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Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: It is the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. I'm Bailiff Jesse Thorn. With me, Judge John Hodgman. This week's episode, recorded live at San Francisco Sketch Fest.

John Hodgman: We love beyond love our annual time at San Francisco Sketch Fest. And this time we heard a case about a chest freezer, a Jimmy Buffett themed trivia night, and we saw the return of our old pals, Rob Baedeker and James Reichmuth from Kasper Hauser.

This show was 1,000% fuuun. And while you're laughing along to this episode, please go to SFSketchFest.com to get tickets to our next show at Sketch Fest. That's right! We're returning! Sunday, January 18th, back at the Marines Memorial Theater. We would love to see you there.

Jesse Thorn: Let's go to the stage at Marines Memorial Theater for some San Francisco Justice.

Transition: Three gavel bangs.

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

(Cheers and applause.)

Please welcome to the stage Diana and Brooks!

Diana brings the case against her husband Brooks. Diana wants more freezer space. She's dying to buy a chest freezer. Brooks says, no, they don't need a chest freezer. Who's right? Who's wrong? Who will make sure this house is always stocked with It's-It? Please rise as Judge John Hodgman enters the courtroom.

(Cheers and applause.)

John Hodgman: Diana and Brooks, you may be seated. Welcome to the fake courtroom. Diana, you bring the case. You want a chest freezer? Why? What human body parts do you want to put in there?

Diana: So, currently our freezer is packed. And so, anytime you go to the store, if you buy a frozen item, you need to play *Tetris*. And it beeps at you if it's open for too long. It's a very stressful situation.

John Hodgman: I hate your freezer so much.

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: Your freezer is virtue signaling.

Diana: Yeah. Yeah. But we live in the suburbs. This is a dream that can come true.

John Hodgman: What suburbs do you live in, if I may ask?

Diana: We live in Fremont.

John Hodgman: Okay. And what's packed in your freezer currently, and what do you want to have room for?

Diana: So, there's a lot of noodles—both Asian and Italian varieties. There's bread. There are—

Brooks: Ice cream.

Diana: Well, ice cream, and It's-It, mochi ice cream. These are things that are not efficiently packed. They take up a lot of space.

John Hodgman: Do you have room for a chest freezer?

Diana: We can make room.

John Hodgman: Okay. *(Chuckles.)* Brooks, Diana says that a chest freezer will make her happy. Why is her happiness unimportant to you?

(Laughter and scattered applause.)

Brooks: Uh, *(chuckling)* I think her happiness will not be found in the depths of a chest freezer. Only more frustration.

John Hodgman: You're saying that you know her mind better than she does.

(Laughter.)

Brooks: I think that in this one case, she is incorrect.

John Hodgman: Tell me more. What do you anticipate happening if I were to rule in her favor, and you get a chest freezer? What's she gonna fill it with? And then what's she gonna want next?

Brooks: So, currently our freezer is full of bread, ice cream, noodles. I think that it—

John Hodgman: *(Interrupting.)* I heard the whole inventory before, Brooks! Stop stalling for time! Mochi ice cream, It's-It, we all know!

Jesse Thorn: Wait. Wait, wait, wait! What kind of It's-It?

John Hodgman: Oh, good point.

Brooks: In general, we have plain and mint.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah. That's the right ones.

(Laughter and scattered cheers.)

John Hodgman: About three years ago, Jesse Thorn sent to my home in Maine a huge shipment of It's-It of maaaaany flavors.

Jesse Thorn: Basically, a palette.

John Hodgman: And we enjoy— *(Chuckles.)* Yeah, exactly. And we did not have a chest freezer. Though, I'll tell you something. We do have a garage fridge.

(One person claps.)

Which has a freezer attached. So, I feel you. Thank you for that one applaud.

Jesse Thorn: That's the mid-westerner in the crowd.

(A single, loud shout.)

John Hodgman: And that was three years ago. And all of those It's-It were enjoyed and remarked upon by everyone in my family except for one kind. Three years later, the pumpkin It's-It are still in the freezer, I'm sorry to say. Anyway, I apologize. I took it a different way. You don't—oh, you like the pumpkin It's-It?

Diana: No, I didn't even know that was an option!

John Hodgman: Well, this might be why you need another freezer!

Brooks: But I think we currently— Like, currently on average, we have three to four kinds of ice cream in our freezer. And I think in Diana's vision we have eight to nine types of ice cream in our freezer.

Jesse Thorn: Honestly, if you had a chest freezer, think about how 30-wonderful your life could be.

(Laughter.)

[00:05:00]

Brooks: I think for bread, we're going from like five frozen loaves to like ten frozen loaves. I think this is— You know, the vision is we go to the grocery store once every two months. And I think we're just gonna—

John Hodgman: Let the record show for listeners: Diana touched her hands to her heart with joy when considering going to the grocery store every two months. Who goes to the grocery store? Who does the grocery shopping Brooks?

Brooks: I do most of it.

John Hodgman: Do you like going, or do you not like going?

Brooks: I'm fine going.

John Hodgman: Diana, you don't like going to the grocery store or what?

Diana: I hate going to the grocery store.

John Hodgman: But Brooks is doing it!

Diana: Well, but—so, the caveat is we get a CSA; we go to the farmer's market. So, like the grocery store is actually pretty limited.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah, yeah, yeah! You live in the Bay Area. We know!

(Laughter.)

Diana: But we have small children who each will only eat things that no one else eats. So, there's like four grocery stores that you have to go to get all of the specific items. And it's just— It's too much!

Jesse Thorn: I get it. I do that for It's-It in Los Angeles.

(Laughter.)

(Giggling.) I go to a special grocery store only to get It's-It!

John Hodgman: Diana, why do you think Brooks doesn't want you to have the chest freezer of your dreams?

Diana: All he will say is that we don't need it. And I think it's objectively false.

John Hodgman: Well, I mean there is added expense there. You know, and there is Brooks' assurance that you don't know your own feelings and that you're just trying to fill up that chest freezer to fill some other emotional hole in your life that maybe you should be going to

therapy for instead. And that once that chest freezer is full, you will realize there's still more that you need in this life. But that's what Brooks would say, if he would bother to mount a defense at all.

(Laughter.)

Brooks, why not? Why not? Why not? Really.

Brooks: 'Cause I think we would just end up with like two months of stuff in the freezer getting frost on it, and it would just be sitting there. We would eventually eat it, but it would be like all frosted over. It would be—

Jesse Thorn: Brooks, do you know that chest freezers don't frost, because they don't have defrost cycles?

Brooks: Well, but then we would have to defrost it, wouldn't we?

Jesse Thorn: No, I mean— What I mean is they don't get covered in frost, because it doesn't turn on and off in order to melt the—they don't get freezer burned.

Brooks: Oh? I did not know.

John Hodgman: Yyyeah. I think you better do some research, Brooks.

Diana: Well, can I add—? So, we are both lab scientists.

John Hodgman: Let me just say. You can add. *(Softly.)* You don't have to.

(Diana laughs.)

You're way ahead at the moment. But I am interested in hearing about your research science.

Diana: So, freezer defrosting and organizational systems—like, this is what we've been training for our entire career.

Brooks: I think we we're just gonna end up—

John Hodgman: Wait a minute. You're trained lab scientists in the field of suburban store-ology?

(Laughter.)

Jesse Thorn: They're CostCo-logists.

John Hodgman: *(Laughs.)* What are your actual fields, if I may ask?

Diana: I'm a protein scientist.

John Hodgman: How are you gonna counter that, Brooks?

Jesse Thorn: You know she gets her macros!

Brooks: I am a synthetic biologist.

John Hodgman: I don't know what either those things are, but it's like I would be so excited to be at a cocktail party with you. Nonetheless, you have not made an argument for why you shouldn't have a chest freezer. Let's fill up that chest freezer and then see if Diana still has needs.

Diana: Yaaay!

(Cheers and applause.)

Jesse Thorn: Thank you, Diana and Brooks. Swift Justice now continues. Please welcome to the stage James and Rob!

(Cheers and applause.)

John Hodgman: James and Rob.

Jesse Thorn: James brings the case against his colleague, Rob. They're both members of the legendary Bay Area sketch comedy group, Kasper Hauser.

(Cheers and applause.)

They're also in the midst of a terrible dispute that they say only Judge John Hodgman can resolve! Who is funnier? Judge Hodgman?

John Hodgman: Whoa! Well, so nice to see you again, James and Rob. Welcome back!

James: Thanks very much for having us back on the show.

John Hodgman: Of course.

James: *(The sound of something dropping.)* Oops. *(Chuckles.)* Keep it together, Rob.

John Hodgman: Alright. I guess the dispute is who is funnier?

James: Yes. So, we have brought two different versions of an unperformed Kasper Hauser sketch. I prefer the first one. Rob prefers the second one. And this disagreement is the reason

why neither of them has ever been performed. And we are hoping that you will settle this dispute.

John Hodgman: Yeah, I would be happy to. So, let's hear a sampling of the first sketch. This would be your sketch. The first sketch. Okay. First version of the sketch. I should say.

Rob: *(Timidly.)* Hello?

James: *(In a deep, monstrous voice.)* Hello.

Rob: Are—are you the devil?

James: I have gone by many names.

Rob: Oh! Oh, good.

[00:10:00]

I'd like to sell my soul in exchange for being the best there's ever been.

James: Okay. Guitar or fiddle?

Rob: *(Beat.)* Tuba.

(Jesse laughs.)

James: *(Coughing in surprise.)* Tuba?!

Rob: I want to play tuba like it's never been played before!

James: Why?

Rob? I like the— How do you describe it? Low sound?

(Jesse cackles and so does the crowd.)

James: Tubas are heavy, you know. They wrap around your whole torso.

Rob: Well, if I sold my soul, could it come with a special tuba that would be small?

James: *(Chuckling.)* Do you mean a trumpet? I mean, I'd hate for you to not get that really booming tuba sound that you love.

Rob: Okay, let's do it. Normal tuba, best ever, my soul.

James: Okay, let me just— Here's a thought. So, there's no rule that says you have to pick just one instrument. Why not be the best ever at tuba and guitar as a backup?

Rob: No way! Tuba... and oboe.

(Laughter.)

James: No. No, no, no, no, no, no. *(Laughs dryly.)* No-boe. The reeds on an oboe are sooo sensitive to humidity changes.

Rob: You know what? You know, it sounds like you're trying to talk me out of this!

James: No, we just— We want people to be happy with their choice.

Rob: We?

James: M-me and the demons and stuff. The—

Rob: I wanna do beekeeping.

James: And be what? The world's best beekeeper?! You're not even making sense now!

John Hodgman: Alright, I'm gonna interrupt here. I think we've got a sense.

(They agree.)

Jesse Thorn: That was good sense of that sketch.

John Hodgman: Good sense of the throw of sketch one. Very nice. Very nice.

(Applause.)

Okay, well let's just try to keep it neutral, 'cause I want to hear the second sketch. And then I'll evaluate who is funnier. Go ahead. Rob, this is your sketch.

Rob: Yes.

James: *(Deep and menacing.)* Can I help you?

Rob: A-are you the devil?

James: I have gone by many names.

Rob: O-okay. So, do you remember me? Six months ago, I sold my soul to be the best guitar player ever.

James: Yeeeah. Um. Yeah, you kind of look a little bit familiar. You know what? I'm in the middle of making some home movies right now. Can we do this—?

Rob: Can I just play something for you? Just to check?

James: Not necessary, my son. I assure you, you are the greatest—

Rob: *(Never having stopped talking.)* I—I—I just—something really quick. I just wanna play— Just real—

(Clumsily plucks the strings without any real melody.)

Wait, wait, that's—hold on.

(Continues discordantly.)

James: Oh. Yeah, yeah. Wow! *(Laying it on thick.)* That's amazing!

Rob: What? Really?

James: Oh, yeah! Yeah...

Rob: Because I feel like I... kinda suck!

James: *(Comfortingly.)* No! You don't suck!

Rob: *(Weepily.)* I do! I suck!

James: No, you don't suck! No, you don't suck!

Rob: I'm supposed to be the best!

James: I mean, what's your name?

Rob: Terry.

James: Terry? Terry, you're dynamite!

Rob: Oh? Okay. Yeah, I am good. I guess I just needed— I just wanna play one more thing.

James: No, no, no, no. I gotta go now. But—

Rob: *(Singing out of key while fumbling the guitar, completely out of rhythm.)* “Knock, knock, knocking on Heaven's door. Knock, knock—knock, knock—”

James: No, stop it. Stop it. You're terrible. Believe me, I've seen some *(censor beep)*. I'll give you your soul back. You need to stop right now.

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: Alright. I'm also gonna stop you there 'cause that's great. That's amazing.

Jesse Thorn: That's a good sense of the sketch.

(Cheers and applause.)

The sketch for Hauser.

John Hodgman: James' sketch, Rob's sketch. Similar themes.

Jesse Thorn: Both very funny.

John Hodgman: Both very funny! Both very funny. I mean, it's really hard. Humor is so objective, you guys. You know what I mean?

(Laughter.)

And I think the thing of it is, though— You know, I know that you want me to say one of you is funnier, but here on the podcast, you know, we have a reputation for finding like the emotional crux. What's really going on.

Jesse Thorn: What's underneath it all.

John Hodgman: Yeah. And the fact is like I know you guys; you were here with us last year. We love you. We love Kasper Hauser. You've been working together for 35 years. You've been friends for that long too! And yet as great collaborators as you are, all creative people—I think—tend to be a little bit competitive inside and kind of want someone from the outside to say, “Yeah, you're funnier than him,” or “you're funnier than them.” But I have to encourage you to not think that way. You're funny in different ways. You complement each other, and your value doesn't depend on who gets more laughs. You know? So. Unfortunately, I'm gonna throw this one out of court. 'Cause you're both really funny. They're both really great sketches. So, there you go.

(They thank him.)

(Cheers and applause.)

Jesse Thorn: Thank you, James and Rob.

John Hodgman: Thank you James and Rob. Great to see you.

Jesse Thorn: Let's bring out our next set of litigants! Please welcome to the stage... James and Rob.

[00:15:00]

John Hodgman: *(Softly.)* What?

Jesse Thorn: James brings the case against his colleague Rob. *(Speeding through.)* They're both members of the legendary Bay Area sketch comedy group, Kasper Hauser. They're also in the midst of a terrible dispute that they say only Judge John Hodgman can resolve. Who's funnier?

John Hodgman: Jesse, why are you saying—? Why are we doing this again?

Jesse Thorn: I'm just— I don't even— I don't write the script. I just read the script. I dunno.

James: Thank you so much for having us on the show! *(Something drops again.)*

(Coyly.) Oops! Keep it together, Rob.

John Hodgman: Okay. I'm not sure what's happening. Do you have another—? You have another dispute?

James: Yes. We've brought two versions of an unperformed Kasper Hauser sketch. I like the first one better. Rob likes the second one better. But this disagreement is the reason why neither of them has ever been performed before. We would like your help in settling this dispute.

John Hodgman: *(Beat.)*

(Laughter.)

Knock yourself out.

Rob: Hello?

James: *(Using the devil voice.)* Hello.

Rob: Are you the devil?

James: I have gone by many names.

Rob: Oh, good. I'd like to sell my soul in exchange for being the best there's ever been!

James: Okay. Guitar or fiddle?

Rob: TUBA!

John Hodgman: Alright, stop! Stop it! Stop it! I thought—I thought maybe it would be a different instrument. This is the same—? This is the same sketch. (*Stammering.*) I don't—alright, I'm sorry. Maybe you didn't like my other ruling where I was like, “You're both funny.” Maybe you really need to know who's funnier. Okay. I respect that. So, let me just say that the sketches are great. I would say they both... need work, honestly.

(*Laughter.*)

But if I had to say it, I think, uh— I think— I'm sorry, Rob, but I do think that James's is a little funnier. The tuba one is a little bit funnier. Just by a hair, but that's not important. But if you must know, I'm ruling in James's favor. Sorry, you had to come back to hear that. (*Bangs his gavel.*) Thank you, James and Rob!

(*Cheers and applause.*)

Jesse Thorn: Swift Justice continues. Please welcome to the stage: James and Rob! (*Rushing through it.*) James brings the case against his colleague Rob. They're both members of the legendary Bay Area sketch comedy group, Kasper Hauser.

(*John stammers helplessly.*)

Wait, hold on. Judge Hodgman, I know what it is.

John Hodgman: What? What's happening?

Jesse Thorn: It's a *Groundhog Day*. We're in a *Groundhog Day*.

(*John “oh!”s.*)

It's a Groundhog Day!

John Hodgman: I forgot about that. Okay.

James: Thank you so much for having us on the show.

John Hodgman: Okay.

(*Laughter.*)

Jesse Thorn: Definitely...

James: *(Dropping sound.)* Koops! *(Slowly melting into the devil voice.)* Better keep it together, Roooooob! *(Loud gasp.)*

John Hodgman: You're gonna—? You're gonna do this whole bit again, aren't you?

James: *(In his normal voice.)* Yes. We've brought two versions of an unperformed Kasper Hauser sketch. Now, I like the first one better. Rob likes the second one better. This disagreement is the reason why neither has ever been performed—

John Hodgman: Okay. Stop. Stop it. Stop, stop. I understand now we're in a *Groundhog Day* loop. So, I guess I gotta learn something about myself? Or I gotta like grow in some way to get out of this? I mean, I already said you were both funny. I said one of you is funnier. I mean— Why is this happening?

Rob: Maybe you're being punished for outsourcing a whole segment of comedy instead of coming up with something new yourself?

(Raucous laughter.)

James: It has to be—

Jesse Thorn: We did do that. Just brought in local talent.

John Hodgman: But—yeah. Look, it's harsh but fair. But you have to understand. Um. Look around you. Nothing is funny anymore. I can't—I can't write—I just can't write comedy! I'm just crying inside all the time. So, yes, I admit it. I brought you in because you're sociopathic enough to be funny in these times, and I'm not. And I just want to get through the show so I can get back to my hotel room and eat pork cracklings and watch Jenny Nicholson videos about Galactic Star Cruiser!

(Scattered cheers.)

Which is the only thing that brings me any pleasure right now, because my kids have grown up and left, and I just wanna stare in the middle distance and cry all the time! Okay?! So, I'm being honest with you now! Is that enough? Does that break the curse?

Rob: *(Sadly.)* Not... not—not... no.

John Hodgman: So, how do I get out of this?!

James: *(Devil voice.)* I can think of a way.

(John “oh”s.)

Jesse Thorn: Oh no, he's back.

John Hodgman: Let me ask. Uhhh, are you the devil?

James: I have gone by many names.

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: Okay. Okay. Okay. So, what? I got to sell my soul to get outta this *Groundhog Day* loop?

James: Mm-hmm! And anything else you desire?

John Hodgman: Oh! Well, I have always kind of wanted to be the best that's ever been!

James: *(Sighs.)* Guitar or fiddle.

John Hodgman: Well, I got a big song coming up, so ukulele.

[00:20:00]

James: *(Irritated.)* Oh, *(censor beep)*, here we go again.

Jesse Thorn: Rob Baedeker and James Reichmuth everybody!

John Hodgman: I'll sign it. I'll sign it!

Jesse Thorn: Check out Rob and James classic sketch comedy group, Kasper Hauser. The entire Kasper Hauser comedy podcast is available at MaximumFun.org and in your favorite podcast app. And you can buy their many books, including their legendary *Sky Mall: Happy Crap You Can Buy from a Plane*.

Transition: Three gavel bangs.

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[00:25:00]

Transition: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: San Francisco, are you ready for... mega justice?!

(Cheers and applause.)

Let's bring out our litigants. Please welcome to the stage, Yael and Conner.

(Cheers and applause.)

Tonight's case, "Why Don't We Get Drunk and Sue?" Yael brings the case against his friend Conner. Yael runs a weekly trivia night at Conner's bar. Yael is a lifelong parrot head.

(Scattered cheers.)

He wants to host a Jimmy Buffett trivia night to commemorate the second anniversary of Buffett's passing. But Conner has only one rule: no Jimmy Buffett!

(Laughter.)

Who's right? Who's wrong? And who's trying to reason with hurricane season? Only one can decide. Please rise as Judge John Hodgman enters the courtroom and delivers an obscure cultural reference.

John Hodgman: "Here is my philosophy. Up with life. Stamp out all small and large indignities. Leave everyone alone to make it without pressure. Down with hurting. Lower the standard of living. Do without plastics. Smash the servo mechanisms. Stop grabbing. Snuff the breeze and hug the kids. Love all love. Hate all hate."

Bailiff Jesse Thorn, please swear the litigants in.

Jesse Thorn: Yael and Conner, please rise and raise your right hands. Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God-or-Whatever?

(They swear.)

Do you swear to abide by Judge John Hodgman's ruling, despite the fact that his favorite Jimmy Buffett's song is "The Piano has Been Drinking, Not Me" by Tom Waits?

(Laughter.)

(They swear.)

Judge Hodgman, you may proceed.

John Hodgman: *(Chuckles.)* You have identified a similar, polarizing aspect of those two artists. Yael and Conner, you may be seated.

Jesse Thorn: They both agree that it's five o'clock somewhere!

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: Yael and Conner, you may be seated for an immediate summary judgment in one of yours favorites. Can either of you name the piece of culture that I referenced as I entered this courtroom? Conner, let's start with you. You're closer to me, correct? You are Conner.

Conner: I am Conner.

John Hodgman: Welcome, Conner. What is your guess?

Conner: (*Very confidently.*) I believe that is a quote from *Blue Planet*—David Attenborough during *Planet Earth*.

John Hodgman: I love the acting that you're giving to this!

(*Laughter.*)

(*Teasing.*) “I believe that's a quote from—hmmm. Is it *Blue Planet*? Which David Attenborough is it?”

Well, that's a very good guess. I'm going to write that down. Yael, it falls to you. What is your guess? He could be right; he could be wrong.

Yael: I'm gonna guess that it's from Jimmy Buffett's novel, *A Salty Piece of Land*.

(*Laughter.*)

(*John snorts.*)

And that in preparation for this, you read the whole thing!

John Hodgman: (*Laughs.*) I absolutely did not. I did not know that was a novel! But all guesses are wrong. It was actually from a novel called *A Tan and Sandy Silence* by John D. MacDonald, one of 21 Travis McGee novels featuring the beach bum and houseboat denizen of Fort Lauderdale—and problem solver—Travis McGee, who is referenced in which Jimmy Buffett's song? Yael, Jimmy Buffett expert.

Yael: Ohhh! Good question. I don't— I can't think of it off the top of my head. Is it—?

John Hodgman: It's the first two lines! “Travis McGee is still in Cedar Key. That's what John D. MacDonald said.” Song comes out, 1981.

[00:30:00]

Yael: Ah, no. I don't know. Um. 1981. Okay, so it's not— It's on *Barometer Soup*, but it's—I don't know the name of the song.

John Hodgman: *(Scoffingly.)* Barometer Soup. Come on. *(Muttering indistinctly.)*

Yael: I don't know! Yeah, I couldn't tell you.

John Hodgman: Lemme give you another one. Let's see if you can see if you can catch this cultural reference. Alright? I'm gonna give you another shot. Give you another shot. This one's really short. "Has a good ring to it, don't you think? Has a good ring to it, don't you think?" This one is very recent, from January 31st, 2025. "Has a good ring to it, don't you think?" You got it, Conner? You got a guess?

Conner: That was Trump referring to the Gulf of America.

John Hodgman: Very close! Very close! But I would never bring that up in this room, 'cause I want us all to have a good time.

(Laughter.)

Conner: I know. I thought it was out of character!

Jesse Thorn: Because we have to do 45 more minutes of comedy, dude!

(Conner laughs.)

John Hodgman: In fact, it was what we used to call a tweet, back when we thought the internet was good and not terrible for everyone. It was a tweet sent from Jimmy Buffett's account... from the grave.

(Laughter.)

Yael: Yeah! I was gonna say.

John Hodgman: And it accompanied a photo of the Gulf of Mexico, but the Gulf of Mexico had been renamed Gulf of Margaritaville.

(Yael "ahh"s.)

Well, I gave you two shots, and you lost both of them, so we must hear this trial. Who seeks justice in this fake—

Jesse Thorn: Wait, John. John, do you know what my stock guess would've been?

John Hodgman: No, I don't.

Jesse Thorn: The Jimmy Buffett song "Math Suks", which is a real Jimmy Buffett song. It's spelled S-U-K-S. "Math"—and you know what it's about, John?

John Hodgman: Math sucking?

Jesse Thorn: Yeah, it's about math sucking. The whole song is just about that! It's about how much he hates math! That's all!

John Hodgman: That's fair. I can't do subtraction, so maybe I'm a Jimmy Buffett fan after all. I've never been a parrot head myself, but I am parrot curious.

(Laughter.)

Yael: Yeah. It's a good lifestyle.

John Hodgman: Okay. Yael, tell me about the lifestyle and what it means to you.

Yael: Yeah, it's very different than— It doesn't necessarily include, you know, polyamorous connections the way that the lifestyle you were referring to is. But it's more about an escapism and a sense of the beach and the sea and having a good time and all of that. Right? And this is a culture that I was raised in. And I host trivia at Conner's bar now. I often find a Jimmy Buffett song makes sense for a music round. Conner will scoff at me whenever I play it, and he goes, “Ah! No Buffett! That's the rule! No Buffett!” It's his one rule. But you know, it's tough for me to *(unclear)*.

John Hodgman: *(Interrupting.)* That's your one rule in your bar? Underage drinking is fine. Fighting.

(Laughter.)

Conner: It's the only rule that I make, not the law.

John Hodgman: Okay, I understand. So, you own a bar here. In San Francisco or—?

(Conner confirms.)

And we'll go ahead and say the name of the bar, 'cause I know this whole thing is just a scheme to—

Conner: Redtail Beer and Wine bar.

(Cheers and applause.)

John Hodgman: Redtail Beer and Wine bar.

Yael: Tuesdays at 7:30.

John Hodgman: Alright. Always be plugging. I admire your hustle. Okay. And you don't like Jimmy Buffett?

Conner: I do not. No.

John Hodgman: Tell me why you hate the lifestyle.

Conner: So. I feel like, with Jimmy Buffett and a lot of artists of that era— You know, I didn't grow up with it. My parents didn't know it. My introduction to Jimmy Buffett was working crappy retail jobs, where they would play the same radio station every day on repeat. And so, you would just get stuck stocking yogurt, listening to “Margaritaville”. Everyday.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah. *(Chuckling.)* You just felt like you were wasting away.

(Laughter.)

Conner: Yeah. I was. 100%.

John Hodgman: It's like you cut your brain on a pop top.

Conner: Yeah, yeah, yeah. You're listening to “Cheeseburger in Paradise” while in hell. You know? And like, it's—it's not a good time. And as a result, like Jimmy Buffett's just in my head, burrowed in there. And it's just like, I can't— Whatever it is, I just can't stand his style of singing/songwriting/performance. And then—

John Hodgman: It's not for you.

Conner: It's not for me. And then the fact that he—

Jesse Thorn: Can I tell you what? I totally relate to you. I worked at Macy's when that LFO song came out, and Chinese food still makes me sick.

Conner: There's just something in my brain that— But—and then the fact that he went on to make his favorite—his number one song—a chain restaurant! To be enjoyed in only the most miserable places in the world.

(Laughter.)

Like, he—

Jesse Thorn: *(Sarcastically.)* Yeah. Like, Cancun.

Conner: Is there one in Cancun?

(Yael confirms.)

I know there's a lot of them in the Midwest, where there's not a lot of sun.

John Hodgman: Yeah. But that's where you go to get that island lifestyle!

Yael: That's where you go for the sun!

Conner: To waste away.

John Hodgman: Yeah. Yeah. You know, you own a bar too.

(Laughter.)

Conner: It's beer and wine. It's classy. *(Laughs.)*

John Hodgman: You're saying Margaritaville is not classy. I've never been!

Conner: We should go!

(Laughter.)

Because me either; we could have fun!

[00:35:00]

John Hodgman: This is one of those moments in life where I have to make a choice.

(Laughter and scattered applause.)

Do I agree to go with a perfect stranger to a Margaritaville, even though we both acknowledge we don't really like Jimmy Buffett very much?

Conner: The content's there.

John Hodgman: Conner, Alright, deal.

(Conner laughs triumphantly.)

(Cheers and applause.)

We'll make it happen. We'll make it happen.

Jesse Thorn: By the way, John, happy anniversary!

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: Yael, you might be invited, depending on how this goes for you.

So, you host— You're an employee of Conner's at the bar?

Yael: I'm a contractor.

John Hodgman: Okay. Oh, so you just host the trivia?

Yael: I only host the trivia there. I do trivia at a lot of other places. I'm a professional trivia host. Yeah.

John Hodgman: Oh, okay. Even though you got my two questions wrong, you are—?

(Laughter.)

Yael: Yeah! Yeah, yeah. What was the song, by the way? You never said the title of the song?

John Hodgman: “Incommunicado.”

Yael: “Incommunicado”! Of course, it was! I knew it was on *Barometer Soup*. Okay.

John Hodgman: That’s why I also host trivia and don't partake in trivia.

(Laughter.)

I like pretending to be smart, because it's the rule that I'm the smartest one in the room.

Jesse Thorn: I'll tell you this. It wouldn't matter what you said the name of the song or album was, 'cause they all sound like a joke Jimmy Buffett song or album.

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: Yes, it avoids parody by being self-parody. It’s one of the, I think, sort of charming things about Jimmy Buffett.

Yael: That's what's nice about it. Yeah. I mean, look at how I'm dressed.

John Hodgman: I was just about to point out how you were dressed.

(Laughter and scattered cheers.)

For those who are not in this room with us, perhaps listening at home, Yael is wearing... looks like tropical pajamas!

(Laughter.)

Jesse Thorn: He also appears to have margarita themed Crocs.

Yael: These are official Margaritaville Crock gibbets that I am wearing!

(Scattered cheers.)

And here's the thing. I came here with the lime, the ice cubes, and the shaker of salt. And at some point tonight, I lost the shaker of salt. So, there is a shaker of salt crock gibbet somewhere in this theater that I legitimately lost right before coming up onstage.

John Hodgman: Whoever finds that lost shaker of salt gets a free t-shirt *(unclear.)* Or you can get Yael's tropical pajamas if he'll take them off. It's all part of the lifestyle.

(Yael agrees with a laugh.)

I mean, is this something that you enjoy truly or ironically?

Yael: Oh no, absolutely enjoy it truly. On my way getting ready today— My wife's in the audience; she could tell you. I was showering— There she is. I was showering and listening to Jimmy Buffett songs and singing at the top of my lungs getting ready for tonight. I wholeheartedly love dressing like this, acting like a fool, listening to this music. If there is a Margaritaville in a city that I'm visiting, I wanna go find it. Like, I love it!

John Hodgman: And so, you want to do a full night of Jimmy Buffett trivia?

Yael: That's correct. I wanna honor the master in a way that only somebody who has been a fan of his since birth could! With a full trivia night at the Redtail, that would be Jimmy Buffett themed.

Jesse Thorn: I don't want to be rude here, but... of what, would you say, was he a master?

(Laughter.)

I'm genuinely—

Conner: Capitalism.

Yael: He is the—well. Yes, yes.

John Hodgman: Wait a minute. Wait a minute. Whoa.

Yael: Capitalism, yes. He is the quintessential bard of beach escapism.

John Hodgman: (*Overlapping.*) Boomerism?

Yael: He is the bard of— Boomerism. Sure. Yeah, yeah. Fine. Yeah. A lot of people— Well, that's the thing. A lot of people associate Buffett just with like this one kind of boomer. Right? But where— I'm from San Diego. I'm from this particular neighborhood in San Diego called Ocean Beach.

(*One loud cheer.*)

Where it's all— it's the Grateful Dead and Jimmy Buffett all day, every day. And no matter who you are, that's what you're getting. Like, that is what you are enjoying. And it is earnest! Our love for Jimmy Buffett is earnest, because we are living in this beach paradise. Whereas there's a lot of— Like you were saying, there's a lot of Margaritavilles in Midwest towns. There's a lot of parrot heads who are just old boomers. There is some—what's the word I'm looking for?—artifice in some people enjoying Buffett in a perceived way, that it's just associated with Boomerism. But what it really is at the end of the day is just a true expression of beach life!

John Hodgman: Alright. I let you speak for a while.

(*Laughter, cheers, and applause.*)

Yael, I let you speak for a long time there.

(*Yael agrees.*)

Jesse Thorn: What we need is a boys' camp!

John Hodgman: First, because I was trying to open this bottle of water and I was having trouble; I was paying attention to that.

(*Laughter.*)

And then I realized I couldn't stop you until you came to your natural, rousing conclusion. And I just wanna be clear that when I say, you know—

[00:40:00]

—the bard of Boomerism, I'm no young person. I'm a true dad myself. And I'm pointing a finger at myself. But I have always identified Buffett with a kind of—a dad aesthetic. A kind of middle brow, “I get one week of vacation a year, so I'm gonna go down to an island, and I'm gonna listen to Jimmy Buffett and pretend that I'm free before I go back to the shackles of my job.” Right? That's the fantasy.

Yael: Yeah, yeah, yeah! And that's when he made his money— Like, when we talk about capitalism, that's the—the lifestyle that he sold was that sort exactly what you're talking

about: this moment of escapism, of “I’m starting my vacation early; it’s five o’clock somewhere. Let’s go.” Right? And that appeals to so many people. Because like you said, so much of capitalism is about drudgery. He was selling fun and this escape, you know? And this way that you could have a good time.

John Hodgman: Sure, I understand. Okay. Conner, has Yael ever tried to sneak Buffett into the bar before?

Conner: Oh yeah.

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: And explain what happened, and how did you counteract it?

Conner: So, he’s pretty smart in using tracks that normal—like, Jimmy Buffett tracks that normal people would’ve never heard before.

John Hodgman: So, this would be like during a music round of a regular, general trivia game?

Conner: Exactly, yes, yes. How he normally formats it, he’ll play a minute of a song; you guess the artist’s/title, you name it. And so, he will sneak one in, because in the miasma of 12 songs, a minute at a time, it’s kind of easy to sneak in a little acoustic (*singing*) ba-ba-bedup-ba. But it is— But every time that he then reveals—

Jesse Thorn: Man of a thousand voices over here.

Conner: *(Laughs.)* Every time he then reveals it’s Buffett, he has to deal with my chagrin of like, “Come on, man. We have one rule!” Like, we have so much fun. There’s just this one rule. Like, please!

John Hodgman: Why can’t you abide by the one rule, Yael?

Yael: I am an artist, judge.

(Laughter and applause.)

I cannot be censored! If you try to take the Buffett away from me, you are taking away a core part of what makes me the draw at this trivia night! People come for me! You need to have me in the full expression of me!

(Cheers and applause.)

John Hodgman: Don’t worry. I think there’s no other way to get you than in the full expression of Yael.

(Yael confirms.)

And I mean, there's part of me that wants to believe that you have oppositional defiance disorder, and because there's the one rule, that's why you love Jimmy Buffett. But you claim to have been a Buffett fan since birth, which I guess means you were birthed in a birthing pool full of like Corona Light or something?

(Laughter.)

Yael: My parents literally did like play Buffett to me, like from the record player, when I was in the womb. So, I have always been a Buffett fan. Yeah.

Jesse Thorn: John, he explained he was born in a birthing pool of Corona Light: San Diego.

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: Are you concerned, Conner, that you'd be losing control of the theme and the vibe of your bar if it became a Jimmy Buffett bar, even one night?

Conner: It's a floodgate. Once— You know, once you start letting the parrot heads in, who's next? Juggalos?

John Hodgman: I've done a few floodgates at a swim-up bar in Jamaica, myself.

Conner: Kiss Army? Are we gonna start appealing to that?

John Hodgman: *(Chuckling.)* That sounds fine.

Conner: Yeah. That'd be *(unclear)*. *(Giggles.)*

Yael: That's a different kind of Boomerism, right there. Yeah.

John Hodgman: Can you make a capitalist argument, since we're talking about Jimmy Buffett's capitalism? Do you think an audience will come?

Yael: Yeah! I absolutely do think an audience will come. Well, I think that people will come to our trivia regardless. We have a very well-attended trivia, so I'm not worried about that. But I think that we could open up the Redtail to new audiences by advertising, "Hey, we're doing this Jimmy Buffett trivia night." People who might not have thought to come to Redtail before but are interested in, you know, the Margaritaville aesthetic might wanna come hang out for that night! And therefore—

John Hodgman: Yeah. But Conner doesn't want them there!

(Laughter.)

Conner: And I don't sell margaritas.

(Laughter followed by raucous cheers and applause.)

Yael: Parrot heads have dimensions! They have facets! They contain multitudes, your honor!

Jesse Thorn: You can put salt on the rim of a nice pinot grigio.

(Laughter.)

Yael: We have sold a margarita sour in the past. That was— Like, a margarita flavored beer.

John Hodgman: Surely there's another bar in San Francisco where you could do a Jimmy Buffett trivia night.

Yael: *(Without hesitation.)* Oh yes, of course. Yeah, of course there is.

John Hodgman: So, why don't you...?

Yael: This is not the only bar what I host trivia.

John Hodgman: And you are friends. Right?

(They confirm.)

Conner, you will stipulate to the fact that Yael is your friend?

Conner: Yes, your honor.

John Hodgman: How would you feel if he did a Jimmy Buffett/Margaritaville trivia night in another bar?

[00:45:00]

Conner: I think I might come down with COVID that day.

John Hodgman: Well, no one would ask you to go see it, but how would you feel? Would you feel betrayed? Would you feel angry? Or would you be like, "I'm glad that's not in my bar"?

Conner: Alright. So, I was thinking about this. And the way that I would be cool with it is— Jimmy Buffett passed away from a complication with skin cancer. If we were to do a Jimmy Buffett night that raised money for skin cancer awareness, let's go.

(Cheers and applause.)

John Hodgman: That seems like a pretty reasonable...

(Yael confirms.)

Alright. What am I even doing here?

Yael: Yeah, yeah, yeah! He never told me that!

John Hodgman: That's a better idea than the dumb idea I had to settle this.

(Laughter.)

But I'm gonna give you my idea too, just as soon as I go into my chambers. Think about this. I'll be back in a moment with my verdict.

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

(Cheers and applause.)

Can I tell you guys a story from my own career?

Yael: Please! Yeah.

Conner: Please.

Jesse Thorn: So, years ago, I very nearly, accidentally scored like the first interview with Bill Withers in about 20 years—the great singer songwriter of, you know, “Lovely Day” and “Lean On Me” and all those other amazing hits. And—

(An inaudible audience member reaction.)

(Irritated.) Yes, he had other songs! We're not just gonna—!

(Laughter.)

(Mockingly.) “EXCUSE ME!”

“Harlem”, that's one of my favorites! Do you want—?

Okay. Anyway. And I went and interviewed him. He had been out of the music industry at that point for like 25 years. He quit the music business in the early 1980s. And I was talking to him. He had very passionate reasons to have quit, having to do with the way that the

industry exploited artists, especially black artists. And as I was talking to him about that, I alluded to him having been out of the business for however many years—'cause he hadn't put out a record since “Just the Two of Us”.

And he said, “Well, I'm not out of the business.”

And I said, “Oh yeah?”

And he said, “Well, a few years ago I wrote a song for a friend of mine's album.”

And I said, “Who's that, soul legend Bill Withers?”

And he said, “Jimmy Buffett.”

(Surprise and laughter from the audience.)

That's like the one thing that Bill Withers did in the last 25 years was write a song for his friend, Jimmy Buffett.

Anyway, the reason I bring this up is if you ever want to see— If you ever want to connect with Jimmy Buffett and you're not a parrot head, you can go search on internet video sites for the tribute that Jimmy Buffett did to Bill Withers when Bill Withers passed away. Because they were, indeed, very deep close friends. The reason being: Jimmy Buffett was a good-ass dude.

Anyway, how are you feeling about your chances, Yael?

Yael: You know, I think that I'm just gonna take it whatever way it comes. You know? Changes in latitudes, changes in attitudes. You know what I mean?

(Laughter.)

Nothing remains quite the same in life! You know? You gotta just— I'll accept what the judge gives, you know?

Jesse Thorn: Conner, how are you feeling about your chances? *(Too close to the microphone.)* Math sucks.

(Laughter.)

Yael: Quack, quack!

Conner: Well, it's hard to match the passion to my right, but I think my solid stance is secure.

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

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Promo:

Music: Playful, jaunty backing music.

J. Keith van Straaten: Hey, I am J. Keith van Stratton from *Go Fact Yourself*, and I'm here with MaxFun member of the month, Josh Mentor—who has been a Maximum Fun member since 2016! Hello, Josh!

Josh: Hey, J. Keith, how are you doing today?

J. Keith: I'm so well! And thank you so much for being a listener and supporter of our show. What made you decide to support MaxFun in general and to support our show, *Go Fact Yourself*?

Josh: Jordan Morris on *Jordan, Jesse, Go!* has a thing that he likes to say, which is, “You know, you tip your bartender a buck a beer; you tip your podcaster a buck a month.” You know, I get way more use outta MaxFun podcasts than I do like Disney+ or Netflix.

J. Keith: Well, it's something we very much appreciate. And by the way, when was the last time Netflix selected you as a member of the month?

Josh: Eeeexactly!

J. Keith: Exactly! Josh Mentor, congratulations, and thank you again for being the MaxFun member of the month!

Josh: Thanks so much, guys.

Speaker: Become a MaxFun member now at MaximumFun.org/join.

(Music ends.)

Promo:

Music: Fun, exciting music.

Allan McLeod: *Walkin' About* is the podcast about walking. It's a walkumentary series where I, Allan McLeod, and a fun, friendly guest go for a walkabout. You'll learn about interesting people and places and have the kind of conversations you can only have on foot! We've got guests like Lauren Lapkus.

Lauren Lapkus: I figured something out about this map, like how to read it.

Allan: Betsy Sodaro.

Betsey Sodaro: I had no clue. That's awesome and nuts.

Allan: Jon Gabrus.

Jon Gabrus: This is like a great first date for like broke 20-somethings, you know?

Allan: And more! Check out *Walkin' About* with Allan McLeod on Maximum Fun.

(Music ends.)

[00:50:00]

Transition: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: It is the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. We're taking a break from the stage. We are going to return to that stage for SF Sketch Fest, 2026. Tickets are on sale now. The show is January 18th at 7:30PM at Marines Memorial, which is one of our favorite places to play in San Francisco.

John Hodgman: It's the first place we ever played Sketch Fest, and I'm so happy to be back in our house, at Marines Memorial Theater. It's a great theater right there in San Francisco—downtown streets of San Francisco, I think they call it. Ricearoni. The point is, 7:30PM; nice, early show; you're gonna love it.

SFSketchFest.com is where you go get tickets. Or! As always, you can go to MaximumFun.org/events, where you'll see tickets for all of our and all the other MaxFun shows. If you have cases for our San Francisco show coming up in January, won't you let us know? Send them right now to MaximumFun.org/jjho.

Jesse Thorn: You don't have to live in San Francisco! The whole Bay Area is acceptable. El Cerrito? Yeah, absolutely. Richmond, California? Yes, thank you. Hillsborough? Why not? All these places are wonderful— Look, I don't care if you live in Campbell. If you live in Campbell, go to MaximumFun.org/jjho and submit a case.

John Hodgman: And I dare say the Sketch Fest is such an incredible experience overall that if you're in some other part of the world, it is absolutely worth a trip to see some of your favorite comedy—including *Judge John Hodgman* on January 18th. So, please SFSketchFest.com for tickets or MaximumFun.org/events. And if you're in doubt, send it out! Send your dispute to MaximumFun.org/jjho, and let us know if you're gonna be in San Francisco.

Jesse, we've got some new merch, right?

Jesse Thorn: It's incredible! It's all at MaxFunStore.com. You know, every episode I say, “Who's right? Who's wrong? Only one can decide.” This holiday season we have decided to expand that offering to anyone who buys one of our hats that say “right” or “wrong” on them. They are old-fashioned, 1980s, corduroy-style baseball caps. One says “right,” and one says “wrong.” So, whether it's a gift for someone in your life who you love and is always wrong, or whether you always want to be right, or the other way around, MaxFunStore.com. We also have a brand-new candle!

John Hodgman: A scented candle for the holidays. It's got a beautiful, fresh, clean smell that we call the Smell of Justice.

Jesse Thorn: And we have cozy goth sweatsuits available now at MaxFunStore.com for all you cozy goths out there.

John Hodgman: We're talking about an incredibly cozy sweatshirt and matching sweatpants set with an amazing illustration of two delightful cozy goths, getting cozy by the goth fire. That's by Tom Deja at Bossman Graphics. And of course, the label for our as scented candle—“this is the scent of a candle,” it says—is by Aaron Draplin, the amazing. And it's all there at MaxFunStore.com for you now. Stuff some of that in your stocking. You could do some *Judge John Hodgman* roleplay. Get a couple of right and wrong caps, hand 'em out to your family when you know whether they're being right or wrong.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah, I think that's perfect! Pass 'em around like the conch in *Lord of the Flies*.

John Hodgman: Yeah, instead of a lump of coal in the stocking, just put a wrong cap in there!

Jesse Thorn: Love it.

John Hodgman: So, that's all at MaxFunStore.com.

Jesse Thorn: And if you want to buy something special, antique, a treasure, some jewelry, a handmade pocket square or scarf, one of our special caps, go to PutThisOnShop.com where I have all kinds of wonderful things. And those holiday orders are pouring in, and most of this stuff is one of a kind. So, make your way over to PutThisOnShop.com and grab something special. Let's get back to the show.

Transition: Three gavel bangs.

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

(Cheers and applause.)

John Hodgman: First of all, I want to say I appreciate Bailiff Jesse Thorn's full-throated endorsement of “Jimmy Buffett as a cool dude,” and his defense of Jimmy Buffett as an artist—even though he is not someone that you listen to or I necessarily listen to. I really appreciated that, even though it was very painful crouching down behind this lectern as it went on and on about it.

(Laughter.)

But I really appreciate—I appreciate it, because it's something that I feel too. I mean, there are— One of the foundational tenets of the court of Judge John Hodgman is “you like what you like.” And not everything is for everyone. You know? You do not like Tom Waits. I really love Tom Waits. I get why you don't like him. I love him! I have the Tom Waits receptor gene. You do not. I do not. I do not have the Bob Dylan receptor gene, even though they're both funny singers.

(Laughter.)

[00:55:00]

And even though I acknowledge that Bruce Springsteen is a genius artist who I can appreciate in the abstract, I'm a Tom Waits “Jersey Girl” guy, not a Bruce Springsteen “Jersey Girl” guy. That's just how I am!

(Scattered cheers and applause.)

And similarly, Jimmy Buffett has never quite done it for me—in part because I had a kind of a juvenile association of his work with these kind of dads that I was contemptuous of, because I was afraid of becoming that person. But you know, I really love the fact that Jimmy Buffett quoted—or you know, made reference to—Travis McGee and John D. MacDonald. Because over the past eight years or so, I discovered the Travis McGee books, and I absolutely love these novels. And they're in print, and you can read them. There's definitely some dated stuff in them. There are 21 of them. They started— They're crime novels starting in the mid-‘60s and going to the early ‘80s. And there's definitely some stuff that doesn't age particularly well.

But one thing that ages really, really well is Travis McGee's philosophy of life. He is a guy who won a houseboat in a poker game and lives on it, and he has dropped out of a society that he considers to be increasingly corrupt and venal and small and awful. And I think that Jimmy Buffett recognized that same impulse—that desire to look around you and say, “I choose for myself pleasures that are deep and meaningful to me, and I don't accept the pleasures that society says I should feel. And there's a lot to leave behind.”

And I just wanna— I mean, like this quote I think is really important for me to reread again these days. This thing of like “up with life. Stamp out all small and large indignities. Leave everyone alone to make it without pressure. Love all love. Hate all hate.” There is that in Jimmy Buffett as well that I have to acknowledge and respect, you know? And so, I appreciate that. I don't wanna listen to these songs, you know what I'm saying?

(Laughter.)

Jesse Thorn: To me, they are baaad.

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: They're just—they're not for me. And I have to say that if I didn't know you, Yael, and your incredible enthusiasm, if I saw that the Redtail Beer and Wine Bar was having a Jimmy Buffett trivia night, I would plan to be out of town.

(Laughter.)

For fear that I might accidentally walk into the bar.

But I am schooled! And I am learning. And I appreciate that you like him. And indeed, I know people who looove his work! People who I respect very, very, very much. People who love his work and loved the man. And in fact, the idea that I had to settle this was to challenge—not to go by my wisdom, but to do a classic trial by trivia. So, we reached out to one of our friends who is actually someone who knew Jimmy Buffett and knows a lot about Jimmy Buffett, to submit four Jimmy Buffett trivia questions.

Yael: Oh boy.

John Hodgman: For you to answer.

Yael: Okay!

John Hodgman: And I'm going to say, if you can get three—I'm gonna even say if you can get two out of four.

Yael: Two out of four. Okay.

John Hodgman: Two out of four.

Conner: Oh boy.

John Hodmgan: Then you've got your night. And if you don't get them, you're outta luck.

Yael: I hear you.

Conner: (*Fiendishly.*) Let's go.

(*Laughter.*)

John Hodgman: Yeah. So, can we hear the first question from our guest?

Justin McElroy: Hello, everybody! Hello, Judge Hodgman. Thank you for having me here as an expert witness. This is so flattering. my name is Justin McElroy.

Yael: (*Laughing.*) I knew it!

Justin McElroy: I was a close personal friend Jimmy Buffett's, by which I mean he texted me... at least four times. And one time I sat next to him during *Hamilton* and listened to him sing all of *Hamilton*, 'cause he knew every word. I miss him very much.

(*Laughter.*)

John Hodgman: What a dad.

Justin McElroy: I have four trivia questions for you. The last one's a bonus if you need it. I don't know. Here we go.

Jimmy Buffett, while working for *Billboard*, is credited with breaking the story of what musical duo's split?

That question again. Jimmy Buffett, while working for *Billboard*, is credited with breaking the story of what musical duo's split?

Yael: (*Rushed.*) Simon and Garfunkel!

Justin McElroy: No, I'm sorry. We were looking for Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs.

John Hodgman: Wooooow!

Yael: Justin, are you here?

John Hodgman: (*Laughing.*) No. No, he's in West Virginia.

Yael: Yeah, yeah, right? Yeah.

John Hodgman: He just sent this through technology. I believe that this was Justin and Lynn and Jimmy Buffett maybe at the premiere of the Margaritaville musical?

Yael: Yeah, *Escape From Margaritaville*. Yeah.

John Hodgman: Yeah, in Chicago. I was invited to go to that with them, but I couldn't.

(Laughter.)

Jesse Thorn: You know what they say. It's 9AM somewhere!

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: I realize now the better version of that was “I was invited to go to that with them, but I didn't.”

(Laughter.)

Yael: Hey, fun fact about Justin McElroy. He has this exact outfit.

[01:00:00]

I've seen him wear it in *My Brother, My Brother and Me* videos before. Yeah.

John Hodgman: Oh! Well, there you go. Let's go to the next question then.

Justin McElroy: Next question. Jimmy Buffett wrote the theme song to a TV series that only had eight episodes in production, only six of which ever aired. That's the same number as *My Brother, My Brother, and Me* on Seeso.

(Laughter.)

What was the name of that short-lived series? Not *My Brother, My Brother, and Me*. The other one that Jimmy Buffett wrote the theme song for.

Yael: Oh boy!

John Hodgman: Do you think you—do you have an answer? You have no idea, right?

Yael: No. I mean, like I can think of a *Love Boat* spinoff or something like that.

John Hodgman: That would be pretty cool.

Yael: *Harper's Island*.

John Hodgman: I'll tell you what. It involves a recreational vehicle. I've never heard of this—

Yael: Is it called *RV*?

John Hodgman: It is not. Justin?

Justin McElroy: Ah, so close. We were actually looking for *Johnny Bago*! A series about a man who owned a Winnebago.

Conner: Cool.

John Hodgman: It's a series about a guy who lives in a Winnebago.

Yael: This is deep! Yeah.

John Hodgman: Okay, so. So far you've got two wrong. Two more.

Yael: I have to get the next two right.

John Hodgman: You gotta get to the next two right. Justin McElroy, are you still there?

Justin McElroy: Question three. Bill Paxton parodies Jimmy Buffett in a performance Jimmy very much enjoyed—reportedly—in Broken Lizard's *Club Dread*. What was the name of Paxton's faux Jimmy Buffett?

Yael: I did not see this movie.

John Hodgman: Oh, this is rough!

Jesse Thorn: How about this for a trivia question? I saw that movie in the theater. Why?

(Laughter and applause.)

I don't remember.

John Hodgman: Do you remember the name of the character that Bill Paxton played?

Jesse Thorn: No, I don't.

John Hodgman: I don't remember either.

Yael: I'm gonna say Timmy Buffet.

John Hodgman: Timmy Buffet?

(Yael confirms.)

Conner, do you want a chance to steal?

Conner: That's literally what I was gonna say. *(Laughs.)*

John Hodgman: Okay. Oh yeah. Show me Timmy Buffet!

Justin McElroy: *(Mimicking a buzzer sound.)* Wrong. It was Coconut Pete, unfortunately.

Yael: Yeah, alright.

John Hodgman: Coconut Pete!

Jesse Thorn: Well, the good news is this last question is actually worth two points!

John Hodgman: That's right! This is for all the paradoxical cheeseburgers. Let's hear the last question.

Justin McElroy: Lastly, which *SNL* cast member had their life saved by Jimmy Buffett after a surfing accident?

John Hodgman: Which *SNL* cast member—? Now think of all the *SNL* cast members.

Yael: Yeah, that's what? I got like a one in 150 shot there, right? Which *SNL* cast member?

Jesse Thorn: You don't know this?!

Yael: *(Chuckles.)* No, I don't know this. Do you know this?

Jesse Thorn: Get your parrot head outta your parrot ass, man!

(Laughter.)

Yael: Do you know this, Jesse?

Jesse Thorn: I don't know! All I'm saying is if Bill Withers saved the life of an *SNL* cast member, I know I would know which one. I'd be like, "CHRIS KATTAN! CHRIS KATTAN! CHRIS KATTAN!"

(Laughter.)

John Hodgman: Do you know the answer?

Conner: I don't know the answer.

John Hodgman: Oh, I'm sorry.

Conner: I listened to this earlier, and I don't remember.

Jesse Thorn: Why would I know that, John?! Jimmy Buffett knowledge?! Nooo.

John Hodgman: Do you want to ask—

Yael: I know a lot about his music and his restaurant chains and his novels, but not—

John Hodgman: Well, I believe you. I believe you. I believe you.

Yael: Not about the— I'm gonna just guess, uh—

John Hodgman: Hang on, hang on, hang on. Do you wanna phone a friend? Is there anyone in the audience who knows?

Several Audience Members: Colin Jost!

Yael: Colin Jost!

John Hodgman: Is that your final answer?

(Yael confirms.)

You're absolutely right! Justin?

Justin McElroy: Yes, that's right. Correct. Colin Jost. Thank you for having me.

Yael: Thank you, thank you.

Justin McElroy: And congratulations to all parties involved.

John Hodgman: The recorded voice of Justin McElroy! And there's Colin Jost.

Well, that last one, you got over the finish line with it.

Yael: Yeah. But barely. Barely. Sure.

John Hodgman: Two cheeseburgers. I should, by rights, deny you your chance to have a Jimmy Buffett theme night at Redtail Beer and Wine Bar.

Yael: It's all good, man. Yeah. *(Unclear.)*

John Hodgman: But your friend Conner is a true friend and an inspired businessperson and a Samaritan, even. You may have one—and only one—night of Jimmy Buffett, so long as it is a fundraiser for skin cancer treatment and research.

(Cheers and applause.)

Conner, you will do your best to be a good sport about it. However, I authorize you—as the bartender—to have a microphone at the bar and make fun of everything that happens.

Conner: YEEEEAH!

John Hodgman: This is the sound of a gavel. *(Bangs his gavel.)* Judge John Hodgman rules. That is all.

(They thank him.)

Jesse Thorn: Thank you, Yael and Conner!

Transition: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: That's it for another episode of the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. Thanks to Reddit user Poop Parade for naming the case in this episode.

John Hodgman: Thank you, Poop Parade.

Jesse Thorn: We're on YouTube and TikTok at [@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod](https://www.youtube.com/@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod). Once again, we are going to be returning to San Francisco Sketch Fest in January. If that show sounded like fun—and I hope that it did—go to [SFSketchFest.com](https://www.sfsketchfest.com) or [MaximumFun.org/events](https://www.maximumfun.org/events).

The *Judge John Hodgman* podcast was created by John Hodgman and Jesse Thorn. This episode, recorded by Matthew Barnhardt.

[01:05:00]

AJ McKeon is our podcast editor. Daniel Speer is our video editor. And our producer is Jennifer Marmor.

John Hodgman, you know, on our last tour we were talking a lot in the tour van with Matthew Barnhart about the television show *Slow Horses*.

(John confirms.)

Anyway, Matthew Barnhart just texted me a picture of him at Slough House.

John Hodgman: Oh really?!

(*Jesse confirms.*)

Oh, I gotta remember to text my picture of me and James Callis, Gaius Baltar from *Battlestar Galactica*, who's now on *Slow Horses*. Oh boy, oh boy. That Matthew Barnhart. I love texting with him. Love that he was able to record these episodes for us and couldn't do it without you. And of course, we couldn't do it without Jennifer Marmor. And we couldn't do it without all of you in the audience, so make sure to go get your tickets for Sketch Fest! 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!