

[00:00:00]

Jesse Thorn: Hey, it's Jesse. I just wanted to thank everyone who has reached out to us about the fires here in Los Angeles. And I also wanted to reassure everyone that Jennifer and Daniel and I are entirely safe. None of us have evacuated. Everyone else at MaxFun is also safe. We have had some evacuations and challenges, but everybody is doing okay considering the circumstances.

If you want to give some money to support the recovery efforts, one good place to give is the California Community Foundation. They're at [CalFund.org](https://www.calfund.org). And they not only will be directly funding both emergency response and recovery efforts, but also fund local foundations for local recovery efforts. Great foundation. That's [CalFund.org](https://www.calfund.org).

We also have a very beloved former colleague, Ibarionex Perello, who lost his home in the Eaton Canyon fire. And so, we're going to put a link to a GoFundMe for Ibarionex and his wife, Cynthia, in the show notes.

Okay. Enjoy the show.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: Welcome to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. I'm Bailiff Jesse Thorn. And in the winter wonderland of Brooklyn, New York City is my friend, Judge John Hodgman.

John Hodgman: (*Chortles.*) Why, it's true, Jesse. We're here in the new year, and it is snowing real snowflakes. Not the fake stuff. You know, let me tell you something. You want to know some behind the scenes Hollywood trickery?

Jesse Thorn: Yeah, sure, I'd love to hear about behind the scenes Hollywood trickery!

John Hodgman: If you want to make fake snow on the ground, you know what you do? If you want to make fake slush on the ground? I learned this when we were filming the Hulu musical comedy, *Up Here*. Romantic musical comedy. Romantic musical rom com.

Anyway, it was created by our friends Bobby Lopez and Kristen Anderson-Lopez—listeners to the show and wonderful geniuses and people. And we were filming at night, and it was supposed to be during the winter, but we were filming during the summer. What do you do, Jesse? Well, you get a Superman to fly backwards around the earth until it changes the season or something. Or! Take cotton batting, good old-fashioned cotton, put it on the ground, and then make it wet, and it looks just like slush.

(*Jesse "wow!"s.*)

It's also disgusting. Ruins the whole neighborhood.

(*Jesse laughs.*)

I think they cleaned it up after.

Jesse Thorn: When our friend, Rachel Bloom, creator of *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend*—

John Hodgman: Yeah, incredible talent.

Jesse Thorn: Brilliant. Wonderful lady too. When she was shooting *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend* outside of our office building one day, she was kind enough to allow me and my daughter to come visit the set. And we had a great time. And they were shooting a song, a musical number about the Santa Ana Winds in Southern California. So, they had a guy from—what's that musical? *Jersey Boys*, about The Four Seasons?

(They laugh.)

They had a guy who had been in the Broadway production of *Jersey Boys*, performing as the Santa Ana Winds, and he was completely surrounded by crumpled up newspaper. I'm talking about a full city block of crumpled up newspaper.

(John "wow"s.)

And more enormous fans than you have ever seen in your life.

John Hodgman: Well, I don't know, Jesse. I've been to some live *Judge John Hodgman* shows.

Jesse Thorn: *(Laughs.)* Yeah, well, we gotta let my glowing locks fly.

John Hodgman: I just mean to say we have some incredible fans, that's all.

(Jennifer laughs.)

Jesse Thorn: Oh, okay, I got it. Oh. Well, I'll tell you this, John. When you're in a real winter wonderland, a lovely thing to do is hole up in your cozy studio and clear the docket.

John Hodgman: *(Surprised.)* Oh, you're moving on?

Jesse Thorn: *(Chuckling.)* I don't know. Yeah, sure. I mean, we already covered Hollywood magic.

John Hodgman: I said that I wasn't going to mess with the camera, but since we're on YouTube now, [@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod](#) on YouTube, I'm going to turn the camera around, so you can see the magic.

Jesse Thorn: I'm really excited about this.

John Hodgman: Alright. Well, I hope this works. Watch me fall over, knock the camera down. Alright, I'm taking off my headphones.

Jesse Thorn: He's taking off his headphones. Jennifer, we can talk any (*sensor beep*) we want to.

(*Jennifer chuckles menacingly.*)

Jennifer's catchphrase is back!

(*They laugh.*)

Jennifer Marmor: I didn't know what else to say!

Jesse Thorn: That was a perfect use of your catchphrase.

Jennifer Marmor: You know, I used cotton batting once to make a large container of Ben & Jerry's ice cream. I used the cotton batting as ice cream.

John Hodgman: Okay, are you ready? Here we go. Winter Wonderland.

(*Jesse "wow"s and Jennifer "ooh"s.*)

Jesse Thorn: It's beautiful out there in Brooklyn! Look at that lovely dusting of snow.

John Hodgman: Merry Christmas, you old Building and Loan.

Jesse Thorn: It's actively snowing, beautifully snowing there in Brooklyn, New York City.

John Hodgman: But we are here now to clear a docket, correct?

Jesse Thorn: We do indeed have a docket to clear, John!

[00:05:00]

John Hodgman: And as I alluded, this is our first recording of 2025. We are back in studio after a short holiday break. Thanks for joining us for our holiday special. And we're ready to take on the new year.

Over the years, we've had a lot of weird dads and husbands and other partners parade through our courtroom displaying their very special and eccentric systems. New complicated systems for doing the dishes, maximizing solar power, and keeping a never-ending stock of gelato in the freezer. I think that that was a weird wife, actually, more than a weird husband.

In any case, though calendars are arbitrary inventions—of course—with the longest night of the year behind us, the new year is as good a time as any to abandon old systems and try some new ones.

Jesse, do you have any new year's resolutions? Any systems of habit or thought that aren't working for you anymore that you're going to change up?

Jesse Thorn: I want to get a vibe together like a guy that knows karate.

John Hodgman: You want to get a vibe together like a guy that knows karate?

Jesse Thorn: I just don't think I'm going to have time to learn karate. But you know how a guy that's really good at karate, they have a kind of stillness to them, but also a perpetual sense that they could kick your rear?

John Hodgman: Oh, oh, I see what you're saying.

Jesse Thorn: And also, that maybe they kind of want to, but they're not going to—unless they need to. But you could tell that they would enjoy it if it came to it.

John Hodgman: You want that karate look.

Jesse Thorn: The vibe. I want the vibe. I want to project that into the world.

John Hodgman: Look, I think you could do that.

Jesse Thorn: We've discussed on this program Guardian Angels—all Guardian Angels, in their little berets in the back of the bus—whether or not they knew karate, they had karate vibes.

John Hodgman: That's true. I think that you move through life with a lot of grace and elegance—the elegance of a capybara, honestly.

Jesse Thorn: Thank you. *(Laughs.)*

John Hodgman: A lot of people ask me, is Jesse Thorn just a capybara who's in a skin suit who's standing on his hind legs? And I'm like, "I haven't checked lately, but I think he's human."

Jesse Thorn: I mean, my teeth have never stopped growing.

John Hodgman: But you have that—yeah, you have that in that sense of inner peace and calm. *(Beat.)* That I know you don't feel, but you project it anyway.

(Jesse laughs.)

I have a system that did not work for me all last year, because I made the New Year's resolution to read more books and watch more movies and read less internet. And I did those things, I'm glad to say. I read *Middlemarch*. I even read another book. I can't think of what it was now, but anyway. Read a couple of other books. And I watched a lot of great movies and everything else. And I read less internet.

But the thing was, I was very—once you make those resolutions, if you're like me, you can be very punitive—self-punitive, I should say. And every time you reach for the wrong thing, you reach for your phone or whatever, it's like you're mad at yourself. And this made for a miserable existence. I couldn't even enjoy these movies or these books!

And I have a new system that I'm working on this year, which is instead of thinking at every turn, “Am I doing the right thing? I'm probably doing the wrong thing. I'm probably making the wrong decision for how to spend this moment on earth that I will never get back in my life.” Instead, I'm just going to decide whatever I choose to do, it's like, “This is probably the right thing to do.” ‘Cause I'm making the decision. I'm just going to say to myself, yeah, you're doing the right thing today.

And the best thing to do is record a podcast with a friend.

Jesse Thorn: I'll tell you this. The sincere answer to your question is: upon the turn of the election, I decided to myself that my default internet button to press—which was the newspaper; I shan't say which, but I shall say they've done a lot more both-sides-ing of gender affirming care for children than I'd like.

John Hodgman: Mm-hm-hmm! Mm-hm. I think I know the one you're speaking of.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah. I had been pressing that button out of habit. And I thought, “This is not making me a better citizen in any notable way. And it is making me more agitated and upset when I do it.”

And so, I have not (*stifling a laugh*) looked at the newspaper since then. Since the election, I have not looked at the newspaper. A couple of times, I have accidentally typed it into the URL bar out of habit.

John Hodgman: Sure. Muscle memory.

Jesse Thorn: But each of those times, I have hastily navigated away.

John Hodgman: Yeah, I made a similar decision. I realized that my reading the news and getting angry and upset over it was not affecting the news in any way, and therefore there was no—I had no obligation to feel that way.

Jesse Thorn: Can I tell you something that is affecting the news in a positive way?

John Hodgman: Oh, yes, please.

Jesse Thorn: So, a few weeks ago on the show, I shared that my family—

[00:10:00]

My wife and I had issued a \$25,000 challenge to listeners of *Judge John Hodgman* and *Jordan, Jesse, Go!* and folks who followed us on social media, to raise money for an organization called Al Otro Lado. Which means “the other side” in Spanish. They do direct services for migrants on both sides of the US/Mexico border.

And I had told the Al Otro Lado people, “Look, I’ll get you my \$25,000. I have no idea—I have no idea what’s going to happen with this. Please do not raise your hopes.”

John Hodgman: Yeah, your challenge was, “We’re committed—” You and Teresa are committed to donating 25k to this incredible organization. And the challenge was to the listeners: could you match it? In other words, if the listeners gave 25k, you and Teresa would match it. That was your commitment. And I don’t know, Jesse. I haven’t been checking in. Have you been getting close to that rather ambitious goal?

Jesse Thorn: Let me tell you a story, John.

John Hodgman: I love a story!

Jesse Thorn: Four or five days after that episode came out, we were at like \$24,000. (*Chuckles.*)

John Hodgman: Oh my gosh. I’m sitting there refreshing this feed thinking, “Well, what’s going to happen when we hit \$25,000? That’s the totality of our match. Will people keep giving? What’s going to—?” How can we keep the ball rolling, in other words?

I get a text message from a friend of a friend. This friend of a friend wishes to remain anonymous.

John Hodgman: F of an F. F of an F.

Jesse Thorn: This person says, “My family was inspired by your listeners and your generosity. We would like to provide a second \$25,000 match.”

(*John “whoa”s.*)

I said, “Holy mackerel!”

They said, “From 25 to 50? That’s us. We’ll match it.”

We pass 25. It’s literally five or six days later. We’re about to hit 50. And I’m having the same thoughts. I’m thinking, “This is unbelievable. How could we keep this ball rolling? How

could this work?" Like, I don't know any actual rich people. (*Laughs.*) You know what I mean? That's usually who does this.

I get a message from a *Judge John Hodgman* listener who I do not know. They say, "Our family foundation. has been inspired by the generosity of you and the listeners and that second match. We'd like to provide a third \$25,000 match." (*Laughs.*)

(*John whistles.*)

I say, "Are you for real?"

They say yes. I check. They are. I connect them with Al Otro Lado. We update the website at AlOtroLado.org/letsdosomething. Third \$25,000. So, up to \$75,000.

Can I just tell you? As we sit here in the new year, I am typing the website into my phone. And I am going to tell you we currently sit at \$89,206.

(*John "whoa"s.*)

Plus! \$75,000 in matching. So, that is 165is thousand dollars for Al Otro Lado. It is absolutely mind bending.

John Hodgman: That's incredible.

Jesse Thorn: And will make a very—unlike looking at that newspaper and getting upset—will make a huge impact in the actual lives of actual human beings. One of the—I love to read the little comments that people leave when they make their donation. I love that a lot of people have been making recurring donations too.

John Hodgman: Yeah. They go: "First." "First."

Jesse Thorn: (*Chuckling.*) Yeah, exactly. But somebody posted, "You know, last year or two years ago, my uncle went and spent a couple of weeks at the border volunteering with Al Otro Lado." The uncle, presumably an attorney. They have a lot of attorney volunteers that go down there and work with them. They said he came back, and all he could talk about was how effective they are.

Yeah, I was like, "Yes!" That's what we're talking about! We're talking about actually doing stuff. So, anyway. Thanks *Judge John Hodgman* listeners. Unbelievable.

John Hodgman: Thank you, *Judge John Hodgman* listeners. And that really is the message. I was not advocating for complacency, either in your personal goals or your goals and values for the world. I just mean to say there's no point in making yourself upset. The world is organized to make you upset. There are people who want you to be upset. You should take care of yourself, and you should take direct care of others in any way you possibly can. And this is an incredible way to do it. Al Otro Lado.

If people want to continue to keep this ball rolling, where do they go for this, Jesse?

Jesse Thorn: AlOtroLado.org/letsdosomething. And we'll put the link in the show description in your podcast app as well. But.

John Hodgman: Headline though, from that story, I have to say—for me—is that we have a *Judge John Hodgman* listener who has a family foundation.

(They laugh.)

It's very exciting.

Jesse Thorn: Totally thrilling.

John Hodgman: Bring us to your Island. We'd like to visit.

I also have a new year's resolution, which is to periodically get the cold that I got on Friday, so that my voice sounds like this all the time. Oh yeah. I haven't had, I haven't had a deep, mellifluous voice like this for a long time.

And this voice wants to dispense some justice.

[00:15:00]

And today's docket is all about systems. We're going to rule whether or not these litigants and their systems are right or wrong, which systems will thrive in '25, and which will get—*(struggling to match the rhyme)* the kni...ve. The knifve, in '25.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah, rhymes with thrive. The knife. Get the knife.

John Hodgman: Jesse, let's clear this docket.

Jesse Thorn: Okay, here's a case from Emily in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

“Anytime my husband, Frank, hears about a book he's interested in reading, he immediately jumps on—major website name redacted—and buys it. Putting aside the many problems I have with that website, Frank's book buying system drives me bananas, because I am a librarian. Just like all JJHo listeners.”

It's true. Some are graphic designers.

John Hodgman: *(Laughs.)* That's what Emily wrote. That's not a snarky comment that we put in. That's what Emily wrote.

Jesse Thorn: “If he's interested in a book, I can bring it home from work that day. I want him to at least check in with me about any book before he buys it. Judge Hodgman, what do you think about Frank's book-buying system? Time for him to ditch it?”

John Hodgman: Hm. Jennifer Marmor, you're here too, right? Producer Jennifer, Happy New Year.

Jennifer Marmor: Happy New Year!

John Hodgman: Any New Year's resolutions?

Jennifer Marmor: Yeah! Basically, I want to become a morning person, and I want to be a person who enjoys cleaning. So, basically, I want to be a brand-new person, and I think I can do it.

Jesse Thorn: Resolving is going to be the thing that makes that happen, Jen.

John Hodgman: Here's what I say. You're perfect the way you are. Let yourself off the hook. Sleep in, and live in squalor. That's my advice for you.

(Jennifer laughs.)

Jesse Thorn: Except when we have a morning record.

Jennifer Marmor: Yeah. My son will just be late for school. All good.

John Hodgman: Well, you know, anyway. There are things that you have to do, but.

(Jennifer agrees.)

Yes. Well, I made a resolution and not long ago to wake up with my wife, who's a whole human being in her own right, and walk out the door with her when she goes to teach school, high school. I don't go to that high school. That would be weird.

What if I enrolled as a high school student? *Back to School*, Rodney Dangerfield style?

(They laugh.)

Jesse Thorn: I love it! I mean, you're a great diver.

John Hodgman: That's true.

Jesse Thorn: That's the plot of *Back to School*.

Jennifer Marmor: I hope those students give you some respect.

John Hodgman: Well, I don't get any is the thing.

I go to the coffee shop, and I do a little work. And it actually has really—you know, really helped. I don't do it every day, but I've noticed that if I just sit up in bed, the next thing that happens is my feet are on the floor. And the next thing that happens is I'm going! Getting started is 99% of the battle. Anyway.

What about reading books? Now we're talking about—I read a bunch of books, and I like them, but I don't read physical media anymore. Because my eyes are messed up. How do you—what's your system for reading/borrowing/buying books, Jesse Thorn? Do you have a hierarchy of what you do and when you do it?

Jesse Thorn: John, I am a public radio host. So, if there is any system that I need to develop, it is a system to get rid of books. The number of books that appear in my life unbidden is limitless. So, I generally... you'll find me leaving a lot of books at the little library outside of the art gallery by my house.

But! When I want a book, I do usually buy it. I'm not—by no means am I anti-library. But I like to buy books when I want them, because that way I am supporting the authors of those books.

John Hodgman: And Jennifer Marmor? How do you like to read a book when you have time to read one?

Jennifer Marmor: Well, lately—you know, in the spirit of not looking at apps that bring you news and make you angry and—or make me angry—I started last year revisiting the Libby app, but on my phone. The Libby app is the library app in the United States. Maybe in other countries; I'm not sure. But you can connect your local library card to this app, and then you can borrow from the library. eBooks, obviously.

John Hodgman: And audiobooks!

Jennifer Marmor: And audiobooks. And audiobooks.

John Hodgman: Ohhh, we said it in stereo. Some of them are in stereo.

Jennifer Marmor: Yes! So, you know, I have read a lot more in the latter half of 2014 than—or— (*Realizing what she said.*) 2014, oh my gosh. 2024!

Jesse Thorn: 2004.

Jennifer Marmor: 2024 than I had in a long time. And that system was working great for me, especially because, you know, when I'm doing bedtime with my young kids, often they are not quite asleep. They don't want me to leave, but I don't have to do anything. I'm just sitting there. And that used to be, you know, crossword time or look at internet and get stressed out time. And now it's just my reading time, which I really have enjoyed.

[00:20:00]

And I've gotten through a lot of books on my to-read list that way.

John Hodgman: That's wonderful!

Jennifer Marmor: Yeah. I do buy books, you know, occasionally. And that's fun for me, but mostly right now I'm doing some library books.

John Hodgman: I will say that—yes, enjoying culture that has a beginning, middle, and end that wasn't dashed off in a fit of rage, but it was actually considered and made by a talented person, in no matter what format that is, it's really, really meditative and lovely. And I will also say, I just happened to notice I have Libby on my phone, which I use. And I didn't think about this until this moment, because I forgot they had audiobooks until we said it in stereo.

But at least at my connected library in Maine, you can borrow the audio books for *The Areas of My Expertise*, *More Information Than You Require*, and *That is All*. *The Areas of My Expertise*, that's a seven-hour listening experience. I never thought of it that way. And then, *More Information Than You Require*, 13 hours.

I do like to buy books when I can. If you have the means, it is a great way to support authors, obviously. Because they get a royalty on every sale, which is important to authors—speaking as one. And it is also the way to support a bookstore. But I don't buy books from major-website-name-redacted, anymore. Nor do I buy eBooks from that website. Because I am not supporting my local bookstore when I do that.

And so, I feel that reading books is very personal. It is a chance to be essentially by yourself, with the brain of another person, and entering a world that perhaps is a little bit more consoling than this one. And however you intimately engage with the book, whether you read better on a screen or rather on paper or whatever, you have a chance every time you read a book to do something good. And whether that is supporting your local library, or supporting your local bookstore, or supporting an author by buying a book if you have the means, that's all very, very good feelings.

But running out and buying from major-website-name-redacted—no offense. Like, I'll still buy Japanese KitKats from that company, because that's where you gotta go. But for books, I'm much more likely to support Books Are Magic if I'm gonna buy, and I'm much more likely to go to the Blue Hill Public Library and borrow a book there, or the Friend Memorial Library, or the Park Slope Brooklyn Public Library here in Brooklyn, New York.

It's a wonderful way to engage with your community, to go physically into your library and meet your librarian. And maybe say hi to your wife if you live in—oh, Ann Arbor, Michigan! She's a librarian! Maybe we met her at our show.

Jennifer Marmor: We did.

John Hodgman: Oh! Oh, hi Emily! Sorry, whoops!

Jennifer Marmor: (*Laughing.*) No!

John Hodgman: I mean, boy, oh boy, what a delight it was to go into that particular library, even! Like, we did a—so, if you don't remember, we went to Ann Arbor, on the generous auspices of the Ann Arbor Public Library, and we did a live *Judge John Hodgman* there. It was one of the highlights of the tour, and we got to do the show right there in the library, and I got to browse the stacks.

We did the whole show right in front of their incredibly capacious and complete graphic novel collection. And it was a lot of fun. And you know, frankly—speaking of frankly, I wanna know why Frank wouldn't go to the library to see his lovely wife! And borrow a book there, for heaven's sake.

I'll tell you what, Frank, if you don't get out to the library, I'm gonna go back to Ann Arbor, go back to that library, and I'm gonna marry your wife. Sorry, buddy!

Jesse Thorn: I'll tell you this. As much as I'm a big “buy the book to support the author” guy, as the husband of an author—my wife's book, Theresa Thorn, *It Feels Good to Be Yourself*, in bookstores now; buy it for a child in your life. And as an author to be, my own self, I will say library sales are absolutely essential to the success of books.

(*John agrees.*)

So, if there's a book that you would like to check out, and it's not available at your library, be sure to mention it to your librarian. They will use that as justification to purchase a copy or purchase another copy. They'll be thrilled that somebody wants a book. So, do ask for a book. That actually makes a big impact for authors as well.

Jennifer Marmor: I know that to be true, because I have been on the waitlist—on the hold list in Libby for a very popular novel that came out last year by Miranda July.

John Hodgman: Oh! That's one of the books I read.

Jesse Thorn: Just dropped a copy of that off at the little library! Maybe it's still there. I'll go take a look.

Jennifer Marmor: (*Laughs.*) It's okay. I'm very close.

John Hodgman: We might as well say the book.

Jennifer Marmor: *All Fours*, yes.

John Hodgman: It's *All Fours* by Miranda July. It's a terrific novel. One of the novels I read this year.

Jennifer Marmor: I've been on that wait list since October, and I every now and then check on it, see where I'm at.

[00:25:00]

There's a lot of people waiting for the eBook. And my library, the LA Public Library, has acquired 59 more copies since I placed my hold, because it's so popular.

(John "wow"s.)

You know, not every book is an *All Fours* situation, but you know. Even just putting yourself on those hold lists lets the library know, you know, "Buy more of this."

John Hodgman: Buy more.

Jesse Thorn: Check out that— That's a wonderful book, and check out Miranda July talking about it on *Bullseye* if you're interested in that book. She is one cool lady! I love a great artist who is so able to write about big feelings and the central issues and themes of our life who also just has a bunch of stuff in her book that's so funny, you have to read it out loud to your partner after you read it. (*Laughs.*)

Miranda July is so funny. Very underrated part of Miranda July. So funny.

John Hodgman: It's unfair that she's so funny. Because she's so talented in every other way.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah. She's so—(*laughing*) yeah, exactly.

John Hodgman: Hey, Emily in Ann Arbor, Michigan, thanks again for having us out to the library. Maybe you can get a copy of *All Fours* over to Jennifer Marmor. You know, if Frank isn't abusing your kind offer to skip the line at the library, maybe you could help out Jennifer Marmor with a copy of *All Fours*. Just an idea.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah. What we really learned here is that librarians are skipping the line for their partners!

John Hodgman: Yeah. What a scandal. What a scandal! We're breaking the scandals here on *Judge John Hodgman*.

Jesse Thorn: Okay. Here's something from Shelby in Frederick, Maryland.

"What is the correct way to say and spell the word aluminum? My husband, Kyle, insists that al-oo-min-ee-um is correct. I know that's how they say it in the UK, but Kyle and I have lived in the US our entire lives. I say it's pretentious to ask for the al-oo-min-ee-um foil. He says the rest of the whole world says it that way. Please tell him I don't care about the whole world, because he is wrong."

Cheers to your system, Kyle!

(They laugh.)

John Hodgman: Well, according to our friends, Emily Brewster and the gang over at Merriam-Webster's dictionary—they had a whole article about this, which you can find, about ah-loom-in-um vs. al-oo-min-ee-um.

And here's what I learned. “The substance aluminum is the most abundant of all the metallic elements in the Earth's crust! But it doesn't exist on its own in nature. It's like gunked up with other rocks.”

Jesse Thorn: Do you think that aluminum manifested abundance this year?

(They laugh.)

John Hodgman: I think so. I think that's probably right.

And it was described in its pure metallic state by a dude named Sir Humphry Davy in 1790, who didn't even say aluminum. He called it, uh-hh, ah-loom-ee-um. And then someone added an N, and then someone added an I as well. I think that the earliest version is ah-loom-in-um. Al-oo-min-ee-um became common almost immediately after, because it sounded to certain European and other ears a little bit more, a little more similar to sodium and potassium and other words that sounded that way, and it sounded a little bit better and more coherent that way.

Jesse Thorn: A little science-ier.

John Hodgman: A little science-ier. But it is completely—I mean, as Kyle points out, the rest of the world mostly does say al-oo-min-ee-um, but we say ah-loom-in-um.

My question is to you, Jesse. If you're going to make a whale tank in San Francisco in order to transport some whales to the future, what's the best material to use?

Jesse Thorn: You're going to need transparent aluminum for that.

John Hodgman: Transparent aluminum.

Jesse Thorn: *(Attempting a Scottish accent.)* “Hello, computer!”

John Hodgman: *(Laughs.)* Yes. That's a *Star Trek: Search for Spock* reference.

Jesse Thorn: No! *Star Trek: The Voyage Home!*

John Hodgman: Oh, *The Voyage Home*. I apologize.

Jesse Thorn: San Francisco. I was born there.

John Hodgman: (*Giggles.*) Yes. As far as I'm concerned, if Scotty says transparent ah-loom-in-um, and he's from Scot-land, then I think that Kyle should go ahead and say ah-loom-in-um, just like everyone else in the United States and North America. I don't know.

Jesse Thorn: He's probably at pubs at 5AM, watching the Premier League. He's one of these guys.

John Hodgman: Oh, he's like an early morning football watcher at the pub?

(*Jesse groans.*)

It's a little pretentious, I think. Even in Frederick, Maryland. Sorry. Ah-loom-in-um it is. Sorry about that, Kyle.

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

John Hodgman: Does he also say 'ta for thank you?

(*Jesse laughs.*)

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

[00:30:00]

(*ADVERTISEMENT*)

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: Welcome back to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. We are clearing the docket this week, and all of our cases involve systems. Here's a case from Glenn in Portland, Oregon.

“I live with my partner, Arwin, and our two teenagers. My family has a history of using and breaking things I care about. For example, I have a favorite mug. It's medium blue with white line-drawn illustrations of cephalopods on the outside.”

(*Sarcastically.*) Really, *Judge John Hodgman* listener?! This just isn't adding up!

(*John giggles.*)

“I keep it on a high shelf, so that I'm the only one who can use it.”

(Laughs.)

John Hodgman: Yes.

Jesse Thorn: Yes!

“Arwen found it up there. She doesn't understand why I was hiding it from everyone else. Now everyone uses it. I want to keep it safe. Is my system good-weird or bad-weird?”

John Hodgman: And Glenn sent in a picture of the cephalopodic mug. In the photo of his mug, the cat is in focus. His Vincent Price action figure is in focus.

(Jesse chortles.)

His bucket hat is in focus. But the mug, which is what we're supposed to be seeing here, is not in focus.

For whatever reason, Glenn decided to share all of the other *Judge John Hodgman* obsessions, cats and Vincent Price and so forth. And the mug just sort of fell into the foreground, in blurry foreground. But it looks like a pretty good mug. Jesse, Jennifer, do you have any items that you hide from your family?

Jesse Thorn: I've thought about hiding mugs from my colleagues at MaxFun.

John Hodgman: Really? What, do you got a favorite?

Jesse Thorn: I have what I consider to be my on-air mugs. I'm not a hot beverage drinker, so mugs are not an important part of my life.

[00:35:00]

But I do have—*Judge John Hodgman* YouTube viewers have spotted my on-air mugs. It's basically a rotation of three mugs. One is a mug from the New York radio station WNYX, which admittedly is a fictional radio station from the television show *NewsRadio*.

John Hodgman: I was just gonna say. Happy birthday, Dave Foley, by the way.

Jesse Thorn: Indeed, happy birthday, Dave. One is my mug emblazoned with the cover of the E-40 album *In a Major Way*. And the third is from a certain sitcom about podcasting, starring the guy from *Scrubs*. And every time I drink from that one—that one I acquired because a listener knew that I was obsessed with a promo for that sitcom in which the guy from *Scrubs*'s child said to him, “Nobody thought radio was cool until you did it.”

(Laughs.) And I got obsessed with it. And then a listener sent me that they were at a thrift store in Oakland, and they had seen an entire rack of mugs advertising this long since

cancelled sitcom. And I got so excited. But I was so disappointed, because I wasn't in Oakland, until my friend Roman Mars from *99% Invisible* stepped in. (*Laughs.*)

John Hodgman: There you go.

Jesse Thorn: Roman either went to or sent an underling—he's got a lot of underlings; it's a very successful show—to this thrift store to buy all of the mugs. (*Laughs.*) And he mailed us some. And so, if those get broken, those are irreplaceable! “Nobody thought radio was cool until you did it, Dad.”

John Hodgman: Well, that's what all of your children say to you every morning, right?

Jesse Thorn: You know, at the end of the day, there's nothing that kids think is cooler than the podcast startup.

John Hodgman: I hide my *Antiques Roadshow* Yeti flask from my family.

Jesse Thorn: (*Laughs.*) I bet.

John Hodgman: That this style—the fact that, that *AR*, that the *Roadshow* gave me this style of flask, the one that I can drink while lying down, is so—it was kismet. It was serendipitous, and I love it so much. And if I don't hide it, people in my family—my wife, who's a whole human being in her own right—will take it from me and use it herself, and then leave it someplace where I can't find it. It's just the way it happens.

I have to—I have a very special hiding place in the kitchen where I hide it every morning, because that way I know that I can get it again. It's just the thing that I need in order to sleep. So, there you go. That's my system. That's what I hide.

So, I asked Glenn to send in a picture of this mug, and he did, along with Vincent Price and the cat and everything else. And then he said, “Shortly after I sent you this photo, the mug disappeared!” And he doesn't even know where it is now, because his family got its paws on it! I hope it's not broken, Glenn. I think your system is absolutely fair and reasonable, and I don't know why Arwen is going around— Look, I'm sure she's a wonderful partner.

But Arwen, leave Glenn's mugs hidden where they belong. Let him have his mug. Nice cat, by the way.

Jesse Thorn: Here's something from Claire in Banff, Alberta.

John Hodgman: That's one of the great, great names of a town. Banff. It's just one letter off from bamf, the sound that Nightcrawler makes when he teleports.

Jesse Thorn: (*Laughs.*) Okay.

“My loving partner, Adam, and I live in a small apartment in Alberta. Our kitchen is tiny. Our counter is only a meter long. That's 39 inches. We aren't even allowed to have an oven.”

(John “whoa”s.)

“The problem is. Adam uses too many dish towels. He has a four-towel system. One is wet, one is dry, one is for display, and I don't remember what the fourth is for. I say we only have space for two towels. One wet, one dry, the end. I was a chef for 20 years, and I know that's all you need. Tell Adam my system is better.”

First of all, we got to get these folks a countertop oven. I believe in nothing so much as countertop ovens.

John Hodgman: You know what, I know the one that you're talking about, and we've mentioned it before on the air. So, I'll go ahead and say it. The Breville Smart Oven.

Jesse Thorn: Oh, I love, love—this is a product that has revolutionized my life. I use it four times a day.

John Hodgman: You know, I don't have one here in New York, but we were very lucky when we hosted a huge Thanksgiving this year that our neighbor across the hallway very generously let us use their kitchen, because they were going to be away. And that was wonderful. Thank you very much, Rachel and Luyen.

[00:40:00]

And they have one. And I was making a turkey and warming up a brisket from Franklin BBQ. And I was like, “How am I going to do this? That's why I need two ovens!” And then I realized the brisket will just fit right into the Breville.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah, you can put a whole chicken in there! You know what? Even if you have a regular oven, in a tiny kitchen, I'd advocate for a countertop oven, and just keep your breakfast cereals or whatever in the regular oven.

John Hodgman: Yeah, you know what you do? You keep your jeans in there, or something. No, you keep your jeans in the freezer. You keep your cereal in the oven.

Jesse Thorn: You could toast the jeans. That would do it too.

John Hodgman: Okay. Alright. But I was astonished that a full Franklin brisket could fit in this thing easily, and I just watched a video of our friend Kenji Lopez-Alt, Making his Christmas prime rib roast. And he did it in the same oven, a countertop oven! I think it was a Breville. And hey, Kenji, thanks so much for sharing your journey to sobriety with us on your Substack and elsewhere. Very amazing.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah! Way to go, dude. One day at a time, homie.

John Hodgman: Very wonderful. And we're thinking of you.

In any case, yeah. If you are able to get a countertop oven, you should.

But let's talk about these dish towels, tea towels, whatever you want to call them. Jesse, do you got a favorite tea towel? Not that you hide from your family, but the one that you're so happy to get when you reach for it.

Jesse Thorn: John, you think your boy JT has a favorite dish towel? Do you think your boy JT is your boy JT or a different guy? Because the answer is obviously yes.

John Hodgman: I was thinking that I wanted to hear from my friend JT, who probably has a favorite dish towel.

Jesse Thorn: I have three categories of favorite dish towel. Each has its own purpose. I love to buy vintage linen dish towels. Linen is by far the superior dish towel material. It dries fast. It's textural. It's wonderful, and I'll buy like old French, you know, mid-20th century linen dish towels all day long at the flea market. That's not something most people have access to.

I will say, if you're imagining me spending a lot of money on this project, you're imagining wrong. Just a really premium old product. You can—you know, if you have a source, you can get them for a few bucks a piece. But when I'm not using those, I love—there's a store here in Los Angeles called The Good Liver, as in like good living.

John Hodgman: Oh! Oh, I got it. I thought you meant like the opposite of my liver.

Jesse Thorn: (*Chuckles.*) And the good liver is a store that sells like very simple high-quality products. Some of them are expensive, but many of them are actually not expensive. And one of the ones that is not expensive are dish towels. They have these Japanese dish towels. There are ones that have a smooth finish that are like a rayon-cotton blend, I believe. And then there are ones that have a sort of waffle finish that I think are all cotton. And those waffle ones are great for anything that needs to absorb anything or kind of do a semi-scrub. And the smoother ones are good for anything that needs a soft finish. And I love them both. They're both really, really great products and very reasonably priced.

John Hodgman: I have a favorite dish—two favorite dish towels in theme. One is a wonderful dish towel I've found, which has an illustration of a girl wrestling an alligator. And it says, "Do one thing every day that scares your family."

I mean, novelty dish towels can be pretty corny, I admit. But this one is beautiful.

Jesse Thorn: They can be ineffective dish towels. I think that's the biggest challenge of a novelty dish towel.

John Hodgman: This one works pretty well. And then the other one—the other novelty dish towel that I enjoy very much is a picture of a couple in a kitchen, and their friends are coming

into the kitchen with like a glass of wine and a pie like they're coming over for dinner. And the words just say, "Go away."

(Jesse chuckles.)

Which really speaks to even I. I'm an intro-extrovert. And when I'm in introversion mode, that's the tea towel that I like to have. But it is one that my wife, who's a whole human being in her right, thinks is problematic to display in our home, because it sends a message.

(Jesse laughs.)

So—but we're talking about a lot of different towels here, and Claire lives in a tiny, little, oven-less apartment, I suppose, or maybe a tiny home in Banff, Alberta. And she says, four towels too much, two towels plenty.

What do you think, Jesse?

Jesse Thorn: I think that two towels is indeed plenty to have an active service. I think you're going to need more than that overall. And I could see a system that involves a display towel. If that's your lifestyle. It's not mine. But it sounds like this kitchen is too small for a nonfunctional towel to me.

[00:45:00]

So, I would say two towels is going to do it, but you're going to need to be rotating those pretty regularly. Because, you know, they may be encountering things that are, frankly, food unsafe if you're using them regularly. I mean, you know, me, Judge Hodgman—like, compared to the people that send us emails, I have very loose standards as far as cleanliness and food safety, though. *(Laughs.)* But even I, if I'm wiping down something that could have pathogens on it, will toss the rag that I used to wipe that down and use a clean rag for something that needs to be clean.

John Hodgman: Let's say, for the sake of argument, that what Claire is talking about is two towels out on the counter or four—you know, out, in use, in the kitchen.

Jesse Thorn: In that case, two seems fine.

John Hodgman: Two v. four. Yeah. I think that's right. I don't think there's room for a display towel. What do you—where are you displaying it if you don't have an oven door handle to hang it over? How is it even displayed?!

Jesse Thorn: Yeah, we're going to take a quick break. When we come back, we've got a system about air circulation. Gotta watch out for night fans; I'll tell you that much.

John Hodgman: Yeah. They'll chop up the air and kill you.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Promo:

Music: Playful, upbeat music.

(A phone rings.)

Hannah: Hello?

Clint McElroy: Hannah?

Hannah: Yeah!

Clint: It's Clint McElroy! Hi Hannah!

Hannah: Oh my god, hello!

Clint: I don't know if you know who I am.

Hannah: Oh, I do. I love *The Adventure Zone*. It is probably my favorite D&D podcast.

Clint: You've been a faithful member of Maximum Fun since March of 2019. And this is them rewarding you as our Maximum Fun Member of the Month.

Hannah: It's awesome. I love it!

Clint: So, what made you decide to become a member of MaxFun?

Hannah: You know, it was so long ago, I'm not sure what the exact moment where I decided was. I think I've kept it up intentionally, because a lot of those different podcasts have been there for me when I felt really alone and sad and just needed something to laugh at. *(Chuckles.)*

Clint: Aww, well, that's—Hannah, thank you so much. Thanks for being a member. Thanks for being a *TAZ* fan. Thanks for all the nice things you had to say about me, specifically, and I guess my kids. I guess. Indirectly.

Speaker: If you're a MaxFun member, you can become the next MaxFun member of the month. Support us at MaximumFun.org/join.

(Music ends.)

Promo:

Jackie Kashian: Jackie Kashian. Hi, and welcome to the MaximumFun.org podcast, *The Jackie and Laurie Show*, where we talk about standup comedy and how much we love it and how much it enrages us.

Laurie Kilmartin: We have a lot of experience, and a lot of stories, and a lot of time on our hands. So, check us out. It's one hour a week, and we drop it every Wednesday on MaximumFun.org.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: Judge John Hodgman, we are about to bring our court back on the road!

John Hodgman: Vancouver, British Columbia, we have not seen you for five years. Seattle, Washington, we have not seen you for at least a year. Same with you, Portland, Oregon. And San Francisco Sketchfest, we saw you last year, and we cannot wait to see you again.

All these shows and not more, just them, are on sale now. At MaximumFun.org/events. Our LA show is sold out! So, if you missed that one, why not make a weekend trip up for a Groundhog's Day to see us in San Francisco at the Marines Memorial Theater in San Francisco? That's 22 '25, at MaximumFun.org/events.

Jesse Thorn: That's January 29th through February 2nd. Get those tickets at MaximumFun.org/events. And if you haven't already and you live in one of those places, visit MaximumFun.org/jjho. Please submit a case to us. Look, your idea may be bad, or it may be good. We want you to submit it no matter what. We can help you shape and refine it if you're not sure about it. Worst case scenario is we don't use it. We're always grateful for your submissions.

So, if you live near one of those places, go to MaximumFun.org/jjho and submit your case! Because your cases are the clay that we mold into the pot that is the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

John Hodgman: We're a pot now.

Jesse Thorn: That's all I could think of that's made out of clay.

John Hodgman: I thought it was incredible.

Jesse Thorn: Thank you. And hey, don't forget that until the end of this tour, we are raising money for Al Otro Lado. So, if you want to make a donation to support migrants in a very,

very trying time for a very, very vulnerable population, Go to AIOTroLado.org/letsdosomething.

That's AIOTroLado.org/letsdosomething. And if you have already given, thank you. Because the support has been overwhelming.

John Hodgman: A-L-O-T-R-O-L-A-D-O dot O-R-G slash let's do something.

[00:50:00]

And speaking of let's doing something, let's get back to the docket.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: Welcome back to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. We are clearing the docket with cases about systems. Here is a case from Andrea in Swarthmore, Pennsylvania.

“My husband says he read in a reputable source that it's bad for fruits and vegetables to be stored without air circulation. He is obsessed! He spreads fruits all over the counter to make sure they don't touch and spoil. He feels the same way about shirts and towels.”

(John laughs.)

“I believe apples can touch without spoiling. I believe clean shirts can rub elbows on hangers without degrading, and I believe bath towels should be stacked in linen closets. Tell him to stop spreading everything out! It takes up too much space, and it looks weird.”

Man, Judge Hodgman. You know who's got perfectly spread-out shirts?

John Hodgman: Tell me who. I think I know who you're gonna say.

Jesse Thorn: Mm-hm. Friend of the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast, Jamelle Bouie.

(John affirms.)

Jamelle Bouie shot a video in front of his shirts the other day. This guy's shirts look like a boutique display. Handsome man, always looks like a million dollars, Jamelle Bouie.

John Hodgman: If you take pleasure the way I do in hearing smart people say smart things—maybe there are ideas that you've been circling around, but haven't been able to articulate yourself, or more likely with Jamelle, ideas that never even crossed your mind, particularly with regard to what we might call the political scene. If you want to not read the news, but have some level of in-touchness and staying informed with what's going on, you could do far, far worse than watch the little videos that Jamelle makes where he talks about issues of the day while holding a little microphone and standing in front of his incredible wardrobe (*chuckles*) or wearing incredible outfits.

Jesse Thorn: The clarity of his insights is just absolutely extraordinary. And also, he's a guy who knows his colors! That video that I watched the other day with him sitting in front of his wardrobe, which is like a visible—you know, it's like a one of these kind of pipe tube closets that's out in the—right out there in the bedroom. He was wearing like a brown sport coat with an orange overcheck and like an orange-ish sport vest underneath with the collar popping out. And the colors look so exactly right on Jamelle. I'm like, “What, did this guy go get his colors done?! This guy is looks perfect!”

John Hodgman: You know, he knows. Yeah.

Jesse Thorn: He knows.

John Hodgman: And you know, can I say something else, since we're talking about some of my older work, *In the Areas of My Expertise*?

Jesse Thorn: This guy's one of these op-ed hunks.

John Hodgman: (*Laughs.*) If you look at the author photo of me from 2005, when that book came out—taken by Elizabeth Connor—you will notice that I am wearing a black suit jacket over a black puffy vest and then a collared shirt underneath it. And I didn't know what—Look, I didn't know what I was doing at that time. People said, “John Hodgman, what are you doing wearing that puffy vest underneath a suit jacket?”

I'm like, “I don't know. I'm just feeling it.” And the truth is I chickened out after a while, and I stopped going for that look. ‘Cause I was like maybe they're right. Maybe it's weird. So, I stopped doing it.

Jesse Thorn: You chickened out just in time for it to come into vogue!

John Hodgman: I mean, the other truth is I looked like white-hot garbage compared to the way Jamelle Bouie looks in these videos. But it is very satisfying to me to see Jamelle Bouie rocking that puffy vest or puffy—you know, I guess it's a vest probably underneath that sport coat look. But perfecting it in a way that I never possibly could. You know, from soup to nuts.

And he's a podcaster too! He's got a great podcast about Cold War movies from the '90s. *An Unclear and Present Danger*. Jamelle Bouie, good job. Alright. But did you notice something about his shirts when they were hanging in the back of that video?

Jesse Thorn: I noticed that they were—if they were effectively spaced and like rainbow color coordinated.

John Hodgman: Yeah. But by effectively spaced, like were they touching?

Jesse Thorn: I think they proobably were touching a little bit.

John Hodgman: Did it look like he had gone out of his way to make sure that they were not touching? Let's put it that way.

Jesse Thorn: No, he's not, uh—*(laughing)* he's not mental. I don't know how else to put it!

John Hodgman: I mean, do you believe, as Andrea does, that clean shirts can rub elbows on hangers without degrading?

Jesse Thorn: Yeah. I mean, I think it would be possible to pack shirts into your closet so tightly that they crease.

[00:55:00]

And you have to iron them before you wear them, or you know, hang them loose somewhere damp or steam them or whatever. But in general, as long as they're not getting put away damp, they will be entirely fine touching each other in your closet.

John Hodgman: Now, how do you like them apples? These apples that are on the counter, I guess arrayed in a line with a full inch of airspace between them?

Jesse Thorn: There are fruits that off-gas chemicals that can ripen other fruits. You know, for example, I recently learned—I had been storing all my like pantry food in a drawer together, and I learned that apparently the off-gassing from onions and garlic makes potatoes last a lot less long and makes them sprout.

John Hodgman: Jesse, that's very interesting. I did not know that about onions off gassing potato-killing gases or potato-sprouting gases. Which would explain why— Typically in Maine, we keep the onions—because you gotta keep potatoes in the dark. If you don't keep them in the dark, sunlight has a bad effect on them. And if you cut into a potato, and the edge of the potato is a greenish tint, that means it's been in the sun too much, and it's not gonna taste right. So, you gotta keep them in the dark. I would keep the potatoes and onions together in the dark in a little pull-out cabinet—not a drawer, but a cabinet underneath the counter in our home in Maine, and they would sprout pretty quickly!

And let me ask you this, Jesse. Did you ever store potatoes underneath the counter in your home in Maine and then ummmm... forget that they were there? And leave for several months, and then come back?

Jesse Thorn: I've never done—I've never made that mistake specifically.

John Hodgman: And then discovered that the potatoes had sprouted horrific, Lovecraftian vines that had grown to great length and infiltrated your entire under countertop? And you had to pull them out of the crevices of the drawers and stuff? And then have like sort of—this is not Cronenbergian body horror, but Cronenberg-style vegetable horror?

Jesse Thorn: You know, something like this happened to me. Not the exact same thing, but something like this happened to me when I bought these three magic beans.

(John and Jennifer laugh.)

John Hodgman: Here's the thing. One time I went into a restaurant. I can't remember. I had lunch with my friend Adam, who's a food journalist. Adam Sachs, very good at his job. And this was a Daniel Boulud restaurant; it might have been Daniel; it might have been a different one. I don't know. I've never been back. But the entire outer foyer, as you entered the restaurant, was lined on either side by shelves of apples.

And there must've been 300/400 apples in this room. And it was just there so that you would smell apple when you walked in. And it was utterly sublime. I couldn't believe what I was smelling. They must replace those apples every four days or something.

Jesse Thorn: They got to watch out for sure for bad apples!

John Hodgman: Yeah. Well, one bad apple will spoil the bunch, they say. But it was beautiful. And it reminded you that, yes, your fruits are giving off gases—sometimes delicious odors, sometimes not so delicious odors. But do you know what I noticed about those apples when I was walking through that hallway in Daniel Boulud's restaurant? They were touching. Of course they were touching.

When you see a cartoon, and there's an apple cart, what are those apples doing? Touching? No—or not touching. They're touching. When you see a pyramid of apples that someone knocks over, Bruce Campbell style, they're touching.

Jesse Thorn: Touching.

John Hodgman: Your apples can touch.

Jesse Thorn: They love to touch! Like me and my wife.

John Hodgman: *(Chuckles.)* Exactly right. And your shirts can touch too.

I think what you're saying is true, Jesse. You don't want to bunch your shirts together such that it's hard to get at them, and they get all wrinkly. And similarly, you don't want to have so many apples that there's one rotting at the bottom of the pile. But that's just a matter of being judicious and buying just the number of apples you need, just the number of shirts you need, and storing them with a little bit of distance. But let's not make a big deal of it.

Jesse Thorn: The docket's clear! That's it for another episode of *Judge John Hodgman*. The systems have been either further systematized or destroyed by our revolutionary logic.

(John laughs.)

Judge John Hodgman was created by Jesse Thorn and John Hodgman. Our social media manager is Nattie Lopez. Our video editor is Daniel Speer. The podcast, edited by AJ McKeon. Our producer is Jennifer Marmor. Photos from the show are posted on our Instagram account at [Instagram.com/JudgeJohnHodgman](https://www.instagram.com/JudgeJohnHodgman).

And Jennifer, do not think that we will not be posting video of both those beautiful snowflakes and John Hodgman struggling to operate a tripod on our social media.

[01:00:00]

[@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod](https://www.instagram.com/JudgeJohnHodgmanPod).

John Hodgman: *(Talking over him.)* The tripod isn't the problem! *(Laughing.)* The problem was screwing a thing into a thing. Because it's—I'm screwing up, you know what I mean? That's the law of comedy. Screw up, don't screw down.

(Jesse laughs and agrees placatingly.)

And therefore, I had to go counterclockwise instead of clockwise.

Jesse Thorn: No, it's fine. Don't worry. No, it's fine.

John Hodgman: Righty was not tighty in this case!

Jesse Thorn: No, but everybody thinks it's fine. No, everybody thinks it's fine.

John Hodgman: No.

Jennifer Marmor: How many judges does it take to screw in a tripod?

Jesse Thorn: *(Laughing.)* Thank you, Jennifer! [@JudgeJohnHodgemanPod](https://www.instagram.com/JudgeJohnHodgemanPod) on TikTok and YouTube. The worst joke in the history of our show!

John Hodgman: No, I think my enormous fans joke was the worst.

(Jesse's still cackling.)

Come on. Don't take that away from me.

Jesse Thorn: Follow and subscribe on TikTok and YouTube to see both episodes and clips from episodes, and also video-only content. A lot of great video content from our holiday show the other day.

John Hodgman: That's a lot of fun.

Jesse Thorn: That's on YouTube, on TikTok, and on Instagram.

John Hodgman: And I just got an email from a listener, saying they really like the show on YouTube, because they sit and eat their lunch at their desk and watch us.

Jesse Thorn: What a great thing to do.

John Hodgman: And that's a new way to enjoy the show. So, if you're watching now, I hope you are having a good lunch, listener.

And Jesse, we are getting ready to pack our bags now for the final leg of the *Judge John Hodgman Road Court*. This was a set of trousers with four legs, and we're in the fourth leg now, going to Vancouver, British Columbia, Seattle, Washington, Portland, Oregon, San Francisco, California at the SF SketchFest, and Los Angeles, California.

Now the LA show is sold out. But I'll tell you something, we're still on the hunt for cases. We do multiple cases per night, and if you've got a great case in LA, and you don't have tickets, and you send it in, and we decide to hear it? You're going to the show. It might be the only way to go to the LA show at this point.

Same goes for Vancouver, Seattle, and Portland, Oregon, and San Francisco. If you've got a great case, and you send it in, and you don't have tickets, guess what? You're going to the show—if we choose to hear the case. So, send your cases in to MaximumFun.org/jjho, that's where we get all of our cases.

Our show runs on your beefs. And if you haven't got tickets for the Seattle, Vancouver, Portland, or (*getting tongue-tied*) San Francisco shows—San Fran-sicko, I called it. San Fran-sicko. What am I, a right-wing podcaster? San Fran-sicko. In any case, get your tickets now at MaximumFun.org/events.

Come join us on Groundhog's Day at the Marines Memorial Theater. We're coming home to the Marines Memorial Theater in San Francisco SketchFest. It's going to be so much fun. Vancouver, Portland, Oregon, Seattle, Washington. The same place for tickets for all of them. MaximumFun.org/events. And once again, send your cases for these live cases. MaximumFun.org/jjho. Let us know that you're going to be at the show or would like to be.

Jesse Thorn: You know, something cool about Vancouver, British Columbia, John? Not only is it the home of—I'll just say it, probably my favorite MaxFun podcast of all, *Stop Podcasting Yourself*—

John Hodgman: *Stop Podcasting Yourself*, with Graham and Dave.

Jesse Thorn: —it is also the home of another very special podcast to me.

I'm going to be staying when we're in Vancouver, I'm going to be staying with my friends, Helen and Martin, Helen Zaltzman and Martin Zaltz Austwick. They are podcasting partners

together on many podcasts, including Helen's show, *The Allusionist*. But Helen just announced the return of one of my favorite podcasts of all time, *Answer Me This*, with her podcasting partner, Olly Mann, of literal decades.

And I'm so excited about it. I'm hoping that I will be staying at Helen's house and get to like peep in on one of the new recording sessions for the new *Answer Me This*. I'm so excited about it.

John Hodgman: That's really great that you're going to get to stay with Helen. I will stay in a hotel room.

Jesse Thorn: That's right. Good for you.

John Hodgman: I'll watch Canadian television. Yeah.

We are eager to hear all of your cases, of course, on any subject, no matter how small or how big, no matter where you are! Even if you're not coming to any of the shows, we got to get those beefs, right, Jesse?

Jesse Thorn: We need them at MaximumFun.org/jjho. No case too big or too small. 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!