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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, "Sole Bene-fish-iary". Greg brings the case against his wife, Melinda. Greg and Melinda live on a sailing catamaran, but life at sea isn't busy enough for Melinda! She says they need a new hobby! She wants that hobby to be fishing. Greg thinks it's a bad idea. He says fishing is boring and gross. Live-aboard sailing involves a lot of upkeep and chores. Greg doesn't want to add cleaning fish to that list. Who's right? Who's wrong? Only one can decide. Please rise as Judge John Hodgman enters the courtroom and presents an obscure cultural reference.

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

John Hodgman: *(In an old-timey Maine accent.)* "This day after we were committed to go around the islands, the fog rolled back in thick. Typically, after rounding the second Babson Island, the course back home, it's a straight line heading off 90 degrees. But now the breeze was right on the nose. I took the lead and told the others to follow close behind. We had to make five tacks to get back. And for each tack I used the ledges as my guide. Felt very lucky it was low tide and they were visible. Those ledges were like bases on a baseball field, guiding me back home through these familiar waters. The other two boats followed me like ducklings, and we found our moorings with no problem."

(Still using the accent.) Bailiff Jesse Thorn, please swear the litigants in.

Jesse Thorn: 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 insists on doing that voice?

(They swear.)

(Mimicking the accent.) Judge Hodgman, you may proceed.

John Hodgman: *(Using the accent.)* The voice insists on itself. Greg and Melinda, you may be seated. Where are you anyway?

Greg: We are just outside Boston, Massachusetts at the PRX Studios.

John Hodgman: Just outside Boston, Massachusetts at the PRX studios! Well, hello. And those of you watching on YouTube know that Greg and Melinda are already seated. So, remain seated, if you will, for an immediate summary judgment in one of yours favors. Can either of you name the piece of culture that I referenced as I also sat in the courtroom? I entered the courtroom, but I was already here seated. Go ahead, Greg. You guess first.

Greg: Well, I'm not sure—

John Hodgman: You want to hear it again?

Greg: No, that's okay. *(Laughs.)*

John Hodgman: Oh, okay. You sure?

Jesse Thorn: *(In the accent.)* No, please! We're done hearing that voice!

(They chuckle.)

Greg: I am gonna guess it's from one of your Substack readings of *Moby Dick*. I'm not sure which one, so I'm just gonna guess my favorite week that I've got from you, which was May 10th, 2024.

John Hodgman: Wow, you really had this prepared.

Greg: “Scrapple and Scrabble”. It’s one of my favorite of your Substacks. I'm gonna guess that one.

John Hodgman: You're referring to [Hodgman.substack.com](https://hodgman.substack.com), my newsletter which also has a secret room in it. And if you enter the secret room, you get to hear me reading the entirety of the text of the novel *Moby Dick* or *The Whale* by Herman Melville in a terrible Maine accent, just like the one I used when I entered this courtroom.

Greg: That is correct.

John Hodgman: But now, Melinda, you have heard Greg's guess.

(Melinda laughs.)

And what is your guess?

Melinda: My guess was captain Dave Marciano of *Wicked Tuna*?

John Hodgman: Oh, that's very flattering!

(They laugh.)

Wicked Tuna is one of the—is a reality show about tuna fishers in Boston. Correct? Or you know, in Massachusetts.

(Melinda confirms.)

Greg: I don't watch it.

John Hodgman: It's no Jacob Knowles's YouTube page! You guys know who Jacob Knowles is?

Greg: I don't.

Melinda: No.

John Hodgman: Oh boy. This guy's blowing up. Fifth generation lobsterman and YouTuber? This guy's blowing up.

I was doing my terrible imitation of a Maine accent, but the person who I was quoting does not have such an accent. I was just putting a little extra sea-salty sauce on it, because I enjoy talking that way. And I enjoy how much it annoys my friend Jesse. But that's an affectionate annoyance, I hope.

Jesse Thorn: Indeed.

John Hodgman: Point is, that quote was from a short essay called “My Biggest Disaster and What It Taught Me” by Jane Alfeld. Now, Greg, Melinda, you know who Jane Alfeld is?

Greg: I do not, no.

Melinda: No.

John Hodgman: That was my sailing teacher in Maine. Well, really, my wife—who's a whole human being in her own right—'s sailing teacher. I did not actually get to take the course with Jane, but all I ever heard about when my wife was taking the course—who is a whole human in her own right—was Jane, Jane, Jane. And Gretchen! Both of them wonderful, wonderful sailors and incredible teachers. And I've gotten to know both of them. And I did take the course, and I've learned a lot from Jane since.

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Actually, I did study directly with Jane, 'cause we went out on the *Merry Day* together. But that's a different story. Jane's an incredible sailing teacher. And in summertime life—in regular life, she is a computer programmer and consultant. But every summer she goes up to our town in coastal Maine to teach at the Wooden Boat School. And she's truly one of the most... I'm gonna say something to you. I hate sailing. Hate it. I learned it out of obligation to the world that I lived in and to my wife—who's a whole human being in her own right—who

wanted to learn, and I wanted to learn with her. And lots of anxiety and one catastrophically destroyed shin later—'cause sailing's very painful. Things are bobbing up and hitting you in the shins all the time. Bad news. Also, I don't like heeling. I don't like feeling like I'm gonna go into the ocean.

But I loved learning sailing from Jane, because Jane was so calm. Is so calm. And I highly recommend that you look into her work on a website called OffCenterHarbor.com. She wrote a couple of short essays about sailing there that are really lovely. And that whole website, OffCenterHarbor.com. If you wanna understand the world that has kidnapped me and turned me into the weirdo that I am today—a guy who's gonna fake a main accent for no reason other than my own enjoyment, and other things—you should go to OffCenterHarbor.com. Can't recommend it more highly. Essays and videos about boats. It's just boat stuff.

Hate sailing. I hate sailing, Greg and Melinda. But I do like boats. I'm a little bit boat mad. And I want to hear all about this boat you're living on. Since neither of you got it right, we're gonna hear this case. Who brings the case to my court?

Greg: I do.

John Hodgman: Maritime Justice today on *Judge John Hodgman*. “I do,” says Greg! Greg, you and your wife—who's a whole human being in her own right—Melinda, live on a sailing catamaran. Is that correct?

Greg: That's correct.

John Hodgman: And right now, you're on land outside of Boston at PRX and outside of Boston, Massachusetts. But normally that's because there's similar— You live at sea.

Greg: We do. We rented a car so we could drive up here and be in the studio with you.

John Hodgman: Well, do not think we're gonna reimburse you for that expense!

(They laugh.)

Right. Right now, you— Other than today, you normally don't have to worry about anything on land, which—

Greg: Just our two children. They're sophomores and seniors in college, which is why we're doing this now again.

John Hodgman: Let's be honest, when you're out there in international waters, those kids don't even exist anymore to you. Right? Come on.

(They laugh.)

Greg: They can take care of themselves. They're doing well.

John Hodgman: Let's be serious. You forgot all about 'em. When you're out there, how far out do you go into the Atlantic?

Greg: We've been across the Atlantic twice.

John Hodgman: What the heck!?

Greg: Yeah, we've been across the Caribbean twice. We've been up and down the Caribbean.

Melinda: Circumnavigated the Mediterranean.

Greg: Mediterranean. Went up and down the East coast now. We're planning on early next year going through the Panama Canal and trying the South Pacific.

Jesse Thorn: What are you running from?

(They laugh.)

John Hodgman: Yeah. Really this is like—

Melinda: Corporate medicine!

Greg: The political climate. *(Laughs.)*

John Hodgman: Corporate medicine and the political climate are both worth fleeing.

(They agree through laughter.)

I would advise staying north of Venezuela, however.

Greg: Yes, we will.

John Hodgman: Alright. So, first of all, for folks who are listening—I call them landlubbers—what is a Catamaran?

Greg: A catamaran is a newer type of sailboat, at least in the West, that has two hulls.

John Hodgman: Hulls, H-U-L-L-S.

Greg: H-U-L-L-S—that are skinnier and more narrow a regular sailing mono-hull's hull. And then it's connected—

John Hodgman: Monohulls.

Greg: Yes. And then it's connected by a like a bridge between the two holes, with a cabin on top called a saloon. That's sort of the main living area, where your galley and your eating areas, your bridge, and everything. And then the hulls are where the berths, the bedrooms, and the heads—the bathrooms—are located. So, they're—they don't heel, which means you might like them.

John Hodgman: Now explain what healing is for folks who don't know.

Greg: Heeling is—for a monohull, just has a single hull, there's a weight underneath the main hull that helps balance the ship. So, the winds are blowing hard, and the sails are generating a lot of lift, the boat will lean one way or the other.

John Hodgman: It leans over! It's not even when the winds are blowing hard. Even a little bit!

Greg: Yeah, it heels over. And it can be 20/30 degrees sometimes. And it's kind of disconcerting. I'm with you on that one.

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John Hodgman: And everyone is telling John Hodgman as he white-knuckles grips the gunnels, "It's not going to go under."

Greg: I mean, probably!

John Hodgman: "You're not going to capsize." But it's like, how do you know?!

(They laugh.)

Melinda: Right.

Greg: So, a catamaran has the two hulls, so that when it starts to lean, one hull gets pushed more into the water, which increases the lift. Then the other hull acts as a counterbalance to keep it from— So, we might heel three or four degrees, even with pretty strong winds.

John Hodgman: Still too much. Still too much.

Greg: And then catamarans are faster than monohulls, because we have less hydrodynamic drag because of the smaller hulls.

John Hodgman: We gotta to be careful here, Jesse. 'Cause before you joined us, I got in on the tail end of a conversation that Greg and Melinda were having with Jennifer Marmor explaining how cold it's been and how both their holes have been very cold. They're like, yeah, "Our holes have been like 60 degrees lately. It gets very damp."

(Melinda laughs.)

I'm like, what?! Your hole?

Greg: Hulls! Hulls!

John Hodgman: Your hulls are cold. Cold hulls over there. And so, right. Heeling means— Alright, so there are gonna be some nautical terms, and we'll work— Do not be alarmed, listener and viewer at YouTube [@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod](#). We'll work through all the maritime vocab as we get through it. Okay. And so, you have lived at sea before, correct?

Melinda: Yes.

Greg: Yes. 2015-2017, we took our 9- and 11-year-old kids with us and sailed—

John Hodgman: To sea.

Greg: Yeah. To sea. And that's when we sailed the Caribbean, went across the Atlantic, the Med, and then crossed back to the Caribbean in those two years. Then they wanted to go to high school on land, which we get. So, we put them through high school. We moved onto— as land gets, we moved to Nebraska. But got our kids through high school, got them in college. And then now we're back on the sea.

John Hodgman: As soon as you were empty nest, you're like, “It was fun sailing. It would be better without kids. Let's go.”

Melinda: Mm-hm.

Greg: That is correct.

John Hodgman: Same boat both times?

Greg: Same model.

John Hodgman: Okay.

Greg: We did sell the boat (*unclear*). They require a lot of maintenance when they live on the ocean. So, we sold our first boat, and then we bought another one recently in June.

Melinda: The exact same kind of boat.

Greg: Same kind. Just a little bit newer, but the same model.

Melinda: ‘Cause we liked it!

John Hodgman: Tell me about the exact same kind. What kind of—what's the make and model of this? Is it a Nissan Sentra?

Greg: It's a Leopard 48.

John Hodgman: And so, 48 means it's 48 feet long.

(Greg says something unclear.)

It's a sailing catamaran, and it is named *Jerry*.

Greg: *The Intrepid Jerry*.

John Hodgman: Excuse me, *The Intrepid Jerry*.

Melinda: Yes. He's very brave.

Greg: And there's only one of him to.

John Hodgman: And your previous boat was named...?

Greg: *The Amazing Marvin*.

John Hodgman: *Marvin*. So, if you want to see a picture of it—and Jesse, you can also look at the evidence right here. All of the evidence is available on our show page, as well as on our social media. Our show page at MaximumFun.org, of course. And our social media is [@JudgeJohnHodgman](https://www.instagram.com/JudgeJohnHodgman) on Instagram. And if you're watching right now, you are seeing it right now on our YouTube, [@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod](https://www.youtube.com/JudgeJohnHodgmanPod). There's *The Intrepid Jerry* right there. And here's another photo of the aft deck, it looks like to me!

Melinda: That's actually the front cockpit; that's the front of the boat. And not all catamarans have a seating area there. Usually it's more angled, and you can't get a nice seating area. But that's one of the reasons we bought this particular kind of boat is that you can just sit out there in the evenings and watch your sunset when you're at anchor, and it's a really nice area.

John Hodgman: So, that's the front of the boat. And I called it the back of the boat. 'Cause I'm an idiot is what you're saying. I don't know my aft from my fore is what you're saying.

(They laugh.)

Greg: It's an unusual feature, and one that we really like in the Leopard family.

John Hodgman: Yeah. Normally when you see a sitting area like that, it's to the rear of the boat. That's the hangout area.

(They confirm.)

Because the front of the boat, the aft, usually it's just one point on a single-hulled boat.

(They confirm.)

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

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John Hodgman: Alright, so we know what a catamaran is. Can you tell me what a sloop is?

Melinda: So, a sloop is the rig that we have. So, our kind of set up in terms of how many masts and giant poles sticking out of the boat. And so, a sloop is a single-masted sailing boat. So, we have a big, 75-foot mast—or 75 feet above the water. And then we have a jib, or a genoa—a smaller sail that goes on the front of the boat.

Jesse Thorn: How do you like the cut of that?

John Hodgman: Is it well cut?

Melinda: It's well cut. I call it jibby.

John Hodgman: And a jib would be a stays'l, right? Because it's not affixed to a mast, but aligned?

Greg: Correct. It's a furling jib. So, it furls around the front—

John Hodgman: Oh, I mean, obviously it's a furling jib.

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I just couldn't remember.

Jesse Thorn: *(Haughtily.)* Yeah, I knew it was a furling jib. You don't have to explain to us that it was a furling jib.

Melinda: Everybody's jibs furls.

John Hodgman: Yeah. I mean, come on!

Melinda: Most people's jib furls.

Greg: It's not a hanked jib.

John Hodgman: No, I'm looking at this right now.

Jesse Thorn: Don't be ridiculous.

John Hodgman: What fool would say that was a hanked jib?

Melinda: Yeah, who would hank it?

Jesse Thorn: Only a real dullard would say that was a hanked jib.

(They laugh.)

John Hodgman: Alright, well, okay. So, thank you very much for allowing me to quiz myself and revive my trust and my ability to remember things. But one thing I remember is that you said that you are rather late in life sailors. How did this begin for you?

Greg: This began—so, I'm a pilot as well. I fly like just my own small airplanes. So, when we were younger—before kids—we flew our small, four-seat airplane over to The Bahamas. It was a common place—like, the first place to fly out of the country.

John Hodgman: Well, obviously whenever I'm flying my four-seat airplane, I'm going to The Bahamas.

Greg: I mean, it's a great place to go.

Jesse Thorn: I mean, I have a six-seater, but I get it.

Greg: Yeah. *(Laughs.)* So, we flew over to The Bahamas, and we met these crazy people that live on their boats. And they let us stay on their boat and took us for a sale, and we took them for a flight. And we had never— We both grew up in the Midwest, so we weren't cognizant of the fact that people lived on sailboats and sailed around.

Melinda: And there's toilets on them. And kitchens.

John Hodgman: Yeah, they got everything.

Greg: Yeah! So, we found out about it, and that sort of planted a seed. So, the next time we went back, we—with our plane—we also met with some more cruisers, and we decided to charter a catamaran in The Bahamas. We had sailed with my stepfather on his small, lake catamaran before, so we kind of knew the basics of sailing. But we wanted to see if we could live on a sailboat.

John Hodgman: Greg, may I interrupt you for a moment?

Greg: Yes.

John Hodgman: I don't want to hear anything about lake catamaraning again.

Greg: I—I— Agreed.

(They laugh.)

John Hodgman: Thank you. Jesse Thorn gives through two thumbs down, lake catamaraning.

Greg: So, we chartered this boat with a skipper, with a captain—

Jesse Thorn: *(Mockingly.)* Where do we go? The other side of the lake?

(They laugh.)

Melinda: Lots of tacking!

Greg: Usually, they just come back to where they left.

Jesse Thorn: *(Mockingly.)* Yeah, let's go to the middle of the lake and then come back.

(They laugh.)

John Hodgman: Look, if you wanna be on a lake— And I'm not necessarily talking about a great lake here. I'm just talking about a regular lake.

Greg: Yeah, just a small lake.

John Hodgman: You wanna be on a lake, that's great. Go on either a canoe or a pontoon party boat. That's what belongs on a lake.

Greg: Yes.

John Hodgman: Okay, so you met all these cruisers, and you decided “This would be a great time for us to drop out of society with our kids.”

Greg: Well, so my wife is a neurologist, and she was pretty burned out. And we went on this charter for 10 days and loved it. Really had a great time. The kids loved it. We loved it. So, we thought we could do this. So, we started taking sailing lessons at the American Sailing Association School in Minnesota. We were living in Minnesota at the time. So, we—

Melinda: So, Lake Minnetonka. A lake—*(laughing)*.

John Hodgman: I don't wanna—I just—I know. I know! I know! I know geography. I know what you're sailing on.

Melinda: *(Laughing.)* But Lake Superior is a—Lake Superior is a big lake!

John Hodgman: That's true.

Greg: We did take our advanced monohull and cruising catamaran classes on Lake Superior.

John Hodgman: Well, that's fine.

Greg: In October, when it was 33 degrees.

John Hodgman: I mean, if you want some cold holes, go to Lake Superior.

Greg: So many. So many cold holes.

John Hodgman: So, I'm gonna get to the case already.

Greg: Okay!

John Hodgman: And ask you what— The topic at hand is fishing. Melinda, you want to go fishing?

Melinda: Yes.

John Hodgman: Greg, you hate fishing.

Greg: correct.

John Hodgman: Melinda, why do you want to go fishing on your boat?

Melinda: So, on the boat, it works best—when you live in a small space in a place that requires a lot of maintenance—is that everybody has their own assigned tasks and duties. And Greg is far more multi-talented at handling all of the tasks on the boat than I am. Like, he's more capable of doing the plumbing, the sail planning, the electrical work, fixing all the stuff that breaks. So, my role has been designated as Quarter Master or provisioner. I'm the one that plans the meals, figures out what we have to freeze in the freezer, how often we go to the grocery store. So, I'm kind of the hunter gatherer of the couple.

Greg: And the ship's doctor!

Melinda: And ship's doctor. *(Laughs.)* Which is mostly—

John Hodgman: That's right. You have a full—do you have a—? You're a neurologist, right? So, I presume you have a full CAT scan machine onboard?

(They laugh.)

Melinda: Exactly. Actually, ship's doctoring ends up being a lot of ear, nose, and throat. *(Laughs.)* And a lot less neurology. But so, as the person who is in charge of bringing food

onto the boat, fishing is something that a lot of other cruisers do and enjoy. And I feel a little inadequate in my crowd not being able to do that.

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John Hodgman: What kind of fishing are these other cruisers doing that you're trying to keep up with?

Melinda: So, lot of them will trawl a line behind the boat or have a rod on the back of their boat. And so, when they're underway offshore, they do deep sea fishing. And they hope to catch tunas and mahis and big, old fish.

John Hodgman: Yeah, those are— Look, I don't know. I'm not a fisher person myself. But the tuna—a tuna's a big fish.

Melinda: It can be. So, you let those go. *(Laughs.)* And you bring on this—

John Hodgman: Maybe they let you go!

Melinda: Yes. The small to medium sized fishes to eat. And I like sushi. He does not. But fish would be a nice protein to have. Because we're planning to go to the Pacific, and there's a gajillion islands out there. Not all have a big old grocery store on them. And so, you have to be a little bit scrappy in finding food. And if we could provide our own food for ourselves, that would be more—you know—culturally acceptable too.

John Hodgman: Economical? Oh yeah.

Melinda: Yes! Economical and more just acceptable. Like, we're not coming—you know—from America and going somewhere and taking. We're actually being part of the culture.

John Hodgman: That all sounds reasonable to me, Greg. Why don't you want Melinda to be happy?

(They laugh.)

Greg: I don't know if we have enough time for all the reasons I don't want her to be happy.

John Hodgman: Whoa!

Greg: *(Laughs.)* I just—I grew up in a rural part of Missouri where like everyone fishes. My brother's a big fisherman, and I just found it—I've always found it tedious and gross. And I don't particularly like eating fish.

John Hodgman: Tell me more.

Greg: I would always bring a book with me when I would go fish fishing. So, I would read my book instead of fish, and so I got made fun of a lot. But I just—

John Hodgman: What would your kin fish for in the Show-Me state?

Greg: Oh, catfish. Catfish a lot.

John Hodgman: Okay, so that is gross. Those are disgusting fish.

Greg: Oh, yeah. I mean, they're bottom feeders. And—

Melinda: Walleyes.

John Hodgman: Would they noodle for them?

Greg: Yes, I have a— My brother-in-law's a champion catfish noodler.

John Hodgman: Do you know what catfish noodling is, Jesse?

Jesse Thorn: That's where you stick your hand in a hole and hope the catfish chomps onto it? Is that correct?

Greg: Well, and then you pull out the catfish, and throw it in a bucket, and then eat it later.

Jesse Thorn: Oh, yeah. No, I left out the bucket part.

(They laugh.)

John Hodgman: You use your hand and forearm as both bait and pole.

Greg: Yes.

John Hodgman: You shove your hand into a hole. And I mean hole here. Not hull. Into a cold hole. And hope that a cat—or maybe a—maybe a—

Melinda: It's probably a warm hole.

John Hodgman: A warm hole.

Greg: It's dark. It's definitely dark.

John Hodgman: Like, a mouth-temperature hole, and then get a mouth on your—ugh! But that's not what Melinda wants to do! Melinda wants to be out on the open sea! Fishing for leaping, beautiful, sparkling marlins and such! That's heroic!

Greg: And expensive!

John Hodgman: It's not like your noodling, weird cousins in Missouri. This is ocean stuff here! Good stuff. Heroic stuff. Not lake and river stuff.

Jesse Thorn: This is glamor fishing!

John Hodgman: Glamor fishing!

Greg: Which one might argue is much more difficult than sticking your hand in a hole and pulling up a fish.

John Hodgman: What do you mean?

Greg: It's a— Deep sea fishing to me seems more like the grad school of fishing. Like, you would start on a pond or a lake getting small fish. And then once you're good at that, you could go up and start doing it on the ocean.

John Hodgman: You're saying Melinda isn't strong enough to haul up an ocean-going fish herself?

Greg: That's a big part of it, because—

John Hodgman: And you don't want to help.

Melinda: He doesn't wanna help!

Greg: *(Laughing.)* That is correct.

Melinda: He doesn't wanna help!

Greg: Melinda can do whatever hobbies she wants to do. She can learn—

John Hodgman: Except this one.

Greg: Whatever she wants.

John Hodgman: Except for this one.

Greg: Except for this one, because she can't do this one by yourself. These are big fish. So, these are fish that I would have to haul up on deck and beat to death with a fish bat.

Melinda: No! You don't beat it to death! You would ikejima it or whatever it's called.

John Hodgman: I would like to know what it is—

Jesse Thorn: Yeah, small-scale nuclear weapons.

(They laugh.)

Melinda: It's, uh, ikejima. It's a way that you just take an awl, and you poke it through its brain. Okay? Very little guts come out.

Greg: I don't wanna do that either!

Melinda: And then the fish immediately seizes up, and it relaxes all its muscles so that the meat is nice tend. And then you take a long wire, and you punch it through its spinal cord.

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John Hodgman: Yeah? Go on.

Melinda: To paralyze it more to keep the meat tender before you bleed it out. *(Laughing awkwardly.)*

Greg: Please continue.

Melinda: And before you bleed it out, and—

John Hodgman: Can I just say something? This is a family pod— Well, it's a family-tolerant podcast. But I'm gonna need to talk about some grownup stuff right now.

Greg, why don't you want to have sex with your wife right now in the studio? Because this is incredible.

(They laugh.)

Greg: See, I just don't— That does not sound fun to me! I don't wanna stick an awl in a fish's brain, and I don't—

John Hodgman: It doesn't sound like you have to! It sounds like Melinda's ready to do it right now!

Melinda: Yeah! See, I would do this part! I know the anatomy.

Greg: So, what you're saying is I gotta—I gotta—

John Hodgman: Ikejime method. Ikejime method is, indeed, as Melinda describes. “Dispatching fish, involves inserting a spike into the brain, causing immediate death,

rupturing the spinal cord with a wire, shilling the fish immediately to maintain high quality and prevent stress-induced hormone release and muscle contractions, thus leading to improved flavor, texture, and a significantly longer shelf life.” In case you wanna sell your fish!

(They laugh.)

Jesse Thorn: I mean, honestly, Greg, this sounds pretty good, even if you just develop sea enemies of any kind. Not to be confused with sea anemones!

(They laugh.)

I’m talking about sea enemies!

Greg: Yeah. That's another—

Jesse Thorn: You have a wife who reeeally knows her way around a long wire through the spinal cord.

(They laugh.)

John Hodgman: Yeah, for sure. Yeah.

Greg: That's another thing is when we're out on the ocean and we do— We scuba dive as well. I kind of have a relationship with the ocean where I don't take anything from it, and it doesn't take anything from me. And that's worked out for me so far.

Jesse Thorn: Except your leavings.

John Hodgman: Yeah. I mean, what are you doing with your head? Not the top of your body. I'm talking about emptying the toilet.

Greg: That is true.

Melinda: That’s true.

Greg: That is true.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah, how are things going on the poop deck?

(They laugh.)

John Hodgman: Yeeees, Jesse's got the vocab too.

Melinda: We contribute nitrogen *(laughs)* and urea to the ocean.

Greg: That is true. Yeah, we're contributing fertilizer to the ocean.

John Hodgman: Well. So, you are if you are killing a fish and then fileting it and throwing the guts back. That's gonna feed fish.

Melinda: It's the natural cycle.

John Hodgman: And I wanna explore with you for a moment. What about fishing when you were growing up was particularly gross to you?

Greg: I mean, just all— I don't like eating fish. I like some white fish, like a halibut or a mahimahi. But like a catfish or a trout or a bass? It's just—the whole thing's gross. Scales.

John Hodgman: Lake fish. Lake fish. Lake fish! Halibut, ocean fish. Gooood fish.

Greg: And Lionfish is pretty good. And I have fished lionfish in the past when—because they're an invasive species, and I don't mind doing that.

Melinda: With a spear!

Greg: With a spear.

Melinda: He poked it with a spear, and then I made tacos out of it.

Greg: Yeah, I don't mind that.

John Hodgman: So, you know, like your whole argument that this is too gross to handle, it doesn't seem like that's—if I may say in this nautical themed case—holding water. Because you don't mind fishing when it is on your terms, and it's not so gross that you won't do it. So.

Greg: Well, lionfishing is different, because the lionfish—you have a spear. The spear goes out, spears into lionfish, and then you take the spear, and you shove the lionfish inside of a PVC pipe, and then you pull the spear back out. So, the fish stay inside the pipe. And then I give the pipe to Melinda, and she cleans the fish and cooks it.

John Hodgman: We're talking about a lionfish, like a lionfish?

Greg: Yeah. With the spikes and the—

John Hodgman: Like, highly decorative and spikes and everything?

Melinda: Aquarium—yep.

John Hodgman: Isn't that what Captain Picard had in his ready room on the USS Enterprise?

(They confirm.)

A lionfish. You want to eat Captain Picard's fish, and you're cool with that?! But you won't eat a tuna that your wife catches and spikes?

Jesse Thorn: Hold on, John! He's cool with shoving it in a tube.

Greg: Yes.

John Hodgman: Right. That's as far as it goes.

(They laugh.)

Greg: After that, I don't know what happens! It goes in the tube.

Jesse Thorn: Only a psychopath would go past tube-shoving!

John Hodgman: Are you a— When you say you're a neurologist, have you done brain surgery?

Melinda: No. Myself, no. I do the medical part of the brain medicine.

John Hodgman: But clearly the idea of stabbing a fish in the brain and then running a wire through its vertebrae does not gross you out. You're okay with that muck.

Melinda: It's— I call up the same things I called up when I was learning medicine in medical school and dissecting cadavers. I am primally grossed out by it, but I get over it, 'cause I know there's a goal to be attained by getting through it.

John Hodgman: You say you call up the same skill that you called up when you had to dissect cadavers.

[00:30:00]

So, what's your technique for getting over nausea and aversion and gross out?

Melinda: Uh, thinking about how good the food will taste. *(Laughing.)* But I didn't think about that with human beings!

John Hodgman: Okay.

Melinda: With human beings—! *(Laughing.)*

John Hodgman: That was a very important correction at the last minute there. I like that.

Melinda: Because muscle does look a little bit like roast beef. But—

John Hodgman: You think that Melinda can't learn how to fish?

Greg: I'm certain she could learn how to fish.

John Hodgman: You wanna get back on a boat with this guy?!

(Greg laughs.)

Melinda: I know! I mean, this is part of why we're doing this now in the empty nester is being a doctor takes a lot of training, takes a lot of skill. And I was getting kind of stuck in a rut. And as I'm aging, I'm wondering, "Can I learn anything else?"

Greg: She can. She can learn it.

Melinda: Am I capable of doing something new and different and cool? And so, being on the boat, you have to call up and learn all these new skills and all these new vocabulary words. And fishing is something—a skill that I could learn as somebody who really doesn't know how the world works at all except for the human body. It would be a practical skill that I could have.

Jesse Thorn: Greg, what are the expenses involved?

Greg: So, I am not the best person to ask about this, but I did go on a major sports retailing website, and I put together a list of two rods and reels, lures, all the things that it looked like you would need, including a fish bat to beat them to death, and a gaff—

Melinda: You don't need the bat!

John Hodgman: You are not gonna use the fish bat, Greg!

Melinda: I'm not gonna use the fish bat.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah, you need the wire and the ice pick.

Greg: Alright. And then a gaff. A gaff is just a big hook that you use to hook in the fish, to pull 'em on board.

John Hodgman: You're telling me you don't already have a gaff on your catamaran?!

Greg: I don't have gaff. No. No, I don't have a gaff.

John Hodgman: Well, that's just an oversight on your part, but go on. Alright.

Jesse Thorn: Once they get onboard, you just garrote them?

(They laugh.)

Melinda: You have to have a gaff to keep the orcas away anyway.

Greg: Oh, that's not a bad idea. But it was about \$2,000 at the end of the day. And that's my best guess in terms of what it would cost. And for \$2,000— I mean, MREs are about \$50 for a dozen. So, I could buy, you know, four and a half months of MREs for that much money. *(Laughing.)* If we ate 'em three times a day, every day.

Melinda: We—oh my god! What kind of—?!

Greg: It's just—it's a lot of money!

Melinda: I am not eating—

John Hodgman: Do you feel your argument breaking down as it comes out of your mouth?

(They laugh.)

Greg: Well, we would never buy that many, but that's a lot of money to spend on an alternate food source when we could just use that money to buy food or to buy rations as a backup.

John Hodgman: But I mean— I'm going back to that parable. You give a man a fish, he eats for a day; you teach man a fish, he fishes for a lifetime. The point is—and woman too, and non-binary people, et cetera; sorry to be gendered there in the parable department. But the point is that like if someone learns a skill and invests in the tool, that is a skill that will service them in a sustainable way for a lifetime. Or at least for a lifetime of those—

I mean, I understand that you would have probably a century's worth of MREs if you put enough money into it, but that is not a sustainable— I mean, literally it's plastic and freeze-dried food. I'm not sure— It's not a quality of life that I would want, and it's also developing a lot of waste!

Greg: Well, that's primarily a backup. I mean, my original plan is still to buy food from the people who fish on the islands if we wanna buy fish.

Melinda: But there's no skills required to do that—to buy food from people on the island or make an MRE. There's skill in the fish, and that's partly why it tastes so good is 'cause you made it yourself. Like, growing your own vegetables, *(chuckling awkwardly)* killing your own meat. There's some satisfaction that you get from that that I don't have a lot of outlets for on the boat, because I'm not skilled at fixing all the things that are broken.

Greg: Well, you're welcome to fish all you want to on the boat. I just— You need me to help get the fish onboard.

John Hodgman: Well, now wait a minute. There is another crew member onboard that we haven't discussed.

Greg: There is a third crew member. She's not very useful, but—

John Hodgman: This is Exhibit B.

Melinda: She's very useful!

John Hodgman: Penelope the morale officer, who happens to be a cat.

(They confirm.)

If you scroll down, Jesse, you can see a photo of Penelope the morale officer, keeping morale alive by hiding—

(Jesse “aw”s and giggles helplessly.)

Do you agree with Greg's premise that you would need his help to land the fish and spike it?

Melinda: So, I would need his help if it was really big. But if it's going to be the kind of fish that I would select to bring onboard—a medium or small one?

[00:35:00]

Probably not. What the help would from—like, why he would feel compelled to help me—is I'm clumsy. *(Laughs.)* And falling off the boat—

John Hodgman: Just what I've always wanted: a clumsy neurologist.

Melinda: Exactly. *(Laughs.)* Just—

Greg: Yeah. She's not a surgeon.

John Hodgman: No, I understand.

Melinda: I walk around people with a hammer, and you never know where it's gonna go. But he would probably— If I'm fishing, I'm sure he's going to be hovering, making sure I don't fall off the boat. 'Cause you have to be on the very back of the boat. It's called the transom, where one step back, you'd be in the drink. So, being there to help me— And if the fish got away from me, like preventing me from just following it *(laughing)* into the ocean.

John Hodgman: Now, look, I'm no deep-sea fisher person, but I've seen *Jaws*. And I remember that on the back of his boat, *The Orca*, he had a special fishing chair where you strap yourself in.

Greg: We do not have that.

Melinda: No, we don't have that. But we could get it.

Jesse Thorn: Think about how many MREs they could buy with a strap chair!

Greg: Oh my gosh. Strap chair? Strap chair would buy a lot of MREs.

John Hodgman: How has it been like living together on a boat again after some years on land?

Greg: *(Laughs.)* There's definitely a period of adaptation. There's the first time we went out, we had— We did this after Melinda went through medical school, residency, fellowship, and then having kids to where—and then working her first job. So, I would see quality, awake Melinda maybe six hours a week while that was going on. And then when she burned out and we decided to go on our first sail, all of a sudden I was with Melinda 24/7, no farther away than 30 feet. And that was tough on both of us. Not just me. That's just hard when you go from parallel but still attached lives to just being completely around each other all the time.

John Hodgman: Parallel but still attached is a pretty good definition of a catamaran.

Greg: Yeah! Actually, it is! *(Laughs.)* It's a perfect one!

John Hodgman: Have you tried sleeping in separate hulls?

Greg: Well, sleep—

Jesse Thorn: *(Interrupting.)* Why are you bothering with this kitchen and everything? Why not just have a reflecting pool?

(They laugh.)

John Hodgman: The world is— If you're in a catamaran, you have two separate bedrooms, and the world is your reflecting pool.

Greg: It's so true.

John Hodgman: Melinda, tell me about the transition from your point of view.

Melinda: It was difficult. Because not only was I spending a lot of time with my husband, whom—you know—I love, and I admire a lot of his qualities. But all the little, daily life things, the trivialities, can add up when you're just six feet away from somebody. And so, it was difficult just having him watch me do something every hour and having an opinion about what I was doing. *(Laughs.)*

John Hodgman: Yeah. This isn't the first time that you have mentioned Greg's hovering.

Melinda: (*Laughing.*) Hovering! Yes.

Greg: When Melinda works, I'm the primary caregiver for the kids. So, I make most of the meals.

John Hodgman: Not anymore! Not anymore.

Melinda: Not anymore!

Greg: That's right. And so, I had— You know, the kitchen was sort of my area. Melinda would cook on the weekends, but I would cook during the week. So, it's been tough to give that up. We've kind of switched roles when we did that. And so, that— It's just hard. It happens a lot where a couple will buy a boat, and they'll sail off, and then six months later the boat will be at anchor in a foreign country, and there'll be two flights home to different cities. I mean, it's—living on a boat with someone will fracture a relationship or strengthen it. And we were— I mean, ours has certainly been strengthened, which has been nice. But there's a period where it is an adjustment that is difficult.

Melinda: And part of the difficulty also is your relationship has to change a little bit. Because you are on a boat, and you do have designations—duties—on that boat. It's like your work is your home. Because he's the captain; I'm first mate. Sometimes things are happening very quickly on the boat, and you know, he's like, “Take down the main,” or whatever, a “flake the halyard,” and doing all this stuff. And I'm just supposed to—as first mate, it works best, “Okay, I'll go do that.” Not argue or, “Should we not flake the halyard just yet? Maybe we need to do this.” Like, have a discussion like you would with your spouse. I just have to say, “Yes, sir.” And go do that.

John Hodgman: Look, I mean, when you— This is something that I learned very much from Jane and Gretchen in sailing, is that like there is a reason that everything has a very specific name, even if it's a silly sounding name—

[00:40:00]

—like mainsail, mizzenmast, whatever, halyard, reef the thing and flake the duh-ba-duh. The reason for it is that you don't want there to be any confusion about what's happening. 'Cause things could go wrong very quickly. You know, like—so, you need very specific terminology so that everyone knows, even though it's a little bit hard to learn. It's not like— You don't wanna be saying, “No, I meant that rope for you to pull. Not this rope.” You know, like halyard does a single job, which is to raise the main sail. Correct?

(*They confirm.*)

I got it right again. Okay, good.

Greg: You did!

Melinda: Very good.

John Hodgman: And similarly, there is a reason to really divide chores or work requirements on a boat, because people need to focus on their own department and not be sort of litigating every decision. ‘Cause things have to happen swiftly and securely as you go forward. Right? It's like—it's dangerous out there.

Greg: It can be.

Melinda: Yes,

John Hodgman: So, what I—but what I keep hearing is that like, okay, so now you're in a new phase of your life where you're on the boat together, and Greg gets to be the captain who tells you to flake the halyard, and you say, “Yes, sir.” And your job—your department as it were, as they would say on *Below Deck*—is, you know, galley. And that Greg isn't letting you do your job! Without hovering over you and commenting on it.

(Melinda confirms.)

Which I appreciate is probably hard for you, Greg, 'cause you used to run the galley in your land home.

Greg: I have. And I'm happy to give it up to her. I think I've been better this time out.

John Hodgman: *(Extremely skeptically.)* Are you?! Are you?

Greg: *(Laughs.)* Yes! Yes, I am. I'm happy to give it up.

John Hodgman: Melinda, it says here in your petition that you need a sphere that you are in charge of. Tell me more about that.

Melinda: Well, as a doctor, I—

John Hodgman: Highly trained professional.

Melinda: Highly trained professional. I was in a hierarchy.

John Hodgman: Clumsy. Clumsy! But highly trained professional.

Melinda: *(Laughs.)* My people are like that though. Neurologists are a bit of a clumsy group.

John Hodgman: Not reassuring to hear.

Melinda: *(Laughs.)* But not neurosurgeons!

Greg: Yeah, that's different. Yeah.

Melinda: I referred to them to go do the coordinated stuff.

John Hodgman: Okay.

Melinda: But so, as a doctor I was in a very strong hierarchy. And I was in charge. I had people answering to me, nurses. I was an associate professor. I taught medical students. And so, I had a very nice set of things that I had power to control and change. On the boat, because I am the least skilled worker—let's just say—in the boat world, I don't have something that I can make my own and develop my skills there without any feedback. *(Laughs.)*

And I just—I'm missing that kind of—I don't wanna say power, but I'm missing that role for me in the world.

Jesse Thorn: You wanna have just some sort of space where you can drive a spike through something.

Melinda: Exactly! *(Laughs.)* Exactly. Localize the brain.

John Hodgman: Melissa, you keep—you mention over and over again that like this would be a great way for you guys to eat food sustainably. I mean, except for the fact that Greg doesn't want to eat your stinky fish.

Melinda: *(Laughing.)* I know.

John Hodgman: He hates sushi. But set that aside. Is this something you really need or something you really want?

Melinda: It's more of a want, yeah.

John Hodgman: Right. Because—do you have any other hobbies in this new chapter of your life?

Melinda: I have some hobbies, some writing hobbies.

John Hodgman: I mean, I'm just saying. You know, you're at sea. Scrimshaw is right there if you wanted to— It's waiting for you.

Melinda: Right? *(Laughs.)* Yeah. I'm supposed to be painting at some point, learning how to paint. And there are some other hobbies that I could get involved with. We have a giant sewing machine on our boat that is ready to be deployed if our sail rips. And in the past, I

made courtesy flags. So, the flags of the countries that were visiting, I made them myself with a sewing machine. So, I could get into sewing again.

John Hodgman: And what's— So, you mentioned these hobbies, but you're kind of like, “I should start painting, and I did some sewing,” but none of them seem to have really caught on with you.

Melinda: Correct. Yeah.

Greg: Melinda has started quite a few hobbies with a lot of enthusiasm, but most of them peter out pretty quickly. I'm a little worried that this might be one of them. And then we've got a bunch of smelly fishing equipment onboard that we don't know what to do with.

[00:45:00]

John Hodgman: Is there a way to start this hobby out without the \$2,000 investment that Greg thinks is necessary?

Melinda: There is, actually! There are kits that are \$200 where you just get a fishing line and a lure and a bungee cord, and you just strap it to your boat and drag it behind the boat and pull the fish in that way. You don't get a rod and a reel and all of the fancy stuff.

John Hodgman: And this is rated for the kind of fishing that you hope to do in the middle of the Pacific?

Melinda: Yeah. A lot of cruisers do it.

John Hodgman: What would be wrong with something—starting out small like that, Greg?

Greg: I mean, it leads back to the same problem. If it's a big fish, I gotta bring it in and hold it while she kills it. And I don't know of the efficacy of these types of things. I mean—

John Hodgman: *(Sarcastically.)* Well, I guess there's no way to find out. Certainly not by trying.

Jesse Thorn: Look, a lot of cruisers do it!

(They laugh.)

John Hodgman: Yeah, a lot of cruisers do it, Greg! Do you wanna be part of this lifestyle or not?

Greg: *(Laughing.)* I have seen no evidence that cruisers do this.

Melinda: Oh, they do! We've bought fish from other cruisers that caught them!

John Hodgman: Someone's doing it! Otherwise, where are you gonna get the fish?

Melinda: Somebody's doing it!

Greg: I would suggest— If she does want to try it, I would suggest something that's more of a local— Fish where we are. So, if we get to an atoll, you can take a kit out in a small boat, in the dinghy—or off of our boat—and fish off of the boat, and then catch fish there and see—

John Hodgman: Once the boat has already stopped?

Greg: Yes. Once we are where we are. And we could go out even just for the day and heave to, and she could fish off the side then. That would be fine too.

John Hodgman: What is this “we”, though?! This isn't something that she wants to do with you. This is something she wants to do on her own. Right, Melinda?

Melinda: (*Laughs.*) Well, our boat is too big to sail single handed. You need two people onboard at all times. So, if we were gonna use our *Jerry*—*The Intrepid Jerry*—to do this— And it's best to catch fish by having the lure move through the water. So, you'd wanna be sailing. If we're gonna use it, he needs to be there in participating with me in that.

Jesse Thorn: But here's the thing, Judge Hodgman, and it's something that you may have missed. Uh, he doesn't want to stop the boat. Stopping the boat is fine. He's glad to stop the boat, but he doesn't want to stop the boat. Does that make sense?

John Hodgman: Stopping the boat is fine, but he doesn't wanna stop the boat.

Jesse Thorn: He's not gonna stop the boat, but it would be fine to stop the boat, but he's not going to. He's not going anywhere. But he's not going to do it. He's not gonna stop the boat.

John Hodgman: I think what Greg is suggesting is that when you pull into an anchorage and you pick up a mooring, or you anchor or whatever, and you're down for the night, then maybe Melinda can get up early in the morning and fish off the side of the boat when you're already stopped because of necessity.

Greg: When we are at a place. Yes. Or she could—or take the dinghy out and fish off the dinghy.

Melinda: Well, the stopping the boat and fishing would require a rod and reel.

Greg: Correct.

Melinda: Yeah.

John Hodgman: Melinda, do you think it's possible—the kind of fishing you want to do is off the over the transom, off the aft the boat.

Melinda: Yeah. Trawling.

John Hodgman: While it is in motion.

Melinda: Yes.

John Hodgman: Trawling, which means you're just connecting a line that floats behind you. You're not standing there with a fishing pole.

Melinda: Correct.

John Hodgman: The line is connected. It's trawling behind you. Fish will either get it, or it won't. And at a certain point, if you've hooked some fish, you wanna pull 'em in. Right?

Greg: But how do you pull them in?

Melinda: You wear gloves. And if the boat's not going 12 knots, you can just pull it in.

John Hodgman: When it's time to pull the fish, Greg would have to stop.

Greg: We would have to heave to. Yeah.

John Hodgman: You would have to heave to. And then you would pull them in. Do you feel that you could do the kind of fishing that you want to do without Greg ever—he said that he would stop the boat—without having Greg's aid in landing and spiking the fish?

Melinda: I would have to test that out and practice first.

John Hodgman: Alright. I think I've heard everything I need to in order to make my decision. I'm going to go below decks and into my private captain's cabin where I will contemplate my decision, and I'll be back in a moment with my verdict. Ahoy Hoy!

Jesse Thorn: *(Laughs.)* Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom.

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

Melinda, how are you feeling about your chances in the case right now?

Melinda: I'm feeling very good! Surprising to me, because I thought I would totally lose this one.

Jesse Thorn: Greg, how are you feeling?

Greg: Oh, I don't know. Melinda can learn whatever she wants to, and she can do whatever hobbies she wants to. But I think it's reasonable for her to at least try this and for me to, you know, give it a shot.

[00:50:00]

But I don't know how it's gonna go at this point.

Jesse Thorn: Melinda, is it possible that—I don't know much about this cruising lifestyle that you guys are involved in. But do you think you could get like a temporary shore husband to haul in the *(laughing)* bigger fish? Is that part of this?

Greg: I'm sure she could!

Melina: I could get on the VHF and—

Jesse Thorn: I hear it gets cold in those hulls is all I'm saying.

(They laugh.)

Melinda: Yep. I could get on the radio and ask for a fisherman to come on the boat.
(Laughs.)

Greg: She'd have a dozen there in 10 minutes.

Melinda: I would! That's a great idea!

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

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: Judge John Hodgman, we are about to go on some thrilling adventures on the road. Separately! Not together. But you're headed to London, England.

John Hodgman: That's right, Jesse! I'm as surprised as pretty much anyone to be joining my friends at the *Thrilling Adventure Hour*—and your friends—at their big two shows November 1st at the Leicester Square Theater in London, England! They just asked me if I could run over there with them, and I'm so happy to join them! We're talking about Paul F Tompkins, Marc Evan Jackson, Mark Gagliardi, all your friends and favorites from the *Thrilling Adventure* celebrating their 20th anniversary up there in London, England!

(Jesse whistles.)

I wish that I was traveling across the Irish Sea with my friend Jesse Thorn, like the last time I went to the UK! Maybe that will happen in the future. But in the meantime, there are only a few tickets left for the late show and a waiting list for the early show. I hope that you can join us. Go to [ThrillingAdventure.Live](https://thrillingadventure.live) for tickets. That's [ThrillingAdventure.live](https://thrillingadventure.live) for those last few tickets. And if you're a *Judge John Hodgman* fan in London, please let me know at Hodgman@MaximumFun.org. It'll be great to connect with some fans while I'm over there.

Jesse Thorn: You know what, John? You know what I have to say to 20th anniversaries?
(*Blows a big raspberry.*)

John Hodgman: Wow!

Jesse Thorn: Because I'm having my 25th anniversary, baby!

(*John imitates a triumphant horn.*)

That's 25% more anniversary! *Bullseye* is having its 25th anniversary. My public radio program, *Bullseye with Jesse Thorn*, which I started as a 19-year-old at the University of California at Santa Cruz. And to Santa Cruz shall I return! On November 1st, I will be at the Kuumbwa Jazz Center in Santa Cruz, California for the *Bullseye* 25th Anniversary Spectacular. I will have Santa Cruz's own Mr. Adam Scott. I will have Boots Riley, the legendary rapper and filmmaker. Our friend, standup comedian Scott Simpson, and Glenn Washington from *Snap Judgment* on public radio. And beyond all that, I will also have Santa Cruz's greatest rock band of all time, the Mermen! You can also come see *Bullseye* at the People's Improv Theater in New York City on November 15th. That show will have Jad Abumrad, H Jon Benjamin, Kristin Anderson-Lopez and Bobby Lopez, and standup comedy from Josh Gondelman. You can get tickets for all of those shows at MaximumFun.org/events.

And by the way, John, if you have a podcast that people listen to, this is my—this is the arbitrary line that I'm drawing. It's 100 reviews in Apple podcasts. If you have 100 reviews in Apple Podcasts, that signifies to me that you have a podcast people listen to.

John Hodgman: Yeah. That's true.

Jesse Thorn: I'll go on your podcast. I cleared out a bunch of time to talk about the 25th anniversary of *Bullseye* and go on people's podcasts. Drop us a line at Hodgman@MaximumFun.org. We'll connect you with my publicist, Emily. Look, if you're just looking for—Emily Erskine's the name of my publicist. You can drop her a line directly.

John Hodgman: Well, you could! And why not send me an email first? (*Laughs.*)

Jesse Thorn: I'll go on your freaking podcast. Look, it's the only email—it's the only public email address we have. We're not gonna just give out my email.

John Hodgman: Hodgman@MaximumFun.org. No! If you got a podcast, you got 100 reviews on Apple, Jesse Thorn's gonna go on your podcast and talk about 25th anniversary of *Bullseye*. You're gonna enjoy talking to him. Send an email to me at

Hodgman@MaximumFun.org. I will forward that email to the appropriate parties and get that booking done!

Two big shows on November 1st on opposite sides—more or less—of the world. Santa Cruz for the 25th anniversary of *Bullseye*; London for the 20th anniversary of *Thrilling Adventure Hour*. See one— You can't see both of us, but please choose to see one of us. And if you wanna see both of us, I'll be there at the People's Improv Theater in New York City on November 15th, sitting in the back row.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah, there's a John Hodgman on that guest list.

John Hodgman: MaximumFun.org/events for your tickets to *Bullseye*. And of course, ThrillingAdventure.Live for your tickets to *Thrilling Adventure*. Let's get back to the case, shall we?

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.)

[00:55:00]

John Hodgman: *(Imitating a foghorn.)* You may be seated.

So, when we were learning sailing in Maine, it was at the Wooden Boat School, where weird older men go to learn how to build canoes because they wanted to do it their whole lives. But they also had these sailing classes. And the sailing classes were often mostly populated by the wives and partners of these old guys who had made this pilgrimage to build a wooden boat. And that's how my wife—who's a whole human being in her own right—took Elements of Sail for Women parts one and two with Jane and Gretchen. So—and even when I took the class, which was a co-educational class, there were quite a few spouses—female spouses in this case.

And we realized in thinking it over and talking about it, is that these women who were often older—and they weren't always women spouses too—but these partners who were often older were taking the sailing class because they realized that they were sailing around a lot with their partners—just like you two are—later in life, a second chapter in life, maybe a third chapter in life. And that as they get older, usually one person takes over the role of captain and knows how to run the ship, and then this other person doesn't necessarily. And then one day they wake up in their state room or whatever and they realize, “Oh, if my partner keels over and dies, I better know how to run this ship!” And so, they come, and they take sailing lessons.

The other thing that they might be thinking about is “now that I live at sea, much of the time with my partner, I want to murder that person. And if I do, I better know how to run the ship.”

(They laugh.)

Because it's very, very challenging. This is part of the reason why sailing is no longer something that my wife—who is a whole human being in her own right—and I do, at least not together. Which is that it is very hard to avoid conflict when you are a married or otherwise devoted couple who have suddenly taken to sea. It's very romantic. It's very beautiful. You had an extremely wonderful experience with your children—or you know, your tweens, when they were onboard. But then you had some very defined parental roles that kept you so occupied that you didn't have to stop and think about how it's challenging for a married or otherwise committed couple who have developed—who are both whole human beings in their own right; who are adults with responsibility—to suddenly have one person giving the other person orders. It's really hard. It's really challenging both to let go of your ego and allow yourself to be bossed around—because after all, who is Greg to boss Melinda around? Or vice versa for that matter?

You know, Greg, you used to be the guy who ran the galley for your household when Melinda was working much more than she is now. And I bet you did a great job. And ceding that role in this new two-handed job that you have of moving this catamaran around the world I'm sure is challenging for you, that you want to sort of—you know, hover is the term that Melinda used for certain tasks that she undertakes. And similarly, Melinda, I really very much feel your need to find some sphere in which you have the full authority to stab something in the head.

And I think that defining those roles—no matter how deeply Melinda gets into fishing—is going to be really important as you continue your journey. And one of the things we don't want is for Melinda to get so deeply into fishing that she then goes deeply into the ocean as a 9,000-pound orca pulls her down or whatever. So, safety first and foremost, right? But I mean, I do feel like if you're gonna be the captain of this boat and Melinda is gonna be in charge of provisioning, and Melinda wants to do some fishing? I see that falls into her department, Greg. Not your department. And keeping— Part of being on a boat is dividing responsibility and respecting those divisions. I mean, obviously a captain is— I mean, look, no one's— When you fill out your tax return, you don't say like “boat captain” as your primary occupation, right? You're not getting paid to boat captain.

Greg: Nobody pays me to do this.

John Hodgman: Yeah, you're getting paid to do whatever you're doing with acoustical equipment or whatever. You know what I mean? But still. If the way you divide the work on the boat is that you are going to make the boat go—

[01:00:00]

—and you have the responsibility to tell Melinda to flake the halyard, and Melinda's department is to make you go—and her too—by feeding you and provisioning properly?

Then this falls within her department. But I think that, you know, Melinda has said that she would be willing to start small with a smaller investment of money than you think is necessary and to start by trawling and to experiment. And I think there's nothing wrong with that so long as you—I mean, the number one rule of being on a boat—right?—is don't go in the water.

So, I would say, yeah. Melinda, you should start small. But of course, being in charge of your own department means not letting your department's problems become ship-wide problems. I've watched enough of *Below Deck* to know that at least. You know, I think that you need to respect the boundary and the departmental difference. That Greg wants nothing to do with your fish. Nothing. Doesn't want to see it until it is a filet presented to him. And that's part of your job, I think, to find out a way to do that. Because Greg has a squeamishness, a dislike, a generational trauma around fishing. He does not wanna spike the head of any fish. He does not wanna run a wire through any spines. It needs to be something that you can do and do on your own. Anyway. Melinda, you're gonna go fishing. This is the sound of a gavel.

Clip:

Speaker 1: (*Angrily.*) What are you doing on this boat?!

Speaker 2: We're going fishing!

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.*)

Greg, how are you feeling about these fish tacos you're gonna be eating?

Greg: Oh, man. You know, (*laughing*) as long as I don't have to be a part of it, I'm happy with whatever Melinda makes and cooks.

Jesse Thorn: Melinda, (*laughing*) how do you feel about your husband having wiped his hands of this decision?

Melinda: (*Laughs.*) I think that was a good judgment. I accept the challenge of doing it only if I can do the whole thing myself. I can use technology to help me accomplish things. Like, lifting the fish out, I can use a winch on the line. I can figure it out. I think that it's going to be exciting!

Jesse Thorn: Greg and Melinda, thanks so much for joining us on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

Greg: We had a great time! A wonderful time. Thank you for having us.

Melinda: Thank you.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: Another *Judge John Hodgman* case is in the books! We'll have Swift Justice in just a second. Our thanks to Redditor u/acone419 for naming this week's episode, "Sole Benefishary".

John Hodgman: Because sole is a fish too. Sole is a fish.

Jesse Thorn: Sole is a fish. It's S-O-L-E. And I tried to pronounce it S-O-L-E. I don't know if it read.

The Maximum Fun Subreddit is where we name the episodes. [Reddit.com/r/MaximumFun](https://www.reddit.com/r/MaximumFun).

John Hodgman: Rolls right off the tongue.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah. We look for our title suggestions there too. So, keep an eye out for those. Evidence and photos from the show 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 our video-only content.

John Hodgman: Speaking of video, our YouTube comment of the week comes to us from user @JSW92009, pertaining to our episode "Pro-Betamax Court", featuring guest bailiff Monte Belmonte offering a truly epic string of puns and obscure references in his intro. JSW92009 writes, quote, "As someone who has no native sense of humor and only steals pop culture and movie references, Monte's intro completed me," unquote.

First of all, I'm sure you do have a native sense of humor, JSW92009. And thank you for that wonderful YouTube comment! Guest bailiff Monte Belmonte really out to himself with his punny introduction in that particular episode. And if you want to see my face as I have to listen to all these puns, make sure to watch the episode on our YouTube channel, [@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod](https://www.youtube.com/@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod). And make sure to subscribe to our channel and tap the bell, so you get notifications when we post a new video. Which reminds me of an old sea shanty. Jesse, you know this one? (*Singing.*) "Tap the bell, second mate! Let us go below. Look off to windward, you can see it's gonna blow. Look at the glass. You can see that it has fell. We wish that you would hurry up and tap, tap the bell!"

The end. Of song.

Jesse Thorn: *Judge John Hodgman* was created by Jesse Thorn and John Hodgman. This episode, engineered by Chris Kalafarski at the PRX Podcast Garage in Boston, Massachusetts. The podcast is edited by AJ McKeon. Our video editor is Daniel Speer.

[01:05:00]

Our producer is Jennifer Marmor. If you are watching on video, you might have noticed I am not wearing my bailiff uniform, and I am appearing from my home shed in Los Angeles, California. That's because Maximum Fun is moving! John, did you know that?

John Hodgman: I did not know that! I mean, I did know that, but I'm gonna let you explain it to me.

Jesse Thorn: The week that we record this, Maximum Fun is moving our studio and our office from MacArthur Park to downtown Los Angeles after nearly 15 years on MacArthur Park. We love you, Westlake. We'll miss you so much. But our office—we needed an office where everyone could come to work, so that we could have an office. If you—by the way, if you go to the website MaximumFun.org/movingday, you can not only buy like packs of our old crap— We found so much old crap!

John Hodgman: *(Laughs.)* What? You're saying you're having like a moving day sale?! You're having like a tag sale?

Jesse Thorn: Yeah. If you want to get a mystery pack of Maximum Fun pins or patches or t-shirts, all kinds of stuff—we had so much cool different stuff. And everything is a deal. Like, you don't get to pick what you get, other than a broad category, but it's a total deal. And then also *(giggling)* Maximum Fun is selling the naming rights for basically everything in our office to cover the cost of moving.

John Hodgman: This is the right to name doorknobs, to name light fixtures, to name power outlets, for example. Right?

Jesse Thorn: Yeah. And we will be using a label maker, apparently.

John Hodgman: Okay. There you go!

Jesse Thorn: Yeah. I think our colleague, KT, will take any opportunity to use a label maker. *(Giggling.)* It's her greatest pleasure in life. Okay!

John Hodgman: Well, congratulations to Maximum Fun for moving. I cannot wait to visit the new headquarters as soon as I'm back out there in Los Angeles. Where do you go to buy stuff and to name stuff? MaximumFun.org/movingday?

Jesse Thorn: Yep, that's exactly right! Okay.

John Hodgman: I got it right!

Jesse Thorn: You ready for Swift Justice, John?

John Hodgman: I'm very ready.

Jesse Thorn: Okay. On the topic of life on the sea, we have something from a redditor in the Maritime Province of Nova Scotia. Nova Scotia, Canada.

John Hodgman: Nova Scotia, Canada.

Jesse Thorn: Beejtronic, who posted this on the Maximum Fun subreddit, writes, “We've been having an argument about whether garlic fingers should have Donair sauce, but I feel like this would be gibberish to anyone outside Nova Scotia.” *(Laughs.)*

John Hodgman: Wow. You don't know what I know! You don't know what I know. *(Beat.)* What is garlic fingers?

Jesse Thorn: For reference—

John Hodgman: What is this person talking about?

Jesse Thorn: Garlic fingers are pizza with garlic and butter instead of tomato sauce.

John Hodgman: Okay, here we go.

Jesse Thorn: Typically cut into rectangular fingers. So, I guess that would mean cheese, garlic. It's like garlic sticks, but with cheese on top. Right?

John Hodgman: Yeah, yeah, yeah. It's like—yeah. Okay. I got you. Mm-hm. That sounds good.

Jesse Thorn: Donair sauce is usually a milky sauce that many people find to be sweet.

John Hodgman: So, Donair is a reference to what we would call shawarma, probably, in the United States.

Jesse Thorn: Yeha, or a kebab sandwich or something.

John Hodgman: A kebab. Like, a Mediterranean, Middle Eastern kebab meat sandwich. And the Donair sauce is what they call white sauce. I would think it'd be a garlicky—but I've not had it in Nova Scotia. Because unfortunately, I haven't had a chance to get back to Nova Scotia in, now, almost 25 years! And I'm hoping beyond hope, Jesse Thorn, that pretty soon we'll be announcing some tour dates and that someday those tour dates will include a trip from Bar Harbor to Yarmouth, Nova Scotia on the CAT fast ferry, and do a show in Halifax at some point. I don't know when we're gonna get to do it, but it's something that we've dreamed about doing.

And I'll tell you what. When I get up there, not only am I gonna have Donair sauce on my garlic fingers, 'cause that sounds delicious, but I might even have some on my Lunenburg pudding!

Jesse Thorn: John, hold—hold on. (*Laughing.*)

John Hodgman: Yeah! You think I don't know about some Nova Scotia stuff?!

Jesse Thorn: Hold on. 'Cause I have just looked up Donair sauce.

John Hodgman: Uh-oh.

Jesse Thorn: Donair sauce is not white sauce. (*Laughs.*) I mean, it is white, and it is a sauce, but is not—its is not— Like, if you wanna make a white sauce bowl like you would have in fast food truck in New York City, Kenji Lopéz-Alt has a great recipe for that. But that is not what this is.

John Hodgman: Not this.

Jesse Thorn: This made out of sweetened, condensed milk—

John Hodgman: Whooooa! Okay.

Jesse Thorn: —vinegar and garlic. But the main ingredient is condensed milk, which is very sweet.

John Hodgman: You know what? That's very sweet. And I don't really have a sweet tooth. I have an alcohol molar, and I also have a shawarma-impacted wisdom tooth. But I will try it. I will try it for Halifax. I will try it for all of Nova Scotia. And I stand by I would even put it on my Lunenberg pudding.

Alright, as this episode comes out, we are just days away from Halloween!

[01:10:00]

I'm sure you're maybe getting ready to go out to a Halloween party. And as we lead into the holiday season, there are gonna be a lot of parties. Love to hear about your party fouls. What is the worst party foul you've ever witnessed, experienced, or committed? Did a friend ever ruin a surprise party that you were planning? Meanwhile, just in terms of Halloween—I know that we'll be past it by the time you write in, but if you go to some Halloween parties, tell me about the best Halloween costume you've ever seen in your life. Or the best one you've ever worn!

Send all of your disputes, comments, thoughts, and questions to MaximumFun.org/jjho. If you're a member, make sure to let us know. You can also email me directly. Hodgman@MaximumFun.org.

Jesse Thorn: And of course, any dispute you have is very welcome here at Maximum Fun. Go to MaximumFun.org/jjho to submit them! We need them! (*Dramatically gasping.*) It's the air that we breathe! We'll talk to you next time 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!