

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Welcome to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. I am bailiff Jesse Thorn. We're clearing the docket this week, and I'm joined by Judge John Hodgman. Hello, John.

Judge John Hodgman: Hello, Bailiff Jesse Thorn. Guess what? This is a special docket. Haven't done one of these in a long time! We're going way, way, way back into the mailbag to a bunch of cases, Jesse, that have gone back maybe a decade that we never heard.

(Jesse "wow"s loudly.)

This is justice delayed, justice denied. Children have been born, grown up, gone to work, and retired since many of these cases were first brought to our attention.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: That's true! That's a true story.

Judge John Hodgman: True story. Definitely. There are definitely some 10-year-old attorneys out there.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Before we get into our first case, which I have here, I'm just going to do something for our YouTube audience real quick.

Judge John Hodgman: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. I can't wait to see what you're going to do.

(Jesse starts singing transition music and John laughs and joins in.)

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Okay, ready for the flashback.

Judge John Hodgman: It's a *Wayne's World* flashback!

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: I did all the lu-lu-loops.

Judge John Hodgman: You could hear it on the audio; you couldn't see it unless you're over there at [@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod](#) on YouTube—and let me invite you one more time, everybody within the sound of my voice—please be within the sound

of my eyes too! Go over to YouTube and subscribe to the channel. It doesn't cost nothing. Just hit subscribe!

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: No, it's free to you. Just hit the subscribe button.

Judge John Hodgman: And profoundly beneficial to not only me and Jesse, but the whole endeavor, because it helps people find the show. More subscribers, more people get the show in their feeds, more people discover the show, more people become MaxFun members, the more we're able to bring you these rollicking dockets and all the justice that I dare say you've become fond of!

Alright, end of that. I've delayed this long enough, Jesse. There are people out there who are (*laughing*) desperate for justice over many years. I just had a little memory of the son of one of our friends in Maine, who—when he was little—was driving to the pizza place and just yelled from the back seat, “(*Loudly.*) I'm dying of star-va-tion!”

(Jesse snorts a laugh.)

He was fine. (*Unclear*), he was fine. But you know what? People get cranky when they're hungry, and especially when they're hungry for justice. So, let's get into it.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Here's a case from 2015 from Sean.

“My wife Karen and I have a dispute about dining out. When we go out for dinner, Karen wants to go to a second restaurant for dessert. To clarify, I don't mean swinging by an ice cream parlor on the drive home. I mean driving to another restaurant, waiting for a table, then ordering dessert. This has been going on for 10 years. We're now parents and our nights out have become rare. Please order Karen to stop.”

Well, immediately, the good news is it's 2026. They're not parents anymore. The children are grown. They're out of the house.

Judge John Hodgman: They're grown. They've had careers. They're now retired. I wonder what Sean and Karen's child is doing in retirement. Volunteering?

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Probably some volunteering, like to stay active. Do some deep-sea fishing trips.

Judge John Hodgman: Finally get to write that novel.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Going to the Quays, hanging out at the Margaritaville.

Judge John Hodgman: Step on a pop-top. Don't do that! Wear some flip-flops. You know what I mean?

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Exactly. You know that this is the plot of an episode of *Curb Your Enthusiasm*? *(Laughs.)*

Judge John Hodgman: Where Larry David literally steps on a pop-top?

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: No, no, where Cheryl wants to go to a second restaurant for dessert and Larry doesn't. And so, for that reason, I find in favor of Larry David! *(Laughs.)* It's 2026. With the benefit of hindsight, I always choose Larry David!

Judge John Hodgman: Well, I mean, this brings another layer to the justice that we must dispense, because there might be a copyright infringement lawsuit that Sean and Karen have over Larry David here!

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: I'll also say this, John. If they do step on a pop top? It's going to be a problem for Cheryl, because she probably didn't get her tetanus shot! *(Laughs.)*

Judge John Hodgman: She probably didn't get her tetanus shot. I mean, no one bought their life story rights. And this has been going on for years. Not only is this case 11 years old, it was already a 10-year-old dispute when they wrote in!

(Jesse "wow"s.)

Some simple math. I don't love subtraction, but I can do addition pretty good. That's 21 years old. Their child probably is an adult now!

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Yeah.

Judge John Hodgman: And let me tell you something. One thing— When they talk about going for second dessert, Jesse, they don't mean swinging by the ice cream parlor.

Jesse Thorn: Wink!

Judge John Hodgman: People who are on the YouTube saw me winking. Swinging by the ice cube parlor—*(realizing what he said)* ice cube parlor?! No, ice cream parlor. Wink. You know what I mean. They're talking about going actually to a restaurant. They're not talking about going to a hugging and kissing club in Upper West Side Manhattan in the '70s. They're talking about going to an actual restaurant and ordering a second dessert. Now, I don't love dessert, but I will say this. *(Beat.)* I like some desserts. I like cheesecake. It is a cake. I like a savory dessert. I like a baked Alaska. You ever baked Alaska, Jesse?

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: I haven't, but I think fondly of baked Alaska often. Because I heard a story about Nikita Khrushchev visiting Nixon in the White House and they served baked Alaska, and Khrushchev said, "Truly, America is a land of wonders."

(John laughs.)

I don't know if that's true! I don't know if it was Khrushchev. It's a memory from 25 years ago for me of a thing that happened 50 years ago, but that's my memory.

Judge John Hodgman: Yeah. Baked Alaska is a dessert with a—it's sponge cake and then it's got ice cream and then it's got meringue on top of it. And that meringue is torched. And I like meringue! Meringue is a good flavor for me in the sweets department. And I remember enjoying that a lot on one of the early Jonathan Coulton cruises, back when I went on that boat. Instead, Jesse and I are going on a cool sailing boat on our own. Well, not on our own, with people who want to come and be with us!

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Yeah. Not our friend Jonathan Coulton, though!

(John chuckles.)

Yeah, that's right, Jonathan Coulton! You're in the crosshairs. Quit being the nicest guy ever!

Judge John Hodgman: Yeah, no, he's invited if he wants.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: *(Quietly.)* Yeah, he can come.

Judge John Hodgman: He can sail Grace Bailey with us in June if he wants.

I'm going to say Karen should stop. If they are not, you know, divorced at this point—and I hope that you're not, Sean and Karen—that's got to be a no. Right, Jesse? What do you think?

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: I think it's a no. And in fact, I would say I am much more in favor of stopping at an ice cream parlor. Because! It's a nice activity. You could take your ice cream, go for a stroll on the riverfront. (*Beat.*) Or whatever.

(John agrees.)

Rather than just sitting around waiting for a table at a restaurant, then disappointing the server by only ordering dessert. (*Chuckles.*)

Judge John Hodgman: Well, you put your finger right—you put the cherry right on top of the cake or whatever—the sundae right there, Jesse. Because you go swing by an ice cream parlor—wink—you're going there for exactly what they are there to do for you. Like, you're not going into the ice cream parlor and being like, “Could I have a Salisbury steak, please?” Then they're confused. You're like, “No, I would like some ice cream.”

They're like, “We know exactly what you want. That's terrific. We have the ice cream here. We're set up to serve it in a quick-serve environment that will allow you to take it and walk along the river with your beloved, for example, and enjoy an evening.” That would be the equivalent of going— You know, that's what going to a restaurant and ordering dessert is like. It's like going to an ice cream parlor and ordering a Salisbury steak. It's just not what they're set up to do. It's confusing. And the server is going to be like, “*(exhaustedly)* Oh boy, oh boy.”

Because, you know, that's not— They don't make their money on the desserts, you know. They make their money on the wine and on the cocktails and on the carrot tartare. You know, I went to a very fancy restaurant here in New York City. Maybe I mentioned this to you? I went to Eleven Madison Park.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Oh, this is like a legendary restaurant!

Judge John Hodgman: Very, very, like—this chef received many Michelin stars, to the point where it got boring for him. And he said, “Okay, it's too easy now. I'm going to go ahead and make my whole restaurant, not just vegetarian, vegan fine dining.”

And he got another Michelin star! Now they're serving everything they ever served. It's like an anniversary menu there. But you know, it is one of these *Bear*-type restaurants where it's like very curated. And they do a carrot tartare where they literally slap a meat grinder on your table and grind up carrots at your table. And then you mix in some kinds of delicious mustards and quail eggs and stuff. It was real good.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: This sounds—! Yeah, you—! You say carrot tartare. I think you're describing coleslaw!

Judge John Hodgman: There—yes. It is a pretty fancy coleslaw. And I'll say this to Eleven Madison Park. I loved that dish. Just grind the carrots in the kitchen. I know your food is fresh.

(Jesse snorts.)

Just go ahead and grind the carrots in the kitchen. Because I mean, I loved the theatrics of it. Do you know what I mean? But you're setting something on fire. That's a show. Me having to watch the poor server struggle with this meat grinder and trying to get the— Or you know what? Get a better carrot grinder, because you're just reusing vintage meat grinders, which look terrific. But they're not built for grinding carrots. They're built for grinding meats and was a little awkward. But overall, the experience was amazing. Astonishing, honestly.

But yeah, I wouldn't bop in there and just be like, “Uh, yeah, can I get a hot fudge sundae now?” No. Come on. Be respectful, Karen. Here's the thing. I bet that they stopped doing this years ago. Do you know why?

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Why?

Judge John Hodgman: Because they're old now! They don't want to stay out that late. Go to a second location?! What?

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Your ruling is: never go with a spouse to a second location.

Judge John Hodgman: Yeah, I just don't have the energy for a second stop anymore. Used to be, we'd be going out two/three/four different places a night. Now

it's like, (*clicks tongue*) you know, the name of Jeff Tweedy's memoir, *Let's Go So We Can Get Back*? That's how I feel. Let's go so we can get home.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Okay. Here's something from Lewis in 2016. That's a decade ago.

“I want to be buried in my Fiat 500. My relatives think this is ridiculous. What do you think?”

Judge John Hodgman: Well, I have driven— Have you ever driven a Fiat 500, Jesse?

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: I have never driven a Fiat 500. This is like a very compact, Italian motor vehicle car.

Judge John Hodgman: It's a very little, teeny-tiny car. Very cute. I'm not sure you would even fit into such a thing. I'm not sure you could fold your beautifully proportioned but ginormous body into a Fiat 500 and be comfortable. Maybe! I don't know.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: It's not made for my elegant limbs.

Judge John Hodgman: It's not made for your elegant limbs! Exactly so. It's sort of like a Mini Cooper, but more mini than a Mini Cooper, I think. And I rented one once. When we moved a bunch of stuff to Maine, now more than a decade ago in 2014—take that, Louis. I may have mentioned this before, but we rented a panel van. Like a van, a moving van; a windowless, white moving van. I mean, there was a windshield and driver's windows, but the back of it was just— It wasn't one of those vans that you drive by telepathy or whatever.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Yeah. Feel your way around. And not one of those daredevil vans where you just sniff your way around.

So, I loved this white, windowless van. The best part about it was we got some armchairs and put them in the back. You'll see when you come to Maine in June, Jesse; you'll see these armchairs. You've probably sat in them before. For a while, we just toted them around. They're these vintage—(*coffing at himself*) vintage. They were just some used, mothy armchairs. We've since had them reupholstered. But for a while, they sat in the back in the van. And they were fun for people to ride around in.

And I would pick up our kids, who were little at the time, in the van from their day camp. And there's nothing better than showing up early for pickup at a day camp—you know, idling mysterious, menacing-looking, windowless, white van. That was a lot of fun. And then I would just sort of open the back of the van and let them climb in. And I would not let any of the counselors ever see me. That was fun. I would be like, “Uhhh, can you help me get this armchair into this van?” It was that kind of vibe, you know? Jame Gumb from *Silence of the Lambs* type of vibe.

And after a while, we didn't need the van anymore, but we still needed a second vehicle. So, I returned the van to the rental car company, and I said, “You know what? I'm tired of driving around this huge van. Give me the smallest thing you got.” And they gave me this Fiat 500. And believe me, the difference between driving around a big Econoline van where you're up high and surrounded by metal and a Fiat 500, where you are essentially on a road toboggan surrounded by thin plastic? Honestly, Lewis? If you don't plan for this to be your coffin, it will end up being your coffin anyway.

(Jesse laughs.)

It's a scary little car. What's the smallest car you would drive, Jesse?

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Wow! What an interesting question.

Judge John Hodgman: Is it?

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: I mean, it really would be a function of whether I could fit into it. But like, I have always wanted to have a Datsun Roadster. I've always thought a Datsun Roadster would be a great car to have. And I would imagine that I would have to sit like I was Kareem Abdul-Jabbar in a—you know, in a Toyota Corolla.

Judge John Hodgman: With your knees up?

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: My knees up and my head sideways kind of thing.

Judge John Hodgman: Ohhh, Jesse, look at this! By now, the YouTube folks are looking at a clip that we clearly have put up. I'm going to presume that we have put up a clip of this beautiful car on the YouTube. And anyone else can go search the web,

but it is a classic 1960s Japanese sports car. Yeaah, Jesse! You would look good in this.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: (*Mournfully.*) I know.

Judge John Hodgman: And it's a convertible too. So that's good for you, because you're tall.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: It's part of this obsession that I sometimes develop, which is: what is the coolest car I could buy for \$9,000-\$12,000?

Judge John Hodgman: Yeah. Why not? Anyway, Lewis. Right. Your family doesn't want you to be buried in a Fiat 500. I think that it's none of their business. If you have survived this long driving the car, then you are certainly an adult. And last wishes are your last wishes, not anybody else's. Now, I would not saddle them with the expense of finding a place that will accommodate the burial of a Fiat 500 or the crane mechanism that would be required to lower it in. I think it would be a complicated, if not quite expensive—

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: You just put it in neutral, give it a push. Flag a few guys down at the gas station. (*Chuckles.*) Put it in neutral. Maybe get a CHP car out there. Give it a bump.

Judge John Hodgman: Yeah. Yeah, maybe you could find a place in the ocean where, if you removed— I'm just spit balling here. I'm sure there's a million problems with this idea, so just spare me the emails. But you know, if you get if you get rid of the most toxic materials in it and then dump it and your body in the ocean, it would become a natural reef, and you would become fish food.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Yeah! Plus, divers would get to do that thing where they swim down and they look in the chair, but—OH! There's a skeleton!

Okay. Let's take a break to hear from this week's partners. We'll be back with more cases to clear from the docket on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

Transition: Three gavel bangs.

(*ADVERTISEMENT*)

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Jesse Thorn: Welcome back to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. I am Bailiff Jesse Thorn. We're clearing the docket. I've got another case here from Julia. This one is from 2017. In 2017, Julia might have still been our producer! Jennifer, were you already working on *Judge John Hodgman* in 2017?

Jennifer Marmor: Yeah, I started in 2016.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Okay. I take it back! (*With dramatic finality.*) By 2017, we had discarded Julia Smith!

Jennifer Marmor: That's not true! (*Laughs.*)

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: It's not true. We love Julia.

Judge John Hodgman: But we gave her a Fiat 500 as a parting gift.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: We did. We give everybody a Fiat 500 on the way out.

Judge John Hodgman: That was her signing bonus! Everyone got a Fiat 500 and a velvet bag.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Okay. Julia says, “My husband and I agreed we would learn one of the other's hobbies. Specifically, I would learn curling, and he would learn the mandolin. I've now gone curling with him several times and even participated in a tournament, but he hasn't touched the mandolin in a year. Now he wants to take up a new sport. It's a weird bowling thing from the Netherlands, like bocce ball mixed with curling. But if he has time for a new sport, shouldn't he be learning mandolin?”

Judge John Hodgman: And this is mandolin the musical instrument, not mandolin the finger-slicing device that you find in some kitchens.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: And this is sport the recreational activity, not sport the sport.

Judge John Hodgman: Oh, you don't count curling as a sport?

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: It's on the edge. Let's put it— I'm going to put it on the edge. Congratulations to all the medalists out there. We wish you all the best. Thank you for your... your brooming.

Judge John Hodgman: I'll tell you what's not on the edge. You said that curling is on the edge of being a sport. What's not on the edge? Curling shoes. They're not skates! They're just flat shoes. But one of them has a rough sole and the other one has a slick sole, so you can push yourself along on the ice and you slide around. I really want to get a pair of those.

Anyway, curling. First of all, I have to say right up front: this is also justice denied. Gotta apologize to listener Kurt who, in 2023, I mentioned the Belfast Maine Curling Club. Kurt wrote me and said, "I'm a member of the Belfast Maine Curling Club please come by. Would love to see you try out curling." And here it is, as of this recording in 2026 I have still not done it. We drive by it every time we drive to Maine. And I just drove by it on Saturday as we came back from Maine. And I felt really bad. There were a lot of cars in the parking lot. Let's be honest, Subaru. There was a lot of curling going on, and I did not go in, because I didn't— (*Clicks teeth.*) It's just inopportunately located, Kurt, is the thing.

It's on the way, right? So, going to curling would be like going on the way home. And I don't like doing that when I'm in Maine. I don't like going backwards. I like to go forwards. If you want to move the curling club north, say to Winterport or Gouldsboro or Schoodic Peninsula, I'd go there. That's going away from New York City. See what I mean? You should move the curling club for me. Also, congratulations to Autumn and Ryan at the Ellsworth's Candlepin Bowling Alley. They're getting a big profile on CBS Sunday Morning coming up. Really excited for them.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Oh, that's great. I'm happy to hear that.

Judge John Hodgman: That's super cool. Alright. Anyway, I apologize. I went on a curling bender. Let's get back to Julia.

Julia learned curling and has gone curling with him several times. It sounds as though husband—it looks like he's unnamed. It sounds as though husband messed with the mandolin a little bit but hasn't messed around with it since and hasn't learned it since. And that's just a breach of contract. That's a simple breach of contract. Got to learn the mandolin. If he hasn't learned it by now, you got to go back to your 2017 self and make it up to Julia. Now, this— I'm curious, though. As a fan of the on-the-edge maybe-sports of rolling things or sliding things—be it curling or bowling—what is

the Netherlandic cross between curling and bocce ball that they could be talking about?

Well, there are a couple of options. One is pétanque, which is played—boule or pétanque. That's a lawn game that's played all over Europe, including in the Netherlands. And there's indoor curling in the Netherlands where you are sliding the—I don't know if they call it the rock; I don't know if it is a rock. But you're sliding, instead of on ice, what looks like a slick, artificial turf. But the thing I think they must be talking about here is krulbollen, krulbollen, where you are essentially playing bocce, but with wheels of cheese. Not actual wheels of cheese, but wooden—thick, wooden discs that are sort of—that you roll on their side, and you curve them around. And also, it's known as krulbollen, but also known as rolle bolle. Rolle bolle it's called. That's for real.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Do you know what the Dutch call baseball?

Judge John Hodgman: No, I don't!

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Honkbal.

Judge John Hodgman: Honkbal?!

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Mm-hm! There's a professional baseball league in the Netherlands. It's called Honkbal Hoofdklasse.

Judge John Hodgman: I'm in! Have you ever been to the Netherlands, Jesse?

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: I haven't been to the Netherlands. I've been to other parts of Northern Europe, but only the parts that are north of there. I had such a great time in Denmark. Denmark ruled! And everybody that loves Denmark seems to love the Netherlands. So, I'd like to go.

Judge John Hodgman: Yeah. I mean, I think that I am of the kind of person who thinks of the Netherlands as being somehow in Scandinavia, but obviously they're not. They're just sort of like right across from London, just in the chunk of the North sea coastline between Germany and Belgium. The lowlands. I would love to go there, and I would love to play some rolle bolle with you. And some honkbal, Jesse!

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Would love to honk.

Judge John Hodgman: Maybe one of these days we'll get to go do a show. Maybe one of our Judge John Hodgman Bailiff Jesse Thorn night court shows! Get a little wild! Get a little wild in Amsterdam.

I really want Julia's husband to learn *rolle bolle*, obviously. And by now, maybe he has. By now, maybe they are no longer together, because he never learned to play the mandolin and instead went cuckoo for *rolle bolle*, and he breached that contract. But if you are still married, you need to cure the breach of contract. You need to go back and learn a song on mandolin... and perform it on video and send it to us. And then I will sign off on your *rolle bolle* lifestyle. Understand, Julia's husband, who seems to be unnamed? Go learn mandolin. Go to Chris Thile's mandolin camp some summer. Or just learn it off the internet. Learn the mandolin. Make music. Making music's terrific. It's hard. It's a hard instrument. I understand, mandolin, but you chose it, so learn it.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Yeah, it's a little asymmetric, this matchup between curling and mandolin. Like, curling is something where part of the appeal is that anybody can show up and do it while drinking beer. That's my understanding!

(They chuckle.)

Mandolin is super hard. Like, I feel like— The context is not here, and this was nigh on a decade ago. It's possible Julia's husband like already plays other guitar-type instruments. Like, he's already a master of the banjo and the guitar or something. But I know that if it was a matchup between me learning the ukulele as an adult man— which I kind of did—and my wife—

Judge John Hodgman: You're doing a great job with the ukulele!

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Thank you. *(Continuing.)* —my wife going curling with me, one is a lot harder than the other. *(Laughs.)* One asks much more challenge, in terms of— But if he chose it, that's his problem! Like, if he took it up. They might be a music family! Look, in my wife's family, they're all just picking up each other's mandolins. In my family, everyone just hangs around and talks about Gramsci.

Judge John Hodgman: I'll say this. It is asymmetrical. You're not wrong. But on the other hand, there are definitely people who believe that curling is as simple as sliding a rock on some ice. And those people are Jesse. I didn't say that. But even if you discount— Even if you acknowledge that curling is a sport of skill and discipline, you

can still have fun doing it, but you still do have to get dressed up and go to a place. That is a barrier to entry that the mandolin does not have! You have a mandolin, you pick it up, you noodle around on it. Eventually, you'll learn a song. And then, Julia's husband, you're going to film yourself singing the song. I don't care what it is! You want to get on Jesse's nerves; it can be a Tom Waits song.

(Jesse snorts.)

But I would watch some videos of Chris Thile or Sierra Hull playing the mandolin, and you'll be so excited and inspired. I know you'll want to do it. Go do it. It's never too late to pick up a musical instrument and learn to make some music. It's one of the greatest things you can do.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Here's something from Beau in October 2017.

“I would like to sue my friends Isaac and Brooke. They have invented a bizarre family language. Noodles are noods. Spaghetti is spaghettis. Peanut butter is peanut butts, and so on.” So, that's just the beginning of this language. That much, sure.

Judge John Hodgman: Those are just the abbreviations, the abreeves.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: “But some items get whole new words. A head is a nogalog. Then other phrases are jumbled. Little kids are kittle lids. I'm barely scratching the surface. The other day, their toddler fell and hurt his knee. With tears streaming down his face, he said, ‘Bonk a neasle!’”

Judge John Hodgman: Bonk a neasle?!

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: “Please stop Isaac and Brooke from inflicting further, permanent lexicographical damage on their children.”

Judge John Hodgman: Alright, Beau. 2017. These kids are beyond help at this point. As we know, they've already, uh— I'm trying to think of what their way of saying “grown up, become employed, and retired.” They bonked a job out, then took nappy naps. I don't know. Something. I'm not a member of this family.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: *(Unclear.)* Yeah.

Judge John Hodgman: Yeah. I don't know how they would say it. I'm not a member of this family. And neither are you, Beau! Neither are you. I mean, clearly you want to— You know, you think you're pretty smart, because you said, “Lexicographical damage.” These kids aren't trying to write a dictionary. That's what lexicography is. Maybe you mean linguistic damage. And you're not wrong, I suppose, to worry about this. Because you know, like there are family nicknames for things. But if they're developing a whole new family-only dialect, I could see how that could be a little bit isolating for little kids as they start to join social groups at school. I don't know. It's pretty cute, though. Or is it too cute? What do you think, Jesse? Is it too cute?

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: You know, honestly, I support it. I like this nonsense. If it was just noods, spaghettis, peanut butts, I would just think like, “Oh, this is like some “oh, big chungus” on the internet type thing. You know what I mean? Like, this is just sort of that kind of cutesy millennial nonsense. And I say that as a millennial myself. However, once I heard about bonk a neasel, nogalog— Nogalog is my favorite one.

(John agrees.)

When they're going to whole new nonsense words, it comes back around for me, and I support it.

Judge John Hodgman: Yeah, I don't have a problem with the family speaking its own kind of like—what do you say? Cryptoglossia, the twin language? (*Cryptophasia*.) When identical twins, sometimes start making up little languages that only each other understand. That's pretty awesome, honestly. That's a fun story to tell.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: You think this is maybe a Kaspar Hauser situation where they all live in a basement together and aren't allowed to leave? (*Laughs.*)

Judge John Hodgman: I hope not. I hope not. We're not talking about Kasper Hauser, the comedy troupe. We're talking about Kaspar Hauser the historical, quote/unquote, “feral” child who was discovered without language in the Middle Ages. Yeah.

I'll tell you what, there's one problem between the noods and the spaghettis and the peanut butts. What if the kids, you know, they go to an Italian restaurant and the waiter is like, “What would you like, young child?” And the kid says, “Send noods.” That would be a problem.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: (*Laughs.*) My mom makes up words and names for everyone. To the point where, when my wife—who grew up in a very normal family—would come visit me when we were teenagers—

Judge John Hodgman: Well, normal plus mandolins.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Yeah, normal plus mandolins, for sure. But they're like, “Oh, what do you want to do today? Go for a nice hike? You don't want to talk about Gramsci at all? You want to talk about Bakhtin?”

Judge John Hodgman: I don't know what Gramsci— What is Gramsci?

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Antonio Gramsci. He was a Marxist philosopher.

Judge John Hodgman: He was a Marxist philosopher. Okay, thank you.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Perhaps best known for creating the idea of the organic intellectual. Anyway!

Judge John Hodgman: Ohhh! Antonio Gramsci!

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Yeah. So, anyway, my mom—

Judge John Hodgman: This guy had great— Can we just show a picture of him on the YouTube from the Wikipedia? This guy had great hair.

(Jesse agrees.)

Ooh. Ooooh! He's a Sardinian too. Alright, go on. You were saying.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: So, anyway, my mom my mom reads, you know, Bakhtin or Walter Benjamin or whatever for fun, but then also she makes up words all the time. And my wife would come over—we were just boyfriend and girlfriend then; we were 17 years old. And we would leave the room—we'd be talking to my mom, leave the room, and Theresa would say to me, “Can you tell me what she said?”

(Chuckling.) I'd be like, “Yeah. I can summarize it.”

But I also would— She would make—she uses names for people as though other people know what that means. So, I would meet friends of hers, and they would say,

“Oh, you must be Boonsolay-Boonsolay.” Or “Ah, it's the famous Bundles Buntings.” Because my mom had only referred to me that—

(John “wow”s quietly.)

It's not like she called me Jessicles or something like that. Like, she only would call me these ridiculous— Like, she calls her sister, Gail—famous on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast for her husky rescuing activities.

Judge John Hodgman: Husky rescuing, yeah, exactly.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: She calls her Buff, which is short for Buffalo. Of course. Now, are they from Buffalo? Does she have some association with Buffalo? No, it has something to do with maybe *Captain Kangaroo*? I'm not sure.

Judge John Hodgman: Interesting! Huh!

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Yeah, that's Buffalo Gail. And then there's also her sister Buffalo Deb, but Deb is not called Buffalo or Buff. Only Gail is called Buffalo or Buff. Sometimes Deb is called Buffalo Deb.

Judge John Hodgman: *(Beat.)* So, sometimes she's Buffalo Deb, but only Gail is Buff, period.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Exactly. Buffalo Deb, of course, famous for helping boomers with their lifestyle transitions in real estate in Northern Virginia.

Judge John Hodgman: Jonathan Coulton—remember how we were mentioning him, that nice guy that we know? His grandparents were called Tuffy and BJ.

(Jesse snorts a laugh.)

BJ was his granddad. Tuffy was his grandma.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: My mom will be texting me with nicknames of people I never met before. I don't live in the Bay Area. I haven't lived in the Bay Area in 20 years. Her friend, Eric? This guy's just called Best. Because his name used to be Best E, and it just became best. I was talking to best the other day—

Judge John Hodgman: Bestie, like bestie friendie?

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: No, just Best E, because he was the best Eric around.

Judge John Hodgman: (*Snorts quietly.*) Ehh, that's great.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Yeah, my mom's cool.

Judge John Hodgman: That's great. Yeah, your mom is really cool. You know, look. For the cool moms and dads and parents of all stripes out there, you know, part of your job is definitely, to the best of your ability, give your kids skills and wisdom so that they can port themselves in the outside world—outside of your family—as best they can. And they understand the ways and means of the outside world, you know? And so, if you want to teach them a fun family language full of neologisms and made-up words, great. But you also have to make sure that they are aware of—you know, of code switching, basically. Of like, “This is our family language. You may not know what they— Your doctor may not know what you mean when you show up in the ER and tell Noah Wyle that you bonked a neasle. You might need to explain that you hurt your knee.”

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: (*Seriously.*) “Thank you for coming into my office. Please have a seat. We've found a tumor in your nogalog.”

Judge John Hodgman: Yeah, (*chuckling*) but we got to have another word for tumor. Little buddy?

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: (*Chuckling.*) Let's take a break. We'll be back in just a second on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

Transition: Three gavel bangs.

Promo:

Music: Exciting, upbeat synth.

Mike Cabellon: Hey, it's *TV Chef Fantasy League*! You know, the podcast where we watch cooking competition shows, and we treat them like fantasy sports.

Ify Nwadiwe: Right now, we're getting ready for *Top Chef: Carolinas*.

Sierra Katow: We spend all year covering these competitions, but now it's time for the main event.

Mike: The apex predator of competitive cooking television shows.

Ify: Tune in, draft a team, and play along.

Sierra: With your hosts, Sierra Katow.

Mike: Mike Cabellon.

Ify: And Ify Nwadiwe.

Sierra: New episodes every week at MaximumFun.org or wherever you get your podcasts.

(Music fades out.)

Promo:

Griffin McElroy: *Wonderful!* is a podcast where we talk about things we like. That's hard to sell in a promo like this. So, we've enlisted the help of piano rock superstar, Billy Joel, to tell you about some of the topics we've covered. Take it away, real Billy Joel!

Music: A “We Didn’t Start the Fire” parody, definitely sung by the totally real Billy Joel.

Teddy Ruxpin, Auld Lang Syne, Warsan Shire, Circle Time

Sega Dreamcast, Cesar Salad, Tower of Hanoi

Keepy Uppy, Time Capsules, Wayne's World, Cheese Pulls

Wallace Stevens, Donkey Kong, Fun Size Almond Joy

They didn't start the podcast

Except that's not true, they did in '22

They didn't start the podcast

No, they actually did

That was, in fact, a fib

Griffin: Listen to *Wonderful!*, every Wednesday on MaximumFun.org or wherever you get your podcasts. Thanks, real Billy Joel.

Real Billy Joel: (*Rachael McElroy dropping her voice an octave.*) No problem, Griffin!

Transition: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: Judge John Hodgman, we're taking a break from clearing the docket. There are still a few berths left for our trip on the Grace Bailey, the historic sailing ship.

Judge John Hodgman: Yeah. If you don't know what Jesse said, he did not say there are a few birds left. He said berths. Berth is a nautical term for a bed in a beautiful, beautifully restored and updated cabin aboard the equally beautifully restored schooner, Grace Bailey—a historic, 100-year-old, wooden, two-masted sailing wind jammer out of Rockland, Maine. And boy, oh boy, are we excited to share some time at sea with you, a small group of people who will join us as we dispense maritime law at night. We hang out during the day. Maybe I'll give a little reading from *Vacationland*. Basically, we'll just sit down and have some grog together. Bit.ly/maritimejustice. And we're looking forward to seeing you there. Jesse, what's going on with you in the world of *Bullseye* or Put This On?

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Well, I have actually— You know I was in Mexico City a few weeks ago. And I did a looot of shopping, brought a lot of awesome stuff back for the Put This On Shop, which is online at PutThisOnShop.com. I bought a bunch— Look, if you need Mexican muscle man magazines? Yeah, I got those.

(John chuckles delightedly.)

I brought back so many awesome Mexican movie posters and lobby cards. I brought back a bunch of bootleg superheroes—which, in Mexico, they're called (*adding a mild accent*) bootleg. Bootleg superheroes. I brought back a toon of gorgeous Mexican silver jewelry for gentlemen and ladies. I just went wild in Mexico City, brought it all back. Brynna's got it up in the shop at PutThisOnShop.com. Brynna, my shop master. And I hope that you will go to PutThisOnShop.com and take a look at some of the wonderful things we have on offer.

Judge John Hodgman: As we say in this episode, developing a sense of taste and an aesthetic taste—whether you're decorating yourself or the world around you—is a true pleasure. And a great place to start is going to PutThisOnShop.com. I always love finding stuff there for me and often stuff for people. And you know, when you're giving gifts, you need a little inspiration. And I always find it at PutThisOnShop.com.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: John, can I also say right around the corner, the MaxFunDrive. We're looking forward to everybody joining MaxFun. That's all! I'm just going to say it! We're going to do all kinds of fun stuff. We're looking forward to you joining MaxFun.

Judge John Hodgman: It's a fun drive! Which is to say, it's fun and is also a wonderful way to keep the podcast going, MaximumFun.org/join. Stay tuned.

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

Transition: Three gavel bangs.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Welcome back to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. I got a case here from David; this is also a decade old, May of 2016.

“My wife and I recently found a website where one can print items with a custom image. I really want to make a shower curtain with a specific stock photo. In this photo, the model is an old man shrugging. The photo is used in a lot of memes.” He sent us a picture of the photo. We're showing it on YouTube now. You can also find it where our evidence is.

Judge John Hodgman: Jennifer Marmor had it locked and loaded. She was ready to show this mocked up shower curtain. And there's an old man who kind of looks like

George Carlin in his later years, wearing a red long sleeve t-shirt and shrugging. Eh! He's like, "Eh, what am I going to do?" What does the wife think of this?

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: "My wife thinks it's creepy. I think she just doesn't understand my humor. I would pay for the rights to use the stock photo. Or! The curtain could be free advertising for Shutterstock. I haven't had much say in the art we have displayed in our apartment. Please rule in my favor."

Wonder why he—? It's weird. I kind of wonder— I guess he doesn't say— Jennifer, he doesn't say here why he doesn't have much say in the art in their apartment. Does it? Does it say that?

Jennifer Marmor: No, I think it was self-explanatory.

(John and Jesse "ab" and "ob" mock-thoughtfully.)

Judge John Hodgman: Because he just wants to hang memes all over the apartment. He just wants to make their home and their marriage a joke.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Or just more dank.

Judge John Hodgman: That's true. That's true. Maybe their home isn't dank enough. I don't know. Yeah. My inclination here... Well, I'm gonna hold on my inclination. I just want to give you a little bit of bathroom trivia—shower trivia.

(Jesse affirms.)

Jesse, we did this wonderful show in San Francisco—San Francisco Sketchfest. And look, I don't want to blow up anybody's spot. But it's over now; I am no longer in residence at room 1205 of the Kabuki Hotel in Japantown San Francisco. There are certain rooms in the Kabuki hotel, which is a hotel that I love, where the shower is like more than a shower; it's a room.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Yeah. Where there's like—where it's almost like a, uh... where it's almost like a European bathroom, where the entire bathroom is the shower?

Judge John Hodgman: Yeah. And there's like this very deep bench that's sort of mysterious. Not deep bench like they've got a lot of good players. I mean, like there seems—there's like a— *(Laughing at himself.)* Sports.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: What are they going to do with Al Horford? They already have two bigs?!

Judge John Hodgman: There's a sitting area in the shower room that is tiled. It's all tiled over. And it's like, what is this doing here? Well, I happen to know. The very first year I went to Sketchfest, I stayed in one of these rooms before they remodeled. Underneath the tiles in those shower rooms are Japanese soaking tubs that they got tired of cleaning.

(Jesse "wow"s disappointedly.)

So, they tiled them over and made them into a shower bench. Put that in your *Atlas Obscura!* Don't I get a page in that now? That's a fun thing! Hidden Japanese soaking tubs. You go to the Hotel Kabuki and you've got a pickaxe, guess what? You got yourself a Japanese soaking tub. *(Unclear.)*

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: You wash first, then you get in the shower. In Japan, you wash first, then you get in the tub.

Judge John Hodgman: Alright. So, what about this George Carlin shower curtain? It looks dumb, right, Jesse? We can say that, right?

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: It's awful. Yeah, no, it looks terrible.

Judge John Hodgman: And it's awful, because it has the Shutterstock watermark all over it, which makes every image look cheap and stolen. The resolution is bad. It is a weird, nonsensical image. And I don't feel like getting into a shower with that old man. But also, I think that joke decoration... I'm going to be pretty reductive here, but it's like joke decorating of a shared home sometimes feels to me a little bit like something guys do because they're a little intimidated by the big step they've taken in their life in order to make a commitment to a partner and to move in with them and maybe get married. You know what I mean?

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: It can also be kind of a rejection of the aesthetic. Like, a guy who is—and this could apply to people of any gender, but it's culturally typically guys—a guy who is like, “Ahhh! I don't know how to make it look nice! I'll make it a joke, and then I have the power.”

Judge John Hodgman: Yeah, yes! Exactly. Yeah, or if your partner's taste seems better than yours or you don't understand how to make something look nice, it's how you retain a little bit of power. And I think that's really insightful, Jesse. This really does scream r/MaleLivingSpace, that subreddit of dudes posting their profoundly horribly decorated first apartments.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Sometimes they look nice. Sometimes they look nice.

Judge John Hodgman: There's just like a gray sofa facing a PlayStation. Maybe—maybe there's a samurai. Sometimes they look nice. Anyway. David—

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Sometimes it's all houseplants. Sometimes it's just wall-to-wall houseplants. *(Chuckles.)*

Judge John Hodgman: I think that it's important for everyone—*(correcting himself)* not important, but it's like learning the mandolin. Like, learning how to make music maybe feels a little intimidating; “I'm not going to be able to do it,” blah, blah, blah. And then you start picking it up and you realize not only is it kind of easy and deeply pleasurable, but natural. There's a reason that so many humans make music. It is a kind of emotional breathwork. It is part of what we want to do. And I think that it is sort of trained out of us by shyness. I don't know what it is. But it's like when you're doing it, it sort of feels like you're breathing properly for the first time.

And I think developing a sense of aesthetic taste is like that too. Like, all you got to do is look at some magazines, you know? All you got to do is like look at some home decoration internet accounts, see what people are doing. It's sort of like learning fashion, you know? People like, “*(Dopily.)* I don't know what to buy. So, I'm just going to get this junk.” It's like it's not hard to sort of take a look at some examples of fashion and be like, “Oh, you know what? I respond to that. Or I don't respond to that.” Or whatever! Like, developing taste and a sense of aesthetic pleasure—whether it's what you wear in your body or what you hang on your walls—is a very human thing to do.

It's something that we've been— We've been decorating, you know, since we cannibalized the last Neanderthal. It was like, basically, “Let's eat this Neanderthal's brain, and then let's paint something beautiful on these caves in ancient France!” I

think that we ate some Neanderthals. I think that's just part of our gross Homosapien history, which is pretty gross!

Point is, I feel like this kind of anti-aesthetic of turning a dank meme into a shower curtain suggests to me that the David of 2016—maybe he's grown a lot since then; it's been almost a decade. But the version of David in 2016 was somebody who was like, “I don't have a say in how the house is decorated, because I don't have any good—I have terrible taste. And I want to exercise some power and control over my environment, but I'm not willing to put in the small amount of effort it takes to take it seriously, rather than treat it like a joke.”

Take it seriously! It's a serious thing. It's an art form. It's an art form. And you have fun doing it. I mean, Jesse, you have fun thinking about and curating outfits, right?

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: I love it.

Judge John Hodgman: It's one of the great pleasures of your life!

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: For sure.

Judge John Hodgman: And when you show up—as I well know, when you show up the very first time you're in my town in Maine and you go to the hardware store and then you carry out a bag of rock salt to the car, all of the ladies at the hardware store are being like, “Who is your sexy friend?” It brings pleasure wherever you go, is the point. True story. Everyone in Maine wanted to hug and kiss Jesse Thorn. It was incredible. (*Snapping between examples.*) The thrift store, the wine shop, the hardware store, comments galore!

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: I felt like a king.

Judge John Hodgman: You were! You were. You were the king of the Blue Hill Peninsula.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: You know what? I do have one exception to this ruling that you're leading up to, though John.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Oh yeah? What's that? If you want to get a shower curtain of one of those pictures of our friend, Emily Heller, at the Emmys, I think that's an exception.

(John agrees.)

Either the time that she wore an entire green screen suit, so that you could make her outfit into anything you wanted—or the time that she carried a giant purse with a Getty Images watermark printed on it. *(Laughs.)* Man, Emily Heller's so cool!

Judge John Hodgman: Truly, one of the greats. Truly, one of the greats. I don't know whatever ended up happening with the shower curtain. But if it's still up, time to take it down.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Here's something from Nick in July 2016.

“I'm filing suit against my girlfriend, Julie. I'm taking part in the newest craze called... Pokémon GO. Most of—”

Judge John Hodgman: *(Chuckling.)* Newest craze!

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: I know. I got one of these *(purposefully mispronouncing it)* Toe-moe-gotchis, Jennifer! *(Chuckles.)* Alright. Pet rocks, for your benefit, John.

Judge John Hodgman: How did we not hop on this letter right away to catch the Pokémon GO wave, I don't know. But here we are.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: A few people at the MaxFun office still riding that wave. Okay. “Most of our friends—” Oh, yeah, absolutely. Absolutely.

Jennifer Marmor: My six-year-old is a new rider on that wave.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Ohhh! It's nice. Get them out of the house.

Judge John Hodgman: Oh, in Pokémon GO?

(Jennifer confirms.)

Yeah.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Most of our friends also play this game. We all have a group text, and occasionally we meet up for group Pokémon hunts. Julie feels left out, but she doesn't want to download the game and join us. Not because she hates it, but

because of her concerns over phone storage and data usage. Please order that she play with us or put disappointment aside and ride out the Poké craze in silence.”

Judge John Hodgman: So, Jennifer, I heard that your six-year-old human child and whole human being in their own right is into Pokémon GO right now?

Jennifer Marmor: Yeah, he's into Pokémon anything. But uh, yeah, he likes Pokémon GO.

Judge John Hodgman: So, Pokémon GO—if my memory serves from this ancient new craze of 2016—is an alternate or augmented reality game. So, like you're holding your phone looking through your camera at the world, but if you have the app open, it might show you that there's a Pokémon right over there. Is that correct?

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: It could be a Squirtle!

Jennifer Marmor: It could be a Squirtle. It could be a Jigglypuff. It could be a Black Rayquaza. It could be any—

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Bulbasaur.

Jennifer Marmor: Bulbasaur! Any kind of Pokémon. And then you try to catch them.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Snorlax.

Judge John Hodgman: You ever get a Psyduck?

Jennifer Marmor: Probably.

Judge John Hodgman: That's the duck that always has a headache.

Jennifer Marmor: (*Laughs.*) Yeah, probably. I don't know all of the ones. I do know when he catches a Jigglypuff, because he makes a point to show me. Because I think that's my favorite one.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: I like the idea of all the different Pokémon's and they're all these funny different guys, and you have to mark them off your list like a compulsive birder. This, I like. And I can see a particular appeal of it with my neurodivergent children, all of whom went through at least one Pokémon phase. Very amusing. That's

great. When that show was on television in my house, it made me want to put a spike through my brain. Like, I could not bear it.

Jennifer Marmor: I tune it out.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: I'm like— It is sooo— It is just the junkiest piece of television that has ever existed. And I'm like, “Can we just put this in the form of like posters for children's bedroom walls? Like, does it have to be a show?! Could it only be Pokémon GO and a list of guys?” If it was just a list of guys, I feel like I would be fine with it. But I found the show just unwatchable.

Jennifer Marmor: Yeah, there's all kinds of shows on Netflix that we keep finding and someone in my house wants to keep watching. And I tune them out. There's one of them though, called *Pokémon Concierge*. I don't know what it's about, because I refuse to find out.

Judge John Hodgman: Ha! It's about Pokémons getting people theatre tickets and restaurant reservations, I assume.

Jennifer Marmor: (*Chuckling.*) I can only assume so! And it looks cute. And it doesn't sound as annoying as the other ones. Like, the other ones have like a lot of like high-pitched yelling and pipa-pi-pew! sounds. But so far, *Pokémon Concierge* doesn't seem... that bad? But again, I am not paying attention at all.

Judge John Hodgman: Two mezzanine tickets to *Hamilton*, I choose you!

That's what the *Pokémon Concierge* is.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: (*In a cartoonish French accent.*) Madame, I have a Squirtle for you.

(*Jennifer and John giggle.*)

Prepared for you. Would you like a Snorlax to go with?

(*Clears throat.*) My tip?

Judge John Hodgman: So, how do you keep your six-year-old from driving over people in his car while he's playing Pokémon GO? There were some dangers that

were associated with people being distracted in the real world and tripping over things and falling into the ocean and such.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Our colleagues, Danny Baruela and Jesus Ambrosio, were at some point leading expeditions into MacArthur Park to catch Pokémons. Uh-huh.

Jennifer Marmor: Yeah. When we go on a— When I say we, it's only sometimes me. Mostly my husband will do this with our kid. You know, it's already hard enough to get our kid to like pay attention to what's going on. I'm constantly telling him, “Hey! Look alive!” But you know. Eh, you know, it works out. But when we're in the car and he wants to play, we're like, “You can't. We're going too fast. It won't let you.”
(Chuckles.) So, that's safe for... yeah.

Judge John Hodgman: That's good! I'm glad there's some safeguards in place.

Jennifer Marmor: I'm glad—yeah, exactly. Exactly.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: You gotta catch 'em. You got to field dress 'em.

Jennifer Marmor: Give 'em fruit, for some reason.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: What's the ruling for Nick?

Judge John Hodgman: Well, I mean, obviously it's been a decade of screaming for the United States. And I presume it's somewhat of a decade of decline, Jennifer's son notwithstanding, for Pokémon GO. If Nick is still playing Pokémon GO? At this point, I can imagine that Julie's concerns over phone storage and data usage—which sounded like a smokescreen to begin with—probably have been resolved. There are a lot of good data packages out there.

Here's what I'm going to order. It's over, Nick. Not your marriage, but Pokémon GO. And I presume it's not part of your life. But for old times' sake, in order to— Eh, bring out the old Pokémon GO, and you and Julie just go out there and hunt some Pokémon together. Just to put some closure on this. It's like her learning the mandolin. You go out into the world of a nice evening, and you find some Pokémon. And then maybe while you're out there, swing by the ice cream parlor—either for real or euphemistically. Your choice. Just one game. You get one game of Pokémon GO. One sesh, I should say, because it's an ongoing game. You gotta catch 'em all. But in

this case, you just catch ‘em some and have one good evening of it when the weather warms up.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Docket’s clear! That's it for another episode of *Judge John Hodgman*—the program created by Jesse Thorn and John Hodgman. Our social media specialist, Megan Rosati. The podcast is edited by AJ McKeon. Daniel Speer’s our video producer. The show is produced by Jennifer Marmor. Follow us on Instagram at [@JudgeJohnHodgman](#) and check out our full episodes on YouTube at [@JudgeJohnHodgmanPod](#).

Judge John Hodgman: Speaking of YouTube, our YouTube comment of the week this week comes from Princess Dendar, who commented, “I'm so glad to be subscribed to the *Judge John Hodgman* YouTube channel, so I can see all of the obscure cultural reference guesses that Hodgman writes down.” I do assiduously write down each guess. I show the camera every time, but I'm actually doing it. There's so much that we have fun with on the YouTube channel. And I do hope you will join us there by going to YouTube and subscribing! Also hit that like, share, subscribe, and comment. Eh, do everything, you know?

And by the way, if you enjoy this kind of rollicking docket—just me and Jesse and Jennifer reading some letters and talking about things—well, let me remind you that we do a members-only mailbag episode every month, in which we read letters from listeners that aren't necessarily disputes. Sometimes they're comments. Sometimes they're critiques. Sometimes they're little stories about things that are going on in their day. And their day could be your day too, if you become a member at [MaximumFun.org/join](#).

Memberships start at \$5 a month. All of the sudden, you unlock an extra episode of *Judge John Hodgman* in your bonus content every month. It's the members-only mailbag. We have a lot of fun doing it, and this gives you a little bit of a vibe of what it's like. Except it's even more rollicking! And probably, I would have said in the Membo's Only Mailbag that, when I was talking about swinging by the ice cream parlor, I meant going to a swinger’s club and having sex. That's something I would have said in the Membo's Only Mailbag, but I wouldn't say in the—

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: In the Membo Mailbag, yeah.

Judge John Hodgman: Yeah. MaximumFun.org/join. You can become a member anytime you want. And we have our big MaxFunDrive coming up.

In the meantime! Uhh... speaking of lexicography, let's hear some more cases about the written word. Do you have any disputes about reading or books? Have you been trying to read a novel with your wife—who's a whole human being in her own right—but she's a faster reader than you, and she just finished *Lonesome Dove* yesterday, and you still have 150 pages to go? Is this a true story? Yes. *Lonesome Dove* is a great novel, by the way.

What do you do if you are not enjoying the book that you are reading? Do you ever put it down? Is it fair to give it up? Or do you suffer through it, because that's the kind of person you are? What is the worst book to film adaptation? I'll tell you right now. It's Stanley Kubrick's *Lolita*. Completely misunderstood the book. I mean, an interestingly-made movie. Wild and dangerous misinterpretation about what *Lolita* is all about. If you disagree with me, let me know. MaximumFun.org/jjho is where you send in aall your disputes about books and literary materials and everything else in the world.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: You know what my dispute is?

Judge John Hodgman: No.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: It's with the entire world until two months ago, who didn't tell me how much I needed to read the novel *True Grit*.

Judge John Hodgman: Mmm. Yeah. Charles Portis.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: Ho-ly cow! Holy cow, does *True Grit* rip! Thanks to my friend Roman Mars from *99% Invisible*. He posted it on BlueSky or something. He was like, “Are there other books like *True Grit*? Also, is *True Grit* the greatest book ever written?”

And I was like, “Uhh, alright.” I saw it at the thrift store for a dollar. I bought it. I brought it on a trip to Mexico. I was reading it. I was like—every paragraph, there was something—I had no idea! I had no idea. I was like, “This is the gr—!” Blew! My! Mind! I was like, “This is the most delightful thing I have ever engaged with in any medium ever.”

Anyway.

Judge John Hodgman: I think— You know, I offer— I'm a pretentious boob.

(Jesse agrees without hesitation.)

And I read— I give bookish, as they say. But in fact, reading for pleasure is something I've honestly struggled with. There's some books that I absolutely love, but it feels— and especially since I've worked in book publishing, it started to feel like homework to me to read books. Which was sad! Because the truth is, if you're not a reader, you might get this idea in your head like, “Reading's not for me, or it's too challenging, or that's not how I engage with stories.” Fair enough. But I'm telling you something. Whether it's a written book or an audio book, however you engage in longform prose storytelling, there is a book out there that is going to blow your mind. And experiencing a book is different from everything else. It is really wonderful. Find a book that loves you the way *True Grit* blew Jesse's mind. There will be a book out there that will blow your mind, and you'll have fun getting your mind blown.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: It's so funny. I had no idea it was so funny. Anyway, it's also exciting. It's got a lot of good violence in it.

Judge John Hodgman: Yeah, it's enjoyable! It's George Saunders. Like, just— Anyway, read books.

Bailiff Jesse Thorn: MaximumFun.org/jjho is where to submit your disputes, no matter what they're about. We'll talk to you next time on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

Judge John Hodgman: Read books, is what I say!

Transition: Three gavel bangs.

Transition: Cheerful ukulele chord.

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Speaker 3: Of artist owned shows.

Speaker 4: Supported—

Speaker 5: —directly—

Speaker 6: —by you!