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Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: It's the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. I'm Bailiff Jesse Thorn. With me is Judge John Hodgman. This week's episode was recorded live in Ann Arbor, Michigan. This is the first and only time we have ever recorded *Judge John Hodgman* at a library—in a library!

John Hodgman: I hope it's not the last, because talk about the epicenter of the *Judge John Hodgman* audience! Librarians and library patrons. They definitely showed up for us in Ann Arbor at that wonderful library that was so kind to host us. We put on a great show right in front of the graphic novel section. And I think you're gonna hear what a great time it was.

Jesse Thorn: Judge Hodgman, we had a really important correction on the Maximum Fun subreddit recently. That's r/MaximumFun. Not all of our listeners are librarians; several mentioned they are library support workers.

(John affirms with a laugh.)

Yeah, so they work in libraries, but they are not librarians.

John Hodgman: Whatever the case, we had a wonderful time in the jewel in the crown of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and can't wait to go back. But until then, you get to go back in time with us and listen to this incredible live show that we performed right there at the Ann Arbor Downtown District Library.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: People of Ann Arbor, you asked us for live justice, and we came to deliver it. The Court of *Judge John Hodgman* is now in session!

(Raucous cheers and applause.)

Let's start our first case. Please welcome to the stage Peter and Steven!

(Cheers and applause.)

Peter says he's Steven's mentor and life coach. He hired Steven 13 years ago in Virginia. Now they both live in the same Midwestern city. Peter says Steven followed him here. Peter says that's wrong; he makes his own decisions because he is a real grownup boy.

(Laughter.)

Who's right, who's wrong? Only one can decide. Please rise as Judge John Hodgman enters the courtroom.

(Applause.)

John Hodgman: Welcome, Peter and Steven. Thank you for being here. Who seeks justice in my fake court?

Peter: I do.

John Hodgman: You are Peter?

Peter: Yes, I am.

John Hodgman: Peter, let's get this outta the way. You say that Steven followed you from where you met. Which was where?

Peter: Charlottesville, Virginia.

John Hodgman: Charlottesville, Virginia. Followed you here to the Midwest, but not here to Ann Arbor. Correct?

Peter: Not here to Ann Arbor.

John Hodgman: And—no. Where do you both live?

Peter: We both live in Columbus, Ohio.

(A mixed reaction from the crowd.)

John Hodgman: Oh, wow. Steven, you could have stayed home and avoided all of this.

(Laughter.)

And yet you followed!

Peter: He followed me here.

John Hodgman: Yeah. You followed Peter here.

Steven: I drove him here.

John Hodgman: Well, fair enough! But he's the one who's seeking justice. You agreed to be here to have this fight. What is your beef with your old boss?

Steven: Well, my beef is that he frequently asks me to acknowledge his role in my life as a life coach and mentor. Part of him asking me to do that and part of him kind of framing our

relationship in that way is that he's constantly telling people that I followed him to Columbus. And there's various factors that, you know, we can get into, And yeah, I just kinda wanna reframe our relationship in less of a top-down and more of like an equitable, even across.

John Hodgman: Right. Yeah. He considers himself to be a father figure, and you want to destroy your father.

Steven: Essentially, yeah.

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: And finally grow as a human being. I understand.

Peter, is the only life advice you've given to Steven is to get him to follow you to Ohio, of all places?

Peter: No, I've actually—

John Hodgman: And why was that—why did you advise that? Anyway, sorry.

(Laughter.)

Sorry, I'm just pandering. Peter, what other kind of life advice have you given to Steven?

Peter: Well, we met when I hired him when he was 23 years old. I always laugh. He was a teacher at the time. He was—it was him—

John Hodgman: You were a principal. At a—?

Peter: I was a principal at the time. Elementary school.

John Hodgman: Elementary school. And you hired Steven to be a...

Peter: A fifth grade teacher.

John Hodgman: Fifth grade teacher. That's great!

Peter: And it was him and the reigning Georgia Teacher of the Year. And I just—there's something about him, you know? He got the kids. He's a good guy. And he cared.

John Hodgman: Wait, you're saying that the other candidate for the position was the reigning Georgia Teacher of the Year?

(Peter confirms with a laugh.)

And how long ago—

Jesse Thorn: Wait, how did you know they were still reigning? Would they come with a scepter?

Peter: (*Chuckling.*) This person talked about—

John Hodgman: You gotta wear a sash. Gotta wear a sash, around.

Jesse Thorn: Gotta wear a sash, got it.

Peter: They talked about it quite a lot. (*Laughs.*)

John Hodgman: Yeah. And you're still shitting on them?

(*Peter agrees with a laugh.*)

Good.

Jesse Thorn: John, you know what you get when you're teacher of the year?

John Hodgman: No. What?

Jesse Thorn: Free pizza party.

John Hodgman: (*Laughing.*) Free pizza party.

(*Laughter.*)

Class outside? Yeah. Okay. So, you hired him to be a fifth grade teacher?

Peter: We bought him his first—myself and a coworker bought him his first set of grownup sheets. That just means actual sheets for his bed.

John Hodgman: Was he in fifth grade?

(*Laughter.*)

Peter: Prior to that he was using a sleeping bag and t-shirt as a pillowcase.

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John Hodgman: Is this true?

Steven: Yeah, you gotta understand I was living that kind of rockstar lifestyle of an elementary teacher at the time.

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: Had you been a teacher already?

Steven: For one year. I didn't—it wasn't my first pair of bedsheets. It was the first pair at a new place. Which doesn't really help.

John Hodgman: Were you sleeping in the sleeping bag with the t-shirt—?

Jesse Thorn: Wait, no. Hold on, John. Your first pair at a new place? Did you like *Velveteen Rabbit* everything from the old place?

(Laughter.)

Steven: I don't remember the circumstances that led me to not having bedsheets.

John Hodgman: Okay. What were on the sheets that he got? *Transformers*? What?

Peter: Well, yeah, so actually we were going to purchase him ones like that. But we decided he is a big boy now, and we got him to some plain sheets that looked adult-ish. We thought that was the best way to actually be nice.

John Hodgman: When you were sleeping in your sleeping bag, was it under your desk in your classroom?

(Laughter.)

Steven: It was in the basement I was living in at the time.

John Hodgman: Okay, fair enough. And was that the—you bought him some new sheets, or you convinced him to buy some new sheets. What about his head?

Peter: We actually purchased the sheets. We convinced him to shave his head entirely. Before that there was some hair, and it took some years off his life. He looked—he's the strapping man he is today. But, you know,.

John Hodgman: May I ask how old you are?

Steven: I'm 36.

John Hodgman: Well, you look terrific.

Steven: Thank you.

John Hodgman: I don't know what's—

(Laughter.)

I mean, I notice you still are completely shaven on your head.

Steven: Correct. And I would like to add that when he says he like convinced me, and he's framing it like a father, what he means is he berated me constantly until I decided shaving it was the move.

John Hodgman: He was your principal, commenting on your personal and physical appearance. Did it ever occur to you that you could sue him into oblivion?

(Laughter.)

Steven: Not until right now.

Peter: It was on the rubric. So, yeah.

(They laugh.)

John Hodgman: Oh, okay. Steven, did Peter give you good advice?

Steven: Oh, absolutely. Yeah. I can't argue that. Yeah. The shaving the head was great for sure.

John Hodgman: Right. Yeah. Sheets are pretty good too, right?

(Steven agrees.)

Let me ask you this question. Do you still use sheets?

(Steven confirms.)

Seems like case closed! Case closed, Jesse, still use the sheets! What are we talking about? Percalé? Satine? What? Flannel, washed flannel?

Jesse Thorn: Oxford.

John Hodgman: Oxford? What kind of sheets do you have? Do you even know?

Steven: Oh, geez, I don't know.

John Hodgman: Oh, really? Why? Because Peter's still buying them for you?

(Laughter.)

Peter, why did you move to Columbus, Ohio?

Peter: I actually grew up outside of Cleveland, so when our kids became school-aged, it was time to come back closer to family. We were an hour from the in-laws, an hour from my family.

John Hodgman: Did you come to the Thurber Prize event where I lost?

Peter: No, but I remember when you were here for that, and we didn't make it. But I'm glad.
(Laughs.)

John Hodgman: I wish I had skipped it too.

(Laughter.)

Steven, did you follow him to Columbus? Yes or no?

Steven: In the sense that, yes, he moved to Columbus, and then less than a year later I moved there. Yes.

John Hodgman: How did it come to pass?

Steven: Because I have family that lives there. My sister-in-law lives in Columbus.

John Hodgman: Mmm, weird coincidence. Mm-hm. Okay. But you wanted a change? You're telling me you had nothing to do with the fact that Peter was already there?

Steven: It was a lovely circumstance surrounding my move to Columbus, but it wasn't the reason why.

John Hodgman: Right. Okay. And do you work together now?

Steven: We do.

Peter: We still work together.

(Laughter.)

I was one of his references.

John Hodgman: In a school, presumably.

(Peter confirms.)

Well, thank you for being teachers, by the way. That's terrific.

(Applause.)

Library crowd; they're gonna clap for teachers.

(Laughter.)

And you are—

Jesse Thorn: And you know what? Thanks to firefighters too.

(Laughter and applause.)

For keeping our houses from burning down.

John Hodgman: And you're friends—?

Jesse Thorn: And moms!

(Laughter and applause.)

John Hodgman: But that's it! No one else gets thanked. Doing the good work is its own reward.

You're friends?

(They both agree.)

But this is an ongoing dispute. Steven, how does it feel when Peter says that you followed him to Columbus? Infantilizing?

Steven: It's not—yes. And it's objectively not true. And it's a story. He's a storyteller. It's a story I hear a lot.

John Hodgman: Wait a minute. Thank you to the storytellers.

(Laughter and applause.)

John Hodgman: Right, Jesse? Thank you to the storytellers. Where would we be without them?

(Jesse “mm”s agreeably.)

Yeah. They help us make sense of things. Okay.

(Jesse continues “mm”ing.)

Maybe you're having some dental pain?

(Laughter.)

We are in Michigan, the crown—so to speak.

(Laughter and boos.)

The jewel in the crown of dental hygiene.

Jesse Thorn: John, at the end of the day, we're all just storytellers. Especially ad guys that want to tell you about how they're storytellers.

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: Fair enough. So, you—how does it feel when Peter says that you followed him here? How does it make you feel?

Steven: I feel like it's a little reductive to how I view our friendship.

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John Hodgman: Does he tell funny stories about you that make you feel humiliated and infantilized, by any chance?

Steven: At any chance that he gets, and I feel like he's actually won by having this audience now, tonight.

John Hodgman: What kind of stories do you tell about little-bitty Steven, Peter?

Peter: I mean, I love the one about how, when he met his wife, he came to me for advice—as, you know, a life coach or mentor might be serving that role. And he said, you know, he was really into her. But they were roommates, and he was concerned that there were nine months left on the lease. So, what if it didn't work out?

(John “ooh”s appropriately.)

What if she—? So, I mean—

John Hodgman: Yeah, that's a tricky maneuver.

Peter: But now they have two kids and they're together.

John Hodgman: When you are falling in love with a roommate, and you only have one pair of sheets that you just bought.

(Laughter.)

So, what advice did you give him?

Peter: I told him to go for it, you know? If he really was into her, let's go for it. And it's turned out amazing. He has an awesome wife and awesome kids, and that's awesome.

John Hodgman: So, you're married now, you have two kids?

(Steven confirms.) But you no longer live together. Weird.

(Laughter.)

No. Still cohabitating then?

Steven: We are.

John Hodgman: Good job. So, Steven, that's a lovely story to tell. How does this affect you?

Steven: It's maybe like the frequency of which the stories are told, coupled with who he's telling them to, and it often requires me—professionally—to kind of like maybe backtrack and say like, “Okay, yeah, that's a funny story. Ha-ha. I actually moved here for adult reasons.”

John Hodgman: The story that he told about you meeting your wife is not a funny story.

(Steven confirms.)

No. The story that he told about you following him to Columbus is—mm... Actually, honestly, not a great story. Not very funny. I mean, is there any other story that he tells about you? Or is this about it?

Steven: Oh, no, there's a lot more.

John Hodgman: Well, gimme an example that would make him look bad.

Steven: Hm.

(Laughter.)

Well, there's— One time he—like, we were running this race where you have to do obstacles. It was like, maybe—I don't know—a five-mile race.

John Hodgman: Oh, you're runners?

Steven: Well, is that not obvious?

(Laughter.)

I know that—

John Hodgman: You look like the one of the fastest fifth grade teachers in the land, I'm here to say!

Steven: And I cramped up pretty bad at the end, and he had to carry me across the finish line.

(Jesse blurts a laugh.)

So, that's a story he tells.

Peter: I'd like to add that he had a shorts malfunction, so he was also just in his underwear at this point. So.

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: I just put it together that you said a shorts malfunction. I thought you said short smell function. I thought I was having a stroke.

Jesse Thorn: Was there something cute on his undiepants?

Peter: They matched the sheets, so it was—*(laughs)*.

John Hodgman: Is it infantilizing to you when he tells these stories to others?

Steven: I love the jokes. I love the self-deprecating humor. I like to tell them. But sometimes in the professional set setting, it is a little...

John Hodgman: Do you feel it undermines you professionally?

Steven: Um, occasionally. *(Laughs.)*

Jesse Thorn: Has he ever told one of these stories in front of the 10-year-olds?

Steven: Probably.

John Hodgman: Do you have difficulty acknowledging, Peter, that Steven is a grownup man now?

Peter: No, not at all. I mean, we've actually talked about this before. He's an awesome guy. Love him as a friend. We both love the banter we get to give each other. And again, as a life coach and mentor, I just—I got to teach him that, got to help guide that for him.

John Hodgman: Do you feel you need to keep him in his place by telling these stories?

Peter: I mean, that might be my only hope. He is really—like I said, he's a great dude, so.

John Hodgman: Well, I mean—you know. Have you asked him to stop telling the stories before, Steven? Before now?

Steven: Not really. I think I have asked that I not like acknowledge him publicly as my mentor.

John Hodgman: You don't want to acknowledge him as your mentor?

Steven: I mean, not in most settings, yeah.

Peter: I thought tonight was the right setting, but I don't know. (*Chuckles.*)

Jesse Thorn: Have you not asked in the past because you're afraid Daddy will be mad with you?

(*Laughter.*)

Steven: I mean, that's very likely. That could be some of my deep-seated reasons.

John Hodgman: Now that you've heard that Steven is uncomfortable with these stories, Peter, why do you keep telling them?

Peter: Um, I do—this is gonna sound like I'm not a very nice person, but it is part of our banter. We both like to tell silly stories about each other. There's plenty he has, I'm sure, on me. Whether they're appropriate for a podcast or not...

John Hodgman: Well, if you both like to tell them, wouldn't you have heard one before?

Peter: I think I've heard some. But I mean—hm. I dunno.

John Hodgman: Alright. You're his boss now, currently?

Peter: No.

John Hodgman: No. You're not his direct supervisor anymore?

Peter: Not at all. No.

John Hodgman: Okay. Steven, you'd like me to order that Peter stop saying that you followed him to Columbus and stop telling these stories in general. Is that right?

Steven: Not in general. Maybe just be a little bit more prudent about the setting. And he wants me to acknowledge that I'm his life coach. I would just like him to acknowledge that it's really awesome that our life circumstances brought us back to the same place and we have this great friendship.

John Hodgman: I agree. That is my order to you as well. Say it. "He didn't follow me to Columbus."

Peter: *(Somewhat begrudgingly.)* He didn't follow me to Columbus.

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John Hodgman: "No one should follow me to Columbus."

(Laughter.)

Peter: *(Trying not to laugh.)* Nooobody should follow me to Columbus.

(Applause.)

John Hodgman: Who in their right mind would follow anyone to Columbus?! This is the sound of a gavel. *(Three gavel bangs.)*

(Cheers and applause.)

Jesse Thorn: Thank you, Peter and Steven.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

(ADVERTISEMENT)

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: Please welcome to the stage Eva and Glenn.

John Hodgman: Eva and Glenn to the stage, please. So, what's going on with Eva and Glenn, Jesse?

Jesse Thorn: on with Eva and Glenn, Jesse? Eva and Glenn are longtime friends who used to work together at a law firm. Eva says she's now a “recovering attorney”. She also says that Glenn owes her a cruise! But Glenn says Eva's gone overboard.

Judge Hodgman, you may proceed.

John Hodgman: (*Muttering.*) I wrote that joke.

Jesse Thorn: He wrote that. John wrote that in.

John Hodgman: Eva's gone overboard. She's a little bit overboard in her demanding of a cruise. Who—

Jesse Thorn: It says, “Went overboard,” and then right here next to it in italics, it says, “Noo alts.”

John Hodgman: No, yeah. Don't improvise. Read as written.

Hello, Eva. Do you seek justice in my fake court? Yes or no?

Eva: Yes.

John Hodgman: And you used to work with Glenn.

(*Eva confirms.*)

But your relationship used to be different. Or it's a personal relationship as well. Can you explain?

Eva: Yes. originally we were colleagues who worked together in the same firm, and as we worked together and got to know each other better, we started to become friends. And then we ended up hanging out outside of the office, and we've been good friends for 19 years now.

John Hodgman: And you got to know his family to a certain degree?

(*Eva confirms.*)

And just as a friend?

(*Eva confirms.*)

Right. But did Glenn ever represent that your relationship was different to his own family?

Eva: He absolutely did. Multiple times.

John Hodgman: How would that misrepresentation take shape?

Eva: Well, when we were colleagues, Glenn had not yet come out to me. And in fact, was not out at all. And so, he used me as a beard with his family, without my knowledge or consent.

John Hodgman: Glenn.

(Laughter.)

Glenn, did you tell your family that Eva was your girlfriend?

Glenn: I did say a woman named Eva was my girlfriend. Yes. *(Laughs.)*

John Hodgman: You're clearly still a practicing attorney.

(Laughter.)

Might not have necessarily been this Eva, but a Eva. An Eva, I suppose I should say. An Eva?

Glenn: An Eva. Correct. An Eva was.

John Hodgman: Right. And how long did your family believe that you had a girlfriend named An(*ne*) Eva.

Glenn: Anne Eva, *(chuckles)* probably a good, maybe two years?

(Laughter.)

A very quick two years maybe. Maybe a year and a half.

Eva: Okay, that's two cruises, your honor.

John Hodgman: Well, alright. Tell me about the cruises then. You go on an annual cruise with your family, is that correct, Glenn?

Glenn: Well, at the time my stepmom's mother paid for the entire family and our legitimate significant others. *(Laughs.)*

John Hodgman: You mean your nonfictional, significant others?

Glenn: Right, right. To take a cruise. And well, I went solo, because I didn't honestly have a legitimate, uh—

John Hodgman: Did your family in invite you to invite an Eva?

Glenn: They did. They did. An Eva. But I didn't have a true Eva, so there was no...

Eva: I am the only Eva.

Glenn: Right. So, I—

John Hodgman: Let me ask you this, counselor. Did your family believe that this Eva was the Eva?

Glenn: Possibly. (*Laughs.*) Maybe. I think that may have been the case.

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I can't really recall if she met them after coming out, prior. It could have been post.

Eva: Your mother loves me.

Glenn: Right. (*Laughs.*) I think it probably was post coming out, but.

Eva: That's irrelevant.

Glenn: Right. (*Laughs.*)

John Hodgman: Was there a reason that you didn't want to bring this Eva on the cruise?

Glenn: Uh, you know, those state room cabins are really small and stuffy. Especially if (*inaudible*) inside room maybe, you know? Which back then, I may have. And I don't—

John Hodgman: But Eva brought her own sleeping bag and a t-shirt for a pillow.

(*Laughter.*)

Glenn: I just don't think that sleeping in a little cabin like that for a week would be on either of our bucket lists. (*Laughs.*)

Eva: (*Pointedly.*) Would've been nice to have the choice.

(*Laughter.*)

John Hodgman: Yeah. But I mean, Eva, you have to acknowledge that Glenn—at this time, your friend—was struggling with acknowledging his own truth, of himself—

Eva: Suuure, whatever. Mm-hm.

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: Glenn, would it be reasonable to say that you were willing to lead your family on to a certain extent? To say, “Yes, I have a girlfriend named Eva, and it might be that one over there.” But to actually bring her onto the cruise would be a level of deception that made you feel uncomfortable.

Glenn: Exactly. That would’ve been... yeah.

John Hodgman: But then you did acknowledge your own truth to yourself and to your family. And congratulations for that.

Glenn: Oh, thanks.

John Hodgman: And do you have a significant other now?

Glenn: Yes. My Eva turned out to be a 6’3” guy named Mike that I have been—

John Hodgman: Mike!

(Laughter.)

Is Mike here?

Glenn: He is. Right there.

(Applause.)

John Hodgman: Mike, would you please stand up and be acknowledged?

Jesse Thorn: Let the record reflect that Mike waved adorably.

John Hodgman: Let the record reflect that Mike is a snack.

(Laughter.)

So, I ask you this, counselor! Has Mike ever been on a cruise!?

Glenn: He has been on... several cruises. Yes.

(Laughs.)

John Hodgman: J'accruz! (*J'accuse.*) It had to be done, Jesse. It had to be done. No alts. No alts. Even though we've made that joke before. No alts. It came up.

Eva: Your honor.

John Hodgman: Oh yes. Hi.

Eva: If I could contribute.

John Hodgman: You may!

Eva: I did speak with Mike briefly prior to us coming up here to ask just how many cruises he has been on with Glenn.

John Hodgman: Oh, interesting.

Eva: And he estimated 15.

(Disbelieve and murmuring from the crowd.)

John Hodgman: Now, are these all family cruises? Or maybe some—

Glenn: No, the vast majority are non-family cruises. My stepmom got me into cruises and got Mike into cruises, and we just like 'em. So, we take a lot.

John Hodgman: You're really into cruises!

Glenn: So yeah, we take quite a few. And they come—

John Hodgman: Where do you go? Do you have a preferred line?

Glenn: Oh god, yeah. We like Norwegian Cruise Line. We're going to Greece next year.

John Hodgman: Sounds great!

Glenn: Yeah! (*Laughs.*) Now these are certainly, uh, my—

John Hodgman: Yeah, Eva, have you ever been to Greece?

Eva: No! I'd love to go!

John Hodgman: Okay, next question: Glenn, where else have you gone?

Glenn: Oh, well, we—Barcelona, but you know, I've been—we of course do the usual...

John Hodgman: Oh, Eva have you been to (*pronouncing the 'th' sound*) Barcelona?

Eva: I have not! No.

John Hodgman: No on Barcelona.

Eva: I don't even know to say—do the 'th' legitimately.

Glenn: (*Overemphasizing.*) Barthhhelonya.

John Hodgman: Yeah. Oh! Well, Glenn, you know! 'Cause you've been there.

(*Laughter.*)

So, Glenn, why don't you take Eva on a cruise? I mean, she did you a solid for a period of time, right?

Glenn: She did, but I don't know if that can really be quantified. I mean, you know, being able to say that she was associated with me in that manner. I mean... wouldn't you like that? You know, I'm not sure if that—what's the harm? How are the damages—?

Eva: Oh, there's harm.

John Hodgman: Okay, Eva.

Glenn: What are the damages?

John Hodgman: Make your case, Eva. You are a recovering attorney. I've never practiced law in my life.

(*Laughter.*)

Why don't you give it—why don't you show me how it's done?

Eva: If I can remember back that far. Well, there was the harm that I was single at the time and interested in dating. Not this guy, but a guy. Perhaps my Eva.

John Hodgman: You're saying that you might have gone on a cruise with Glenn and his family as Glenn's fake paramour?

Eva: No.

John Hodgman: And then you would've found a paramour of your own on the cruise?

Eva: No.

John Hodgman: Come on, Glenn! That would've been fun!

(Laughter.)

Glenn: That would've been a crowded little state room. *(Laughs.)*

John Hodgman: That would've been a French farce or a romcom! Let's do it!

Glenn: Yeah. Would've needed a sign for the door, I guess.

Eva: No, I did not know what I was missing at the time. Because again, I did not consent or was not made aware of being his beard.

John Hodgman: Oh, you didn't know that you were being represented?

Eva: Nope. No.

John Hodgman: How did you feel when you found out, and how did you find out?

Eva: I felt used!

(Glenn laughs.)

John Hodgman: Well, let me reverse those questions. How did you find out?

Eva: He probably told me.

(Laughter.)

Glenn: I volunteered that information. I said—oh, maybe I just said a person with your same name was—happened to be my fake significant other when I would go home for Christmas or Thanksgiving, and you get those questions incessantly. “Who are you dating? Who are you dating?” And finally, it was—

John Hodgman: Someone named Eva!

Glenn: Yep. It's Eva. Yep.

Jesse Thorn: Eva—

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Eva, did you ever have to IRL impersonate the girlfriend? Did you ever have to show up to something as the girlfriend?

Eva: I did not. 'Cause I was unaware I had been cast in that role.

John Hodgman: Would you have been willing to go on the cruise if you had to act as Glenn's girlfriend?

(Glenn laughs.)

Eva: Sure!

John Hodgman: You want to go on a cruise that badly?

Eva: I've never been, your honor! And my husband's not interested.

John Hodgman: I've been on some cruises.

Eva: Yeah?

John Hodgman: They're fine.

Jesse Thorn: I mean, to be fair, there's a ton of soft serve. There's so much soft serve.

John Hodgman: Terrific. It's terrific.

Eva: That's pretty compelling.

John Hodgman: If you like being on an incredibly gaudy, fallen-down hotel floating through an infinite abyss that reminds you of death, it's for you.

(Laughter.)

And by the way, I do! I love it.

Eva: I think I would. But my husband looks at it the same way you do, so.

John Hodgman: Oh, I see.

Eva: This is my only chance.

John Hodgman: Where would you go on your cruise if I were to order Glenn to take you on a cruise?

Eva: Well, Greece sounds good.

John Hodgman: Greece sounds good. Actually, it's *Greethe*. Greethe.

Eva: Or he could take me on one of the Broadway cruises.

John Hodgman: What are the Broadway cruises? What are they?

Glenn: Yeah, what are those?

Eva: They're cruises that have some people who are stars on Broadway on the ship as entertainment, and they interact with people and do some classes. Things like that.

John Hodgman: Are you still friends? Glenn, Eva?

Glenn: We're good friends.

Eva: I mean, at the moment.

(Laughter.)

Yes.

John Hodgman: What would be your objection to taking your friend on a cruise? I presume Mike would come too, right? You like Mike? Everyone likes Mike, right?

(General agreement from people who do and don't know Mike.)

Jesse Thorn: Yeah, that guy's a snack!

John Hodgman: Yeah. Everyone loves Mike. What would be your objection to taking Eva on the cruise with you and Mike?

Glenn: Oh, she could—more than welcome to come, you know. Just have that Amex card ready and, you know, we're all—*(laughs)* we're on our way!

Eva: See what it comes down to?

Glenn: We are on our way.

Eva: Cold, hard cash.

John Hodgman: Glenn, you mentioned that you've been on perhaps 15 cruises.

Glenn: Yeah, quite a few.

John Hodgman: You cruise on Norwegian Cruise Lines.

Glenn: Yeah. There and some other ones too.

John Hodgman: I presume that you belong to their frequent sailor club or whatever.

Glenn: We do. Yeah.

John Hodgman: The platinum Mariner or whatever it is.

(Laughter.)

Glenn: Right. We took a *RuPaul Drag Race* cruise. That was really fun.

Eva: I would love that!

John Hodgman: You know what? Stop bragging about it in front of Eva!

(Laughter.)

What I'm saying is that surely, with the amount of status that you've earned as a frequent cruiser, surely you could probably get Eva a pretty good deal on a cruise—the three of you together—even if it's a short one. Wouldn't you agree?

Glenn: No.

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: Well, luckily for Eva, I agree with myself! Cash in your chips, and get Eva a cruise. Go take her on a cruise! Say thank you! Thank you to Eva. Thank you for being here. Have fun, bon voyage. *(Three gavel bangs.)*

(Cheers and applause.)

Jesse Thorn: Thank you, Eva and Glenn.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Promo:

Music: A fun, percussive synth beat.

Jo Firestone: *Dr. Gameshow* is a podcast where we play games submitted by listeners with callers from all around the world, and this is a game to get you to listen.

Name three reasons to listen to *Dr. Gameshow*, Kyla and Lunar from Freedom, Maine.

Lunar: Dishes, folding the laundry, doing cat grooming.

Jo: (*Laughing.*) Okay, thank you. Great.

Manolo Moreno: Oh, things you could do while listening, yeah.

Jo: I love that the reason—I'm like, "Why do you listen to this show?", and Lunar's like, "Dishes." (*Chuckling.*) Fantastic. Manolo!

Manolo: Number one is that it'll inspire you. You're gonna be like, "Oh, I could do that."

Jo: That's all we have time for, but you'll just have to find *Dr. Gameshow* and Maximum Fun to find out for yourself.

(*Music fades out.*)

Promo:

Music: Fun, exciting music.

Kirk Hamilton: Say you like video games—

Jason Schreier: And who doesn't?

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

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

Jason: Well, you should get some better friends.

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

Maddy: Me, Maddy Myers.

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

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

Kirk: *Triple Click*. (*Click, click, click!*) It's kinda like we're your friends. Find us at MaximumFun.org or wherever you get your podcasts.

(Music fades out.)

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: Judge John Hodgman, I know that we disappointed some Chicagoans, because there was not a Chicago date on our last tour.

John Hodgman: It just didn't fit into the—

Jesse Thorn: We couldn't get it in! The right venue wasn't available. It just happens sometimes, but—

John Hodgman: We love Chicago! It's my kind of town!

Jesse Thorn: But I have good news for all you Chicagoans and those in the Chicago area. Very, very shortly on April 11th, I am bringing my other comedy podcast, *Jordan, Jesse, Go!*, to Chicago in the wonderful club, Sleeping Village. Jordan and I will be doing all kinds of nonsense.

[00:30:00]

John, I just wrote a quiz that is called Spirit Halloween Superstore Automaton, Performer From the Gathering of the Juggalos, or Some S-H We Made Up.

(John giggles.)

Where you have to figure out which is a music act from the Gathering of the Juggalos, which is a thing you can buy at Spirit Halloween Superstore, and which is just some nonsense I

wrote. We will also be joined by two monumental podcasting celebrities. One of them is Sam Riegel from the huge, huge podcast *Critical Role*, and from its very successful Amazon television show!

He also, John—

John Hodgman: Whoa. That's a big deal.

Jesse Thorn: A lot of people ask me, “Well, that's great. He's a very successful podcaster on *Critical Role*. But did he ever play the character Phoenix Wright, ace attorney, in a legal simulator anime video game?” And the answer is yes, he did. Yes, he did.

John Hodgman: And then Peter Sagal is there too?!

Jesse Thorn: Yeah. Peter Sagal from *Wait, Wait, Don't Tell Me!* is also gonna be there. And of course, from *Runner's World Magazine*—you know him best as a columnist from *Runner's World!* But he's also the host of NPR's *Wait, Wait, Don't Tell Me!*.

John Hodgman: Two princes of the land of Lincoln, joining you and your best friend—Jordan Morris—for a night of comedy at Sleeping Village on April 11th. Jesse, I'm mad, 'cause I love Chicago, and I love you guys, and I wish I could be there, but I'm gonna be upstate New York helping our daughter adopt a cat. So sorry!

Jesse Thorn: John, I'll eat a beef for you, and I'll see everybody April 11th. The tickets are on sale now. You can find all of the information at MaximumFun.org/events, and I will see you April 11th!

John Hodgman: As for me, I've got nothing going on right now. But I will remind you: please go check out our friend, Jean Grae's, new book. It's an incredible new book, called *In My Remaining Years*. It's funny, it's wise. It's, uh—it's spicy. It's hysterical. It's the book you have to go and get right away, please. *In My Remaining Years* by Jean Grae. Go and get it wherever books are sold or loaned.

Jesse Thorn: Let's get back to the show!

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: Ann Arbor, Michigan, are you ready for Mega Justice?!

(Cheers and applause.)

Let's bring out our litigants. Please welcome to the stage Kalee and Nik. Tonight's case: “A Jewel of Your Peers”. Kalee brings the case against her brother, Nik. They both lay claim to a family heirloom: their father's very cool ring in the shape of a lion's head. The only problem is: their dad is still alive!

(Laughter.)

Kalee says she wants the ring when their father goes, but Nik says the ring should be buried with dad. Who's right, who's wrong? Only one can decide! Please rise. As Judge John Hodgman enters the courtroom and delivers an obscure cultural reference.

(Cheers and applause.)

John Hodgman: “He thought of all the things that he kept in his own pockets. Fishbones, goblin’s teeth, wet shells, a bit of batwing, a sharp stone to sharpen his fangs on, and other nasty things. He tried to think what other people kept in their pockets, and finally said, “A piehole or nothing!”

‘Wrong,’ said Judge John Hodgman, ‘All guesses are wrong.’”

Bailiff Jesse Thorn, please swear them in.

Jesse Thorn: Kalee and Nik, please rise and raise your right hands. Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God-or-Whatever?

(They swear.)

Do you swear to abide by Judge John Hodgman's ruling, despite the fact that he never found his courage?

(They swear.)

Judge Hodgman, you may proceed.

John Hodgman: Kalee and Nik, you may be seated for an immediate summary judgment in one of yours favors. Can either of you name the piece of culture that I mostly quoted then paraphrased at the end, as I entered this courtroom? But before you guess, may I ask you a question? Are you both chewing gum?

Kalee: *(Softly.)* Yes.

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: May I ask you to say yes into the microphone?

Kalee: Yes.

Nik: Yes.

John Hodgman: Very good. Thank you.

(Louder laughter and applause.)

Thank you very much, Bailiff Jesse Thorn.

Jesse Thorn: As the Spanish teacher at my high school used to say, “Chicklet en la bas!”

John Hodgman: Welcome to the recording of a podcast. Kalee, why don't you guess first?

Kalee: it sounds like something from *The Hobbit*. I have nothing more specific than that.

John Hodgman: I see! Something from *The Hobbit*. I'll write that down in the guess book. B-I-T. Alright. Now Nik, what's your guess?

Nik: My guess is that it is *The Hobbit*, when there is a riddle competition between, Smeagol and... I do not remember the other hobbit's name.

[00:35:00]

Kalee: Bilbo?

Nik: Bilbo! Yes.

John Hodgman: I should have known you both would know this one! I mean, it's not very obscure. And of course, it was written by JRR Tolkien, a famous Ann Arborean.

(Laughter.)

Technically born in Ypsilanti, but did most of his living in writing right here, in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Staying frequently at the Campus Inn, now The Graduate.

(Laughter.)

Local humor.

Can either of you name the... name the chapter that it comes from?

(Laughter.)

Nik: I cannot.

Kalee: I'm gonna say 13.

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: All guesses are wrong! “Riddles in the Dark” was the name of the chapter. And that is, of course, when Gollum—Smeagol, as you rightly pointed out, Nik—challenged Bilbo Baggins to a game of riddles, because he coveted the ring that Bilbo Baggins had found and had put in his pocket. Much like one of you or both of you covet the ring that belongs to your dad! Kalee, you seek justice in this court?

Kalee: I certainly do.

John Hodgman: Tell me about this ring.

Kalee: This ring was given to my father by his father. It's a gold lion head, and both eyes are pearls, and the mouth is a ruby.

John Hodgman: That sounds hot as hell!

(Laughter.)

Kalee: Yes.

John Hodgman: That sounds like it would be my precious too. We have a photo of it, do we not, Jennifer Marmor?

(“Oooh”s from the audience.)

Yeah, ooh. And did he get it at Shifrin-Willens? A famous jeweler in Detroit?

Kalee: Apparently.

John Hodgman: Yeah. Wow! That's a really cool ring for sure. And you say in the mouth there's a—oh, I see it there. A ruby. Like its little tongue, like when cats forget to put their tongues back in their mouths.

(Laughter.)

My favorite thing, those dumb cats. Thank you very much. We can take that that off now. Nik, it is a very cool ring. How long have you two been fighting over it? You're brother and sister, correct?

Nik: Yeah. As long as I can remember.

John Hodgman: Oh, really?

Nik: Pretty much. Yeah. It's always just been like the, “Who's gonna get it one day?” So to speak.

John Hodgman: Right. And what does your dad have to say about it?

Nik: He has chosen to remain silent and laugh in our faces whenever we try to talk about it.

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: Why do you think he—

Jesse Thorn: And by extension, laugh in the face of death!

John Hodgman: Isn't it possible that your dad might write a will someday and decide for both of you?

Kalee: It is written. His will is written, and the ring is not mentioned in the will at this point.

John Hodgman: Sooo, it's just been revealed that Kalee has read your father's will.

(Laughter.)

Nik: I had no idea!

John Hodgman: You haven't, Nik?

Nik: I have not.

John Hodgman: And you think you deserve a ring?

(Laughter.)

You're not doing the due diligence. You're not doing the pre-grave-dancing that your sister's doing.

(Laughter.)

You all—you work together? You're not just brother and sister?

(They confirm.)

You work in the family business? What's the family business?

Nik: Auto repair.

John Hodgman: Auto repair. Very cool. Here in Michigan?

(They confirm.)

Oh, interesting. Wouldn't you rather work in a state that has more of a connection to automobiles?

(Laughter.)

Kalee: It's really, really tough.

John Hodgman: Your dad is not expressed an opinion one way or the other.

Nik: No.

John Hodgman: You don't think he has an opinion, or you think he's just keeping it to himself? Or does his opinion not matter?

Nik: I don't think he really has an opinion. I mean, I don't think he would want to choose between one of his children.

John Hodgman: Are there any other siblings involved?

Nik: No.

John Hodgman: Okay. Kalee, why do you deserve this ring and your brother doesn't? Who's older, by the way?

Kalee: I'm older.

John Hodgman: Oh, okay. Well, there you go.

Kalee: So, said family business is going to be inherited/boughten by my brother. Because that's his line of work. So.

John Hodgman: Okay, gotcha. You work there too, but it's not—

Kalee: I also work there. It's just a very—it's—

John Hodgman: What are your respective roles in the business, if I may ask?

Kalee: I'm an office assistant. I fill in the holes. He's actually doing like body work and he's—you know. So, that is lined up for him.

Jesse Thorn: He's filling in the holes.

(Laughter.)

Kalee: Yes, exactly. So, that is lined up for him. Now, granted, he does have to purchase that over time.

John Hodgman: Right. It's not—the business won't just go to him. He's gonna have to buy out your father.

Kalee: Correct. Yes. So, I'm not in line for that, which I don't want. That's not a part of this equation.

John Hodgman: Terrific! You're not getting it.

Kalee: Exactly.

(Laughter.)

But what I do want is this ring.

John Hodgman: And why?

Kalee: Because I have—I'm not a very sentimental person. Nostalgia is the thief of joy, as is established law. So—

John Hodgman: I say it's a toxic impulse, but that's a better way of saying it.

Kalee: You're right, you're right. So, I have this picture in my head of my dad, every Sunday morning before we would go to church as kids. We would all get together and get ready in their bathroom when we were really little kids, and he would open his armoire.

[00:40:00]

And he would have his suit jacket or his tweed coat or whatever on. And he would open the armoire, and he would take the ring out of the box, and he would put it on his finger, and he would wear it every Sunday. And anytime there's a special event or like a wedding or, you know, something special going on, he always wears it. So, that is why I would like it as something sentimental for myself.

John Hodgman: Because Nik has never observed this ritual that your dad has? I mean, Nik doesn't even know what an armoire is!

(Laughter.)

Kalee: Not because he hasn't observed it, but because he is getting the legacy of my father's business. And I think I could have a small piece of sentimental... like, a memory for myself.

John Hodgman: Like a token, like a memory. Right. And is the ring important to your—? I mean, he obviously wears it to important occasions.

(Kalee confirms.)

What does it mean to your dad, the ring?

Kalee: He hasn't expressed anything specific. Like, his dad gave it to him while he was in high school. So, I'm sure it's significant in the sense that like his father gave it to him. But it's—

John Hodgman: Right. But you don't know.

Kalee: Yeah, I'm not sure.

John Hodgman: You don't know what your dad wants to do with the ring. You don't know what it means to him. Has your dad ever spoken to either of you?

(Laughter.)

Oh, is he here?!

Nik: He said it was a—it's a class ring.

Jesse Thorn: Only through the medium of bodywork.

Nik: So, his father had a similar ring, and I think he admired that his dad had one. So, he bought it for him as like a class ring for him when he was in high school.

John Hodgman: I see. I got it.

Jesse Thorn: So, he wears it only for special occasions like weddings, christenings... his own funeral?

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: What do you think is the proper distribution of the ring, Nik? What do you want with it?

Nik: I don't know. Like she has an image of him of—like, she wants it for the sentimental value, 'cause she sees him with it, I just always see it as like a part of him. So, like to me, I'm like, "The captain—" I always make a joke with him about it whenever we're disputing it as a family, and I'm like, "The captain should go down with the ship, so to speak."

John Hodgman: So, you're saying the ring should be buried with the father?

(Nik confirms.)

It should go down with the ship of his body.

(Nik confirms.)

You don't—

Jesse Thorn: What else do you think should be buried with him? All his cats? A bunch of honey?

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: 1,000 clay warriors?

(Laughter.)

What kind of cars do you work on? All kinds?

Nik: Anything. Yeah.

John Hodgman: Okay. Like, so like 5,000 Plymouth Furies can be in his temple as well?

Nik: '29 Model A.

John Hodgman: Is that what he's—is that gonna be his casket?!

Nik: Yeah. No, he has one.

John Hodgman: Does your dad love how much you're thinking about his own funeral?

(Laughter.)

Nik: Uh, he has mentioned that.

John Hodgman: What is his age?

Nik: He's 56.

(Shock and laughter from the crowd.)

John Hodgman: HE'S A YOUNG MAN!

Jesse Thorn: It's never too early to plan.

John Hodgman: Wow. Didn't think—

Jesse Thorn: By the way, John... nice ring.

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: No wonder he's not taking you seriously.

(Laughter.)

He's probably going to outlive all of us!

So, you don't want the ring, Nik. You want the ring to go into the earth with your dad.

Nik: I'm not opposed to like keeping it, but I was more suggesting that so that there would be no like dispute between us.

John Hodgman: You actually suggested to our producer, Jennifer Marmor, a compromise of some kind?

(Nik confirms.)

What would that consist of?

Nik: Like a casting of the ring.

John Hodgman: Make a duplicate—like, take the ring. Have a cast taken, and make new ones.

Nik: Correct. So that we could both have a piece of the legacy, so to speak.

John Hodgman: You would each have a copy of the ring?

(Nik confirms.)

Why is that unsatisfactory to you, Kalee?

Kalee: It's just not the real thing.

John Hodgman: *(Beat.)* Yeah, that's true.

(Laughter.)

Kalee: Yeah!

Jesse Thorn: John, you of all people—a graduate of Yale—know about the progression of the simulacrum!

John Hodgman: Yeah. *(Laughs.)* Yeah, *Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. I understand the aura of the authentic. Thank you, Walter Benjamin.

1929 what?

Nik: Model A.

John Hodgman: And that's a car?

(Nik confirms.)

Alright. I understand that there was another family ring that you and Kalee split somehow, Nik?

(Nik confirms.)

What happened there?

Nik: Well, she's actually wearing part of it right now. My grandmother had a diamond ring when she was married, and she gave it to my mother. And my mother—she got married first, and she said that you guys can split this ring. And she got married first. So, she took the—

John Hodgman: Kalee got married?

(Nik confirms.)

Kalee: I got married first.

John Hodgman: So, the ring had been passed down to your mom?

(They confirm.)

[00:45:00]

And then—but she is still alive, right?

(They confirm.)

Okay. I just wanna make sure of it.

Nik: She's younger than my dad.

John Hodgman: Okay. Wonderful for both of them. And then Kalee, you got married, and your mom offered to give you the ring?

Kalee: Yes. Yeah, she split it up. So, there was five diamonds in the gold. So, I got the large diamond, and then he got the four small diamonds and all the gold.

John Hodgman: And where are those now? In your teeth? You're hanging on—are you married?

Nik: I am.

John Hodgman: Oh, okay. And where are the diamonds?

Nik: I did not get the gold or the diamonds, because they weren't—they did not fit the style of ring that I wanted to make for my wife,

John Hodgman: And so they evaporated?

Nik: Correct. Into cash.

(Laughter and disapproving “oh”s from the crowd.)

John Hodgman: Shant be sentimental in the auto repair business, can we? Everything comes to an end! Some things you just can't repair. Ultimately, you have to turn it in for cash. Trade-in value. How did you feel when your brother—*(laughing)* sold half of your mom's wedding ring?

Kalee: It's a personal choice. I think this just goes to show that he doesn't value sentimental objects like I do.

John Hodgman: Alright, fair. And is this ring splitable?

Nik: The lion head? No.

Kalee: No!

John Hodgman: No. You can't pry that ruby out of its mouth? You can't gouge out its diamond eyes?

Kaylee: Preferably not.

Jesse Thorn: No, then they'd have to deal with the curse of the Pharaoh.

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: Yeah, but Nik would cash in those diamonds for some money. When do you want the ring to come down to you, Kalee? After your father passes away or sooner?

Kalee: Whenever the time is right. If he wants to part with it before he passes, amazing. If not, after he passes is great.

(Scattered laughter.)

Nik: She has gone to him at gatherings and taken the ring and just walked around and sort of... flaunted it. Flaunted it around!

John Hodgman: Flaunted it around the gatherings?

(Nik confirms.)

Do you have it with you now?

Kalee: We thought about it, but we chose to keep it where it belongs.

John Hodgman: Because you knew I would take it!

(Laughter.)

Anyone who sees that beautiful ring wants it! We all want that ring! Now everyone here in the laboratorium at the library has seen the ring and is under its spell! All of these 2-or-300 people are gonna be coming for your dad's ring!

(Laughter.)

How will it be safeguarded?

I think I've heard enough to make my decision. I'm going to go into my chambers. I'll be back, along with my verdict.

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

(Applause.)

Nik. Nik, how are you feeling about your chances right now?

Nik: We'll see what happens. I don't know.

Jesse Thorn: That's admirably—you're like, "I don't know. I didn't have anything better to do. So."

(Laughter.)

Kalee, how are you feeling?

Kalee: Unfortunately, I do feel like he has a better case. But I'm still feeling very confident.

Jesse Thorn: What if you just split it lengthwise, and each of your award is a single stud earring? Idea! We'll see what Judge Hodgman has to say about all this.

Please rise as Judge John Hodgman reenters the courtroom and presents his verdict.

(Cheers and applause.)

John Hodgman: Some time ago in my neighborhood in Brooklyn, New York, I went into a coffee shop, and there was a young barista there. And the barista was wearing overalls—among other clothes. And I know that everyone enjoys jokes, Jesse.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah.

John Hodgman: People love jokes.

Jesse Thorn: Jokes and humor.

John Hodgman: So, I said to this young person, “I’ll have this coffee please. And by the way, you deserve an award in the category of overall excellence.”

(Laughter.)

Jesse Thorn: Everybody loves jokes.

John Hodgman: And the young barista said to me, “Nice dad joke.”

(Laughter.)

A term I had never heard before. They said to me, “Nice dad joke.” And that's how I died.

(Laughter.)

I wasn't even 50 years old.

(Laughter.)

It can happen! You can die young! (*Chuckles.*) And honestly, as someone who, you know, has a parent who died relatively young, you don't wanna wish for a premature death of a parent—someone that you care about and that you love—just to get their cool ring, anyway.

I don't think that that's what you're wishing for. But it came into focus for me that why your dad doesn't take this particularly seriously—because he is, on average, a person who's got a lot of life ahead of him, and I wish him many, many more years of life. Even if you, Kalee, don't.

(*Laughter.*)

But I'm going to be honest—okay?—that I think that you probably should have the ring, Kalee.

[00:50:00]

I'm rooting for you. Here's why. One, you told that wonderful story that involved the armoire, and I love an armoire story.

(*Laughter.*)

Anything! An armoire, a wardrobe, you name it. I love it. Yeah.

Jesse Thorn: I double-love a story where armoire is pronounced “arm wire”, because of some Michigan thing that I don't know about.

(*Laughter and applause.*)

Couldn't have been more charming.

John Hodgman: And Nik took his half of the legacy from your shared mother and sold it for cash.

(*Laughter.*)

Which is a reasonable thing to do, it just—but I think that you made your case very strongly that Nik is... has a different understanding of sentiment when it comes to things. And you know, what he has an understanding of is he wants to honor his dad, and that his dad should take this treasure with him into the dirt—or perhaps afterlife, if you believe in such a thing. That's where his sentiment goes. But to keep and hang on to something is not his thing, right? So, why should he keep and hang on to something?

I mean—and I think the argument that Nik is taking over the legacy of the family business... you articulated an absence in your life that could be filled by a cool lion with a ruby in its mouth.

(Laughter.)

So, I am rooting for you. But as I was reminded when you took the stage, both of you chewing gum.

(Laughter.)

Like a couple of little rascals. Like a couple of rascallions. That you're very, very, very young yourself. It makes sense that your dad is relatively young. You're gonna be young too. Many, many years to figure this out. And ultimately, it really is your dad's decision. I really enjoy the story of you going and sneaking it off your dad's finger and wandering around family events, trying it on for size. I hope that he understands what it means to you. And perhaps you could write him a letter or talk to him about it. But ultimately, it really has to be his decision, not mine.

But I'll tell you what? If I were your dead dad, I'd wish you best of luck with the automobile business.

(Laughter.)

And I wish you the best of luck keeping your beautiful, cool lionhead ring away from all these monsters who are gonna be coming for you. 'Cause they got the curse.

(Laughter.)

This is the sound of a gavel. (*Three gavel bangs.*) Judge John Hodgman rules. That is all.

Jesse Thorn: Kalee and Nik, thanks for joining us on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: That's it for this episode of the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. Thank you to Reddit user, u/taako-salad, for naming the case in this episode. Make sure to follow us on Instagram at [@JudgeJohnHodgman](https://www.instagram.com/JudgeJohnHodgman). We're on YouTube and TikTok at [@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJmKw8p8p8p8p8p8p8p8p8p).

The *Judge John Hodgman* podcast was created by John Hodgman and Jesse Thorn. This episode, recorded by Matthew Barnhart. Dan Telfer is our social media manager. AJ McKeon is our podcast editor. Daniel Speer is our video editor. Our producer is Jennifer Marmor.

Thank you this week, by the way, to Eli Neiburger at the Ann Arbor District Library, who was nice enough to make this show happen for us. And also, John?

John Hodgman: Yes?

Jesse Thorn: A put-up with the social media führer when the tickets sold out too fast.

John Hodgman: Tickets sold out too fast. People were disappointed. We gotta go back! We've got to go back! It's like the island in Lost. We've gotta go back.

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

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Transition: Cheerful ukulele chord.

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