

00:00:00	Music	Music	Gentle, trilling music with a steady drumbeat plays under the dialogue.
00:00:01	Promo	Promo	Speaker: <i>Bullseye with Jesse Thorn</i> is a production of MaximumFun.org and is distributed by <i>NPR</i> .
00:00:13	Jesse Thorn	Host	<i>[Music fades out.]</i> I'm Jesse Thorn, it's <i>Bullseye</i> .
00:00:15	Music	Music	"Huddle Formation" by The Go Team. A fast, upbeat, peppy song. Music plays as Jesse speaks.
00:00:22	Jesse	Host	Peter Sarsgaard is an actor. He's been in over sixty different roles. Films like <i>Shattered Glass</i> , <i>Magnificent Seven</i> , <i>The Green Lantern</i> —and if there's a type that Peter plays, it's guys who are confident and cool and composed. Or—I guess guys that <u>should</u> be competent, cool, and composed but in some small way, are not. Like, maybe it's a CIA researcher whose personal life unravels when he's been secretly dosed with LSD—like in Errol Morris's <i>Wormwood</i> . Or a charming young guy who turns out to be something of a confidence man, like in the Academy Award Nominated, <i>An Education</i> .
			Or like in his latest film, <i>A Sound of Silence</i> . In it, he plays Peter Lucien. Peter is a New York City house tuner—meaning that he is kind of like... a sort of scientific guy who goes around studying ambient sound.
00:01:17	Jesse	Host	<i>[Music fades out.]</i> He lives in New York, one of the loudest, busiest cities in the world, and he has made a business out of creating harmony. Like <u>literal</u> harmony: finding ways to match the ambient sounds in everyone's apartment.
			Like—say you're feeling tired and down and the hum of traffic outside your apartment sounds like an A on the piano <i>[A gentle tone in A plays underneath dialogue]</i> .
			Why not buy a microwave that cooks in a C Sharp <i>[additional tone in C# joins the first]</i> —
			—and add a toaster that hums in E? <i>[a tone in E builds on the others]</i>
00:02:09	Clip	Clip	It's a beautiful, quiet, strange film; and Peter Sarsgaard is captivating in it. Here's a clip with him in action. He's been contacted by a woman named Ellen Chasen, played by Rashida Jones. Ellen is depressed and she's having trouble sleeping in her home, and Peter thinks he knows the cause. <i>[Music swells and fades.]</i>
			Peter: I noticed your toaster produces an E Flat... and your refrigerator hums at a clear G. Now, the foundation note... is a subtle but convincing C throughout the entire apartment. Here.
			<i>[A beat. Then, a long, sustained note is played on a harmonica^.]</i>
			Peter: Do you hear that? Hm? The mechanical sound? Or, uh—perhaps it's—it's wind patterns, on the East Side? It's remarkably

consistent. *[Sighs]* Anyway... new toaster should solve your problems.

Ellen: *[Incredulous]* What, and you think it's that simple?

Peter: Technically, the refrigerator's a perfect fifth and the minor third created by your toaster combined with the tonic from your neighborhood... and, uh, you've got a depression.

[Music swells and fades.]

00:03:08	Jesse	Host	Peter Sarsgaard, welcome to <i>Bullseye</i> . It's nice to have you on the show.
00:03:11	Peter Sarsgaard	Guest	<i>[Chuckles]</i> Thank you.
00:03:13	Jesse	Host	Peter, I work in public radio, and so I have gone to... conferences where sound people talk about the power of sound.
00:03:24	Peter	Guest	Oh yeah.
00:03:25	Jesse	Host	And it's—I gotta be frank. It's not my thing <i>[breaks into a laugh]</i> .
00:03:29	Peter	Guest	<i>[Laughing in the background.]</i>
00:03:30	Jesse	Host	Um, <i>[laughing again]</i> I hope I'm not admitting I'm in the wrong business, but uh—and I wish them all the best—but, I wonder if you had ever... listened in the way that your character in this film listens, before playing this character required you to do so?
00:03:50	Peter	Guest	Oh, not the way that my character does, no. Not at all. I mean, you know, obviously this isn't a documentary or a—or a, really, a drama. Um. It's kinda got its own little tone going on.
			That said, I do think that a variety of things... influence our feelings and behavior that are, some of them, unseen. And I guess I would include the sound environment that you're in. I mean, being... uhhh, in a church, with organ music playing makes you feel spiritual, for some reason. Right? And... I think being nature, the sounds—you know, without human input—make people feel a certain way. But as far as like a certain frequency making you—like a 440 A making you feel enlightened, um, I'm not so sure about that.
00:04:42	Jesse	Host	What are the quietest environments that you ever spend time in? I mean, you're talking to me from New York—where you live—and that's not a particularly quiet place.
00:04:50	Peter	Guest	I would say it might be where I am right now, in this sound studio. <i>[They laugh.]</i> Before you came on, I was sitting here and I was actually thinking: wow, I think this is probably pretty good for my brain, to not talk or listen to anything, other than maybe my own heartbeat for a little while.
00:05:09	Jesse	Host	<i>[Laughs]</i> You know, they test speakers and stuff in those totally acoustically dead rooms—
00:05:15	Peter	Guest	Yeah.
00:05:16	Jesse	Host	—where there's no sound can come in and, uh, so all you experience is the sound that's being generated in that space?
00:05:24	Peter	Guest	Yeah.
00:05:25	Jesse	Host	And, frankly, when I think about that? I find it terrifying.
00:05:30	Peter	Guest	Yeah. It's like a sensory deprivation chamber. Not many people like that. <i>[Chuckles]</i>
00:05:36	Jesse	Host	<i>[laughs]</i> I'm so grateful that you agreed, because one time I... asked Neil deGrasse Tyson, the astrophysicist, if he ever got freaked out thinking about how space is infinite?
00:05:51	Peter	Guest	<i>[Chuckles.]</i>

00:05:52 Jesse Host And he made fun of me *[breaks into a laugh]*.

And I said: come on, dude! *[Stutters into laughter again.]*

00:06:01 Peter Guest *[Jokingly wounded]* I opened up to you, Neil deGrasse Tyson! I think the idea, in the movie is that, you know, we live in this time—and maybe this has been true of other times. I can only speak to the time in which I live—but, where a lot of people I know are looking for, sort of, outside influences that are affecting their behavior. They'll say, "I have anxiety because of..." you know—one that is real, for example, like black mold. They'll say, "You know, the black mold is making me depressed and I need to get out of this environment. My environment is toxic. I live in a toxic world and the toxins are affecting my behavior and everyday life."

And so... th-that idea is one that I think feels—makes the movie feel very current, to me, and very much about something more than just... you know, whether or not a B flat makes you feel sad. You know, minor keys make me feel—you know, people always say minor keys are sad. I—I think they're more like, um... ah, more inspirational, to me, than a major key, but—you know. We all have a different idea of what's going on. But that idea that—that, yeah: it's something out there that is making me feel this way.

00:07:15 Jesse Host Do you have anything in your life—or, it might be acting?—that you are as focused on, or as single-minded, while you're doing as your character in this film is, as when he is recording and listening?

00:07:31 Peter Guest I have a small orchard. And I would say when I'm, uh—been up there for a while with, you know I have like apple trees and pear trees and a number of plums and other things, but mostly apple. And, uh—

00:07:43 Jesse Host Is this in—in New York City or Vermont?

00:07:46 Peter Guest Elsewhere. Vermont. And I'm always thinking—*[cuts himself off with a laugh]* In New York City. I have a small orchard in New York City.

00:07:52 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Peter:** I'm the wealthiest person, here.

Jesse: *[embarrassed]* Huh—I don't know!

[They both dissolve into laughter.]

00:07:54 Jesse Host You're in *Green Lantern*. I don't know how that pays!

00:07:57 Peter Guest *[Getting a handle on his laughter]* No, no. I, uh, I really do—everything relates to them, you know? You make, uh—I'll think: oh, the wind's blowing. Well that's good, and that way there won't be as high a spore count for fungal stuff, you know? Or, um, I'll think about when it's rained and I'll think—I'll look at the ground and see a mushroom and think: oh, that's cool. All the trees are talking to each other.

You know, everything has—everything I see, hear, or feel has something to do with that apple tree. So, that's sort of the way he is, in this, is he's like walking around and everything has something to do with his bit of, you know, quote-unquote "science".

00:08:35 Jesse Host I was reading an article about you and your wife's home, which you had put on the market maybe—I think it was earlier this year—in *People Magazine*. Or maybe it was *Architectural Digest*—and there was this part about you having a Meyer lemon tree in your backyard.

00:08:51 Peter Guest Yeah.
00:08:52 Jesse Host And I live in Los Angeles, where—you know—lemons will grow on top of your car if you don't get your car washed enough.

00:08:59 Peter Guest *[Laughs.]*
00:09:00 Jesse Host But um—*[breaking into brief laughter]* but in New York—that's like a... that's like a really, that's like a really special thing if you actually get a lemon out of it.

00:09:09 Peter Guest Yeah, well, the wall was South-facing, you know. We're approaching zone 8, here. You know. You have global *[sighs]* oh, let me think of what Greta Thunberg calls it, 'cause I—I don't—

[Stammering] I shouldn't call it climate change, anymore. I think we're supposed to call it the climate emergency—um, has changed the climate zones. I mean, I—I grow persimmons. My friend grows kiwi in Vermont. So, you can grow virtually anything. I mean, not bananas, yet. But, you know, soon.

00:09:44 Jesse Host Are there things in your life that you bring that level of focus to? I heard that you're also an ultra-distance runner, as a hobby.

00:09:54 Peter Guest I do run, yeah. I—I, uh, had to take a lot of this last year off, because I got pertussis. Which, uh, you know, adult—I'm fully vaccinated, but it turns out the vaccine's only 85% effective. Um, so I—that's the hundred-day cough, so I missed a lot.

But yeah, I'm very focused on that. I think, also, with—music is something that I've always been interested in and wished... I think there's a part of me that's always wished that I was a musician instead of an actor, since—as an actor, you can't really act at home, by yourself. I mean you don't.

00:10:31 Jesse Host *[Laughs.]*
00:10:32 Peter Guest And people think you walk around the house, practicing lines and stuff. I mean, I say them in my head. I don't ever speak them, until I show up. And with music—you know, I could be doing it every day, if I felt like it. It's the very troubling thing about acting. You try not to get into it too much, because um... because other people need to give you the opportunity to do it.

And if you're particular, like me, then... you know, you don't do it every time somebody asks you and then you're not doing it as often as you'd like. So, you have to come up with your—your other things that you're interested in. You know.

00:11:13 Jesse Host When you started acting—and you didn't really start acting until college—did you find that you were able to do it at the beginning?

00:11:24 Peter Guest Yeah. I didn't—I didn't ever even think about doing it, and then I was, uh, invited by someone to be in an acting class, because I wasn't able to play sports anymore—'cause I'd had an injury, and—

00:11:37 Jesse Host When you say "invited by someone"—?
00:11:40 Peter Guest Karen Schmulen. A Jewish woman from Texas that said, "You're gonna have a lot of free time on your hands and you're probably gonna be pretty bummed out. Why don't you come take this acting class with me?" And I—I did, and then the first time I ever tried it, I felt like I knew how to do it.

I mean, I—I didn't—I didn't, you know, and I've learned a lot since then, but I had a facility to do something that I'd never imagined doing. It was a strange feeling.

00:12:07	Jesse	Host	You know, I was thinking about this film and how important sound is in the film.
00:12:14	Peter	Guest	Yeah.
00:12:15	Jesse	Host	And it's a spectacularly, beautifully sound designed film.
00:12:19	Peter	Guest	Yeah.
	Jesse	Host	And, it occurred to me—I was like, "Well, gee whiz, none of that is happening on the set. <i>[Laughs]</i> Like? This is—this is a film where the—the third central driving force, besides the two main characters of the movie, is the way things sound and, you know, often in—often in films, you're not even hearing the actual words coming out of the person on screen's mouth as they came out—it's like somebody went back and did ADR and recorded a—recorded it slightly differently to match the shape of the lips.
00:13:00	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Peter: Yeah. Jesse: You know? Peter: Yeah, yeah.
00:13:02	Jesse	Host	Much less the sounds of the environment. Those are always, almost always, coming from elsewhere, but then—
00:13:07	Peter	Guest	But he always left so much room for it. I mean, he knew—I knew that it was coming. And um, he would let things roll for a really long time, in and around scenes. I just—I could feel it coming, you know? And I had my own stuff in my head that doesn't— <i>isn't</i> the same as what's in the film, but it's not really necessary that it be the same. We actually—he would always try to play classical music and stuff when we were filming and, um, I had my own—I had my own thing in my head. And I think I had, like, cicadas.
00:13:42	Jesse	Host	When it's that quiet, aren't you desperately—don't you feel like a desperate need in the pit of your stomach to fill the silence with something, or to break the silence with something?
00:13:53	Peter	Guest	No, 'cause I'm not a performer. <i>[Laughs.]</i> You know, I think—for me... You know, I had a grandparent who, you know, many people thought of him as kind of... reticent and, um, difficult to know. And I always found him the opposite. I always found him incredibly open and it was, uh—he would <u>never</u> fill in with small talk. He just let it be. And it might be uncomfortable for somebody, but... I guess I find that more <u>comforting</u> .
			<i>[Stammering]</i> I think we do a lot of talking and making sound in our everyday lives to obfuscate or to distract or to—whatever your agenda is, or because you're feeling uncomfortable or anxious. And to just let the silence, or... lack of talking, anyway, <u>live</u> , takes guts. But I would say it's ultimately rewarding.
00:15:00	Jesse	Host	I interviewed this musician once named Betty Davis, and she was and is a sort of legend of funk music; but in the late 1970s, she quit the music business and... quit the entertainment industry entirely and moved back home to Pittsburgh, where she was from, and just had an entirely different life and had not done—she did no interviews and no anything.
00:15:32	Peter	Guest	Mm.
00:15:33	Jesse	Host	And this was—previously she had been married to—she got that surname from Miles Davis, her ex-husband. Like, she was, <i>[laughs]</i> she was really flying high for a while. Show business-wise. And...

so, I called her to interview her and I knew that she had not talked—she had like, not even cashed her ASCAP checks until some Swedish fan of hers tracked her down in the suburbs of Pittsburg and said, you know, “ASCAP owes you \$300,000.”

00:16:06 Peter Guest
00:16:08 Jesse Host

[Chuckles.]
And so I knew that she was a very quiet person, and when I interviewed her I found her to be exceedingly polite, but... she would answer with a word, or two, or six—the absolute minimum number of words necessary to answer every one of my questions.

And I knew, from having read a thing that, you know, Terry Gross or Ira Glass or some other hero of mine had said, that if I was just quiet long enough, she would say more. And most vivid memory of talking to this woman whose music I love so much and—a really remarkable woman—is how terrifying it was for her to finish a sentence and me *[embarrassed chuckling through dialogue]* not to reply.

00:17:01 Peter Guest

[Humorously] Huh. Yeah. I just saw the Miles Davis documentary down at Film Forum and, yeah, he had that too, didn’t he?

00:17:13 Jesse Host
00:17:14 Peter Guest

I mean, they must have been quite *[chuckles]* the quiet couple. Um. Yeah.
Um, I mean those—I would say, for me, I think that’s one reason I—like, a lot of my heroes, in my life, were not actors but were musicians. Because... they do so much communicating, just nonverbally. I mean that’s, you know, you watch Miles Davis in that documentary and there’s a grunt or two and there and then he says so much when he finally plays. You know, it’s unbelievable.

00:17:42 Jesse Host
00:17:45 Peter Guest

[Humorously] He wasn’t a super chill dude.
[Laughing through dialogue] He was not—he liked to box.

[They laugh.]

I love that they—Alan Arkin once told me—I guess who knew him—said, uh, said, “Aren’t you worried about boxing? It’s gonna like, mess up your embouchure if somebody hits you.”

And he goes, “Ah. *[Whispering]* Nobody ever hit me.”

00:18:05 Jesse Host
00:18:06 Peter Guest

[Laughing through dialogue] O-okay. ‘Cause you’re Miles Davis.
[Chuckles.]
You can do anything. *[Laughs.]* What a—what a genius, my god. I’ve—I’ve really always wanted to be a musician. I actually, um—one story I’ve told a couple of times in relationship to this movie, just because it relates to it a bit, is a friend of mine—Jordan McLean, who plays with this group, Antibalas—um, was playing with Ornette Coleman at his place here in the city. And just, at night, he would show up in—Ornette had kind of an open-door policy—and, um, he invited me over, one night. He said, “You wanna come over and meet Ornette?” And it was like... I mean, he’s probably one of my favorite artists, you know?

And, uh, I showed up and I was sitting at the drumkit while we were all talking, and I asked to see his Pulitzer Prize and he went off and he couldn’t find it. And he turned back around and he looked at me

			like he's just realized I was sitting and the drumkit and he went, "Oh, great! Count off! Let's play!"
00:18:58	Jesse	Host	<i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:19:00	Peter	Guest	<i>[Chuckles]</i> Uuh, I said, "Oh, no, no, no. I—I don't play the drums."
			And he goes, "You know, that doesn't make any sense—or matter." And he went, "Count off."
			And so, I played drums with Ornette Coleman for like, two hours. And afterwards, he started talking about how... you know, uh, human beings—whether we, you know, think of ourselves this way or not—in the animal kingdom, are uniquely gifted at music. So, even those of us who don't think we are musical, are—are really extraordinarily musical when you look at us in the grand scheme of things. I mean, you know, even being able to appreciate music is a sign of our musicality. And what—what is playing all the time, what is happening all the time, anywhere you go—whether it be in a grocery store, Muzak to make you feel better, put you in a certain mood, go into a church, used to elevate you and make you feel spiritual.
			I mean, it's just used in such a variety of contexts to alter our moods, that like—the idea of this movie that, you know, like a B Flat makes you feel a certain way and if it's not jiving with that G Sharp or whatever... might be funny, but we all know that... you know, there's a kind of ecstasy that can happen with music. There's a kind of, uh, access to sorrow that can happen with music. It's—it makes things emotionally available to you.
00:20:32	Jesse	Host	We have more with Peter Sarsgaard after a break. Still to come: stories about Tom Cruise! It's <i>Bullseye</i> , from MaximumFun.org and <i>NPR</i> .
00:20:41	Music	Music	Relaxing music plays under dialogue.
00:20:43	Jesse	Promo	This message comes from <i>NPR</i> sponsor, Zip Recruiter:
			Hiring can be a slow process. Café Altura COO, Dillon Miskiewicz, needed to hire a director of coffee; so he went to Zip Recruiter, posted his job. and found the right person in just a few days. Find out why four out of five employers who post on Zip Recruiter get a quality candidate within the first day. Try Zip Recruiter for free at ZipRecruiter.com/bullseye . B-U-L-L-S-E-Y-E.
00:21:15	Promo	Promo	<i>[Music fades out.]</i> <i>[Upbeat guitar music plays.]</i>
			Ophira Eisenberg: Alright, Professor McConaughey, are you ready for an <i>Ask Me Another</i> challenge?
			Matthew McConaughey: <i>[Drawling]</i> Alright, alright, alright.
			Audience: <i>[Laughs.]</i>
			Ophira: Hey, everyone! It's Ophira Eisenberg. In this episode, we talk with actor Matthew McConaughey. Listen to <i>NPR's Ask Me Another</i> : the answer to life's funnier questions.
			<i>[Music ends.]</i>

00:21:32 Promo

Promo

[A telephone rings.]

Hotshot Hollywood Producer: Listen, I'm a hotshot Hollywood movie producer.

[Music fades in.]

Producer: You have until I finish my glass of *[articulating]* kom-bucha to pitch me your idea. Go.

[Slurping sounds.]

Ify: Alright! It's called *Who Shot Ya*: a movie podcast that isn't just a bunch of straight, white dudes. I'm Ify Nwadiwe, the new host of the show and a certified BBN.

Producer: BBN?

Ify: Buff, Black Nerd.

Alonso: I'm Alonso Duralde, an elderly gay and legit film critic who wrote a book on Christmas movies.

Drea: I'm Drea Clark, a loud, white lady from Minnesota.

Ify: Each week, we talk about a new movie in theaters and all the important issues going on in the film industry.

Alonso: It's like *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* meets *Cruising*.

Ify: And if it helps seal the deal? I can flex my muscles while we record each episode.

Producer: I'm sorry, this is a podcast?! I'm a movie producer. *[Disdainfully]* How did you get in here?

Drea: Ify, quick! Start flexing!

Ify: *[Dramatically]* Bicep! Lats! Chest! *Who Shot Ya*, dropping every Friday on MaximumFun.org, or wherever you listen to podcasts.

[Music ends.]

00:22:25 Jesse

Host

Welcome back to *Bullseye*, I'm Jesse Thorn. My guest is actor Peter Sarsgaard. You've seen him in *An Education*, *Blue Jasmine*, *Black Mass*, and many more. His new film, *The Sound of Silence*, is out now.

Let's hear another scene from *The Sound of Silence*, which is my guest—Peter Sarsgaard's—new film. And in it, he plays a guy who tunes people's living environments: sonically recognizes the sounds that surround them and adjusts them to, uh, improve their overall wellbeing.

And, so—in this clip, uh, Peter, the—the character, uh, is upset that the work that he's doing isn't being taken seriously and that it's

00:23:18 Clip Clip being commercialized. And so, he asks his mentor—Robert Feinway, who’s played by Austin Pendleton—for advice. *[Sound swells and fades.]*

Peter: My data is supported, maybe they just can’t comprehend it.

Robert: It’s all good feedback, Peter. I encourage my students to ask tough questions in their critique sessions. I think they’re maybe caught up a little bit in your... *[chuckles]* in your lack of formalities.

Peter: But I’m close, though. And you understand the significance.

Robert: Listen, I’ve read it. Don’t rush yourself. This work takes time, years.

Peter: *[Impatiently]* Well, it’s been years.

[The sound of a sheet of paper being pulled out.]

Peter: This is a universal law that I’ve discovered, and the scientific community needs to know about it.

Robert: *[Sighs]* You know, there’s a trap in science that I talk to my students about: when all we see is exactly what one’s looking for—not because it’s there, but because one desperately wants to believe that it’s there.

Peter: You saying my research is faulty?

Robert: No! *[Laughs]* I’m just cautioning you not to make it too personal, perhaps even obsessive. One must be obsessive in this field of ours, but... be careful of too much, um—faith.

00:24:26 Jesse Host It’s interesting, to me, because... you have these, uh, avocations in your life that are all—no matter how hard one would try to, uh, systemicize them or, scientificize them—they’re all, ultimately, kind of ad hoc. You know? Like there’s no way to act—

00:24:48 Peter Guest No.

00:24:50 Jesse Host —besides *[laughing through next few words]*, you know? Doing your best?

00:24:55 Peter Guest Yeah.

00:24:56 Jesse Host You know what I mean? *[laughs]*

00:24:57 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Peter:** Yeah.

Jesse: Like, there’s no—there’s no answer *[laughs]*, to any of these. Just as there’s no answer to exactly what you’re supposed to do about the spores, uh, when you’re growing apples on your apple tree.

00:25:07 Peter Guest No. No, I like that, you know. I—I’m... *[takes a deep breath]* Um. My mother’s a microbiologist. You know? And, uh, we had a microscope in our house, when I was kid, and I used to go and get pond water and... all kind of other things and look at them under there. You know, it always seemed more like a story, to me, than anything else and—I never wrote anything down, kept track of what I was looking at, or was much interested in naming of things.

00:25:58 Jesse Host My mother is also really into bird watching. I was always way more
00:25:59 Peter Guest into, like, the story. Like—lekking, you know? Which is a peculiar
bird activity where all the females end up having sex with one of the
males even though, like, twenty of them are sitting there. Um.
[Huffs a quiet laugh through his nose.]
You know, it's the same male that's impregnating all of them. I look
at pigeons and always remember that.

00:26:11 Jesse Host But my mom, you know, wanted to know the names and all that
00:26:15 Peter Guest stuff and I just have always been less interested in that.
Some people gotta catch 'em all, *[humorously]* is my understanding.
[Laughing] Yeah! I—that part of bird watching, of like—keeping
track of what you've seen and—and everything and reporting it to
Cornell—I just can't—I can't get down with.

00:26:27 Jesse Host But, uh, you know—one of my major—
That sound you just heard was twenty thousand public radio
listeners angrily snapping their radios off.

00:26:32 Peter Guest *[Surprised laughter.]* It's okay, now it's just you and I.
00:26:39 Jesse Host *[Chuckling]* You were an athlete before you were an actor. You
played soccer into college.

00:26:44 Peter Guest Yeah.
00:26:45 Jesse Host Um, and eventually quit, I guess, because of some combination of
getting too many concussions and no longer being really great at it,
relative to your peers.

00:26:55 Peter Guest Yeah. Absolutely. I never... you know, I'm somebody who always
really enjoyed the beauty of that game, and I still do. I think it is, it
really is to me, the beautiful game. It's so simple. I think one of the
reasons it's so popular, in the world, is that you don't even need a
ball and hoop, or a ball—a hoop and a hard surface to bounce it. All
you need is a ball, and in some countries they make them out of
tape. And so, I like the simplicity of the game. It's just a ball that you
can't touch with your hands and you try to put it in the goal.

So, um—and when it's played beautifully, I really like it. Very often,
at the—you know, even at—I was playing at pretty high levels,
sometimes—it just wasn't satisfying, in terms of what it looked like,
to me. I would think like: we won, but it was ugly. You know?

I wanted it to have a feeling, like—oh the ball went there, and back
to here, and then slid it through there, and then he tapped it to that
guy, and then he scored! Instead of just, like, we just battered them
into submission. Which was frequently the case. So.

00:27:58 Jesse Host Like the difference between watching the Warriors play basketball,
at their—at their peak, and watching like, the great Bill Laimbeer
Detroit Pistons, or something.

00:28:06 Peter Guest Yeees. Yes! Yeah! I—I like, um, I actually really liked watching the
women play? Um, one of the reasons why, is I really felt like, in that
game, there was a lot of thought about the geometry of the game,
letting the ball do the work, you know. And, um, you could really see
it, more. You know? So—and I watched it with my daughters, which
was really nice to see, you know, a female sport that everybody
was tuning into.

00:28:38 Jesse Host Are you, uh, still... passionate about soccer? Do you watch it?
00:28:43 Peter Guest Every—uh, I mean, all the time. *[Humorously]* You could ask me
about any game that happened over the weekend and I'd know

about it. Yeah, I just watched all the champion's league games the other—I mean, I—I usually tape them, right?

00:28:53 Jesse Host 'Cause they come on at like—the European leagues, obviously, come on at two o'clock in the morning, or something, in the United States.

00:28:58 Peter Guest Yeeeah, and like—for some of them, I will watch what's called extended highlights, because it's a long game.

00:29:04 Jesse Host *[Laughs.]*

00:29:05 Peter Guest I—I try not to watch more than one full game a week, because—

00:29:09 Jesse Host *[Laughing through his words]* I've seen DePeter—doesn't mean anything to me.

00:29:11 Peter Guest Yeah. My wife and I were walking down the street, today, and she actually said—I was telling her, you know, "I have this project coming up that I'm interested in acting in, but sort of at the moment, my head is not totally into acting." Um, I finished a gig about a month ago—I'm in between jobs.

And she said, uh, "Have you ever thought of doing other things, besides acting?"

And I said, "You know, I'd really like to be a commentator for soccer, on any level." I'm just putting it out there in the world.

00:29:42 Jesse Host *[Laughing]* I feel like—I feel like Nick Hornby's gotta have the hookup on that, right?

00:29:45 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Peter:** Hornby.

00:29:50 Peter Guest **Jesse:** Hornby's the—you know, Hornby's the famous-est soccer fan of all of England!

00:30:08 Jesse Host Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. I do—Nick, when I go to, uh, London, Nick knows why I text him, but I'll text him because he's always got the—the really good Arsenal tickets in that gorgeous stadium. So, yeah I've gone to see games with him.

00:30:14 Peter Guest Are there things that you learned playing sports, competitively, that are useful to you as an actor?

Oh, yeah. It's very, very similar, in a lot of ways. I mean, it's, um. *[Beat.]* You know, one of the things I'll say that gets in the way of both of them is a kind of star system, right? The need to have the guy on the team that's the one, when we say, "Oh, you know, Barcelona is playing Juventus." And they'll show a picture of Messi and a picture of Ronaldo and that's—that defines it for us.

And, or, when we go to see a movie, we'll say, like, "Did you see that new Tom Hanks movie?" Instead of saying the name of the director or anyone else who legitimately made the movie. And, um, I think both things skew the way that we watch them? And even the way that we participate in them, as actors, or as athletes. And the need to have a single person—and that's one of the things I really enjoy about soccer, is that any team of, you know, eleven talented guys, will beat a team of one Messi and, you know, ten okay guys.

I mean, it's just a game of geometry and there's—and space—and, uh, the same thing is true with acting, you know? My favorite scenes, as an actor, you look at like... *On the Waterfront*, you know—there's not one guy in the backseat of that car. You know? It's not just Marlon Brando. *[Laughs.]*

So, it's, uh, the need—the way we focus on individuals like that, in acting, I think really skews the story, even, of what we're watching. And—and I would say, even before that, it skews the stories that people decide to make. We make stories where we need, like, the—a certain type of hero that threads all the way through. Um. And I really prefer more of a... you know, I think that's why actors liked acting with Robert Altman. You know. Who's the lead in *Shortcuts*, you know?

00:32:18 Jesse Host

Speaking of movies like that, where one person being in it skews the whole thing in one's perception and you think of it as a vehicle for, uh, that person—you were in an action comedy called *Night and Day* with Tom Cruise and Cameron Diaz. And—

00:32:37 Peter Guest

[Jokingly] Vaguely familiar.

00:32:38 Jesse Host

—and—*[laughing]* Yeah. In my—in my... job, I talk to, uh, famous artists whose work I care about and—and who I admire and I'm used to it. I've been doing it almost twenty years, now. So it's not—I—I'm used to the idea that somebody who stars in a film or makes an incredible album or something, is actually just a lady or a guy.

00:33:05 Peter Guest

Yeah.

00:33:06 Jesse Host

That no longer seems foreign to me. However, Tom Cruise continues to feel foreign to me. And I just kind of wonder wh-what's that guy's deal? To the extent that you know—uh, like, what—

00:33:18 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Peter: Well, I'll tell you a story from that movie.

00:33:21 Peter Guest

Jesse: —what is he like as a human being in the world?

Yeah. Two stories from that movie. One is—he discovered, when we were in Sevilla, uh, that I was really into, uh, soccer—or, football, I guess, over there. And, um, that I'd been going to all these Sevilla games.

And he said, "I'd like to go see a game."

And I said, "Well, let's go!"

So, we went to go see them play and, um... he was—he was super into it and veery, um—you know, it's different going with him. We had to go in like, what felt like an armored vehicle and show up and there were—you know, and go in through the back way and sit up in a special booth and watch it from impossibly far away. And I remember, at one point, explaining offsides to him on a piece of paper and looking up and seeing that we were on the Jumbotron together.

00:34:09 Jesse Host

[Laughs.]

00:34:10 Peter Guest

And so, this is a guy who can't even, like, have one second of his life that is in private. I don't know—I think it becomes very difficult to... not act like you're always in public, you know? So I couldn't tell you what he's like in private, because even when I've hung out with him in what felt like more private circumstances—of course, his guard has gotta be up, on some level.

00:34:32 Jesse Host

And, I mean, you're—you're saying that as a famous person who is married to a *[laughs through his words]* famous person.

00:34:38 Peter Guest

Yeeeeeeah, that's...

00:34:39 Jesse Host

You know what I mean?

00:34:40 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Peter: Yeeeah.

00:34:44 Peter Guest **Jesse:** Like, you're not Tom Cru—I'm not—I'm saying, it's just a different thing.
Yeah. *[Stammering]* My—the type of fame that I have is really great. I love it. I—I walk down the street and the people that come up to me are coming up to me, usually, for a very personal reason.

They'll say, like, "I saw this movie and you in it, and I like this about it." Or whatever. Or, "I hated this about it," or whatever they want to say to me. But it's specific.

You know, with Tom Cruise—they're pointing. It's that guy. It's not—it's not even a specific role. It's not—it's—it's just fame. You know?

00:35:13 Jesse Host Right.
00:35:14 Peter Guest And, um, so, yeah, I—a couple of times a day I get a certain type of attention. Most New Yorkers are circumspect unless they do have something to say to you that's specific. And then you, you know, you get a table at the nice restaurant, which is good.

But, um, you know. Another story about Tom Cruise, on that movie, is—he liked to stay after work to rehearse scenes and he worked harder than anybody I know. Like I said, for me, acting is something that feels best when it's really easy? You know, I just do it and then—I'm the first one that leaves work, at the end of the day. Like, the minute we're done? I don't even take off the makeup or anything. I just go into my trailer, change clothes, get in the car, go home, take a shower. You know. I'm—I'm out of there.

And he really—he wants to stay and work. Was a guy who did a stunt on the movie that I did not know he was gonna do, when I was in the same frame, and he's like running across the top of this building. You know, you're just like—*[stammering]* it's another level, of anyone I've ever seen.

And I actually quit drinking right after I worked with him. And, uh, about three months later, he walked across a room, seeing me, and said, "Something's changed about you. Something really has changed about you."

And I said, "Yeah."

He was the first person, you know, who really noticed that I'd quit.

So, he's also incredibly perceptive for a guy who's, you know, leading such a bubble-type of life, you know?

00:36:51 Jesse Host I mean, he has got those laser eyes.
00:36:53 Peter Guest Yeah. *[Chuckles]* I remember telling him at one point, I said, "Everybody loves to watch you run, I can't believe you haven't run in this movie." And then I swear, the next day, he was doing a running scene, behind a—behind a truck.

00:37:03 Jesse Host *[Laughs.]*
00:37:06 Peter Guest Everybody does like to watch him run! He's got like a—what is it? Like, in *The Firm*, you're just like, "Keep running!" I love it!

00:37:13 Jesse Host Yeah, it's really—there's a real, like, uh—it—it's fluid, but not graceful. It's like purposeful.

00:37:21	Peter	Guest	<i>[Delighted]</i> It's purposeful. It looks like he is <u>going</u> somewhere! I mean, yeah.
00:37:27	Jesse	Host	N-n-not my jam. I can't do that. I mean, he also looks like that when he's just, uh, just standing still, though.
00:37:30	Peter	Guest	<i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:37:31	Jesse	Host	To be fair.
00:37:32	Peter	Guest	Yeah, yeah, yeah.
00:37:33	Jesse	Host	He wouldn't be one of the greatest movie stars of the— <i>[laughing]</i> of <u>movie history</u> —
00:37:38	Peter	Guest	I know.
00:37:39	Jesse	Host	<i>[Laughing through his words.]</i> If he—he weren't <u>amazing</u> to look at.
00:37:41	Peter	Guest	Yeah, yeah. That's right. That's right. But yeah, I mean, I've acted with so many—I mean... people have this very monolithic idea about who actors are and where they come from and that kind of thing. It's just been—for me it's been a real opportunity to meet all kinds of different people. I mean, it is—people come for all kind of different reasons.
			I mean, there are the generic sort of, "I wanna be famous" things, but they don't last very long. You know, the ones who really stick around and that I've seen—you know, I've been acting for, I don't know, 25 years, or something. And the people that I notice are still around always have very interesting, specific reasons for coming to it in the first place.
00:38:20	Music	Music	Relaxing music begins to fade in.
00:38:21	Jesse	Host	Peter Sarsgaard, thank you so much for talking to me on <i>Bullseye</i> . I really enjoyed it.
00:38:25	Peter	Guest	Absolutely. Thank you for having me.
00:38:32	Jesse	Host	Peter Sarsgaard. His newest film, <i>The Sound of Silence</i> , is out now.
00:38:36	Music	Music	"Huddle Formation" plays over dialogue.
00:38:39	Jesse	Host	That's the end of another episode of <i>Bullseye</i> . <i>Bullseye</i> , produced at MaximumFun.org headquarters, overlooking McArthur Park in beautiful Los Angeles, California—where there are tire tracks, in the grass: a long, straight, muddy line across the park. And, uh, Kevin—my producer—saw a squirrel run down the tire track like it was a squirrel highway.

It's written in my script: "Life in the fast lane."

The show is produced by speaking into microphones. Our producer is Kevin Ferguson. He has, perhaps, too much power on the program. Jesus Ambrosio is our associate producer. We get help from Casey O'Brien. Our production fellow is Jordan Kawling. Our interstitial music is by Dan Wally, also known as DJW. Thanks to Dan for sharing it with us. He's made a bunch of music that he made for, uh, *Bullseye* available on Bandcamp. Uh, just search for DJW, there. It's called, like, *Music for Bullseye*. It's pay-what-you-want.

Our theme song is "Huddle Formation" by The Go Team. Thanks to them and Memphis Industries, their label, for letting us use it. Great song, great band. backhere

And before you go! *Bullseye* has been around forever and a day! I am bald now and didn't used to be. That means we have done hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of interviews, including more than one with Lynda Barry, who just won a McArthur Fellowship, a Genius Grant, and I agree—she is a genius. Two of my favorite *Bullseye* interviews in the history of the program, so go listen to Lynda, because she is an amazing human being.

All our interviews are available on our website or in your favorite podcast app. You can also find us on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube—both of the interviews from this week's program are in YouTube, if you want to share them. Just search for *Bullseye with Jesse Thorn*. You can keep up with the show on any of those platforms.

We're also, these days, on NPR.org! You can go find them in NPR.org, if you want to.

I guess that's about it. Just remember: all great radio hosts have a signature sign-off.

Upbeat music plays.

Speaker: *Bullseye with Jesse Thorn* is a production of MaximumFun.org and is distributed by *NPR*.

[Music fades out.]

00:40:40 Music
00:40:42 Promo

Music
Promo