

[00:00:00]

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Monte Belmonte: Welcome to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. I'm your humble, autumnal guest bay-leaf (*bailiff*) peeper, Monte Belmonte—sitting in for Jesse Thorn. This week, “Pro-Betamax Court”.

(*Adopting a dramatic movie trailer narrator voice.*) In a world where physical media has been replaced by ephemeral digital technology—

John Hodgman: Oh boy. Here we go.

Monte Belmonte: Tyler still believes DVDs are, uh, (*referencing The Maltese Falcon*) the stuff that dreams are made of!

(*Referencing Brokeback Mountain.*) I wish I knew how to quit you, VHS!

(*Referencing Network.*) And Abby is mad as hell, and she's not gonna take it anymore!

(*Returning to his usual voice.*) Abby brings the case against her husband Tyler. Tyler wants Abby to keep all 450 of his physical movies when he dies.

(*Referencing Rocky IV.*) If he dies, he dies.

Tyler says, (*referencing Sudden Impact*) “Go ahead, take my... *Babe 2: Pig in the City* on laser disc.”

(*Referencing Gone With the Wind.*) But frankly, my dear, Abby doesn't give a damn. She isn't a movie person!

And nobody puts Abby in a corner. (*Dirty Dancing.*)

She says this collection will be wasted with her. Hasta la vista, Blu-ray. (*Terminator 2: Judgement Day.*) She thinks Tyler's family and his little friend (*Scarface*) would enjoy the collection much more than she would, but Tyler is scared that the memory of him will be relegated to a long time ago and a galaxy far away. (*Star Wars.*)

He thinks his vast selection of movies will be the best way for Abby to stay connected to him when he's on the other side. I see dead people. (*Sixth Sense.*) Who's right? Who's wrong? Who's good, who's bad, who's ugly? (*Does the whistle and a bar of the musical stinger from The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly.*) 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: Humble, autumnal guest bay-leaf peeper, Monte Belmonte. I forgot that you are a living embodiment of a Billy Crystal intro to the Oscars.

Monte Belmonte: *(Cackles.)* That is the nicest thing anyone has ever said to me!

John Hodgman: *(Dryly.)* That's wild. Alright, uh, what are we doing? Obscure cultural reference? Is that what I'm doing now?

Monte Belmonte: Yes. That's what you're doing. Yes.

John Hodgman: *(Muttering to himself.)* Yes. I forgot what I'm even doing here.

Alright. Here's the obscure cultural reverence. “Your family's willingness to debate topics at the dinner table rather than speak plainly about their lives and their feelings, that is keeping everyone at a safe distance from their own emotions. And perhaps you have inherited that to a degree. And so, you feel more comfortable talking to people about hypothetical situations or cultural references or whatever, rather than simply saying, ‘I don't know what an actuary does. I'm married to one. Can you explain it to me?’”

Bailiff Monte Belmonte. Please swear them in.

Monte Belmonte: Tyler Durden and Abby Normal.

John Hodgman: *(Tiredly.)* No.

Monte Belmonte: Please rise and raise your right hands.

Now, leave the gun. Take the cannoli. Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth—EVEN THOUGH YOU CAN'T HANDLE THE TRUTH!—so help you David Lynch or whatever?

(They swear.)

Do you swear to abide by Judge John Hodgman's ruling despite the fact that a copy of *Pitch Perfect II* starring John Hodgman, which John Hodgman gave me himself, is the Blu-ray that we use to test our projection equipment at the monthly double-feature movie night called Cinema Storm that we have at the Shea Theater in Turner's Falls, shameless plug?

(They swear.)

Judge Hodgman, you may proceed.

John Hodgman: Abby and Tyler, you may be seated.

(Chairs squeak.)

Hey, Abby and Tyler, you wanna just go get like a cup of coffee or something at this point? 'Cause I feel like the podcast is over.

(They laugh.)

Tyler: That was amazing!

Abby: I'm not following a lot of what's going on right now.

Monte Belmonte: Unsurprising.

Tyler: High art.

John Hodgman: Yeah. Wowie. Wowie McGowie. And by the way, super-editor AJ McKeon, keep all that stuff about Billy Crystal in at the top.

(Monte laughs.)

In fact, edit none of this. 'Cause this is a fun reunion show! Not only do I get to re-une with the regular J squad—Jennifer Marmor and Daniel Speer and Annie Lopez and AJ McKeon and all of our friends at Maximum Fun, but also! Guest bailiff Monte Belmonte is back again for an autumnal visit. How's your cozy goth going, Monte? How's your autumn going so far?

Monte Belmonte: So far so good. The colors are lovely. Got a little bit of rain this last week, which we needed.

John Hodgman: What's the foliage like in western mass right now, Western Massachusetts where you live?

Monte Belmonte: I'm gonna say, you know, early to mid-October it's gonna be peak. So, there's some beautiful things, depending on when you're listening to this. But yeah, I'm looking forward to even more beautiful colors. But there are some beautiful colors already out.

John Hodgman: You wanna check out those beautiful leaves, go to Monte Belmonte country out there in Turner's Falls, Western Massachusetts. Go see a show at the Shea. Go listen to Monte every afternoon on New England public media. *The Fabulous 413* is the radio program. If you don't know who Monte is, we'll be talking a little bit more to him and about him later. But now let's get into the case.

Welcome back to the show! As I say, this is not just a reunion for me and Monte, but this is a repeat.

[00:05:00]

You are repeat offenders here in the court of Judge John Hodgman. And so, I ask you— You know the score. How do you win? Well, you guess the obscure cultural reference, if you can! Which one of you will get an immediate summary judgment by guessing the obscure cultural reference? Abby, you bring the case. So, let's throw it to Tyler first.

Tyler: Okay. So, it sounds familiar, but I really—(*sighs*). I feel like I just watched something with this in it, but I can't remember. So, I'm gonna use one of my—

John Hodgman: Well, what did you watch most recently?

Tyler: Most recently, I did watch *The Blood of a Poet* last night.

John Hodgman: *The Blood of a Poet*. I've never heard of it. What is it?

Tyler: It's sort of like a surrealist French short film. I think they're called soundies.

John Hodgman: You know *30 Rock* is on, right?

(*The others laugh.*)

(*Unclear.*)

Monte Belmonte: Love that show.

Tyler: Well, okay. So, if we want the last thing that most people have seen, (*chuckles*) this is not like a shameless plug; it was *Dicktown*.

(*John “ohhhh”s approvingly.*)

Monte Belmonte: Well done.

John Hodgman: I like it!

Tyler: I thought I was gonna bring this in, but it's my favorite episode. So, it's season one, episode two. I believe it's called “The Maybe Boyfriend”?

John Hodgman: “The Mystery of the Maybe Boyfriend”, co-starring Anna Akana, the internet sensation and incredible, talented actress and comedian. (*Beat.*) And David Rees, of course, my co-creator of *Dicktown*.

(*The others laugh.*)

Which is available, even as we speak, on Hulu. If you canceled your Disney+ and Hulu bundle in support of Jimmy Kimmel, guess what? So did I. But I allow you now to resubscribe.

Monte Belmonte: He's ruled for all of America now.

John Hodgman: Based on what's happened as of this recording, Jimmy Kimmel is back. And I think that it's fair enough to watch *Dicktown*, if you must. And indeed, you must. So, I'm putting your guess down as season one, episode two, "The Mystery of the Maybe Boyfriend", and I'm writing it down right here. Everyone can see it on the YouTube that I wrote it down. Good job, Tyler. Abby, what's your guess?

Abby: I believe it's a quote from our last appearance on this podcast.

John Hodgman: From your last appearance on the—! What was the clue? The fact that I referred to someone as an actuary, which indeed you are one?

Abby: Yeah, that was a big giveaway. And it felt familiar, and I tend to remember things from my own experience.

John Hodgman: It felt familiar? It didn't seem like it was from a surreal French film, *The Blood of the Poet*, or—?

Abby: No.

Tyler: Or *Dicktown*.

John Hodgman: —an episode of *Dicktown*. Lemme write that down. I'll just write down "our last appearance". You wanna get any more specific than that?

Abby: I think it's a quote from you to Tyler.

John Hodgman: From me to Tyler in your last appearance. Which would be correct. It was indeed from my verdict.

Tyler: (*With embarrassment.*) I did actually just watch that just to make sure I wasn't wearing the same sweater.

(*John "wow"s and the couple laughs.*)

John Hodgman: Which in fact, I realize now is absolutely something you can watch and not just listen to! Because we are on YouTube at [@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod](https://www.youtube.com/@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod). And Tyler, you are wearing a different outfit.

John Hodgman: In fact, Daniel Speer, maybe you'll cut in a little picture of what Tyler was wearing last time!

Tyler: (*Laughing.*) Oh, don't do that!

John Hodgman: And there you go.

(They laugh, but Tyler is especially beside himself.)

Good to see you both again, virtually through these lenses through which we mediate our lives. But Abby, I do need to hear the case. So, unless you can tell me what number episode that was, or the title?

Abby: The title was “Cease and Delist”.

(Someone whistles.)

John Hodgman: *(Begrudgingly.)* Alright, you got that right.

Monte: *(To Tyler.)* You're in big trouble.

John Hodgman: Episode number...?

Tyler: *(Giggling helplessly.)* Oh no!

Abby: Uhh, I don't know.

Monte Belmonte: Oh, thank god. I thought that was gonna be over!

John Hodgman: Episode number 658, “Cease and Delist”—released the 28th of February last year. If you don't know when last year was, look it up. You do the math. 'Cause we're now in the present. Time moves in one direction. And yet you're back again!

Now. Abby, once again you are seeking justice against Tyler. Before we get into what Tyler did this time, will you refresh my and our listeners—and Monte's!—memory about what the dispute was last time?

Abby: Last time—uh, yeah, I again brought Tyler to court. He has a habit of making top five lists and... strongly encouraging people around him to make top five lists with him.

John Hodgman: That was your conversational gambit, Tyler, which you and your family enjoy doing. Top five movies, top five... uh, episodes of *Dicktown* on Hulu, available now. Whatever it might be. And then you would talk about that. And if I remember, Abby, that made you feel put on the spot and like you were—instead of having a conversation, you were being quizzed or something. Right?

(Abby confirms.)

Yeah. And what did I—? That was from my verdict, so I think I was leaning into ruling in your favor if my memory serves. Did I do that, Abby?

Abby: I came out ahead at the end of the day.

John Hodgman: Good. And Tyler, have you abided by my ruling and toned down the top five list requests from Abby?

Tyler: I have. I don't think I've asked any top five lists or even really referenced any to you this year.

[00:10:00]

Abby: No. You shared yours, which was allowed in the ruling.

Tyler: Oh good, alright.

John Hodgman: But both the letter and the spirit of the law have been observed. Abby, would you agree?

Abby: Yeah, I would agree with that.

John Hodgman: So, you're not trying to sneak in some double jeopardy on Tyler here and getting me to retry him on this thing?

(They laugh.)

You have a new dispute?

(Abby confirms.)

With your husband, correct? Your husband?

(Abby confirms.)

Okay! So, Abby, what did Tyler do this time that brings him back into court?

Abby: He is an obsessive physical media collector.

John Hodgman: Wait a minute. You're telling me that the guy who insists that everyone come up with their top five movies, also a guy who hoards DVDs!?

Tyler: I'm a unique flower. Thank you.

John Hodgman: Which is to say a guy. Okay. Tyler has a lot of physical media. What are we talking about? DVDs, laser discs, Blu-rays, steel books—steel cases? What are they called?

(Abby and Tyler don't know.)

4Ks?

Abby: I think primarily Blu-rays and some DVDs.

Tyler: I have some 4Ks as well. Yeah. Mostly like Criterion movies, I guess, if we wanna go hyper-specific.

John Hodgman: Yeah! Let's get hyper specific. It's the soul of hyper narrative.

(They laugh.)

Tyler: Yeah, mostly Blu-rays, 4Ks, some DVDs for like the old monster movies. Yeah!

John Hodgman: I have a list here that is supplied to us—we'll call it Exhibit A—of the movies— All movies or also TV shows?

Tyler: Those are just the movies. Yeah.

(Monte "wow"s.)

John Hodgman: So, just the movies. Because you are so kind and so—frankly—predictable to put it into a spreadsheet, I can easily see that you have listed 451 films. 451 titles that you have on physical media. Is that correct?

Tyler: That is correct. And a spreadsheet is my love language to Abby. So, I thought it would only be right.

John Hodgman: That's right. Okay. That's cool. And you have it arranged, it would seem here, alphabetically by director, first name. Interesting categorization technique!

(Monte agrees.)

Tyler: I'm still—yeah, I'm still like an English major, so I'm still learning this Excel stuff.
(Laughs.)

John Hodgman: Okay, fair enough. Here's— So, when I look at the top five here, this is not necessarily your top five movies. It just happens to be that they were directed by Agnes Varda, Akira Kurosawa, Akira Kurosawa, Akira Kurosawa, and Akira Kurosawa.

(They laugh and Tyler confirms bashfully.)

Number one! Actually, number one is “movies”, because you're using the heading as the first cell there.

Tyler: Just so I don't forget.

John Hodgman: Then *Cleo from 5 to 7*, *High and Low*—recently remade by Spike Lee as *Highest to Lowest*? Is that what it's called?

Tyler: I believe so, yeah.

John Hodgman: Right. *Rashomon*, honored by this podcast as *Rasho-Mom*, years ago. *Sanjuro*, *Seven Samurai*. These are all good movies. *Yojimbo*. *Yojimbo*, of course— Oh, that's a Kurosawa. Excuse me. My mistake.

What would you say are your top five movies in here?

Tyler: So, I actually wrote those down. They kind of switch a lot, uh, based off of— But *Dr. Strangelove* is always pretty much number one.

John Hodgman: Whoa, I thought you were about to say *Doctor Strange*. Which you know, is a fine movie.

(They all chuckle.)

I was like, “Oh, a wild card!” Okay.

Tyler: *Some Like It Hot* is always really hot.

John Hodgman: *Dr. Strangelove*, or *How I Learned To Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*. Title.

(Tyler “mm-hm”s.)

And then you said what? *Pitch Perfect 2*?

Tyler: Yeah, *Pitch Perfect 2*.

Monte Belmonte: Not my favorite.

Tyler: Just your scene, really, in that one. *Mystery Train*, by Jim—

John Hodgman: Jim Jarmusch!

(Tyler confirms.)

Huh! Okay!

Tyler: *M* by Fritz Lang is the next one.

John Hodgman: *M* by Fritz Lang is a classic with Peter Lorre. Saw that one in— Monte, I saw that one in college!

(Monte “wow”s.)

It was pretty good.

Tyler: And then I would say the fifth one is *The Executioner*. It's a Spanish film.

John Hodgman: Don't know that one at all.

Monte Belmonte: Me either.

John Hodgman: 451 movies. Do you have any TV shows?

(Tyler confirms.)

Any boxsets of *Psych*?

Tyler: (Laughs.) I—we do! We both have—! Yeah, we do.

(They laugh.)

John Hodgman: I was just wondering. It was just a random question that I ask.

Abby, do you— I mean, all of this is marital property, whether you like it or not. Would you say that *Psych*—your boxset of *Psych*— I've seen—there's an— In a moment we're gonna look at some photos of your Blu-ray hoard. And it includes a boxset of *Psych*, so I knew that ahead of time.

(Tyler whispers “oh” in sudden understanding.)

John Hodgman: Yeah. Yeah. I'm not, myself, a psych. Although I think that show's about a fake psychic. Right? Isn't that about a fake psychic?

(Tyler confirms.)

Abby, do you love *Psych*? Is it the best show of all time or what?

Abby: I love *Psych*. I have a ruling that I don't have to make top five lists anymore, though. So, I'm just gonna leave it at I love *Psych*.

John Hodgman: Yeah. No, no, no, no. I was just wondering if that's— Do you have any physical media in your house that you like too? Or is it all Tyler, I guess is what I mean to say?

[00:15:00]

Abby: No, there's ones that I enjoy as well. And there's got it DVDs that I would argue are my DVDs and not Tyler's.

(John "ooh"s with interest.)

Tyler: Which is one of the reasons I said that the way I did, because that's really— She bought that. That was her set, but I really love that show as well.

John Hodgman: Oh, okay. Gotcha. So, you have some DVDs of your own. Are they on this list of 451?

Abby: No.

John Hodgman: Okay. That's a separate list. Got it. Okay. I'm not gonna ask you to make a top five list of them.

Abby: Thank you.

John Hodgman: Do you need Abby more than you need your 451 Blu-rays?

Tyler: Oh yeah. Yeah. *(Laughs.)*

John Hodgman: And yet your 451— Good answer, by the way. And yet, your 451 Blu-rays are important to you, correct?

Tyler: Yes, very.

John Hodgman: What does it mean to you to have all of your 451 favorite movies available on physical media at aaaall time?

Tyler: Lots of things. So, I guess there's lots of like memories I have collected with them, because Abby gifts them to me so often. So, I have like countless memories of Christmases, romantic just surprises, things like "just thinking about you" kind of gifts that really— whenever I watch them—they're tied to me with that.

John Hodgman: That's interesting! Yeah. Yeah, okay. So, I get it. You know, your collection of films connects you to your memories. Whether it's a gift from Abby or your generational memory of an obscure Italian fishing technique.

What's your point of view, Abby?

Abby: I think it's great that he has these, and I can recognize that they mean a lot to him. And a very small handful mean something to me as well, but I don't wanna keep them after he dies.

John Hodgman: And that's what this is about. You're looking forward to your husband's death and what to do with his stuff afterwards. (*Correcting himself.*) Not looking forward to, but looking ahead.

Abby: Planning. (*Laughs.*) Plotting.

John Hodgman: You're both young. I mean—well. You are an actuary, right? I mean, that's—right?

(*Abby confirms.*)

Yeah. By profession and training, right?

(*She confirms.*)

And remind me and listeners and Monte Belmonte what an actuary does!

Monte Belmonte: Because I actuary don't know!

John Hodgman: (*Muttering.*) Oh boy. That one's on me, everybody, and I apologize.

Monte Belmonte: You walked right into that one, Hodgman. I'm sorry.

John Hodgman: I walked right into it. Yep.

Abby: We use tables to make predictions about when populations of people are going to have certain things occur to them.

John Hodgman: And so, you know. Actuaries—you know, you make macro predictions about what's gonna happen to various populations, including lifespan for the purpose of determining insurance premiums, right? Typically?

(*Abby confirms.*)

Right. Okay. Got it. So, you are a planner-aheader by trade.

(*Abby confirms.*)

Alright. But your health is good. Tyler's health is good. He's not—?

(Abby confirms with a laugh.)

This is not a bucket list? Second appearance on the podcast?

Abby: No.

John Hodgman: Okay, good.

Abby: We're—yeah, hopefully, we're talking about very far into the future.

Transition: Three gavel bangs.

(ADVERTISEMENT)

[00:20:00]

Transition: Three gavel bangs.

John Hodgman: And you sent in a photo, Abby—we'll call it exhibit B—of this collection of Blu-rays and DVDs and such, right?

(Abby confirms.)

You too, listener and viewer, will be able to review this photo on our social media as well as on our show page at MaximumFun.org. Or you might be looking at it right now if you're watching us on YouTube. Our channel is called [@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod](https://www.youtube.com/@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod).

Alright, I'm seeing here two bookcases. Or I guess they are purpose-built DVD/Blu-ray cases. Tyler, do you wanna describe what I'm looking at here?

Tyler: So, it's a handmade bookcase by my lovely mother-in-law.

(John and Monte are both impressed.)

And it contains a large collection of Criterion Blu-rays, 4Ks, and some just general DVDs as well as some of our books.

John Hodgman: Yes, I saw that copy of *Vacationland* facing forward!

Monte Belmonte: Prominently featured.

John Hodgman: You know, Monte will take a bribe to talk about *ALF* on this podcast.

(Monte confirms.)

Judge John Hodgman, like the Doughboys, can't be bought. But thank you for having a copy. I see two— I have two photos here. One is of these bookshelves, which do not merely contain DVDs but, as you pointed out, also some books. And then I see a photo with just a few items—two shelves with a few items, one of which is the aforementioned boxset of *Psych*, as well as the complete David Suchet *Poirot* collection. Also, you got some *Nero Wolfe* there. But I don't see— Is there a photo be missing?

Tyler: It might be cut— So, in the upper corner, there should also be— It might look really generic, like almost like a— In the upper left corner, there should be like a Criterion top 40, their top 40 films. And then there's an Ingmar Bergman collection of 50 of his films. So.

John Hodgman: All in that one little Criterion box!?

Tyler: Those two Criterion boxes, yep.

John Hodgman: The CC 40. That's 40 films on that one box?!

Tyler: 40. Yep. And art and essays.

John Hodgman: Well, it all seems— This all seems fairly self-contained, Abby. You're not concerned about living with these things. You're only concerned about what to do with them after death. Is it that they are clutter to you, Abby?

Abby: Yeah. Primarily.

John Hodgman: Current clutter or post-death clutter? In other words, are they currently clutter to you, or do you only foresee them becoming clutter once they're disconnected from Tyler's mortal body?

Abby: Yeah, I foresee them becoming clutter once there is no one around who will appreciate them.

John Hodgman: When you walk by this bookshelf now— And let's face it, any collection of DVDs or CDs looks like garbage. Sorry. You know, even if you sneak some books in there. Any collection of books looks pretty good, but any collection of DVDs and Blu-rays looks pretty... bad. Do you disagree with me, Monte, on that?

Monte Belmonte: I do. Yeah, I think books look good, and DVDs and Blu-rays look good.

John Hodgman: I mean, I'm not against them.

[00:25:00]

People love their physical media for a lot of reasons, which I'm sure Tyler will talk about in a moment. But I mean, this doesn't— Look, this is not egregious. I'll say this to you, Abby. In

fact, I'm not even sure I believe that there are 451 separate titles in these bookshelves. Am I seeing everything here, Tyler?

Tyler: So, in those bookshelves, there's also— If you look at the bottom, the—(*chuckles*) so, this goes—(*stammering*) the movies that don't look quite as good in their cases, I put into like a little sleeve. Like one of those classic car—when you used to have CDs in your car.

(*Monte affirms.*)

One of those is at the very bottom.

Monte Belmonte: It's on the floor.

Tyler: And that's about—yes. And that's about like 100 movies—100/200 films? No, 100 films in that one just there.

(*John “oh!”s.*)

So, yeah. I mean, they're compact. They're compact. Because I also don't like clutter. I would like to also put out there that we have a library. So, Abby has— Roughly how many books would you guess?

Abby: Probably about 200.

Tyler: About 200 books in a library. So, it's, not—

John Hodgman: You're not talking about a public library. You're talking about a room in your home.

Tyler: In a room. It's our barn library area. And it— So, I'm not— The case isn't like I am forcing Abby to like give up really space to satisfy my lust for movies. It's an equal, fairly balanced—I think—amount of physical media both in books and movies.

John Hodgman: Right. And to be clear here, Abby, you're not suggesting that Tyler get rid of any of this stuff in life.

(*Abby confirms.*)

It's not intolerable when you walk past this bookshelf. Right? You're not gritting your teeth going, “Uuugh.”

(*Abby confirms.*)

And Tyler, you're not asking— You're not bringing up Abby's book collection in order to both-sides this and say, “See, I'm perfectly normal, and she's the wrong one, and I want to get rid of all these books”?

(Tyler confirms.)

“I have 451 movies, which happens to be the precise degree Fahrenheit at which books burn.

(They laugh.)

(Tyler “wow”s.)

According to the book and movie *Fahrenheit 451*. You're not suggesting that you're gonna become...? What's the name of that main character in *Fahrenheit 451*? Ghee? He's got a funny name that Ray Bradberry came up with.

(Abby says something unclear.)

I wanna say *(unclear; crosstalk.)*

Monte Belmonte: It's Alf.

John Hodgman: No, it's not Alf.

Monte Belmonte: Guy Montague?

John Hodgman: Guy—? Yeah, Ghee Montag.

(Monte confirms.)

Or maybe it's Guy. Yeah.

(Monte says something unclear.)

You don't want to Guy Montag Abby's library either, right?

Tyler: *(Laughing.)* No! No, not at all.

John Hodgman: This is— You guys love each other, and everything's fine. It's just the problem is what to do with these things after the inevitable happens. Tyler, what do you want to have done with these? If you were to predecease Abby, what would you ask her from beyond the grave to do with these DVDs? I'm just gonna call them DVDs. I know that they're Blu-rays or 4Ks or whatever. I just— I'm just an old person, so forgive me.

Tyler: I would ideally like her to keep them. And... honestly, watch them. Because—(*sighs*) the way I do movies is I—rarely ever do I like do any research into them, unless maybe I saw them in a theater or, you know. I will go out and buy a random movie just based off of mood, like what looks kind of good, what flashes out to me. And I've found that I really enjoy almost everything that I've gotten. And that like it's kind of really affected me in a profound way. Kind of like—you know, like when I read books that you've recommended; those have always been really great to me, and they've really connected me, I think, more with you.

So, what my hope is is like—if I'm gone, if you're missing me—you can pull down something like, I don't know, *Bull Durham*. And just like remember, “Oh, Tyler really didn't like baseball. I love baseball. But then he watched this movie and suddenly found sort of like a passion for it or found a connection with it.”

John Hodgman: Abby, it sounds to me like Tyler, should he unfortunately predecease you, merely wants you to keep his collection and to wear black for the period of time it would take you to watch all of his movies in his collection and remember him each time for different reasons. Why do you not want to do this?

Abby: So, we've seen the pictures of how much space they take up. So, it's really not that big of a deal to actually have them, even though he's not around anymore. I... won't watch them.

John Hodgman: By the way, 451 movies, at roughly 90 minutes per. That's 676 hours. So, if you were watching these movies 24 hours a day without sleep, which—

[00:30:00]

—I mean, that is the standard mourning procedure for a movie buff. It would only take you 28 days.

Tyler: (*Softly.*) Not that much!

John Hodgman: Of watching the movies, to get to thoroughly memorialize Tyler and his collection.

Monte Belmonte: It's called sitting Cinema. It's like Shiva, but it's for movies.

John Hodgman: Right. And then 28 days later, when you're done watching them, you'll walk outside and discover that society has collapsed due to an aggression virus.

Abby: I would love if those movies went to someone who would appreciate them. For example, our niece and soon-to-be-born nephew.

John Hodgman: Abby, you say that you do like some movies, and indeed you also made a spreadsheet. Abby's Movie List. It says here these are movies that you are willing to keep. That you like. That are in the collection already.

(Abby confirms.)

These are all good movies. These are ones that are in the collection that you'd be willing to keep.

(Abby confirms.)

I noticed, by the way, that not only did you make a spreadsheet, but it has three columns. I just noticed column C.

(Tyler cackles.)

So, there's movies, director, and then reasoning as to why you would keep them. And the reasons are—and these are— Now I see! These are organized by reasoning. Your top two, *Arsenic and Old Lace* and *Paper Moon* reasoning: “because of me.” We'll get back to that in a moment.

(Tyler laughs.)

Abby: Yeah. That's fair.

John Hodgman: Your next two—*The Great Dictator* and *Paris is Burning* is: “feels important.”

Self-explanatory. I like that you put some, I guess, homework in your top five. And then, the next whole bunch is just “I like it, I like it, I like it, I like it, I like it,” all the way to *Grand Budapest Hotel*. Oh, there's *Dr. Strangelove*! There, you guys agree on that one. And then your final two are *High Sierra* and the wonderful silent comedy *Hundreds of Beavers*, that I've talked about on this podcast before. Those are: “want to see it,” and the rest are all “special memory.” I love this list, Abby! I must say.

Abby: Thank you.

John Hodgman: Do you have a list of movies that you are ready to throw away?

(Abby agrees.)

Whoa! Did you submit that list? Or do you just have 'em off the top of your head?

Abby: It was a different tab of that same spreadsheet.

John Hodgman: Oh, excuse me.

Monte Belmonte: (*With excitement.*) Oh, here we go!

John Hodgman: There it is!

Monte Belmonte: Oh, “Do Not Keep,” yeah.

John Hodgman: And there are... okay. And there are 441 of them.

(They laugh.)

No, that’s—*(laughs.)* Uh-oh! Uh-oh!

Monte Belmonte: Yikes!

Abby: There’s—yeah.

(John keeps “uh-oh”ing while Monte groans ominously.)

There’s gonna be some... oh.

John Hodgman: Whoa. Wow.

Tyler: *(Laughing.)* This is all news to me!

John Hodgman: Oh boy.

Monte Belmonte: It’s a hurtful list.

John Hodgman: Oh, you’re gonna— You haven’t seen this particular spreadsheet? This one—

Tyler: I haven’t seen either of these!

John Hodgman: Tyler, you may find this one less arousing. There are some... you know, they say kill your darlings in writing. The little turns of phrases and the little things that you love the most, sometimes those are the things you need to cut out. But there are a lot of darlings here. Boy, oh boy.

You’re gonna tell me you’re gonna get rid of... you’re gonna get rid of *Miller’s Crossing*, one of my very favorite movies? I also just rewatched it.

(Abby confirms solemnly.)

Godfather! Godfather Part II, Godfather Part III. All three?! *(Whistles sadly.)* You didn’t put the special edition in there?

Monte Belmonte: *Coda?*

Tyler: There's like over nine hours of special features in that case.

John Hodgman: But I gotta tell you this right now. You want to hear some of the other ones that Abby wants to get rid of?

Tyler: I really do, (*chuckling*) because now I'm really— *Miller's Crossing* I thought was a safe one. So, now I'm very surprised.

John Hodgman: Noooo, *Miller's Crossing* is on the chopping block at... at number nine! Top five Abby Throwaway movies. Grab onto the table! Counting down from number six: *Seven Samurai* in the garbage!

Tyler: (*Whispering in shock.*) Oh, that's a spiteful!

(*They laugh.*)

John Hodgman: *Seven Samurai*. Number five going in the garbage: *Office Space*, starring maybe a distant cousin of mine, Stephen Root.

(*Monte hums in surprise.*)

Never was able to figure that out.

Monte Belmonte: Interesting!

John Hodgman: Number four, *Gone With the Wind*. Next up in the garbage: *Wages of Fear*, Henri-Georges Clouzot.

Monte Belmonte: Love that movie.

John Hodgman: And number two with a bullet, and we'll stop there: *Wizards* by Ralph Bakshi.

(*They laugh.*)

It just so happens!

Tyler: (*Laughing.*) That's so sad.

John Hodgman: Things. Just. Got. Real.

Tyler: (*Laughing helplessly.*) Okay. There's so many stories of anger in that list, now that I think about it!

John Hodgman: Tell me all about it, Tyler!

Tyler: So—(*struggling through laughter*) was *Wages of Fear* the one that I—? So, whenever my parents come over, we always watch a movie. You know, carry on that tradition that I spoke of earlier. And *Wages of Fear* was one that I put on. And they usually come over for Thanksgiving, so I'm cooking dinner. And we put that on, because I thought it was a really good one.

[00:35:00]

Is this the one that, before it was done, I was like, “I have a huge migraine,” and I went to bed? (*Laughs.*)

Abby: We were not halfway through that movie when you decided you didn't need to be watching it anymore.

Tyler: So, it was— I just had the biggest migraine, and I had to go lay down. And then it— I kind of didn't think about how much that narrative might like not be the funnest one to sit and watch with the in-laws.

John Hodgman: That's like a looong, tense movie that you can't even nap through, because it's too... tense.

Abby: Well, I also couldn't nap because earlier that day I had hurt my back.

John Hodgman: I'm sorry to hear that.

Abby: So, I was alternating between a heating pad and an ice pack.

John Hodgman: Well, let's talk about *Wizards* for a second. Because this isn't— We've already described this film. Abby, is there a particular reason that you don't care for *Wizards* by Ralph Bakshi?

Abby: Well, I couldn't make it through the whole movie. Not napping. I had to leave.

John Hodgman: Very strange. Very strange and disturbing movie. And like a lot of Ralph Bakshi, tonally and pace-wise, it's very hard to get a beat on that movie. But I also know that this is on a list of most treasured movies, not just because of your connection to your dad and the past, Tyler, but also 'cause it's a rare edition, right?

Tyler: It is a rare edition. So, like you can watch it on Amazon by paying for it, but that those get switched around so often, and it feels like one of those where people are like, “Who's gonna miss this weird cartoon made by this strange cartoonist that's maybe a bit anti what our government is right now?” But like, if you see pretty much any of them online to buy, they're either going to be only ones that can be played out of the country—different region code—or

they are black market forgeries that are actually— If you get them and put them into your DVD player are *Working Woman*, the movie.

John Hodgman: Say it again?

Abby: *Working... Girl?*

John Hodgman: You buy *Wizards*, but then it plays *Working Woman*?

Tyler: Yeah, it's basically they just put over the DVD *Working Girl*.

(Abby confirms.)

Working Girl. They put over a *Working Girl* like a fake sticker that says like *Wizards* on it, and you put it in your DVD player, and it's just that. So, I got my—

John Hodgman: That's insidious!

Tyler: Yeah. I got my copy off of eBay.

John Hodgman: Wait a minute. I just want to clarify what I'm hearing here. You're saying that there is a black-market trend. It's hard to get a copy—a legit copy—of Ralph Bakshi's animated, weirdo film *Wizards*. And that there's a black-market trend that sometimes, more than once, if you buy *Wizards*, it says *Wizards* on it. But when you press play, it's the American comedy *Working Girl*, starring Melanie Griffith and Sigourney Weaver and Harrison Ford?

Tyler: Correct. You can go on Amazon right now. There was a poor gentleman who uploaded his video, and it's a very sad picture of a man's hand putting in this DVD, putting it on, and then it's like *(singing)*, “Working giirl!”

John Hodgman: Well, it's got that Carly Simon song. *(Singing.)* “Leeet the river meeeeet—bum-bum-bum.” By the way, that's impossible to stream, that song. I've tried many a time. Yeah. Well, many a time at two o'clock in the morning when I'm remembering my youth, and I wanna hear that song.

Monte Belmonte: If only you bought a copy of *Wizards*, then you could just play the song.

John Hodgman: I want to know who is it out there who is doing this!?

(They laugh.)

This is like the— This is like beyond Rick Rolling. It's such a specific population of people that you're pranking when you swap *Working Girl* for *Wizards*. And it's so random, and yet they're both W movies. I find this fascinating! But so when you think of—

Alright, you've passed away. I hope many, many years from now, peacefully in your sleep. And the first thing Abby does the next day is finds that copy of *Wizards and Wages of Fear* and *Office Space* and *Seven Samurai* and *Miller's Crossing* and all 41 Ingmar Bergman movies is on this list.

(Tyler laughs.)

And *To Catch a Thief*, which is a lesser Hitchcock, but they're all going in the trash. When you think about that, how does that make you feel?

Tyler: It's devastating!

John Hodgman: So, to clarify, Abby does not want to throw away the movies on the do not keep list. She merely wants to redistribute them to people in your life that she thinks might enjoy them more than she. Why do you resist this plan, Tyler?

Tyler: Well, so I have like maybe two friends who are very big movie buffs, and they have started families. They have limited space. And I have this concern where if she was like at the funeral—or like when we're bequeathing things—says like, “Okay, well here's, Richard, like 250 movies that Tyler really wants you to have.”

[00:40:00]

I don't think most people's thoughts are like, *(emotionally)* “Oh, I'll always remember him!” It might be like “This is a burden. Where do I find room to keep all these movies?” You know?

Because like you said, thinking about 400 movies, you assume it's like a giant library's worth of movies. And my concern is they'll take them, and then they'll give them away, or they'll sell them. And those movies will like—

John Hodgman: In other words, you don't want to be a burden to your friends. You just wanna be a burden to your wife.

Tyler: Cherished memories to the wife.

(John “hm”s noncommittally.)

And you know, there's also the idea she put by me, donating to the public library. Which I also— I actually don't mind as much the more I think about it. But my fear, again, is that people often disrespect property of libraries. They don't take very good care of them. It's just a little— Like, it's harder— Books are easier to take care of than like movies are. Movies get a scratch, might not work. And so, I'm just worried about like... I guess I'm worried about where in the world they'll end up in that end. That's just...

John Hodgman: They're all gonna end up in a landfill eventually.

(Tyler concedes.)

I mean, eventually. Right? So, why not be buried with them? Make your grave their landfill.

Tyler: So, that was another thing I put by her is building a monument to me in some kind of way. We're thinking Nicholas Cage, *Pyramid*. Bury me with all my movies. But that seems kind of... maybe extreme. I don't know! Like, I wouldn't get rid of any of your books if you died. Like, I'd keep every single one of them.

Abby: Which is your choice.

Tyler: My choice.

John Hodgman: How many books do you have, Abby?

Abby: I think about 200.

John Hodgman: About 200? Tyler says— Abby, Tyler says that he's going to keep and cherish your books, should you predecease him. Is that okay with you, or do you have another plan for them?

Abby: If that's what he wants, that's fine with me. Because I will be dead and won't care anymore. I feel like he's not going to appreciate the books as well as other people in my life might. But if he wants them, that's fine with me.

John Hodgman: If you wanted to bequeath books to certain people... Or I should I actually be posing this to Tyler. If Abby said, "Well, actually, if I should pass away before you, please send *Baseball Murder* and *Discworld* to John Hodgman. Don't keep them," would you honor her wishes?

Tyler: I'm a big fan of yours. That might be very shocking. (*Laughs.*) So, if it was, yeah, "Drop these books off to John Hodgman. He's waiting for them," I would be like, "Oh! Okay. Oh no. Okay, yeah." But if it was— It depends. Like, some of the books I would be much more hurt about than others.

John Hodgman: Well, let's take me out of the equation.

Tyler: Yes, let's do that.

John Hodgman: If she doesn't want you to keep her books, or she has other plans for them and she makes that clear to you, would you honor her wishes? You're asking her to honor your wishes! So, why is this a hard question to answer?

Tyler: Yeah. No, that's not a hard question. I would honor your wishes. Of course, I'd honor your wishes.

John Hodgman: Alright. Alright. So, why can't you honor Tyler's wishes, Abby?

Abby: Wow. If that is really what he wants most in the world, I would honor that. I just think that what he wants is wrong.

(John snickers.)

Tyler: *(Earnestly.)* I love you so much.

(Monte and John laugh.)

John Hodgman: Abby, you're an actuary. Obviously, you're a practical-minded person. Do you have a will?

Tyler: Yeah, Abby. Do we have a will?

Abby: We don't have a will, no.

(Tyler laughs.)

John Hodgman: Oh! Okay. Life insurance?

(Abby confirms.)

Okay. You don't have a will currently? Neither of you?

(Abby confirms.)

Either as a joint couple or individually?

Abby: We do not.

John Hodgman: Alright. Interesting. Abby, would you be willing to pretend that you're going to honor Tyler's wishes until he is dead? In which case, then you'll just do whatever you want?

Abby: Are you asking would I lie to him until he dies?

(John confirms a little bashfully.)

I'd like to think I wouldn't...

John Hodgman: Wasn't that part of your vows?

Tyler: (*Laughing.*) It's not far off!

Abby: I don't think I would lie to him until he dies. I think if the ruling today is that I have to keep all of Tyler's movies, I would agree to that and not back out on it after he dies.

John Hodgman: Got it. I see. Thank you for your honesty. (*Beat.*) Now I know I can trust you. Tyler, I wanna ask you again. Abby's desire is to bequeath all or at least some of your movies to people in your life who might enjoy them more than her. There's gotta be someone out there who likes the movie *Wizards*—

[00:45:00]

—who would cherish this rare non-*Working Girl* copy of that. Why is it not sufficient for her—or why does it bother you, this idea of her distributing some of your precious memories?

Tyler: I think it is just I'm more of a romantic than she is, I guess. I just really— She hasn't offered up a very good list of people either, which is kind of a problem. Like, she's just said, “There's Richard and maybe your brother,” and I know my brother really wouldn't— He's a very minimalist person with his house. I wanna make sure— And this maybe sounds a bit petty. I wanna make sure that she— (*Cutting himself off to whisper*) Oh boy, this sounds petty.

John Hodgman: Go on!

Tyler: We're gonna say it!

John Hodgman: We gotta get it out!

Tyler: I wanna make sure she's thinking of me when I'm gone. (*Laughs.*)

John Hodgman: You wanna make sure she's thinking of you when you're gone.

Abby, you would like me to rule that Tyler maintain a list of his physical media and assign each title to someone in his life to whom it may be bequeathed. In other words, make a will; make a movie will. Is that correct?

(*She confirms.*)

But that's your—that's what you would want me to rule?

(*She confirms.*)

Is it “Tyler, figure out who are the people who would actually benefit and would enjoy having this memory” of him? And assign it in advance. In other words, make a damn will. A movie will.

Abby: Yeah. And the first priority for our will is gonna be the movie collection.

John Hodgman: Yeah. That's the first priority. Good idea.

Abby: That seems fine.

(John agrees.)

I have— By the way, a little while ago he said that I have only given him two names of people that he could give movies to. And that's incorrect.

John Hodgman: Richard and his brother.

Abby: Richard and his brother. So, I'm assuming he's gonna live... a little while. And therefore his—*(correcting herself)* our—

John Hodgman: You've consulted the tables.

Abby: *(Laughs.)* I've looked. He's not a smoker.

John Hodgman: Good.

Abby: Our niece and nephew at some point will be old enough to take care of movies I think once we know what their personalities are going to turn into, they are also great candidates to get some movies. We have other friends besides Richard who we go to see movies with, such as Brooke.

(Tyler "oh"s.)

Brooke requested that she could be on the list if you make one.

(Tyler agrees.)

But I think there are plenty of other people in our lives that he could bequeath movies to. And I'm willing to be a name on the list as long as it's reasonable and thoughtful.

John Hodgman: He's got a list of 26 movies that you are willing to keep to begin with, so.

Abby: Yeah, he can start from there. Yeah.

John Hodgman: Tyler, you want me to order that Abby keep all of your movies? Or do something that is in memory of you.

(Tyler confirms.)

What do you have in mind in the “in memory of you” option?

Tyler: This idea— She kind of—we already discussed maybe a bit of this, and she kind of pointed out it didn't work. But I'd still like to try like a— And this is weird, but like... give a movie or take a movie kind of thing. Like, do something with that. Which I guess now that I say that out loud though, that's just—

John Hodgman: What do you mean give a movie or take a movie?

Tyler: So, do you know those little libraries?

John Hodgman: Yes, I'm familiar with them.

Tyler: Yeah. Sorry. So, something—

John Hodgman: Many a copy of *Vacationland* has been discovered in those.

Tyler: You know, if it was something like the library or like a “give or take a book” that was like—something that specifically was like, “This was donated by Tyler (*censor beep*)” that like, you know, Abby could go back to and like still have access to if she wanted. Like, if she just for some reason was like, “I remember one of these movies that he was always going on about,” and could go back and get it and watch it. That would be a good alternative, I think, if I was trying to do like a middle ground.

John Hodgman: Mm-hm. I think I've heard everything I need to in order to make my decision. I'm going to go into my personal Criterion Closet, which is just my closet full of... old... magazine clippings. (*Chuckles.*) And I'll be back in a moment with my verdict.

Monte Belmonte: Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom.

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

Tyler, you have been Letterboxed in by Abby with this shocking list of films that she actively would like to get rid of. And while I had originally thought I was 100% in Abby's camp—not that it matters what the bailiff thinks—the look on your face when you heard the movies she wants to get rid of? My heart went out to you. How are you feeling right now, Tyler?

Tyler: I think I just— Well, no matter what I take away from this, it's that I need to have more conversations with her about the movies we watch and (*laughs*) if she's actually enjoying them. I thought I asked that enough, and clearly... (*Laughing.*) Hopefully I haven't been torturing you too much!

[00:50:00]

Monte Belmonte: And Abby, it seems like the betrayal is on your part and that you're acknowledging that there's a sense of betrayal here. It is something that you have betrayed your precious Tyler.

Abby: Coming into this, I thought I had a more shoo-in case.

Monte Belmonte: No, I think you still do actually. Frankly.

Abby: Oh, okay, good. *(Laughs.)*

Monte Belmonte: But I mean, you really did break that poor man's heart.

(They laugh.)

If only you'd remembered your vows to lie to him until death do you part.

Abby: Yeah, that would've been helpful.

Monte Belmonte: Well, we'll see what the judge has to say about all this when we come back in just a moment.

Transition: Three gavel bangs.

Promo:

(Sci-fi beeping.)

Music: Playful synth.

Adam Prianca: Now everybody knows that *The Greatest Generation* has always been MaxFun's go-to podcast for old *Star Trek* recaps. But what my theory presupposes is: what if it isn't?

(Aggressive record scratch.)

Music: High-energy techno.

Adam: In a shocking turn of events, *Greatest Trek*—the comedy podcast covering new *Trek*—has gone through a temporal wormhole back to the very beginning.

Ben Harrison: Because we are now reviewing *Star Trek: The Original Series*. That means when you subscribe now, you'll get episode-by-episode recaps of all the 1960s-style action and intrigue, along with all the jokes and fun that make *Greatest Gen* and

Greatest Trek the number one *Star Trek* podcasts out there. Subscribe now to *Greatest Trek* on MaximumFun.org!

(Music ends.)

(Sci-fi beep.)

Transition: Three gavel bangs.

John Hodgman: Monte, we're taking a break from the case. Let's talk about Monte's March!

Monte Belmonte: Yes! It is a march to raise money for the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts. And with the federal budget cuts to programs like SNAP, people who don't know where the next meal is coming from are gonna need more help. And so, this will be the 17th time that I have pushed an empty shopping cart as a symbol of hunger from Springfield, Massachusetts to Greenfield, Massachusetts—43 miles—to raise money and awareness for the Food Bank of Western Mass. And it's happening on Monday and Tuesday, November 24th and 25th, Thanksgiving week.

Our US Congressman, Jim McGovern, goes the entire 43 miles with us—as do school groups and individuals and people of all stripes. We will be honoring the icons of public broadcasting, who also have experienced major cuts this year. *(Chuckles.)* And I will be dressing up as Ernie from *Sesame Street* as well as Mr. Rogers.

John Hodgman: *(Chuckles.)* You're dressing up as Ernie one day and then Mr. Rogers the next day?

Monte Belmonte: Yeah, because it's two days we do it.

John Hodgman: Yeah. Who's gonna be your Bert?

Monte Belmonte: There's a guy named Sean Berry, who is always the person who helps me while I'm trying to broadcast and push a shopping cart. It's difficult, so he helps me navigate the cart while I'm doing all that other stuff. So, he'll be my Bert.

John Hodgman: If you are in Springfield and wanna walk to Greenfield—from field to field!—you can join Monte. But if you'd prefer to join Monte virtually, you can do so by going where, Monte?

Monte Belmonte: FoodBankWMA.org, Food Bank Western Mass dot org.

John Hodgman: Food bank western mass dot org. Yeah, there are a lot of budget cuts across a lot of different things that we value and thought would never go away, public media being a big part of that. I would just remind people to support your local public media, including

WERU.org up there in Orland, Maine—or Maine Public Broadcasting, or wherever there is public broadcasting in your world; including New England Public Media, where Monte has a show every afternoon! Isn't that right, Monte?

Monte Belmonte: That's right! *The Fabulous 413*, where we talk about solely things that are going on in the four counties of Western mass. It's at NEPM.org or wherever you get your podcasts.

John Hodgman: And me, I'm Judge John Hodgman. You listen to me here every week on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. You also can see the *Judge John Hodgman* columnette. It's a little, tiny column—like a columnella?—in the *New York Times Magazine*. And as well—as mentioned earlier in the show—I'm the co-creator with David Rees of the cartoon *Dicktown*, which is a good PG-13 cartoon that is still available on Hulu for now! If you have resubscribed to Disney+ or Hulu, you can go check it out.

Go to bit.ly/DICKTOWN—all capital letters! D-I-C-K-T-O-W-N. Or simply search *Dicktown* in Google. You'd be surprised to learn it goes to our show.

(They laugh.)

I certainly was surprised!

Monte Belmonte: I learned this the hard way!

John Hodgman: A true labor of love. So, thank you very much for supporting us in all the ways that you do as Maximum Fun members, as listeners, as viewers on YouTube, as watchers of *Dicktown*. And of course, coming out to see that screening of *They Live* at the Nighthawk of Prospect Park was so much fun to see so many of you listeners out there. So, thank you as always and forever for all of your support in all your many ways. Hey, let's get back to the case!

Transition: Three gavel bangs.

Monte Belmonte: 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: You may be seated. So, I also—I happened to be listening through the door to my chambers, and I want to acknowledge the very interesting—and I think revealing—

[00:55:00]

—fact that, when Abby made a list of movies that she doesn't like, that she had to make a note of the fact that she knew this would hurt you, even to contemplate it. I think that you can trust that just as you obviously love Abby very much, she loves you very much—no matter

how she disposes of, or keeps and cherishes, your movies. You know, one thing that is too early for you to be thinking about but is something that we all do end up having to think about is end-of-life plans. Serious end-of-life plans.

You know, my wife—who is a whole human being in her own right—and I were only forced to make a will in our own 30s because a smarter person than I said, “Oh, you have to do it. (*Chuckling.*) You have children. You have to make plans. You have to express your wishes.”

And I was like, “I’m in my 30s. I’m going to live forever.”

Obviously, I knew that was not true. I look forward to many more years of life—and happily wedded life. I am recording this, by the way, on our anniversary.

(“Aw”s and congratulations all around.)

Yeah! Thank you very much. I enjoy being married to her. But we have adults in our lives—parents—who are since sincerely, realistically nearing the end of their lives. And some of them have been very responsible in their end-of-life planning, and others of them don’t believe that they’re going to ever die. It is a scary thing to contemplate, even in a sort of lighthearted way as this.

But I only mention it because it’s important that you acknowledge that our time here is short. It is important that you understand and are able to express your wishes for what you want done in your honor—right?—after you have gone, and to have done with your possessions after you have gone. Or someone else will be making those decisions.

So, you’re not wrong. And in fact, I actually think you’re pretty responsible in a sort of off-kilter way, Tyler, of thinking about this. This is a meaningful collection to you. It is connected to a lot of memories for you, obviously. And you clearly love movies. All of which is to say that I think that your collection has value intrinsically and in context of your life. But I do hear something here, Tyler, that disturbs me a little. And I want you to take that in the spirit in which I mean it. It disturbs me on your behalf a little bit. When Abby, for example, suggested that she give certain videos away to family members who might like them, you kind of expressed some concern that no one will like them the way that you do and the way that you trust Abby to cherish and like them.

And I can’t believe that that’s true, honestly. I like you! I’d take some of these movies off your hands, and I would think very fondly of you. And we’ve only met twice! You’re the only—as far as I know, only the second litigants ever come back on the show. So, you know.

Abby: Really?!

John Hodgman: Yeah. And I believe that if I—a relative stranger—feels this way, that there are many non-strangers and definite relatives who would feel very, very, very happy to have and cherish things that had belonged to you and had meaning to you. And I want you to feel that way too. I don’t think your situation is as dire as you present. I could be wrong.

And I think that you've probably learned that in life, but I don't think it's to your credit and to the strength of your case to be the guy who's like, (*solemnly*) "In death, you must watch and appreciate my movies." I think that that's unrealistic, and I think that that's unfair. I think that, you know, in the unhappy event that you should predecease Abby many, many, many years from now, she's going to be going through a whoooole lot of grieving. And the memory of you is going to haunt almost everything she touches in your home. Your movies, for sure. But also clothes.

[01:00:00]

A pocketful of change in a pair of pants that never got spent. Whatever. It's just gonna be awful. You know what I mean?

(*Tyler affirms.*)

And I think you need to offer her the grace—as she must offer to you—the grace of grieving in her own way without an enormous homework assignment. Beyond the legal disposal of all your worldly possessions in general! Which is gonna be straightened out once you write a will. You know what I mean? Like, I think to give her the burden of watching and appreciating all your movies in death the way she couldn't do it in life, because she's got her own taste and her own interests, is too much to ask.

So, my verdict is: you're not wrong, Tyler. And whatever your wishes are, I order Abby to honor them. But I ask this. You have to write a will, both of you. Get together with an attorney and get a will together. It's just part of being a grownup. And in that will, as you approach that will, you make your wishes known, and you be open? Right? You be open to the idea that Abby, I think, has really thoughtfully suggested. Which is there are other people who will want a keepsake of your life, and are there movies that you can give to those people? Or you know, in the case of your niece and nephew: who will hold *Wizards* in trust for them until they are of age? Or something like that.

I think that if you sat down and thought about it, there would be quite a few movies there that you would be able to give to people that would be very meaningful to them. And it might be a meaningful exercise for you to think about those people and those connections. But bequeath rather than... curse. Do you know what I mean? Bequeathing of the things that you care about to people who will care about them—and I bet there are institutions and libraries that you would trust to take care of some of these things. I bet you could find homes for a lot of these movies beyond the ones that Abby already admits that she likes and would like to keep.

But whatever you do, Abby will honor your wishes. But you have to write it down, and you have to give it real thought. Make a will. Write down your wishes. Consider what I said. This is the sound of a gavel.

Clip:

Marvin (*One Upon a Time... In Hollywood*): What a picture.

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

Monte Belmonte: Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom.

(Chairs squeak.)

Abby, technically that ruling did not go in your favor. But do you view this as a favorable ruling?

Abby: I do. I think the judge is someone that Tyler admires very much, and he said some very kind things, which is always a victory. And at the end of the day, I don't think I'm gonna have to keep 500 movies that I have no special feelings for. So, that's good.

Monte Belmonte: And Tyler, apart from the fact that Abby broke your heart during the course of this podcast, are you happy with having this ruling ostensibly in your favor?

Tyler: I am. I think the judge made a lot of really healthy points. You don't wanna be a burden, and I like some of the ideas that he shared—like figuring out some— Making more like lists of—*(to himself)* I'm talking about lists again!—of people—of like happy memories that I shared movies with other people and sharing those with those. And maybe the ones that maybe aren't so special or they're more special to me having maybe like a celebratory “come to our house after the funeral and take one, and remember Tyler,” or we watch them like, you know, to celebrate his life.

I think those are all things I should consider, and the will is definitely something we need to get on. I think that's a very healthy approach to this situation.

Monte Belmonte: Well, I hope that I am invited to the corporate viewing of *The Meg* as you are Sitting Cinema to honor the life of Tyler, Abby. And I know that you need to find somebody to do this will for you, even though you are an actuary. Good luck finding a will. Good will hunting.

(John “oh no”s quietly.)

Abby: *(Laughing.)* It's been an honor.

John Hodgman: No...

Transition: Three gavel bangs.

Monte Belmonte: Another case in the books. Before we dispense some Swift Justice, we wanna thank Redditor u/Footwear_Critic for naming this week's episode, "Pro-Betamax Court".

John Hodgman: "Pro-Betamax Court". Now, I gotta say— We did not talk about beta Max tapes at all. But what other case is there that we would ever even get close to talking about Betamax? So, that's why we call it pro—

[01:05:00]

And it has to do with probate court, which is a fun topic.

Monte Belmonte: It's funny how much criticism I get from making puns, but you literally ask all the listeners of *Judge John Hodgman* to come up with a punt for the name of your episode every time. (*Laughs.*) And well done, u/Footwear_Critic! That's a good one.

John Hodgman: Hey, we are all hypocrites! (*Monte laughs.*) Accusing someone else of hypocrisy is juvenile, because we are all two-faced!

Monte Belmonte: You can join the conversation over at the Maximum Fun Subreddit over at [Reddit.com/r/MaximumFun](https://www.reddit.com/r/MaximumFun). We'll be asking for title suggestions of puns there too. So, keep an eye out for those!

Evidence and photos from the show are posted on our Instagram account at [Instagram.com/judgejohnhodgman](https://www.instagram.com/judgejohnhodgman). We're also on TikTok and YouTube at [@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod](https://www.youtube.com/@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod). Follow and subscribe to see our episodes and video-only content.

John Hodgman: Speaking of YouTube! Our YouTube comment of the week comes this week from Complete Walkaround! Complete Walkaround is the name of a user who I believe is a subscriber to our YouTube channel, [@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod](https://www.youtube.com/@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod). And on our recent case, "Probable Jaws", Complete Walkaround said, "Wow! Glad I stayed for the leg show!"

And that's true. Jesse Thorn and I did put our legs on main and on camera in that particular episode.

Monte Belmonte: Nice!

John Hodgman: And boy, do we have shapely calves! There's so much fun stuff to see over there on YouTube. So much of the show that you might miss if you're only listening to it. Of course, we love our audio listeners. But it would be wonderful if you wanted to go over to YouTube and like, share, and subscribe; because that is a place where people are discovering new podcasts, and it's great for the show if you're able to go over there and smash those buttons.

Judge John Hodgman was created by Jesse Thorn and me, John Hodgman. This episode was engineered by Dusty Weis at Podcamp Media in the great city of Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Schlemiel, shlimazel, Hasenpfeffer Incorporated. The podcast is edited by AJ McKeon. Our video editor is Daniel Speer. And as always, our producer is Jennifer Marmor, the great and powerful.

Monte Belmonte: Woooo! Okay, Judge John Hodgman. Let's get to some Swift Justice, where we answer your small disputes with a quick judgment. Mod007 on the MaxFun subreddit says, "I would like my husband to wear a V-neck sweater. He won't do it."

John Hodgman: Now look, I understand why some people would not wanna ever wear a turtleneck sweater or even a crewneck sweater! I hate things touching my neck, but you know what, Mod007? I'm not your husband. And if he doesn't wanna wear a V-neck sweater, people like what they like, and they wear what they wear. Sorry about that. Wear your own V-neck sweater and look at yourself in the mirror. I bet you look great.

Hey, we have an episode coming up with some experts on snacks. Who are these snacking experts? You'll find out! Keep listening! But in the meantime, we need some snack related disputes. What's the best snack? Salty or sweet, crunchy or gummy? What's your favorite snack, Monte? When you're snacking, what do you want? Some dried apple rings?

Monte Belmonte: I love Cheez-Its. Just straight up, no special flavor, extra cheese or anything.

(John agrees.)

Best beach snack. Cheez-Its!

John Hodgman: Cheez-Its. By the way, I love Pringles.

(Monte agrees.)

I once ate some Pringles on a beach, and I reached into that canister so hard I cut the side of my hand, and I still have a scar.

Monte Belmonte: *(Laughs.)* Oh my word!

John Hodgman: Yeah. I love snacks. And I want to hear your disputes over snacks. Indeed, what do you think are the best snacks? Even if you got no one to fight against, tell me what you think. The best snack foods, your maximum snacks. Send them in to MaximumFun.org/jjho. That's where we get all of your disputes. Or email me at Hodgman@MaximumFun.org. That's MaximumFun.org/jjho, or email me Hodgman@MaximumFun.org. We are eager to hear about all of your disputes—big, small, medium. It's how we make the show go.

So, please submit your disputes right now to MaximumFun.org/jjho! We'll talk to you next time on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast! Monte Belmonte, thank you so much for being here again! And I hope to see you again in the near future!

Monte Belmonte: It's always a pleasure and an honor. I love doing it so much.

John Hodgman: Well, I will talk to you next time in real life. But I'll talk to the rest of you on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Transition: Cheerful ukulele chord.

Speaker 1: Maximum Fun.

Speaker 2: A worker-owned network.

Speaker 3: Of artist owned shows.

Speaker 4: Supported—

Speaker 5: —directly—

Speaker 6: —by you!