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Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: Welcome to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. I'm Bailiff Jesse Thorn. We're in chambers this week clearing the docket. With me, the great Judge John Hodgman. Hello, Judge Hodgman.

John Hodgman: Hello, Jesse! I am here at the Technica House in New York City, because we have a very special friend of the court with us today! You can see him seated to my right—probably your left, viewer on the YouTube at [@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod](#). He's a very affectionate and handsome man, and I've forgotten his name. Jesse Thorn, can you help me out please?

Jesse Thorn: John, he's a beloved friend of the court. He's starred in critically acclaimed films like *Civil War* and *Sovereign*. You know him as Ron Swanson on *Parks and Recreation*. He's also a bestselling author. His new book is called *Little Wood Chucks: Offerman Woodshop's Guide to Tools and Tom Foolery*. It's available in stores right now. Let's welcome back to the court Mr. Nick Offerman.

John Hodgman: Mr. Nick Offerman, hello!

Nick Offerman: Hello, your honor.

John Hodgman: Thank you for being here with us again.

Nick Offerman: Thank you for having me.

John Hodgman: And you're on tour with your book, *Little Woodchucks*, which we're gonna talk about a little bit later on.

Nick Offerman: That's right.

John Hodgman: But today we're gonna dispense some justice. We have had people sending in disputes, cases, conundrums—if you will—that only the wisdom of Nick Offerman can help solve.

Nick Offerman: I doubt that. Can I say something earnest real quick?

John Hodgman: Ehhhh. Okay. I'll tell you what; I'll leave the room briefly. Go ahead.

Nick Offerman: Okay. He's gone.

It is a great comfort and pleasure to be here on this program, because I've actually learned a great deal about how I navigate my own relationships—specifically under the auspices of “we all must be allowed to like what we like.” I quote that from this program with great

regularity, because it really has made me a much nicer person (*chuckles*) when I realized there's no sense in giving anybody a hard time because they prefer a condiment that is distasteful, or perhaps a musical genre that is a foolish choice. That is their prerogative! And they may feel the same way about my use of horseradish sauce. And so, I'm very grateful to be here. And that is the end of my earnest statement.

Jesse Thorn: We have a thumbs up from Judge John Hodgman!

John Hodgman: And I'm back. Thank you very much, Nick. That's very kind of you to say. And guess what? We have some disgusting condiment deployment coming up!

Nick Offerman: Oh (*sensor beep*). (*Laughs.*)

John Hodgman: But that's a little later here in our docket.

Nick Offerman: We may find we need to cut that out. (*Laughs.*)

John Hodgman: Oh no, no, no, no, no, no, no! It was the perfect, unconscious tease for the content we are creating right now, called the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast—with Jesse Thorn, guest bailiff, and co-creator. Why don't you read our first letter for Nick Offerman?

Jesse Thorn: Primary bailiff, Jesse Thorn.

Here's a case from Anders in Seattle, Washington. “My friend Jonah brought a whole, uncut watermelon to a party I was hosting. They then expected me to cut it. To me, the point of bringing a dish to a party is to minimize work for the host. Jonah says they were acting reasonably. They were also mad the watermelon sat on my counter until it was rotten.”

(*John hums thoughtfully.*)

Long party!

“Who’s right?”

John Hodgman: Who's right? Who's wrong? Nick Offerman will help decide. Before we get into it, Nick, when you are arriving at a party—dinner party, cocktail party, whatever it might be—you bring a gift to the host if you're gracious.

Nick Offerman: That's right.

John Hodgman: What's your go-to? Go-to gift? GtG?

Nick Offerman: Usually a beverage. I mean, if it's somebody who I know, I will sincerely reach out. They know the things I like to cook—

John Hodgman: Which are?

Nick Offerman: —or that Megan likes to cook. Beefs. For me, it's meat items. And for Megan, she's become an incredible baker. And—

John Hodgman: Megan, you're talking about is your incredible, and talented wife—who's a whole human being in her own right—Megan Mullally.

Nick Offerman: Megan Mullally. That's right. Among her many other talents, she's become a master of pies. And she makes even her crust from scratch.

John Hodgman: Wow.

Nick Offerman: So, you know, we'll see if there's something we can bring. But generally, you know, adults like us—including us—we like to put on a spread for our guests. And we don't want them to go into any trouble. So, then invariably I stop and pick up a very nice bottle of wine or a whiskey product, depending on what I know the host to like.

John Hodgman: Right. Of course. Yeah, I mean, a bottle of wine—Jesse, wouldn't you say that's pretty much the standard? Not a whole watermelon!

Jesse Thorn: Yeah, a watermelon is, uh... quite a hunk of fruit.

John Hodgman: I mean, I think this was a situation where— Let's see, it's Anders and Jonah in Seattle. Anders is the host; Jonah, they are the guest.

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And I think Jonah was asked to bring something for the meal—or a dessert or something. Like, I don't think that they were just sort of like, “I know what's fun! Watermelon under my arm.”

Jesse Thorn: “I was supposed to bring a main, so I led a cow in on a rope.”

John Hodgman: Okay. (*Laughs.*) So, you're starting to lean toward Anders, it sounds like, Jesse Thorn.

(*Nick giggles.*)

Jesse Thorn: That's my estimation.

John Hodgman: I mean, I will say that—speaking of cutting things up—I cut Anders's letter down a little bit for length. But Anders goes on to explain that he was in the midst of getting, I think, a charcuterie board ready. And they were serving—he was serving a signature cocktail that he had to make for everybody. So, he didn't have time, he felt, to cut up a watermelon on Jonah's behalf, in this case.

Nick Offerman: That makes a lot of sense. I mean, on one hand, I think— And you gotta see the context. You gotta see the household and the kind of party it is. Is it a fancy party? Is it a cookout? I think a watermelon is a wonderful idea. But I think where I would draw the line for Jonah is that they should bring the watermelon and simply then say, “Can I get a knife and a cutting board? Like, I've brought this watermelon.”

John Hodgman: That does seem part of the contribution.

Nick Offerman: Because what did you have in mind? Do you want this melon bald?

(They chuckle.)

Do you want it segmented?

John Hodgman: Good point! Good point.

Nick Offerman: Do you want it juiced? I do think that Anders is somewhat correct to expect Jonah to finish the creation of that dish.

Jesse Thorn: Nick, you say it depends what kind of party it is. I guess the distinction you're making is between a standard party and a make-work party, like during the Great Depression.

(They chuckle.)

A government program designed to achieve full employment through hosting parties and cutting watermelons. *(Snorts.)*

Nick Offerman: You're right. That's the distinction.

John Hodgman: That's right. That's right. It was part of the Work Progress Administration, back in the day. And you're right. I mean, you make some— There's some very talented watermelon carvers and sculpturalists.

Nick Offerman: That's for sure.

Jesse Thorn: “Thank you for having me At your party, I brought you some uncut (unclear).”

(They laugh.)

John Hodgman: “Thank you for having me at your party. I've brought you an unelectrified Tennessee.”

(Jesse laughs.)

That's a real deep cut for the TVA-heads out there.

Jesse Thorn: “I brought you a post office to muralize.”

(John laughs.)

Nick Offerman: But depending on the sort of picnic it might be, you can drill a hole in a watermelon and turn a bottle of Tito's upside down and let it glug in there. And that is— And then you can actually poke some straws into the watermelon. That's one way to consume a watermelon.

John Hodgman: Look, there are a lot of things you can do with a watermelon. And I think we all agree it's among the top melons, if not the top melon. No offense, honeydew.

Nick Offerman: For sure.

John Hodgman: But yeah, if you are bringing a watermelon to a party, and you see that your friend Anders is busy creating a signature cocktail— Now I'll tell you what my favorite host and hostess gift is. When we're up in Maine and friends get together, you bring whatever you want to drink, and you drink it! And in fact, free the host from having to create that signature cocktail or even have something on hand to serve you. Like, that's the gift of doing less work, basically.

Nick Offerman: That is brilliant, and it guarantees that you will be pleased with the beverage choice.

John Hodgman: Absolutely. So, yeah. I mean—you know, Jonah, you probably should have cut up that watermelon. I love the fact that Anders, seeing that Jonah was not going to cut up the watermelon, left it on the counter to rot.

Nick Offerman: A very silent protest.

John Hodgman: That's exactly so. I mean—

(They laugh.)

So, in that sense, Jonah's refusal to do the most obviously gracious thing, and Andre's reprisal by letting it rot—Anders is right in this case, but you are friends who deserve one another, and I hope you remain friends forever.

Nick Offerman: Amen.

(They laugh.)

John Hodgman: I brought in my big wooden gavel that Matt Howie gave us years ago because I thought Nick Offerman might like it, because he loves wood.

Nick Offerman: I do. I do. I love it. It reminds me of your beautiful baritone ukulele.

John Hodgman: Oh, thank you very much! That was made by Mya-Mo Ukuleles—in Seattle, Washington, no less! But let's move on, Jesse Thorn, before we plug more obscure things.

Jesse Thorn: Okay. We've got something from Catherine in London, Ontario. “I like to eat—”

(Nick cackles.)

John Hodgman: *(Softly.)* Oh yeah. Here we go. I'm so excited.

Jesse Thorn: “I like to eat half my French toast with ketchup as the main course, then the other half with syrup as dessert. My husband Adam says eating French toast with ketchup is gross. Please order him to stop making faces and try it.”

(Nick chuckles delightedly.)

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John Hodgman: Now, I just noticed that Catherine is from Ontario, and Canada is the home to the ketchup potato chip, of course. Which—maybe this is a Canadian thing, to add ketchup to French toast.

Jesse Thorn: I eat my French toast with Donair sauce.

John Hodgman: Ha! *(Chuckles.)* Nick, I sensed a certain immediate, visceral reaction to this concept.

Nick Offerman: Yeah. I mean, it's immediately putting the idea to the test of “no matter how strange the proclivity of gravy upon the meat, as it were, it has to be allowed to fly.” But—And so, I immediately say, “Whew! That rubs me the wrong way! But if you like it, go nuts! If you like a bowl of ketchup with a little French toast as a garnish.”

John Hodgman: Oh, right! A little French toast dipper!

Nick Offerman: I mean, that is your prerogative. And by all means, you should be allowed to like what you like. And I would— So, I was on board with the idea and said, “Great, that sounds like you've made a little bit of fun out of your meal as well. You've turned it into a fantasy, two-course offering.”

John Hodgman: That's true.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah, you've given it a narrative element.

John Hodgman: Absolutely, every meal is a story. Speaking of which, would you like to start a story with me where we eat some French toast with ketchup, Nick?

Nick Offerman: I would not. Uh.

John Hodgman: *(Pulling away from the mic.)* Too bad.

Nick Offerman: Uh. Uh-oh.

(Jesse laughs.)

John Hodgman: So, yes. Jesse, I have here some French— I actually have two items that I wanna try. Some french toast— Wait a minute. That's—wait, those are fried eggs. I wanted scrambled eggs, but okay. And these are fried eggs too. So, no French toast.

Jesse Thorn: *(Laughing.)* Congratulations, John.

John Hodgman: Look, my inadvertent plug for the Landmark Diner here in lower Manhattan remains. I'm sure they've had a very busy day. We all have difficult ones. But I guess we'll send Carla out for some French toast, which we'll try later in the program. In the meantime, I do have a question for you. You are an aficionado of breakfast foods. Right?

Nick Offerman: Okay. Yes. Yeah. And this— I mean, receiving the wrong breakfast foods, I would say, is a great injustice.

John Hodgman: It's a great injustice. But at the same time, it's still breakfast food.

Nick Offerman: Sure.

John Hodgman: What is your go-to? I got some bacon and some sausage with these two different meals.

Nick Offerman: You know, I tour a lot. And so, quite often I will order a breakfast with a breakfast meat. And just to keep things fun for myself, I alternate.

John Hodgman: Oh really?

Nick Offerman: I love them both very much. I know Ron Swanson's brand leans a little more towards bacon. He's known for his love of bacon. And he's right. He's not wrong. But I love a pork sausage as well, especially in the UK—a Cumberland Sausage.

John Hodgman: I just had a— Well, we both flew from the UK yesterday, separately.

Nick Offerman: That's right.

John Hodgman: And I enjoyed a Cumberland sausage for breakfast. Jesse Thorn, what do about you? Here, just so that Jesse can see, I'll hold up a sausage. You hold up some bacon.

Jesse Thorn: Thanks. Okay. So, you're talking about— (*Playing confused.*) So, one of those is sausage, and one of those is bacon?

John Hodgman: Yes, that's right.

Jesse Thorn: Thank you. I love both as well. I'm a little bit hesitant sometimes with sausage, because I'm worried that I'm gonna accidentally get one of those chicken apple sausages from like 1998.

John Hodgman: Oh gosh. Yeah.

Jesse Thorn: Not that they haven't made it recently, but like— Like a sun-dried tomato in 1989. Like, to me, the food of 1998 is the chicken apple sausage, and I don't want that. I want pork. And if anything, put some cheese in there. But the heavier the better as far as I'm concerned.

John Hodgman: Sure, yeah. And nothing against people who prefer chicken sausage. There are very delicious ones, and obviously—

Nick Offerman: They do a nice job these days.

John Hodgman: People who don't eat meat at all! I mean, I find there are lots of great, nonmeat sausages that I enjoy in a sausage, egg, and cheese sandwich. Gimme Lean does one that I think is quite good. But yeah, that chicken apple thing, that's bad news for me, and it's not my favorite. But people like what they like.

Nick Offerman: They sure do.

John Hodgman: Let me ask you this real quick before we move on, since we have some bacon here. How would you— I don't wanna touch bacon that you might put in your mouth.

Nick Offerman: You can. I will eat bacon that you've rubbed on the bottom of your foot.

John Hodgman: Oh, terrific! Well, let me have this. You can have this piece of sausage that I've been eating. There you go!

Nick Offerman: Alright. That's fair.

Jesse Thorn: What about smoked sausage? That's kind of like the best of bacon and sausage. I used to get smoked sausage in a giant tube from Father's Country Hams in Arkansas, but—

John Hodgman: That's some salty sausage! You sent me some of that once.

Jesse Thorn: But Father's Country Hams is closed now, so I don't know where I'm gonna get my smoked sausage.

John Hodgman: Oh, I didn't know that!

Jesse Thorn: Hit me up with your sources, listeners and viewers.

John Hodgman: Now this is what Jonathan Coulton's children, when they came to my house, would call waggy bacon.

(Jesse and Nick muffle laughter.)

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Which is to say not crispy. Which is to say they weren't merely calling it waggy bacon, they were criticizing me for making my bacon not waggy enough. Because I'm not a waggy bacon guy.

Nick Offerman: It was an admonition.

John Hodgman: That's right. Do you like crispy bacon or waggy bacon?

Nick Offerman: I sure do.

John Hodgman: Okay!

Nick Offerman: I mean, if I nail it when I'm making bacon for myself, I go right down the middle. But I've never sent—I've never had crispy or waggy that I sent back.

John Hodgman: Let me change some lives real quick before we move on to our next letter. And Carla is rushing out. You know, we're drawing it out to get that French toast. Maybe we'll do that in another segment of the show.

Nick Offerman: Do you mind if I finish eating the meats that you've given me?

John Hodgman: No, please. And here's some more.

Nick Offerman: Why, thank you.

John Hodgman: But I'm gonna change some lives. I discovered something. If you get some relatively thick cut bacon—obviously, people do oven cook all the time. Put in the oven at 250 degrees in a cold pan—cold cast iron pan or a baking sheet—for 30 minutes. Then turn it up to 450. Set your timer for 15 minutes. You're gonna like the way you look, I guarantee it.

Jesse Thorn: Let's take a quick break. When we come back, we will have more on the docket—including some woodworking content—and the arrival of the French toast. Or possibly two more bowls full of fried eggs. *(Laughing.)* Who knows? We'll see what we get when we come back in just a second.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

(ADVERTISEMENT)

[00:20:00]

Jesse Thorn: Welcome back to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. This week we're clearing the docket with our friend Nick Offerman, who has a brand-new book called *Little Woodchucks: Offerman Woodshop's Guide to Tools and Tom Foolery*. I've read and enjoyed this book, because Nick was a guest on my public radio program, *Bullseye*, and gave me a massage!

(John makes a surprised sound.)

(Nick giggles.)

On camera, much to the delight of internet users.

Nick Offerman: Oh man.

John Hodgman: What a treat!

Jesse Thorn: People who use the internet for certain specific things.

Nick, how do you choose wood projects that are appropriate for—as you put it—little woodchucks?

Nick Offerman: Well, my co-author, Lee—who ran my wood shop for 10 years—she has two little boys, and she lives up in Berkeley. And so, she's a built-in laboratory. And so, the two of us curated these 12 projects together. And basically, it comes down to what can we do without using electricity and with using minimal hand tools? So, for example, one project is a set of toast tongs that requires a couple of easy cuts through thin wood, and then just some wood glue and some clamping. Or there's a box kite that's just long, thin dowels with wine corks and glue and paper to make a kite. So, these are—

John Hodgman: How many bottles of wine do the children need to drink in order to like get the materials for this?

(Jesse laughs.)

Nick Offerman: I believe there are eight corks.

John Hodgman: Okay, got it. Well, fair enough.

Nick Offerman: And you can use conventional size or magnum. Both corks are good.

(Jesse and John giggle.)

But you know. And so, these are—I think—great gateway projects. Because once you see the power of wood glue—for example—in these tongs, you'll be astonished at all the— You can then build a house using properly cut lumber and wood glue.

John Hodgman: I'd love a tong house, if you wouldn't mind constructing one for me. Or maybe I'll read the book and learn how to do it myself. There are also advanced tongs in here, called cowboy tongs.

Nick Offerman: That's right.

John Hodgman: What's that?

Nick Offerman: They're super cool. I was staying in a bunkhouse in West Texas out on a ranch, and it had this cool cowboy kitchen. And I was making breakfast for Megan and I. And I opened a drawer. And it's a pair of tongs that are connected at their butt ends with a nail. So, like they're hinged. And the way the two tongs are cut, they lever against each other. So, it's just two cleverly arranged tong halves that, when you squeeze them, they create a spring action. And I said, "I've gotta replicate this."

John Hodgman: Do you remember the first thing that you made out of wood when you were a young'un?

Nick Offerman: I do. I remember my dad was an amateur furniture maker, and he made incredible things for our house. And so, I was always around him in his workshop in the basement. And the first thing that I remember making was just a little box, a wooden box, for me to stand on so that I could pee in the big boy toilet.

John Hodgman: Oh, wonderful!

Nick Offerman: We called it the tinkle box.

Jesse Thorn: Why are there no tinkle boxes in this book? *(Laughs.)*

Nick Offerman: Well, because it's in my first woodworking book, *Good, Clean, Fun*, which is what you should get after you make everything in this book. Then you graduate to *Good, Clean, Fun* and a tinkle box of your own.

Jesse Thorn: And in the meantime, just pee on the bathroom floor!

Nick Offerman: Just learn to arc it is the trick.

John Hodgman: There's no more arcing in my stream, Nick.

(Nick giggles.)

My 54-year-old mechanisms are not that powerful anymore. Maybe we should move on to some woodworking questions.

Nick Offerman: Perhaps. I mean, with strategically placed fans, you can get anything into a bucket or bowl.

John Hodgman: Good to know. Jesse, I believe we have some woodworking related disputes and letters and conundrums for Nick Offerman to hear.

Jesse Thorn: This one is from Sean in Fairfax, Virginia. He says, “I’m building a bench for our mudroom. I want to use an oil finish on it. But my wife, Allie, wants to use polyurethane. I think oil finishes feel softer and warmer.

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“It will give the peace character. Allie says polyurethane is more durable and easier to clean. Who’s right?”

John Hodgman: Nick, you have this question here from Sean, who’s created a mudroom bench. Jennifer Marmor, I believe we have a photo of the mudroom bench to look at.

Nick Offerman: Ooh!

John Hodgman: Nick, can you see it from where you are?

Nick Offerman: I can. I... uh...

Jesse Thorn: (*Pleasantly.*) I have a concern!

John Hodgman: Yeah, me too!

(*Jesse cackles.*)

Can you spot what we’re talking about, Nick Offerman?

Nick Offerman: I think so. I mean, from this angle, it looks like you can’t open the door? Or if the door opens out, you’re gonna catch your thigh on that piece of trim.

John Hodgman: Yeah. I mean, I think that if the door is going— I mean, it could be that Sean isn’t just building a mudroom bench, but also a barrier to an ancient evil in the house.

(*They laugh.*)

Nick Offerman: It is a little confusing, and I—it’s—I’m baffled. But setting the aside perhaps some question of perspective or—(*laughs*).

John Hodgman: For those of you who are just listening and not watching us on the YouTube channel, at [@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod](#), there's a big chunk of built-in, very handsome-looking mudroom bench that seems to be blocking the doorway.

Nick Offerman: At a sort of wainscoting level.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah. I had imagined when it was described that this was a freestanding bench, but this is actually built into the wall. And the walls are covered in boards of various lengths, I'm gonna be frank. *(Chuckling.)* And one of the boards near the door of the entrance to the mudroom seems to just extend out an additional ten inches or so across the door opening.

Nick Offerman: I mean, this is— Sean is asking the question?

John Hodgman: Sean is asking the question from Fairfax, Virginia.

Nick Offerman: From Virginia. Now, without getting some more angles of the piece, I don't want to give any sort of critique. It looks quite interesting and like an original design, which generally I give a thumbs up to. And as far as the piece of bench crossing into the doorway, I definitely would like to ask why is that happening? Um.

Jesse Thorn: It's the original design by Marcel Duchamp.

(Nick giggles delightedly.)

John Hodgman: I'm sure Sean has a very plausible explanation and plan. And Sean, take a vertical video and send it in for our social media. But in the meantime: otherwise, I think it looks quite handsome. I can't tell from this distance if it has been finished yet or not, but maybe you could tell us in general the difference between a polyurethane finish and an oil finish.

Nick Offerman: I will. And from her—again, it's some distance away—but from the sort of light, peach color of the wood, I'm gonna guess— It could be anything from maple to cherry to a couple different kinds of oak. Or alder, perhaps. And so, to get to the question, it's kind of an age-old battle in woodworking. Polyurethane is an incredibly durable finish, but you're sort of encasing your beautiful organic material in plastic. So, it doesn't feel like— It doesn't feel nice and warm, like a piece of wood. It feels like a countertop. Might as well be Formica or something.

But Allie is correct that it is much easier to keep clean, and it does have a much greater durability. So, if you wanna preserve the sort of brand-new look of your wood, then that is a better utility choice. However, I do everything I can with everything I make to avoid using a finish like that.

John Hodgman: Like polyurethane or synthetic. Yeah.

Nick Offerman: Like polyurethane. Or a lacquer.

John Hodgman: It makes it shiny too, which is not—

Nick Offerman: You can get it in gloss or matte or semi-gloss.

John Hodgman: Oh, you can?

Nick Offerman: Yeah. But just for me, I love the— As he said, it does give it character. If you use an oil finish, it's going to stain more easily. It's going to get dinged more easily. But when I deliver a table to a client that's a beautiful work of art, I say, “If you show signs of life on this, if you get coffee cup rings or dings in it, that's— You know, I want your grandkids to see that and see the evidence that you lived with this table. I don't want it to stay pristine, you know? This is not something in a museum. This is the table that you live on.”

And so, in a mud room—me, personally, I would rather see an oil finish and see, you know, the sort of damage—

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—or the evidence of life that's enacted upon this bench from this family. Because I just— I think it feels much nicer. When you come in and sit on it and you put your hands on it, I think it feels more like what Gandalf would prefer.

John Hodgman: (*Chuckling.*) That's true. If Gandalf was walking into a hobbit hole— Well, maybe this is designed to keep Gandalf out. Maybe this guy doesn't want to go on any more adventures! I don't know!

Nick Offerman: Perhaps.

John Hodgman: But yeah, he would. And you know, as you point out— You know, even in a museum—certainly among collectors—I've learned—as you have, Jesse—from *The Roadshow*, *The Antiques Roadshow*. What we're talking about here is patina!

(*Nick confirms.*)

The evidence of life, as you say. So, I think we're all coming down on the side of oil finish. You know, the motto in Virginia is—the state slogan in Virginia: “Virginia is for finishers.”

And coffee is for closers.

What's our next one, Jesse Thorn?

Jesse Thorn: Okay. “Is walnut overused in woodworking, particularly on YouTube?” And the signature on this, John? Michael, Historian at Large.

John Hodgman: Michael, Historian at Large!

Jesse Thorn: That feels like somebody that's writing into a public radio show. I'm gonna be honest with you.

(John chuckles.)

I think I've probably gotten a few emails over the years from Michael, Historian at Large.

Nick Offerman: *(Laughs.)* I mean, I can't speak to that. I don't watch a lot of woodworking on YouTube, so—

Jesse Thorn: There's a lot out there, Nick. *(Beat.)* I think.

Nick Offerman: I imagine so. And if anyone is looking for some, I would send them to see my friend JimmyDuresta. He's my favorite maker to watch make anything on YouTube. But I would say in general— The question, what that elicits in me is—to make the analogy—“is sourdough overused in sandwich making?”

John Hodgman: Right. Or on YouTube. *(Laughs.)*

Nick Offerman: Yes. Or on YouTube. It's like, sure, quite possibly. But it's because it's the best bread. Or it's— Walnut is arguably the most beautiful and easy to work with of the cabinet woods.

(John “oh!”s with interest.)

So, it's not like it's a fashion thing. It's the most gorgeous, deep, lush coloration. And it's really easy to work with, but with a very high strength.

John Hodgman: I was gonna ask what makes it easy to work with? Why is it preferred?

Nick Offerman: Well, it's— I mean, it generally has a straight grain. And so, you know. woodworkers for centuries have sort of weeded out the, for example, red eucalyptus or the gum trees.

John Hodgman: Right. *(Darkly.)* Don't even tell me about red eucalyptus.

Nick Offerman: Those have grain patterns that are really difficult. They can be really ornery. They're quite beautiful, but they're much harder to work with.

John Hodgman: Right. You're talking about like saw through? Sand down?

Nick Offerman: Yeah, to use bladed tools with. And so, the cabinet woods that are— domestically, generally considered walnut, oak, cherry, maple. And then mahogany is an import, but it is very popular. Part of it is because they're straight grained. And so, if you can imagine, you know, trying to take a cheese grater and cut something that's has a straight grain versus a crooked grain, the crooked grain is gonna beat up your blades. It's gonna just be a lot

harder. There are other woods—like, teak comes to mind; that has a lot of silica in it and that it's actual sand growing in the wood. So, when you use saw blades on it, it dulls your steel much faster. There are— Osage orange is a domestic wood that does that. Wenge is an import that is like that. And so, basically, walnut—

John Hodgman: Can we just change this podcast to *Nick Offerman Catalogs Woods*?

(Jesse “mm-hm”s.)

Nick Offerman: I would love that.

John Hodgman: I mean, I think we would like to be successful.

Nick Offerman: There are many beautiful woods that aren't talked about nearly enough. But walnut just— It's really lovely to work with, you know. If you're— For those of you that love to carve meat, you know, if you get a beautiful wagyu rib roast, you understand—

John Hodgman: Right. Or a piece of waggy bacon, even.

Nick Offerman: That's right. You can tell the difference between the good stuff and the ornery stuff.

John Hodgman: I guess it's a kind of a trendy wood. I mean, you mentioned that sourdough—sourdough is a delicious dough from San Francisco. But is walnut too trendy? Or should people not care about trends?

Nick Offerman: I mean, I don't care about trends. And I also— But I feel I can't speak to it, because I don't have an awareness of what woods are popular in design at the moment. But you know, if you have to pick a wood, I'd pick walnut.

John Hodgman: There you go! I'll use wood to rule on that one! (*Bangs his gavel.*)

[00:35:00]

Jesse Thorn: Okay, we're gonna take a quick break. And when we come back, we're gonna tear open that French toast!

Nick Offerman: When we come back, there will be french toast.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

(*ADVERTISEMENT*)

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: Judge Hodgman, we're taking a quick break from clearing the docket. Nick Erman, of course, has a brand-new book called *Little Woodchucks*. You should go check it out. And while you're checking it out, why not check out Nick's interview with me about the book on *Bullseye with Jesse Thorn*, which you can find on the *Bullseye* YouTube page, including footage of Nick offering me a spontaneous massage.

John Hodgman: (*Laughs.*) I've seen it, and it's glorious.

Jesse Thorn: It's the 25th anniversary of *Bullseye* this autumn. And I just got back from Santa Cruz, California, where I talked with our friend, the great Adam Scott—also one of the stars of *Parks and Recreation*. I don't know if you knew that, John.

John Hodgman: I did know that! I watch television.

Jesse Thorn: And I also spoke with the great Boots Riley, from *The Coup* and the filmmaker behind *Sorry to Bother You* and *But I'm a Virgo* on Amazon Prime. He has a new film coming out called *I Love Boosters*, in the Spring. And in addition to those, Glen Washington from public radio's *Snap Judgment* and *The Spooked Podcast*. Glen, one of the best. Plus, music from The Mermen and comedy from our friend, standup comedian Scott Simpson! All of that is gonna be on the *Bullseye* YouTube page if it's not up there now already.

John Hodgman: But Jesse, I'm curious about something. When am I going to get to see you in person celebrating *Bullseye*'s 25th anniversary, maybe somewhere in New York?

Jesse Thorn: Well, you are gonna get to see *Bullseye*'s 25th anniversary show on November 15th with Jad Abumrad, H. Jon Benjamin, Kristen Anderson-Lopez, Bobby Lopez, Josh Gondelman, and Tony Shalhoub. But if folks who are listening to this right now don't already have tickets, they're outta luck.

(*John gasps.*)

Unless! Unless—

John Hodgman: Unless?!

Jesse Thorn: —they subscribe to the *Bullseye* podcast and listen to the show there. I will also mention, John, it's the middle of November. Go hit up the Put This On Shop for your holiday shopping. Now is the time. John, we also have some brand-new merchandise for the holidays at MaxFunStore.com.

John Hodgman: That's right!

Jesse Thorn: My favorite is our new corduroy caps. I always say at the beginning of every show, “Who's right? Who is wrong? Only one can decide.” We've decided—for limited time only and only for MaxFunStore.com shoppers—to open that up to whoever can decide.

Because we are offering one hat design that says “right” and one hat design that says “wrong.” You can purchase it for a friend. (*Chuckles.*) You can purchase it for yourself.

John Hodgman: That's right!

Jesse Thorn: They're very cool. They're like vintage, '80s-style, corduroy baseball caps. I just saw a 49ers cap that reminded me of my best friend Petey's dad, Mark Frauenfelder, in a vintage shop the other day in Santa Cruz. That's the style of cap that we're talking about. We're talking about embroidered corduroy. They look awesome. They say “right” and “wrong.” They're so cool. Plus, we've got all that cozy goth stuff!

John Hodgman: You're absolutely right, Jesse. We've got an incredibly cozy and gothy sweatshirt and sweatpant matching set.

[00:40:00]

Something you can put on, and sit around the fire, and get cozy and gothy with your favorite cuddly partner. Or just by yourself, drinking some—I don't know—eggnog that's been food dyed black for fun? Cozy goth! You can go check out this incredible illustration of two cozy goths snuggling by the fire that was created for us by the wonderful Tom Deja of Bossman Graphics. You can preview it over at MaxFunStore.com. You can also check out our holiday-only, limited-edition scented candle. What scent? Well, it's obviously justice smell! This is the scent of a candle: Justice Smell is available for you right now, with a label designed by the amazing Aaron Draplin of Draplin Design Co. It is actually a very light, refreshing—How would you describe the smell of this candle, Jesse?

Jesse Thorn: It's a fresh, cotton scent. A fresh, cotton scent.

John Hodgman: A fresh, cotton scent. And you can use it in any room of your house, and you can always have the smell of *Judge John Hodgman* with you wherever you might have a match handy. It's a really beautiful little item, and all of our holiday merch is available now for you. They make great gifts. I really encourage you to get those “right” and “wrong” hats and shove them in some stockings. Because I'll tell you something. Who's right? who's wrong? Only I can decide. You'd make it a lot easier if you wore a hat that said you were wrong. That would make it easy for me. Go check it out at MaxFunStore.com. And also go where I'm gonna go to do some of my holiday shopping at the Put This On Shop, where you've got some wonderful vintage items and real finds.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah, so many treasures at PutThisOnShop.com for gentlemen, ladies, everything within those boundaries and without at PutThisOnShop.com.

John Hodgman: Seriously, if you have someone in your life who is like, “I just don't know what to get for this person,” that's when you go to PutThisOnShop.com. 'Cause you're gonna find something one of a kind for everyone in your life. And I always go there every holiday season and find some really cool stuff for my dads and grads and friends and moms and dads and the people in my life that I care about. PutThisOnShop.com, MaxFunStore.com. And of course, *Bullseye* is where you can hear and celebrate the 25th anniversary of the incredible

interviewing stylings of Jesse Thorn, the one of the best in the biz, if not the best in the biz—as far as I'm concerned. And you get to see Jesse get a massage from Nick Offerman on the YouTube channel. Come on! That's a gift in itself.

Jesse Thorn: Let's get back to the docket.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: Welcome back to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast with our pal Nick Offerman. John, Nick, you've got a bag full of french toast there. Are you ready to ketchup it?

(Bag crinkling.)

John Hodgman: Let's see what happens.

Nick Offerman: I'm gonna start doing deep breathing.

John Hodgman: This is syrup. This is syrup.

Nick Offerman: That's for the dessert course.

(Bag rustling.)

John Hodgman: This is an omelet. I don't know how this got in there. It's like— Are you— are you the subject of a curse?

(They laugh.)

Any time that—

Jesse Thorn: Did you run afoul of a breakfast witch?

John Hodgman: Anytime you order a breakfast, extra breakfast comes at you?! I mean, I would think run a-fair of a breakfast witch in that case!

Nick Offerman: I can't explain this. I mean, people do—if they're fans of *Parks and Rec*, and I'm in a restaurant—quite often, my meal will arrive with a lot of extra bacon on the meal. And I'll look around, and a chef will be poking his head out from the kitchen and give me a furtive thumbs up.

John Hodgman: That's wonderful.

Nick Offerman: And I loved that until my cardiologist showed me some numbers. And I said, “Okay.” Now I thumbs up back, and then I put the bacon in my pocket.

John Hodgman: For later!

Nick Offerman: And I give it to someone on the bus. Yeah.

John Hodgman: Alright, let me open this up.

(Bag crinkles.)

Nick, we're old pals, so I'm gonna use my fingers to parse this out.

Nick Offerman: By all means. I'm like that.

John Hodgman: I'm gonna give you this plate that already has—that's been pre-linked with sausage.

Nick Offerman: I have a very robust immune system, and I think it's because I eat a lot of soil—the soil of the world. I don't worry about germs, and I think it serves me very well.

John Hodgman: Yeah, that's right. Nick Offerman says, “Eat dirt, America.”

Nick Offerman: That's right.

John Hodgman: Not bad! Alright, now there's some french toast. You have a little knife and fork there, unless you want to eat with your fingers.

(Nick hums thoughtfully.)

And we have an extra—you have an extra option too, Nick. Because I was concerned *(chuckles)* rightly, it turns out, that Landmark might forget the ketchup. So, I picked up some packets of ketchup from my home diner—which, Nick, the owner of the diner begged me not to reveal the name of it, 'cause he's too busy already. Sorry, Little Purity in Park Slope, Brooklyn.

[00:45:00]

But anyway, I got some ketchup packets from there. Landmark sent in this off-brand ketchup. Chef's Quality, it's called. But I've got some good, old Heinz ketchup for you.

Nick Offerman: Wow. Listen. I mean, this—

John Hodgman: French toast with ketchup

Nick Offerman: To me— Now, again, I'm down for this experiment. But I'm going in feeling like this is a desecration of a—

John Hodgman: Are you a french toast person? A pain perdu kind of guy?

Nick Offerman: Am I a human being with taste buds? Yes, I am.

John Hodgman: Okay.

Nick Offerman: I mean, french toast is an undeniably gorgeous breakfast delectation.

John Hodgman: And Jesse, I'm sorry that we don't have any french toast for you over there.

Jesse Thorn: It's okay. I actually don't really like french toast.

John Hodgman: Oh, really?!

Jesse Thorn: Yeah. I don't hate it or anything. I'm just not really into it. I'll just take all the sausages and bacons that are left over. Maybe Carla could bring those over. *(Chuckles.)*

John Hodgman: Carla's showing off the French toast. Thank you, Carla!

Nick Offerman: The thing about French toast is— What it's great for is it's one of the many syrup delivery systems. It exists to deliver maple syrup into your mouth.

John Hodgman: That's right. Well, cheers.

Nick Offerman: Cheers. Been nice knowing you.

(A long beat.)

Not terrible.

John Hodgman: Have you ever eaten ketchup on scrambled eggs? That's something that I used to do. I experimented with it during my teen years.

Nick Offerman: I've tried it, because I was with people who used it. And I said, “Lemme try that.” This is not dissimilar.

John Hodgman: I automatically went in for another bite. So, that tells you something. That was completely— That was a reflex second bite. And I like ketchup too!

Jesse Thorn: That's one of the things they give you when you get a neurological exam.

John Hodgman: *(Chuckling.)* That's right. At least, my doctor is kind enough to do that for me.

Nick Offerman: I will say, the sugar content in the ketchup is playing an important role in my acceptance of this dish.

John Hodgman: I see. Yeah.

Nick Offerman: It still feels somewhat like a treat. It's sweeter. Like, when I hear “put ketchup on” something, I think, “Well, it's not a hot dog or a sandwich.”

John Hodgman: Right. I mean, at this point I would not be putting any powdered sugar on top.

Nick Offerman: No.

John Hodgman: It's enough.

Nick Offerman: But I do feel like, to cleanse my palate, now I'm gonna need to put some syrup on this other part.

John Hodgman: Yeah, please do. And I have a nude piece of french toast here, if you'd like to start over. And some drawn butter, in case we're gonna have some lobsters later, apparently.

Nick Offerman: Wow! Gosh. Thank you.

John Hodgman: You wanna go again?

Nick Offerman: I'll just hit this one.

John Hodgman: Meanwhile, I won't burden you with this, but I will try this Chef's Quality to see if this is a secret ketchup that we shouldn't be sleeping on. I am pretty much a Heinz purist, but I will try some chef's quality and see what that's like. Well, I wouldn't eat it with a spoon, that's for sure! But... I wouldn't eat it again, actually, is the answer. It's so much—it's so much—I was gonna say, “But it's not meaningfully different.” It is meaningfully different. Heinz all the way. Heinz wins again; we know this. Anyone who listened to our Seattle episode where we had the ketchup taste test knows Heinz is the best. Meanwhile, Nick Offerman is continuing.

Nick Offerman: (*Mouth full.*) I mean, this is my kind of podcast.

John Hodgman: Good. Do you like maple syrup on your sausage?

Nick Offerman: Sure. I mean, I like maple syrup on anything.

John Hodgman: I do like maple syrup. But I don't want it to interfere with my enjoyment of sausage, I'm afraid to say.

Nick Offerman: Given my druthers, I need nothing on my sausage.

John Hodgman: Yeah, yeah, I'm a druths man myself in that regard. But yeah.

Nick Offerman: To sort of wrap up Catherine's question, I would say, surprisingly—you know—3/4ths of a thumbs up.

John Hodgman: Yes, I agree. 3/4ths of a thumbs up.

Nick Offerman: But at the end of her plea, she asked that her husband be made to try it.

(John hums thoughtfully.)

And that— I mean, you know, I would say to any husband or any spouse, generally, if it's a question of trying something? Try it. Then you've made a compromise. You've made a positive step, and you can then say, “Oh, no thank you. I don't like it.” You may find you love it. But at the same time, I also don't think we should be made to have to try things.

John Hodgman: You know, the “like what you like” settled law came out of one of our earliest cases—and one of many times—husbands have asked their spouses to watch a movie that they like. And in that regard, I don't think you should ever force someone to watch a movie, because it's just a— First of all, people like what they like. If they don't like the movie, that's fine. Second of all, you just feel terrible, 'cause you foisted your favorite thing on someone who may or may not be enjoying it.

[00:50:00]

It's just—it feels like a bad pop quiz, essentially. But if you're talking about a bite of french toast with ketchup on it—well, I mean... Catherine's husband is named Adam, I believe, in Ontario. Adam, if Nick Offerman and I can eat some french toast with ketchup on it, surely you can eat some french toast with ketchup on it. One bite in order to honor your wife—who is a whole human being in her own right, and a person that you claim to love. So, give it a try. And certainly, if you don't like it, that's fine. But you should stop making faces. 'Cause who knows?

Nick Offerman: Amen.

John Hodgman: And by the way, if it is a thing in Canada to eat ketchup on french toast, let us know in the comments or wherever you know how to get at us. 'Cause I'd be very curious to know.

Jesse Thorn: We have a case from Rocky in Manitowoc, Wisconsin.

John Hodgman: Ooh!

Jesse Thorn: “I live in Wisconsin, but I am a Chicago Cubs fan. I love their history players and the lore of the Billy goat curse. And I've used the Cubby's team's song to convert two of our three children. But now that the curse is broken, should I become a Milwaukee Brewers fan? I like the idea of going to a Brewers game with my family and cheering on our local team.”

Nick Offerman: Gosh,

John Hodgman: Nick, how do you feel about the city of Chicago?

Nick Offerman: I feel a very strong affection for the greatest city in the nation. I lived there for a time. It's easily the best theatre community in the country. And that's not an exaggeration, because it doesn't have Broadway and it doesn't have Hollywood as ulterior motives. So, a lot of the theatre you see in New York or LA, people aren't interested in doing a good Ibsen; they're trying to get on *Friends*. In Chicago, there's no *Friends*.

John Hodgman: That's right. It's just, classic, old-fashioned, go-nowhere theatre.

Nick Offerman: (*Giggles.*) Which makes it the greatest.

John Hodgman: Just for the love of it. Yeah.

Nick Offerman: Yeah. This is— I have a lot of feelings about this question. I really love this question. Because the older I get— You know, when I was younger— Our main rivals these days for the Chicago Cubs are the St. Louis Cardinals and the Milwaukee Brewers. And I used to get into shaking my fist at the rival teams and saying, “You guys can go scratch yourselves!” You know. And these days— I did a commercial with Craig Robinson some years ago where they had him in a Chicago White Sox hat and me in a Cubs hat.

John Hodgman: Uh-oh.

Nick Offerman: And I said, “You know what? I don't want— I no longer feel enmity toward rivals. I am glad we all get to enjoy baseball.” And so, I'll absolutely— And you know, the reason I would get mad at the Cardinals is usually 'cause they're good! It's usually complimentary, where I'm like, “You son of a—whore! You do so good at hitting home runs, that makes you a villain in my house.” And it's a backhanded compliment.

But recently, the brewers have been in this pattern where they unremarkably win the division over the Cubs. And it's really frustrating, because this year it came down to the final game in a playoff series between the Cubs and the Brewers. And the Cubs were so lackluster that a slightly less lackluster Brewer's team beat them. Like, they petered out to the end. And it was like, “God, that was so disappointing for eeeverybody.”

And the Brewers then—their catcher, a guy named William Contreras—went on the news and did some really extreme bragging. It was some really unfortunate like braggadocio.

John Hodgman: They call it Brewer bragging. Yeah.

Nick Offerman: That's right. Some Brew brags. And the cubs have a tradition where they hold up a W flag when they win. It's just a thing.

John Hodgman: It's just a thing.

Nick Offerman: So, when the Brewers beat them in that last game, they took a big team photo out on the diamond, and they held up a big L flag.

John Hodgman: Oh, wow.

Nick Offerman: Which I call being a sore winner.

John Hodgman: A sore winner!

Nick Offerman: You've won the thing. And then they like made fun of something about the Cubs. And then they learned the Greek lesson of hubris and were just immediately spanked into embarrassing submission in the shortest time possible by the Dodgers, who the cubs had been beating all year. Like, it was clearly just a case of like, "Don't brag, don't make fun of the other team, don't be a sore winner." And so, I was at least glad that the justice of the universe said, "You have learned—the wages of hubris is embarrassment and defeat."

John Hodgman: You know, I'm following most of what you're saying. I'm not known for being a follower of sports.

Nick Offerman: This is a sport ball topic.

[00:55:00]

John Hodgman: That's not due to a prejudice on my part, but due to trauma. The one time that I thought as a teenager that I would try to follow the Boston Red Sox was in 1986, as they marched towards ignominy and the loss of the World Series to the New York Mets. And that was a hard thing to deal with. It also goes back even further to my brief attempt at playing youth soccer when I was perhaps eight or nine years old? I was very on the fence about it. But I was assigned to a team called The Force, which I liked very much!

(Nick giggles.)

And perhaps because of that, I turned off. I put the blast shield down over my face. And I scored a goal! Because I just allowed the force to guide me.

Nick Offerman: My god!

John Hodgman: And this was so unexpected, even to me as an eight- or nine-year-old, that I delighted—and perhaps too much, because as we were walking past the other players going, “Good game, good game,” I said, “Ha-ha! We won!”

And my own coach, who was the terrifying actual Irish person in Boston—not an American Irish person, but an actual Irishman—yelled at me, right at the peak of my triumph! My one, little triumph! Appropriately scolded me for being a sore winner.

Nick Offerman: You went too far.

John Hodgman: And I've never kicked a soccer ball again. Actually, I take it back. Some kids in the courtyard of our building kicked a soccer ball out of the—you know, it went foul. They were just playing in the courtyard. And I attempted to stop it with my foot, and I did, and then I immediately jammed my toe and got gout in that foot!

(Jesse titters.)

So, I don't know what to say about it.

But Jesse, you are obviously a baseball person, and you are someone who grew up loving the San Francisco Giants. And now you live in a different city, Los Angeles. And I have some news for you, Jesse. *(Beat.)* The Los Angeles Dodgers, I believe, just won the World Series. Did you hear about that? *(Beat.)* Jesse?

Jesse Thorn: *(In a choked whisper.)* I'm fine.

John Hodgman: Jesse?

Jesse Thorn: *(Quietly.)* No, it's fine. I'm fine.

John Hodgman: Yeah.

Nick Offerman: Giants fans don't like the Dodgers.

John Hodgman: No, I know. *(Chuckles.)* I know what I'm doing.

Jesse Thorn: There's no conceivable world where I become a Dodgers fan for convenience reasons. I don't even like you, John... implying the implication that it could be conceivable. I hate the Dodgers sooo deeply. It's the only conviction I hold in life! *(Chuckles.)* It's not based on anything.

John Hodgman: I understand!

Jesse Thorn: The Dodgers— I don't even intellectually believe in the like arguments against the Dodgers for being sneaky or a super team or too much money or whatever. Like, actually,

intellectually, I think it's mostly just that they did everything right. *(Laughs.)* And also, many of the Dodgers— There's a few real heels that I try and focus on—Blake Tryman.

(John snorts.)

But for the most part, they seem like nice guys. I mean, who hates Shohei Ohtani, the greatest baseball player of all time, who also seems to be having a great time and be really fun and nice?! Who hates Mookie Betts, who bowls 300s on his off day? He's a professional level bowler when he is not switching from right field to shortstop at age 31 or whatever.

Nick Offerman: I feel like the Cardinals are our traditional rival. The Brewers, up until recently, were an American League team. And when the league expanded, they switched the brewers to the National League. So, they're a newer rival. They're only 90 minutes up the road. And so, it doesn't feel that it has the teeth, you know, that the Cardinals rivalry has. But they've certainly been pesky, 'cause they keep winning the division unremarkably. And so, you know. I just wish, if they're gonna win the division, that they would do it in an impressive way and say, "Well, I gotta give it up to these guys. They were great." But they're never great. And it makes it disappointing.

But I feel like, to answer her question—you know, I live in Los Angeles, and I love going to see Dodgers games. But no matter who's playing, I'll just wear my Cubs stuff. I just love going to watch baseball. I could never feel a fealty toward the Dodgers. They don't feel the same as other teams. And maybe... I liken it to the Yankees. They also don't— They feel like too much more— I don't know. Like, a—

John Hodgman: You liken it to what? I'm sorry?

Nick Offerman: The New York Yankees—

John Hodgman: *(Sticking to the bit.)* I'm sorry. There's a problem with headphones, maybe?

Nick Offerman: There's an American League team—

[01:00:00]

John Hodgman: Jacob, what's going on?

Jesse Thorn: For folks who are—

John Hodgman: Every time he speaks, I just hear this horrible screeching of insects from netherworld that I'd rather not peer into.

Jesse Thorn: For folks who are listening at home and can't see John, normally John wears the judge's robes to do the show. Right now, he's wearing a backwards Bruins baseball cap and a Tom Brady jersey.

John Hodgman: Now, wait a minute! Now, let's not go too far! I mean, look. Jesse, you expressed— I'm sorry. Did you finish your point, Nick? You were mentioning something, and then you turned into the horrible screech of the underworld.

Nick Offerman: I think to just try and wrap up that point, I would suggest: you can go enjoy games at the Brewer's ballpark without having to switch your loyalty to that team, which historically has been a disappointing team. And I say that without disparagement.

John Hodgman: The Cubs, you mean, specifically?

Nick Offerman: No, the Brewers.

John Hodgman: No, the Brewers. Right.

Nick Offerman: Okay. The Cubs have historically been a lot more fun. They're more charming. And I think that's in arguable. It's not my subjective opinion. And I don't want to disparage the Brewers, our rivals. I have friends that live in Milwaukee, and they have a great experience. You know, every baseball team— I want everyone to love their team. But I don't think a move of positivity to switch from the Cubs to the Brewers. I don't think that's gonna—

John Hodgman: So, you don't think Rocky should make the move, even though Rocky is kind of Brewers curious?

Nick Offerman: Yeah. I mean, I feel like go enjoy the ballpark, but wear your Cubs stuff.

John Hodgman: The Billy goat curse of the Cubs was the same style of curse— We had the curse of the bambino in Boston, which was the Never Win a World Series curse for a long, long, long time. And longer, I think, for the Cubs. Right?

Nick Offerman: Yeah.

John Hodgman: Because finally, thanks to Theo Epstein of Brookline—general Manager of the Red Sox—the Red Sox won the World Series in 2000 (*makes a blurbling noise instead of specifying when in the 2000s*) or whatever and broke the curse. And suddenly I didn't understand sports even more than I already didn't understand it. 'Cause the Red Sox are always supposed to be underdogs. The Billy goat curse was broken when?

Nick Offerman: 2016.

John Hodgman: So, very recently! But what is the Cubby's song that she refers to?

Nick Offerman: It's a song written by Steve Goodman, who is a contemporary of John Prine, in the '70s in Chicago. And it's called "Go Cubs, Go".

John Hodgman: How does it go, exactly?

Nick Offerman: (*Speaking the lyrics, not singing.*) “Baseball season's underway, so you better get ready for a brand-new day.” Uh...

John Hodgman: I put you on the spot.

Nick Offerman: “The Cubs are gonna win today. Hey, Chicago, what do you say? The Cubs are gonna win today. Go Cubs, go! Go Cubs, go! Hey, Chicago, what do you say? The Cubs are gonna win today.”

And people do argue that it's not necessarily a great song, but the good feeling that it engenders is no joke. We love to hear that song play at the end of the game.

John Hodgman: I really enjoyed hearing it, particularly in your William Shatner speak-sing rendition that you gave it that was very moving.

(*Nick giggles.*)

And I will point out that there is a way to convert enemies—baseball enemies only, of course—to joining your team, even. And that's by... winning. (*Laughs.*) Like, you know, you can't become in love with losing on principle over and over again. Then your team affiliation will die and wither and become toxic and so forth. But if you win the World Series in 2003, guess what? You start seeing Boston Red Sox hats in New York City. And that's a very interesting thing that has nothing to do with anything else other than coming together and supporting the team.

And by the way, the love of baseball. I think that's where I'm gonna leave it for you, Rocky. Only you know what's in your heart, and I think we should all just feel grateful that—and you should feel grateful—that you get to watch baseball. Because unfortunately, I cannot. Because our daughter—who's a whole human being in her own right—who now lives in San Francisco, took us to a baseball game in Oracle Park to watch the Giants play the Cardinals! And it was a wonderful evening and one of the most beautiful ballparks I've ever been in, Jesse. And what a good time I had eating those garlic fries and those crazy crab sandwiches!

But of course, the giants lost by one baseball score hole or whatever to the Cardinals. And I remembered something that's very true. And it's absolutely—talk about the curse of the Billy goat; I have never been to a sports game of any kind where the team that I was rooting for won.

(*Jesse and Nick laughs.*)

And I'm beginning to think that I am the problem. And I will not ever go again, 'cause I don't wanna make anyone upset.

Nick Offerman: I mean, I take that as a challenge. We have to disprove this.

John Hodgman: Well, Nick Offerman, thank you. We've got one more case for you, and this is a controversial one. Jesse, you wanna talk about it for us?

Jesse Thorn: Yeah.

[01:05:00]

This is from Leah. “My husband's been wearing a specific cutoff, sleeveless shirt for more than a decade. I really think it's time for it to go. He says he'll only wear it at home, but then I still have to see it. Can you and Nick Offerman please order him to retire the shirt?”

(Nick giggles delightedly.)

John Hodgman: And I believe we have a photo of the shirt.

Nick Offerman: Oh, hell yeah.

John Hodgman: Which we're looking at now.

Nick Offerman: Oh no!

John Hodgman: Yes. It's a—

Nick Offerman: *(Laughs.)* The twist! And what does it say, please?

Jesse Thorn: It says, “You had me at meat tornado,” and features a one-color print of Mr. Nick Offerman. I presume that's as Ron Swanson.

(John confirms.)

Nick Offerman: That's right. Well, as soon as I heard cutoff sleeve t-shirt, I drew a deep inhalation. Because—

John Hodgman: Ooh! That's sort of like ketchup on French toast to you?

Nick Offerman: I mean— Well, it touches me very close to home. Because this is— You know, this is something that my wife, Megan Mullally, and I may have brought on your show, had we ever gotten around to it. Especially, mine is a Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds t-shirt.

John Hodgman: Sleeveless?

Nick Offerman: Sleeveless.

John Hodgman: Oh yeah.

Nick Offerman: Black t-shirt, red lettering, from like '92.

John Hodgman: Sounds great!

Nick Offerman: And it—I have to say. I don't know, can I say this on this channel? I looked sick as *(censor beep)* in this t-shirt.

(John and Jesse laugh.)

I'm pretty masculine. *(Chuckles.)* And when I had that sleeveless t-shirt on, that's exactly what I was going for. I was my own platonic ideal of a badass, like motorcycle-riding, Fonzi wannabe.

John Hodgman: Yeah, that's right.

Nick Offerman: And it turns out— You know, I've learned over the years that the women in my life usually don't agree with that aesthetic ideal. That it's something that is performative on my own part, like wanting to look cool kind of for the other guys. Because Megan would say, “What in the world are you doing? Why don't you wear something that I like to see you in?”

And I have to say, there are— So, by now—

John Hodgman: Is Meghan's objection to the sleevelessness? To the Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds-ness? Or to the overall sort of like youthful, cringey, rock-and-roll-ness as it is stretched across your body as a mature man now?

Nick Offerman: She and I both still wear a lot of like rock-and-roll t-shirts. So, it's not that, and it's not Nick Cave by any stretch. We both love *(unclear.)*

John Hodgman: *(Talking over him.)* Of course. Who doesn't love Nick Cave? Yeah.

Nick Offerman: It's the cutoff sleeves. It's like the cool, tough guy—you know—like, performative, college-age sensibility. And we've been together for 25 years. So, by now my closet has been curated to basically a collection of garments that Megan has either chosen or that I know she loves.

And you know, for example, I just have a rack of button-down flannels, you know? And I will bring one home from a great company like Filson or Pendleton, and maybe they gave it to me on a TV show. And I say, “Oh, I love this new flannel.”

And I'll bring it home, and Megan will say, “I don't like that. I don't like the color. I don't like the—” For whatever reason.

And I'll say, "Well." It's interesting. Because I don't wanna wear things ultimately— And I had to learn this over years of marriage. Why should I wear things that I like more than the person who I want to find me attractive likes?

(John agrees.)

And I really started on one end of the argument, where I was defiant. And I said the same thing. I was like, "Well, alright, if we're going out in public, if I'm where you have to countenance me, then I wanna wear something that you condone, that you— I don't wanna wear something that you dislike. I want you to like what I look like. But if I'm going to my wood shop or—you know—I'm working out, or any of the realms in which I'm the master (*giggles*), in the 3% of my life where I'm the boss.

John Hodgman: Well, and—you know, it's important to have a percentage of your life. And if you're sharing your life with someone as a life partner, you both need percentages of your life where you can just be alone, and on your own, and make your own stuff in your own woodshop, metaphorically speaking.

Nick Offerman: Sure. Or not even necessarily alone, but just not in Megan's sphere. So, I can go hang out with other cool dudes, and we can flex our muscles for each other and like roll cigars, I'm guessing. But—

[01:10:00]

John Hodgman: That's probably what's gonna happen.

Nick Offerman: But I think— The thing I want to impart that I came to, 'cause it also goes for haircuts and just all matters of personal appearance—eventually, I was like, "I've made a promise to this person to be her best friend and her spouse for forever. Why don't I do my best to make choices that strengthen that bond and that honor the marriage?" And so, when it comes to questions like this, that's the ultimate barometer is: I would rather please my wife. I would rather have her like to look at me than me like to look at me.

John Hodgman: And I don't think that this is gonna change your mind, but I'll add some context. 'Cause I did ask Leah, "Well, what is it that you don't like about the shirt?" I mean, obviously who wouldn't want a shirt with your face on it? Of course.

Nick Offerman: Of course. Yeah.

John Hodgman: You know what I mean? And I mean, we could argue back and forth. I mean, Jesse, I'm sure you have some opinions on when sleeveless t-shirts look good or look bad. Do they look good?

Jesse Thorn: I guess when the sun is out. That's when.

John Hodgman: And the buns are out.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah. *(Laughs.)* Do sleeveless t-shirts look good or bad? I don't know. I guess it depends on the arms in question and the spirit with which they're worn. I can tell you this. Some years ago, I purchased at the flea market, for my friend Mr. Jordan Morris, a tank top featuring one Bart Simpson.

John Hodgman: Cowabunga!

Jesse Thorn: Yeah. I believe it was. I believe he's saying, "Don't have a cow, dude." It was the classic, first season—you know—Simpson's merchandise mania graphic of Bart Simpson. And he didn't wear it for years. And then I believe he went on some sort of trip where there was gonna be a pool, and he wore it around the pool. And he got so many compliments that now he like wears it to signings.

John Hodgman: There you go!

Jesse Thorn: Like, he's off signing his comics and books. He wears the Bart Simpson tank. And you know, Jordan has a swimmer's body, because he is a swimmer. He has a big, strong chest and arms. But also, I think he has the spirit to carry it off. I don't think I have ever had that spirit. I almost always am wearing long sleeves to cover, not my track marks, but my shame.

(They laugh.)

John Hodgman: So, in a vacuum—and I'll tell you what Leah said in a minute. But in a vacuum, you're not married to Leah, Jesse, nor am I. I don't believe you are.

Nick Offerman: No.

John Hodgman: No. So, I mean, is Leah's husband carrying it off? Let's take a look at the thing again. Jesse, you're a sartorial expert. Is Leah's husband carrying this off?

Jesse Thorn: No.

John Hodgman: Yeah. Alright. So, let me give you the context then, which is that I said to Leah, "Why don't you like it?" And Leah provided two reasons. One is that Leah works in sustainability. And you know, we've talked a lot about meat, and we are—the three of us—carnivores. And yet, I am absolutely cognizant of the fact that, you know, not only are there all kinds of ethical problems with regard to the treatment of animals, but factory farming on its own is an ecological disaster.

Nick Offerman: 100%.

John Hodgman: And so, the meat tornado element of this bothers Leah. Which is—you know. She was like, "I'm very happy with Nick Offerman. I wouldn't mind a Nick Offerman t-shirt. But this one bothers me." And then she also feels that her husband knows this and is wearing the t-shirt to troll her.

Nick Offerman: Ah.

John Hodgman: And that I do think is an anti-marital thing to do.

Nick Offerman: I will say I do still have the t-shirt, but I also—regardless of Megan's distaste for a sleeveless t-shirt—I've aged out of sleeveless t-shirts. Like, I have always been athletic. And actually, this year I put on a bunch of muscle, because I'm playing a former pro wrestler in a new David E. Kelly show that's coming out next year.

John Hodgman: Listen to this. Listen to this expert in the plugging, Jesse!

Nick Offerman: And so, I got what they call somewhat jacked.

John Hodgman: Yeah. Dare you to prove it. Dare you to prove it.

Nick Offerman: (*Under his breath.*) I'll fucking prove it.

John Hodgman: Uh-oh! No. Wow!

Nick Offerman: Any questions?

John Hodgman: Just stunned silence.

Nick Offerman: Would you say that is proof?

John Hodgman: That is fair proof of jacked-ness.

Nick Offerman: I just showed the judge a photograph.

John Hodgman: Yeah. We'll send that to Jennifer Marmor, and when she wakes up in five weeks, she'll put it on the social media page, if you don't mind.

Nick Offerman: I won't.

John Hodgman: Okay! Fair enough.

Nick Offerman: I've chosen not to make that the story.

John Hodgman: I understand.

Nick Offerman: I don't, uh—

John Hodgman: Well, people can, I guess, watch the show and see it for themselves.

Nick Offerman: That's right.

[01:15:00]

You'll see on the show that I put on a bunch of muscle.

John Hodgman: That's what we call in podcasting French toast with ketchup. A tease.

Nick Offerman: That's right.

John Hodgman: So, you put on a bunch of muscle, sorry.

Nick Offerman: With a wonderful Hollywood trainer named Grant Roberts, who does— He did it with Kumail. He just did it with Sydney Sweeney for her boxing movie. And so, kind of for the first time in my life since my days of football, I should be wearing sleeveless t-shirts. Like, if at any time. And I no longer feel like it. Because now it feels like peacocking. 'Cause it is. It's saying, “Check out my dope muscles, everybody.” And I'd rather— I've found that it's better to cover them up and have people say, “Whoa! What's under there?”

John Hodgman: Well, I appreciate your modesty, and I'll feel your dope muscles later when I give you a hug to say thank you for joining us here on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast to resolve all of these disputes. Here is the book. It is called *Little Woodchucks* by Nick Offerman, featuring 12 projects for kids and adults, *Offerman Woodshop's Guide to Tools and Tom Foolery*, co-written with Lee Buchanan.

Nick Offerman: That's right.

John Hodgman: And then I'm gonna see you later this evening at a special screening for a new TV show that you're a part of. A historical drama, if you will!

Nick Offerman: That's right. It's called *Death by Lightning* on Netflix. And it's the story of James Garfield. His unlikely election and subsequent demise.

John Hodgman: And he really hated Mondays, I hear!

Nick Offerman: (*Chuckles.*) He did.

John Hodgman: Sorry. I apologize. Jesse, I'm firing myself from the podcast forever. Maybe you want to read the credits before I go?

Jesse Thorn: Sure. The docket's clear. *Judge John Hodgman*, created by Jesse Thorn and John Hodgman. This episode, recorded by Jacob Derwin at Technica House in New York City. The podcast, edited by AJ McKeon. Daniel Speer is our video producer. The show is produced by Jennifer Marmor. Photos from our program are at [Instagram.com/judgejohnhodgman](https://www.instagram.com/judgejohnhodgman). We're on TikTok and YouTube at [@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod](https://www.youtube.com/@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod), where you can visually assess Judge Hodgman's reaction to a

photograph of Nick's jacked-ness, and thus infer how jacked Nick is using the power of your eyes. Follow and subscribe at [@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod](#) to see our episodes and our video-only content.

Nick Offerman: But PS, does your audience know about your calves?

John Hodgman: Oh, they're about to find out.

Jesse Thorn: John brings it up aaall the time. *(Laughs.)*

Nick Offerman: The judge, legitimately, has insanely gorgeous— You see his calves, and you're like, “Were you an Olympic shot-putter previously?”

John Hodgman: Only my calves.

Nick Offerman: They're— I mean, hey.

John Hodgman: I don't know what to say. It's the only part of my body that looks like marble.

Nick Offerman: They're wild.

John Hodgman: *(Chuckling awkwardly.)* Goodbye.

Well, Nick Offerman, thank you so much. You are indeed one of my favorite snacks in many ways. And we enjoyed some snacks today, but we are still looking for some snack disputes for an all-snacks episode we have coming up. Did you grow up in a Cheese Nips household? How are you adjusting to the real world? Is there a bandmate who brings something stinky on the tour bus that he or she or they like to snack on that you simply can't abide? Do you ever eat kimchi out of a jar at two o'clock in the morning? Try adding some mayonnaise! I don't know what that is. Why would I know? In any case, send us all of your snack related disputes to MaximumFun.org/jjho, or you can email me directly at Hodgman@MaximumFun.org. But we don't wanna just hear snack disputes, right Jesse?

Jesse Thorn: Whatever your case is, send it to us at MaximumFun.org/jjho. Big or small, we judges them all. We can't make our show without you, so please go to MaximumFun.org/jjho. Thank you to the great Nick Offerman. Go buy his book, and 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!