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Transition: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: It is the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. I'm Bailiff Jesse Thorn. With me is Judge John Hodgman. This week's episode of our program was recorded at the Shea Theater in Turner's Falls, Massachusetts.

John Hodgman: What an amazing show we had there in Turner's Falls, Western Massachusetts—one of my many beloved hometowns. Our summertime fun-time Bailiff Monte Belmonte was there, and we had two actual pro wrestlers talk about a dispute instead of taking it to the ring. Friend of the show Perry Von Vicious brought his wrestling best pal, Delmi Exo, to court, and it was a blast.

Jesse Thorn: Let's go to the stage at the Shea.

Transition: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: People of Turners Falls. You asked us for live justice, and we are here to deliver it. The court of Judge John Hodgman is now in session!

(Cheers and applause.)

Let's bring out our litigants. Please welcome to the stage Perry Von Vicious and Delmi Exo!

(Cheers.)

Tonight's case: "Kayfabeas Corpus". Perry Von Vicious brings the case against his friend, Delmi Exo. They're both professional wrestlers here in New England—a place that I have never heard of.

(Scattered laughter.)

In fact, Perry used to be Delmi's trainer, but now he says the student has become the master. He wants to meet Delmi in the ring just once before he retires. But Delmi refuses to fight. 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: "In the middle of nowhere, the thunderous roar of the sacred ocelot was heard. The jaguar god cried out to the heavens for the presence of the one who would adorn civilization with glory! The tale of a comet illuminated the horizons while the high priest looked into the infinite. It foretold the arrival of a fierce, noble, brave podcast judge with an enormous spirit and an indomitable heart.

“The depths of the universe opened like infinite windows. The mask covering his face was surrounded by flashing halos that obscured all darkness! And Judge John Hodgman emerged into podcasting on November 8th, 2010! 14 years ago, today!”

Bailiff Jesse Thorn, please swear them in.

Jesse Thorn: Perry and Delmi, 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 is the international undisputed title holder in not-wrestling?

(Laughter.)

Perry Von Vicious: I do.

Delmi Exo: I do, because I know I'm gonna win.

Jesse Thorn: Judge Hodgman, you may proceed.

John Hodgman: Perry and Delmi, you may be seated. Before I allow you to guess. I just want to say that speaking in that fashion caused me to get a cramp in my ribs *(chuckles)* that I'm dealing with right now.

(Laughter.)

Delmi Exo: Yeah, you went in. I felt it.

John Hodgman: I went in a little hard. I went in a little hard. Okay. Okay, well. For an immediate summary judgment in one of yours favors, can either of you name the piece of culture that I referenced as I entered the courtroom? Perry, why don't you guess first?

Perry Von Vicious: It sounded like a—*(sighs)* a Judge Hodgman's specific version of the intro to the Japanese anime *Kinnikuman*?

(Jesse chortles.)

John Hodgman: A Judge Hodgman specific version to the Japanese anime *Kinnikuman*. I don't know that anime, but it was a good guess as far as I'm concerned.

Perry Von Vicious: It's about pro wrestling.

John Hodgman: Oh, okay. That makes sense. On topic. Very good. Boy, my rib hurts!
(Laughs.)

Delmi, what is your—?

Jesse Thorn: Wait, is that the one that muscles come from?!

(Perry confirms.)

Millions of unusual small creatures lurking everywhere!?

(Perry confirms.)

Whoa! Those little pink guys!

Delmi Exo: Oh man, this is (*unclear*) all the time.

John Hodgman: Yeah. You know what? I'm gonna lie down for a little bit while you guys talk about that.

(Laughter.)

Delmi, what's your guess?

Delmi Exo: I'm gonna guess *Shrek 2*.

John Hodgman: *Shrek 2*...

(Laughter.)

Jesse Thorn: Also a good guess. It wouldn't be *Shrek* one. That's too obvious.

John Hodgman: Yeah, no. Right, exactly. Well, all guesses are wrong. It is a—I did change a few words to incorporate me, Judge John Hodgman, when in fact that quote is from the bio page on the website <http://www.GuerreroMaya.com>, the official website of the Mexican master wrestler El Guerrero Maya Jr., also known as Samba, also known as (*stumbling the pronunciation*) Multifacétiti—sorry, Multifacético. You know El Guerrero Maya, don't you?

Jesse Thorn: I know him indirectly. So, years ago I went to Mexico City. And my friend, the professional wrestler, Colt Cabana, sent me a text message.

[00:05:00]

And he said, “Jesse, you're going to Mexico City. You gotta go to the Lucha. Are you going to the Lucha?” Which is the Mexican wrestling.

And I said, “I guess I wasn't really planning to. I was gonna go to like the archeological museum, Colt.”

(Laughter.)

And he said, “Look, I wrestle with some guys that wrestle in the big arena in Mexico City. I'm gonna send a couple messages. I'm gonna get you some tickets.”

And I ended up corresponding on Twitter with El Guerrero Maya. And my Spanish is very poor, and he had no English, so we were like translating—Google translating back and forth on Twitter DMs. And it turned out he was gonna be out of town the weekend that I was there. But he said, “But I live right near your hotel. I'll bring tickets by; I'll drop them off for you.”

I was like, “You don't have to do that, El Guerrero Maya!”

And he was like, “I'd love to. It's no problem.”

So, we got to our hotel, and it was like a little—like, a five-room hotel with just one like innkeeper. And she's explaining to us all the different parts of the hotel, you know, where to do everything. And then she says, “Oh.” She's speaking to us in English. She says, *(with a light accent)* “Oh, I forgot.” And then she says, “A man left you this.” And then she goes, “He say his name is El Guerrero Maya, but he's just a man.”

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: A brush with wrestling greatness! As we are having right now, here on stage. Perry Von Vicious, you have been featured in the show before. You are a professional wrestler. Is it—Perry Von Vicious is your wrestling name.

(Perry confirms.)

One of. You are also known as the Human Monster Truck.

(Scattered cheers and applause.)

And you are also known—*(chuckles)* you are also known—a weird wrestling name. You're also known as Former Second Grade Teacher.

Perry Von Vicious: Yes, I was a second grade teacher in Oakland, California.

John Hodgman: *(Chuckles.)* And when did your students find out that you were a wrestler?

Perry Von Vicious: They found out probably halfway through the year, but I didn't find out that they found out 'til like the last week of school, when one of the parents stooged out that they all watched me on YouTube.

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: You must have been the most popular teacher in school at that point.

Perry Von Vicious: I mean, it was unbeknownst to me, but apparently! Yeah.

John Hodgman: Delmi, tell me about your journey into wrestling.

Delmi Exo: My journey into wrestling? Well, I was probably like four/three years into wrestling before I finally crossed paths with Perry. And I—

John Hodgman: Here in Western Massachusetts?

Delmi Exo: Here in Western Mass, yeah. I'm from the New England area. I grew up in Rhode Island, and now I currently live in East Hampton.

John Hodgman: Okay, cool.

(Scattered cheers and applause.)

I believe that's the wrestling epicenter of Western Massachusetts.

(Laughter.)

Delmi Exo: *(Chuckling.)* Oh yeah, yeah.

(Perry confirms.)

And actually, at the point that I met Perry, I was really ready to hang up my boots.

John Hodgman: And then what happened? What changed?

Delmi Exo: His positivity and his friendship and really seeing something in me that I didn't see in myself.

John Hodgman: Is it true that he trained you? You did some training with him?

Delmi Exo: Yeah, he kind of brought me back up from the ground.

John Hodgman: Well, I'm glad to hear that. I mean, like physically lifted you off over his head and spun you around?

Delmi Exo: No, yeah. Like, he dropped me down with a body slam and then helped me back. Yeah. *(Laugh.)*

Perry Von Vicious: Exactly, right.

John Hodgman: Ah, got it. And now you're wearing a t-shirt—you run this wrestling promotion, correct? Called the—what is it? Pro Wrestling Grind?

Delmi Exo: Pro Wrestling Grind out in East Hampton. I run this with my partner, Rip Byson.

John Hodgman: And what is a wrestling promotion, and what is Pro Wrestling Grind?

Jesse Thorn: *(Singing.)* Do you rip bison? Take—

(Laughter.)

Delmi Exo: Awesome. *(Laughs.)*

John Hodgman: What is a—? I mean, for those who don't know—including me—what is Pro Wrestling Grind all about, and what is a promotion?

Delmi Exo: Pro Wrestling grind is about, you know, really pushing through and finding that perseverance in yourself to get to that next level. You might not have like the biggest opportunity or the biggest stage every weekend, but when you're at Grind, it feels like that. The crowd is just so involved, and they're so there for you and watching you like fulfill your dreams in front of them.

John Hodgman: And do you—you have events how often?

Delmi Exo: We run about once a month.

John Hodgman: Once a month. In East Hampton? And then— Perry, you travel around. You both travel around New England quite a bit. And you've been wrestling in Japan recently, correct?

Perry Von Vicious: Yeah. Actually, Delmi also has wrestled in Japan and Germany as well. Yeah, we wrestle everywhere.

John Hodgman: It sounds like your career couldn't be going better for a former second grade teacher who is now a professional wrestler on the international stage. And yet it says here that you're considering retiring.

Perry Von Vicious: I, uh—I turned 40 back in July? And uh—

John Hodgman: But you're a young man!

Perry Von Vicious: I didn't really necessarily picture myself wrestling well into my 40s.

John Hodgman: Uh-huh. And are you starting to slow down physically? You're kind of a weakling, right?

(Laughter.)

[00:10:00]

Perry Von Vicious: Actually, I'm probably in the best shape I've ever been in. And according to Delmi and Rip and a lot of my closest friends in wrestling, I'm probably having the best matches I've ever had.

John Hodgman: And so, when are you thinking of retiring? In what timeframe?

Perry Von Vicious: Honestly, I've kind of passed the timeframe I'd talked about. I'd sort of said forever that like, unless I was signed to a major company, I would be done at 40.

John Hodgman: Right. *(Sarcastically.)* And that's never going to happen. It's time for you to give up your dream. All dreams must stop. The pursuit of happiness ends at 40. You're absolutely right! Time to get serious. I mean, there's a child in the audience who needs to hear this.

(Laughter.)

Your dreams die the moment you turn 40. Oftentimes, they die at 25!

Delmi Exo: TikTok. *(Laughs.)*

John Hodgman: Yeah, that's right.

(Laughter and scattered applause.)

Jesse Thorn: A lot of times you're like 35 years old; you're on the top of the blogging world. People from Discovery call you into their office.

(Laughter.)

And when you turn down their show, the head of Discovery Networks takes you out to sushi—which you don't even like—to try and convince you to take the pilot. What you don't know is that you'll be bald almost immediately thereafter!

John Hodgman: These are the exact kinds of things that happen as you grow up, Eli. Get ready.

Now that you are planning the end of your career as a professional wrestler, Perry, you have a list of things that you would like to do. A bucket list, a wrestling bucket list.

(Perry confirms.)

What do you wanna—what are some of the things on the list?

Perry Von Vicious: I mean, I'd like to do something on national TV in the States.

John Hodgman: Well, it's not gonna happen.

(Laughter.)

Perry Von Vicious: Fair enough.

Jesse Thorn: You mean like beyond *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?*, or—?

Perry Von Vicious: I'm not sure how I make it happen, but I'd like to meet weird Al Yankovic.

(Cheers.)

John Hodgman: I could make that happen.

(Laughter.)

Jesse Thorn: I've been to his house.

John Hodgman: Yeah. He's a nice guy.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah, he's really nice. It's a nice house.

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: I'm telling you, you gotta throw away your TV dreams. It's all podcasting. You wanna meet Weird Al, you start a podcast.

Perry Von Vicious: I'll get on it.

Delmi Exo: Don't give him ideas. *(Chuckles.)* Don't—

Perry Von Vicious: As soon as I can get turned down by Discovery.

John Hodgman: *(Chuckling.)* Yeah, don't worry. It's already happened.

(Laughter.)

Jesse Thorn: I'll tell you this. The secret to podcasting success is that your last TV credit is *Christmas Through the Decades* on the History Channel.

John Hodgman: Okay. National television appearance as a wrestler. I think it can happen. One. Meet Weird Al? It's definitely gonna happen. You and I are gonna drive across the country. We're gonna make a documentary film about it.

(Laughter.)

Perry Von Vicious: I'm in.

John Hodgman: Alright, what else?

Perry Von Vicious: And then— So, it's kind of like—it's an important thing in pro wrestling. It's almost like a rite of passage. You wrestle all of your friends in a one-on-one match. It always happens.

John Hodgman: Oh, I thought it was all at once!

Perry Von Vicious: No, not—

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: That—*(stammering)* I would put that on national television right now.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah, that's called a polycule.

(Laughter.)

Perry Von Vicious: And I've wrestled all of my closest friends. And they really do become your closest friends, because you spend hundreds of hours in cars with these people. Delmi and I have definitely spent hundreds of hours in cars together.

Delmi Exo: And not killed each other.

Perry Von Vicious: *(Beat.)* Not yet.

John Hodgman: Yeah, you're gonna be on my new web series: *Hundreds of Hours in Cars with Wrestlers*.

Perry Von Vicious: *Wrestlers in Cars Getting Nowhere?*

John Hodgman: Yeah, that's— No, no, you're getting somewhere. We're gonna go see Weird Al. Don't worry about it. It's gonna happen.

(Laughter.)

Perry Von Vicious: So, I have wrestled all of my closest friends in singles matches—some of 'em many times. In fact, Delmi's fiancé, Rip Byson, is one of my closest friends in wrestling. We've probably had 30+ singles matches against each other. We've wrestled in every time zone.

John Hodgman: And yet, you've never wrestled Delmi.

(Perry confirms.)

And why won't you wrestle your former trainer and your pal?

Delmi Exo: We mentioned the bucket list. You know? If I wrestle him, that just brings him closer to retiring.

(John hums understandingly.)

And I don't wanna see him go!

John Hodgman: You think it's too early for him to retire?

Delmi Exo: It's way too early. We could hold out like 10 years, easily.

John Hodgman: 10 more years.

Delmi Exo: 10 more years.

John Hodgman: And your feeling is that if you were to—if you were to let him check off that part of his bucket list, which is wrestling the one person that he hasn't wrestled, then that just will usher him into his wrestling grave faster?

(Delmi confirms.)

Right. And you don't want that to happen.

Delmi Exo: No.

John Hodgman: And you also— Do you have a concern about any signature move that Perry has?

Delmi Exo: *(Beat.)* I'm not scared.

John Hodgman: No! No! Trust me, I'm not going to tell any professional wrestler that they're scared.

[00:15:00]

But why are you holding out your pinky at me?

Delmi Exo: *(Laughing.)* You gotta pinky promise that you won't—

John Hodgman: Oh, I thought you were gonna disembowel me with that.

(Laughter and scattered applause.)

I promise. I'm promise. I'm not suggesting that. But there is a signature move that Perry does.

Delmi Exo: There is a high-risk move that Perry Von Vicious does. It's called the Perry-Go-round.

John Hodgman: *(Chuckling.)* The Perry—

(Laughter.)

Look, you don't have to describe it, 'cause I believe that we have video. Can we see the Perry-Go-Round, please!

(Muffled wrestling match noises.)

Now here's a fun fact. About two years ago, we did a holiday show here at the Shea. Perry, you were a guest. And you didn't do the Perry-Go-Round on me, but you did lift me up over your head.

Perry Von Vicious: Yes, I did.

Delmi Exo: He was about to.

John Hodgman: And it was— What's that?

Delmi Exo: He was about to.

John Hodgman: He was about to do the Perry-Go-Round as well? Maybe so, I don't know. But you did lift me up over your head—safely—and it was terrifying.

(Laughter.)

And that looks worse. Another fun fact: I also have underwear that says “vicious” on it.

(Laughter.)

Not licensed merch. I'm sorry, I got it on the black market. *(Chuckles.)* You ought to sell those on your YouTube page or whatever.

Perry Von Vicious: I actually have to get mine from Delmi. She makes those for me.

John Hodgman: Oh, cool! That's very cool. So, do you—you know Perry, would you— If you were to fight Delmi, would you Perry-Go-Round her? I don't know how else to put it.

(Laughter.)

Perry Von Vicious: I mean, if I wanted to win, yeah.

John Hodgman: Now, look, wrestling of the kind that you do—you call it wrestling. Not Olympic style wrestling, where they're just on the ground the whole time, and it's like *(grunts weakly)*. Like, this is an extremely physical show that you're putting on. In other words, that other wrestler— Who was the other wrestler in that video?

Perry Von Vicious: His name is Jack Ripper Reed.

John Hodgman: Sure. Jake Ripper Reed. It was right on the tip of my tongue. Jake Ripper Reed knows that's gonna happen to him. You have worked this out. I mean—sorry to pull back the curtain. But I just want to understand that when you're talking about getting into having a wrestling match with Delmi, it's not like just you go in an alley and just wail on each other. Like, it's going to be a proper wrestling match with—I don't wanna say—

Perry Von Vicious: You can say.

Delmi Exo: The nine-year-old's watching.

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: I'm about to destroy a dream. With advanced planning choreography, safety measures, and—dare I say—a little bit of showpersonship. Please don't—

Perry Von Vicious: We like to say about—

Delmi Exo: We like to say smoke and mirrors.

John Hodgman: I just wanna make sure that that's what you are proposing happen in this case, right? It's not—

(Perry confirms.)

Right. It's not getting all of your friends together to beat the shit out of you in the alley next to the Shea Theater. 'Cause that's how I want to put you on television. You see?

(Laughter.)

I'll take a mortgage out on our apartment. I'll set it up. But okay. You're talking about a real thing. Okay. Does it intimidate you? The Perry-Go-Round?

Delmi Exo: Would I agree to take the Perry-Go-Round? No.

John Hodgman: Okay. But you're not even going to agree to do anything. That's not the reason you don't wanna fight.

Delmi Exo: No. That's just one more piece of evidence as to why I would not. I wouldn't. Would you? Or no. *(Chuckles.)*

John Hodgman: Got it. You wanna keep your friend, Perry Von Vicious, in the game.

Delmi Exo: And my neck.

John Hodgman: Sure. Both of those things. But would you say that your primary motivation is to keep Perry wrestling, even beyond what he wants to do?

Delmi Exo: Yeah. He's gotta stay.

John Hodgman: Why do you want—why is it important to you?

Delmi Exo: So, Perry's holding out. Perry has this rule that once he's done with wrestling, he's like deleting all his social media. No one's ever gonna hear from him. Only few people have his actual phone number—me being one of them. But he says—

John Hodgman: Do I—? Perry, do I have your phone number?

(Perry confirms.)

Okay, good.

(Laughter.)

Delmi Exo: I worked years for that! *(Chuckles.)*

Perry Von Vicious: Yeah, but you weren't on *Dicktown*.

(Laughter and applause.)

Jesse Thorn: That reminds me, John. I wasn't on *Dicktown*!

John Hodgman: We'll do another season.

Jesse Thorn: Okay. He just doesn't want me to get out of the game. He knows about my bucket list.

John Hodgman: *(Laughs.)* You're gonna delete everything? You're gonna erase your wrestling—?

Delmi Exo: He's just gonna vanish! And—

John Hodgman: And is he gonna vanish from your life?

Delmi Exo: That's what he claimed!

John Hodgman: Are you gonna vanish from your friends' lives when you give up wrestling?!

Perry Von Vicious: Ssso... everyone I've ever known in wrestling, no matter how close of a friend they've been, when they leave wrestling... it's kind of the last you hear from 'em.

Jesse Thorn: Like alcoholism?!

(Laughter.)

Perry Von Vicious: It is an addiction of sorts.

[00:20:00]

Like, my trainer—Johnny Idol—was one of my closest friends in the entire world. And when he retired—I think since then we text maybe twice a year?

John Hodgman: Right. And so, you're—? Looking forward to this?

Perry Von Vicious: No, I've just accepted it.

Jesse Thorn: I mean, let me ask you this question, Perry. Like, when I was texting with El Guerrero Maya— When John looked up El Guerrero Maya earlier today in the car that we've driven hundreds of miles together in—

John Hodgman: That's right.

Jesse Thorn: By the way, *(casually)* I have killed him. That's his guh-guh-guh-ghost.

(John snorts.)

But when John was looking up El Guerrero Maya—

John Hodgman: (*Ominously.*) I fell victim to the Jesse-Go-Round.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah, he said to me, “Is it El Guerrero Maya Junior or El Guerrero Maya Senior?” And I was reminded that when I went to the Lucha in Mexico City, there are multi-generational families taking place in those matches—including hater familias that are like at least 70. And they just kind of go around and yell different stuff and point different places. And wear a singlet, (*chuckling*) which is an intense experience to see up close. But why, if you give up wrestling—why, if you give up the like action of wrestling, the danger of wrestling, why can't you be one of those guys that yells and points at stuff?

(*An inaudible shout from the crowd.*)

John Hodgman: Yeah! Didn't you hear that person? Yeah.

(*Laughter.*)

Jesse Thorn: That's a perfect example of yelling! They probably pointed, too! I can't see 'em!

Perry Von Vicious: I've known a couple people who, when they were done, kind of hang around the scene for a long time, but they're not—

John Hodgman: They're real cool, right?

Perry Von Vicious: It's a little bit like hanging around (*unclear*)—

Jesse Thorn: When they come back wearing their letterman jacket.

Perry Von Vicious: Yeah. It's like hanging around your high school after you graduate.

John Hodgman: Sure. It's like—what's his name? Matthew McConaughey.

Jesse Thorn: Matthew McConaughey in *Dazed and Confused*?

John Hodgman: Yeah, thanks.

Jesse Thorn: Or it's like when Jesse Thorn graduated from college and kept doing his college radio show for three years.

(*Laughter.*)

And then left that station and did it for 20 more years. (*Chuckles.*)

John Hodgman: How long are you gonna continue wrestling for, Delmi? Do you have an idea?

Delmi Exo: Oh, like I'm just gonna be there. That's it.

John Hodgman: No matter what.

Delmi Exo: No matter what.

John Hodgman: What's on your vision board for your wrestling career? Meet Weird Al Yankovic, obviously. That's gonna happen.

Jesse Thorn: *Christmas Through the Decades.*

Delmi Exo: I just wanna keep going. It's just—I have so much fun doing it. It's something that I've had great success in. So, you know. Like, honestly, if I go further with what I've had—you know, that's great. But where I'm at right now and the opportunities that I'm able to give to other people with Pro Wrestling Grind is like—I'm just so content with that.

John Hodgman: Right. And if Perry were to say to you like, “Hey, look. I'm not gonna disappear from your life if I retire. I will stay friends with you and Rip Byson. I won't hang around the ring in my singlet looking weird, but I will maintain a presence in your world,” would you then be willing to fight him and defeat him—as he deserves—to send him out of wrestling forever?

Delmi Exo: *(Clicks teeth.)* I don't believe him.

John Hodgman: You don't believe him?

(Delmi confirms.)

Do you wanna get—you want out of this life, Parry? I mean, look at what it's given you. You're gonna meet weird Al Yankovic.

(Laughter.)

You think I hook that up for non-wrestlers?

Jesse Thorn: Perry, take it from me—an expert. If you get booked on *Christmas Through the Decades*, you're gonna meet Mr. Belding.

Perry Von Vicious: I went to UMass. I met Mr. Belding.

(John “wow”s.)

He popped through a lot.

John Hodgman: But you want—you're ready to put this life behind you? Why?

Perry Von Vicious: I mean, honestly I think Donnelly's a little bit overreacting here. 'Cause I'm not really ready to put it behind me. Like, I don't have—currently, I don't have a timeframe to be done. Like, I think I'm still adding a lot. The rule I've kind of set for myself is: as long as I'm a net positive to the shows that I'm on, I will keep doing it. But as soon as I see someone younger and better than me not booked on a show that I'm on, I need to move on.

John Hodgman: You don't wanna be taking up that space for the new, young talent that's coming up.

(Perry confirms.)

Okay. So, if I were to rule that you were to have a wrestling match with Delmi, what do you have in mind? Where's it gonna happen? What's it gonna look like?

Perry Von Vicious: I mean, to my mind, there's only one place it can happen. And it's gotta be Pro Wrestling Grind.

John Hodgman: The stage of the Shea Theater—what?

(Laughter.)

Perry Von Vicious: I understand that we're not actually allowed to do that.

John Hodgman: No, I did look into it.

(Laughter.)

Jesse Thorn: There were insurance issues, very literally.

John Hodgman: Let me—yeah. Yeah.

[00:25:00]

So, short of settling it right here, right now—the most wrestling way to settle a thing—where would it happen?

Perry Von Vicious: It would happen in East Hampton at the Pulaski Club for Pro Wrestling Grind.

(Cheers and applause.)

John Hodgman: Alright! And when would it happen?

Perry Von Vicious: So, Grind likes to run on Fridays or Saturdays. It kind of depends on availability of the venue. My birthday is on a Friday, this coming year in July. And I think it would be a cool birthday present to get to wrestle my friend.

John Hodgman: *(In a wrestling announcer voice.)* Friday, Friday, Friday! July 2025. Delmi vs. Vicious, the title bout! It's going to happen.

(Returning to his regular voice.) Or is it? Now, he called you out. You gonna just tell him no?

Delmi Exo: Or. We could sign on Perry to wrestle for 10 more years.

John Hodgman: 10 more years? If you—if Perry signs a binding contract to wrestle for another 10 years, would you wrestle him on his birthday in July? Yes or no?

Delmi Exo: Yeah.

John Hodgman: Oh! How do you respond to that, Perry?

Perry Von Vicious: I don't know that my body, my marriage, or my hairline could make it another 10 years.

(Laughter.)

Jesse Thorn: Honestly, wrestlers are doing extraordinary things with hairlines these days.

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: Well, it sounds like a lot—it sounds like a very interesting proposal. I think I've heard enough in order to make my decision. I am going to go into my chambers to consider my verdict. I'll be back in a moment with my decision.

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

(Cheers and applause.)

Delmi, how do you feel about your chances right now? I see you crossing your fingers.

Delmi Exo: Oh, yeah. You know, just doing all the little rituals I used to do as a Pats fan.

(Laughter and a “whoop”.)

Jesse Thorn: Uninflating the ball.

(Laughter and boos.)

That definitely, by the way, is the worst thing I could have said about Tom Brady.

(Laughter.)

Perry, how are you feeling about your chances?

Perry Von Vicious: I mean... *(sighs)* I have a lot of flexibility in what I'm willing to accept as a verdict, so I feel pretty good that I'll be comfortable no matter what the judge rules.

Jesse Thorn: How much flexibility do you have in general? You're pretty yoked is why I mention it. *(Chuckles.)*

Perry Von Vicious: Not as much as I had a few years ago, but more than you'd think.

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

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

(Cheers and applause.)

John Hodgman: I'm very disappointed that I cannot have you wrestle on stage.

(Laughter.)

It truly is—I mean, two real violations of Chekhov's principle, right? They're not wrestling on stage, and my pants aren't falling down. Everyone here is leaving very, very disappointed, I'm afraid. But the only way to really solve this, honestly, is some form of trial by combat. So, we're gonna play a little game.

There are a lot of wrestlers in this world. Professional—national professional, worldwide, the various— There are a lot of wrestlers. That's what I'm saying.

(Laughter.)

I don't know what the divisions are. You two are gonna take turns naming famous wrestlers until one of you can't think of one.

Perry Von Vicious: How much time do you have?

John Hodgman: Let's go! You have to go fast.

Delmi Exo: Kenji Kobashi.

Perry Von Vicious: Colt Cabana.

Delmi Exo: CM Punk.

Perry Von Vicious: K Kotaro.

Delmi Exo: Kelly Kelly.

Perry Von Vicious: El Santo.

Delmi Exo: Trish Stratus.

Perry Von Vicious: Blue Demon.

Delmi Exo: Lita.

Perry Von Vicious: John Cena.

Delmi Exo: Evil Eve.

Perry Von Vicious: Shawn Michaels.

Delmi Exo: Bret Hart

Perry Von Vicious: Triple H.

Delmi Exo: *(Under her breath.)* You took Triple H?

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: If you repeat even by accident, you lose.

Delmi Exo: *(Whispering devastatedly.)* I just did.

John Hodgman: You did?

Delmi Exo: *(Even quieter.)* Yeah, I did.

John Hodgman: I missed it!

(Laughter.)

Oh no! Which one did you say? Triple H?

Delmi Exo: He took Triple H, and that's my favorite wrestler. And he knew that. So, then I—

Perry Von Vicious: You said it out of instinct.

John Hodgman: Delmi, you gotta play if you wanna win. You gotta get in his head.

(Laughter.)

Wrestling isn't just the Perry-Go-Round. It's also mental combat. Think of a wrestler! El Guerrero Maya Junior and Senior! We talked about them!

Delmi Exo: *(Laughing.)* Thomas Cairo.

John Hodgman: Thomas Cairo. Okay.

Perry Von Vicious: Uh, uh, uh, uh, uh—

(John cackles malevolently.)

Owen Hart!

Delmi Exo: Eddie Guerrero.

Perry Von Vicious: Bruce Hart.

Delmi Exo: *(Laughing.)* Macho Man.

Perry Von Vicious: I'm sorry, what?

Delmi Exo: Macho Man.

John Hodgman: Randy Macho Man Savage.

Perry Von Vicious: Stu Hart.

Delmi Exo: Ricky Steamboat.

Perry Von Vicious: Ric Flair.

(Scatter whooping.)

Delmi Exo: Dusty Rhodes.

Perry Von Vicious: Dustin Rhodes.

[00:30:00]

John Hodgman: Wait a minute. That seems like a technicality.

Perry Von Vicious: It's his son!

John Hodgman: Oh, okay.

Delmi Exo: Rick Martel.

Perry Von Vicious: Cody Rhodes.

Delmi: Would you stop taking my favorites? *(Laugh.)*

John Hodgman: Ah-ha-haha! Okay. Gavel's about to come down. You gotta name one.

Delmi Exo: Becky Lynch.

Perry Von Vicious: Greg the Hammer Valentine.

Delmi Exo: Sasha Banks.

(Gavel bang.)

John Hodgman: *(Cackles wildly.)*

(Cheers and applause.)

I don't want you to think that it was rigged, but I got the outcome that I wanted.

(Laughter.)

Oh, actually, you won. Rats. But you know what? I don't care. You're gonna fight. You're gonna fight. You're gonna fight. You're gonna wrestle—I mean to say—on his birthday. Birthday gift. Five-year contract. Five. *(Beat.)* Okay, four. This is the sound of a gavel! *(Bangs his gavel.)*

Judge John Hodgman rules. That is all. *(Unclear.)*

Jesse Thorn: Perry, Delmi, thanks for joining us.

John Hodgman: Let me tell you—hang on. Let me tell you why. Because we all have to fight for four more years.

(Cheers and applause.)

This is the sound of a gavel.

(Bangs his gavel.)

Judge John Hodgman rules. That is all.

Jesse Thorn: Perry, Delmi, thanks for joining us on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

(Cheers and applause.)

Transition: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: You're listening to *Judge John Hodgman*. I'm Bailiff Jesse Thorn. Of course, the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast, always brought to you by you—the members of MaximumFun.org. Thanks to everybody who's gone to MaximumFun.org/join. And you can join them by going to MaximumFun.org/join.

(ADVERTISEMENT)

Transition: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: It's time for Swift Justice! Please welcome to the stage Andy and Mark.

(Cheers and applause.)

Andy wants to get a private pilot's license, but his friend Mark says that flying is too dangerous. He loves Andy very much and doesn't want him to die in a crash.

(Laughter.)

[00:35:00]

Please rise as Judge John Hodgman enters the courtroom.

(Cheers and applause.)

John Hodgman: Andy, Mark, welcome to the court of *Judge John Hodgman*. Before we get started, we do have—as I mentioned—a very special guest here. There is someone that you know very dear to my heart and the entire community's. He's sometimes known as our summertime fun-time guest bailiff, but right now he's our winter of discontent guest bailiff.

(Laughter.)

Please welcome to the stage Monte Belmonte.

(Cheers and applause.)

Monte, thank you. Will you sit in on Swift Justice and lend some expertise?

Monte Belmonte: I would love to.

John Hodgman: I appreciate that. Thank you for being here, and we'll chat with you in a little bit. But let's go ahead. Justice will not wait. Andy and Mark. Who's Andy?

Andy: I'm Andy.

John Hodgman: Andy. And before we hear the case, may I license your life rights immediately?

(Laughter.)

For those of you who are listening at home, Andy is wearing an incredible members only jacket, it looks like to me.

Andy: Thank you for the recognition, your honor.

John Hodgman: In Whaler's green. He is wearing a Hartford Whaler's hat.

(Andy confirms.)

He has a handlebar mustache. He's a very fit gentleman. And I would like to option your life—

(Laughter.)

Oh, and he's disrobing to represent—

(Monte “wow”s.)

Yale University.

(Laughter and applause.)

The heart of the Secret World Government and my alma mater. And you're Mark?

Mark: I am Mark.

John Hodgman: Okay. Never mind. I think I've heard everything I need to in order to make my decision.

(Laughter.)

Well, no, I'll hold the gavel. But I do want to sign your life rights, so that I can write a new TV show about a guy named Dan Crowbar Hockey Detective.

(Laughter.)

It looks like a nice—looks like Tom Selleck run through a Zamboni. It's incredible over here. Mark, you look pretty good too.

Mark: Thank you.

Andy: Thank you.

John Hodgman: Mark, who seeks justice in this court?

Andy: I seek justice, your honor.

John Hodgman: Andy, what is the nature of the justice you seek?

Andy: I would like to get my pilot's license. And Mark, here—

John Hodgman: I'm, frankly, surprised you don't already have it.

(Laughter.)

Andy: Well.

John Hodgman: Frankly, I'm surprised that you want a pilot's license and not an auto gyro license. Or a whirly bird license.

(Laughter.)

Andy: There's only one person standing in the way of me having the license so far, and it is my friend Mark, here.

John Hodgman: And you guys are friends. Mark?

Mark: We are friends.

John Hodgman: And so, Andy has a lot of hobbies, Mark.

Mark: My concern and the reason that I've stood in his way is that he's a bit of a serial hobbyist. And so, my concern is that while he thinks he wants to learn how to fly the plane, it's more that he wants to be the kind of person who also flies planes.

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: *(Playfully.)* What about the incredible affected presentation that Andy presents suggests to you—?

(Laughter.)

Mark: You know, you, see his handlebar mustache. What you don't see is that in the past ten years, he's also taken up birding, curling. He's the vice president of the Nutmeg Curling Society. He became—

Jesse Thorn: *(Laughing.)* Wait, is he also in the Rushmore Pipeline Society?

Mark: He also became a mason.

Monte Belmonte: A Freemason or with bricks?

Mark: *(Beat.)* No comment.

Jesse Thorn: Appropriate question.

John Hodgman: Yeah. Not allowed to say.

(Laughter.)

Andy: Hence the Yale shirt.

Mark: Yeah. And you know, this is on top of his interest in mustache culture. I mean his hobbies know no end.

John Hodgman: There's a lot of what they call Venn between your interests and mine, Andy.

(Laughter.)

A looot of overlap, and I'm beginning to wonder—

Andy: My interests and yours, your honor?

John Hodgman: —if you are, perhaps, not a real person but instead a Five-Hour Energy drink hallucination that I'm having right now.

(Laughter.)

Is this real life? *(Chuckles.)* Monte Belmonte, is this real life?

Monte Belmonte: Let me pinch you.

John Hodgman: Oh, okay! Okay, thanks. Will you pull up my pants in the meantime, while you're at it?

(Laughter.)

No, no, no. Please don't do this.

Jesse Thorn: Are you suggesting this is a "Hodgman After Dentist" situation?

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: I suspect it might be. Andy, why do you wanna fly an aero-plane? And not become a Zeppelineer?

Andy: Your honor—*(laughs)*. Your Honor, Bailiff Jesse, Guest Bailiff Monte Belmonte—

John Hodgman: Are you gonna marry somebody?!

Andy: I just might! Handsome people of—

(John and Monte "wow".)

—the Shea Theater—

John Hodgman: Here we go.

Jesse Thorn: "I'm just a simple cave man."

(Laughter.)

Andy: I'm just a simple townie from New Haven. I'm not a sophisticated Yale man, like my opponent here who has two degrees from Yale. I just want to be free. And I believe in life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. I don't think that Mark should be able to stand in my way of happiness—

(John makes a sound.)

Don't interrupt me, sir!

(Laughter.)

And what we're about to see is the silver tongue of a professional debater.

[00:40:00]

Jesse Thorn: John, if you want, I can come back in an hour.

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: Yeah, I was gonna say. There's still pizza downstairs, right?

(Jesse confirms.)

Okay, let's all go down, and you know. No, go on, Andy. We'll hear you out.

Andy: The impossible, full head of hair, age-defying on my friend here—Mark—and all I'm asking for is the freedom to pursue a hobby that we all want: to be able to fly like a bird. The birds that I've looked—that I seek out there in the field. I just wanna fly.

Mark: It's just that—

John Hodgman: Birds that you watch.

Mark: It's just that the cost—can I interrupt?

John Hodgman: I'll allow it.

Mark: Thank you. It's just that the cost of him failing at curling—there's no cost to him failing at curling. But the cost of being bad at flying is really—you know, is death.

Andy: I'm so happy he brought—

Mark: And I just think that it's a hobby too far.

John Hodgman: How old are you, Andy, if I may ask?

Andy: *(Whispered.)* I'm 50.

John Hodgman: Well, you've had a great life.

(Laughter.)

Andy: Your honor.

John Hodgman: Yes.

Andy: I'm so glad that Mark brought up the risks of flying, because I've done a little math—as you may have expected. I'm a prepared person.

John Hodgman: Thank you. I do appreciate that.

Andy: Yes. May I refer to my notes?

John Hodgman: Please reach into your members only front pocket.

(Laughter.)

Jesse Thorn: *(Mumbling.)* Yeah, do that iconic—

Andy: The likelihood of me dying in a plane crash in the first year—if I were to take one year of lessons, one hour—

Jesse Thorn: Is the answer inside that envelope?!

(Laughter.)

Did you have PricewaterhouseCoopers keep the answer secret for you?! *(Chuckling.)*

Is the answer a DeLezhen?

Andy: The likelihood of me living through the year is 99.99%.

John Hodgman: This is literally back-of-the-envelope math that he's doing here. Yes.

Andy: I mean, that was deduced through binomial distribution. I'm sure there's someone in this audience who understands what that is.

(A few scattered cheers.)

And—

John Hodgman: *(Snickers.)* Binomial nerds.

Andy: Thank you.

Mark: Of course.

Andy: So, if I were to say to anyone in this audience, “Are you prepared to accept the risk of living—you know, of surviving a 99.99% likelihood? Would you accept that risk for the next year?” I think he'd be a fool to not take that risk.

John Hodgman: May I see the envelope?

(Andy confirms.)

Well, he's done the work.

(Laughter.)

This is a picture of a bird with a mustache. There's an affidavit inside?

(Andy confirms.)

As I open the affidavit, let me give Mark a moment to speak, if you don't mind, Andy.

Mark: Please.

John Hodgman: What standing do you have to deny Andy his right to pursue his desire to fly?

Mark: Look. I'm the friend who has stuck around through all this.

John Hodgman: How long have you been friends? We've been friends 20 years? 17/18 years now.

And you know, being the friend of someone who's—you know. He recently bought—this is true. He recently roped about his last six friends and our spouses into an all-day curling session at his club, because he wants to recruit us to the curling community. Like, there's a heavy lift to be friends with Andy, which is you indulge the hobbies. And he's a great guy. But I just don't want to be going up in the little putt-putt plane with him.

John Hodgman: Well, you don't have to!

Mark: I don't. I don't. But he—

John Hodgman: You can—you're not forcing him into the plane, are you?

Andy: I don't even want him to.

Mark: No, exactly.

(Laughter.)

It's just that it always tends that way.

John Hodgman: Mark, I appreciate your concern for your friend.

Mark: Thank you.

John Hodgman: And it's clear that you care about Andy very much.

(Mark confirms.)

And you want him to live, mostly because he's exciting to have in your life.

Mark: *(Laughing.)* Everyone should have a guy like this in your life! I know!

John Hodgman: I understand. I've definitely had exciting friends in my life who I wished them to live, even though their—their recreational risk taking makes my life more exciting, as it obviously makes your life more exciting.

(Mark agrees.)

The fact is, Andy is his own person. I have a very dear friend. We are working on a project that involves hang gliding.

(Mark laughs.)

And he decided to go hang gliding. Had never hang glided before. That's the past tense of hang gliding. He'd never hang glid. Hang glud?

Jesse Thorn: He had never hung glid.

John Hodgman: Hung glidded. But let me— It was none of my business. And that gentleman, David Rees, he surely did hung glad. He had a great time. Far more dangerous than flying a plane. Monte, do you have anything you want to add to this? Jesse?

Monte Belmonte: Are you, Andy, by any chance a singer-songwriter?

Andy: *(Confused.)* I'm not... yet.

Monte Belmonte: Because I think the odds on your envelope would be much different if you were. I mean, I think of John Denver and Jim Croce.

[00:45:00]

And Buddy Holly and Richie Valens and Patsy Cline and Otis Redding.

John Hodgman: Oh. Oh. Oh. Oh boy, oh boy. Talk about crashing and burning. Really bringing us down to earth, Monte.

(Laughter.)

Monte Belmonte: I love what you did there, John Hodgman.

John Hodgman: Ah, I'll tell you what. I order Andy to soooar! Of course, you must!

(Scattered cheers and applause.)

Of course, you must learn to flyyy!

Jesse Thorn: Thank you Andy and Mark.

Andy: Thank you!

John Hodgman: Sorry, Mark.

Mark: That's alright.

John Hodgman: Congratulations, Andy.

Transition: Three gavel bangs.

Promo:

Music: Paramore inspired pop punk music.

Sequoia Holmes: Are you a five-star baddy? If you answered yes, then *Black People Love Paramore* is the podcast for you. Contrary to the title, we are not a podcast about the band. *Paramore Black People Love Paramore* is a pop culture show about the common and uncommon interests of Black people in order to help us feel a little bit more seen.

Jewel Wicker: We are your co-hosts.

Sequoia: Sequoia Holmes.

Jewel Wicker: Jewel Wicker.

Ryan Gilyard: And Ryan Gilyard.

Sequoia: And in each episode, we dissect one pop culture topic that mainstream media doesn't associate with Black people, but we know that we like.

Jewel: We get into topics like ginger ale, *The Golden Girls*, Black romance, UNO, and so much more.

Ryan: Tune in every other Thursday to the podcast that's dedicated to helping Black people feel more seen. Find *Black People Love Paramore* On MaximumFun.org or wherever you get your podcasts.

(Music fades out.)

Promo:

Music: “Building Wings” by Rhett Miller, a spirited acoustic guitar number.

John Moe: One thing we all have in common: we all have a mind.

Speaker 1: It makes me so scared, because I'm like, “When is the bad thing going to happen?”

John Moe: And minds can be kind of unpredictable and eccentric.

Speaker 2: Everybody wants to hear that they're not alone. Everybody wants to hear that someone else has those same thoughts.

John Moe: *Depresh Mode with John Moe* is about how interesting minds intersect with the lives and work of the people who have them: comedians, authors, experts, all sorts of folks trying to make sense of their world.

Speaker 3: It's not admitting something bad if you say, “This is scary.”

John Moe: *Depresh Mode with John Moe*, every Monday at MaximumFun.org or wherever you get podcasts.

(Music fades out.)

Transition: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: Judge John Hodgman, we are taking a quick break from the stage at the Shea Theater, and you ordered onstage at the Shea Theater that a wrestling match occur. That wrestling match is approaching fast.

John Hodgman: That's right. You heard my verdict. I ruled in Perry's favor. Delmi Exo must wrestle against Perry Von Vicious in a singles match and finally put this grudge aside. And guess what? Claxon, claxon, claxon! That match is coming (*announcer voice*) July 19th—19th. At the Pulaski Club in East Hampton, Massachusetts. It's the Pro Wrestling Grind Championship main event—(*echoing*) event, event. Current champion: the human monster truck, Perry Von Vicious, versus the God Queen—Queen— Delmi Exo!

Perry won the case in my court. But will he win this wrestling match? Find out. Only one way. Get your tickets at GrindPuro.eventbrite.com. That's G-R-I-N-D-P-U-R-O dot Eventbrite dot com. I'll repeat that URL at the end of this episode. Do not miss this incredible matchup.

Also, do not miss the second season of *E Pluribus Motto*, dropping July 8th. *E Pluribus Motto* is my and Janet Varney's super fun podcast about state mottos. And not just state mottos, but also state slogans, state mammals, state monsters, state beverages, state snacks. It's a whole bunch of wild and weird trivia, and Janet and I having a good time with you—I hope—the listener. Make sure to go check us out wherever you get your podcasts. It's called *E Pluribus Motto* at MaximumFun.org or wherever you get your podcasts. It all drops July 8th.

Jesse Thorn, what's going on with you?

Jesse Thorn: Well, I happened to be out at the flea market this past weekend, and I didn't see a couple pals of mine. Their names are Jesus and Maria. Longtime flea market friends. I got all these flea market friends. You know, you go to the flea market every week, you have flea market friends.

John Hodgman: FMFes.

Jesse Thorn: So, my pals, Jesus and Maria, weren't out there selling. And I had—I mean, I don't know that I'd ever seen them miss one. And I was talking to their flea market neighbors—my friends Matthew and his mother, Maria. And they mentioned to me that Jesus and Maria weren't there because the previous week, a swap meet in Los Angeles had gotten raided by ICE. Now, my pals were not detained in that raid. But they also didn't feel like they could go to work safely.

And that kind of thing is going on across Southern California and—indeed, at this point—across the country.

[00:50:00]

You know, ICE is trying to arrest 3,000 people a day. And the only way they can do that—especially now that they have—that the president arbitrarily exempted the workplaces of

people who work for not enough money for his squillionaire friends in a few industries—is to hit people in the places in my community and our communities that should be sacrosanct. Not just people's workplaces, but schools and churches and hospitals, courthouses, things like that.

So, I was feeling down about it. And then I remembered how awesome *Judge John Hodgman* listeners are. And our fundraiser for Al Otro Lado remains open. It is at AlOtroLado.org/letsdosomething. We have raised, at this point, a total of over \$275,000. That's over \$200,000 in small and midsize contributions. My wife and I gave \$25,000, and we had two matching grants of \$25,000. So, we have raised almost \$300,000. And I would love to get it up to \$300,000. So, go to AlOtroLado.org/letsdosomething. Al Otro Lado do, among other things, legal trainings for people who are in detention and people at the border.

Like, one of the things that they have tried to do in the current administration is what little legal training— People who were seeking refugee status, what little education about the laws—both international and American immigration laws—that people were getting, the funding has been zeroed out for in the government. So, people generally do not get an attorney. Some people are able to get an attorney for themselves, but often even if they have an attorney, the system attempts to separate them from their attorney and not even tell their attorney where they are, much less their families. So, Al Otro Lado provides that training.

Now, they need our support to be able to give that training. Because it is no longer—as it was in a previous administration—funded by the government. And it just informs people who are seeking refugee status of their basic rights. And you know, I won't speculate as to why the government wouldn't want people to be informed of their basic rights. But it's not 'cause they're respecting them. So, AlOtroLado.org/letsdosomething is where you can go and give some money. And that money will have a direct impact on people who are in a really brutal spot right now.

John Hodgman: It's an easy time to feel very, very helpless and scared. And one way that you can actually provide direct help and maybe even feel a little less scared and paralyzed is to support Al Otro Lado. You've been incredibly generous in the past. And if you're able to be generous again, please join us in supporting this really, really important mission. What's that website again, Jesse?

Jesse Thorn: That's AlOtroLado.org/letsdosomething.

John Hodgman: Now, let's get back to the Shea Theater.

Transition: Three gavel bangs.

John Hodgman: Monte Belmonte is here, in case you didn't notice.

(Scattered cheers and applause.)

So nice to see you, Monte. I've missed you.

Monte Belmonte: So nice to see you.

John Hodgman: And Monte, one of the things you're well known for when you join us on the Judge John Hodgman podcast are your introductions full of ruinously corny puns.

(Monte agrees excitedly.)

Jesse Thorn, are you a fan of punnery?

Jesse Thorn: *(Dryly.)* Yeah. I love it. I love it. Especially—

John Hodgman: I love it. Yeah,

Monte Belmonte: I think I've created so many puns over the years that Jesse Thorn doesn't like me in real life.

(Jesse cackles.)

John Hodgman: No! Well, as we're coming up on—

(Laughter.)

Jesse Thorn: He is a very—he's doing a lot for charity.

(Monte cackles.)

He does a lot of work in the community.

Monte Belmonte: I am the president of the board of this theater!

John Hodgman: That's true!

(Cheers.)

That's true.

Monte Belmonte: And I get paid zero dollars for it.

John Hodgman: You truly are the center of town, and we're very happy to be here. And since you are here, and Swift Justice continues, perhaps you might take a turn introducing the next set of litigants in your own inimitable Belmonte manner.

Monte Belmonte: Don't mind if I do, Judge John Hodgman. Let's welcome to the stage Brianne and Chris!

(Cheers and applause.)

[00:55:00]

Brianne and her husband, Chris, use cloth napkins at home. At the end of dinner, Chris uses his napkin to blow his nose.

(Scattered boos and laughter.)

The mob justice is later!

Brianne says this is disgusting. Chris says—Chris says it's s'not. He does not think it's a t'issue.

(Laughter.)

He says it's a nasal digestif and that Brianne, moist a-towelette.

John Hodgman: *(Beat.)* I don't even know what that—I don't even get that one.

(Laughter.)

Monte Belmonte: Must allow it! Moist a-towelette!

John Hodgman: Okay, moist a-towelette. Got it, got it, got it.

Monte Belmonte: Who's right? Who's gesundheit?

(Laughter.)

Only one nose *(knows)*. Only one can serviette *(serve)* justice. Only one can ah-ah-ah! CHOO-se! Please rise and—while you're at it—put a little boogie in it as Judge John Hodgman enters the courtroom.

(Cheers and applause.)

John Hodgman: Wow. Brianne and Chris, welcome to the court. Who seeks justice in this courtroom?

Brianne: I do, your honor.

John Hodgman: Brianne, it's your husband—husband, is that correct? Chris?

Brianne: That's correct.

John Hodgman: Who blows his nose in the cloth napkins at dinner?

Brianne: He does. Can I add: he often does this while making direct eye contact with me as well.

(Laughter.)

Audience Member: That's worse!

John Hodgman: That's pretty hot, actually.

(Laughter.)

Chris: Yeah. It works every time.

John Hodgman: Yeah. Very provocative. How often does this happen that Chris is gunking up your napkins with his snot?

Brianne: Yeah, so it happens pretty much anytime we eat dinner at the dinner table, which doesn't happen that often. Yeah, it's not often that we're together at dinner.

John Hodgman: It's a more—so, when you are like sitting and watching television or what have you, he's blowing his nose into the throw pillows.

Brianne: We don't— *(Laughs.)* We don't bring out the cloth napkins for the couch dinner. It's more of a kind of we're eating dinner together at the dining room table; it's a nice thing; and then it ends with just letting it rip. *(Laughs.)*

John Hodgman: And is it—when you are having these formal, comparatively formal, dinners, are there other people invited? Like, your boss, your in-laws, whatever it is? Or is it just the two of you?

Brianne: It's generally just the two of us. I have asked him if he would do this were anyone else there. And I've never seen him do it, but he insists he would. He thinks there's nothing wrong with it.

John Hodgman: But mostly, you save this behavior just for your beloved wife. Is that right, Chris?

(Laughter.)

Chris: That's correct, your honor.

John Hodgman: And why do you do this? You say you call it a cleansing blow?

Chris: Yes.

(Laughter.)

So, I'm sure like many in the audience here, I work a stressful job, and I come home weary. And phlegmatic.

John Hodgman: What is your job?

Chris: I'm an ICU doctor.

John Hodgman: Okay!

(Laughter.)

I thought you were gonna say autogyro pilot. But yeah, that's pretty stressful. Okay. And that causes some phlegm to back up?

Chris: Yeah. Yeah. And at the—

Jesse Thorn: Not as stressful, to be fair, as public radio hosts.

(Laughter.)

Chris: Totally! Budget cuts, Fun Drives! So, you know, sometimes I work late, and we don't always get to eat together. But you know, at the end of a long day, dinner—I don't know—it seems to provoke a certain amount of nasal congestion. And it's just such a relief at the end of a satisfying meal. *(Laughs.)*

Brianne: I would add: I think there's a mismatch in disgust tolerance, given Chris's job. I think he has a pretty high—

John Hodgman: And given Chris's shirt.

(Laughter.)

I'm sorry, Chris.

Brianne: I like his shirt.

John Hodgman: That one's just for us. I'm not gonna explain that to the listening audience.

(Laughter.)

It's certainly very jaunty and wacky.

Chris: North Hampton Goodwill.

John Hodgman: Huh! Nice pull. I like it. So, please say again. Your disgust tolerance is different.

Brianne: Yes. My disgust tolerance is significantly lower than his, and I think that's coming into play.

John Hodgman: So, you're saying that you occasionally get disgusted by things that are disgust-ing?

(Laughter.)

Brianne: That's correct. And I would— The flip side is that *(chuckling)* I think he does not get disgusted by things that are disgusting.

John Hodgman: Well, he's an ICU doc. I mean, I think there's probably some distress tolerance built into your job at this point.

(Chris confirms.)

Yeah. There's snot all over the place.

Chris: Uh, and more. We don't have to go into it.

Jesse Thorn: I think at this point you should possibly be happy that he doesn't disembowel himself after dinner.

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: Is this something you've done your whole life, Chris? Did you grow up doing this?

Chris: *(Sighs.)* Probably. But honestly, I think maybe my family is weird enough that maybe we'd all do it if we sat down at a dinner table? But I've never paid attention.

[01:00:00]

But maybe Brianne, coming from a more normal family, calls out this behavior.

Brianne: I think it started happening when we got the cloth napkins.

Chris: They're so soft on the face.

(Laughter.)

Monte Belmonte: The only comfort he gets!

Jesse Thorn: Do you have anything else to blow your nose on in your home?

John Hodgman: Well, there's a tablecloth, surely.

Jesse Thorn: That's a good point.

Monte Belmonte: There's that shirt!

John Hodgman: Yeah. Oh, and there's Brianne's shirt too, probably! You could go around the table.

Chris: It's happened before.

John Hodgman: Oh boy!

Jesse Thorn: There's the dog.

John Hodgman: Have you ever owned a hand-kerchief?

Chris: I never have owned a handkerchief.

John Hodgman: Really?! You know, the holidays are coming up, Brianne.

(Chris affirms.)

I have an idea for a stocking stuffer. Well, is there any defense that you wanna offer? Because...

(Laughter.)

Chris: I, you know, so what happened—

John Hodgman: Aside from “I have done this already.”

(Laughter.)

Chris: The process is—I mean, it is— You know, people— I would say people do kind of some other gross stuff into table napkins. If you get a particularly grizzly piece of meat or a fishbone, you're gonna spit it into your napkin. Right?

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: Again, the audience participation is later in the show, but I appreciate the—essentially, the catching the tenor of this crowd with regard to this.

Chris: And then—

John Hodgman: And I'm gonna say something, Chris. With regard to a piece of gristly meat or a fishbone or whatever, you're absolutely right. Sorry. You absolutely would dispose that politely in your napkin and try to—because what you're trying to do is spare your fellow guests and maybe the person who made the food the discomfort and the embarrassment of you spitting it out onto the table or whatever.

(Laughter.)

But that's different than blowing your nose.

Chris: Yeah. Additionally—

John Hodgman: Oh, there's more.

Chris: Additionally, the napkin— This is at the end of the meal, so I'm not using it anymore. And I put it directly into the washing machine, ready for the next wash.

John Hodgman: And yet, I don't think this is the first time that your wife, Brianne, has said to you, “That's gross. I wish you would not do it.”

(Chris laughs.)

I mean, even if there were a custom of doing this that you grew up with or whatever, even if you could mount a defense—

Jesse Thorn: Yeah. In your childhood in the world's most disgusting family circus cartoon?

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: The fact that Brianne says, “Please don't do that.” Who does the cooking by the way?

Brianne: I do.

John Hodgman: Alright. And are you sprinkling allergens over? Or it's just like a little dusting of pollen? Just to—?

Brianne: Not that I'm aware of, no.

John Hodgman: Yeah. 'Cause it's making his sinuses clog up.

Chris: I did have two slices of pizza from Jennifer Marmor's mom before the show.

John Hodgman: That's true. Jennifer Marmor's mom sent a bunch of pizza that's out there in the lobby. And it's not sprinkled with allergens or poison.

Chris: And I did have a—

Jesse Thorn: Hold on. It was Jennifer Marmor's dad, Bob.

John Hodgman: Oh, I apologize! *(Beat.)* It was both of them, she says.

Monte Belmonte: It's Jennifer Marmor's birthday!

(Cheers and applause.)

John Hodgman: We'll talk more about that later.

Chris: And this was just to say: I did have a delightful nose blow in the bathroom after that.

John Hodgman: Where you can!

(Laughter.)

Jesse Thorn: Do you have a bathroom at your home?

John Hodgman: Here's what I'm going to say. And perhaps I— *(Beat.)* How long have you been married?

Brianne: Six years.

John Hodgman: Six years. So, it's very early in this marriage.

Brianne: Well, we've been together since high school.

John Hodgman: Okay. But you know, you're still quite young compared to me. And Andy, the pilot. And as you are married, you will become more and more accustomed to each other's weird bodily functions. And the polite hiding of the farts and burps and secretions will start to erode over time.

(Laughter.)

You become so comfortable with each other that the barriers and the common sense tends to break down. I'm sure you've experienced this with your own parents, if you have a relationship with them, and the weird things they do in front of each other that's absolutely disgusting, and it should not be allowed in public. And I think that it's important to acknowledge what you're doing and put a stop to it as soon as possible. And I say this as someone who has blown his nose in a cloth napkin before. And I thought that this might have been acceptable.

And when I heard this case originally, I took it to my own family, and I said, “What do you think of this? It’s kind of like—kind of could go either way, right?”

And they were like, “No, this must stop right away.”

And I realized I am outside the bounds of acceptable behavior, especially since there are other things to blow your nose in—like handkerchiefs in the bathroom.

[01:05:00]

And I think out of respect for your wife and the meal that she has made and your marriage and the trying to keep the magic alive rather than drowning it in phlegm? Change your ways. This is the sound of a gavel.

(Bangs his gavel.)

(Cheers and applause.)

Jesse Thorn: Thank you Brianne and Chris. And of course, thank you Monte Belmonte!

John Hodgman: Thank you, Monte Belmonte!

Monte Belmonte: My pleasure. Thank you, Bailiff Jesse. Thank you, Judge John Hodgman.

John Hodgman: So, great to see you.

Transition: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: That's it for this episode of the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. Thank you to Reddit user u/DrColossusofRhodes! Absolute— I mean, look up “legend” in the dictionary, you're gonna see a picture of DrColossusofRhodes naming *Judge John Hodgman* episodes—for naming the case in this episode.

John Hodgman: And guess what? You've listened to the whole show, and now you know: if you're in Western Massachusetts, you will actually get to see Perry Von Vicious and Delmi Exo take it to the ring! Get your tickets for the court-ordered match between Perry and Delmi at Pro Wrestling Grind. It's happening on Saturday, July 19th at the Pulaski Club in East

Hampton, Massachusetts. Get your tickets at [GrindPuro.eventbrite.com](https://www.grindpuro.eventbrite.com). That's Grind P-U-R-O dot Eventbrite dot com. Whoo!

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Transition: Three gavel bangs.

Transition: Cheerful ukulele chord.

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