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Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: Welcome to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. I'm Bailiff Jesse Thorn. This week, "Bouilla-biased". Daryl brings the case against her husband, Adam. Daryl loves soup, but she can't cook it at home, because Adam hates it. She misses soup! She'll tell anyone who will listen. Adam says he wants her to stop talking about soup in public. It makes him feel bad. Daryl just wants more soup in her life. 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: "Old-Fashioned Vegetable made with beef stock. Scotch Broth, a hardy soup—one of the man-handlers. Chicken 'n dumplings. Hotdog and Bean—tender beans and little frankfurter slices. Oyster stew. Vegetarian Vegetable. The Alphabet Soup. New England Clam Chowder. Tomato Beef Noodle-Os. Golden Mushroom, rich in sliced mushrooms. Cheddar Cheese, great as a sauce too."

Bailiff Jesse Thorn, please swear the litigants in.

Jesse Thorn: Daryl, Adam, 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 he only eats solid foods?

(They swear.)

I don't think that's true. Judge Hodgman, you may proceed. I'm sure you like soup as much as the next guy. *(Chuckles.)*

John Hodgman: Just like the Dead Kennedys said, "Soup is good food to me, but not to Adam." Adam and Daryl, you may be seated for an immediate summary judgment in one of yours favors.

(Chairs squeak.)

And by the way, you may be seated in the comfortable chairs of Technica House, our recording partner in New York City. Hi, Jacob—who's our engineer there—nice to be back with you virtually again. But now it comes down to Daryl and Adam. Can either of you two name the piece of obscure culture that I referenced as I entered the courtroom? Oh, let's see. Daryl, let's start with you.

Daryl: It sounded like a delicious list of soups. It was not a list of soups with which—

John Hodgman: That's right, Daryl! You win the case! Goodbye!

(They laugh.)

Well, let me—look. You two met in a trivia club, right?

Adam: Yeah, it was an online zoom trivia hour.

John Hodgman: Oh, we're gonna get to your whole life story, Adam, in a second.

Adam: Sounds good.

John Hodgman: Point is, this is a trivia question. I did recite 10 delicious sounding soups, including Hotdog and Bean—not a sandwich, a soup. What do these 10 soups have in common is my question to you. Adam, I'm gonna ask you now and give Daryl a chance to think about it.

Adam: I'm gonna guess that it's like the opening—

John Hodgman: Do you wanna hear them again?

(Adam agrees.)

Okay. “Old-Fashioned Vegetable. Scotch Broth, a hardy soup. Chicken ‘n Dumplings. Hotdog Bean. Oyster Stew. Cheddar Cheese, also as a sauce. Golden Mushroom. Tomato Beef Noodle-Os. New England Clam Chowder. Vegetarian Vegetable.” And I forgot to mention that Scotch Broth, a hardy soup, is labeled one of “the man-handlers”.

(They snicker.)

Don't know what that means. But I gave you a big hint, by the way there, Adam. Gave you a big hint. And you too Daryl. 'Cause you're getting another chance.

Adam: Well, it flew right by me. I think I'll guess that it's like the opening day slate for Campbell's Soup. That was like what they decided to offer on the first day of offering Campbell's Soup.

John Hodgman: The original 10 Campbell's soups. Is that your guess?

(Adam confirms.)

Alright. I'll put that in the guess book.

Jesse Thorn: When you said opening day, it was just baseball opening day. I assumed that you meant that every year on baseball's opening day, Campbell's Soup offered a baseball themed lineup of soups!

(They laugh.)

Adam: Yeah. It's like the Puppy Super Bowl, except the Baseball Soup Super Bowl.

John Hodgman: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Their Peanuts and Cracker Jack soup was not developed until a couple years later. Right? Yeah, exactly.

Jesse Thorn, growing up when you were seeing the Giants play, your favorite day to go was soup day, right? When everyone got a can of soup?

(They laugh.)

Jesse Thorn: Yeah. Big trouble when the Phillies had soup day.

Daryl: Yeah, it does remind me of—I did a tour of baseball stadiums, and one of the things I did was I wanted to try a signature food at each ballpark. And I'm struggling to think if any ballpark had a soup.

John Hodgman: It's not something you want to bring into the stands, I feel like. A hot, brothy liquid is not something you want to be holding above another person's shoulders and neck when a fly ball comes your way. Boy!

Adam: That was always the joke about Candlestick Park, right? That, you know, at other stadiums, they'd throw a full bottle of liquor at you, and at Candlestick it would be half empty 'cause they would've had to drink most of it to stay warm.

John Hodgman: *(Chuckles.)* Pretty good. Adam, stop stalling.

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(Adam agrees with a laugh.)

Okay, Daryl. Adam guessed the original 10 Campbell's Soups. Now I'm gonna say something. Adam got the hint. 'Cause I did mention on Scotch Broth, a hardy soup—it says

on the label “one of the man-handlers”. So, he knew that there was a label involved. So, he's close. But let me ask you this question. Does Daryl smoke cigars?

Adam: Not currently.

Daryl: Not currently. No.

John Hodgman: So, he’s close, but no cigar.

Adam: Oh, there you go.

John Hodgman: (*Chortles triumphantly.*) I win again!

Oh boy. Anyway, before I retire for terrible joke making. Daryl, what's your final guess, so that we can move on from this?

Daryl: I truly don't know, but it does sound—

John Hodgman: These soups have something in common. He is not correct. It is not the opening day roster of Campbell's soups. Can I give you a hint?

Daryl: Please!

John Hodgman: So, Campbell's Soup was introduced in 1869, or at least Campbell's started as a company then. These soups were offered to the public in the year 1969, a hundred years later. So, not opening day by any stretch of the imagination. 1969 Campbell Soup. Hm. What could the connection be, Daryl?

Daryl: Are these the 100th anniversary Campbell’s Soups?

John Hodgman: (*Snorts a laugh.*) All guesses are wrong. The people of Pittsburgh are crying today, because you did not realize that these were the 10 cans of Campbell's soup that were painted and then silkscreened as part of Andy Warhol's *Campbell's Soup* 2 collection of prints.

Daryl: I was thinking about Andy Warhol, and I thought, “I should not say anything about Andy Warhol.” (*Laughs.*)

John Hodgman: Why? Because it was too obvious, or 'cause you hate winning?

(*They laugh.*)

Adam: I definitely thought it was too obvious.

Daryl: (*Sighs.*) I thought it was too obvious.

John Hodgman: So, the 1969 collection of silkscreens, *Campbell's Soup 2*, was a sequel to—you guessed it—*Campbell's Soup 1*, which Andy Warhol made in 1968. But even that was a sequel to his original 32 Campbell's Soup cans that he released, and completely transformed his career in American art, in 1961 and '62. So, there you go.

I like these cans. The reason I picked *Campbell's Soup 2* is because it had the weirdest ones, including Hotdog Bean.

Adam: And the man-handler!

John Hodgman: The man-handler, Scotch Broth. I guess Campbell's had a line of pretty chunky soups for very masculine eaters, I guess. I don't know what it was. Anyway, we're gonna hear the case. Who brings this case to the courtroom? Daryl?

Daryl: I believe I do.

John Hodgman: Daryl, you love soup. What are your top three soups?

Daryl: Oh boy. I think my top—I really enjoy tomato soup. Like, a roasted, hardy tomato soup is wonderful.

John Hodgman: Oh no, sorry, you're wrong. Campbell's tomato soup is the only tomato soup.

Adam: She makes her own.

Daryl: Well, I used to. That's one of the soups that has been banned.

John Hodgman: No, homemade tomato soup is really good too. I apologize. Go on.

Jesse Thorn: I like Trader Joe's tomato soup. Sorry, I don't mean to throw a spanner into the works here, but...

(They laugh.)

John Hodgman: Never tried it. Okay. Tomato soup is number one.

Daryl: I also am a big fan of a white bean escarole soup that you serve with like a crusty French bread.

(John "mm-hm"s appreciatively.)

Maybe with some garlic on it. It's delicious. And then, gosh, there's so many soups to choose from. I think just off the top of my head, you know, uh—

John Hodgman: This isn't *Sophie's Choice*, Daryl. Just pick a soup that you like.

(Daryl laughs.)

It's not locking you into anything here.

Daryl: My mom makes a chicken soup which is very dill-heavy, which I really enjoy.

John Hodgman: Yeaah! Mom's dilly chicken! So, of these three, Adam: Mom's dilly chicken; extra thick, white bean and escarole; or homemade tomato puree. Which of these is most disgusting to you?

Adam: Um, I'd have to go with the chicken. I'm a vegetarian, so. I'm not a big fan of the meat aspect of that one.

John Hodgman: Ohhh, okay. You're not—but you're a big fan of your mother-in-law, I trust.

Adam: Oh, yeah, she's great.

John Hodgman: Okay. Terrific. But you do hate soup?

(Adam confirms.)

Tell me all about it. Why do you hate soup so much? Is it because it's gross to you, or what's going on?

Adam: It's really—it's hard for me to describe, but I find that it doesn't leave me very like satisfied.

John Hodgman: It's not filling.

Adam: Yeah. It's... you know, it's nice. It's like warm. It's a good sensation. So, I like—you know, in the same way—

John Hodgman: I'm not asking you to make the argument for soup. Everyone knows why soup is good food. Why do you hate it?!

Adam: It's like a real chore to eat. It's just so much like volume of stuff to eat and like volume of liquid to consume that it just really grates after a while. I'm just—you know.

John Hodgman: It's a chore to eat.

Adam: Yeah. It's a spoon-to-mouth and bowl and spoon-to-mouth kind of chore.

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John Hodgman: You just gotta keep going on it. It's like you're working on a project.

Adam: Yeah.

John Hodgman: It's like you're digging a ditch of stew.

Adam: Yeah, exactly. (*Laughs.*)

John Hodgman: And it just keeps filling in.

Jesse Thorn: I 100% assumed this would be a textural issue. The fact that it is an issue with chore foods is really throwing me for a loop here!

(*Adam laughs.*)

Daryl: Honestly, Jesse, I think this is the first time I have heard this argument. So, I'm also—my loop has also been thrown.

John Hodgman: Has Daryl ever made a different argument, or is this just a new side of your husband that you're seeing for the very first time?

Daryl: He has made other arguments against soup for sure.

John Hodgman: Like, what?

Daryl: That it's not filling, that one I've heard before. You also have told me that you don't think that it is a meal, that you don't think it is real food, that the flavors are not as flavorful as solid food. Which that one I don't understand at all. That feels like...

Adam: Yeah. I do feel that way.

Daryl: Yeah, I don't understand that.

John Hodgman: I mean, it could be watery or mushy, I suppose.

Adam: Exactly. It's very—it's watered down, quite literally.

John Hodgman: When was the first time you realized, "Oh, I'm not gonna ever eat another soup again, even if it does hurt my wife's feelings"? Like, were you a kid?

Adam: No, it's... (*sighs*) I can't really remember. It's kind of later in life that I've taken a stand against—

John Hodgman: How old are you? How old are you?

Adam: 31.

John Hodgman: 31. Okay. So, when—

Adam: So, more recently that I've taken a stand against it.

John Hodgman: Okay. What are you gonna say? 25? Ballpark? Earlier or later than 25?

Adam: Around then.

John Hodgman: Okay, around 25. I got it on the nose. How long have you had that beard? People who are watching on the YouTube channel, [@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod](#), will notice that Adam has a beard and also that Adam and Daryl are very adorably holding hands and have been this entire time, which I applaud. You cannot, because you're holding hands, but I applaud it.

(They laugh.)

How long have you had that beard? Does that play into your soup aversion?

Adam: I definitely stopped shaving during the pandemic. So, a couple of years ago, stopped trimming and shaving and just—letting it go. I'll get it cut back occasionally to get the split ends off and things, but...

John Hodgman: So, did you start getting soup in your mustache, and you're like, “This is kind of gross. This is—”?

‘Cause I mean, I'll tell you something, as somebody who now has a mustache and a beard—arguably—soup is a challenging food for me, even though I love it. It is a challenge. Is that part of what's going on?

Adam: No, it doesn't really bother me. I eat like runny eggs all the time and get egg on my face.

John Hodgman: *(Stammering.)* I did not need to hear that.

Adam: *(Laughs?)* Not a fan of runny eggs?

John Hodgman: I am. I just don't wanna hear you talking about it now that I've got—not only your beard in my mind, but in my eyes—it's just not what I want to envision at the moment. No offense. You wouldn't... what's your favorite food? What's your most filling ideal food?

(Adam makes a thoughtful noise.)

And this is a *Sophie's Choice* situation.

Adam: Yeah. This definitely is.

John Hodgman: You choose it, and this is what you eat for the rest of your life.

Adam: Right. Of course. That's the ruling that my wife's—

John Hodgman: Hamburgers? No, you don't. You're a vegetarian.

Jesse Thorn: Macaroni and cheese?

John Hodgman: Macaroni and cheese?

Adam: I'm a big fan of like a rice bowl. A lot of variety, a lot of different textures, some good spicy sauce on there. I love anything that's spicy, really.

Daryl: I thought for sure you were gonna go with giant soft pretzel.

Adam: Oh, I do love a giant soft pretzel, but that's not a meal. That's like a great snack.

Jesse Thorn: Do you ever have one of those giant soft pretzels where they bring it to your table on a hook?

Adam: Oh yeah. I dislike that. That's too showy.

Jesse Thorn: No, I've never had that.

Adam: I have had those.

John Hodgman: Where are you getting pretzel on a hook, Jesse?

Jesse Thorn: Sometimes you go to— You're at like, whatever, a beer garden or something like that, and you order the giant soft pretzel with a cheesy dip. And then they bring it to you on a hook, like on a stand on the table. It's hanging from a hook like the sides of beef that Rocky fights.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

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John Hodgman: Daryl, Adam tried to give the game away earlier. Why don't you go ahead and tell us how the two of you met?

Daryl: We met at a Zoom trivia night at the very beginning of the pandemic. I think it was the first weekend of lockdown. A couple of my friends—my close friends were organizing—

John Hodgman: Wait, you're married, and you met on Zoom?

(Adam confirms.)

Daryl: We did. We met at a trivia night hosted by mutual friends. So, we like to say—you know, depending on who you're talking to, we met at a party hosted by mutual friends. We also met online. Both of those things are true.

John Hodgman: Wow. Daryl, when did you learn—? So, you met five years ago. You got married how long ago, Daryl?

Daryl: Year and a half ago.

John Hodgman: Congratulations.

Daryl: Thank you.

John Hodgman: And when did you learn that your beloved Adam hates soup?

Daryl: I only learned about this about... I wanna say October of last year.

John Hodgman: Well, okay. Recently!

Daryl: It was very recently. And it was a bit of a surprise, because we had been eating soup. And in fact, when Adam first met my parents, one of the things he did to show them how wonderful he is is he cooked ramen for them. Ramen is one of the—Adam's not a—he's a great cook, but he doesn't cook very much. I do most of the cooking, almost all of the cooking, in our house. But one of the things that he specializes in is ramen.

John Hodgman: And we're talking about more than just putting a packet into two cups of water.

(Adam confirms.)

Daryl: Oh, he makes an amazing, homemade, vegetarian—I think it's vegan?—ramen.

(Adam confirms.)

With dried mushrooms and fresh mushrooms, and it takes like a whole day. It's great.

John Hodgman: Your hypocrisy knows bounds, obviously.

Adam: (*Chuckling.*) Oh, no. No bounds.

Daryl: Yeah. So, you can see why I was very surprised to learn last year that he hated soup, and didn't want me to make it anymore, and didn't want me to tell anybody about it.

John Hodgman: Jesse Thorn, I would say that ramen is one of the most famous soups. Would you agree or disagree?

Jesse Thorn: Yeah. That's gotta be a top 10 soup, worldwide.

(*John agrees.*)

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So, you two are telling me that you're a married, heterosexual couple where the wife does most of the cooking, but the husband does some really complicated cooking that takes all day, every once in a while?

Adam: And makes a huge mess?

(*Jesse laughs.*)

Yeah! It makes an enormous mess everywhere. You know.

Jesse Thorn: I presume that only the factor of vegetarian keeps you from having an overelaborate smoker set up.

Adam: And living in New York City too. Yeah, but we knew some people. One of her coworkers was big into smoking and lived in Brooklyn. We were always like—I've always been like, "How did he manage that? Where—?"

Daryl: Don't worry, Jesse. He has an elaborate espresso machine setup with all the different fiddly bits to make coffee. So.

(*Jesse laughs.*)

John Hodgman: Ohhh, Mr. Fiddlybits himself is in the house.

Jesse Thorn: There's truly nothing that a husband whose wife does most of the cooking loves more than spending 36 hours smoking a brisket.

(*They laugh.*)

John Hodgman: You're making all this ramen. What is going on? What kind of manipulator are you? One year into your wedding, you're making soup for your in-laws. And then as soon as you hit that anniversary, you're like, "Well, I got you trapped. Now it's time for me to show my true colors. No more soup, and I would like you to be a trad wife. Start churning butter. Turn this liquid into solid so it'll be more filling!" Then what happened? What was the switch that flipped at that moment?

Adam: Really, the inciting incident was: we had gone out a couple of times that week seeing different people, like going out for her aunt's birthday, or going to have dinner with some friends. And it had come up at every one of these outings that Daryl really missed making soup. And then the conversation would turn from Daryl saying, "Oh, I miss making soup," and they're like—

"Well, why don't you make soup?"

"Oh, Adam hates it."

Then they'd turn to me and be like, "Adam, why are you a terrible person?"

But also then it would turn into them just kind of naming soups in my direction. We'd sort of—the conversation would move on, and we'd be talking about something else. And then, you know, someone from the peanut gallery would be like, "Chili? What about chili? Chili?"

Jesse Thorn: Ooh, wow, oooh, you just stepped on a third rail there.

John Hodgman: Chili isn't a soup though.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah. That's not a soup. That's a stew, sir.

John Hodgman: It's not a soup. That's a stew. That was the first case that Judge John Hodgeman ever heard.

Adam: There you go. And they're like—I was really like, "I don't wanna—like, I would rather talk about the weather, I'll talk about anything other than you quizzing me about soups."

John Hodgman: And you kind of skipped a step there too, because you went right to the fact that you were getting annoyed because all the people in your life were quizzing you about soups, but you never told us when you told your wife, "Stop making soup. I'm never gonna eat it."

Adam: Oh, see, I've never told her that.

John Hodgman: Daryl, then why are we even here?

Jesse Thorn: So, it sounds like you're willing to eat all the soups.

John Hodgman: I grant you permission to stop holding hands if you need to.

(Adam and Daryl laugh.)

Daryl: This is a frustrating part of this conversation for me, because what has happened is—So, we went out—this sort of soup weekend where people were naming too many soups at Adam, and he didn't enjoy it. *(Chuckling.)* And we got home and—

John Hodgman: Let the record show, we are calling that “soup weekend” from now on.

Jesse Thorn: So noted.

John Hodgman: Soup weekend. Okay. So, you went out. It turned into a whole soup weekend. Adam was quizzed on all the soups that he didn't like.

Daryl: Yeah. He will characterize it as people were naming soups in his direction, which he doesn't enjoy. And he got home, and he was like visibly very frustrated. And he's usually a pretty calm—you know, he's a pretty even-keeled guy. And he said, “Can you please stop talking about soup? I don't enjoy it.” And that led to a conversation about how, well, I really missed soup, because I couldn't make it anymore. And he said, “Well, I haven't said you can't make soup anymore.”

I said, “Well, but you won't eat any of the soup that I make. And so, I can't cook at home for us, because you won't eat it.” He doesn't want it.

John Hodgman: There is a tacit ban on soups in the house, not an explicit ban.

Daryl: Yeah. And I recognize this is a personal preference. This is a reflection of my—sort of the way that I treat food and eat. But I like to cook for everyone who will be eating. You know, I didn't grow up—I grew up in a house where, you know, primarily my mom but also my dad did a lot of cooking, and we'd cook family meals, and whatever the person who was cooking cooked was what we ate as a family. We didn't have separate meals, you know, that were cooked for different people. And so, if I know that if I cook soup—and Adam isn't going to eat it, and he's gonna eat something else—then I'm just not gonna cook it, because it's not a family meal.

John Hodgman: If you cook soup, what is Adam gonna do? Go make a sandwich for himself?

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Adam: I'll probably—I think that what happened in the past is I'd be like, “Oh, could I have some of the non-soup leftovers from yesterday?”

John Hodgman: And you don't—you specifically say, “Can you go and get me other food?” Instead of getting your own food?

Adam: No, I'll get it. I'll heat it up. I'll do all that. No problem.

John Hodgman: You're just saying— So, that's not an order to your wife, “Please go make something else to eat.”

(Adam confirms.)

That is, “Do you mind if I go and eat something else? Because I'm not gonna eat any of your disgusting soup. I'm tired of it. I'm a grownup. I'm 31 years old. I don't like eating it, and I don't like being made to feel like a freak by your family.”

(Adam agrees with a laugh.)

Is that how you feel when—? I mean, this is as much about banning soup talk as it is about making soup. So, when Daryl's family and your mutual friends start—how do you call it?—naming soups in your direction, why does that make you uncomfortable?

Adam: I just find it very frustrating. It's happened also when we were planning the wedding that we ended up just having the same conversations like over and over. Like, we would see different people—

John Hodgman: Yeah, yeah. You're telling me about events that happened, but you're not telling me how it made you feel. I mean, I do want to know what soups you served at your wedding. I presume that there was a soup buffet.

Adam: There was a soup, actually, at our wedding!

John Hodgman: Really? Italian wedding soup?

Adam: *(Laughs.)* No. What was it? I forget.

Daryl: It was Jamaican jerk chicken—no, not chicken Jamaican jerk spiced stew, I think it was called. But it was a soup.

John Hodgman: But it was a vegetarian version? It sounds great.

Daryl: Yes, it was delicious. It was, in fact, the only thing from our tasting—and we had a great caterer, but it was the only thing from our tasting that we both said, “No matter what else we have, we have to have this at our wedding.” It was—

John Hodgman: Oh, you agreed to Oh, Jamaican jerk spiced, stew?

Adam: Yeah. It was nice.

John Hodgman: And you weren't just tricking your then-fiancé.

Adam: No, no.

John Hodgman: You weren't just hiding your true colors 'til you got her locked down with a ring on her finger, and then you're like, "Nah, never again."

Adam: Yeah, that didn't—I did love that soup. It was good.

John Hodgman: Okay. So, we were getting though into your feelings.

Adam: Yeah. Just having this same conversation over and over just makes me feel very frustrated and like—I don't know, like I'm not actually connecting with my friends and family, that I'm just sort of regurgitating happenstance and facts to them.

John Hodgman: Well, I mean when you're presented with a sort of interrogation of soup after soup after soup, I think—I mean, I would feel that the implication is they're saying, "What's wrong with you?" Do you feel picked on?

Adam: A little like, I don't know, othered? A little like, "Well, how could you possibly feel this way?"

John Hodgman: Yeah, but what about minestrone?

Adam: (*Chuckling.*) Yeah, but what about?

John Hodgman: What about consommé? What about Philadelphia pepper pot soup?

Adam: Never had that one.

John Hodgman: Daryl, you say that you miss soup. Do you ever just say, "F it, I'm a whole human being in my own right. I'm just gonna go make some soup and enjoy it. I don't care anymore."

Daryl: There are certain soups that I have figured out that I can make for one, for myself. And as I mentioned before, I really do prefer eating as a family. But there are some times when we're not eating together. You know, either Adam's out of the house, or sometimes on the weekends—rather than having a more, let's say, formal dinner or formal lunch—we'll, have leftovers. And so, I have some soups that I can put together just for me, you know. So, I'm having a one-person soup.

But I think for me it's more that I wanna be able to try these new recipes. I mean, one thing that I have enjoyed since we got together is, as I said, I used to make a lot of the same recipes on repeat. And Adam really likes variety, so he's really pushed me to be more creative in our recipes. And so, I now try all kinds of different recipes. We probably do one or two new recipes a week. And there's a spring bean soup recipe that I would love to try. And I feel like it is not unreasonable. I'm not asking him to necessarily eat again soups that he has previously

rejected. So, he doesn't want the soup, all peace to him. He doesn't have to eat that again. But I think rejecting the soups out of hand before we've even tried them once seems hasty.

John Hodgman: And that is what's going on.

Daryl: Yeah. I don't make them, because he says that he won't— You know, what you say is, “They're not—”

John Hodgman: What does he say? “You can make that, honey, but I ain't gonna eat it.”

Adam: No. I say, “That's not my favorite.” It's like my very White way of trying to attenuate criticism.

John Hodgman: When you talk about sitting down to family dinner, you're talking about the family of the two of you.

Adam: Correct. The dog does beg, but he...

John Hodgman: And Adam, what did you not like about the vegetable soup with the pea stew in it?

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The—oh, the province hall pesto?

Adam: It just fell in the chore soup category for me.

John Hodgman: I don't—?! So, what are you talking about, a chore?!

Adam: Bowl-to-mouth!

Daryl: Yeah. What are you talking about?

John Hodgman: Do you prefer to eat with your hands?

Adam: I do enjoy eating with my hands. Yeah. I'll pick a finger food.

John Hodgman: What about a sandwich?

Adam: Love a sandwich. Right.

John Hodgman: You know, one of the reasons that we know that a hotdog is not a sandwich is that you would never cut it in half and serve it with a cup of soup.

(Adam affirms.)

Soup and half a sandwich is a well-known thing. Soup and half a hotdog... well, cuisine's a living language. You can have it—

Adam: Well, you couldn't even cut it diagonal-wise, right?

(John agrees.)

That would be a disaster.

John Hodgman: So, I have a question. Daryl, why don't you serve your soups with a sandwich on the side?

Daryl: One of my soups in heavy rotation was grilled cheese and tomato.

John Hodgman: A classic combination!

Daryl: Homemade tomato soup, and I would make homemade grilled cheese. And that has also been canceled.

John Hodgman: Okay. I promised myself I wouldn't other you, Adam, but that is a classic combo. You don't like grilled cheese, and you don't like grilled cheese and tomato soup?

Adam: Yeah, it's, uh... it's not my favorite.

Daryl: *(Laughs.)* I don't know if you can tell, but Adam grew up in what he calls a "low feedback environment".

John Hodgman: *(Stammering.)* I don't know what that means, Adam. Can you tell me?

Adam: Just an environment that nobody really talks to each other about things. People don't, you know, discuss the feelings they're having. You just have the feelings, and push them inside, and then push more feelings on top, and then one day you die.

John Hodgman: Mm! *(Beat.)* Sounds like fun.

Adam: It is! Yeah, great fun.

Jesse Thorn: The goal, John, is to die before the feelings explode.

(Adam confirms.)

So, the sooner you die or the better you push the feelings, the more successful you are in life.

Daryl: And it sounds like Jesse is familiar with this style. I don't know anything about how you were raised, but I was not raised in that style of household. And so, it was a learning process for me to—it took a while for me to realize that when my husband says, “It's not my favorite,” what he really means is “Don't ever do that again. I hate it.”

John Hodgman: When you say, “It's not my favorite,” does that mean “don't ever do that again,” Adam?

Adam: It covers a lot of ground, honestly. Like, it definitely—I don't think it means every time “don't do this again,” but it does range from “never do this again” to like, “Nah, that really wasn't my favorite, but it was fine. And I'll eat it again.”

John Hodgman: Because what Daryl is suggesting is that perhaps your feelings are more strong than your expression of your feelings. Would you say that that's true?

Adam: Yeah, I think downplaying the feelings is part of the whole deal.

John Hodgman: Do you think you understand your feelings about soup?

Adam: Probably not.

John Hodgman: Okay! Well, I appreciate your honesty there! Because the reasons that you present are all very rational. It's not filling. Obviously, it's not filling; it's not a main course. Soup is a not a main course. Rarely is it a main course, lemme put it that way.

It's not filling; it's a chore to eat. These all sound very rational, but you're behaving as though this is a deeper aversion, it seems to me. Does that mean anything to you? Does that resonate with you at all?

Adam: Yeah, there's definitely something more there that I have not unpacked.

John Hodgman: In this low feedback environment that you grew up in, was it also a low soup environment?

Adam: I'd say so, yeah. No chili, as we said before, but also no green chili stews or anything. It was a very occasional meal growing up.

John Hodgman: Did you have rules in your house about finishing your food?

Adam: Absolutely. Yeah.

John Hodgman: For example?

Adam: My parents coined a term called a “clean plate ranger”, I think it was.

John Hodgman: Sure. Oh, they're the ones who made that up?

Adam: Oh no. I dunno. Did they—? *(Laughing.)* Is that not specific to us? I had no idea.

John Hodgman: No, it's a well-known term. Yeah. I think you need to have a long conversation with your parents about how they gaslit you into believing that that was their invention.

If you were not a clean plate ranger, what would happen?

Adam: I think dessert was the main carrot, so to speak.

John Hodgman: Oh, okay. Yeah. And I presume they only gave you carrots for dessert too.

(Adam agrees with a laugh.)

Do you think that that played a role in your formation of your taste and your dislike for soup?

Adam: Yeah, that's a good insight. Like, I think—you know, if I was done with soup, and there was still some soup left at the bottom of the bowl, that would disqualify me from my ranger status.

John Hodgman: One of the things I'm circling around is this idea that soup isn't filling enough. It's not satisfying. You need a full, nourishing meal, is what I'm hearing.

Adam: Mm-hm. No, I think that's a totally—I recognize it's totally arbitrary about like what counts as filling. I was trying to think like does chewing factor into it for me? Like, the lack of chewing in a soup versus—

John Hodgman: We're not developing an app here. We're not—you know what I mean?

(Adam laughs.)

We're not troubleshooting. You know what the issue is!

[00:35:00]

It's inside of you! Or in the case of soup, not inside of you. You refuse to put it inside of you. Or you would prefer not to. It's not your favorite. I get it.

Adam, if Daryl held your hand—hypothetically speaking.

Adam: Hypothetically.

John Hodgman: Right? And then looked in your eyes, and said, “It’s okay for you to not finish this soup,” do you think that would be meaningful to you?

Adam: Yeah, I think that would help.

John Hodgman: Daryl, you wanna give it a try?

Daryl: It’s okay if you don’t finish your soup. I will finish your soup.

John Hodgman: Whoa!

(They laugh.)

Okay! Now it’s getting a little spicy!

Daryl, you’re suing for two things. One, you wanna make soup, and you want—in a perfect world, in the dream scenario, the anti-nightmare scenario, you want Adam to enjoy it. But barring that, you just wanna be able to talk about soup again. You feel like there’s a gag order on soup talk?

Daryl: Absolutely. I am the one who brought this case, but I do wanna state for the record that the way that this came about was we had the soup weekend; it was uncomfortable; and then, I think we were listening to an episode of the podcast. There was a call for cases, and Adam said, “Well, if you care about this so much, submit the case.”

I said, “No, I’m not gonna do that. I’m not gonna do it.”

And then he kind of needled me and dared me to do it and said, “Well, you know. Do it, coward, if you wanna—” He didn’t say that. *(Laughs.)*

John Hodgman: No, okay.

Adam: I did actually. I literally said, “Do it, coward.”

John Hodgman: No...

Daryl: I’m worried that Adam—

Adam: Because I could tell it was bothering her that—you know, that this was a rift in our relationship.

Daryl: I do wanna—so, I did wanna clarify for the record, I am the one who is suing, but he is the one who encouraged us to bring the case up. I’m also very worried that this is coming off *(laughing)* like you’re horribly controlling, which is not true. Adam is one of—the most

empathetic, wonderful man. This is such a small dispute in our otherwise wonderful married life.

John Hodgman: There are just certain topics that he doesn't want his wife talking about in public.

Daryl: Exactly. And so I'm conscious—

John Hodgman: Why would that be a red flag?

(They laugh.)

Jesse Thorn: There are just certain ways in which our spouses are cowards.

(Adam agrees with a laugh.)

Daryl: And so, your honor, I wanna answer the question that you asked, which is sort of what relief that I'm seeking here. And that is: I think what I—I cannot compel him to enjoy the soup. I understand that people like what they like, and I don't even wanna compel him to eat soups that he has already said that he doesn't want to eat. Even though, you know, grilled cheese and tomato soup might be the best combo in the world.

What I would like is for him to, in good faith, try a limited number of soups. We can limit it to you to, say, two new soups a month—recipes. You know, I cook. I said I do most of the cooking, and we probably do maybe four recipes a week. So, that's only like every other week we try a new soup, and if he doesn't like it, he never has to eat it again. But he has to, in good faith, try it and then give a genuine opinion about whether he likes it or not. Or! So, that's option A. If he's unwilling to do that, then he has to lift the NDA. Because it is very stressful to me now, when we go out and the topic of soup comes up. I immediately—I get nervous! Oh my God. *(Stammering.)* Is the soup issue gonna come up? Am I gonna say something wrong? What if I mentioned—

John Hodgman: Well, now it's gonna follow you for the rest of your lives, because everyone's gonna listen to this podcast. You're gonna share this with your families and your friends, and all they're gonna want to do now is talk about soup with you.

Daryl: Right. Well, that's fair.

John Hodgman: But if it weren't for this, I don't see how it would ever come up again! I can't tell you— This is the first conversation I've had about soup in years. And I love thinking and talking about food.

Daryl: But could you imagine if you were out—you know, you're out in public or you're at a restaurant, and the topic of soup comes up, and the first thing you think is, “Oh no! I better keep my mouth shut, because my husband might get upset.” *(Laughs.)*

John Hodgman: What happens at a restaurant when they're serving soup? Are you not allowed to order it, Daryl?

Adam: You're allowed to order it.

Daryl: I get—I mean, the reason this came up originally was because we were— During soup weekend, we were at a restaurant, and my dad ordered— My dad is also a fan of soup. I think I probably inherited my love of soup from him. And he ordered a soup. It was a white bean—Tuscan white bean style soup. And I was so excited, 'cause I hadn't had soup in a while. And I said, “Oh, can we share?” We share a lot of—when we eat out, we often will split things. “Can we share that?”

And he said, “Oh yeah, of course. You know, this is great.”

And I said, “Yeah, I'm really excited.”

He was like, “Why are you so excited about the soup?” And then of course, it snowballed from there.

John Hodgman: You explained that soup is not served in your house.

Daryl: Correct. And then he was aghast, because he—“But you love soup! Why aren't you making—?” And then it turns into a whole thing. So, you know, I can order it.

[00:40:00]

But I have to be very careful about how I talk about soup in public, lest it lead to soups being named in Adam's general direction.

John Hodgman: How would you feel if I lifted the ban on talking about soup—whether that's explicit or tacit—but I also issued an order to your family and friends to not bother Adam about it?

Daryl: I think that would be fine. I mean, I'm sensitive to the fact that it's not always clear what is bothering him. And I think sometimes people are genuinely surprised at how uncomfortable it makes him when they are talking about soup. I think a lot of people don't think of soup as a controversial topic. And so, when they say to you, “Oh, well what about a corn chowder? That's a hardy soup,” that doesn't immediately register with them, “Oh, this is something that's gonna make him upset.” So, I certainly want people to take your feelings into account. But I think there's also a level of self-policing that's going on that is uncomfortable.

John Hodgman: When and how did you explicitly ask for the ban? This was after soup weekend.

Adam: Yeah. This was the—

John Hodgman: Paint the picture for me.

Adam: Yeah, this was the—the nadir of soup weekend for me was a— We got in the car after going to this Italian restaurant and Daryl and her dad having a nice white bean soup and then devolving into a named soup conversation. And I asked like, “Hey, could you not bring up soup? ‘Cause it feels like every time we’ve gone out the past couple of days, that soup has come up, and then it’s just turned into this like nonsense conversation that I really, really hate.”

John Hodgman: It’s interesting that you say nonsense conversation, as opposed to saying, “It just makes me uncomfortable.”

Adam: Yeah. There’s something there for me about like—it’s this like—feels like this useless conversation that like, we’re not— You know, even if we were talking about the weather, we could at least be like, you know, telling each other new information or something. But there’s like—none of this is like new information or interesting in any way to me.

Daryl: Can I share something? I don’t wanna answer for you. But I think you are generally uncomfortable in conversations that you perceive as not having a purpose. And that is something that has been very interesting to observe, because I find that I’m often in situations where people are talking a lot, but not saying very much, and it doesn’t really bother me. But since I’ve been with Adam, I’ve noticed that that’s something that does seem to bother you—particularly when you feel like there is a problem to be solved, and the conversation is not moving towards a resolution of that problem. That really does seem to be something that makes you uncomfortable.

John Hodgman: Mm. Interesting. Do you agree with that, Adam?

Adam: Yeah! That’s a good insight.

John Hodgman: Huh. So, Adam, if I were to rule in Daryl’s favor, and I were to rule soup talk is back on the menu, how would that make you feel?

Adam: Apprehensive about any and all conversation.

(Jesse cackles in the distant background.)

John Hodgman: Apprehensive about any and all conversation. Is this a purposeful conversation? Or is this a time-waster?

Adam: I’d say so. We’re working towards resolving this.

John Hodgman: Okay, good. Good, good, good. Okay. I just have a couple more questions for you, Adam. Um. Oxtail soup?

Adam: *(Laughs.)* I’m vegetarian, so.

John Hodgman: Oh, asparagus soup? Mock turtle soup? Printanier soup? That's a chicken consommé that turns into jelly overnight. I suppose that wouldn't be for you.

Adam: Probably not.

John Hodgman: What about celery soup? Yes or no?

Adam: Well, no. Obviously. It's a soup, but I guess I could try it. What kind of soup is that anyways? Is it like brothy? Is it—?

John Hodgman: It's a man-handler.

(Adam laughs.)

No, this is a poster of the 21 soups that were available from Campbell's Soup in 1933. I just wanted to see if there were any soups on there that would catch your eye. Adam, aside from soups, how do you feel about Daryl's cooking? Is there anything else going on that you'd like me to address?

Adam: No, it's wonderful!

John Hodgman: What's the favorite thing that she cooks for you? Your favorite thing that she cooks for you?

(Adam “um”s thoughtfully.)

I'll let you circle around that for a second and ask you this: do you consider food to fall into the same categories as conversation? IE, Food has value when it is purposeful and nourishing, but it has no value otherwise. In other words, soup is like idle chatter. It's not doing the job that food needs to do. You see what I mean?

Adam: Yeah. It's an interesting comparison. I don't know that I feel that way. I think I love the taste of food and love the—you know, act of eating and sitting at the table.

[00:45:00]

John Hodgman: You do enjoy food.

Adam: Yeah. And the communal aspect of it.

John Hodgman: Okay. Alright. So, that's not all just a waste of time.

Adam: No, no.

John Hodgman: That's all just like cultural smog that gets in the way of the caloric purpose of food, right?

Adam: No, very much not that way for me.

John Hodgman: Right. So, let me see, here. You love a giant pretzel, whether or not it's hanging off a hook. You like sandwiches. And we were trying to get back around to something that Daryl makes that you like.

Adam: The thing that's coming to mind is one of her go-to recipes. One of the first things she ever cooked for me was these Beyond Meat meatballs, just homemade tomato sauce with some meatballs, got a lot of parsley in them, some dairy free Parmesan. Just a great recipe. She like crisps up the meatballs a bit, so they're not too chewy, but not too just like falling apart. Sometimes they do fall apart, and then you have a like Bolognese, but the flavor's all there. It's great.

John Hodgman: Yeah. It's really, really, really right on the bubble, there.

(Adam laughs and agrees.)

Between meatballs in sauce and a meatball soup. I understand.

Adam: Oh yeah. Especially if the meatballs don't wanna hold together that day. I think so? Yeah.

John Hodgman: Oh boy, are they good! Is cereal a soup?

Adam: Oh boy. I would go with no, but I am a—if I have any milk in there, it's an extremely light amount of milk.

John Hodgman: You just don't like liquids!

Adam: Yeah. Except espresso, I guess.

Daryl: Except water!

Adam: And water. Love water. Big water drinker.

John Hodgman: Uuuh, you know, what a vanilla latte is, right?

Adam: I've heard of it, yes.

John Hodgman: Yeah. It's a three-bean soup. Think it over. I'll be back in a moment with my verdict. I've heard everything I need to in order to make my decision. 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.)

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

Daryl: I have no idea, but I do think this has been a productive discussion. So, thank you for having us.

Jesse Thorn: Adam, how are you feeling?

Adam: I don't think my chances of keeping the soup NDA are good. I think, though—I agree that this has been a lovely conversation and very productive, and I don't think it was—I forget how the judge put it—conversational weather talk.

Jesse Thorn: Well, we'll see what Judge John Hodgman has to say about this when we come back in just a moment.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Promo:

Music: Playful, thumpy string music.

Jesse Thorn: Hi, is this Kelly?

Kelly: Yes, this is Kelly.

Jesse Thorn: Hi, Kelly. This is Jesse Thorn, co-host of *Jordan, Jesse, Go!*.

Kelly: Hi, Jesse.

Jesse Thorn: I'm calling because you were just named MaxFun Fun's member of the month for April.

Kelly: Oh wow! *(Laughs.)* This is so surreal.

Jesse Thorn: How long have you been a *Jordan, Jesse, Go!* listener?

Kelly: Probably eight years. I actually saw you guys at the Bellhouse in Brooklyn in 2019.

Jesse Thorn: Was seeing us the reason that you started listening to the show?

Kelly: (*Laughs.*) No, I had been listening for a while.

Jesse Thorn: Why did you end up becoming a member?

Kelly: It's really just been such a dependable source of laughter and joy and comfort. I just appreciated that, and I didn't wanna take it for granted. So, I want to contribute and show my support, because I don't want it to ever end.

Jesse Thorn: Kelly, thank you so much for talking with me, and thank you so much for being a member of MaxFun.

Kelly: Absolutely. It's my pleasure. It's totally worth it.

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

(*Music ends.*)

Promo:

Music: Playful, retro rock music.

Narrator: This season on *The Adventure Zone*, *Abnimals*! Get ready for a brand-new crime fighting trio, here to protect the anthropomorphic, muscular animal citizens of River City. Featuring Justin McElroy as Ax-o-Lyle, the firefighting axolotl. Clint McElroy as Roger Moore, the debonair cow of mystery. Griffin McElroy as Navy Seal, the raw seal that has never served in the Armed Forces. And Travis McElroy as every other swole critter in River City. This swear-free, Saturday morning cartoon inspired story airs every Thursday on MaximumFun.org or wherever you get your podcasts.

(*Music fades out.*)

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: Judge John Hodgman, we're taking a quick break from the show. Can I tell you about a couple of people who have been on and are about to be on *Bullseye with Jesse Thorn*?

John Hodgman: I would love to hear it. I love a sneak preview of *Bullseye with Jesse Thorn*.

Jesse Thorn: This is, of course, my public radio interview program. I had a great conversation with Christina Hendricks, who folks might know from, among other things, *Mad Men*. That's one of those people—this also happened with Antonio Banderas—where, when you're sitting like four feet from them, it's hard to form words.

[00:50:00]

John Hodgman: Yeah, yeah. So incredibly captivating as a person, actor, and presence.

Jesse Thorn: I also had an interview last week with Bruce Vilanch, the legendary comedy writer—

John Hodgman: Same deal.

Jesse Thorn: Who wrote on 25 straight Oscars, I think. He wrote this book that was about the worst things he ever wrote on.

(*John laughs.*)

So, if you want to hear Bruce Vilanch talking about writing jokes for the *Star Wars Holiday Special*, great news.

John Hodgman: How did I not know that Vilanch worked on the notoriously terrible *Star Wars Holiday Special*. So weird, it's fascinating! That's great. I need to go listen to that conversation right away. Where could I hear it again?

Jesse Thorn: That's on NPRs *Bullseye with Jesse Thorn*. He also talks about Paul Lynde's Halloween special, (*laughing*) the premise of which was—because they had to come up—they're like, "What's our take on the Halloween for Paul Lynde?" Yeah, it's basically just "Paul Lynde hates children."

John Hodgman: That's perfect!

Jesse Thorn: (*Laughs.*) It's great. Paul Lynde sings songs on it. I've seen it. It's amazing.

John Hodgman: Seriously, folks, go listen to *Bullseye with Jesse Thorn*. He is among the best conversationalists in the biz. You know it already. Go and enjoy those conversations. And hey, by the way—look, you may not know that Janet Varney and I started a little side project to a little podcast on Maximum Fun called *E Pluribus Motto*. If you've already listened, great. But if you haven't, this is just a fun conversation that Janet and I have about all of the state mottos, slogans, mascots, songs, beverages, mammals—you name it, we talk about it. If you like trivia, this is as trivial as it gets.

E Pluribus Motto is the name of the podcast. The first season is available right now in its entirety at MaximumFun.org. We will soon start recording the second season, so please let us know your favorite state cryptids. That's right, I'm talking about Bigfoots and lake monsters

in your state. Write to us always at EmailPluribusMotto@MaximumFun.org. You can listen to that also at Maximum Fun and get that email address again, 'cause I'm not gonna repeat it. (*Immediately.*) Okay, I will. EmailPluribusMotto@MaximumFun.org.

Jesse Thorn: It's an email address that bears repeating. 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: My first job in New York City was working at a literary agency. And I was working as an assistant to a literary agent, named Susan Ginsburg, who is still there and still the best. The agency was owned—and I believe he still has a stake in it—by a fellow named AlZuckerman. Incredible guy. He was Ken Follett's literary agent. He started the agency. Really interesting person, and somebody who—I believe he's now finally retired, but he worked aaall the time. In fact, one time he had a small surgical procedure, and he walked home from the hospital that day and wanted to get to work in the afternoon. And because his assistant was on vacation, it was my job to walk his mail over to his house, where he was working from that afternoon. And he invited me to lunch.

So, this is my lunch luncheon with the big boss. It was a formal luncheon, much like you and Daryl have, Adam, routinely. It was in the dining room. And he had brought back some food. I think he had stopped off at Citarella and brought back some food for a lunch. And he and I were not vegetarians. He got a seafood salad. Do you know what I mean? Like, marinated octopus, which I know—that was a weird thing to offer to somebody. I didn't like that very much, but I ate it out of politeness. You know? And there was soup too. And I don't remember what soup we were served; it was probably a minestrone. Right? And we were talking, and he was trying to get a sense of, you know, what was going on in my life and my career and what my plans were. And he and his then-wife had a little dog that was kind of running around the table. It was cute; it was a nice afternoon; it was whatever.

But I was on my best behavior, and I was also quite nervous too. 'Cause this is the big boss. This isn't my boss; this is the big boss. The owner of the company, et cetera. And as we got to the end of lunch, and I was sitting there with my more or less empty bowl in front of me, Al said, “What? You're not going to lick the bowl?”

(Adam laughs off-mic.)

Daryl: *(Softly.)* No!

John Hodgman: And I said, “Um. No, I think I'm fine. Thank you very much.”

And he said, “Oh, no, no, I was talking to the dog.”

(They laugh.)

[00:55:00]

And what I didn't realize is that he had gotten to the point where he was done with his soup and had a little leftover, and rather it be a crisis in his life, he put it on the floor. But then he noticed that the dog wasn't licking the bowl. And so he said, "Are you not gonna lick the bowl?" to the dog, but I thought he was treating me like a dog. It was a funny miscommunication, but it reminded me of something which I think is important to remember from time to time, which is that soup is good food, but it's also disgusting. And sometimes a dog won't eat it. Sometimes a dog won't even lick that bowl, because it really is right in that liminal space between delicious and disgusting.

I was sure when we were coming into this that, Adam, you were gonna have an issue with the fact that soup has a texture that is not for everybody. And that, depending on its thickness and its colloidal-ism and its hardness, it's— You know, there's a brand of soup made by Campbell's Soup called chunky. It's called chunky. It's on the label. It's disgusting!

(Laughter.)

Soup, at any moment—if you look at it the wrong way, all of a sudden you realize, "Oh, that thin soup is just saliva, or that thick soup is just snot." And then you're done! You're done with soup. You don't wanna lick the bowl. The dog got grossed out, and so did I.

But that's not what you're bringing to this formal luncheon table, Adam. What you're bringing is a more complex set of preferences that are entirely yours and entirely within your right to maintain. I think that it might be worth exploring a little further why you have these preferences and what it may or may not have to do with the culture of the family table in your growing up or whatever. I think that it's something that you're still, it seems to me, working towards articulating even to yourself. And I think it might be worth the effort to talk it through a little bit with your family, or with a therapist, or with anyone in your life to try to get a little bit more to the heart of it. You might find some insight there.

And I also take your hand, Adam, and look at you in the eye and say, "It's okay to not finish that soup." And indeed, you've got a solution which you mentioned earlier: a soup disposal process called The Dog. AlZuckerman's a fan of it. I am too. You are absolutely within your rights to say, "It's not my favorite." It's a very polite way of saying, "Uhh, no thank you. For reasons that I can't articulate, I don't want to eat it." And that's fine. And I would say this, now that you are married—and clearly happily married—and you're both wonderful people... I mean, you used to throw a saxophone up in the air. What verve and delight you bring to life! What obvious care and emotional care you take for your wife and enjoyment you get from her company, and vice-y versa, I believe. Based on the hour or so I've spoken to you through a postage stamp of a screen, I can diagnose remotely: your marriage is good.

But one of the things that you have not yet learned about marriage, only being a year and a half in, is that—particularly if you have no children—you can eat whatever you want! *(Chuckles.)* I mean, now that our children are grown up and out of the house, my wife—who is a whole human being on her own right—and I only maybe twice a week eat the same

thing. And instead it's like, "Well, I'm gonna have this," and I'm going, "I don't care. I'm gonna have this." It's a delight. I mean, if you want a formal luncheon, Hodgman marriage style, you don't meet at the end of a long table. You do it grey Poupon mustard style.

(They chuckle.)

You just drive up next to each other in your respective old-timey limousines, and you eat whatever you want.

What I'm saying is that, Daryl, you should make the soups you wanna make! You know, I understand that the life pattern that you were instructed to adhere to, Adam, was to force your feelings down, much like you are making a paté instead of a soup. You know, just layers and layers of closely—and then put a brick on top of it and hope you die before you have to express any of those feelings. And that's how you were raised. I mean, in real life, you know. Daryl, you were raised in a different way, which is to share a lot of food and take a lot of value in sharing that food. But this is not a value that Adam shares. He does, you know—he has said that he will try some soups, but for the most part, he doesn't want to eat them.

[01:00:00]

And that may just be something that you have to accept. But that means in no way should you stop expressing yourself and enjoying the making of soup. And if he doesn't want to eat it, that's fine too. Like, Adam, you're holding Daryl's hand right now. I want you to look her in the eye and say, "It's fine if you make soup that I don't eat."

Adam: Baby, it's fine if you make soup that I don't eat.

John Hodgman: Whoa. I didn't say you should call her baby. That was hot. Okay.

(Daryl laughs.)

That added an extra spice to it. I like it. Some of that New Mexico chile went in there.

What I would recommend—right?—if it is the case that you're cooking—and it sounds like you're doing most of the cooking, Daryl, because you enjoy it; it's an expression of yourself. I understand that you would love to share what you're exploring with your husband, but if he doesn't like it, he doesn't like it. He does seem like he's willing to try it, and he did say there is no ban on cooking the soup. So, you should take him up on that! Just go ahead and make it! My wife, who is a whole human being in her own right—I mean, one of the great things about soup, even though it is disgusting a lot of the time, sometimes it's really delicious! And one of its pros is that it freezes typically very well. And my wife, who is a whole human being in her own right, has this product I think—and I'm gonna buzz market; I don't care!—called Soup Cubes. It's extra-large ice cube—silicone ice cube dispenser, so that you can portion out soup and freeze it and just have soup whenever you feel like it! So, the wastefulness issue goes away.

And I will say this as well. You can make as much soup as you like. Adam doesn't have to eat it. You can talk about soup as much as you want. You can talk about soup with your family as much as you want until—and in such time—that Adam acknowledges that soup makes him gag, there shall be no gag order. 'Cause there's no reason. There is no compelling reason for it unless it's actively nauseating him to hear about the soup. However! That does not mean that it is fair for your family, even if they are on Adam's side, to interrogate him about soup types. It is now known that Adam doesn't like soup, and he doesn't love talking about it. So, if the conversation of soup comes up, it is perfectly reasonable for him to be excused from it. And as his spouse, you have to defend him. If it is getting too hot, you need to say, “Hey, cool your soup, everybody. We're not talking about—Adam's not talking about soup today. Soup is not on this conversational menu for Adam. Let's move along to something else.”

That doesn't mean that you are barred from talking about soup, or that—Adam, that doesn't mean that you're allowed to shut down the whole conversation. You can excuse yourself from it and sit there quietly and think about the weather, because you can. You are an adult, and you can handle the intrusion of some of the things that you don't love in order to enjoy the company of the person you very much do love. But it is not okay for you to be soup-shamed. I understand exactly why people want to ask you about soup. Because the thing is, lots of us have completely non-productive conversations about food all the time. Some of us have just brains that are wired to talk and think about food all the time. It has real benefits; it has real downsides. But that is just how we do it.

But in many ways I envy you thinking purely calorically, “What is the most filling thing I can have?” And I would say the only other ruling that I would make is that, when you're making soups and experimenting with soups—and you can do them whenever you want; I don't want to be like only twice a month or whatever. The soup should not be shamed, nor should Adam. But if you're serving soup, you gotta offer a sandwich. You gotta. It's just not—it just doesn't feel like enough food to him, and it's just not his preferred food mechanism. Or at least a soft pretzel on a hook. Something! Something other than soup as an alternative. So, that way Adam's not insulting you by going like, “No, I'm not gonna eat that. I'm gonna go get something else from the fridge.” And if he eats something different that is not what you've prepared—or I should say, lemme put it this way: if you make the soup, and he decides not to eat it, and he decides to eat something else that you've prepared or that you've agreed upon, that's fine. You can eat different things. It is not a comment.

You know, your culture—the way you were raised, your family table culture is different from Adam's, and that's okay. And if he's not eating exactly the same thing, it's not a slight upon you. It truly is—for whatever reason; I still think we don't know—not his favorite.

[01:05:00]

Okay, so that's my ruling. Basically, I'm ruling in your favor, Daryl. Make soup, talk about soup, but keep Adam's peccadillos in your mind. And you go ahead and make that corn potato chowder. It's not my favorite, but go ahead and make it. This is the sound of a gavel!

Sound Effect: Slow, burbling soup slurps.

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

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

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

Adam, how do you feel about this decision?

Adam: Hopeful. I think. It's gonna be interesting, but I'm willing to try the soups, and I'm willing to try conversing about them.

Jesse Thorn: We should get you a feelings press to turn your feelings into paté.

(Adam agrees.)

Daryl, how are you feeling?

Daryl: This is great. I'm excited to make soups. I'm excited to talk about soups without the weight of judgment, and I'm excited—I mean, I'm looking forward to helping my husband in public when people name soups in your general direction. Because I feel deputized now to make sure that you're not uncomfortable in those conversations.

Jesse Thorn: Daryl and Adam, thank you so much for joining us on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

Adam: Thank you for having us. A true pleasure.

Daryl: Thank you so much.

Jesse Thorn: If you want, you can stop holding hands now.

(They laugh.)

Daryl: It makes me feel less nervous.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: Another *Judge John Hodgman* case is in the books. We'll have Swift Justice in just a moment. First, our thanks to u/Mr-Duck1 for naming this week's episode, "Bouilla-biased". We are on Reddit at [Reddit.com/r/maximumfun](https://www.reddit.com/r/maximumfun), where we take title suggestions. Evidence and photos from the show are on our Instagram account. That's [@JudgeJohnHodgman](https://www.instagram.com/JudgeJohnHodgman). We are also on TikTok and YouTube at [@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJHodgmanPod). Follow and subscribe to see our episodes and video only content.

John Hodgman: Speaking of, users of the internet, I want to thank internet user TheFuzz33, who went over to Apple Podcasts to leave some very nice words and a rating that amounts to—not one, not two, not three, not four—but five stars! Thank you, TheFuzz33. TheFuzz33

wrote, “Smart, funny, creative, wise. JJHo has given me many lines to use in the classroom to help guide more children toward pro-social behavior.”

I presume that one of the lines we've offered you, TheFuzz33, is “shut your pie hole” (*chuckling*) or maybe something else.

Jesse Thorn: “I won't put your ashes in the toilet.”

John Hodgman: Yeah, exactly! (*Laughs.*) But in any case, thank you, TheFuzz33. And if you—that's right, you—are listening to us on Apple Podcasts right now, why don't you go and give us a review and a five-star rating? If we've merited it? You can also rate us at Pocket Casts, and you can leave a comment on YouTube if you're watching the episode there. All of these ratings and comments really do help listeners find the show.

Jesse Thorn: *Judge John Hodgman* was created by Jesse Thorn and John Hodgman. This episode, engineered by Jacob Derwin at Technica House in New York City. Thank you, Jacob. Our social media manager is Dan Telfer. The podcast is edited by AJ McKeon. Our video editor is Daniel Speer. Our producer is Jennifer Marmor.

Now Judge Hodgman, you ready for Swift Justice?

John Hodgman: I'm ready.

Jesse Thorn: End of an Afternoon asks this on the Maximum Fun subreddit. “Is a door on or off when it's closed? My husband and I can't agree. This started when I sleepily asked him, ‘Can you turn on the door?’”

John Hodgman: Well, the correct phrasing is, “Can you Spider-Man turn off the dark?”

(*Jesse agrees with a giggle.*)

But I'm trying to think in sort of log-ie, twilight sleep, awake-ness talk. Turn on the door would mean close the door to me. This is not normal conversation. This is obviously dream logic. But I have to say—I would interpret that as “please close the door” rather than open the door. Turn on the door. And that is my Swift Justice, and I will brook no dissent! I would love to hear from you though.

I'd love to hear some disputes about video games. We're looking for disputes surrounding video games. It's been too long since we've had a Mario Kart dispute. Does your sibling have to be player one, and you'd like to turn as player one sometime? Is your sim peeing on the floor even though you built them a bathroom? Did your mom babysit your Tamagotchi and forget to feed it? Tell me about all of your video game beefs and disputes. The way to submit them is at MaximumFun.org/jjho. There's a simple form there. It'll take you seconds to fill out. And of course, we only ever want to hear about your video game disputes from now on. Right, Jesse? Only that.

[01:10:00]

Jesse Thorn: Nooo. We'll take disputes of any kind at MaximumFun.org/jjho. No dispute is too big or too small. We'll talk to you next time on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

John Hodgman: Byeee!

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!