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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, "I'll See You and Raise Your Right Hand". Joe brings the case against his fiancée, Julie. Joe learned poker from his grandmother. She taught his whole family all sorts of wild variants of the game, from baseball to Big Murph. Playing these games is a beloved family tradition, but Julie says that her future in-laws are losers and suckers! Because these games are not real poker! 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:** "I've been told that I am as bad a loser as I am a winner. I hope that I'm not too obnoxious. At the game I play weekly, I'm very loud. I'm very demanding. I'm a loud, loud man."

Bailiff Jesse Thorn, please swear the litigants in.

**Jesse Thorn:** Joe, Julie, 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 his mechanics grip has put a sign on his back?

*(They swear.)*

Do you swear to abide by Judge John Hodgman's ruling, despite the fact that his giant gavel is smaller than my new giant gavel?

*(They swear.)*

Yeah, I got a giant gavel now, John.

**John Hodgman:** What is happening out there in Maximum Fun HQ in Los Angeles?! We got dueling gavels! And!

**Jesse Thorn:** Look how huge this freaking thing is.

**John Hodgman:** That's incredible. Look, and anyone who wants to see the giant gavel-off, you gotta go to our YouTube page, [@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod](#) over there on YouTube. Subscribe, like, share, comment, etcetera.

**Jesse Thorn:** My gavel's so giant, I can hardly hold it up with my left hand. (*Laughs.*) I gotta switch hands, here!

**John Hodgman:** My gavel's so giant that even reaching at my full length of my arm, I'm still not getting to it, and it still looks huge. Yeah, Jesse, I hate to say this—your gavel's bigger than mine. Hey, well that makes sense. Because today is about that ultimate gavel-measuring contest known as poker. Bailiff Jesse Thorn, you've sworn them in.

Joe and Julie, you may be seated. For an immediate summary judgment in one of your favors, can either of you name the piece of culture I referenced when I entered this courtroom? Joe, why don't we start with you?

**Joe:** I had prepared *Maverick*, the classic movie from the '90s? Maybe '80s? But I don't think that's it.

**John Hodgman:** Well, I mean, you're talking about—(*laughs*) you're talking about the Mel Gibson, Jodie Foster romp.

**Joe:** Yes.

**John Hodgman:** Which itself was a remake of the *Maverick* TV show, starring James Garner, the original Mav from the '60s and '70s. That's a pretty good guess.

**Jesse Thorn:** By classic, I presume you mean old.

**John Hodgman:** Old.

**Jesse Thorn:** It's alright. I mean, it's not bad, but.

**John Hodgman:** James Garner is always great.

**Jesse Thorn:** Yeah, that's true.

**John Hodgman:** And boy, oh boy, did Mel Gibson and Jodie Foster have weird chemistry in that film. That's all I'll say about that. I like that guess a lot, Joe. Julie, the bet is to you. Actions on Julie. What's your guess?

**Julie:** I'm gonna go from the movie *Big*, just based on size comparisons.

**John Hodgman:** *Big*! The Tom Hanks movie that features a lot of dancing on giant piano keys, but zero poker. I'm going to tell you that one's wrong. I'm going to give you another guess. With a hint. The same person also said, in the same piece of culture, "TWO OF

SPADES! TWO OF SPADES! I'M NOT KIDDING! TWO OF SPADES!" Does that help? I had to back off the mic for that one.

**Julie:** It does not help me.

**John Hodgman:** Alright, I'll spare it. Alright, Julie folds. So, all guesses are wrong. I'm going to say that that "two of spades, two of spades" is not Lemmy from Motorhead, but is in fact: actor, raconteur, friend of the court, loud-loud man, and poker player, the wonderful Richard Kind. Who—*(laughs)* I went way back in the Wayback Machine on YouTube to a July 2004 episode of Bravo Television's *Celebrity Poker Showdown*, back when celebrity was all the vogue.

And Dave Foley was hosting a celebrity poker show for multiple years. This was a two-hour long broadcast where, in this particular episode, Jennie Garth from *90210*, Jerry O'Connell, the late Willie Garson—rest in peace—Dave Navarro, Richard Kind. I think that's it. All played poker together for charity. I won't tell you who won, but I got to tell you:

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The heads-up one-to-one competition at the end of this tournament between Richard Kind and Dave Navarro is very dramatic! Check it out.

**Jesse Thorn:** *(Chuckles.)* Now you have me thirsty for a Motorhead cover band fronted by Richard Kind called Two of Spades.

*(John giggles.)*

I mean, he's a Renaissance man entertainer, Richard Kind. I think he could do it.

**John Hodgman:** I'm going to ask him if he'll record Ace of Spades for us, and maybe we'll throw it on as a bonus, in the bonus content of the members only feed. But meanwhile! For you, the listener, and you, Joe and Julie, you come to our court looking for justice. We're about to provide it.

Joe, you bring the case. Is that right?

**Joe:** That is correct.

**John Hodgman:** Joe, tell me about your grandmother and these games. First of all, is your grandmother still alive?

**Joe:** She is not.

**John Hodgman:** I'm sorry to hear that. What did you call her when she was alive? Grandmother?

**Joe:** Grandma.

**John Hodgman:** Grandma?

**Joe:** Yeah. I think that's mostly it.

**John Hodgman:** Tell me all about all the games that Grandma taught you.

**Joe:** So, we played a lot of just random poker games. Do you want me to name them now?

**John Hodgman:** Yes.

**Joe:** Okay. (*Chuckling.*) Well, I didn't know!

We played games like—and I have my sheet here.

**John Hodgman:** Oh, I love it. I love it.

**Joe:** (*Laughs.*) Big Murph.

**John Hodgman:** Big Murph. M-U-R-P-H.

**Joe:** Correct. Baseball.

**John Hodgman:** Baseball. That's a classic poker variation.

**Joe:** Both Night and Day.

**John Hodgman:** Night ball and Day ball. Mm-hm.

**Joe:** What Follows the Queen.

**John Hodgman:** Follows the Queen is what we call it. Mm-hm. Or Follow the Queen.

**Joe:** The Big L.

**John Hodgman:** The Big L. That's what one of you is going to get today, when I rule in the other person's favor.

**Joe:** Under Ten.

**John Hodgman:** Don't know that one.

**Joe:** Jacks Are Better Trips to Win.

**John Hodgman:** Yep. Know that one. Jacks or Bets. Mm-hm.

**Joe:** Elevator.

**John Hodgman:** Oh, wow, there are a lot of them here! Why am I taking notes? They're written down. Keep going. I've stopped writing.

**Joe:** And the last one is Low Hand.

**John Hodgman:** Oh, I almost got them all! (*Laughs.*)

**Jesse Thorn:** When you said Big L, I just—in my head—immediately started thinking of poker variants as all being legendary underground rap figures from the 1990s.

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

**Jesse Thorn:** Like, “Oh yeah, we played Big Murph, Big L, Chino XL. We played High and Mighty.”

**John Hodgman:** Alright! And these games—so, for folks who don't know, poker has many, many variants, as it were. I mean, almost always what you're trying to do is make the best possible five-card hand out of various cards that are dealt to you in different sequences. And the hands tend to be always the same. You know, high card being the lowest best hand, then a pair, two pair, three of a kind, straight, flush, full house—I'm probably missing a few—four of a kind, you know. These hands are ranked, and these ranks are the same throughout these games. But the number of cards you play with, the number of cards you share with other players, changes. And as well, there are often wild cards that are involved.

So, in Follow the Queen, that's a game of seven-card stud, if I remember correctly. But every time a queen comes up on the board—face up on the board, or the playing—you know, the table—the next card that is dealt after the queen becomes wild. So, if the next card that is dealt face up is a two, and you have a two either showing in your hand or in your whole cards, the cards that only you can see, that's a wild card until another queen comes up. And it's a fun variation of the game of poker.

For example, I don't remember how to play Baseball. I certainly don't know anything about Big Murph. We won't get into the details of all of them. We will get into the details of some of them. But your grandma taught you and your family this game. Is that right, Joe?

**Joe:** That is correct. Yeah, my mom grew up—they had been playing all of their lives. And then when we went to visit her, we'd always play poker.

**John Hodgman:** And who's “we” in this case?

**Joe:** Me, and my brother, and my sister.

**John Hodgman:** Okay, so the three siblings go play poker with Grandma. In Louisville, Kentucky?

**Joe:** No, this is in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

**John Hodgman:** Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. So, you were playing poker there. Got it.

This sounds really wholesome and cute and wonderful. And what were the stakes? Thousands of dollars? College funds?

**Jesse Thorn:** Werther's Originals?

*(John giggles.)*

**Joe:** We played for dimes, nickels, and quarters.

**John Hodgman:** Alright! Nickel and dime; fun, fun poker. So, Julie, why is Joe's grandma so awful?

**Julie:** *(Laughs.)* I can't speak to her. I never did meet Joe's grandma, but the—

**John Hodgman:** Oh, okay. So, you're just dancing on her grave then.

**Julie:** Yes, essentially.

**John Hodgman:** *(Under his breath.)* Alright. Okay. Got it.

**Julie:** And her legacy. However! They play these games fairly regularly whenever we go visit, and I don't think they're real poker.

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I think that they just make things up as they go along!

**John Hodgman:** Oh!

**Julie:** In an effort to steal all my change.

*(They laugh.)*

**John Hodgman:** So, when you visit—you guys are affianced, correct? You're engaged? You're not yet married. Congratulations in advance.

**Joe:** Thank you.

**John Hodgman:** So, when you go and visit your future siblings-in-law, Joe and his sister and brother want to play these games. And your contention is that they're just gaslighting you.

**Julie:** Essentially, yes.

**John Hodgman:** So, right. There's Night Baseball, there's Day Baseball, and then there's Gaslight Baseball, where they just make up the rules as they go along.

**Julie:** Nailed it, yes.

**John Hodgman:** Okay. And have you tried to play any of these games?

**Julie:** Oh yes, that's how I know they're not real.

**Jesse Thorn:** John, serious poker players play Mad Skillz or Paz de Nuez, or Phife Dawg.

*(They laugh.)*

**John Hodgman:** So, is your contention then that these are not games that serious poker players would play? Or that these aren't really games at all, and that the siblings are making up the rules as they go along, and maybe Grandma never existed?

**Julie:** Absolutely the latter.

**John Hodgman:** Okay. Do you have any proof that your grandma ever lived, by the way, Joe?

**Joe:** You know, I asked my mom if she had pictures of us playing poker with my grandmother, and she said she couldn't find any, but she'll go look.

**John Hodgman:** Alright.

Which game did they try to get you to play, and which one do you hate the most, Julie? Maybe it's the same one.

**Julie:** The one I'm most familiar with is Big Murph. I can't tell you the rules of it, but that's the one that they've tried to get me to play.

**John Hodgman:** Alright. Now we get down to it. I would love to learn the rules to Big Murph.

*(Joe affirms.)*

What's going on? Tell me about Big Murph.

**Joe:** Yeah, Big Murph is just a seven-card stud. And—

**John Hodgman:** First of all, I love it—Jesse, I love it when you call me Big Murph.

*(Jesse agrees with a chuckle.)*

Alright. Seven-card stud. It's a seven-card stud variant.

**Joe:** Correct. And fives and tens are wild.

**John Hodgman:** That's it?

**Joe:** That's it.

**John Hodgman:** That's a pretty simple variation. Where does Murph come in? I would call—you know what I would call that one? Woolworth. Because Woolworth was a five and dime store.

*(Jesse "wow"s.)*

See what I'm saying? Pretty good, right?

**Jesse Thorn:** I like that.

**John Hodgman:** Maybe it's Big Worth! Maybe it's a corruption.

**Joe:** It could be. The thing is, this is where it—maybe Julie has some standing, because I don't know where these games came from. I just know that I played them.

**John Hodgman:** Well, I mean, there are rules, right? It's seven-card stud with fives and tens are always wild. That's a pretty simple— Now it sounds to me, Julie, like maybe just even the word seven-card stud sounds mysterious to you.

**Julie:** It does. I'm not a big card player.

**John Hodgman:** So, go ahead, Joe, and explain to the listeners what seven-card stud is. Because I think I remember, but I'm not sure myself.

**Joe:** Sure. So, you're dealt two cards down and then a sequence of cards up, and you—first you ante, obviously—and then you bet on each hand as it comes around. You get four cards up, and then you get your last card down. And then you try to make the best hand out of five cards out of those seven.

**John Hodgman:** Right. So, the deal with seven-card stud—thank you for reminding me, because I couldn't remember if you get two cards down or three cards down, and I didn't want



to get those letters. You get two cards dealt down, and then one card dealt up, right? That's how you start the game. Everyone antes up. They put in a certain—they put in a quarter each, let's say, right? Let's say you're playing for quarters.

And then after you get those three cards, two down and one up, there's a round of betting—or folding, if you don't want to bet, if you want out of the game. And then there's another round of cards dealt up, another round of betting, another round of cards dealt up, and so on, until you have four up cards. And then the final round of betting happens, if you're still in the game at that point, after you get your final down card.

So, you have three cards that only you can see, and four cards up, that everyone can see. They can't share them, but they know what you have. So, they have a guess as to where you might be going with your hand. And you make your best five-card hand out of those seven cards. And then fives and tens are wild. That's the big Murph part.

Did that help you understand it, Julie? Should we play some cards right now?

**Julie:** I would love that.

**John Hodgman:** This sounds fun. Oh, you'd play with me, but not your beloved? Soon-to-be husband, full human being in his own right.

**Julie:** I don't feel like you're trying to steal my coins.

*(Joe laughs.)*

**John Hodgman:** Is the case that you just were losing a lot? That you were getting destroyed by Joe and his sibs?

**Julie:** *(Giggles.)* Not entirely. That may be part of it, an underlying part of it.

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However, the game that we play, each hand changes. And it's hard to keep up, especially when it's not just one card is wild versus another card is wild.

**John Hodgman:** What do you mean each hand changes? You mean as the cards come up, it's hard to keep track of what you have and what everyone else is having?

**Julie:** No, so once you play a round, they'll change whatever we're playing.

**John Hodgman:** Oh, they'll change the game!

**Julie:** So, we won't be playing Big Murph anymore. We'll play a different game. Whoever's dealing gets to choose the game.

**John Hodgman:** (*Disdainfully.*) Ohhh, dealer's choice, they call it.

**Joe:** Yeah, dealer's choice.

**John Hodgman:** Ugh. (*Spitting sound.*) I just spat right now. It's not the most famous spit on the internet these days, but that was a spit of contempt, I should say. I don't like dealer's choice. I feel you there, Julie.

(*Beat.*)

Joe, when is this happening? What are the occasions in which this is happening? Obviously, Grandma's funeral.

**Joe:** Correct. (*Chuckles.*) Yeah. On her grave, every year. No. (*Laughs.*)

**John Hodgman:** Holidays? Family reunions? What are we talking about?

**Joe:** Yeah. Growing up, it was whenever my mom would take us over to my grandmother's. So, that'd be like once a month. But now—

**John Hodgman:** Your grandmom is dead, Joe!

**Joe:** (*Chuckling.*) I know!

**John Hodgman:** I'm trying to bring us up to date here. When is—how many times has Julie come over to play?

**Jesse Thorn:** Grandma and Big L, rest in peace.

**John Hodgman:** That's right. Pour one out.

**Joe:** We head up to Pittsburgh probably—we can get up to two or three times a year, but we don't play every time. Probably once a year at this point.

**John Hodgman:** When you go and visit your family—they're still in Pittsburgh. Is that where you're from, Joe?

**Joe:** Correct, yes.

**John Hodgman:** Alright. Julie, where are you from?

**Julie:** Kentucky.

**John Hodgman:** You're from Kentucky. Okay. And you hate Pittsburgh?

**Julie:** I don't hate Pittsburgh! I love Pittsburgh.

**John Hodgman:** Oh, okay. I was just trying.

*(They laugh.)*

I was just seeing what your reaction would be.

**Julie:** No, I'm not willing to make that assertion.

**Jesse Thorn:** Pittsburgh's great, John. That's where we got to visit the Oscar Mayer Wienermobile.

**John Hodgman:** That's true. Did you come see our show in Pittsburgh or Lexington, Kentucky? We didn't come to Louisville, I'm afraid.

**Joe:** No, I was trying to get to Lexington, but it was a Monday night, and I had to work. So, I couldn't get away from that.

**John Hodgman:** Always start tour on a Monday night. That's my creed.

Julie, what are his siblings like? Sister and brother, is that right?

**Julie:** Yes. They're great. I love his family. They're all very loud and outgoing. A lot of fun to be around.

**John Hodgman:** You don't feel like they are purposefully teasing or bullying you by picking the most complicated games and delighting in your confusion. Or do you?

**Julie:** They may be doing that, honestly.

**John Hodgman:** Here we go.

**Julie:** *(Laughs.)* Probably not in a mean way, but I think they would think it was pretty funny if I kept losing at their made-up poker games.

**John Hodgman:** Joe, how do you respond? It's a heavy accusation.

**Joe:** It is a heavy accusation. Not unfounded. *(Laughs.)* But my family also loves Julie immensely, so I don't think they would do anything like that to her.

**John Hodgman:** But you know, poker is an aggro game. I mean, Richard Kind gets loud. I mean, he gets loud always—do you know what I mean? But like, it's a game where you are lying and bluffing and delighting in other people's misfortune. And there is a lot to poker that is—you know what they say. You know, a person who's new at poker is called a rabbit in

poker parlance, and they say that if you don't know who the rabbit at the table is, it's you, Julie. You see what I mean?

*(Julie confirms.)*

People really love taking advantage in poker of new players. Because paradoxically, new players in poker tend to do very well. If you have not had a lot of bad beats, if you've not lost a lot of hands that you got close at, you tend to be overconfident. And overconfidence in poker at the beginning means that you bet more aggressively. And when you bet more aggressively, you tend to do better. When you've had some bad beats and you know a little bit more of the game, you tend to lay back more, and people can push you around more.

Isn't that interesting? That's what I've observed anyway. I'm no power player. I just have played some poker. That's all.

**Julie:** I'd say that's pretty accurate, honestly.

**John Hodgman:** They push you around at the poker table?

**Julie:** No, I'm too excited to throw in a penny or two.

**John Hodgman:** Ohhh, okay. Let me ask you this question—in terms of their level of poker play. Joe, what's poker been like in your life? You play a lot outside of these family reunions, or—?

**Joe:** No. A video game that recently came out; *Balatro* has been most of my poker playing lately, but that's about it.

**John Hodgman:** I don't know this video game.

**Joe:** It's a rouge-like, as they call it, but you have jokers that change the power of each card.

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Or like, if you get a straight, it'll double the points or something like that. And you're trying to beat an anti every round. It's pretty fun.

**John Hodgman:** Now I feel like Julie. I feel like you're just making up...

*(Joe laughs.)*

**Jesse Thorn:** Yeah. At what point do we stop playing poker and start playing *Tegwar*, the excellent game without any rules from *Bang the Drum Slowly*?

**John Hodgman:** *(Laughs.)* Also known as Calvin Ball?

**Jesse Thorn:** Yeah.

**John Hodgman:** You never—Joe, you never went through a period in the early 2000s when you watched *Celebrity Poker Showdown*, and you and Michael Ian Black would play poker against Phil Gordon or whatever? That whole poker era that sort of slotted in directly after the swing dance era for White guys who desperately wanted to feel cool about something?

**Julie:** No, he got hit by that one though.

**John Hodgman:** You got the swing dance one? By the way, I'm not accusing Michael Ian Black of wanting to be cool about something. Michael Ian Black is very cool, and he's an incredibly talented poker player. I've lost to him many times. But that was a whole—there was a whole moment in history in the early 2000s. You never—? Did you go through that period of time?

**Joe:** No. I know that was also like the Texas Hold'em big shift. That was it. Yeah. I never got into that. No.

**John Hodgman:** Texas Hold'em came along and destroyed every other game of poker. Because—I mean, it had been around for a while. But as soon as the World Series of Poker became less niche and obscure, and the big event at the World Series of Poker is no limit Texas Hold'em. Well, I'll just quote Richard Kind from an interstitial bit of that episode of *Celebrity Poker Showdown* from 2004:

*(Impersonating Richard Kind's emphatic, staccato speaking style.)* “If you must know, I despise this game. We used to play Seven Stud and Omaha and High Low. Now all we play is Texas Hold'em. It has destroyed the game!”

**Jesse Thorn:** Judge Hodgman, when you're talking to Richard Kind in real life—which both of us have done—do you ever feel like he's doing Richard Kind?

**John Hodgman:** I think Richard Kind will tell you to your face that he is doing the best Richard Kind imitation he knows.

**Jesse Thorn:** Oh, bless him.

**John Hodgman:** Joe, Julie's not having any fun playing with your family. Why should I compel her to participate in these games?

**Joe:** Well, I like—it's deep thing from our family, like a deep connection. And we don't play often, but when we do, I want her to have fun too, you know? I want her to enjoy the experiences that we enjoy, as well.

**John Hodgman:** Also, you want those sweet, sweet quarters.

**Joe:** Also that.

**John Hodgman:** Well, how many people are playing at the table anyway? Like, it's just the three of you? You and your two siblings? Obviously, you want Julie in. You want to have some action at the table.

**Joe:** And my siblings are both married, and my mother will play with us, and my siblings both have seven children between the two of them. So, we also try to get some off of them too. Some change off them.

**John Hodgman:** Everyone plays except for you, Julie?

**Julie:** I still play, just not well.

**John Hodgman:** Oh, I see. What would you rather do then?

**Julie:** Play a different game! Joe has so many boardgames! Why can't we play one that's actually a real game?

**John Hodgman:** Whoa, whoa! Which boardgame do you want to play? *A Carcassonne? A Mille Bourne?*

**Julie:** *Connections.*

**John Hodgman:** From the *New York Times Magazine*?

**Julie:** No. (*Chuckles.*) It's a game where you have a board, and you pick a word, and you have—I don't know (*trails off*).

**John Hodgman:** You're making this up. You're making this up as you go along.

**Julie:** (*Laughs.*) No, it has written instructions.

**John Hodgman:** Would you feel better if the rules were written down for you of these other games?

**Julie:** I'm not sure I'd read them, to be honest. I just want them explained to me before we play.

**John Hodgman:** Let me ask you. Let's just say there was only one game, Big Murph. Obviously, dealer's choice means that the game changes every time, and that can be distracting in itself. But if there was only one game, is there something about poker that makes you feel uncomfortable?

**Julie:** I don't think so, other than I don't like to lose.

**Jesse Thorn:** Do you like to gamble?

**Julie:** I'm not a huge gambler, but I don't mind it.

**Jesse Thorn:** I know I would feel uncomfortable gambling with people I love. (*Chuckles.*)

Like, as has been covered on this show, I have a hard time with competitive games with people I know anyway. Because I feel bad if I lose and feel bad if I win. But the gambling element in particular, I think I would be particularly resentful of people taking money from me. And I would feel particularly embarrassed about taking money from people that I liked.

**Julie:** I'm fine with taking their money.

(*They laugh.*)

**John Hodgman:** You're just not succeeding at it.

**Julie:** Right!

**John Hodgman:** Right. I see. I'm going to ask this question. We kind of covered some of this ground, but we're going to cover it again. Julie, what are your favorite boardgames to play?

**Julie:** I like *Connections*. I like—we've played *Wavelength* recently. That's fun. *Hues and Cues*.

**John Hodgman:** Alright. I have heard of *Hues and Cues*. I was about to accuse you of doing what you accused your siblings of doing.

(*They laugh.*)

It's like, "I like Windowsill."

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"I like Half Empty Can of Diet Coke."

**Jesse Thorn:** "I like Papoose. I like Taggy, Del the Funky Homosapien."

**John Hodgman:** (*Laughs.*) You're still doing '90s rappers. I'm just talking about things that I can see right now.

But I have heard of and played *Hues and Cues*. That's an interesting game. *Hues and Cues*.

But what about—so, to me, that's a long-paced game. But you—the pace of poker is annoying to you.

**Julie:** It's that, and I don't feel like there's as much interaction between the players necessarily. Whereas like we're joking around and bouncing digs, essentially, off of each other in something like *Hues and Cues*. Poker is just speed rounds and then them making up new words to describe another game that doesn't exist.

**John Hodgman:** How would you describe your state of mind? How would you describe your feelings while you are playing poker compared to playing a game of *Hues and Cues*?

**Julie:** Hmm. Almost bored?

**John Hodgman:** I did not see that coming. I mean, I've played poker for a long time, and I find it to be anxiety-inducing. You don't feel that, or do you?

**Julie:** Maybe a little bit, but I'm mostly trying to come up with whatever—or predict whatever the card is going to be, and see am I making the right choice. And there's not a lot of time for like crash talking back and forth and the interaction, I guess, with the other players.

**John Hodgman:** You're telling me there's more trash talk in *Hues and Cues*—?!

**Julie:** Oh, yes. (*Cackles.*)

**John Hodgman:** Than in poker?!

**Julie:** Yes. We're too concerned about the money!

**John Hodgman:** Poker isn't rough enough for you!

**Julie:** Not with his family.

**John Hodgman:** Joe, what's going on? Are you playing speed silent poker? Trash talk is an important part of the poker game!

**Joe:** Yeah, it's a big one. The matriarch of the family, she was always like, “In and out, let's go play.” Not too much trash talking, ‘til end of the round. And then you could celebrate or cry your losses.

**John Hodgman:** I didn't realize, Joe, that you were playing boring poker!

(*They laugh.*)

I mean, I feel like you are denying Julie a very important part of the game!

**Joe:** Well, it's not boring to me. I go through the same emotions. I have anxiety; I'm excited whenever I have a good hand going and then automatically like fall right off as soon as



another card comes out, and I am not having a good hand going. You know? I have those ups and downs every hand. But I guess I've not pushed that over to Julie's emotions.

**John Hodgman:** Oh, you're not trying to guess what other people have? You're not saying to Julie, "Well, I guess you didn't get that pair you wanted," and try to read her mind and mess her up?

**Joe:** You know, I feel like any time we were doing that was the dealer could say some smack talk as you were layering the cards down. But between players it really was like a just sit, and get your hand, and go.

**John Hodgman:** Do you feel like an outsider, Julie?

**Julie:** Maybe a little bit. All of his siblings and their significant others have been around a lot longer, I think, than I have. And so, I think they had the OG game, and I'm getting what they have passed down.

**John Hodgman:** You're getting their sloppy seconds. I don't want to say that. I don't know. That's a gross thing to say.

*(Julie laughs.)*

Have you ever—Joe, have you ever tried playing *Hughes and Cues* or another kind of game that Julie suggests?

**Joe:** Not—yes. Yeah. There's definitely boardgames that with my family.

**John Hodgman:** Just for the record, I want to make sure that our stenographer gets this. The answer was "No, yes." Was it "no, yes" or "not yes"? I didn't quite get that. "Not yes!"

**Joe:** Not yes, but yes. *(Chuckles.)* We do play a lot of boardgames, but there's a time for boardgames, and there's time for poker.

**John Hodgman:** When is the time for boardgames, and when is the time for poker?

**Joe:** Boardgames actually happen probably more often than poker. You need to have like a set "we're going to play poker this time around; bring your pennies ready to play."

**John Hodgman:** But it's not—but that'd be like—if you're going—if there's one evening where you're all hanging around for whatever reason, there's either boardgames or poker. It's not like we'll play a boardgame, and then the second event of the night will be a few rounds of poker?

**Joe:** Most people don't have their change readily available to lose. So, it's kind of like a "we need to plan it out if we're going to have a poker night that night."

**Jesse Thorn:** Everybody's got to go to the laundromat first.

**John Hodgman:** Would it make a difference, Julia, if you were playing with just chips? Like, fake currency? Poker chips, they call them?

**Julie:** I don't feel like it would. I think I'd still be bored.

**Jesse Thorn:** Is poker without gambling a boring game? That's a question for all present.

**Joe:** To me, it is. Yeah.

**Julie:** Probably.

**John Hodgman:** That's interesting. I'll answer when I present my verdict.

[00:30:00]

**Joe:** I don't gamble often. I feel like I just keep my gambling to my poker with my family. But yeah, it feels—even just chips for me, I never feel like that's enough at stake in a card game.

**Jesse Thorn:** Central to the enjoyment is taking money from old ladies and children?

**Julie:** Yes.

**Joe:** Or losing it to old ladies and children.

**John Hodgman:** Do the children ever win big, and what is that like?

**Joe:** They'll win a pot every once in a while, but we make sure that they stay around long enough to get a couple more hands in.

**John Hodgman:** Do you—Joe, from childhood or the last time you hung out with your siblings, do you have a memory of a particularly amazing hand that you won? Or! A bad beat when you thought you were going to win, but then you lost?

**Joe:** Not a specific moment, but my dad came up with What Follows the Queen at Night, and he instituted that game where all cards are down. And so, all seven of your cards are coming up one at a time. You really never know what's coming with Follow the Queen, and it could be the last card of the game is going to be the wild card. So, you have to stay in the whole time.

And I've won one of those. And those feel pretty good, because everyone's betting on each hand as it comes around.

**John Hodgman:** How can you know what the wild card is if all the cards are dealt down? That is, face down.

**Joe:** It's just—yeah, that was the joy of that game. My father made it up, and my grandmother particularly didn't like that one, but he wanted (*inaudible*).

**John Hodgman:** Yeah. I got to side with Grandma on that one.

(*Joe laughs.*)

**Julie:** That's how all of these feel!

**John Hodgman:** Well, tell me the rules of the other ones. What? Baseball.

**Joe:** Baseball are threes and nines are wild, but you have to pay for threes. You have to pay nickel for a three. And then—

**John Hodgman:** If you get a three, it's wild as long as you put in a nickel.

(*Joe confirms.*)

If you don't put in the nickel, then you don't get—you give up the three?

**Joe:** No, you just have to pay the nickel. I don't know if there was ever a time that you didn't pay a nickel when you (*inaudible*).

**John Hodgman:** So, it's a mandatory three fee.

**Joe:** (*Laughs.*) Mandatory three! And then fours, you got an extra card.

**John Hodgman:** And what's Night Ball?

**Joe:** That's where all your cards are face down. Every card is dealt down, and you reveal at the same time as you play.

**John Hodgman:** Got it. And if you get a three face down, you have to pay, and that reveals that you got one?

**Joe:** Correct.

**John Hodgman:** I love it. Follow the Queen we talked about. Big L.

**Joe:** Big L is there are five cards set up in a grid, so three down and then across, and—

**John Hodgman:** Yeah, we called this Fiery Cross. It's too complicated.

**Joe:** It's pretty complicated, yeah.

**John Hodgman:** Under Ten?

**Joe:** There are ten cards, facedown. And everyone has a hand of seven cards. And every card that's revealed, if it matches a card in your hand, you throw it in. And whoever has the least amount of points the end after ten cards wins.

**John Hodgman:** What was—oh, Jacks Are Better. You can only play if you have a pair of jacks or better, right? That's what Jacks Are Better means.

**Joe:** Correct. And that's to open the... pot? I don't know. That one always was played by my grandfather.

**John Hodgman:** Open the betting.

**Joe:** Yeah, exactly.

**John Hodgman:** You don't even remember the rules to that one. What I'm doing is I'm deciding which games you're allowed to play and which ones you're not allowed to play.

*(Joe laughs.)*

Elevator.

**Joe:** Similar to Big L, and there was just a card in the middle. And then—

**John Hodgman:** Forget it then. I don't care.

*(Joe laughs.)*

Lowball.

**Joe:** That is the lowest hand wins, the worst hand wins.

**John Hodgman:** Instead of the highest hand, which is traditional poker.

*(Joe confirms.)*

And that would be in a seven-card stud variation, or a five-card draw, or what?

**Joe:** Seven-card stud. I think we mostly just played seven-card stud.

**John Hodgman:** Do you have difficulty, Julie, remembering the hands of poker? That is, which hands beat what? I mean, obviously you're searching for it right now, so it's not something that's native to you. Do you get to play with a guide? Or do these horrible siblings make you work from memory?

**Julie:** Oh no, it's from memory, and they're all talking over each other if you have a question. (*Chuckles.*)

**John Hodgman:** I thought this was a boring silent game, and now you're telling me that they're talking over each other? I really should have made you guys video a game of this so I could watch, do my best Dave Foley color commentary on your whole game.

**Julie:** It's silent for the most part, but if you do have a question, everyone's going to try to explain it at once over each other.

**John Hodgman:** I got it. Joe, have you ever thought about stepping in and asking Julie to play a few games at home by yourself? The two of you, just a little heads-up training sequence, just a little heads-up home training montage?

**Joe:** I haven't done that.

**John Hodgman:** Well, why haven't you?

**Joe:** It just—it doesn't—(*stammering and chuckling*) that's a wonderful question, first of all. It just never came up.

**John Hodgman:** I mean, you want her to feel at home in this family, and she's telling you in no uncertain terms that these games are dumb, and they're boring, and they're not as good as the other games.

[00:35:00]

And she doesn't feel left out, but nor does she feel exactly included. Why don't you work a little bit harder to include her?

**Joe:** That is something I could probably do, actually.

**John Hodgman:** How long have you guys been together?

**Joe:** Six years.

**John Hodgman:** Six years. And when you hit three, did you pay a nickel?

**Joe:** (*Laughs.*) It felt like it, yeah. Because three was 2020, so that's when we moved in together, yeah.

**Julie:** Actually, when you hit three, you paid a ring. So. (*Chuckles.*)

**Joe:** That's true.

**Jesse Thorn:** Wait, hold on! You've been engaged for three years?

**Julie:** I'm in school. So, we have to wait until both of us are employed again.

**John Hodgman:** Yeah. Yeah. I'll tell you what, that's not a three you buy with a nickel. You know what I mean? A wedding you buy, it's multiple nickels.

**Julie:** Yeah. And they're taking all my nickels!

**John Hodgman:** Yeah, but here's the thing, Julie. What if you become a card sharp? And you could win all this money off of them?

**Jesse Thorn:** You could quit the business like Gina Gershon. Remember when multiple entertainers quit show business to become professional poker players?

**John Hodgman:** Yeah, there's a reason for it.

**Jesse Thorn:** Jennifer Tilly, Gina Gershon, Norm Macdonald. They were taking all of our entertainers.

**John Hodgman:** But I'll tell you what—I'm not even going to save this for the verdict. You asked, Jesse, if poker without gambling is boring. And the answer is no, because poker is not gambling. Gambling is roulette, or slots, or—you know, to a degree, Blackjack or betting on horses, where you are making certain educated guesses, but there is lots, lots more left to chance in gambling than there is in the game of poker.

Poker is a game that involves placing a bet on the strength of your hand compared to what the other hands are. But you have sooo much more information when you're playing poker than when you're placing a bet on a horse. I do not consider it to be gambling, exactly. It is a pastime. It is a game. It is a battle of wits as much as it is a battle of chance.

**Jesse Thorn:** Like rotisserie baseball.

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

Joe, it says here your ideal ruling is that Julie has to accept that these are great card games, and she must play them. Is that correct? That's your ideal ruling?

**Joe:** Probably not “must”, but have fun and enjoy them. I guess you can't rule that she has to have fun. (*Giggles.*) But—

**John Hodgman:** Oh no, that's possible. I have that power.

*(They giggle.)*

**Joe:** Sure.

**John Hodgman:** I have that power. Julie, if I were to rule in your favor, it says here that you would like me to order that Joe admit they're not real games and that the family is making up the rules. Do you sincerely believe that these games—that the rules of these games are being changed during play? That they're not—I mean, all games have made up rules, of course. But do you sincerely believe that the family is playing mind games rather than card games with you?

**Julie:** I think some of them, they're making up as we go.

**John Hodgman:** Some of them, they're making up as we go. Do you have any evidence to suggest this? 'Cause that's pretty nefarious.

**Julie:** It feels like every couple of hands, they'll start arguing about what the actual rules of the game are. And if they can't even remember the rules of the game, then do they even exist?

**John Hodgman:** Joe, how do you respond to that? True or false?

**Joe:** False.

**John Hodgman:** Why?

**Joe:** We've been pretty solid on our rules over the years. I don't think—

**John Hodgman:** Did anyone ever write them down?

**Joe:** No.

**Jesse Thorn:** Julie, is there a particular game you can remember Joe's family arguing about?

**Julie:** No, because they all blend together once you change the rules every hand.

**John Hodgman:** Is there a particular game that you remember being particularly confusing? I'll read them to you again. Big Murph, Night Baseball, Day Baseball, Follow the Queen, Big L, Under Ten, Jacks are Better, Elevator, Lowball. Any one of those give you the biggest shudder?

**Julie:** Probably Night ball.

**John Hodgman:** Night ball. Alright, I think I've heard everything I need in order to make my decision, but let's make this interesting. One of you is going to win. And one of you is going to lose.

Joe, do you have an upcoming family event where poker might or might not be played?

**Joe:** Yeah, we're—beginning of January, we're going to get together for a New Year's Christmas Thanksgiving.

**John Hodgman:** Okay, there we go. Yeah, it's a holiday time. Perfect. So, if you're to win, Julie, then you will not play poker at this event. And in fact, no poker will be played. How do you like that?

**Julie:** I love it.

**John Hodgman:** At least one night. One poker-free night.

**Jesse Thorn:** And Joe, if you win, only poker will be played the entire time. No other activities.

**John Hodgman:** No eating, no drinking, no sleeping. I take it back. There will be eating.

[00:40:00]

I will send Richard Kind over to make sandwiches for you while you play. And it will be all night long.

No, I would never deny your family poker. It's only a question of whether to compel Julie to play poker. So, if you were to win, Julie will play poker. If you were to win, Julie, you will not play poker. What do you want to bet that I'm going to rule in your respective favors? How strong do you feel you've made your case?

Joe, what do you have in your pocket? Got any change?

**Joe:** No, literally nothing. And that's the issue. But I'd bet a whole quarter.

**John Hodgman:** A whole quarter.

**Jesse Thorn:** Yeah, if he had anything in his pocket, they'd be married by now.

*(They laugh.)*

**John Hodgman:** Yeah. Or he might be happy to see me.

Julie, what's your bet?



**Julie:** I probably have maybe two dollars in my wallet.

**John Hodgman:** Would you bid that whole two that I'm going to rule in your favor, and you're not going to play poker next time?

**Julie:** Sure, let's go for it. Let's bet big.

**John Hodgman:** Whoa! All in.

**Julie:** All in.

**John Hodgman:** Alright. Do you call? Two dollars? Or fold? Or raise?

**Joe:** No, we're just going to call.

**John Hodgman:** Alright. The pot's right. I'm going to go in my chambers to consider my verdict. I'll be back in a moment with my decision.

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

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

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

**Julie:** I think I have a pretty good shot of not having to play poker.

**Jesse Thorn:** Why's that?

**Julie:** I think I presented a pretty good argument. And again, I maintain that these are not real poker games.

**Jesse Thorn:** And I mean, there's a lot riding on this right now, Julia. I mean, that could buy you a 20-ounce soda.

**Julie:** Exactly! How am I going to stay caffeinated otherwise?

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

**Joe:** I came in feeling pretty good. 'Cause I know that they're poker games. But I think Julie had a pretty strong case. So, I'm a little—probably like a 30/70 at this point.

**Jesse Thorn:** Well, we'll see what Judge Hodgman has to say about all this in just a moment.

**Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

**Jesse Thorn:** Judge John Hodgman, it is the holiday season. And if you're filling a stocking—

**John Hodgman:** Jesse, I'm not filling any stocking.

**Jesse Thorn:** You're not?!

**John Hodgman:** I'm stuffing them!

**Jesse Thorn:** Oh, wow! (*Laughs.*)

**John Hodgman:** I'm stuffing them up. I'm stuffing them up—

**Jesse Thorn:** Stuff 'em Stockings!

**John Hodgman:** —with new and exciting *Judge John Hodgman* merchandise in the form of our Weird Mom tees. You remember our Weird Dad tees, that incredible Weird Dad logo designed by our friend Aaron Draplin of Portland, Oregon. Well, guess what? Aaron's back with a Weird Mom logo! Which you can get on tees of all sizes. By tees, I mean t-shirts. And I'm talking about regular fit t-shirts and the lady fit t-shirts for all the Weird Moms in your life, whether they are your actual mom or just someone who fills a mom-like role in your life, they'll love that weird mom t-shirt.

What else we got in that [MaxFunStore.com](https://www.maxfunstore.com), Jesse?

**Jesse Thorn:** Our Canadian House of Pizza and Garbage t-shirts are back!

**John Hodgman:** They're back!

**Jesse Thorn:** They were a limited run item. They were sunsetted from the store. We retired them to the Disney Vault. Now they're back for a limited time only. You can find those at [MaxFunStore.com](https://www.maxfunstore.com) as well.

**John Hodgman:** Some of our most popular t-shirts are the Canadian House of Pizza and Garbage shirts. Indeed, when we were on the first couple legs of our road court tour, I saw a lot of them in the audience. And you know what? A lot of them looked pretty old and threadbare. So, we were like, “Hey! We're going back to Canada. We're going to Vancouver in early 2025. Why not bring Canadian House of Pizza and Garbage out of the vault?” Put it back on some brand-new tees in all the sizes that you want, as well as beverage koozies for both regular size cans and slim cans!

**Jesse Thorn:** And you know what? If you're on the west coast of Canada or the United States, why not give somebody the holiday gift of tickets to see the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast live in Vancouver, Seattle, Portland, San Francisco, or—well, you're out of luck if you're in LA, because that show is sold out.

**John Hodgman:** And I dare say tickets are going fast in all the other locations. So, better get over there to [MaximumFun.org/events](https://MaximumFun.org/events) to get your tickets for Vancouver, Seattle, Portland, Oregon—home of Aaron Draplin himself—and the great San Francisco Sketchfest, to stuff those tickets into your stocking or someone's that you love.

**Jesse Thorn:** And if you're looking for a special antique or handmade gift this year, go to [MaxFunStore.com](https://MaxFunStore.com), where we have all new ball caps, all new handmade scarves, and of course, the incredible selection of vintage and antique clothing, home items, and gift items that you have come to expect from our shop. Lots of jewelry for gentlemen and ladies as well.

**John Hodgman:** Put This On Shop.

[00:45:00]

I'm typing it into my clicky keyboard right now. [PutThisOnShop.com](https://PutThisOnShop.com). Look at all these incredible, vivid, handmade—girl's pink daisy dress, lightweight vintage cotton military field coat, and a gorgeous post-World War II black wool peacoat. That's some of the things that come up. But Jesse Thorn, what if I'm looking for a 10-karat gold wishbone stick pin?!

**Jesse Thorn:** Well, great news. If you want to adorn your lapel with one of those, you can go to [PutThisOnShop.com](https://PutThisOnShop.com). And if you use the code JUSTICE, that will ship for free. In fact, all of the—everything except the really big, heavy stuff that costs us a ton of money to ship will ship for free with the code JUSTICE.

So, go to [PutThisOnShop.com](https://PutThisOnShop.com), or just follow [@Put.This.On](https://www.instagram.com/Put.This.On) on Instagram. Let's get back to the case.

**John Hodgman:** Okay.

**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:** Well, the pot is \$4. One of you is gonna take it home. You both—you bet 25 cents. Julie raised it by \$3.75, and you called it. And I think you both played your hands very well, honestly. That doesn't—as in poker, one of you will lose. You can play your hand well and still lose. You do all the right things and still lose. That's because poker is a terrific game.

Now, in one area, Julia is absolutely correct. Poker is a great game. Some of these games are not good, nor are they—in my opinion—poker. Something like Big Murph, or Follow the Queen, or Lowball, where you are using established poker forms—whether that's five-card

draw, seven-card stud, or a Texas Hold'em configuration, where you have two cards down and five cards up in the middle that are shared. Standard poker configurations, dealings, and so forth, but you have a couple of wild cards, or a couple of like whoopsie change-up rules, that kind of thing? Those can be fun, but they're only fun when the rules are known, and they're applied consistently.

Some of these other ones like—whatchacallit—Under Ten or Big L or Fiery Cross or whatever. I mean, these were the bane of my existence in my weekly poker game. Because they feel like different games to me. You're still putting together a five-card hand, but now you're building weird stacks of cards in the middle. And sometimes you have to put a card on your head. It's just—the novelty games started to really wear me down. And all I ever wanted to do was the anti-Richard Kind, was to insist that we play Texas Hold'em, for example. And if not that, then one game over and over and over again.

Because it is the consistency of the game that makes it interesting to me. It is part of the—the consistency of the rules hand over hand over hand over hand over hand that allows you to start getting an intuitive sense for the odds of the hands that you're playing, for the cards that you have and how they stack up against other people. Unless you're going to memorize a bunch of math tables and probability tables—which I don't consider to be fun—playing hand over hand over hand over hand is how you start to build a sense of what's a good hand, what's a bad hand, what is the likelihood that your hand will beat another.

And changing the rules between every deal is, to me, chaotic to the point of unfun. And in that regard, I have great sympathy for Julie. Because I feel that... I could see why you would feel not only confused, but ultimately bored. Because it's interesting; you know, the stakes of poker are these little coins or chips that represent five, tens, or hundreds of thousands of dollars, or whatever. I mean, there are big financial stakes possibly. But there are also these emotional stakes as you're being tricked or misled, or you're misleading someone else, or you're embarrassed, or you're humiliated, or you're triumphant. And something happens; it turns everything.

It's a highly emotional game. But if you're playing Calvin Ball, and the rules are changing every time, the stakes are never consistent—if you see what I mean. Particularly those emotional stakes. So, in that sense, Julie, I agree with you that what they're playing is a kind of family *Tegwar* that is not only difficult for an outsider to get accustomed to, right? Meaning you. But also, is not good poker, period. Sorry, Grandma.

Julie, I'll meet you on Grandma's grave.

*(They chuckle.)*

But that's it. As I have already said during the show, I believe poker—particularly Texas Hold'em, but some of the others as well—as a straight-up game, even if there is no money involved, it's one of the most intriguing and fun games that I've ever played.

[00:50:00]

I mean, it's up there with Scrabble or with chess, with any other kind of game. It is intrinsically an interesting and well-constructed game. And I have—I am married to a person who's a whole human being in her own right. And we love to play certain games together, *Scrabble* in particular. And I would love for her to play Texas Hold'em with me and other people. I think she would really enjoy it! But unfortunately, I cannot compel her to play poker and have fun. Because this is my marriage.

That's why I'm very happy to compel Julie to play poker and have fun! (*Laughs.*) Or at least give it a try, under certain circumstances in which she has as much of a chance of having fun as anyone else does. Because that's where the odds are in the house's favor against Julie in this case. Because you've got siblings speaking their weird sibling language, playing all these different card games with all these rules that are uptown, downtown, all around town. And it's very confusing, and it's not really poker, and you're not giving her a chance to settle in and have fun.

Because the pleasure of poker is that while everyone brings their own skills to the table and their own expertise and their own experience, you're still being dealt cards at random. That is the element of chance that levels the playing field, so to speak. And right now, the house has too much of an advantage against Julie. Because all these siblings are using their secret sibling language and these old weird rules that are confusing, and she's not coming to it as an equal. Poker, as a game, is a leveler.

And that's what's going to happen when you convene for the holidays with your siblings. And Julie, you have a built-in incentive to play, right? Because I am ruling in Joe's favor. So, you have—you're losing two dollars to him. He's doubled up. And that means that's two dollars that you can win back from him.

Now, here's what's gonna happen. You're gonna pick one game for the night. Of all of these, the only one I haven't crossed out is Big Murph. Because that seven-card stud, first of all, which is—it takes a minute to learn, but it does not take a lifetime to master. Like, you'll get it pretty quickly. The rule of—the order of the game. Seven-card stud is a real poker game. You will learn the ranking of the hands. And with fives and tens wild, you'll have an opportunity to put together a lot of hands. So, it's sort of more fun than even regular seven-card stud, which can be a bit of a grind until you get the sense of it. Do you know what I mean?

So, you're going to play Big Murph, and you're going to play multiple hands of it. Not only on the night, but before you even get there, Julie. You're going to get—you're both going to get a game going in your community, perhaps. Or without that, you'll play some video—you know, get a video game of poker or whatever, and run some hands through. Just get a sense of it. Get a sense of how it's played. And then you're going to get some poker chips. These nickels and dimes, that's—come on, that's nickel and dime stuff. Get some poker chips!

You know what, Joe, you're going to buy some poker chips for Julie for the holidays. And you will put some monetary value to those chips. Now, you're already two dollars up, Joe. But everyone's got to put in—I don't know—four bucks? Whatever the kids can handle, you know what I mean? And you're going to play a tournament until someone wins all of it.

(*Chuckles.*) Or at least play five or ten hands of the same game. I'm recommending Big Murph. It could be regular seven-card stud. It could be Texas Hold'em, even.

You'll play five to ten hands of the same game after you've had a little bit of practice. And then, Julie, you will have actually played poker. And then you could decide, "Ohhh, maybe this sucks. And I don't want to ever play." In which case, you go away. But I have a feeling that if you were to play five or ten hands of real poker, then you—and my wife!—would like the game. This is the sound of a gavel.

**Clip:**

**Speaker:** Let's play some cards.

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

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

How do you feel, Julie?

**Julie:** You know, I thought it would go the other way, but I guess I need to learn how to play poker now.

**Jesse Thorn:** Julie, I'll tell you this.

[00:55:00]

The closest I ever got to wanting to play poker was reading a wonderful book about poker, called *Positively Fifth Street* by Jim McManus, years and years ago for my public radio show. He came on and also was an exceedingly interesting, bright, and lovely guest. He is both a guy who made it to the final table at the World Series of Poker and a frequently published poet. A wonderful, wonderful dude. Really great book that has a lot of juicy stuff about murders in addition to the juicy stuff about poker.

So, I don't know. If that almost got me playing poker—you already like playing games; I bet it would work for you.

**Julie:** Yeah, I'll have to check that one out. It sounds good.

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

**Joe:** Great! I'm excited. I will—I should put more time into getting Julie acquainted to the rules and get her caught up, but I will do that going forward.

**Jesse Thorn:** Do you think between now and January you can learn 75 new versions of poker? (*Laughs.*)

**Joe:** At least.

**Jesse Thorn:** To baffle everyone present. Joe, Julie, thanks for joining us on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

**Joe:** Thank you!

**Julie:** Thanks.

**Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

**Jesse Thorn:** Another *Judge John Hodgman* case is in the books. We'll have Swift Justice in just a second. First, our thanks to Redditor u/Junk\_Mutluk for naming this week's episode "I'll See You and Raise Your Right Hand". If you want to name a future episode, join us on Reddit at MaximumFun—oh! You know what I found out, John?

**John Hodgman:** No, what?

**Jesse Thorn:** MaximumFun.Reddit.com no longer works! They changed the URLs at Reddit. Now you have to go to [Reddit.com/r/maximumfun](https://www.reddit.com/r/maximumfun).

**John Hodgman:** Look, Maximum Fun is always Maximum Fun. That change is less than minimal fun. [Reddit.com/r/maximumfun](https://www.reddit.com/r/maximumfun). Or just search Maximum Fun in the Reddit application or at Reddit. You'll find it. It'll be fun.

**Jesse Thorn:** Did they even take a moment to consider what this would mean for podcast hosts who very automatically say the stuff that they say at the end of every episode? (*Laughs.*)

**John Hodgman:** They did not. They did not take it into consideration.

**Jesse Thorn:** Who have to change it slightly? That's where we ask for episode names, at [Reddit.com/r/maximumfun](https://www.reddit.com/r/maximumfun). You can also join in the conversation about this episode there. It is a lot of fun.

**John Hodgman:** Yeah. We don't just talk about the episode names there. It's where people post all kinds of things relating to this and other Maximum Fun podcasts, including—let's see. User Jesse Thorn just posted, "What are your little weirdsies?" And a little discussion about Linda Holmes's famous Little Weirdsies, which is going strong.

**Jesse Thorn:** Linda Holmes has a new book on the way. I bet we'll have a new Little Weirdsies episode when that book comes out.

**John Hodgman:** Yeah, go to your neighborhood bookstore and preorder or order her new novel. Linda Holmes is the author, friend of the show and terrific lady.

**Jesse Thorn:** Yeah. You know, if you want to see my enormous gavel...

**John Hodgman:** Or my now very, by comparison, small gavel.

**Jesse Thorn:** Or just watch any episode of *Judge John Hodgman*, go to our YouTube page by searching for *Judge John Hodgman* on YouTube. You can find video of our episodes there. And while you're there, recommend it to a friend that loves to—you know, YouTube is the number one platform for podcasts?

**John Hodgman:** I have heard it, and I believe it. And it means that if you go to YouTube, [@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod](#), and press like and subscribe and share and make a comment, that means you're helping spread the word of the podcast to other people.

**Jesse Thorn:** Yeah. Tell your friend that only watches YouTube videos and doesn't even watch television or listen to podcasts or whatever; they just watch *Good Mythical Morning* or whatever. Or it's like some show where like a guy does 18th century woodworking. That seems like that's what all the YouTube shows are, right? It's just some guy doing—or cutting shoes in half?

**John Hodgman:** It's always somebody doing something. Sometimes it's two guys wearing blindfolds eating chicken sandwiches. Oh, that's us!

**Jesse Thorn:** Yeah, that's us. You should watch our Battle of the Brands on YouTube too. If you wanna know whether we prefer Oreos or Hydrox.

**John Hodgman:** Frank's Hot Sauce or Cholula, or Popeye's Chicken sandwich or KFC. That's where you go.

**Jesse Thorn:** Yeah, a lot of fun. Lot of fun. You can also find us on TikTok and, of course, on Instagram. Just search for *Judge John Hodgman*. I recommend that you follow us in both of those places for video content.

And hey, if you like our show, why not review it?

**John Hodgman:** Yeah. Some of you don't watch YouTube at all. Some of the old-school folks are still listening on Apple Podcasts, including listener MonsterIOOI, who left some very kind words for us over there at Apple Podcasts, including a five-star rating! Saying:

[01:00:00]

“Thoughtful and entertaining. I just discovered this show recently, (*John gasps*) and I really like it! Judge John seems to take things thoughtfully, and carefully makes a judgment call even when it's hard sometimes. I appreciate the fun but also genuine advice from the show.”



Thank you, Monster IOOI! As well as to whoever rated and reviewed the show on Apple Podcasts such that MonsterIOOI discovered it! If you're listening on Apple Podcasts, please consider leaving a review and five stars if you feel we've deserved it. You can do the same over at Pocket Casts. You can also leave a comment on Spotify or YouTube, or just text a friend your favorite episode. All of these shares really help. Thank you.

**Jesse Thorn:** *Judge John Hodgman* was created by Jesse Thorn and John Hodgman. This episode, engineered by Cameron Becht at Louisville Podcast in Louisville, Kentucky. Our social media manager is Nattie Lopez. The podcast is edited by AJ McKeon. Our video producer is Daniel Speer. Our producer is Jennifer Marmor.

Now, Swift Justice, where we answer small disputes with quick judgment.

Eddie says, “I call cats kitty regardless of their age. My husband, Alex, thinks the word kitty should only describe baby cats.”

**John Hodgman:** Well, I hope that he only ever refers to you lovingly as: my adult wife, who's a whole human being in her own right. Because calling people baby or honey or sweetie or kitty or whatever it is— Calling adult cats kitty is absolutely fine. And refusing to do so is no fun at all.

By the way, kitty is also a poker term. It means a percentage of the pot that is taken out at each hand to create a collective pool that maybe you use to pay for refreshments that night for your friends, or maybe you're raising money for someone who needs some money. It's called the kitty. That's another version of kitty.

**Jesse Thorn:** You know what this reminds me of? That one Stella short where—who is it that says—? Is it Michael Showalter that says, “Can I hold the purpy?” It's Showalter, right? “Can I hold the purpy?”

*(They laugh.)*

**John Hodgman:** Instead of puppy.

**Jesse Thorn:** The purpy named Pinochet.

*(They laugh.)*

**John Hodgman:** Look, when you're out there calling people sweetie or baby or honey pie or whatever, please make sure it's someone that you are in a relationship with and you're not being inappropriate, say, at an office holiday party. The *Swingers/Mad Men*/early 2000s poker era is over! Please call people by their names.

But speaking of office party fouls, we're still looking for party fouls for our show. Disputes revolving holiday parties, office parties, birthday parties, any party that you might be going to. New Year's Eve party. There are fouls popping up everywhere. How early is too early to

arrive at a party? I have a thought! How late is too late? What exactly is fashionably late, and how is it different where you grew up? What do you do when you've been raised, appropriately, to never show up to a party empty handed, but the host insist, "Don't bring anything, just yourself"? Send me your party fouls and disputes at [MaximumFun.org/jjho](https://MaximumFun.org/jjho).

**Jesse Thorn:** And of course, no matter what your dispute is, our show thrives upon it. So, go to [MaximumFun.org/jjho](https://MaximumFun.org/jjho) and submit your disputes big and small. And you know what, John? If you don't have a dispute, start one. That's what I'm saying.

**John Hodgman:** Oh, wow! (*Laughs.*)

**Jesse Thorn:** Yeah, pick on somebody in your family or something. Do something outrageous, and then say, "We should submit this." (*Laughs.*)

**John Hodgman:** Just think about it. You know that someone is in your life is wrong. Let us know at [MaximumFun.org/jjho](https://MaximumFun.org/jjho). That's [MaximumFun.org/jjho](https://MaximumFun.org/jjho).

**Jesse Thorn:** We are the ones sewing division in America. Let's go!

**John Hodgman:** That's right. It's all on us.

**Jesse Thorn:** We'll talk to you next time on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

**Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

**Transition:** Cheerful ukulele chord.

**Speaker 1:** Maximum Fun.

**Speaker 2:** A worker-owned network.

**Speaker 3:** Of artist owned shows.

**Speaker 4:** Supported—

**Speaker 5:** —directly—

**Speaker 6:** —by you!