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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, "Turtle Power of Attorney". Kaelyn brings the case against her husband, Adam. In their neighborhood in Virginia, there's a roadside sign reminding drivers to slow down. Adam says this sign looks like a turtle, which makes sense because turtles are slow. Kaelyn says Adam is wrong. The sign is clearly supposed to be a child. Who's right? Who's wrong? Is the sign turtley enough for the Turtle Club? 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: "You're in the desert, walking along in the sand, and all of a sudden you see a tortoise, and it's crawling toward you. You reach down. You flip the tortoise on its back; the tortoise lays on its back, its belly baking in the hot sun, beating its legs, trying to turn itself over. But it can't, not without your help. But you're not helping. Why is that?"

Bailiff Jesse Thorn, please swear the litigants in.

Jesse Thorn: Kaelyn and 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 is a hare?

(They laugh and swear.)

Judge Hodgman, you may proceed.

John Hodgman: Kaelyn and Adam, you may be seated.

(Chairs squeak.)

For an immediate summary judgement in one of yours favors, can either of you name the piece of culture that I referenced as I entered the courtroom?

I'm actually gonna take it back. I'm gonna pose this as a question. Answer in whatever way you feel represents you. And we'll go with you, Adam, first. You're walking in the desert; you

see a tortoise. You flip it over. It's baking in the sun. It can't survive unless you flip it back over. It needs your help. You're not helping. Why aren't you helping?

Adam: I think 'cause the tortoise had given me a dirty look on the way in. And so, just needed to hang out on its back for a little bit. But then I might, you know, walk away for a little bit but then come back and flip it back over. I don't think I could see it suffer for too long.

Jesse Thorn: Let the record reflect that Adam made that statement with what can only be described as a feces-eating grin on his face.

(They laugh.)

John Hodgman: Alright, Kaelyn, what's your guess? Or no, excuse me. Why aren't you helping?

Kaelyn: We have a 4-year-old and an 18-month-old, so my hands are constantly full of either children or toys. I think hands are full—like, I just physically can't reach down and flip over the turtle.

Jesse Thorn: John, do I get to answer the question?

John Hodgman: Oh, of course you may.

Jesse Thorn: Because I'm a replicant.

John Hodgman: Jesse, you're giving it away.

Jesse Thorn: *(Chuckling.)* Well, it's too late now! They got it wrong! They gave those weird answers!

(They laugh.)

John Hodgman: There aren't right or wrong answers to this particular test!

Kaelyn, Adam, can you guess the piece of culture that I'm referencing when I ask you these questions? Do they make you uncomfortable?

Kaelyn: *(Laughs.)* Well, now I'm still gonna stick with my *Franklin Fibs* by Paulette Bourgeois book, yes. Even though I know it's wrong.

John Hodgman: Oh, you had that preloaded?

(Kaelyn confirms.)

Who's *Franklin*—? Who's Paulette Bourgeois? That's cool.

Kaelyn: She wrote the *Franklin* series of children's books. And looking through the list of titles of *Franklin* books—

John Hodgman: Ohhhh, the little turtle!

Kaelyn: Yeah. *Franklin Fibs*.

John Hodgman: (*Singing.*) “Hey, it's Franklin!” That was from the cartoon. Alright, well, what about you, Adam? Did you have a preloaded guess, or do you have a correct guess for the piece of culture that we're paraphrasing while we're talking about this?

Adam: You know, I was hoping it was gonna be “Happy Together” by the Turtles, in which case we could have karaoke time altogether.

John Hodgman: (*Hums the tune.*) You know that one, right, Joel?

(*Joel confirms.*)

John Hodgman: Yeah. Okay, good.

Jesse Thorn: That's by the Turtles.

John Hodgman: By the Turtles, yeah.

Joel Mann: And you know who they were? Eddie and Flo? They were Frank Zappa's band, Flo & Eddie.

John Hodgman: Yeah. We're here talking with Joel Mann, programs and operations director here at WERU.org and FM in Orland, Maine. 89.9 on your FM dial.

Why aren't you flipping this turtle over in the desert?

Joel Mann: I wouldn't flip that.

John Hodgman: You wouldn't—? Oh, you wouldn't, no.

Joel Mann: No, I'd let it just be on its back.

John Hodgman: Yeah, that's because you and Jesse are robots.

Joel Mann: No, I like turtle soup.

John Hodgman: Kaelyn is human. And Adam I'm not so sure about. We're gonna have to ask you more questions on the Voight-Kampff test, which is the test that is administered by Bladerunners—police officers in futuristic 2019 LA—who use it as sort of an elaborate polygraph test to see if human-looking androids are humans or androids.

You ever see *Bladerunner*, Adam?

Adam: I have not, unfortunately.

John Hodgman: Oh my gosh. I guess people don't see *Bladerunner* anymore.

Jesse Thorn: You know what's distinctive about *Bladerunner*?

John Hodgman: Uh. No, what?

Jesse Thorn: It rules. It's really great. It's a really great movie.

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John Hodgman: It's a really good movie.

Jesse Thorn: It's a really awesome movie. It's a really great movie.

John Hodgman: You know what's great about *Bladerunner*?

Jesse Thorn: It's really beautiful. It's a really breathtaking—see it in a theater if you ever get the chance.

John Hodgman: Yeah, if you get the chance, maybe go to Belfast; see it at the Colonial Theater where I'm seeing movies this summer, here in Maine. Now we're gonna get to this case, because this is indeed about someone not walking along in the desert, but driving down the road in suburban outskirts of Washington, DC. And you claim you're seeing a turtle, is that right?

(Adam confirms.)

Tell me more about that.

Adam: So, I think this is a pretty common sign that people have. It's a green, small—I guess we could say creature, since this hasn't quite been decided yet. I think it's a turtle. It's turtle-green. It's sometimes holding a flag that says “slow”, or it says “slow” on the thing itself. And so, it's often—you often find it in neighborhoods or around where people are supposed to drive a little bit more slowly.

John Hodgman: It's a sign that people put out in front of their homes, typically.

Adam: Yes. Often.

John Hodgman: Encouraging drivers to drive more slowly. And you say that this little figure holding the flag that says “slow”, to you, looks like a turtle.

(Adam confirms.)

Kaelyn, you say that your beloved husband, Adam, is out of his God-or-Whatever damned mind, correct?

(Kaelyn confirms.)

What would you say that this sign is?

Kaelyn: It is a human child.

John Hodgman: Well, we'll get to that in a moment. But let's get some background here. You two are married, correct?

(They confirm.)

We're. And Kaelyn, how did you two meet?

Kaelyn: We met in graduate school, or just before graduate school, at a happy hour the day before classes were going to start. So, we've been together for 13/14 years now? Yeah.

John Hodgman: So, you were both in the same graduate school?

(They confirm.)

What were you studying respectively, if I may ask?

Kaelyn: Both international relations. Me, conflict management, and Adam's strategic studies. So, him, how the conflict start. And me, how they end.

John Hodgman: You live around DC, and you both have graduate degrees in international relations, and you're gonna tell me that you're not spies, right?

Kaelyn: Correct. Yes.

John Hodgman: Not at all involved in intelligence.

Kaelyn: Not at all involved in intelligence. Correct.

John Hodgman: Got it. And Adam?

Adam: We don't even work in international relations. *(Laughs.)*

Kaelyn: It's actually true. No, we've both since changed careers since—immediate post-graduation. *(Laughs.)*

John Hodgman: Oh, well what are your current cover stories then? Adam?

Jesse Thorn: They work in an office!

Adam: I'm a financial planner.

Jesse Thorn: An unmarked office.

(They laugh.)

John Hodgman: Yeah. So, I'm sorry, Adam, you are—you work—what's your cover story, did you say?

Adam: I'm a financial planner.

John Hodgman: *(Under his breath.)* Still sounds sketchy to me.

You mentioned that you have kids.

(Kaelyn confirms.)

Do you have a career as well, Kaelyn?

Kaelyn: I do, yes. I—and this is this's gonna sound like a terrible cover story. I do research about the future of work, the impact of AI and the future workforce.

John Hodgman: Oh. How's that looking? Good?

(They all laugh.)

Kaelyn: T-two thumbs up. Two thumbs up. We're doing great. *(Laughs.)*

John Hodgman: And Adam, when you met Kaelyn, why were you talking about rollercoasters?

Adam: Oh, yeah. So, we were at a happy hour with a lot of people, and she had mentioned that she grew up just north of Pittsburgh and spent a lot of time in Ohio. And I really like rollercoasters, including Cedar Point—

John Hodgman: Cedar Point!

Adam: The capital of the world. And so, I believe after that happy hour—

John Hodgman: The rollercoasting capital of the world.

Adam: Yes, that's right.

John Hodgman: Well, John, don't speak so quickly. You don't have a master's degree in international studies.

(They laugh.)

John Hodgman: That's true. Who am I to say?

Adam: I mean, you can see Canada from the top of the Millennium Force. *(Laughing.)* I mean, you know, that's international.

John Hodgman: That's a direct Sarah Palin quote, I think.

Adam: Yeah, exactly. *(Chuckles.)* So, anyway, yes. I love rollercoasters. So, I thought that was a nice point of potential commonality with Kaelyn.

Kaelyn: Yes, I do remember very strongly walking away from that and being like, “Oh, that guy sitting next to me was very into rollercoasters.” That was the *(laughing)* primary takeaway,

John Hodgman: Adam, I have two quick questions about rollercoasters before we move into this extremely consequential conversation about whether this sign is a turtle or a boy—or could it be both? But first, about rollercoasters: Adam, top rollercoaster in the world for you.

Adam: I would say the Millennium Force at Cedar Point in Ohio.

John Hodgman: Cedar Point, of course, being a point of pilgrimage for rollercoaster enthusiasts from all over the world. And you're saying that Millennium Force is the best. Why?

Adam: I'm a hills guy when it comes to rollercoasters. So, it's got a great, straight-down hill. None of the turning stuff that slows it down. So, you get the—you know, the good, quick drop feeling.

John Hodgman: So, Kaelyn, my question for you: when you hear Adam, back in graduate school meeting for the first time, always talking about how he loves riding down those steel hills of that rollercoaster—hates inversions, hates turns—you're like, “I gotta marry this guy,” right?

Kaelyn: Yeah. More or less. I mean, I don't think he is right in his opinions on rollercoasters either. We have very different rollercoaster opinions.

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So, I think that was maybe...

John Hodgman: Because you grew up near Cedar Point; you were there all the time.

(Kaelyn confirms.)

So, you bonded over coasters, you got married, everything was fine until you saw this sign in the road.

Kaelyn: Truth, yes.

John Hodgman: This little turtle and/or boy holding up a literal red flag, saying your marriage is about to head downhill.

Kaelyn: *(Laughs.)* I don't know. It all depends on today, I guess.

John Hodgman: Let's—do we have a photo of the sign that we can look at?

Kaelyn: We do, yes.

Jesse Thorn: What we're seeing here is a sign that I've seen in both northern and southern California. It is electric green, but also yellowish—not unlike the color of a tennis ball.

John Hodgman: Which color, by the way, is ‘optic yellow’.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah, and it is like injection-molded plastic. So, it is hollow. It's sort of like the plastic that you would use to make the plastic slide set that you would buy at a big box retail store and put together in your backyard. It is flat but three-dimensional, and it has a crossbar that supports the foot and keeps it from falling over sideways. It also has a red baseball cap—unless, for whatever reason, Adam thinks that's some kind of turtle hat.

Adam: I will get to that.

John Hodgman: *(Laughing.)* Yeah, I mean, you know, it's not unprecedented that turtles will wear a little hat. This image, of course, is on our show page at MaximumFun.org, as well as

all of our social media. And if you're watching our YouTube channel, [@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod](#), you're looking at it right now, forming your own opinion. But let's go to Kaelyn for her opinion. Kaelyn, is this a turtle or a human child?

Kaelyn: Definitely a human child.

John Hodgman: Adam, how in the world is this a turtle?

Adam: I'd say a few things. One, I mean, you can just start on the surface that it's green. Turtles, typically. You know, they can be other colors as well. So, that's the first. I think second, the rounded back is quite shell-like. And some of these can vary just slightly. I think that could potentially be a shell there. Perhaps most importantly though is that turtles, typically you'd associate them in your head with going slow. So, I think it's an attempt at the people who put them up to subliminally send a message to drivers that go by that they should be going slowly.

Jesse Thorn: You see this sign as an example for drivers to follow.

Adam: Yeah, that it's—right, that the drivers are supposed to be going slowly and that they'll think about going slowly, even if they don't even take a direct look at the sign. Just having it in their field of vision, I think, could make them drive more slowly.

Jesse Thorn: Adam, what signs in your life do you emulate?

(Laughter.)

Adam: Well, I mean I think that's the point of the sign is to try to get people to slow down in the neighborhood. So, this is just working on several different levels.

John Hodgman: So, Adam, you said that some turtles wear hats. What evidence do you have to supply to that?

Adam: So, I actually think it's very possible that this, you know, plastic figure is based on Franklin the turtle, from the classic stories and television show, *Franklin*, who wore a red baseball cap. And the only thing that's missing here is Franklin's jaunty red scarf. And so, I'm wondering whether the people who made the signs didn't wanna get too close to copyright infringement and left the scarf off. And 'cause I'd just say too, growing up in the '90s, I don't remember seeing these out there. I'm wondering whether these only popped up after *Franklin* became, you know, much more popular on TV.

John Hodgman: You've never thought to slow down and even stop and look at the manufacturer of the sign and see if maybe you could do some research?

Adam: I have not, no.

John Hodgman: No. 'Cause when you see this slow down sign, you go real fast, right?

(Adam confirms jokingly.)

Do we have an image of Franklin that we can take a look at? Show me Franklin! Yeeeah! Look at that. Oh no! I hate to say this, Kaelyn, but Adam's theory is starting to make a little bit of sense.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah. Judge Hodgman, to be Franklin, this looks a lot like that sign.

(They chuckle.)

John Hodgman: How dare you.

Kaelyn: I will say though that Franklin is not wearing pants and a shirt, like the child in the sign clearly has an outline of pants and a shirt.

Jesse Thorn: And I'm gonna be honest, Franklin looks proud that he's not wearing pants!

(They laugh.)

Kaelyn: That's true. That's real true.

John Hodgman: He's a turtle. All he needs is a hat and a jaunty kerchief.

Jesse Thorn: He's like, "Get load of what I ain't got!"

(They laugh.)

John Hodgman: Yeah, exactly. Right. He's not hiding anything in his shell.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: You are 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.

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Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

John Hodgman: Kaelyn, what happens when you're driving along—the two of you—and Adam sees the sign?

Kaelyn: Well, Adam and I both work from home. And so, typically a couple days a week at least, we have a walk that we go on. And so, we pass by the turtle regularly, both by ourselves on our walks and on our walks with our two kids. And he always greets the turtle out loud and says, “Hi, turtle.” And now it's become a ritual that he says, “Hi, turtle.”

John Hodgman: Oh, so it's only when you're walking through the neighborhood you see the sign?

Kaelyn: Correct. Correct. And I did not notice our pace changing at all upon Adam seeing the turtle.

John Hodgman: You didn't slow down at all.

Kaelyn: No. No, I did not.

John Hodgman: And Adam says—Adam, you say, “Hi, turtle”?

Adam: That's right. It's a friendly greeting to our friend. Who is—unfortunately, this specific one is tied up to a light post with a wire. So, I feel like this turtle deserves a little extra recognition.

John Hodgman: Does he have a name? Other than turtle?

Adam: No. I haven't asked, so I usually just greet with “Hi, turtle.”

Kaelyn: Wait, you haven't asked the turtle if the turtle has a name?!

Adam: I haven't! I think I should.

Jesse Thorn: I mean, he hasn't even looked at the manufacturer to find out if it's officially licensed.

(Adam concedes.)

John Hodgman: This isn't just between the two of you though, right? I understand there's a group chat going on around this?

Kaelyn: Yeah, that's true. Well, especially—it has come up in—well, multiple group chats now. This is maybe (*giggling*) like one of the top five issues in our marriage right now.

Adam: That's why we're on *John Hodgman*, the ultimate group chat.

Kaelyn: Yes, exactly. (*Laughs.*)

John Hodgman: It's one of the top five issues in your marriage. I'm very happy. I'm very happy for your marriage.

Kaelyn: Thank you. Thank you! But no, so I have texted my family's group chat, to which Adam is a party, because my parents like him more than any of their other children. So, this is my parents and my two siblings in addition to Adam. And posted the picture, and they are all squarely team child, with the exception of my dad who said that he reserves judgment and can, quote, "see both sides." And that earned him swift retribution in the group chat. I may have told him that this is how fascism wins, by people not taking a strong moral stand.

(They laugh.)

So, that escalated quickly.

John Hodgman: Uh-huh. And are you concerned that Adam is poisoning your kids' brains by talking to an obvious little human and calling it turtle?

Kaelyn: I am! Yes. Because we have an 18-month-old, and he is just learning to speak, and he's very spongy. I mean both physically, but like absorbency-wise. And so, every time he hears something, he tends to repeat it, and then he tends to repeat it a lot.

Jesse Thorn: You're essentially concerned that your younger child will repeat it. *(Singing.)* Turtle, turtle, turtle, turtle!

Kaelyn: Yeah. Something like that.

John Hodgman: Until the word has no meaning whatsoever?

Jesse Thorn: Yeah. Or until you filmed the film *Master of Disguise* starring Dana Carvey. *(Laughing.)*

John Hodgman: Ohhh, okay. That's an obscure reference that I did not get.

And I believe—speaking of filmed entertainment—you took a video of your kids talking about this sign?

Kaelyn: We did, yes. So, I quizzed them one day on a walk with the two kids to see what they thought it was—trying not to bias them too much. But yes, I did take a video.

John Hodgman: And can we review this video?

Kaelyn: Yeah.

Clip:

Kaelyn: Reid?

Reid: Yeah.

Kaelyn: Is that a turtle, or is that a person?

Reid: A person.

Kaelyn: Person!

Reid: That's a person!

Kaelyn: It's a person, okay. Not a turtle?

Reid: It's a person.

Kaelyn: How do you know? '

Reid: 'Cause it has a hat because. That means it's a person.

Kaelyn: Because it has a hat. That means it's a person. Great!

Jesse Thorn: Great! You get dinner tonight!

(They laugh.)

Adam: Now, I was not on that walk, so I can't vouch for what sort of treats she gave them before or after that video was taken.

Kaelyn: No treats!

John Hodgman: You're saying that this adorable video of your kids in strollers looking at this little sign and being really cute is a deep fake?

Adam: No, it's not a deep fake. I was just out with Reid yesterday, just the two of us, with that same sign. And I asked him what it was, and he said person. So.

Kaelyn: *(Smugly.)* Ha!

John Hodgman: Can you name any other turtle that wears a hat?

Adam: I feel like the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, at some point they were in disguise and must have put one on. I mean, I know they had the headband, but.

Kaelyn: Yeah. Headbands, not hats.

John Hodgman: Right. They're mutant turtles.

(Adam concedes.)

Jesse Thorn: Judge Hodgman. I've done some independent research. You know me.

John Hodgman: I'm so glad. How long have I been telling you to do your own research?

Jesse Thorn: Yeah, I searched on a popular e-commerce website—

John Hodgman: Yeah, me too.

Jesse Thorn: —for this particular sign. And I found a version of it. It's—for one thing—shockingly affordable at \$35 to my door. There's some really interesting information here.

[00:20:00]

I was surprised. I thought if I found, frankly, this sign, it would say—

John Hodgman: If you found Franklin this sign.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah. *(Laughs.)* If I found this sign, it would say like, “Kid playing in road sign.” First of all, it does not. It says, “Kids at play signage for neighborhood safety, reflective caution sign with warning flag.” It is described in the item specifics as yellow, but in the infographic that accompanies the item, it is described as having bright neon green coloring. So, disagreement on that front. And there is nothing about whether it is a turtle or a child in the description. It says that “the vibrant neon body and reflector belt are easily visible during twilight hours,” which is good. And that “the large slow sticker reminds drivers to reduce their speed,” although the example that we've seen in Virginia there does not have that sticker anymore. It also says, and I thought this was very interesting, “While this sign alerts drivers to children playing, we have to keep teaching our children about pedestrian safety.”

John Hodgman: We must! This is not the end-all and be-all of pedestrian safety.

Jesse Thorn: No, this doesn't solve things. I mean, is this number one in industrial warning signs? Yes.

(They laugh.)

But it's still not enough.

John Hodgman: Well, Jesse, I did my own research too at one point during our conversation. I also searched up the sign on a popular e-commerce website, but I got to it from a certain way. Do you know what I did? This was the first result that popped up when I entered into the search bar “slow down turtle sign”.

(Jesse “wow”s.)

And this was what popped up. That said, when I went to this listing for—I dare say that there are many corporations in many corners of other countries; a lot of international relations are going on to bring these cheap signs to our—not our doorsteps—well, our doorsteps first, and then our driveway-ends later. And the description on this particular manufacturer says, “This kit at play safety sign is an effective tool for neighborhood streets. It features a friendly 32-inch-tall man holding a red warning flag.” Which, frankly, is a third option that I hadn't considered.

(They laugh.)

Jesse Thorn: Very small man?

John Hodgman: A very small, 32-inch-tall man. Which is, frankly, terrifying.

Jesse Thorn: Judge Hodgman, speaking of my independent research on this matter: my brother-in-law, Dan Hosfeld—I like to use his full name just in case folks know Dan. He's a wonderful man. He's also an environmental scientist and a former turtle professional. He was literally paid to identify turtles. I texted Dan with a picture of the sign and the question, “Is this a turtle?”

Are you prepared to hear the answer that he sent back?

John Hodgman: Gimme a sec. Okay. I'm ready.

Jesse Thorn: “Wow,” comma, “Yes.”

(A gasp.)

John Hodgman: Kaelyn, you have to acknowledge this is a pretty turtley child. I mean, you can understand why Adam might have a difference of opinion here, right?

Adam: She's shellshocked right now.

Kaelyn: Now I definitely don't have to acknowledge anything!

(They chuckle.)

John Hodgman: Yeah, now that's exactly right. You can immediately begin divorce proceedings.

Jesse Thorn: You don't even have to acknowledge your wedding vows.

John Hodgman: I've never— I've only ever married one couple, but I've offered to divorce many. And if you would like one, I'll bang the gavel right now.

Kaelyn: I'll keep it in mind. Thanks. I mean, yes. I can see how one might think that is the other option. But to me, I mean it is bipedal. It has opposable thumbs. It's holding a flag.

John Hodgman: Like Franklin! Like Franklin.

Kaelyn: I don't if Franklin has thumbs, but alright. But I mean, your point about it being a subliminal message to tell people to slow down, I think it makes far more sense if it's just a child telling people that there might be children around. That seems like a more direct, logical link to what we want people to do from the sign. So, in addition, I think it looks like a kid with a hat, with a backpack. I think it just makes more sense from a next steps perspective for it to be a child.

John Hodgman: Adam, have you found anyone or any evidence to confirm or back up your idea that this is a turtle?

Adam: Uh you know, I think part of the issue is that—

[00:25:00]

I'm fully willing to say if Kailyn wants to think it's a child, I think it could be a child. It's possible. I think the issue here is that she thinks it's nigh on impossible that it could be a turtle. That's what I'm sort of proposing here. So.

John Hodgman: Yeah. But that's also not a yes or a no to my yes or no question. Do you have anyone else that who agrees with you?

Adam: Other people agree with me, yes.

John Hodgman: Who?!

Adam: (*Stammering.*) The inter—the—

Jesse Thorn: Lots of people, John! Everybody's been talking about it, and everybody agrees.

Adam: Yes. I think part of it too is that there's—I think there's perhaps a minority of people who first see it as a turtle, but there are a lot many more people—

John Hodgman: What evidence do you have that anyone sees this as a turtle?

Adam: Well, I think when you say it's a turtle, often people say, "Oh! I never thought of it that way, but I can see how it is a turtle." So, hopefully, you know, your wonderful listeners—

John Hodgman: That's the Heisenberg Uncertainty Turtle. You're affecting the reaction by suggesting! Asking a leading question. Does that look like a turtle?

Let me ask you a question. Can you see Joel Mann right now?

(Adam confirms.)

Does he look like a turtle?

Adam: He does not.

John Hodgman: No, you're wrong. He looks an awful lot like a turtle.

Joel Mann: Turtle Mann.

John Hodgman: Yeah, a tortoise, I would say.

Jesse Thorn: I'm worried that I'm a turtle, because of my rounded back.

John Hodgman: Adam, why did you leave it to Kaelyn to produce a witness on your behalf?

Adam: It's because I have so much trust in my wonderful wife that she would be very honest and bring that out if it was out there. So.

John Hodgman: Kaelyn, you told our producer, Jennifer, that Adam likes to, quote, "repeat a joke," end quote. What do you mean by that?

Kaelyn: I mean that Adam is a very good-humored person. Loves the art of the pun maybe more than I love the art of the pun. But he has a couple of go-to's that he tends to stand by. So, the turtle is kind of one. I think it's become like an inside joke lore with us.

John Hodgman: It's a bit. It's a bit.

Kaelyn: Yeah, it's a bit. It's a bit. We repeat it. Anytime—which happens shockingly often in our lives—a goat is mentioned, something becomes "hard to bleat". We're talking like that level kind of stuff that—I know and can predict when he's gonna have a joke.

John Hodgman: Adam, what's your go-to joke about a goat?

Adam: Oh, if we hear something about it, I say, “Oh, that must be hard to bleat.” And then I give that eel face meme—or the eel face from the meme, where you go, “Ah? Ah?” And then sometimes Kaelyn reacts, and then sometimes she doesn't.

Kaelyn: No, he doesn't just give the face. You go, “Ah, ah?” Or often you will say, “That was funny,” as though to instruct me how to respond to the bit.

John Hodgman: Adam, lemme ask you this question. When you pass the turtle with your family, you say, “Hi, turtle.” Do you ever do it when you're by yourself?

Adam: Every time. I think this gets the idea of, you know, it's a sign of character is doing the right thing when no one else is looking. So, I wanna make sure that the turtle has good cheer even when no one else is around.

(They chuckle.)

John Hodgman: So, I was about to say, oh, so you're not just doing this—this is not the kind of dad joke that you repeat simply to annoy your family? Now I realize it's a dad joke you repeat to also annoy me.

Adam: *(Laughs.)* I think it's also to amuse myself. I'm very good at amusing myself.

John Hodgman: Is that true, Kaelyn?

Kaelyn: Yeah. One time Adam had a boss who told him that Adam was the person most capable of entertaining himself of anyone he had ever met.

(Jesse chortles.)

John Hodgman: Kaelyn, have you recommended to Adam's boss that Adam be replaced by with AI? You're an expert.

Kaelyn: Uh, *(laughs)* I have not, but it's a suggestion I'll consider.

John Hodgman: Adam, even though AI is approaching very swiftly, I don't believe that this sign has achieved sentience. The singularity is not given this 32-inch turtle man a conscience—or a consciousness, I should say. You acknowledge that, right?

Adam: Yes.

John Hodgman: Okay. We're just not—we're not in a place where you actually believe that this thing has feelings in real life?

Adam: Not in real life, no.

John Hodgman: Okay, got it. And your belief that it is a turtle is a genuine belief, right? Or is it genuine using to wind up Kaelyn and annoy her and for your own amusement?

Adam: No, she was just very surprised the first time I told her that it was a turtle. She was, I think, genuinely shocked.

Kaelyn: I was.

John Hodgman: And Kaelyn, what's the harm here? I mean, look, I think that we've acknowledged that some people think it's a turtle. More people don't, but some do. And Adam's just having a bit of fun. So, why are we in court over this? Why would you like him to stop?

Kaelyn: Yeah. Well, first of all, because I want our kids to be able to—I was gonna say make up their own mind, but really I want them to make the right choice, which is the choice that I want them to make. Which is, you know. And second, I think what bothers me a little bit about this is that Adam, I don't know if he's fighting for the turtality of the figure. I think you're more fighting for the ambiguity of it all.

[00:30:00]

It could be a turtle; it could be a person. And the fact that Adam is someone who has, in almost all areas of life, very sound judgment and a very structured way of thinking about things—I mean, he has a quarterly seasonal Costco shopping list, for example. But the fact that this is the thing that you're throwing caution to the wind with and being really chaotic about, I find it destabilizing. Because it doesn't seem like you. Like, it feels very weird and unsettling to me.

John Hodgman: Is your argument that the Costco shopping list is evidence of Adam's otherwise sort of sober financial-plannery kind of lack of whimsy, or what?

Kaelyn: Yeah, it's more—I don't trust that he's arguing that it's a turtle as opposed to a person. I think he's just arguing for the ambiguity of it all, and that feels very destabilizing to me. Because in all other areas of his life, he is very decisive and very clear and very rational, and this just seems like an aberration that I don't like. (*Chuckles.*)

John Hodgman: Adam, how do you respond to that? Are you exploring ambiguity in this one area of your life, where the rest of your life is cut and dry?

Adam: No! I mean, I held this for years! Ever since I had first seen one of these, I had instantly thought it was a turtle. And so, I genuinely said that one day. And Kaelyn was, as I said, shellshocked to see this happen.

John Hodgman: You didn't have to do that again, Adam.

Kaelyn: He repeats the bits. I told you!

John Hodgman: Right. He's—no, that's right. He goes back to the bits. It's back to the bits. So, Kaelyn, if I were to rule in your favor— Obviously, you want me to compel Adam to acknowledge that this is not a turtle, but a 32-inch-tall man. And you want me to forbid him from having a relationship with this sign anymore, right?

Kaelyn: Well, he can still have a relationship with the sign. Also, I would be okay with child, as opposed to 32-inch-tall, red flag waving man. But yes, I would like it to be universally decided that this is a child or at least a humanoid. And I would—but I don't want to prohibit him from saying, “Hi, turtle” to it, especially on his own time. I want him to be able to have that own little ray of joy in his own little bit.

John Hodgman: He can say, “Hi, turtle” in silence.

Kaelyn: He can say, “Hi, turtle” out loud. Alone. *(Laughs.)*

John Hodgman: Alone. Right.

Kaelyn: Yes.

Adam: The neighbors might listen.

John Hodgman: Thus, exploring yet another paradox. If Adam says, “Hi, turtle” alone in the road, does anyone hear it?

Kaelyn: Yeah. Depends on how fast people are driving by, I suppose.

John Hodgman: Adam, you want to obviously keep calling it a turtle, but you also want me to force Kaelyn to admit that it is a turtle. That's what it says here.

Adam: Well, I don't wanna force her to do anything, especially anything that makes her feel uncomfortable. And I'm perfectly willing to let her call it a child. I can definitely see how it's childlike, perhaps. So, I think first— Yeah, I would like to be able to continue to call it a turtle. But you know, my whole goal too as well was that your wonderful listenership right now in their car or on their walk is saying, “Huh! You know, it could be a turtle now that I think about it.” So, if you ruled against me, you might have to pull that one back too.

John Hodgman: You're trying to spread this ambiguity into our listeners minds like a kind of brain virus. Now that you've thoroughly discombobulated your wife, you want to attack our—

(Adam laughs.)

Ahat does it look like to you right now, Joel? A turtle or a little person?

Joel Mann: Let's just call it turtle boy.

John Hodgman: Turtle boy. Joel's always looking for the third way.

I wanna return to something. Kaelyn, you used the term destabilizing. Tell me a little bit more about that.

Kaelyn: Yeah, because I think Adam, with this, is kind of trying to spread a little bit of ambiguity. He wants it—I don't know that he firmly and truly believes that is a turtle as much as he just wants it to be an open question. And he is very decisive and very clear and very structured in his decision making in all other parts of life. So, the fact that this is where he wants to be kind of a chaos Muppet is weird to me, and I don't like it.

John Hodgman: It doesn't—and how would you describe the feeling in terms of rollercoaster terms?

Kaelyn: Yeah. I mean it's definitely kind of like a pit of the stomach thing. A pit of the stomach, followed by an inversion really fast, so you don't really have time to recover.

John Hodgman: Right. Adam, what do you think about that? When you hear Kaelyn say that, how does that make you feel?

Adam: Well. I mean, I don't want her to feel discombobulated in any means or have the, you know, pit of the stomach the next time we're on a rollercoaster together. But I'm pretty certain it's a turtle. I mean, I can be pretty firm in that, at least from my point of view. But given, as you've seen from, you know, popular retail websites and elsewhere, there seems to not be one definitive answer on what this is. So, I'm willing to leave it open and not just stand on my ground, as it were.

[00:35:00]

John Hodgman: But you're not doing this—I mean, you say you don't want to discombobulate your wife, which is good. But you're not going back to this bit because the enjoyment for you is getting her goat?

Adam: No, no. The enjoyment of me is having a turtle to say hello.

John Hodgman: I think I've heard everything I need to in order to make my decision. I'm going to, uh—I'm gonna tuck my head into my shell. I'm going to contemplate my decision. I'll be back to 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.)

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

Kaelyn: I'm feeling okay. I mean, I see the argument of the turtle-ish nature of this, but I hope I've made the case that it makes sense that it is a child, and it also makes sense for us to resolve this once and for all.

Jesse Thorn: How does it feel to be in conflict with my brother-in-law, Dan, who's one of the best guys?

Kaelyn: Not great, but I feel like our relationship can recover from that.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah, he's very good at reconciliation, I imagine.

Kaelyn: I'm glad to hear that.

Jesse Thorn: Adam, how are you feeling?

Adam: Good! As I said, I think I've already gotten a small victory by getting a couple of, "Huh! Maybe this is a turtle." I think we've— And I really appreciate the work that you and the judge have done to bring in additional evidence here, which I think was hopefully supportive to my side.

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

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Promo:

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

John Moe: Hey, it's John Moe from *Depresh Mode*. Every week on our show, we have honest, humane conversations with artists, entertainers, and experts about what it's like to live with an interesting mind. I just interviewed Gavin Rossdale from the band Bush. You might be wondering: what would a successful, handsome, popular musician know about mental health? Turns out, lots!

Gavin Rossdale: All the time, we're like—we're forced into happy situations, sad situations, challenging situations—happy, sad, challenging. And it just never ends! And why should it? You know, we're just the sum of all these journeys.

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

(Music ends.)

Promo:

Brenda Snell: Have you been looking for a new podcast all about nerdy pop culture? Well, I have just the thing for you!

(Voice echoing.) Secret Histories of Nerd Mysteries!

Music: Upbeat rock music.

Austin Taylor: *Secret Histories of Nerd Mysteries* in a weekly pop culture history podcast, hosted by me: Host Austin.

Brenda: And me! Host Brenda. We've already tackled mysteries such as: What happened to the puppets from *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*? Is Snoopy Mexican? And why do people hate Barney so much?

Austin: From theme parks to cartoons; to '80s, '90s, and 2000s nostalgia, we tackle it all!

Brenda: Check us out every Tuesday on MaximumFun.org and wherever you get podcasts.

(Music fades out.)

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: Judge Hodgman, I'm coming to San Francisco, California. So, if there are San Franciscans out there—or look, I'll accept San Mateons, Redwood City-ites, Richmonders, Marin City residents, San Rafaelers. I'm not just gonna keep listing towns in the San Francisco Bay area, I promise. *(Chuckles.)* But Jordan, my cohost on *Jordan, Jesse, Go!*, and I are coming to San Francisco on August 22nd. We'll be at the Eclectic Box in the Mission District. Literally, this theater is three blocks from my childhood home. *(Laughs.)*

(John "wow!"s.)

Yeah. Tickets are available at MaximumFun.org/events. MaximumFun.org/events. It's a little, tiny theater, so get those tickets quickly. And I hope that we will see you there for an intimate experience. Our friend Ashkon is joining us on the program, as well as some comics, celebrities. 'Cause Jordan is gonna be at Cape and Cowl Con in the East Bay. So, it's gonna be a really great—it's gonna be a really great time.

I think, John, we're gonna do a show that is all Reddit. Just gonna be all— We started doing this show during the MaxFun Drive that was just us alternating showing each other Reddits. (*Chuckles.*) And man, I am excited to give Jordan a tour through r/ladders, a subreddit for ladder enthusiasts.

John Hodgman: (*Laughs.*) I believe that it was your recommendation of the subreddit on magnet fishing and also the subreddit concerning dogs on roofs that opened up the world of Reddit to me. Yeah.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah. Jordan is a big r/rootbeer guy. (*Laughing.*) I don't think he even drinks root beer. He just likes that— One time—one time in r/rootbeer, there was a post that was like, “I'm drinking a cream soda right now. Any love for cream soda in here?”

And he went into the comments, ready for like, “Oh my god, this is all—”

John Hodgman: (*Unclear*) all these rootbeer people?

[00:40:00]

Jesse Thorn: Yeah. And then just all the comments were like, “Yeah, I love cream soda!” (*Laughs.*)

John, speaking of beverages, one of the top topics on your show, *E Pluribus Motto*: state beverages? I love hearing about that.

John Hodgman: I get annoyed every week that I record *E Pluribus Motto* with our friend Janet Varney—which is, of course, about the mottos, mammals, monsters, and more of every state, district and territory in the union—when I remember that out of the 33 or so states that have an official state beverage, 28 or something are milk. And I'm gonna give you a spoiler for this upcoming episode that's coming out next week, because you will not be surprised that the official state beverage of Wisconsin, America's Dairyland—sure enough—is milk. So, that's a milk spoiler for you!

But we've got so many fun facts and tidbits and interesting bits of history with regard to Wisconsin that I'm sure you'll enjoy. *E Pluribus Motto*, Wisconsin edition. Coming up after that, Kentucky. Then we go on to DC, Philadelphia, Nevada—well, Pennsylvania, I should say—Nevada, and many more in this season two of our road trip through the state mottos, mammals, monsters, and more. It's all on *E Pluribus Motto*, from only Maximum Fun at MaximumFun.org.

Jesse Thorn: We were in the studio the other day when a combination of various federal forces occupied the park outside our office. It was really upsetting to have armored troop carriers rolling into your neighborhood. That has continued here in Los Angeles, and I think it has only redoubled our commitment to supporting migrants in North America through an organization called Al Otro Lado.

I got an email the other day from one of our mutual friends, the great Elizabeth Gilbert. I had just seen Liz a couple weeks ago, 'cause I recorded an interview about her wonderful new memoir. And it's always just such a delight. You know, Elizabeth Gilbert; she's a beloved author because of how delightful she is.

John Hodgman: She's just a—I mean, a terrific writer, thinker, sharer.

Jesse Thorn: Amazing human being.

John Hodgman: She's a luminous person.

Jesse Thorn: And I got an email the other day from Liz that said, “I heard about you and John's fundraiser for Al Otro Lado. Would it be okay if I offered a \$25,000 matching grant?”

And I said, “No!” *(Chuckles.)* Nah, of course I said yes, John. *(Laughing.)* It would be really weird if I said no! It would be really weird.

So, if you go to AlOtroLado.org/letsdosomething—and that link is in the show description for this episode right there in your podcast app—you can support Al Otro Lado and Liz will match your support up to \$25,000.

Al Otro Lado, among other things, is providing Know Your Rights training for people in immigration detention on both sides of the border. They are offering refugee rights training to people who do not speak Spanish in Mexico City. Many people come from all over the world into Mexico in order to get refugee status in Mexico and the United States. And they need help. There are a lot of—for example—Haitians who speak French or Haitian Creole. And Al Otro Lado provides legal training for them in the language that they speak. They're a really awesome organization, and we hope that you will join us and join Liz in supporting them at AlOtroLado.org/letsdosomething.

John Hodgman: Thanks to Liz's generosity and yours, you now have a chance to make more of an impact than ever by donating to Al Otro Lado. It's a really, really important moment in history where we have to do what's right, and I hope that you'll join us in supporting this incredible organization. What's that website again, Jesse?

Jesse Thorn: AlOtroLado.org/letsdosomething. A-L O-T-R-O L-A-D-O dot org/letsdosomething. Alright, 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: When I first read the description of this case, when Jennifer Marmor first presented the brief to me, I did not need to see a photograph of the sign in question, 'cause I knew it in my mind's eye immediately. I knew exactly what it was, in part because there was the question, "Is this a turtle?" I'm like, oh yeah, it's that child that kind of looks like a turtle. I mean, I don't want to double gaslight you, Adam. There is turtleness to this. The sloped back, the rounded head, even the Franklin-like hat!

[00:45:00]

I knew exactly what it was, and yet I am not yet prepared to say it is a turtle. Because it also is a 32-inch man and a human child. It is all of these things. And I wonder if that's maybe the point. I remember driving in Maine—oh, probably 20 years ago; the only time I ever saw a moose. You ever see a moose, Joel?

(Joel confirms.)

What's that like? Fun?

Joel Mann: No.

(John agrees.)

No. Very up close. Not fun at all.

John Hodgman: Wouldn't you say destabilizing?

Joel Mann: *(Chuckling.)* Yes, very much so.

John Hodgman: I mean, *(chuckles)* I saw many a sign, "Slow down for moose, slow down for moose, slow down for moose." And then I saw something really alarming, which was right next to the road. This was on the airline between Bangor and Calais. The road—this highway is called the airline, 'cause it's up high in the sky. It goes straight. Airline. And I saw a statue of a moose. And I'm like, "Well, that is very irresponsible in an area where I'm being constantly warned to watch out for moose, to put a gigantic, highly realistic statue of a moose right next to the road?!" I hit the brakes hard! I'm like, "This is not cool!"

And then that statue was not a statue. It moved. It was a moose. It lumbered across the road. I'd guess it was probably 30 feet tall! I've never seen a more alien, extraterrestrial-looking creature in my life. In that case, it did happen to be a moose. But it was that ambiguity between "is that a moose or a statue?" My brain had difficulty processing it—and far more effectively than those signs saying, "Hey, stupid, there's a moose coming up," that actual moose made me slow down. *(Chuckles.)* Because my brain couldn't imagine seeing it.

And that's what these little creatures are trying to do to passing motorists. Yes, it's optic yellow or neon green. Yes, it's a little child. Or maybe it's a 32-inch man, or maybe it's a turtle. Yes, it's all of these things and nothing at all. It is unidentifiable. It is terrifying. It has

no mouth; it has no nose. It's wired to a tree. You're gonna slow down, 'cause your brain is trying to process what is that thing? You're not reacting to the word "slow" on its shorts or its red flag. You're reacting to this strange, semi-human, semi-turtley form. And I don't know whether this company actually is copyright infringing upon Franklin, the cartoon turtle. But it is wearing a little red hat, just like Franklin is! And you're not wrong there either, Adam.

I hate to say that your arguments are this good after you made that shellshock joke, but there are pretty good arguments to be made here. One opportunity to defend yourself was when I asked, "Can you think of a different turtle that has a hat on it?" And you're like no. I'm like, "You can't? What about Tippi Turtle from *Saturday Night Live*? Joel, you remember that Tippi Turtle cartoon from *Saturday Night Live*?"

(Joel does not.)

(Singing.) "Hey, Tippi Turtle, walking down the street. Tell us what you're gonna do."

(Doing a dopey, low-pitched turtle voice.) "First, I'm gonna bother everybody I meet. Then I'll probably go home and get drunk."

(They laugh.)

It was a little animation. I always think about it. It sticks in my mind! Much like the memory of this weird, little creature. And! Even more the ambiguity is that my brain—and I wasn't joking about this—after I saw this, before you mentioned Franklin and his jaunty kerchief, my brain did see a kerchief on this turtle boy that I saw in Maine, not two days ago. Manifested in the world, perhaps, 'cause I was thinking—I put it out there into the universe that I wanted to see one of these things. And sure enough, it popped up, and I remember it wearing a kerchief.

I appreciate that this is destabilizing to you, Kaelyn, and it's upsetting. And I'm arguing that is exactly what this sign is designed to do. It is to destabilize, to arrest the imagination for a moment, to make a driver worry that they're about to drive over either an optic green human child or a neon yellow anthropomorphic turtle. Either way, you're probably gonna slow down! I would say that the whole argument as to whether it is one or the other is pointless, because this is one of those things—as Iris DeMent sings of—where you have to let the mystery be, because the point of the sign is mystery. What is this thing?

Now, if I were to go to whatever manufacturer is selling this thing—I mean, I think there are dozens of manufacturers of this nontrademarked image—you would probably have dozens of answers as to what this thing is supposed to be. That red hat! Boy, it sure does look like Franklin the turtle.

So, in terms of your marriage, I don't believe that Adam is consciously gaslighting you by saying, "You're out of your mind. That is obviously a turtle." As what I hear from Adam is there is an interpretation, a supportable interpretation, that there is turtleness to this creature, that this humanoid has turtley qualities, and that there are many humanoid turtles in cartoon

history, and this resembles one of them. And because I don't think that there is malice in this or that he is trying to get your goat, in this regard, I find Adam innocent.

And in terms of your children understanding what this is, it is true that you have profound power as a parent to shape your kids' understanding of the world. I could have raised a child—in fact, I could have raised two children!—to believe without question that Tom Waits is great.

(Joel laughs softly.)

Listen to Joel chuckling over there. You don't like Tom Waits either, Joel?

Joel Mann: No, I do.

John Hodgman: Yeah. I love Tom Waits. Tom Waits is terrific. I'm just saying that there is that power to raise a child with your precise taste and your precise world view and everything else. But like other good, responsible parents, I want to introduce my children to a world in which there is an objective reality, and words have meaning, and things have names, but also allow them to form their own opinions. And the reality is, I think Kaelyn, is that when you asked your child, “What is that?”—you know, you can hear it on the video, in my opinion, that when you asked your daughter, “Is that a turtle or a human?”, even Leah had to think about it. It was a thinker. And Leah grasped for something that was very plain. There is a hat on there. Humans wear hats. Thank God-or-Whatever, we can eliminate this ambiguity for the moment.

But I don't think that there is a solid answer one way or the other. I don't even think the manufacturer knows. I don't know why this exists. If you're the person out there who designed this weird creature, good job. 'Cause we're all talking about it. 'Cause it's, you know, sublime in the classic definition of it, which is that your brain cannot completely comprehend it. It is the equivalent of a Lovecraftian old god. Your brain is not meant to understand this thing. This is a creature from beyond the Eldridge horror, manifest on earth to try to get you to slow down and not hit an actual child—or for that matter, an actual turtle.

So, where does that leave my ruling? Well, I'm going to say that the turtleness or the humanness of this figure is purposefully unsettled and unsettling. In terms of how Adam should behave himself going forward, I would ask Adam—and indeed, order—that he acknowledge the ambiguity of this creature.

Or it is neither turtle nor human. And do you know who else is neither turtle nor human? Precisely because he is fictional? Franklin, the humanoid turtle! I want Adam to have joy in his life and to greet this thing. But turtle? (*Unclear*), turtle, it's too specific. Honor the ambiguity. When you pass by this thing in the future, you're gonna go, (*singing*) “Hey, it's Franklin!”

This is the sound of a gavel.

Clip:

Music: “Hey, It’s Franklin!” by Bruce Cockburn, the theme song to the cartoon *Franklin*.

Hey, it's Franklin!

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.)

Kaelyn, how do you feel right now?

Kaelyn: I feel pretty good. I feel at least taken very seriously about the cosmic nature of this very, very petty dispute. And I feel like this is a fine resolution. And Adam has a delightful singing voice, so I can't wait to hear that every time we pass one of these on our walk.

Jesse Thorn: Adam, how do you feel?

Adam: I was just gonna say, “Shell yeah!” Because I think this brought a lot—

John Hodgman: *(Urgently interrupting.)* I take it back! Un-gaveled! Whomp, whomp, whomp!

Clip:

Music: “Hey, It’s Franklin!” played backwards.

[00:55:00]

Jesse Thorn: Please tell me you were gonna say that, but you decided not to say that.

Adam: Yes, I wanted to if it had been fully in my favor, but I think the judge's ruling was quite fair in the ambiguity here. And I like the idea of letting our kids think creatively about any other anthropomorphized items we see in the future.

Jesse Thorn: Can we hear a little singing?

Adam: “Hey, It’s Franklin!”

Jesse Thorn: Kaelyn, how long until John and I are obsolete?

Kaelyn: I don't know. We got at least a couple of weeks, I think!

Jesse Thorn: (*Laughs.*) That's good to hear! Thank you, Adam and Kaelyn, for joining us on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

Kaelyn: Thank you.

Adam: Thank you.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: Another *Judge John Hodgman* case is in the books! In just a second, we'll have Swift Justice. First, our thanks to Redditor u/kmack for naming this week's episode, “Turtle Power of Attorney”. If you wanna join us on Reddit, it's r/MaximumFun. That is where we name these cases, and we also chat about the cases. You can always suggest a title. You can always enjoy the other titles that people suggest.

Evidence and photos from the show, you can find on our Instagram account at [@JudgeJohnHodgman](#). You can also find them at [MaximumFun.org](#) on this episode’s page. You can also find us on TikTok and YouTube, where there is full video of this case and every episode, at [@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod](#). So, subscribe there. We're having a good time on YouTube there.

John Hodgman: Yeah! We're having a wonderful time over there on YouTube. [@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod](#) is the name of the channel. We recently posted a little video there asking you to be the judge: which kind of pizza should be eliminated from pizzadom forever? Pineapple pizza, deep dish pizza, or hot honey pizza? Which one gets kicked outta the pizza club forever? And guess what most people voted, Jesse? Can you guess? What would you vote out?

Jesse Thorn: I would vote out— I've never had hot honey pizza, but that's what I would vote out. I really like deep dish pizza. I like standard dish pizza as well. (*Laughs.*)

John Hodgman: Weeell, too bad for you. You can never have it again, 'cause it doesn't exist anymore. 'Cause our viewers judged it “not pizza”, and it is now banned forever.

Jesse Thorn: They kicked it out over hot honey and pineapple?!

John Hodgman: Yeah, they kicked it right out. But if you dispute that defining, go over there to the YouTube channel, [@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod](#). We might pick your comment as the comment of the week. And indeed, Waiting For Jerm left a comment over there on YouTube. That's J-E-R-M. I think they're waiting for Jeremy, not waiting for a germ to come

and make them sick, I hope. But Waiting For Jerm left a comment that said, “Pizza snobbism, that's the real problem. You wanna discuss the true abomination? Everything people call poké is just ocean salad.”

Join us over there on YouTube for more opportunities to be the judge. You can watch our full episodes there as well. As you can see right now, if you're watching, we film 'em all! And we post 'em right up there, over there at [@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod](#). They premier every Wednesday at 9AM Pacific, 12PM Eastern. And while you're over there, won't you please subscribe, like, and share an episode with a friend? It's very simple. Just press that little arrow button. It's one of the ways that people discover new podcasts, and it really helps the show. So, thanks!

Jesse Thorn: *Judge John Hodgman* was created by Jesse Thorn and John Hodgman. This episode, engineered by Rob Ford at Podville Media in Washington, DC. 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, Swift Justice. You ready for this, John?

John Hodgman: I am ready.

Jesse Thorn: Oxford Tetherball on the MaxFun subreddit says, “When my partner shares a contact from their phone, they text a screenshot of the contact entry. They won't share it as a v-card or copy and text the phone number. I don't wanna flip back and forth as I manually dial the number. Help!”

John Hodgman: Yeah. I don't know what your partner's prob is.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah, this is dark behavior!

(They chuckle.)

John Hodgman: That's really—that's that borders on cruelty, frankly. Screenshots are great. I liked a lot of evidence that way. But it's pretty easy to share a contact. Why don't you just do it the way it is designed to do it?

Jesse Thorn: We're eager to hear all your disputes on any subject, no matter how big or small that dispute is. Go to MaximumFun.org/jjho, fill out that little form, and send it in to us, because we can't judge it unless we see it. So, please drop us a line, and we'll talk to you next time on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

[01:00:00]

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!