

[00:00:00]

**Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

**Jesse Thorn:** Welcome to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. I'm Bailiff Jesse Thorn. This week, "Cavy-at Emptor". Scarlett loves guinea pigs. They have a long history of guinea pig ownership, starting in childhood. Scarlett desperately wants a guinea pig in their life again, but Morrigan is opposed. Morrigan says that the couple's two dogs are more than enough pets for one home. Adding a guinea pig is too much work. 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:** "Otra pregunta seria, señor. ¿Has visto un tipo de perro pequeño, que se llama guinea pig? Y hace ruido así: wee-wee-wee-wee! Wee-wee-wee-wee! Sí, es un perro pequeño que dice, "Wee-wee!" Y se llama guinea pig."

**Jesse Thorn:** Guinea pig?!

*(They giggle.)*

**John Hodgman:** Bailiff Jesse Thorn, please swear the litigants in.

**Jesse Thorn:** Morrigan, Scarlett, 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 my little joke I was going to make just now was about the thing that he did his obscure cultural reference about?

**John Hodgman:** Of course we were going to get to the same place.

*(They swear.)*

**Jesse Thorn:** Judge Hodgman, you may proceed.

**John Hodgman:** Morrigan and Scarlett, you may be seated for an immediate summary judgment in one of yours favors.

*(Chairs squeak.)*

Can either of you name the piece of culture that I referenced as I entered this courtroom? Morrigan, why don't you go first?

**Morrigan:** I do not have an idea of what that is; it sounds vaguely familiar, but I have no pull for it. So, I'm gonna use my prepared guess. Which is that it was a monologue from the villain of the movie *G Force*, played by Bill Nighy.

**John Hodgman:** Right, that's the movie about secret agent guinea pigs.

**Morrigan:** Yeah, correct. Which I thought was a decent pull.

**John Hodgman:** That's a great pull; I should have thought of it. I remember that I was staying in the same hotel as Zach Galifianakis when he was filming *G Force*. In Los Angeles, back when I had a Hollywood career. So, thank you for taking me on that trip through time. Scarlett, now it is your turn to guess.

**Scarlett:** No, I have no clue.

**John Hodgman:** No. *(Chuckles.)*

**Scarlett:** My prepared guess was going to be in reference to Elliot, the assigned police officer guinea pig, in New Zealand.

**John Hodgman:** Tell me more. I love this guess, but I do not know what cultural reference you are making.

**Scarlett:** Yes! In New Zealand there is an official police member of the police force. His name is Elliot the guinea pig. He has a uniform and everything with a little hat. You can give him a quick Google search. He is very adorable.

**Morrigan:** I think the correct word would be was a guinea pig in the New Zealand police force. Guinea pigs do not live very long.

**John Hodgman:** Oh, did he get too old for that *(censor beep)*?

**Scarlett:** I did not want to put that sad piece of—

**Morrigan:** *(Laughs.)* Yeah, at four years old, it's time for retirement and/or death.

**Scarlett:** I did not want to put that sad news in there! But yes, that was my guess that we were going to obscurely reference Elliot, the police—

**John Hodgman:** Scarlett, I hate to say it, but guinea pig mortality must be part of today's discussion.

**Scarlett:** Not Elliot's!

**John Hodgman:** But also, incredible. We won't talk about Elliot. Named after Elliott Kalin, the famous Maximum Fun podcaster?

**Morrigan:** Yeah. He also likes singing about mailbags.

**John Hodgman:** Elliott does. Elliott the human, not the guinea pig.

**Morgan:** No, and the guinea pig. Yeah, that was something they had in common.

**John Hodgman:** Oh, I didn't know that. Well, in any case, all guesses are wrong. It's not Elliott Kalin, nor Elliot the guinea pig of New Zealand. Nor is it a quote from *G Force*, starring Bill Nighy and Zach Galifianakis, among other actors.

Hey, if there's a *G Force 2*, I'm available.

**Jesse Thorn:** Indeed, Judge Hodgman, (*in a Spanish accent*) it's a real show. And you did a bad job.

**John Hodgman:** Nooo! (*Laughs.*) It's a real show, and you both did great jobs. But Jesse is referencing, of course, the incredible sketch—the legendary sketch by our friends, the sketch group Kasper Hauser—John, James, Dan, and Rob—called Mundo de Perros.

**Clip:**

**Multiple Voices:** (*In musical unison.*) Mundo de Perroooooos!

**John Hodgman:** And it is one of my very favorite things. We've quoted it many a time here on the podcast, that's why I was afraid—Scarlett and Morrigan—that you might get it. But I'm glad you didn't, because we get to hear the case. And if you, listener, would like to listen to this sketch to know what we are talking about, I made a little Bitly.

It's over there, the [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org) website under the Kasper Hauser tab. But you can go there directly by going to [bit.ly/MUNDODEPEROS](http://bit.ly/MUNDODEPEROS), M-U-N-D-O-D-E-P-E-R-R-O-S, all capital letters, Mundo de Perros.

Okay, who seeks justice in this court? Who brings the case, if I may ask?

**Morrigan:** I bring the case, your honor.

[00:05:00]

**John Hodgman:** Morrigan. And your wife, Scarlett, would like to adopt a guinea pig as a pet, correct?

**Morrigan:** That's correct. Yes.

**John Hodgman:** And you say, "No thank you."

**Morrigan:** Yes.

**John Hodgman:** And part of your argument is that you already have pets. Indeed, you have two dogs that are yours and Scarlett's, named Sally and Pixel. I wonder if you possibly might have sent in any photos of these good dogs.

**Morrigan:** We did, yes.

**John Hodgman:** Marvelous. Let's go directly to the evidence. It is available, of course, on all of our social media feeds, as well at the show page at [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org). Exhibit A are these two wonderful, good dogs. Sally is a black and brown dog. That's the style of dog that is Sally. And Pixel is black and white, no gray areas for Pixel. And they are standing by their respective bowls, begging for food. Pretty typical for dogs. Adorable. And then, they're snuggling together.

These dogs are friends?

**Morrigan:** Uh, sometimes.

**Scarlett:** They tolerate each other.

**John Hodgman:** Oh. Scarlett, you say they tolerate each other?

**Scarlett:** Yes.

**Morrigan:** Sometimes they're very cute together, and sometimes Sally is a bit of a bully and resents having a child in her life.

**Scarlett:** Yes, she's—you know, she's old. You know, she doesn't have time for Pixel's nonsense.

**John Hodgman:** Right. How did these dogs come into your relationship? Together? Or were they merged when you merged your lives together in wedded bliss, or what?

**Scarlett:** So, I adopted Sally—gosh, like—had her for a while. And then when we moved in together, to live in sin prior to getting married, we adopted Pixel shortly after, together.

**John Hodgman:** Uh-huh. So, Pixel is the younger sibling in this fur baby array, but you adopted Pixel together.

*(They confirm.)*

And Sally has had—Sally's life has been disrupted quite a bit by Pixel.

**Scarlett:** Yes.

**John Hodgman:** And you want to disrupt Sally even more, Scarlett?

**Scarlett:** I think she'd be quite a fan.

**Morrigan:** By adopting prey animals into her life, yes. *(Laughs.)*

**John Hodgman:** We'll talk about that in a moment. But so far, I have not seen the dogs doing anything particularly weird. And I love a weird animal picture. And here we have Pixel in the shower. Jesse, can you see this picture of Pixel in the shower?

**Jesse Thorn:** *(Laughing.)* What is the dog doing in the shower?

**John Hodgman:** Pixel doesn't seem very happy to be in the shower.

**Jesse Thorn:** Well, what it—it's not—this doesn't appear to be—okay. So like, to be clear, this doesn't appear to be a picture of you showering Pixel. Like, I put my dog in the shower sometimes to wash my dog, because you got to wash the dog sometimes. They're stinky.

**John Hodgman:** Sometimes you got to wash that stinky dog.

**Jesse Thorn:** My dog smells nice like popcorn, but you got to wash the dog sometimes. This appears to be a dog hanging out in a shower. It's fully dressed. It has multiple bandanas on, from what I can see.

*(They laugh.)*

**Morrigan:** Yeah, so that was shortly after he adopted Pixel. The shower door was open. And he went in to investigate the shower, and then—in his investigation—bumped the shower door closed and was in there for several minutes before I heard him crying. And then I saw him in the shower, looking very distressed but also very cute. So, I took the picture. Before releasing him.

**John Hodgman:** You took the picture before releasing Pixel.

**Jesse Thorn:** In case you needed to blackmail him later. *(Laughs.)*

**Morrigan:** Yeah.

**John Hodgman:** These are terrific dogs.

**Scarlett:** Thank you. We kind of like them.

**John Hodgman:** And the question now is: are you going to disrupt their lives with a guinea pig? AKA—

**Scarlett:** Or make it better.

**John Hodgman:** AKA have a cah-vi—or ca-vee? How do we say it, Jesse? At the top. We had that wonderful—

**Jesse Thorn:** It was kay-vee.

**John Hodgman:** “Cavy-at Emptor”. Cavy, of course, being the animal family that includes guinea pigs. And what else, Jesse?

**Jesse Thorn:** I'm gonna say hamsters?

**John Hodgman:** Uh, I don't know about hamsters. They're rodents native to South America—

*(Jesse gasps.)*

—including the domestic guinea pig, wild cavy, and the largest living rodent.

**Jesse Thorn:** *(Singing joyfully.)* Capybaras!

**John Hodgman:** Caaapybaras. Such a wonderful animal. You can't just say the name. You must sing it. *(Singing.)* Capybara.

**Jesse Thorn:** People have been sending me baby capybaras that fit in your little hands, and then somebody opens the hands, and that big flat nose comes out from the little hands opening up. (*Giggles.*)

**John Hodgman:** So, Scarlett, you are a guinea pig enthusiast.

**Scarlett:** Yes.

**John Hodgman:** Going way, way, way, back. You've had guinea pigs in your life. Since you were in childhood, or what are we talking about?

**Scarlett:** Oh gosh, yeah. So, starting in childhood, I did have a guinea pig. I got my first guinea pig—I can't remember the age. But I was really insistent on having one, so not only did I hustle my ass to the library and do all the guinea pig research I could, I then prepared a PowerPoint presentation to my family about the reasons why I was qualified to own a guinea pig.

[00:10:00]

And you know, shortly after that I did get my guinea pig.

**John Hodgman:** What would be—I mean, I hate to do—remember how I hate time and subtraction? But generally speaking, ballpark, what age would you have been when you—?

**Scarlett:** Probably ten. Probably ten, because I think I was really excited about being double digits.

**John Hodgman:** And did you present a PowerPoint for us today?

**Scarlett:** I did not, actually.

**John Hodgman:** (*Interrupting.*) I think I've heard everything I need to in order to make my decision.

**Scarlett:** Yeah. I'm sorry.

**John Hodgman:** That's alright. I suppose I'll hear the case in any case.

**Scarlett:** No, no. It's just to like continue to build the background of, you know, my guinea pig expertise.

**Morrigan:** Guinea pig lore.

**Scarlett:** Yeah, my guinea pig lore, as my wife calls it. I was—

**Morrigan:** I learned a lot about my wife in the preparation for this case. Like, you're in a guinea pig 4H club, which is bananas to me.

*(John “whoa”s.)*

**Scarlett:** Not just was I in a guinea pig 4H club, I was vice president of said guinea pig 4H club.

**Morrigan:** That’s right. An executive.

**Scarlett:** I did lose the race for president to the daughter of the leader of this group.

*(Jesse “wow”s.)*

**John Hodgman:** You lost to a nepo baby? A 4H nepo baby in the guinea pig club?

**Scarlett:** There was nepotism in the guinea pig 4H club.

**John Hodgman:** Whoa. What is that person's first and last name?

*(They laugh.)*

**Scarlett:** Morrigan has to make an excel list to keep up with my current vendettas.

**Morrigan:** Your beefs!

**John Hodgman:** I’m sorry, I’m sorry, repeat that again—clearly into the microphone. Morrigan has to keep an Excel list to do what?

**Scarlett:** To keep track of all my vendettas.

*(John “wow”s.)*

**Morrigan:** Your beefs.

**John Hodgman:** I tell you; I do not want to end up on Scarlett's Excel sheet.

**Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

**Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

**John Hodgman:** So, how many guinea pigs will you say you've had in your life?

**Jesse Thorn:** Wait, I want to hear about the 4H club! Hold on, let's hear about the 4H club.



**Scarlett:** What do you want to know about it? I mean, it was a 4H club.

**John Hodgman:** Where did you grow up?

**Scarlett:** All over. But the 4H club was in Michigan specifically.

**John Hodgman:** Oh, well that's guinea pig ranching territory. That's—all the kids get involved in guinea pig raising there, right?

**Scarlett:** I mean, you would—I guess so! Because it was a pretty fruitful club with a lot of us. And we all—every week, we met, and we brought our guinea pigs, where they socialized. They had a good time; we would make clothing for them.

**John Hodgman:** Wait, wait. Wait, wait. Wait.

**Jesse Thorn:** This is not—look, I'll grant you, I'm from the inner city.

*(They giggle.)*

I grew up going to the boys' club, so that I wouldn't join a gang or whatever. However, this is not fitting with my understanding of what happens in the 4H club.

**Scarlett:** No, I mean, we also did 4H things!

**John Hodgman:** Did you show them at state fairs?

**Scarlett:** Yes. We did, thank you.

**John Hodgman:** Did you ever get a blue ribbon?

**Scarlett:** No, because I did not present mine at state fairs.

**John Hodgman:** No, because that nepo baby in B27 got it.

**Morrigan:** Exactly correct, yes.

**Scarlett:** I rue the day of Pepper's existence.

**John Hodgman:** Is Pepper her name? Or their name? Or his name?

**Scarlett:** I cannot remember the name of—

**Jesse Thorn:** We'll say it was Meryl Streep Jr.

**John Hodgman:** Pepper. Pepper is a great name for an arch nemesis. My lifelong enemy, Pepper.

**Scarlett:** Pepper the guinea pig.

**John Hodgman:** Oh, Pepper is the guinea pig? Oh, I thought that was the name of your enemy.

**Scarlett:** No, my guinea pig was not nearly as pretty as Pepper the guinea pig, so no 4H fairs for Pepper. But we did go to them, and members of the 4H club did bring their guinea pigs.

**John Hodgman:** You did submit some evidence of some of the guinea pigs that you have been a companion to in the past. And they're very cute. I'm looking at exhibits D and E here.

Now, here we have two guinea pigs and a very small dog.

*(Jesse "aw"s.)*

Who are these young people?

**Scarlett:** Yes, so there is Cupcake, and there's Genevieve—the guinea pigs. Genevieve is the one with the voluptuous hair. Cupcake is the one with the smooth hair.

**John Hodgman:** Then there's a—did you know that this dog was not a guinea pig? Or did you think this was a different guinea pig?

**Scarlett:** It does look guinea-pig-like, but it is indeed a dog. Its name is Lily. It was our childhood dog. And they are all sunbathing, because guinea pigs love the sun. So, you can just take them out in the backyard. You let them hang out there. And they kind of wander around with supervision.

**John Hodgman:** Do you have a backyard, a sunny backyard in Chicago for your guinea pigs? Your potential new guinea pigs?

**Scarlett:** We actually do!

**Morrigan:** We have a brick, sort of shared patio situation.

**Scarlett:** No, she's shining a bad light on the brick patio situation. It's actually a backyard.

**John Hodgman:** Let me ask you a question. Do you share that backyard with a family of predatory vultures or condors?

**Morrigan:** There are rats that are approximately guinea pig size that do frequent it.

**Scarlett:** I was gonna say, if not, probably friends for the guinea pig.

**Morrigan:** Little buddies!

[00:15:00]

**John Hodgman:** So, this is Cupcake. And the other one is named?

**Scarlett:** Genevieve.

**John Hodgman:** Genevieve. Very adorable.

**Jesse Thorn:** They're beauties.

**John Hodgman:** Date stamped 7/28/2001. I don't like to do subtraction. I hate to think about time. But I presume they're no longer with us, these wonderful guinea pigs.

**Scarlett:** No. No, no, no.

**John Hodgman:** These are your childhood guinea pigs. And here's one from 2007. Who's this?

**Scarlett:** Is that the one that was a beautifully staged photoshoot?

**Jesse Thorn:** Yeah, this appears to be a beautifully staged photoshoot.

**Scarlett:** That's Cupcake.

**Jesse Thorn:** Cupcake is celebrating Mardi Gras?

*(They laugh.)*

**John Hodgman:** Cupcake seems to be nested in a pile of feather boas, plastic beads, crowns, and Masquerade ball masks.

**Jesse Thorn:** Cupcake may be doing like an *Eyes Wide Shut* thing.

*(They laugh.)*

**John Hodgman:** It's a Christmas movie.

This is Cupcake in the year 2007, so Cupcake was a very long-lived guinea pig, if I am doing my subtraction correctly—which I often don't.

**Scarlett:** I think so! It's been so long—I'm not gonna lie. I do think they lived a nice, long, healthy life. And a fabulous one at that.

**John Hodgman:** With you and your family, they seem to be very happy. They seemed to thrive in your care.

**Scarlett:** I would like to think so.

**John Hodgman:** So, was it always just Cupcake and Genevieve, or were there any others that I should know about?

**Scarlett:** No, at one point in time—as you know, guinea pigs pass. And upon the passing of—I think it was Cupcake—we got Isabella as a buddy. Because guinea pigs do like other guinea pigs.

**John Hodgman:** Isabella. So, there was another guinea pig, Isabella.

**Scarlett:** There was a third, yes.

**Morrigan:** The fact that guinea pigs like to be paired up is also a point of concern from my angle of, if there's one, there will be two.

**John Hodgman:** Yeah, that's something I want to discuss in a moment. But before we go into the future, let's go back into the past a little bit more. What about having guinea pigs do you miss, Scarlett?

**Scarlett:** Oh my gosh. So, guinea pigs are great. Because one, you know when they're happy to see you, because they are so vocal. They talk.

**John Hodgman:** Do they make a noise?

**Scarlett:** I'm not making this noise.

**John Hodgman:** Jesse Thorn, do they make a noise?

*(Jesse appropriately snuffles and “wee-wee-wee”s.)*

**John Hodgman:** Sí, señor. Ese ruido.

**Scarlett:** They are fantastically verbal pets.

**John Hodgman:** Why won't you make the noise, Scarlett? We're having a great time making the noise.

**Jesse Thorn:** Yeah, we're having fun making the noise!

**Scarlett:** You know what? I think you guys are just really holding the board down.

**John Hodgman:** Even Morrigan, your spouse is making the noise.

*(Morrigan “wee-wee-wee”s.)*

**Scarlett:** I'm not doing it. I'm sorry.

**John Hodgman:** I mean, what if it were a condition of my ruling in your favor?

**Scarlett:** Yes. But you must rule my favor.

**John Hodgman:** So, you miss their gregariousness. They talk to you when you come home. What else do you—? Unlike dogs, which don't pay any attention to you whatsoever.

**Morrigan:** Famously quiet and chill.

**Scarlett:** Listen, I'm gonna have to pull up my notes here, because I did come with notes.

They work on your schedule. They are—I can't remember the word for it, but they're not nocturnal, and they're not like on our schedule.

**Morrigan:** Diurnal?

**Scarlett:** Diurnal.

**John & Morrigan:** *(In unison.)* Corpuscular?

**Scarlett:** They are diurnal, which means that. And they also—

**John Hodgman:** They're daytime animals.

**Morrigan:** Crepuscular.

**Scarlett:** And they all—stop looking at my notes; you are cheating.

**Morrigan:** I'm not cheating! I'm trying to remember the word crepuscular.

**John Hodgman:** I love the fact that Morrigan and I both know the word crepuscular and love to say it.

**Morrigan:** It's a good word.

**Scarlett:** So, they adapt to your schedule, and they are ready and happy to play at any time of day, but also happy to relax at any time of day. Which makes them an ideal pet. Because, transparently, dogs—believe it or not—are a lot of high maintenance. So, when you want to play with them, they most often just want you to walk them, or—

**John Hodgman:** And if they want to play with you, and you don't feel like it, then you have a problem.

**Scarlett:** Yes, yes, yes!

**John Hodgman:** And you can't just put them in a box in the back of the closet like you can guinea pigs.

**Scarlett:** (*Laughs.*) Not—no, not—no! It's just that the playtime you can have with them is a lot more low-key. It can be on kind of your terms, and the guinea pig is still very happy. I'm a self-described Gleek, and one of my favorite pastimes and hobbies is rewatching episodes, early seasons specifically, of *Glee* and *Degrassi* on repeat.

[00:20:00].

So, that would fit—a guinea pig would fit perfectly into my lifestyle of TV watching, because they like just to be held for long periods of time.

**John Hodgman:** They like to be held?

**Scarlett:** They do, and they just like to sit in your like lap. And you can just pet them, and they just purr and squeak.

**John Hodgman:** What kind of squeak do they make, actually?

**Scarlett:** You can't get that out of me unless I win.

**John Hodgman:** Okay. Do you want to do the purr, even?

**Scarlett:** Nope.

**John Hodgman:** It says here at the [GuineaPigAlliance.com](http://GuineaPigAlliance.com), “Guinea pigs are crepuscular creatures, meaning they're most active at dusk and dawn. They're awake for up to 20 hours a day, so your guinea pigs need constant food and water in their housing. They need toys to keep them entertained day and night, and also they make a noise.” Wee-wee-wee! Wee-wee!

(*They giggle.*)

That's what they posted on [GuineaPigAlliance.com](http://GuineaPigAlliance.com), Jesse, during Guinea Pig Awareness Week, according to the internet.

**Morrigan:** Do they have like a dot wav file that you can play on there that gives you the noise?

**Scarlett:** I just want to put on the record, if you do rule in my favor, my guinea pig noise would be more accurate than all five guinea pig noises.

**John Hodgman:** I would never compel you to make a noise if you do not feel like making a noise, and I apologize for even suggesting it.

**Jesse Thorn:** I'm just excited about Morrigan pronouncing the file type w-a-v as a dot wav.

**John Hodgman:** Yeah, that was pretty wav-y.

**Jesse Thorn:** That was wild.

**John Hodgman:** It was wild and wav-y. I love it. I don't mind it. I don't mind it at all. It's a wav.

**Jesse Thorn:** Morrigan dances to the beat of her own drum.

*(Morrigan confirm.)*

**John Hodgman:** Scarlett, how long have you been guinea pigless?

**Scarlett:** So, I have been guinea pigless basically since I went to college. Which was, oh my god, like 13 years ago?

**John Hodgman:** I don't like time! I don't like to talk about it or think about it. You're college educated. Good job for you. Did you major in Gleekology?

**Scarlett:** I wish I did.

**John Hodgman:** So, Scarlett, you had guinea pigs in college or up until college?

**Scarlett:** Up until college.

**John Hodgman:** And not since.

**Scarlett:** So, technically I've not had a guinea pig since college. But post-college I did get a chinchilla, which is of the rodent variety family.

**John Hodgman:** Is that a cavy? Let's find out.

**Morrigan:** I feel like no, that's my guess.

**Scarlett:** I don't think it is, but it is in the same vein of owning a piggy.

**John Hodgman:** Morrigan, you know what?

**Morrigan:** Was I correct?

**John Hodgman:** You were wrong.

**Morrigan:** Damn!

**John Hodgman:** Yes, a chinchilla is a cavy.

**Morrigan:** I thought because it was on its hind legs, it would have a different sort of lineage.

**John Hodgman:** Of the Caviidae, Chinchillidae, and—well, wait a minute; they're caviomorphs. I don't know.

*(They laugh.)*

I'm going to stop reading the internet and pay attention to this conversation we're having.  
*(Laughs.)*

**Jesse Thorn:** *Caviomorphs* used to run on Fox Afternoon.

**John Hodgman:** Oh boy, I bet we could sell a whole young adult series of books called *Caviomorphs* tomorrow. We'll split the proceeds four ways or more. We'll include everyone.

**Jesse Thorn:** Ugh, I want to chinch so bad. Chinchies are not that good of pets though, right? Chinchies are so beautiful. But I remember hearing that they aren't nuts about being domestic animals.

**John Hodgman:** Is it true that chinchies aren't chill? Tell us, Scarlett.

**Scarlett:** He would look me dead in the eye, take his little paw full of poop, and throw it out of the cage if I did not clean that cage in time. Like, that chinchilla made it my problem when he was unhappy. So, I will not deny that was the spiciest rodent I've ever—

**John Hodgman:** What?

**Morrigan:** Now, another thing to bring up about the chinchilla, Scar—what happened to the chinchilla when you acquired Sally, your dog?

**John Hodgman:** I'll allow it. I'd like to see where this is going, counselor.



**Scarlett:** Okay, no, no. Okay. So, let it be known that I never grew up in a family that taught me like good dog ownership practices. My family—as you can see, we had like a little dog, right?

**John Hodgman:** Yeah. You had a little floof of a dog and a couple of guinea pigs there in the picture.

**Scarlett:** So, when I had gotten my chinchilla initially, I had it for about three years? A pretty long stint. Like, I loved the guy even though he was mean.

**John Hodgman:** Two quick questions, just to orient myself in time. This is a post-college chinch, right? You're living independently, where?

**Scarlett:** In Chicago at this point.

**John Hodgman:** In Chicago. What's the name of this chinchilla?

**Scarlett:** Ollie.

**John Hodgman:** Ollie. Okay. Go on.

**Scarlett:** Yes, Ollie. You know, I had acquired Ollie. Ollie was a great pet for me. Ollie lived a great life. Unfortunately, when I decided like, okay, it's time to like also get like another pet—like, I'm ready for a dog; I'm ready for that more involved pet ownership experience. I just felt bad for the chinchilla, because I lived in a studio apartment at that time.

**John Hodgman:** Right. You could only fit one fern in your shower.

**Scarlett:** While many—at one point in time, at many points in time, the chinchilla and the dog could both roam free in the house and be completely fine.

[00:25:00]

**Morrigan:** I don't know if that's true!

**Scarlett:** You were not living with me; you did not witness this! In fact, I think I could probably find evidence of it.

When the chinchilla was in its cage, Sally liked just to sit at it and stare at it all day. She did not bark at it, paw at it, anything. And I don't think the chinchilla really cared. But I did start to feel really bad for the chinchilla, because I was like, “You know what? If I'm waking up every day, and this dog is looking at me, I'm like feeling—”

**John Hodgman:** Yeah. I think Ollie cared.

(They laugh.)

**Morrigan:** About having a large predator staring at you all the time.

**Scarlett:** And again—and I wanna reiterate, they were fine. Like, I put them out, and they both just kind of harmoniously lived together when they like roamed around the space.

**Jesse Thorn:** Is it possible that it wasn't the chinchilla having a crisis as that was happening, but the dog? Like, the dog was having like an existential crisis, thinking about cages and about ownership and why it couldn't run free?

**Scarlett:** Probably! You know, and so—but—

**Morrigan:** Is it caviomorph? I don't know.

**Scarlett:** So, what Morrigan is coming to—like, really wants me to point out is that I did have to one day sit down and acknowledge that I was not ready for both dog ownership, chinchilla ownership, and the potential stress being put on the chinchilla. Which, I own up to my mistakes.

But now let me tell you, this chinchilla is living the best life, because I found it a farm owner who now lets this chinchilla—and I see photos and videos of it all the time—literally, that chinchilla is living in a penthouse on a farm, where it gets to roam on like acres of land.

**John Hodgman:** This sounds like a story a parent tells their child when the chinchilla has to be put down.

**Jesse Thorn:** Wait, yeah. Hold on. Does it live with my childhood dog, Sonoma?

**Morrigan:** Why, yes! They're best friends, and they talk every day.

**Scarlett:** No, I found a college student who was majoring in like agriculture, and she has a farm now! And like, that was—the chinchilla truly lives. And I see videos of it all the time. Ollie is the happiest little camper. He's still thriving. So, yes.

**Morrigan:** How old is Ollie at this point?

**Scarlett:** I don't know, but while—

**John Hodgman:** Was this college student double majoring in agriculture and *Farscape* studies by any chance?

**Scarlett:** Oh my gosh.

(They laugh.)

But while I may have like felt that, you know, I wasn't ready for both at that time, and I did feel a little bad for the guinea pig, I found it—I owned up to my mistake, and I found it literally a better life. Like, that guinea pig doesn't—(*correcting themselves*) that chinchilla does not care about me. That chinchilla is glad I'm gone.

**John Hodgman:** But you wouldn't be here if you felt that you were not going to repeat the same mistake with a guinea pig.

**Scarlett:** I would never be here if I felt like I was gonna repeat that same mistake. I'm not—that was, what? Eight years ago or something like that? Like, so long ago.

**John Hodgman:** Scarlett, before I move on, quick question. If I were to rule in your favor, and you were to get this guinea pig, what would you name this guinea pig? Because that could really make up a big part of my decision.

**Scarlett:** I have not decided yet, because it depends on the overall color and breed of guinea pig I land on.

**John Hodgman:** Hm. What are some—? You know, okay. Alright.

**Scarlett:** It would be something probably like—I'm the one who named Pixel.

**John Hodgman:** So, Pixel being on theme, you're talking about technological?

**Scarlett:** It would probably be a little techie. We're (*inaudible*) photo people, so that's where we got Pixel from.

**John Hodgman:** You're what people?

**Scarlett:** Camera, like photography. We're both into photography.

**John Hodgman:** You know what you could name your guinea pig? 8-Bit. It's pretty good, right?

**Scarlett:** That's actually kind of funny. It's actually pretty good. I'm not—actually, I'm not going to lie; that's actually pretty good.

**John Hodgman:** Morrigan, why do you hate 8-Bit so much? Or all guinea pigs, I should say.

**Morrigan:** Yeah, as the resident small, furry animal hater.

**John Hodgman:** Why don't you want a guinea pig, I guess is probably the less leading question.

**Morrigan:** Number one is that I just like don't like love caged animals in houses. I think they are like inevitably kind of smelly. It takes up a lot of space that we don't have an enormous amount of. Like, we have some space. I wouldn't say we're cramped, but—

**John Hodgman:** You put your plant in a cage. A cage called the shower.

**Jesse Thorn:** Could you just keep the guinea pig in the shower with the dog?

**Morrigan:** Yeah, they just all live there, and then you don't have to think about them.

**Scarlett:** Let it be known; we have a plan for guinea pig space that we can touch on later.

**John Hodgman:** Morrigan, how large is your domicile?

**Morrigan:** So, it's a four-bedroom apartment. But that makes it sound, I think, bigger than it is.

**Jesse Thorn:** Chicago living.

**John Hodgman:** Yeah, I gotta move to Chicago.

**Morrigan:** Like, the rooms are not large, any of them. Except for maybe my office; it would be cramped with a queen size bed in it. Like, they're not huge rooms.

**John Hodgman:** It's the two of you and your two dogs, but also that you have a house guest currently, right?

[00:30:00]

**Scarlett:** Yes, my younger sister just moved in with us temporarily, as she navigates her first like industry job.

**John Hodgman:** How generous of you. But she comes with a dog too, right?

**Scarlett:** Yes, Winston.

**Morrigan:** It's a very cute beagle that we should have sent pictures of.

**Scarlett:** We should have sent pictures.

**John Hodgman:** That dog is dead to me. I'm not interested in any sister dogs.

**Morrigan:** His name is Winston, which is pretty good.

**Scarlett:** He's not just a beagle; he's a mini beagle.

**Morrigan:** We have a room that could be used for that, but it could also be used for other things that are not a guinea pig cage, I'm sure.

**John Hodgman:** Well, you have so many rooms, you have one that you haven't even decided what to use it for yet?!

**Morrigan:** Well, no, that's currently housing our house guest, my sister-in-law. But normally it's been a guest bedroom in the past. But.

**John Hodgman:** Got it. So, Scarlett, your suggestion is that when your sister eventually gets a place of her own, and she and Winston move out, that the guest room then become a guinea pig salon.

**Scarlett:** So, while the request is post my sister moving and finding her own space—is the timeline of a getting pig—I actually prefer to keep it in my office. Because one of those rooms, those four bedrooms, is my office. I work from home, and I wanted to keep it in that office space, so I can be in the room with the piggy.

**John Hodgman:** And that will more or less contain the stink that Morrigan is concerned about?

**Scarlett:** That and the fact that my guinea pigs are all litter trained.

**John Hodgman:** Well, your potential guinea pigs. Your potential guinea pig.

**Scarlett:** My previous ones are all litter trained, and I—

**Morrigan:** Notice we've already moved the post to plural guinea pigs, your honor.

**John Hodgman:** It's a slippery slope.

**Morrigan:** It's a slippery slope, yeah.

**Scarlett:** I was referring to my previous guinea pigs have all been litter trained. So, the stink—in theory—is handled every day and scooped out cleanly.

**John Hodgman:** Who walks the dogs?

**Morrigan:** Me, your honor.

**John Hodgman:** That would be Morrigan.

**Morrigan:** Yes, Morrigan.

**John Hodgman:** Who feeds the dogs?

**Scarlett:** We both do.

**Morrigan:** Mostly me.

**John Hodgman:** Mm-hm. Who takes the dog to the veterinarian?

**Scarlett:** That's both of us.

**Morrigan:** Yeah. So, often—just because of my schedule, it ends up being me.

**John Hodgman:** You see the narrative that Morrigan is trying to build here, Scarlett—that Morrigan does more of the pet care in the house so far. Is that true or false?

**Scarlett:** It's true.

**John Hodgman:** You acknowledge that Morrigan—

**Scarlett:** I am acknowledging that the agreement for our division of labor—based on the amount of jobs I have—it makes more sense for you to be the default like caretaker for the dogs. But I jump anytime she's got a gig, or she's out, or she is sick. I'm right in there, jumping on it.

**John Hodgman:** Morrigan, are you happy with the pet care sharing arrangement that you have?

**Morrigan:** I would like if Scar did a little bit more walking and taking the dogs out, and if I was not—Essentially right now, like the situation is when I'm at home, I am doing all the dog stuff. And the only time I don't do all the dog stuff is if I'm at a job.

**John Hodgman:** So, it sounds like you're not 100% happy. Right now, even without the addition of a new animal in the house, you wish that Scarlett, your wife, would maybe pick up the...

**Morrigan:** Yeah, I would like if Scar had less of a “I'm happy to babysit my kids when my wife's away,” kind of vibe to the dogs and a little bit more, “I'm just gonna take the dogs for a walk because I can.” You know?

**John Hodgman:** How do you feel about that, Scarlett?

**Scarlett:** No, I don't disagree with her. Like, let me stress that. I always want to be able to—when my wife is saying there's something that she'd like more of in terms of my effort around the house, it's something I definitely wish I could do. I want to do more of.

**John Hodgman:** If you were to get a guinea pig, which one of you—with regard to the dogs—would be in charge of ensuring that the dogs don't eat this guinea pig for food?

**Scarlett:** First of all, it would be a combined effort. Because in general, we should all make sure the guinea pig doesn't get eaten for food. But my overall responsibility would be protector of the guinea pig, which includes keeping it in its very spacious guinea pig office with the door closed at all times.

**John Hodgman:** Look. I mean, you know, Morrigan, you did mention guinea pigs are prey animals. What do you think about having a prey animal for a pet?

**Morrigan:** I mean, I have no problem with it in general. It's more of just the dynamic of—Pixel and Sally both have a pretty high prey drive. Like I mentioned previously, we have rats, because we're in Chicago. And sometimes they'll be in the back sort of enclosed area we have.

**John Hodgman:** You mean the patio?

**Morrigan:** Yeah, in our little shared sort of courtyard area.

[00:35:00]

And if they see one of those, they are locked in and charging at it.

**John Hodgman:** Even if you were able to keep the guinea pig safe from being eaten for food by these dogs, it would have to be a disruption to their lives. Don't you think, Scarlett?

**Scarlett:** I think—I believe that the guinea pig would be so far into the room— Because where I'm visioning putting its nice, pimped-out cage is far enough in the back room that— while the dogs would probably know it's there, unless I'm out walking around with the guinea pig, it would be pretty hard for them to like truly put two and two together. They're not smart dogs. We love them, but they're not smart.

**John Hodgman:** Well, it is true—and Jesse, as a long-time dog owner, you'll back me up on “dogs have no sense of smell,” right?

**Jesse Thorn:** No.

**John Hodgman:** They're—the only way that they know— And they also have no sense of object permanence. The only way that they would know that there is an animal is if you show it to them right in front of their dumb eyes.

**Scarlett:** They would definitely smell it, but I'm telling you, it would become like a *Wilfred* situation, where they know the guinea pig is there, but they're like, “We can hear it, and we smell it, but we've never seen it.” And I think they might maybe just like roll with it.

**Morrigan:** Oh no, Sally saw—

**John Hodgman:** You're talking about the Elijah Wood TV show, *Wilfred*?

**Scarlett:** Yes!

**Jesse Thorn:** Yeah, if it became a *Wilfred* situation—I mean, on the plus side, you would have those beautiful, soulful eyes.

**John Hodgman:** Of Elijah Wood. (*Chuckles.*)

**Jesse Thorn:** A couple of times, I met Elijah Wood in person, because he's come on *Bullseye*. He was the loveliest man in the world. Just the nicest, brightest guy. But you're just sitting there, and you're like, "Oh my god, look at those eyes." You're just like getting—you're just drawn into his eyes. It's unbelievable.

**John Hodgman:** Fall into those limpid pools. I can't believe that Scarlett just obscure-cultural-referenced their way out of answering the question I was just asking, which is: the guinea pigs stink, and the dogs are going to smell it, and they're going to be upset. Sally already was upset about Ollie the Chinchilla.

**Scarlett:** But the thing is, Ollie the Chinchilla and Sally lived in a studio apartment. And during that time, Sally did not terrorize the Chinchilla. In fact, they at one point in time used to roam around, have a good time, and play. And she never pawed at the cage; she just stared at it.

**Morrigan:** I only ever witnessed Sally sort of staring hungrily at the cage. But I've never seen this cooperation that Scar speaks of, so. It's hearsay.

**Scarlett:** If they live—if the worst that happened to this chinchilla was that the dog stared at it a lot in the cage, then—if we have a whole separate room for them, I can only imagine the situation being even better.

**Jesse Thorn:** Let me ask you this, Scarlett. How many times would you say would be too many times for the dogs to catch and try and kill the guinea pig?

**Scarlett:** One time, but I also— That would require the dogs catching and herding my guinea pig, which I would just simply not allow to happen, vis a vis through the closed door—the fact that it's staying in its Guinea Pig Kingdom.

(*John snorts.*)

**Morrigan:** Your honor, let the record show that Scar is now referring to it as a Guinea Pig Kingdom. (*Laughs.*)



**John Hodgman:** I hate to tell you— I did note that for the record, Morrigan. And you might not be happy to learn this is very exciting to me.

**Morrigan:** (*Laughs.*) I would like to request a new judge.

**John Hodgman:** A Guinea Pig Kingdom is something that I'm very tempted to rule in favor of.

**Scarlett:** Well, just imagine like the episode of *The Office* where Michael Scott tries to make Tube Town.

**Morrigan:** Tube City, I believe.

**John Hodgman:** Now I get that reference.

**Scarlett:** Tube City. I would really like a Tube City situation in my office for my one guinea pig.

**Morrigan:** Your one lonely, woebegone guinea pig with no friends.

**Scarlett:** And I would—

**John Hodgman:** That's a good point. Because Scarlett, here's the thing. I have a sister-in-law who's a whole human being in her own right. Her name is Jennifer. And she is a guinea pig fanatic. Loves them. Self-proclaimed. I'm not putting that on her; she would say it herself. She's had multiple guinea pigs over the years and loves them very much.

And so, I asked my sister-in-law—who's a whole even being in her own right named Jennifer—if she had any thoughts, advice, bits of information that she wished she'd had before she adopted a guinea pig, just about her experience in general. And she reported that there are “cardinal rules”. In her words, the cardinal rules of guinea pig husbandry are—one, no mixing boy and girl guinea pigs. Either all boys or all girls. Two, they need to eat 80% hay.

[00:40:00]

**Scarlett:** Yes.

**John Hodgman:** The rest being pellets and fresh veggies. But you need 80% hay. Do you have a good source of hay in Chicago?

**Scarlett:** Yes.

**John Hodgman:** Is it deep dish hay or tavern style hay?

But anyway, I forgot about the other cardinal rule of guinea pig husbandry, which is every guinea pig needs at least one companion!

**Scarlett:** I am not against a companion.

**John Hodgman:** (*Sarcastically.*) Oh, you aren't?! Oh, I'm sorry. Oh, okay, phew. I think that's what Morrigan was most concerned about, that they would only get one guinea pig instead of two or three.

(*Morrigan giggles.*)

**Scarlett:** But I have to respect and appreciate that my wife is scared of more than one guinea pig.

**Morrigan:** I'm not scared of more than one guinea pig.

**John Hodgman:** Whoa, here we go! Nerve touched.

**Morrigan:** It's not a fear; it's an acknowledgement that if— It's sort of a *Give a Mouse a Cookie* situation of if you get one guinea pig, you're gonna need another.

**John Hodgman:** But you've already upped it to two very sneakily there, Scarlett!

**Scarlett:** I do not need two. I would love two.

**John Hodgman:** But the guinea pig needs two.

**Morrigan:** The pig needs two. I would feel bad.

**John Hodgman:** Even Morrigan acknowledges that.

**Morrigan:** I would feel bad if you only had one guinea pig, and it was just sad and lonely.

**Scarlett:** I would too, but I would also want to respect—

**John Hodgman:** You would sacrifice the happiness of your guinea pig; the false happiness of your guinea pig; the happiness of both of your dogs; and honestly, the happiness of your wife, just so that you could have something to hold while watching reruns of *Glee*.

**Scarlett:** I need my attorney present.

(*They laugh.*)

**John Hodgman:** You don't have to answer. You don't have to make— I can't compel you to make any noise you don't want to make, even if it's a wee-wee-wee. There is an issue here,

which is maybe an issue of a promise made and a promise to be kept. Because I have it here— When were you married, Morrigan? You and Scarlett?

**Morrigan:** That was a year and a month and a bit ago. So, December 3rd, 2024—yeah.

**John Hodgman:** Oh, happy anniversary!

**Morrigan:** Yeah. 2023. Just kidding. It's one of those years. I don't know. What is time?

**John Hodgman:** I don't like time. I don't like subtraction. But which year is it? Which anniversary is it? The first or the second?

**Scarlett:** 2023.

**Morrigan:** We just passed our first. Yeah.

**John Hodgman:** Right. Which is the rodent anniversary. And I have it here on authority—it says here that just before you got married, Morrigan suggested that you maybe consider getting a guinea pig. It says here in your vows, Morrigan, that you promised to buy Scarlett a guinea pig. Is that not true?

**Morrigan:** That is incorrect!

*(Scarlett laughs.)*

**John Hodgman:** But was a promise made, or a suggestion, or—?

**Morrigan:** There was, at some point, in some conversation or another, a mention that maybe we could consider guinea pigs at some point in the future, but not now.

**Scarlett:** Disagree, your honor.

**Morrigan:** Which was in no way a promise that there would be a future guinea pig.

**John Hodgman:** Scarlett, it looks like you are looking at your phone, trying to find some evidence that you'd like to share.

**Scarlett:** I know I have it. *(Laughs.)*

**Morrigan:** With the wiretap you have on our conversation.

**Scarlett:** So, I do keep guinea pig—I do send my wife guinea pig propaganda.

**Morrigan:** It's a lot of TikToks of guinea pigs.

**Scarlett:** And texts and photos when I go to the pet stores, and I see guinea pigs. I can't pull it up right now. But about a year away from the wedding, I did finally send her a guinea pig photo. And I was like, "This could be ours, if you let me."

And she said, "We can't get a guinea pig until after the wedding. You can get one after the wedding."

*(John "wow"s.)*

And she did say, "You can get one after the wedding." I know it was the word can.

**Morrigan:** "Can" as in it is possible to do so, not as in I allow it.

**Scarlett:** But you agree that the statement, "We can get a guinea pig after the wedding" does sound a lot like "Scarlett can get a guinea pig after the wedding."

**Morrigan:** Also, "after the wedding" includes all of linear time. So.

**John Hodgman:** It's true. But it does sound, Morrigan, like you were kicking this can down the road a little disingenuously if you didn't want to have a guinea pig at all. That could be construed as a false hope.

**Morrigan:** Correct.

**John Hodgman:** How do you feel learning, Scarlett, now that hope was false?

**Scarlett:** It was a little rude. *(Chuckles.)*

**John Hodgman:** Like, do you think, Morrigan, that you could ever have a guinea pig?

**Morrigan:** I think if we had more space, potentially. I just think right now, like you having the guinea pig in your office would mean that the door would have to be closed all the time, which I think would make our dog sad. And it would make me sad, because I couldn't see you during the day.

**Scarlett:** You don't care about me during the workday.

**Morrigan:** I do care!

**Scarlett:** I have to pull her in to talk to me.

**Morrigan:** That's untrue.

**Scarlett:** And then you groan, and you pull off your headphones, because you're listening to this podcast, and I've interrupted.

**John Hodgman:** Well, never mind the fact that, Scarlett, you're also working 5 to 9 or whatever. Like, you're out of the house for big chunks of time when that guinea pig would be a prisoner in its own castle, in its Guinea Pig Kingdom.

[00:45:00]

**Scarlett:** It's important to note that, one, it is living in a very—it's going to be living in a great kingdom. But also, as I mentioned earlier, they play when you play. It's also— So, they're available at all times, including the peak times I am available, they will be happy to play.

And then, you know, it's also important to know that guinea pigs love routines. If there's one thing you can like look up about guinea pigs, it's that they fall into routine very well. So, if I were to, say, start my routine where I'm spending more time with my guinea pig at night and early in the morning, that guinea pig would happily adjust to it.

**John Hodgman:** But guinea pigs are awake for up to 20 hours a day. This means your guinea pig needs constant access to food and water, as well as safe hiding places and toys to keep them entertained day and night. How would you feel if I were to allow Scarlett to build the habitat, as you say, to see if they will eventually come, *Field of Dreams* style?

**Morrigan:** (*Chuckles.*) Yeah. It would be probably a substantial expense, I imagine, to construct this Guinea Pig Kingdom.

**Scarlett:** With my own 5 to 9 money.

**John Hodgman:** But have you talked about this possibility, say, with— Obviously, Sally and Pixel have a vet, right?

**Scarlett:** Yes. They do.

**John Hodgman:** Have you talked about, like, “We're thinking about adopting a guinea pig. What do you think—how's that going to work with our particular dogs?” Does that vet treat guinea pigs, or do you know a vet who does?

**Scarlett:** I was gonna say—so, I would have to take— I mean, you can take your guinea pig to like a traditional vet like you would for Pixel or Sally. But I probably would take it to an exotic vet. And I have done some research, and there are a handful within our neighborhood.

**John Hodgman:** Got it. Morrigan, this has been going on in your relationship from the beginning, it sounds like. Four years, right?

**Morrigan:** Yeah, it's been going at least since we started living together.

**John Hodgman:** Okay. And how do you feel when Scarlett keeps bringing this up? Like a cruel monster, or the only reasonable person on Earth?

**Morrigan:** Sometimes both. I feel like I have a very reasonable position that like, before guinea pigs happen, I would like more help with the dogs. And that I will probably end up at least sometimes cleaning the cage out of pure like— You know, something will come up.

**John Hodgman:** You just don't believe that—yeah, that Scarlett will be able to. If you could believe that Scarlett was going to be 100% responsible for the guinea pigs under edict from a podcast, for example, would that change your feelings about this? Or not?

**Morrigan:** Well, I just think like, logistically, there will be times where, for whatever reason, Scar is unable to do it. Because as mentioned before, they have a very busy schedule. And who knows, they might take a trip or something. I don't know what's in the future. But I will probably have to do something with this guinea pig.

I don't know. I don't believe it would be a regular occurrence. But either way, it would mean that I definitely won't have more help with the dogs. Because there will be 8-Bit priorities.

**John Hodgman:** Scarlett, I hear your passion for guinea pigs, and I feel it. And I have a question. Is there an option—have you considered fostering a guinea pig with a rescue organization to see how it would fit into your life?

**Jesse Thorn:** Yeah, to find out if your dog would kill it.

*(Morrigan laughs.)*

**Scarlett:** We are foster failures with Pixel.

**John Hodgman:** Okay.

**Morrigan:** Yeah, we fostered Pixel, and then we kept him. But we did foster another dog previously who we did not keep, that's—

**John Hodgman:** I wonder, honestly, if a rescue organization would even allow you to foster or even allow you to adopt a guinea pig into a home with two, now three—well, two dogs eventually. I wonder. Or even adopt a singleton. I know someone in my life who would like to adopt a cat, and it's very hard to adopt a single young cat right now. They don't like it. They don't like it.

**Scarlett:** It's very hard to adopt most animals, yes.

**John Hodgman:** Anyway. Just something to think about.

**Scarlett:** But I don't think it's—I don't think it's unheard of, though, for— In fact, I know it's not unheard of, as evidenced by my photo of my childhood dog and my guinea pigs hanging out—that people will adopt guinea pigs in multi-diverse animal homes.

**John Hodgman:** Scarlett, you love guinea pigs. It's so clear. And I love your passion for them. But you also love a human named Morrigan, who does not want a guinea pig. At least not right now. Why not give up for the sake of your marriage?

**Scarlett:** I am not against a timeline that she sticks to.

*(They laugh.)*

**Morrigan:** Roasted.

**John Hodgman:** Ohhh, there was a—yeah.

**Scarlett:** But I need—

**John Hodgman:** I need to work on my dismissive cough. That was great. That was some good scoffing.

[00:50:00]

**Scarlett:** But I need it committed to. And the timeline cannot be her post-wedding timeline of, “Yeah, once Sally passes.” Because you cannot make me wait for the demise of my own dog to get a guinea pig.

**John Hodgman:** Why not?

**Scarlett:** My dog I've had for nine, ten years.

**John Hodgman:** I know that—well. But you know, after a suitable grieving period.

**Scarlett:** It feels morbid. It feels like a very morbid timeline. Like, if it was like something more—like, less tied to the death of my very first, adult—like, my adult life dog, *(laughs)* it would feel less morbid.

**Morrigan:** Well, I was just gonna say, I don't know how you put it less morbidly. I mean, after we no longer have Sally, I guess, is one way you could put it. But—

**Scarlett:** But then also, are you trying to tell me that you wouldn't feel bad that Pixel doesn't have a friend, post-Sally?

**Morrigan:** Well, yeah, but you also want a Dachshund. You want a wiener dog.

**Scarlett:** *(Softly.)* Do you think I would look cute with a wiener dog?

*(They laugh.)*

**John Hodgman:** I think I've heard everything I need in order to make my decision. I'm going to go into my habit trail right now that is my chambers and crawl around my plastic tubes. I'll find a little bit of sawdust to nuzzle into, and I'll think about it. I'll be back in a moment with my verdict.

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

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

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

**Scarlett:** Not good, sir.

**Jesse Thorn:** Why is that?

**Scarlett:** In the *Scarlett v. Guinea Pig* case, I just think that the American people would stand by Morrigan's defense.

**Morrigan:** The Americans are not ready for guinea pigs.

**Jesse Thorn:** I mean, the American people have not necessarily been making the best choices lately. And the American people are not deciding this case!

Morrigan, how are you feeling about your chances?

**Morrigan:** I feel pretty good, but I do think my casual mention of “maybe after the wedding we can get a guinea pig” might damn me, and may constitute some sort of binding legal promise.

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

**Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

**Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

**Jesse Thorn:** The final leg of the *Judge John Hodgman* tour is happening right this very moment, as you listen to this. West Coast, you're on notice!

**John Hodgman:** That's right, our first stop is the Hollywood Theatre in the famous Hollywood district of Vancouver, British Columbia. That's right!

**Jesse Thorn:** If you make it there, you can make it anywhere.



**John Hodgman:** We're returning to Canada for the first time in years, and thereafter continuing down the west coast to Seattle, Washington; Portland, Oregon; San Francisco, California for the San Francisco Sketch Festival. And finally, our sold-out show in Los Angeles. Now, as we record this, some of those shows may be very close to selling out. The only way for you to find out is to go get tickets at [MaximumFun.org/events](https://MaximumFun.org/events).

Don't delay! Join us on the West Coast. [MaximumFun.org/events](https://MaximumFun.org/events). And it might not be too late for you to get in a dispute, even. It might be the only way you get into the show, is if you have a dispute that we decide to litigate on stage. You can submit your disputes for the live shows at [MaximumFun.org/jjho](https://MaximumFun.org/jjho).

**Jesse Thorn:** That's [MaximumFun.org/jjho](https://MaximumFun.org/jjho). We'll see you IRL on the *Judge John Hodgman* live tour. Let's get back to the case.

**Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

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

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

**John Hodgman:** *(Clears throat.)* One thing my sister-in-law, who is a whole human being on her own right and is named Jennifer, said, "I have no regrets!" Exclamation point. "I love my piggies!" Exclamation point.

*(They chuckle.)*

**Morrigan:** Are you sure this wasn't just Scarlett that you were texting?

**John Hodgman:** This was my sister-in-law, and I did not ask her if she had any regrets.

*(They laugh.)*

This was in response to no question. It was simply, I think, a reflexive defense that I think people who love—guinea pig owners often have to express to people who don't have guinea pigs. Because guinea pigs are complicated animals.

They are these little, squeaking—you may have heard that they make the noise wee-wee-wee-wee, these little squeaking balls of fur. They are prey animals, which are complicated to keep as pets. Because their socializing often gets confused with their desire to live. They're more—they tend to— As someone who never had a guinea pig, but was tricked into having a series of hamsters by various children who lived in my house, who died horrible deaths.

**Morrigan:** The children?!

**John Hodgman:** No, no, the children are fine. This is not an Edward Gorey book.

*(They laugh.)*

[00:55:00]

The hamsters were not—you know, they were afraid. They were bitey. They were angry. They turned on each other. They had to be separated. I know that hamsters are not guinea pigs, right. But I'm just saying that this is part of—I have to acknowledge part of my trauma that informs this, which is that having prey animals for pets— You know, they want to survive, and they want to hide, and they will bite you. And then they are also prone to complicated diseases, which often take tragic turns as—indeed—happened recently for Jennifer, my sister-in-law, who's a whole human being in her own right.

I think that— And even I, a person who had been traumatized by hamster death, had to say, “That's a pretty cute animal. You have nothing to regret, Jennifer. You love your piggies.” Just like you do, Scarlett. You love your piggies. They're part of your childhood. And I think 8-Bit is an incredible name for a guinea pig.

And Morrigan, I'm gonna say something here. You did a—I'm not saying a bad thing, but an unwise thing, saying, “Well, let's talk—maybe we can have one after the marriage.” That was a bad maneuver. Both in the reality show sense, like you played the game poorly. You're no *(inaudible)*.

**Morrigan:** I'm the villain, yeah.

**John Hodgman:** ‘Cause that's just—that's tactically an error. ‘Cause that's only going to come back around and nip at your fingers like a prey animal later. And you will be held to that. Not exactly a promise, but it is a hope that you offered. And I think it's pretty clear, a false hope—at least where you stand in your relationship, and in your apartment in Chicago, and in your pet portfolio now. That you don't want to have a guinea pig, not now or for the foreseeable future, and with understandable reason.

You have a very full pet portfolio in your home. You have two dogs, one of whom gets confused and tries to take a human shower. And you have a wonderful relationship with a beloved person. But you know, Scarlett's very busy. And for both reasons of schedule, and physical limitations that you need to be navigating, they're not holding up their end of the fur baby bargain at the moment. At least it's not—you're taking the brunt of it.

Trust me, as someone who was a freelancer and has been marginally self-employed for the past 25 years, when we had kids—younger kids—and animals, it does fall to the freelance person fill in the gaps of childcare and animal care and so forth when the person who was working outside the home just can't do it.

And it is a cardinal rule of guinea pig husbandry that one guinea pig will not do. I think that it is essential that you have two guinea pigs if you're going to have any at all. And I think that it is disingenuous of you, Scarlett, to suggest that this isn't already on your mind. I mean, the thing that— You know, marriage is a contract, and you have to live up to it. And that means, first and foremost, that you have to take care of each other—the humans in the relationship—

right? First and foremost. And you do sacrifice things that you might want in order to maintain and live up to the promises that you make being married.

This would be very cut and dry indeed if you had never said that dumb thing, Morrigan. Sorry. If you had not spoken your truth— Because that's the other part of getting married, is you have to be really adept at learning and understanding what your truth is and really speaking it. And the truth of your happiness and the truth of how much of your happiness you're willing to compromise on.

I think it's clear that Scarlett's happiness is very, very entwined with the idea of having guinea pigs in the future. And you have tacitly agreed to that, Morrigan. And it's not exactly fair, but none of this is. But at the same time, Scarlett, you have to acknowledge that the person, the human, that you love most in the world—I'm presuming—is very, very skeptical about this. To the point of maybe not liking the idea at all, and with good reasons. Like, it's going to be a burden upon Morrigan.

[01:00:00]

It's going to be a burden upon Sally; it's going to be a burden upon Pixel; and certainly a burden upon you too. But even you are not making the fool's promise, "I will do everything." This is the promise every five-year-old child makes to their parents when they demand a dog. "I'll do everything. I'll do everything!" You know that that's not going to be the case, but it will be a burden for you as well. And I've got to say, I'm grateful that you already know that right now, it is not a good time to bring guinea pigs into this apartment. Because you have a sister and a dog who's already living there. By the way, an accommodation that Morrigan made on behalf of your family! A pretty big one. I trust it's a happy accommodation. Do you know what I mean?

*(Morrigan confirms.)*

It all works out fine, but it's like—you know, I would say that, though Morrigan gave you that hope, and though maybe Morrigan thought it was false hope, it has to be true hope. Obviously, nothing can move forward until Savannah and Winston move out. And I know that it's morbid, and I know that it's hard, and I know that it's challenging. And maybe you'll even think it's cruel, but I don't think the conversation happens until you have one dog in your life and not two. And I think that you owe it to Sally, who was already bedeviled by a cavy before, to let her finish her journey on this earth, having already adapted to Pixel and Winston. And though I know that's harsh, these decisions are hard to make about when to bring in new animals and when not. And when to bring in big changes. And I think that it's reasonable to give both your wife and your elderly dog a chance to just be chill where it's at for a while longer.

At the same time, it's your office. If you want to build a Guinea Pig Kingdom in there, I would love to see your designs. That's incredible. Like, I think you should trust that this podcast believes in your mission, and that your kingdom shall rise, and it shall have two guinea pigs in it. But not until there is less going on in your house, so that the labor in taking care of the dogs and the guinea pigs and the humans—the happy emotional labor of taking

care of each other—is in a place of balance that will allow the guinea pigs to come in and then rule.

This is the sound of a gavel.

**Sound Effect:** Guinea pigs squealing.

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

**Jesse Thorn:** Morrigan, how do you feel right now?

**Morrigan:** Uh, it's what I was expecting. I felt like we were always going to get into some sort of compromise vis a vis guinea pig acquisition, but I'm glad that the judge took my side when it comes to limiting it to one dog, when it comes to having guinea pigs. Although, as previously stated, Scar does also want another dog after Sally passes, so we'll see.

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

**Scarlett:** Mildly cheated, because I know she's also going to want a second dog when Sally passes. (*Laughs.*)

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

**Morrigan:** Thanks for having us!

**Scarlett:** Yeah, thank you!

**Jesse Thorn:** Another *Judge John Hodgman* case is in the books. This week's episode was named by Reddit user u/AmbitiousFactor715. You can join us on the Maximum Fun subreddit at r/MaximumFun over there on Reddit and in the Reddit app. That's where we ask for our title suggestions. You can also just enjoy the title suggestions of other users.

**John Hodgman:** Just enjoy them. That's what I do. I go over there, and you know what I do, Jesse?

**Jesse Thorn:** What do you do?

**John Hodgman:** I enjoy them. I enjoy the heck out of them.

**Jesse Thorn:** Evidence and photos from the show are posted on our website at [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org), as well as on Instagram, [@JudgeJohnHodgman](https://www.instagram.com/JudgeJohnHodgman). And we're also on TikTok and YouTube with full video of episodes. So, go and like and subscribe and share the episodes. And maybe one day something we make will hit the algorithm, (*laughs*) and people will learn about our show.

**John Hodgman:** You can help, of course, by liking and subscribing and sharing and leaving comments and so forth. Meanwhile, thank you to Lisa Huntress on Apple Podcasts, who left us some very kind words and a five-star rating. Lisa Huntress says about the show, quote, “In the spirit of helping in the way you're asked to help, I'm rating this podcast.”

That's very kind, Lisa, because that's what we say.

[01:05:00]

If you like the show, it really helps us to go over and rate it somewhere. So, Lisa did so, and they say, “I just came out of a meditation retreat.” We could all use more of that these days. “My heart is filled with gratitude for the wisdom that Judge John Hodgman and, I dare say, Bailiff Jesse Thorn has shared over the years. Thank you for your gentle and lighthearted presence.”

Thank you, Lisa Huntress. And indeed, everyone should try to practice a little bit of mindfulness. Take a few minutes out of your day to just breathe, and concentrate or not concentrate on some quiet time. And then go ahead over to Apple Podcasts and rate and review us, if you please. Or go over to Pocket Casts and do the same thing. Or as I say, if you're watching us on YouTube, you can leave a comment on the episode. Like, share, subscribe. All of these things really do help other listeners, new listeners, discover the show, and we're very grateful.

**Jesse Thorn:** *Judge John Hodgman* was created by Jesse Thorn and John Hodgman. This episode was engineered by Colin Bollinger and Max Fabian at Tightrope Recording in Chicago, Illinois. The podcast is edited by AJ McKeon. Our video producer is Daniel Speer, and our ever-capable producer is Jennifer Marmor—childhood neighbor, grandma neighbor of Elijah Wood.

**John Hodgman:** Grandma neighbor of Elijah Wood.

**Jesse Thorn:** And this is our last episode with social media manager Nattie Lopez. Our thanks to Nattie.

*(John applauds.)*

Nattie's done so much wonderful work on our social media over the last year.

**John Hodgman:** Thank you, Nattie.

**Jesse Thorn:** Thank you so much. We'll miss you. And a big welcome to our new social media manager, Dan Telfer! Welcome aboard, Dan! He's a very hilarious guy. Very funny standup. If you've never seen his standup comedy, we're so excited to be working with him. Now—

**John Hodgman:** I just want to say thank you, Nattie Lopez. You're wonderful, and you brought so much energy and verve to social media, and we're going to miss you a lot. And Dan, I also love a lot too, and you're going to enjoy interacting with him on the social media. If you see Dan posting, make sure to tell him what your favorite dinosaur is. Chances are you're wrong.

**Jesse Thorn:** Now, Swift Justice, where we answer your small disputes with quick judgment. Meow\_Meow says, "It should be illegal for someone at work to chat, 'Hi,' and then not immediately follow up with their request. I'd like a ruling that one must say, 'Hi, please send me that report,' or whatever it is that they want. Or just not say anything at all."

**John Hodgman:** Okay, Meow\_Meow, Here's what I have to say.

Hi.

*(Long pause.)*

You're absolutely right. *(Chuckles.)* People should follow up. They should follow up their first sentences with second sentences, whether they're talking or chatting. You have to understand that when you start saying something, the other person is—if they're polite and gracious—is waiting for you to finish. You should be considerate of their time.

Hey, that's a workplace beef, and we need more beeves from your workplace. Surely they've got some for us. Maybe your colleagues have fun lunch plans on your work from home day? Boo. Do you hate how your coworker folds sweaters on the sales floor? Are they doing it wrong? Does someone in your coworking space monopolize the best desk? Hey, do you work in the mornings in a lovely coffee shop in Brooklyn? How do you feel when someone comes and takes your chair and says, "We're holding this table for a party of six." In a coffee shop! It's not my chair. Of course, nobody's chair, just they weren't sitting there yet, but they told me I couldn't sit there, because they were waiting for a party of six! This isn't a WeWork space!

**Jesse Thorn:** Yeah.

**John Hodgman:** And I said, "Okay." And then guess what? The other people never showed up, and they left.

*(Jesse "wow"s.)*

Beeves! We're talking about workplace beeves, whether you work in our office, work in a coffee shop, or work at home. Send us all your workplace disputes at [MaximumFun.org/jjho](https://MaximumFun.org/jjho). That's where we get all the disputes that you might have for us. And indeed we need those disputes. Don't we, Jesse?

**Jesse Thorn:** Indeed, on any subject. You can submit them at [MaximumFun.org/jjho](https://MaximumFun.org/jjho). No beef is too big or too small for the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. That's [MaximumFun.org/jjho](https://MaximumFun.org/jjho), and we'll talk to you next time on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

**Sound Effect:** Three gavel bangs.

**Transition:** Cheerful ukulele chord.

**Speaker 1:** Maximum Fun.

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

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

**Speaker 4:** Supported—

**Speaker 5:** —directly—

**Speaker 6:** —by you!