp's one-eyed cat." Oh, that's not a euphemism. There is a cat, Opal. Oh, look at that! This

image obviously will be available on our show page at [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org), as well as on our Instagram page, [@JudgeJohnHodgman](https://www.instagram.com/JudgeJohnHodgman). And I'm gonna tell you right now, this image is a real rollercoaster.

**Jess Thorn:** (*Giggling excitedly.*) H-h-h-hoooly cow!

**John Hodgman:** Because you start at the top, and you're reading— Your eye reads—one, two, three, four, five—toilets right next to each other, no barriers whatsoever, side-by-side in a very dystopian kind of zero-privacy poop bunker. And then just when you feel like terrified, there's this beautiful little one-eyed cat looking at you at the bottom of the photo. It's very—it's a real run from disturbing to cute in this photo.

**Diane:** She did not lose her eye in the toilet, by the way, the cat.

**John Hodgman:** I'm glad to hear that.

**Jesse Thorn:** John, it's a beautiful cat, but context is everything. And this beautiful cat, in the context of this terrifying toiletscape, really seems like it has dark magical powers.

(*They laugh.*)

**John Hodgman:** It really does. Opal, the one-eyed cat, lives at the camp?

**Will:** That's right. Opal is the pet of our assistant director, Erica.

**John Hodgman:** And where does Opal use the bathroom?

**Will:** Wherever she wants.

**John Hodgman:** Alright. Fair. What kind of toilets are these, Will?

**Will:** These, I should clarify, are the staff toilets.

(*Jesse and John laugh.*)

That's for the staff, are the—

**Jesse Thorn:** (*Teasingly.*) Oh, that's why they're so nice?

**Will:** Well, they are the most advanced, in terms of communal pooping. The toilets that the campers prefer to use do have partial dividers, creating some separation.

**John Hodgman:** Oh! Oh, right. Due to the reasonable demands of parents.

(*Will confirms.*)

Right, wanting their children to not be traumatized. So, to be clear, this structure that is called The Boys' Fort, or The Fort, is not actually used by the campers. It's used by the staff.

**Will:** Correct. The Boys' Fort is adjacent to the picture we're looking at, and is similar in all respects, except that there are—there's a wooden divider between each.

**John Hodgman:** There are dividers. So, they have a modicum of privacy.

**Will:** A modicum is a perfect word for it.

**John Hodgman:** Right, but they're not sitting in a circle like Toilet City in western Massachusetts. They're sitting in a row, facing out towards a screen—?

**Will:** A view of Source Lake.

**John Hodgman:** Right. So, unless you're walking right in front of them, you're not going to see them.

*(Will confirms.)*

But these toilets are the staff toilets and the directors and directors' family toilets? Is that what's happening here?

**Will:** These are the—this would be what we call The Men's Fort. So, this is where I poop.

**John Hodgman:** Okay. Do you know what the definition of fort is?

*(Jesse laughs.)*

**Will:** I don't know the exact origin of our usage of it. But I know in the history of Canada, early fur traders would set up outposts along the shore of Hudson Bay, and those all were called forts.

**Jesse Thorn:** John, many things can be used to fortify a fortification. Stone, adobe, holes full of doo-doo.

**John Hodgman:** *(Laughs.)* That's right. I forgot about the traditional doo-doo-hole fort structure.

**Jesse Thorn:** My main question looking at this photograph is—*(laughing)* and it's a beautiful photograph that people should definitely take a look at.

*(John agrees.)*

Is if you're in the middle of nowhere in Ontario, where did you find a chic interior design and home décor store to purchase these decorative toilet seats? (*Laughs.*)

**John Hodgman:** Yes, all along the back wall and the side wall are decorative toilet seats that seem to have plaques attached to them.

**Will:** Oh gosh, yeah, those are really important.

(*Jesse laughs.*)

Those are commemorative toilet seats, with names painted on them from some of our most legendary canoe expeditions. So, when a canoe trip descends a river for the first time in Pathfinder history, they'll get to write their names on a toilet seat, and that toilet seat will get retired up onto the wall of our fort.

**John Hodgman:** What a more fitting tribute to exploration than a decorative toilet seat on the wall of a shed. Excuse me, fort.

**Will:** We are a boys' camp. Yeah.

**John Hodgman:** I understand. I love it. Okay.

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(*Sighs.*) So, I'm looking at this photo now. What about this could possibly be not-acceptable to you, Diane?

**Diane:** Well, so this is The Boys' Fort. The Ladies' Fort, as it's called, looks the same—except instead of six toilets, there are four.

**John Hodgman:** Okay.

**Diane:** But other than that, it's completely identical. We don't have—

**John Hodgman:** No dividers in The Ladies' Fort.

**Diane:** No dividers. No dividers in The Ladies' Fort.

**John Hodgman:** And again, The Ladies' Fort would be used just by she/her people at the camp.

(*Diane confirms.*)

And not campers, presumably. 'Cause—

**Diane:** No. Yes, there are no lady campers.

**John Hodgman:** Adults and your daughters?

**Diane:** And my daughters, yes. But we do have some female swim staff and staff members.

**John Hodgman:** Got it. Okay. Got it. So, why don't you want to poop and pee right next to—?

**Diane:** The people I employ?

**John Hodgman:** Yeah, exactly. What's wrong with that? It seems like team building to me.

**Diane:** I mean, I think for a lot of the boys, it is! I think that they call it a board meeting when they all go together.

*(Muffled giggling.)*

**John Hodgman:** Oh, brother.

**Jesse Thorn:** Oh, gee whiz.

**Diane:** You didn't want to know that, sounds like!

**John Hodgman:** I love it!

**Diane:** Yeah, so I think—but, yes, I do like some privacy. And that's pretty much it.

**John Hodgman:** How do your daughters feel about using The Ladies' Fort?

**Diane:** Our middle daughter's fine with it. Our younger daughter does not enjoy it. And our oldest, I think, does not. She's like a teenager now, so I think it's uncomfortable for her.

**John Hodgman:** What is—how far away are the toilets from your home?

**Diane:** Very good point. We have—

**John Hodgman:** Do you have an owner's cabin or something?

**Diane:** We have an owner's cabin. I think Will and I have a bit of a dispute of how far the walk is from our owner's cabin to—

**John Hodgman:** Well, there's no way to find out.

**Diane:** —to the fort. I think it's about a seven-minute walk.

**John Hodgman:** And what would you say, Will?

**Will:** I would say it's about less than 90 seconds.

**John Hodgman:** That's a very, very big discrepancy.

**Jesse Thorn:** But to be fair, Will is holding his eyeglasses thoughtfully. So, I'm inclined to trust him.

**John Hodgman:** How do you account for that discrepancy, if possible, Diane? Seven minutes versus one-and-a-half minutes. Do you really wait until it's an emergency, Will? And then you have to hotfoot it there?

**Will:** To be fair, you know, in the night when it's dark, and there's a need to go number one, most boys don't make it all the way to the fort. Whereas girls often prefer to make it to a seat, to pee. And when it's dark out, the process of getting your shoes on, locating your flashlight, navigating up the trails might take a little bit longer. But during the day, I think it's pretty quick.

**John Hodgman:** I mean, seven minutes is how long it takes for me to walk to the subway. And that is where I usually poop and pee.

*(They laugh.)*

It's a couple of city blocks.

**Diane:** And how does that go for you, to have to walk the seven minutes?

**John Hodgman:** Oh, it goes.

**Diane:** *(Laughs.)* Great.

**John Hodgman:** Even if it's only a four-minute walk.

**Diane:** That's what I was going to say. If we sort of put it down the middle, and it's a four-minute walk— I should say that in the middle of the night, I will just go outside.

**John Hodgman:** Yeah, you're on Pathfinder Island. Now, let me just backtrack here. You just bought it. So, was this—and I hate to put it this way, but was this past summer “summer number one” or “summer number two”?

**Will:** *(Laughs.)* Summer number one.



**John Hodgman:** And overall, how did summer number one go? Give me a headline, each of you.

**Will:** It was a mortality-free summer. Everything went really smoothly.

**John Hodgman:** Congratulations.

**Diane:** I should say every summer at Camp Pathfinder is mortality-free.

*(Will confirms.)*

And it was—the weather was amazing and unbelievable, and everybody had a great time.

**John Hodgman:** You mentioned that the campers love to go hang out together and sit on toilets together and have these board meetings, right? How do their parents feel about it?

**Will:** I think the parents, once they hear about it from their kids, come onboard. Because parents tend to, when they're sending their kids to camp, have a lot of trust in their kids to navigate new scenarios independently.

**John Hodgman:** Yeah. I mean, it feels like part of camp. I mean, to be sure. But it's not like—you're not getting any complaints other than from inside the house.

*(Will confirms.)*

Alright. And I'm looking here at [CampPathfinder.com](http://CampPathfinder.com). I don't mind saying the URL.

**Diane:** Why, thank you.

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**John Hodgman:** If I poke around here on this lovely website, am I going to find a picture of Toilet City? Or no?

**Will:** I don't believe we've got a current photo on the website, no.

**John Hodgman:** You save that. You save that? You don't put that in the advertising?

**Will:** I like to let some things emerge as surprises.

**John Hodgman:** Alright. These toilets are—what kind of toilets are these?

**Will:** They're called vaulted privies. So, the toilets, the waste goes down. Down into a—

**John Hodgman:** *(Interrupting.)* Well, well, well! Sorry, I didn't realize it was also a renaissance fair camp.

**Will:** *(Laughs.)* No, it's very high tech. They go down into a tank, a trough that drains into a large, underground—

**John Hodgman:** Lake called Source Lake, and then we drink it.

**Will:** No, no. Everything's kept completely separate. They go into a large underground tank that's made of very thick plastic that is then pumped out at the end of each season by the very special boat.

**John Hodgman:** By the special boat.

*(Will confirms.)*

And Diane, as attractive as The Men's Fort and The Ladies' Fort—I presume—are as well, you are suing for a private toilet in your own cabin.

**Diane:** I'm suing for a very particular private toilet.

**John Hodgman:** What kind of private toilet are we talking about?

**Diane:** I would like to refer to Exhibit C. It's called the Cinderella toilet.

**John Hodgman:** The Cinderella Travel Incineration Toilet!

**Diane:** I know vaulted privy sounds very fancy, but Cinderella toilet sounds also very lovely.

**John Hodgman:** You sent a link to an off-grid living solutions website that offers the Cinderella Travel Incineration Toilet. And by the way, on sale right now! 10% off. You can get it for a mere \$4,000. It normally retails for almost \$4,500. Sounds like a pretty good deal. Tell me what is an—tell me—*(haughtily)* I mean, of course I know what an incineration toilet is. But let's pretend that I'm not lying.

**Diane:** I will pretend that you have no idea. So, you put—you poop and pee into it. And then there's a small propane tank outside the cabin that starts a fire. *(Laughing.)* I don't know, a fire starts somehow.

**John Hodgman:** You don't know. You don't know.

**Diane:** It burns it. It incinerates your waste.

**John Hodgman:** It burns the waste product.

**Diane:** Into this—I mean, you can see on this pile of ash here that it makes it into that. And then you can grow things out of it, apparently, according to this photo.

**John Hodgman:** But it's not a composting toilet. They're indicating that this is a green solution. Is it? I mean, what is your take on this, Will? Why not get an incinerating toilet for your wife? Why doesn't she deserve an incinerating toilet?

**Will:** Well, you mentioned the cost. And you know, \$4,000/\$4,500 is just for the toilet. The installation is almost as much. And then when you consider it in Canadian dollars, it comes to almost \$10,000 for the toilet, which is significant. Not that—

**John Hodgman:** That's too much. That's too much. Your wife doesn't deserve it.

**Will:** Well, no, exactly. I would hesitate to put a dollar value on the comfort of my wife and daughters.

**John Hodgman:** And three daughters. Yeah.

**Will:** Exactly. You know, in terms of this being a green solution—you know, that's hard to define. I would say that burning the propane—and when we're talking about evaporating urine, that's a fairly energy intensive process.

**John Hodgman:** I'm always talking about evaporating urine.

**Will:** Exactly.

**Jesse Thorn:** I can't get this guy to shut up! We're in the van on tour, (*mocking*) “Blah, blah, blah, evaporating urine! Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. Energy intensive, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah!”

(*Will giggles.*)

**John Hodgman:** So, I'm also reviewing some pros and cons of incinerating toilets here on the internet. (*Stammering.*) You know, there's propane involved. If you don't have electricity, you're gonna need to power the incinerator. And then it has this smokestack. And some people say it stinks. Have you heard that, Will?

**Will:** I have heard that some people smell an odor.

**John Hodgman:** It stinks!

**Jesse Thorn:** Yeah, that's what stink is.

**John Hodgman:** That's what stink is. I'm trying to make your argument here for you. It stinks!

*(They laugh.)*

**Will:** You know, I had not used that in our discussions to-date, because I fear that any solution is going to have a stink element.

**John Hodgman:** Oh, do they?!

**Diane:** *(Laughing.)* Yeah, that's shocking.

**Will:** I concede that point. *(Chuckles.)*

**John Hodgman:** The lines of toilets that dump into a single tank that gets pumped out at the end of the season don't smell so great? That's why you have to have them three city blocks from your home?

**Will:** *(Laughs.)* About as much as an incinerating toilet.

[00:35:00]

**John Hodgman:** But one once per year, \$10,000 Canadian to come take the poop away?

**Will:** Yes. About that.

**John Hodgman:** I got to change my career. I could be driving a Canadian poop lake boat!

**Jesse Thorn:** That's where the money is!

**John Hodgman:** I mean, just—oh my gosh.

**Jesse Thorn:** We could be swimming in Tim Hortons right now.

**John Hodgman:** And why, not a—? You have a—Will had put in a composting toilet to your family cabin, if I remember correctly. And a composting toilet is an alternative outdoor toilet situation that I have seen and used in outhouses before, both at the Rosenmeier's property on Prince Edward Island and when I was visiting our friend Chuck Bryant at his camp in Georgia. Composting toilet.

**Diane:** Oh, so you have a friend who has a camp?

**John Hodgman:** Yeah! I got all kinds of people in my life.

**Diane:** Wow! You just know—yeah.

**John Hodgman:** No, I'm not talking about a summer camp for boys. I'm talking about a place where he pitches a tent. Literally.

**Jesse Thorn:** And barbecues.

**John Hodgman:** Yeah. I think he has composting. Maybe he has incinerating, I don't remember. But I do know a composting toilet is one where you do your business, and then you turn a crank, and it all gets put into a compost, and then it actually can be used as fertilizer. So, I don't know whether there's a cost difference there, but why an incinerating toilet as opposed to any other option?

**Diane:** The camp tried to do a composting toilet. And it was ineffective up there.

**Will:** Yeah, composting toilets can be finicky, in terms of their mechanisms and requirements. The composting process is a delicate one. You have to have very carefully managed temperature and moisture levels, and there's small machines and motors that turn and rotate the compost. And it can require a lot of maintenance.

**John Hodgman:** If a composting toilet was the solution, you would have to put it in an outhouse.

**Diane:** Yes. Yes.

**John Hodgman:** Nearer to your owner's cabin than the forts are, but still outside.

**Diane:** Yes, correct.

**John Hodgman:** And people would look at that, and they would be like, "Well, well, well, the king and queen have their own outhouse!" Is that part of your consideration, Will? That if you get an incinerating toilet in your home, it's going to cause morale to plummet throughout the camp? And then there'll be a takeover of Camp Pathfinder, and it's going to be a *Lord of the Flies* sort of type situation?

**Will:** Sort of a mutiny of sort.

**Jesse Thorn:** Wait! Hold on, Will. Wait until you have the conch. Okay, go ahead. (*Laughs.*)

**Diane:** A poot-iny (*mutiny*)?

**Will:** A poop-iny. No, I'm not worried about that. You know, as the owner of the camp, I recognize that I need to have the support of my family to do this job. And so, I have no shame about wanting them to be comfortable and happy in their pooping.

**John Hodgman:** So, and you think the rest of the camp would understand?

**Will:** I hope so.

**John Hodgman:** So, your consideration is purely price? Is there any other consideration as to why you will deny your wife and—I mean, your daughters want this too. Right, Diane?

**Diane:** Yes. He did come up with a second option to the outhouses, which I can refer to Exhibit D.

**John Hodgman:** Let's take a look at Exhibit D. Thiiiis looks like a bucket.

**Will:** Yeah. So, I concede that the, you know, hiking to the group forts is not necessarily gonna make everyone happy. And so, some sort of private solution makes a lot of sense. And in considering sort of the three major options—an incinerating toilet, a composting toilet, or a bucket privy—the bucket seemed like it was going to be the most practical, the least worrisome and the least likely to have maintenance issues.

So, the way this bucket would work is—it's basically a wooden box with a toilet seat on it, and inside that box is just a bucket. And the bucket would have one of those, green compostable bag liners. You know, kind of like a doggie bag, but bigger.

**John Hodgman:** Like a dog bag. Right.

**Will:** Yeah, but bigger. And then after a—

**John Hodgman:** Are you suggesting that my poops are bigger than a dog's?

*(Jesse chuckles.)*

**Will:** Just, you know, a family collective.

**Diane:** Depends on the size of the dog.

**Will:** Yeah. And so, after an event or several, you would just tie up the bag, and take it out with the garbage.

**John Hodgman:** As Norm Macdonald might say— You know, the way a bucket toilet works is: Jesse, it's a bucket!

*(Jesse agrees with a laugh.)*

How often would you change out the poop bag in your bucket toilet, Will?

**Will:** I would commit to changing it out after every poop. Or if I'm not there, at the end of each day.

**Jesse Thorn:** Would you deal with the poops of others?

**John Hodgman:** Good question.

**Will:** Happily.

**John Hodgman:** Is that what you're offering?

**Will:** I'm in the business of dealing with the poops of 110 boys.

[00:40:00]

**John Hodgman:** No, you're not! They're all going down into a tank.

**Jesse Thorn:** Yeah. The boat deals with the poops! You pay the boatman.

**Will:** I would argue that's dealing with it.

**John Hodgman:** Paying a poop sailor is not the same as emptying a bucket once or multiple times a day.

*(Will concedes.)*

But I'll ask you this, Diane. Let's say that he's as good as his word, and every time you and one of your daughters uses the bucket, you pull on a little chain, and it sounds a little awooga horn, and Will's gonna run back and tidy up your bag.

**Jesse Thorn:** Hold on, Judge Hodgman. I need something different from this situation. If this is going to happen, Will, your current—you're gonna direct a scene with Diane. This is going to be an enactment of what happens when your wife has pooped in a bucket. So, you can give her the dialogue that she needs to use. And I want to know—I want to see your reaction on microphone and camera.

**Diane:** *(Reenacting.)* I pooped. And I peed, too.

*(Jesse cackles.)*

**John Hodgman:** *(Flatly.)* Great.

**Jesse Thorn:** And then, Will, what would you do?

**John Hodgman:** Immediate podcast Emmy for that performance.

**Will:** I'd say, "Great. Would you kindly knot the bag, so that I can—"

**John Hodgman:** Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa! She's got to knot her own bag? Why don't you—you're hauling it, Will. Why don't you knot the bag?

**Will:** Would you like me to knot your bag?

*(John "ugh"s.)*

**Jesse Thorn:** *(Laughing.)* Always.

**John Hodgman:** Things are getting weird on Pathfinder Island.

*(They laugh.)*

**Jesse Thorn:** This is the best episode of this show ever!

**John Hodgman:** Have you proposed knotting the bag to your daughters? And how do they feel about the bucket toilet option?

**Will:** I don't think in a substantive way, no. No.

**John Hodgman:** When you said to your 13-year-old daughter, "Here's a solution: you can poop in a bucket," what was her reaction?

*(They snort through laughter.)*

**Will:** We have not had the conversation with her, no.

**John Hodgman:** You haven't even brought it up yet. How do you suspect it's going to go?

**Will:** I suspect they're going to go for the more sleek, incinerating Cinderella toilet. I mean, the marketing is clearly better on that product.

**John Hodgman:** Also, they're not pooping into a bucket.

**Will:** They're pooping into a flame chamber!

**John Hodgman:** *(Beat.)* Which is awesome?!

*(They laugh.)*

**Will:** Kind of shot myself in the foot on that one.

**John Hodgman:** Now I'm going to throw away my sewer connected toilet, so I can poop into a flame chamber.

**Jesse Thorn:** This thing even comes with a flange!

**John Hodgman:** Break it down for me. Incinerating toilet, \$8,000 American, \$10,000 Canadian outlay, and then it would cost a certain amount of money to keep it running all the time. Right?



**Will:** Probably just the propane, or—

**John Hodgman:** Cost of propane, (*inaudible*) cost of propane.

**Will:** Potentially maintenance if it breaks.

**John Hodgman:** Potentially maintenance. Many, many, many, many delicate moving parts.

**Will:** Many delicate, fragile sensors.

**John Hodgman:** The bucket has no moving parts.

**Will:** It's very simple.

**John Hodgman:** (*Skeptically.*) Yeah...

**Diane:** It's true that there are no moving parts to a bucket.

**John Hodgman:** What's your budget for Project Bucket?

**Will:** \$10,000 Canadian.

(*Diane laughs.*)

**John Hodgman:** Alright. You kids are just joking me.

**Diane:** 25 bucks.

**John Hodgman:** Well, you know, the picture that you sent in looks like a real toilet; it just happens to have a green bag in it that catches everything.

**Will:** You could build a little wooden box to conceal the bucket.

**John Hodgman:** You could make it look nice.

**Will:** To conceal the bucket, yeah. You know, you have to pay—you have to buy the bags.

**John Hodgman:** And the Canadian government wouldn't have a problem with this?

**Will:** Uh, no.

**John Hodgman:** I mean, I presume not. But I just want to double check all—trying to get all of the angles here.

**Will:** Yeah, all of these solutions keep the human waste out of the water stream.

**John Hodgman:** How realistic do you think it is, Will, that you'll be able to empty this bucket efficiently? You've got so many other responsibilities!

**Will:** That's a fair point. Realistically, I concede that there may be times when my wife or daughters may find themselves just emptying the bucket themselves.

**John Hodgman:** 'Cause they don't want to wait for you to come and do it.

*(Will confirms.)*

Or they might just walk away and let you come and get it.

**Will:** Later! Yeah. Which would be fine as well.

**John Hodgman:** That would—would that be fine with you, Diane? If you never had to knot the bag.

**Diane:** I mean, I feel like I will be knotting the bag most of the time—is my feeling, realistically.

**John Hodgman:** Realistically, you think that you're going to have to do it. Uh-huh.

**Diane:** Yeah, that—yes, I do feel that. And I feel I don't want to do that.

*(Jesse chortles.)*

**John Hodgman:** Fair. Why don't you and your daughters just stay at your family cabin and enjoy your composting toilet and everything that that cabin has to offer?

**Diane:** It's hard to be in two different places with three kids.

[00:45:00]

Like, I find it difficult to... “Oh, I left this thing at that place, and we got to go back there to get your—you know, your swim floaties or your bathing suit.” And it's just easier to all be in one place. Plus at camp, the meals are all cooked and done. And—

**John Hodgman:** OH! Okay. Got it.

*(Diane laughs.)*

**Jesse Thorn:** Unlimited sloppy joes, John. That's the secret here.

**John Hodgman:** Yeah. What do you serve? What do you serve for food there? You got that Bug Juice?

**Diane:** There's definitely Bug Juice. Yes.

**John Hodgman:** Will, is there something about an incinerating toilet that violates the spirit of Camp Pathfinder? That is to say, if the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast were to buy you one and install it for you and pay for its upkeep, would it still be a problem for you?

**Will:** Judge, that's a great question.

*(John thanks him.)*

And I'll preface my answer by saying that I really do want the absolute best, most comfortable pooping solution for my family.

**John Hodgman:** So, do I even need to go and consider my verdict?

**Will:** My argument is that the bucket system is the best solution for the pooping.

*(John snorts and gives an exasperated affirmative.)*

And my argument comes down to reliability, right? You know, the summer is two months long. That's 60 days of pooping. And with a toilet that is potentially malfunctioning and having a number of days with no solution, in my mind is a worse outcome for my beloved family than having the bucket toilet. Which is going to be 100% reliable.

**Jesse Thorn:** Will, would it be possible to obtain some sort of—I mean, this is crazy. I know everything comes in on a barge—but some sort of backup solution? Like—like a—

**John Hodgman:** What would you call it though?

**Will:** Like a bucket?

**Jesse Thorn:** I'm thinking a bucket. Yeah. I'm thinking of a bucket. Would it—could you get a bucket onto the island just in case?!

**Diane:** Too expensive.

*(They laugh.)*

**Will:** Too expensive!

**John Hodgman:** Alright. But let's be real about expense for a second here, because I can imagine this is a big—not only life change, but a big financial burden to run this camp. Right? You must—

**Diane:** Camps are not like how you become wealthy, owning camps.

**John Hodgman:** Right. I'm sure that there's a ton of insurance and upkeep and year-round maintenance and everything else. I mean, I think it's sometimes hard for one spouse to say to another, “I'm sorry, honey, we simply cannot afford an incinerating toilet.” Is that what this comes down to?

**Will:** No, not for me.

**John Hodgman:** Alright. So, what does it come down to?

**Will:** I think my instinct is to analyze the engineering of it and think about the reliability. I had not considered, you know, an Option A with a backup solution on standby.

**Diane:** I will say that you have said, Will, if we ever did get any kind of...

**Will:** Bucket?

**Diane:** Bucket for a toilet situation in our cabin, that you would still use The Fort.

**Will:** That's right.

**John Hodgman:** Why?!

**Will:** I love it. The front windows of the fort look out over the lake. The conversations you get to have in the fort with friends are completely unique kind of conversations. They—

**John Hodgman:** You're just sitting there with your pants down, having a bowel movement and chatting?!

**Will:** That's right.

**John Hodgman:** So, just because you love The Fort, do you wish that Diane also loved The Fort?

**Will:** No, I don't need that, personally.

**John Hodgman:** Alright, I think I've heard everything I need to in order to make my decision.

*(Diane laughs.)*

I'm gonna go into my chambers, and I'll be back in a moment with my verdict.

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

Well, we'll see what Judge Hodgman has to say about all this when we come back in just a minute.

**Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

**Promo:**

**Music:** Fun, exciting music.

**Kirk Hamilton:** Say you like video games—

**Jason Schreier:** And who doesn't?

**Maddy Myers:** I mean some people probably don't.

**Kirk:** Okay, but a lot of people do. So, say you're one of those people, and you feel like you don't really have anyone to talk to about the games that you like.

**Jason:** Well, you should get some better friends.

**Kirk:** Yes, you should get some better friends, but you could also listen to *Triple Click*. (*Click, click, click!*) A weekly podcast about video games hosted by me, Kirk Hamilton.

**Maddy:** Me, Maddy Myers.

**Jason:** And me, Jason Schreier. We talk about new releases, old classics, industry news, and whatever, really.

**Maddy:** We'll show you new things to love about games, and maybe even help you find new friends to talk to about them.

**Kirk:** *Triple Click*. (*Click, click, click!*) It's kinda like we're your friends.

[00:50:00]

Find us at [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org) or wherever you get your podcasts.

*(Music fades out.)*

**Promo:**

**Music:** Playful ukulele.

**Jesse Thorn:** Hi, I'm Jesse Thorn, the founder of Maximum Fun. And I have a special announcement. I'm no longer embarrassed by *My Brother, My Brother and Me*. You know, for years, each new episode of this supposed advice show was a fresh insult, a depraved jumble of erection jokes, ghost humor, and—frankly this is for the best—very little actionable advice. But now, as they enter their twilight years, I'm as surprised as anyone to admit that it's gotten kind of good. Justin, Travis, and Griffin's witticisms are more refined, like a humor column in a fancy magazine. And they hardly ever say "bazinga" anymore. So, after you've completely finished listening to every single one of all of our other shows, why not join the McElroy brothers every week for *My Brother, My Brother and Me*?

*(Music fades out.)*

**Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

**Jesse Thorn:** Judge Hodgman, we have some new t-shirts in the MaxFun store.

**John Hodgman:** That's right. Everyone's looong been a fan of our wonderful weird dad shirts. That weird dad logo, designed by the great Aaron Draplin. Well, guess what? We went back to Aaron Draplin, and we were like, "Something's missing in our lives."

And he's like, "You're right. How about a weird mom shirt?" And we got them! Weird mom shirts are now in the MaxFun store.

**Jesse Thorn:** No matter what type of parent you identify as, you can be weird! As long as it's weird, we have a t-shirt for you at [MaxFunStore.com](https://www.maxfunstore.com).

**John Hodgman:** And also, bumper stickers! Weird mom, weird dad bumper stickers are available there as well, as a new old favorite. Right, Jesse?

**Jesse Thorn:** The Canadian House of Pizza and Garbage, just in time for our grand return to Canada at the beginning of 2025. You can celebrate the holiday season with one of the greatest *Judge John Hodgman* cases of all time, (*laughing*) in which a litigant was accused of getting pizza out of the garbage. Indirectly, granted. Granted, indirectly, by saving up points that others had thrown into the trash can at a fast-food restaurant.

**John Hodgman:** Yeah. And honestly, when we're talking about the particular pizza-pizza chain that he was taking the pizza out of the garbage from—when it's already garbage before it goes into the garbage, I guess it doesn't matter.

**Jesse Thorn:** Yeah, exactly. You can get that. And not only in t-shirt form, but also in koozie form—which is the perfect way to express the garbage inside of you.

**John Hodgman:** That's right! We have a brand-new Canadian House of Pizza and Garbage koozie, cold beverage insulator sleeve that you can stick right into any holiday stocking you like.

**Jesse Thorn:** And what better gift to give this holiday than tickets to *Judge John Hodgman* live? We are currently in New England. But at the beginning of 2025, we will be on the West Coast. Including! It can finally be announced: our San Francisco SketchFest show.

**John Hodgman:** That's right. We'll be at Marines Memorial Theater in San Francisco during that San Francisco SketchFest, on Groundhog's Daaay! Sunday, February 2nd. And that's just part of our tour. We're also going to Vancouver, Canada; Seattle, Washington; Portland, Oregon; and Los Angeles, California—where we'll also be joined by whom, Jesse?

**Jesse Thorn:** *Jordan, Jesse, Go!*. But John, last time I looked, that show was 99% sold.

(John “whoa”s.)

I don't know! I guess that means there's like three or four tickets left. So, you better go grab those if you're in LA. Or get yourself a ticket up to SF SketchFest, have a great time, make a weekend of it.

**John Hodgman:** All of our tickets are always available at [MaximumFun.org/events](https://MaximumFun.org/events). Get them for yourself or a loved one now. And if you have disputes that you'd like us to hear on stage at any of these shows, make sure to let us know at [MaximumFun.org/jjho](https://MaximumFun.org/jjho).

**Jesse Thorn:** And John Hodgman, if you know a dad in your life who is not weird—for years, *Judge John Hodgman* listeners, among others, have been asking me to bring back the Put This On ball caps that say dad on them, and we are bringing them back this winter.

So, go to [PutThisOnShop.com](https://PutThisOnShop.com). You can find those, along with an infinite number of other wonderful things to give someone you love this holiday season. It's [PutThisOnShop.com](https://PutThisOnShop.com). I think they'll be up by the time—it might be a week or two from when this goes up that they'll be up in the Put This On Shop. But there's lots of amazing things there at [PutThisOnShop.com](https://PutThisOnShop.com).

**John Hodgman:** So, make sure you bookmark [PutThisOnShop.com](https://PutThisOnShop.com), as well as [MaxFunStore.com](https://MaxFunStore.com), as well as [MaximumFun.org/events](https://MaximumFun.org/events), as well as [MaximumFun.org/jjho](https://MaximumFun.org/jjho). Start clicking some links.

**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.)*

[00:55:00]

**John Hodgman:** *(In a stuffy southern gentleman affectation.)* Bert and I went down across the lake to go to the camp to light the fire. Light the fire, Bert, I said. *(Makes dramatic fire-starting noises.)* That were the incinerating toilet. I said to light the fire, not the toilet, Bert.

*(In his usual voice.)* You said it yourself: you knew who you married. You were there enjoying a beautiful summer with a working toilet. It was almost like a fable.

*(Diane giggles.)*

You were there enjoying a beautiful summer in Ontario with a working toilet in your family cabin, when across the water came this creature to tempt you away from all of that, and to bring you back to Pathfinder Island, and keep you there forever. And you agreed! You knew what you were getting into. And over the years, you agreed—I trust and hope! You knew that Will had this obsession with Pathfinder Island.

And at some point, I trust, Will came to you and said, “I want to buy the camp. It will secure a future and legacy for our daughters forever.” *(Chuckles.)* And you said yes. And I trust that when you say, “I know who I married,” that you also knew that—Will—you were going to go and not be home for big portions of the spring and fall, leaving your three children in the care of your wife. And it's hard! Even when you have two children, one children, or zero children.

Will, your dream is fascinating and lovely and novelistic. I think it's an amazing thing to do with your life, to find a place that is so meaningful to you, where you've devoted so much time, and to take a huge risk and make a huge life change. And I trust and sense that you're very, very grateful that Diane is supportive of this dream. Which is yours. And I guess one you share together, but mostly yours. And one that she gets to visit and be a part of for two months out of the year.

I think that she deserves a toilet that she is comfortable with. I mean, I get it that there are costs. I mean, that's not cheap. \$10,000 Canadian toilet? Forget it. That's not cheap. I agree. And I'm sure you've got a lot of expenses. You know, you gotta maybe buy a bucket and start putting money in it.

**Diane:** Not pooping in it?



(Will chuckles.)

**John Hodgman:** Well, you can poop in it too, but it might ruin the money. You should buy a bucket, and you should start putting aside money for this incinerating toilet. As a couple, because you have shared finances after all. So, maybe it's worth trying summer number two with a bucket. But I think that you should start saving up money to buy your bride the incinerating toilet she loves. I appreciate that they take energy, they cost more, they have small sensors and stuff that'll break down. But people have them. They do work. It's not like they don't ever work. And the truth is, the occasional expense and hassle of repairing or maintaining an incinerating toilet, I have to imagine is going to be less onerous, ultimately, than you being on bag knotting duty for the doodies multiple times a day.

(Will chuckles.)

I mean, I think that—and quite honestly, I hope that this dream comes true. As it has already done, but comes truer every year, and that the camp financially is sustainable, and I dare say even profitable. But there may come a time when you're like, “Whoa, I can't keep this up anymore,” just like the previous owners of the camp did—the old man from before who owned that camp. And you may need to sell it. And guess what? That incinerating toilet's gonna be a real attractor to a new buyer. It's an investment, not just in the happiness of your marriage, but also in the camp itself.

So, I do think that you owe it to your spouse, especially now. And your daughters also. Because as you know from attending camp and now owning camp, summer is short, time moves in one direction, people grow up, not everyone works at their summer camp into their 30s.

[01:00:00]

I would dare say that's something of an anomaly that you felt that connection with the camp. Look, I have children who went to camp. One of them hated it. The other one loved it and does feel a connection to camp. People feel real connections to the places where they spend this time. And there is definitely... bonding that occurs through pooping in the same room. Among other activities.

But I don't think it's necessarily true that your own children—as they grow into their fullness as whole human beings—aren't necessarily going to want to spend every summer at the camp themselves. One of them's already going to another camp. I don't know where she poops. But the thing is, if you want your children to come to you as they grow older, and you grow older, and as your lives separate, you got to provide them with comfort and enticement. And something other than a (*sensor beep*) bucket, honestly.

So, I think that it's an investment, even though it's expensive—and I appreciate that. Composting toilet, I would have thought might be a more cost-effective way to do it. But I understand there are different complications. But even though it's expensive, I think that you will gain more than what you spend over time by making your wife and daughters a place that they can defecate in privacy.

So, I rule in favor of Diane and your daughters. This is the sound of a gavel.

**Clip:**

**Speaker 1:** I hope you're not using the toilet! It's broken!

*(A dramatic, discordant musical stinger.)*

**Speaker 2:** Huh?

**Speaker 1:** The toilet doesn't flush.

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

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

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

Diane, how are you feeling about this decision?

**Diane:** I am feeling ecstatic. I feel very grateful to the judge for his ruling. And as always, his rulings were deeper and more profound than just the matter at hand. Which I appreciate.

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

**Will:** Uh. When I search my feelings, I feel like Judge John is right. This is probably the right decision. The bucket concept was probably more of my own design and thinking than putting my girls first.

**Jesse Thorn:** Diane, Will, thank you so much for joining us on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

**Diane:** Thank you so much.

**Will:** Thanks, it was fun.

**Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

**Jesse Thorn:** Another *Judge John Hodgman* case is in the books. We'll have Swift Justice in just a moment. But first, our thanks to Redditor u/mister\_sleepy for naming this week's case. If you want to name a future case, join us on reddit at [MaximumFun.Reddit.com](https://www.reddit.com/r/MaximumFun), where every week Jennifer Marmor puts up a little thread for people to suggest their puns. And suggest them they do!

Evidence and photos for the show are, of course, on our website at [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org), on the page for this episode. They are also on Instagram, [@JudgeJohnHodgman](https://www.instagram.com/JudgeJohnHodgman). You can also watch full video of this episode and almost all of our episodes on YouTube, [@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod](https://www.youtube.com/@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod). Go there and make a comment. Hit that share button. Do all the things that help our stuff. Hit the algo. And of course, you can find us on TikTok now, [@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod](https://www.tiktok.com/@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod). So, be sure to follow us in all of those places. And John, do we have an Apple Podcasts review this week?

**John Hodgman:** We do! Thank you to Doc Robair. That's a very dapper name. Doc Robair over on Apple podcast lent some very kind words and a five-star rating, writing “Two of the best voices in podcasting.” And that's you and me, Jesse. “Two of the best voices in podcasting brought together for ridiculous and hilarious cases, one of the best Maximum Fun shows to get your friends into the network.”

Well, that's very flattering indeed. And of course we love it when people discover *Judge John Hodgman* and all of the Maximum Fun shows. And these five-star ratings on Apple Podcasts and now on Pocket Casts too really do help new listeners find the show. So, if you feel moved to give us a rating and review, please do so right now! You can also leave a comment on Spotify or a comment on our YouTube page at [YouTube.com/@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod](https://www.youtube.com/@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod).

And by the way, if you visit that YouTube page, make sure to check out this video where I feature my weird way of eating a carrot. You've never seen anything it.

*(Jesse chuckles.)*

Well, maybe you have, but go check it out.

**Jesse Thorn:** Judge Hodgman, speaking of those other great Maximum Fun shows, you have a new maximum fun show!

**John Hodgman:** Why, that's right, Jesse, we do! Janet Varney and I are the cohosts of the brand new MaxFun podcast, *E Pluribus Motto*—

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—where we go state by state, commonwealth by commonwealth, talking about fun, weird state and commonwealth trivia—starting with the state mottos and often ending with the state beverage, which is often milk!

*(Jesse giggles.)*

Lots of states have an official state beverage, which is milk. If that's the kind of thing that interests you, it sure does me. Go check us out over at [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org). The name of the podcast: *E Pluribus Motto*.

**Jesse Thorn:** *Judge John Hodgman* was created by Jesse Thorn and John Hodgman. This episode, engineered by Marvin Perdomo at Bravery Studios in Garfield, New Jersey. Our social media manager is Nattie Lopez. The podcast, edited by AJ McKeon. Our podcast producer is Daniel Speer. Our producer is Jennifer Marmor.

Now, Swift Justice, where we answer small disputes with quick judgment. Dave Berrian on the MaxFun subreddit says, “My sister uses a spoon to mix medicine into her cat's meals. When she's done, she rinses it and sets it on the clean dish drainer tray. Please make her wash the spoon with soap and water.”

**John Hodgman:** Jesse, I also use a spoon to mix medicine into our cat's meals! And one thing that I do is I definitely don't rinse it off and put it in the tray. I immediately throw it into my spoon incinerator.

*(Jesse laughs.)*

No.

**Jesse Thorn:** If that's not your judgment, John, we're gonna get letters. If I've learned anything.

**John Hodgman:** Scrub that spoon! Look, there's probably nothing wrong with the cat food that your cat is eating. You could probably enjoy it yourself. God-or-Whatever, help me, I have been tempted. But you don't want to just rinse your cat food spoon. You want to give it a good old wash with some good old, hot soap. Well, regular temperature soap and hot water.

**Jesse Thorn:** Unless, John, you have a cat disease. In which case you might want a little bit of that cat medicine.

**John Hodgman:** That's a good point. If you have a cat disease, consult your doctor.

Meanwhile, we are around the corner from the holiday season, and you know that means holiday parties. I would love to hear about your party-related disputes, all of your party fouls. They don't have to be winter holiday themed. I don't mind if they do, but any party at all, any time of year. If I can paraphrase Andrew WK: when it's time to party, we will always bring justice.

**Jesse Thorn:** Oh man, you know what? If we get a really good party dispute, I'll send Andrew an email. I haven't seen him in too long!

**John Hodgman:** Yeah, maybe he'll lend us a few words of advice and wisdom and justice! Who knows!

**Jesse Thorn:** The greatest of all party legends, one of the best dudes in the world.

We're eager to hear about any dispute. No dispute is too small. Go to [MaximumFun.org/jjho](https://MaximumFun.org/jjho). Of course, if you are in one of the places where we have an upcoming show—which is the West Coast in January and early February—make sure and note that when you fill out that quick little form. It's at [MaximumFun.org/jjho](https://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!