

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 NPR.
00:00:12	Jesse Thorn	Host	<i>[Music fades out.]</i> I'm Jesse Thorn. It's <i>Bullseye</i> !
00:00:15	Music	Music	"Huddle Formation" from the album <i>Thunder, Lightning, Strike</i> by The Go! Team plays. A fast, upbeat, peppy song. Music plays as Jesse speaks, then fades out.
00:00:22	Jesse	Host	If you've seen <i>The Righteous Gemstones</i> —it's a comedy on HBO. It is about a family called the Gemstones. They're pastors and owners of a massive mega-church with hundreds of thousands of followers. The family centers around Dr. Eli Gemstone, the patriarch. He's been preaching on TV for decades. He's played by John Goodman.
<p>But the <u>show</u> centers on Eli's kids. Their power struggles, their scheming, their scandals, their ham-fisted attempts to curry favor with their father. Maybe think <i>Succession</i>, but if <i>Succession</i> was set in the south and created by Danny McBride. Well, I mean—it—it actually, literally is, uh, created by Danny McBride, not just <i>Gemstones</i>.</p> <p>Danny stars as Jesse, the oldest child. He is a boorish, overconfident dummy who constantly finds himself in over his head. So, pretty much <i>[chuckles]</i> every Danny McBride character ever. There's Kelvin, the cool young one who dresses pretty much exclusively in Affliction t-shirts, ripped jeans, and patterned sport coats. He's played by Adam DeVine. And there's Judy, played by my guest: Edi Patterson.</p> <p>On a show filled with some of the most talented people in comedy, Judy Gemstone is comfortably the funniest character.</p> <p><i>[Music fades out.]</i></p> <p>She's got a kind of crackly, manic energy—alternating between total confidence in everything she does and <u>massive</u>, crippling insecurity. She doesn't have much filter. She has a <u>very</u>, very short temper. I mean, so far in this season, she has destroyed an entire soda vending machine and an SUV. Here's a scene from early on in the show. In it, the Gemstone family gather at the gravestone of their late matriarch, Amy Lee. Goodman's Eli Gemstone has some harsh words for all of his children, including Judy.</p>			
00:02:09	Clip	Clip	<i>[Music swells and fades.]</i>
<p>Eli Gemstone: That was an embarrassment.</p> <p><i>[Judy laughs.]</i></p> <p>Don't laugh, Judy.</p>			

Judy Gemstone: I wasn't laughing at that, Daddy. I was just—I was recalling some funny vids I just saw of animals acting like fools. That's why I was laughing. So.

Eli: I've heard you've had some company in your home.

Judy: Who?

Eli: Little boyfriend and you been shacking up.

Judy: Daddy, he's my... fiancé, alright? He's not just my boyfriend and BJ will be a Gemstone soon enough.

Jesse Gemstone: He ain't even a believer!

Judy: *[Stammering]* What—yes, he is!

Jesse: No, he's not!

Judy: Jesse—

Jesse: Amber showed me some posts he made of Facebook. Guess what, Daddy? They're pro-abortion. So, there's that.

Judy: No, Daddy, they weren't!

Jesse: Yeah, they were.

Judy: BJ does not like killing babies! He likes little babies!

Kelvin Gemstone: No, I saw those posts too, Daddy.

Judy: No, you didn't, Kelvin.

Kelvin: Yeah, I did. Very pro-abortion.

Judy: No, it was not, Daddy. And you know what—they won't give him a chance. That's what's happening.

Kelvin: Why would we? He's a dud. He's a snooze.

Jesse: Yeah! You bring home a boring-ass white boy to the family. Good job!

Judy: Uh, no, no, no! He's a interesting-ass white boy!

[The siblings bicker unintelligibly in the background.]

Eli: The family is lost.

[Music swells and fades.]
[Jesse and Edi laugh.]

00:03:05 Jesse Host

Edi Patterson, welcome to *Bullseye*. I'm so happy to have you on the show.

00:03:10	Edi Patterson	Guest	Thanks for having me, Jesse.
00:03:11	Jesse	Host	And congratulations on this great show. I've gotten a <u>lot</u> of laughs out of it. A lot of laughs.
00:03:15	Edi	Guest	Oh, good. I'm glad.
00:03:17	Jesse	Host	Did you grow up going to church, yourself?
00:03:20	Edi	Guest	Yeah, I did. We were definitely a church-every-Sunday and then... if there was, you know, a thing during the week—like a covered dish supper or something, we went to <u>that</u> . And, um, I was an acolyte and we went to Sunday School and none of it was, uh, big mega-churchy stuff. It was a small Episcopal church, but we were <u>very</u> , very involved.
00:03:40	Jesse	Host	Which kind of Episcopal church was it? Because I'm a... somewhat lapsed Episcopalian, myself, and...
00:03:47	Edi	Guest	Mm-hm.
00:03:48	Jesse	Host	I grew up in San Francisco, where the priest in my church was gay in the, like, mid to late 80's.
00:03:55	Edi	Guest	I don't <u>think</u> we ever had... a <u>gay</u> reverend, <u>but</u> I kind of <u>knew</u> ... through hearing about, um, you know, the bigger... diocese, if that's what you call it, across the country, that—that Episcopalians did have gay reverends, and I always—even from a small kid thought, "Oh good, we're in the good one."

[They both laugh.]

I knew from a very young age, like, "This is like a cool philosophy of this church. This is what I think." 'Cause even, um... from the time I was really little, like, the stuff that I... got down with were, you know, the really basic stuff of—of old JC. Of, like, he was down with everybody and it was all about being nice to everyone and he didn't care who had done bad things and... um, yeah. It—it didn't deviate too far from my, uh, my just—

00:05:12	Jesse	Host	You know what, I probably got some of my thoughts about all of it from Sunday School, knowing, like, from very early on—you know, like—there's no <u>choosing</u> to be gay. You're born gay or you're not. And, like, I probably, you know, inadvertently got a lot of that, even, from Sunday School without them even saying that stuff, you know? I feel like, when I was going to church as a kid—and I don't know if this is an unusual experience, but—I never hated church. I always thought church was nice and I liked everyone at church, and I liked the church itself. And I ended up—I ended up working in an Episcopal church for a few years. Um, and was thrilled to do so. I don't remember ever believing in God?
00:05:35	Edi	Guest	Mm-hm. <i>[Surprised]</i> Oh, interesting!
00:05:37	Jesse	Host	<i>[Laughing]</i> Y-yeah! I mean, I just thought church was nice, you know? I don't know.
00:05:41	Edi	Guest	<i>[Shocked]</i> Oh, <u>wow</u> ! So, you never thought about, like, sorta the bigger picture of it?
00:05:44	Jesse	Host	I mean, I <u>thought</u> about it and I thought, <i>[skeptically]</i> "Eh. I don't... I don't think I believe <u>that</u> ."
00:05:49	Edi	Guest	<u>Wooooow</u> .

[Edi gives various affirmatives as Jesse speaks.]

00:05:50	Jesse	Host	"That's—that does—that—that doesn't add up—add up to me." But, uh, you know. I was just—was not a complainer and everybody was
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being nice—and everything. Like, uh, you know—I think a lot of people who lose faith often lose faith in a cataclysmic way, you know? Because of some major disjuncture.

00:06:13 Edi Guest But, for me, it—I was just always like, “I—this is nice, but...”
[Giggles.] Yeah, that’s interesting. I, um, I fully was all-in. Like...
even to the point—you know what, now that I’m thinking about it, it
probably—there was probably a—a good mix of fully believing and
[laughs]—this is gonna sound crazy, but—and watching horror
movies too early?

[Jesse laughs in surprise.]

'Cause my dad really liked horror movies, so we saw, like, the craziest things at such a young age. And I still love horror movies, but I think back, and I go, "Hm—not sure if that was good or bad, but I love it." *[Breaks into laughter.]* But I think it all kind of maybe tied in, because I can remember phases... as a kid, of being like... really worried about, like, you know, spiritual warfare type things and being super afraid of, like... t-the—the ways in which, like, the devil could come for you and, uh, exorcism type stuff and... uh... it all kind of meshed in.

I was very much a believer, but that, like, hard-core—I guess kind of fear stuff, definitely, definitely dissipated. Thank God.

[They both laugh.]

Like, what awful stuff to, like, worry about as you're going to sleep as a child. *[Laughs]* Like—

[Seriously] “Hm, wonder if I’ll have to fight the devil.”

[They both laugh.]

			I mean, it's so sick and so sad and scary.
00:07:39	Jesse	Host	What horror movies did you see at inappropriate ages, as a kid?
00:07:43	Edi	Guest	[<i>Laughing</i>] Oh, man. We saw—I can't remember if it was on a VHS tape—it must have been—we saw <i>The Shining</i> <u>so</u> young.
00:07:50	Jesse	Host	How old are we talk—I mean are we talking about, like—I saw <i>The Shining</i> in a high school class... with a c-cool—with a cool teacher, when I was like 15 or 16, and I was like, “I’m not ready for this.”
00:08:03	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Jesse: [<i>Laughing</i>] “It’s too much for me.”
			Edi: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. No. I’m talking, like... hooo, I feel like eight?
00:08:08	Jesse	Host	Woah!
00:08:10	Edi	Guest	[<i>Breaks out laughing.</i>] Oh—yeah, dude! I’m not kidding. Like, we saw some <u>crazy</u> stuff! We did lean toward liking the ones that had kids in them, though. You know, like—I feel like there was a thing... where it used to be you could have a genuinely scary movie and it could have kids in it, or a kid hero. Like <i>Silver Bullet</i> . Do you know that movie?
00:08:30	Jesse	Host	No.
00:08:31	Edi	Guest	Oh, it’s <u>great</u> . [<i>Giddily</i>] You gotta check that out! Um—or, uh... <i>Lost Boys</i> isn’t that scary, but like, in that vein of, like, “Ooh, this is kind

of for kids, but it's also very intense." We loved *Silver Bullet*; we loved *The Shining*. Um. I can remember seeing... *American Werewolf in London* as a little kid. There was a—I didn't see this until... college, but there was a—there was a time when, like, a hurricane was coming through where I lived and... my, uh, my family had come to my parent's house 'cause it was a little bit higher above sea level than their houses were.

And so, everyone was, like, camped out in my house and I remember looking out the front window *[laughing]* of, like, full trees and stuff flying past, and in the other room—for whatever reason—the adults were watching *The Exorcist*. I think it was on regular TV, or something, 'cause we didn't have cable and so it must have been, just like, on regular TV with, like, really bad parts cut out, but still so scary.

And I remember just hearing that... *[laughing through her words]* as I'm watching, like, a hurricane happen outside. Like, horrible, like, *[makes strangled groaning^ noises]*.

[Edi laughs breathlessly.] So, no wonder, like, it all kind of trips over into, like... religion sort of trips over into supernatural, for me.

00:09:53 Jesse Host *[Edi gives several affirmatives as Jesse speaks.]*
One of the things that we see a lot of on *The Righteous Gemstones* is the... father of the family's television program that he hosted with his wife—it's like a television—

00:10:19 Edi Guest *[Stammering]* It—late 80's, early 90's televangelist show. Did you ever have any Christian media in your life, as a kid?
[Beat. Edi takes a breath.] Well... the closest we had to Christian media, in our life, was—this isn't Christian media, but—there would be, like, uh, reruns of the old *Lawrence Welk Show*? And, uh...

[Jesse laughs in the background.]

00:10:55 Jesse Host
00:10:56 Edi Guest That would be on, sometimes, 'cause my mom and dad thought it was, um, funny and, uh... interesting and so, I—I, as a result, did too. Um... but the other, sort of, uhh... times it was on our TV were... there was this, uh... I don't know, I feel like it was, like, a tabloid news show called, uh, *A Current Affair*.
[Sounding like he's never heard of it.] Sure!
Yeah, and sometimes on *A Current Affair*, they would have stories about Jim Bakker and Tammy Faye Bakker. And so, you would see, like, you know—her crying or him apologizing into a microphone and that—that was about the extent of, like, mega-church stuff that I saw in my TV. But they always landed on me—like, they fascinated me so much, because they were sooo overblown. I wanted them to come on. They were fascinating to me, because it was almost like seeing, um, an *SNL* character, or something.

00:11:29 Jesse Host Like, what—is this real? What are they doing? You know?
Well, I mean—I think what one of the things that you see in *The Righteous Gemstones* that is really striking—I mean, at least, if—if you're like me: a person who, you know, doubts their every move and believes in nothing.

00:11:46	Edi	Guest	<p><i>[Laughs; then, with humor]</i> Uh, <u>wow</u>. Except for <u>fearing the void</u>. Is that these characters who are... not necessarily evil so much as human... behave with such extraordinary certitude and you're like, "Oh. Well, <u>yeah</u>! I guess I would behave that way too, if I thought that's what <u>God</u> wanted me to do." <i>[Laughs.]</i> You know what I mean? Like that an—that must be an extraordinary thing to play, as an actor.</p>
00:11:47	Jesse	Host	
00:12:17	Edi	Guest	<p>It really is, and I think it's, uh, it's really freeing. And then I think all of those things that you said of, you know, feeling emboldened by the Lord and, like, um <i>[clicks teeth]</i> ... uh, <u>blessed</u> or <u>special</u>, in a way.</p> <p>I think add that to, um <i>[clicks teeth]</i> a certain amount of... being born into opulence and being born into entitlement and wealth and yeah, I think it—I think it would do <u>weird</u> things to your brain, where even... even things that you may know are wrong, I think probably, your brain flips it until you go like, "Yeah, but <u>I</u> can."</p> <p><i>[They both laugh quietly.]</i></p>
00:13:06	Jesse	Host	<p>"Yeah, but." You know. "Yeah, but <u>I'm</u> allowed to. 'Cause I <u>feel</u> it. Like, I—what I <u>feel</u> is true." <i>[Laughs.]</i></p> <p>Let's hear another scene from <i>The Righteous Gemstones</i>—and my guest is Edi Patterson, who plays, uh, Judy Gemstone, the daughter of this family of mega-church evangelists. And in this scene, she's talking to her dad, played by John Goodman, and letting him know that—that she's not gonna be at the Easter service.</p>
00:13:25	Clip	Clip	<p><i>[Music swells and fades.]</i></p> <p>Eli: This is a fine time to be hearing about it—two hours before the service. I should have known better than to think I could count on you.</p> <p>Judy: Well, it's too little too late, Daddy. 'Cause you know what they say, "You can't gobble the pie if you didn't help bake it."</p> <p><i>[Soft organ music begins to fade in, in the background.]</i></p> <p>Eli: Judy, what in the world has that man been putting in your head?</p> <p>Judy: Nothing, Daddy, okay? Nothing that wasn't already in there, 'cause—guess what?! I'm not a little girl, anymore! I'm a woman!</p> <p>Eli: Yeah, I know, you're almost 40 years old.</p> <p>Judy: Yeah, no duh, Daddy. That's called Not-A-Little-Girl-Anymore. I have regular woman panties, where the string goes up my crack. I have <i>[censored]</i>. I do sex. I'm carving my own path.</p> <p>Eli: Judy...</p> <p>Judy: That's my name. Don't wear it out, son. <i>[Beat.]</i> Happy Easter, daddy. <i>[The sound of footsteps in gravel as Judy walks away.]</i></p>

00:14:10	Jesse	Host	<p><i>[Music swells and fades.]</i> <i>[They both laugh for a moment.]</i></p> <p>It's a signature of Danny McBride, but it's at a—of Danny McBride's past work, but it's at a new level, on this show. These... very <u>odd</u> word choices.</p> <p><i>[Laughing]</i> Like, these...</p> <p><i>[Edi laughs quietly.]</i></p> <p><u>Weird</u>, 25% to 40% wrong word choices.</p> <p><i>[Edi giggles.]</i></p>
00:14:35	Edi	Guest	Like, "gobble the pie."
00:14:36	Jesse	Host	<p><i>[Laughing]</i> Yeah.</p> <p>Do you just, like, sit in the writer's room, just like, "Nope! That word's not wrong enough! Nope! That word's a little bit too wrong!"</p>
00:14:43	Edi	Guest	<p><i>[Laughing]</i> It's more like if I see—if I'm reading a scene Danny wrote and something maybe looks, in quotes, "<u>wrong</u>", I know it's on purpose and it reads funny to me. And if I—if I write a sentence like, "you can't gobble the pie if you didn't help bake it."</p> <p><i>[Jesse laughs softly in the background as Edi talks.]</i></p> <p>If I—you know, if I'm making up phrases that don't exist, but acting like they do exist, and using words like "gobble" and I show it to Danny and he laughs, like, I know, like, "Oh, great. We're—we're onto something." <i>[She laughs.]</i></p>
00:15:21	Jesse	Host	<p>We—we weirdly, um, get each other, that way. And I'm—oh god, I'm so grateful for that. <i>[Edi breaks into laughter.]</i></p> <p>Danny McBride is a really unusual guy in H-Hollywood terms. He's been on this show before and I've really enjoyed his past work. He, like, came out to Hollywood, flamed out, had to go back home and then...</p>
00:15:34	Edi	Guest	Mm-hm.
00:15:35	Jesse	Host	Ended up having extraordinary success.
00:15:37	Edi	Guest	<p>Yeah. The whole deal's an amazing story. He's <u>such</u> a bright dude. He's <u>so</u>... effing smart. And, um... yeah. So talented. I mean, it would—you know. It—everything works out the way it's supposed to.</p>
00:15:51	Jesse	Host	When you started working with him as an actor, could you tell that it was... the right thing? That it was a good match?
00:16:00	Edi	Guest	<p>Yeah, man. Immediately. Like, from the <i>[clears throat]</i> the second we started the first scene, it was immediate, like... very, very obvious comedy chemistry and, like, I totally felt like he saw me and got me and I—I totally saw and got him. I had already been such a big fan of his stuff.</p>
00:16:21	Jesse	Host	What do you think it is about the two of you?
00:16:24	Edi	Guest	<p><i>[Thoughtfully]</i> I don't know. I think—I think we find similar things funny. I think that we both like extreme specificity...</p> <p><i>[Jesse chuckles.]</i></p>

00:16:51	Jesse	Host	<p>Uh, in characters and, uh, I think we both veer <i>[laughs]</i>—veer toward the darkness, with humor. For sure there's, like, you know, some kindred spirit, brother/sister stuff happening, psychically. Um. Yeah, I don't know exactly what it is. We—we—we think a lot of the same stuff is funny, for sure.</p> <p>We'll finish up my interview with Edi Patterson in just a bit. After the break, if you're already a fan of <i>The Righteous Gemstones</i>, it's the moment you've been waiting for. We'll talk about "Misbehavin'"—the profoundly catchy Christian country tune she sings and helped write. We'll be running through the house with a pickle in our mouth in just a minute. It's <i>Bullseye</i>, from MaximumFun.org and <i>NPR</i>.</p>
00:17:15	Promo	Promo	<p>Maddie Sofia: Maddie Sofia, here.</p>

[Futuristic music plays in the background.]

Host of *Short Wave*—a new daily science podcast from *NPR*. Listen for new discoveries, everyday mysteries, and the science behind the headlines, all in about ten minutes. It'll be fun! You'll learn some stuff! And, yeah. It's gonna get a little weird. 'Cause, science. Listen and subscribe now to *Short Wave* from *NPR*.

00:17:37	Promo	Promo	<p><i>[Music fades out on a long, wobbly note.]</i> <i>[Straightforward, thump-y electric bass guitar beat with light drums.]</i></p>
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Laurie: Hi. I am Laurie Kilmartin.

Jackie: And I'm Jackie Kashian.

Laurie: Together we host a podcast called:

Jackie: *The Jackie and Laurie Show*.

Laurie: Uh, we're both stand-up comics. We recently met each other because women weren't allowed to work together, uh—uh, on the road or in gigs for a long, long time, and so...our friendship has been unfolding on this podcast for a couple years. Jackie constantly works the road; I write for *Conan* and then I work the road in-between.

Jackie: We do a lot of stand-up comedy, and so we celebrate stand-up—

Laurie: Yes.

Jackie: —and we also...bitch about it.

Laurie: We keep it to an hour; we don't have any guests. We somehow find enough to—to talk about every single week. So find us—you can subscribe to *The Jackie and Laurie* show at MaximumFun.org, or wherever you get your podcasts.

Jackie: *[Nonplussed]* K, bye.

00:18:25	Jesse	Host	<p><i>[Music ends.]</i></p> <p>Welcome back to <i>Bullseye</i>. I'm Jesse Thorn. With me, right now, is Edi Patterson. She's an actress and comedian, a veteran of the</p>
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Groundlings, in Los Angeles. She currently plays Judy Gemstone on HBO's *The Righteous Gemstones*, which is streaming now.

[Chuckling softly] I-I'm really interested by the worlds of the various comedy training programs in LA, New York, and Chicago that feed a lot of the comedy world. You were a Groundling where... the training is—it's long been a feeder for *Saturday Night Live*, because a significant portion of the training is about developing distinctive comic characters. But you also have done a lot of narrative improv with a theater here in LA called Impro. That is something that there is not that much of.

00:19:31 Edi Guest

It, you know, it—it has existed since the beginning of improv, but it is not a huge part of the world of improv, these days. Improvising actual long-form stories. How did you get into that?

So, yeah, I got—I got... involved with Impro Theater when I first moved to LA. When—like, when I first started taking classes at the Groundlings. But Impro theater, at the time, was a different thing. It was, uh, short-form sort of—more game-based stuff called Theatresports. Which is, um, comes from Keith Johnstone, who's sort of, one of the—you know—original gurus of improv. English guy who started in—started his stuff in Canada.

But Theatresports was all trickle-down from Keith Johnstone's philosophies. And so, that's how I learned about improv, really, was through a Keith Johnstone type—style training. And then there was a certain point where LA Theatresports became Impro Theater. I guess... maybe something like ten years ago. And we started strictly improvising plays and... I still think we're a bit of an anomaly in that we—we really do, in earnest, improvise a play. We—we have, um, sets, costumes. Uh, we do them at legit theaters, like The Broad Stage in Santa Monica and... it's not played for jokes or goofiness.

The shows are legitimately hilarious, but no one's ever trying to do jokes or one-liners or—we're really just trying to make a cool story happen. [Beat.] So, yeah. I've been with Impro Theater since the beginning and we do usually—usually one genre at a time. We'll do a run. Say, at the—say at The Broad Stage in December, we'll do improvised Jane Austin. *Jane Austin Unscripted*. And we'll do that for a few weeks.

00:21:47 Jesse Host

And, um—so part of—part of the—the study at Impro Theater is very sort of scholarly in that we have to read a ton to all be on the same page. 'Cause we're never doing that author or that style. Say we're doing *Twilight Zone* or we're doing Tennessee Williams or we're doing Chekov. We have to study, study, study to know what that world is. And then we'll do something in that world. It's never based on any play, in particular. It just follows the rules of that—whatever that was. If that makes sense.

00:22:01 Edi Guest

Do you ever have the experience of losing yourself in improv? Like, almost the way that a, you know, um, an athlete describes—might describe losing themselves in, you know, running back and forth on a soccer field.

Absolutely. To me, that's when it's—that's when it's the best. When, maybe, someone from the audience is—is talking to you after and

they are like, “Oh my god, when this happened, and this happened” and you really don’t know... what they’re talking about. You need them to tell you what happened, ‘cause you have no recollection.

That happens a lot in—I do this improvised one person show, sometimes, where I play all the characters. This woman who is—is a Groundlings alum from, uh, I think she was a Groundling in the 80’s, 90’s and now she directs there. Her name’s Diana Oliver. She came up with the concept called One and it’s an in improvised one-person show. And when I’ve done it, I usually play between—I don’t know—12 and 20 characters? And you just go, and you hope... you hope that you can just wipe the whiteboard in your head clean and then channel something.

And thank god—I’m knocking some wood, right now—that is what happens, if you let it. But absoluuutely, I feel like I go out of body. I feel like I’m there with other people, if that makes sense. And I count on them—they’re all me. *[Laughs.]* But I count on them like I would... someone in a—in a scene I’m improvising with. And I feel like I’m there with them. It’s—it’s—that one is the weirdest. And, yeah, I’ve felt that channeling thing in other shows, too, but that one is so, so visceral—of like, you—something just happens, and you go somewhere.

00:23:33 Jesse Host How do you think that working in longform narrative improv affected your work as... a writer?

00:23:43 Edi Guest Oh, it’s—it’s huge. They so inform each other, because that’s how ideas come in, almost in a—on an improv track, they almost come in sideways. I’ll have a sideways idea of going, “Oh, that’s funny. That’s funny if that—if that character thinks that.” And then I’ll just follow that track like I would if I was improvising and many times it’s—I find myself, you know, either talking to myself or talking with Danny or—if he says something riffing on it and—yeah. So much—so much of my writing will, uh, spring, in some way, from improv. For sure, for sure.

00:24:24 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Jesse:** I have to ask you about a song that you helped write—

Edi: *[Laughs]* Please do.

Jesse: —for *The Righteous Gemstones*. This is...

00:24:31 Jesse Host **Edi:** Yes.
You know, I will mention who’s coming on the show on Twitter. And... the universal interest of our audience was this song.

[Edi laughs.]

00:24:50 Edi Guest It’s a song called “Misbehavin’”. Can you tell me a little bit about what—where—how this falls, in the show?
[Stifling laughter] Y-yeah. S-so... the song first shows up audibly in episode five. There’s—in episode three you see... You’re at baby Billy’s house, at Freeman’s Gap. And you walk past an album on the wall of he and Amy Lee as kids and it says, you know, “Baby Billy and Amy Lee, *Misbehavin’*” and it—you just sort of walk by it. And, uh, and then in episode five the—all of episode five is a flashback to 1989. And they—they perform the song together. The whole song. And it’s... man, oh man. It’s great.

They're both so *[laughing]*, so good. So good at doing it. Both, uh, grew up clogging, I have to mention. Um... and... that song was brought up when we were writing the episodes. John, one of the writers, had set—had—we knew they had a—a hit song and he had, uh, just named it “Misbehavin’”. And so, through the scripts, that would be brought up, you know. “Misbehavin’”—oh, they, you know, their hit, “Misbehavin’”, blah, blah, blah.

And then it came the *[laughing]* time when “Misbehavin’” needed to actually exist, as a song, because it was gonna be performed. And Danny had the first... couple of lines in his head and I can't remember if there was a melody with them. I think there might have been, but he sang the first couple of lines in the room, just as a joke, and they—they made me laugh really hard and they—and I understood—something about him saying those first two lines made me all like, “Oooh, it's like that!”

00:26:28 Edi Guest

And so then that inspired me and I wrote, um, a whole chunk after that—more of the song and, um, you know, added in the little, uh, the element of... how do we bring religion into this and added in the, like, “met them in—man in the thorny crown” stuff and—so we had this whole big chunk of it and a melody had shown up through he and I talking about it and so I sang it into his phone...

[Jesse chuckles]

Up at Ruffhouse and we sent it to Joey Stevens and the music supervisor and Joey Stevens then added, um, another verse or two and added a—like, all this awesome instrumentation and, in my opinion, added the funniest line of the song and the most *[laughs]* enigmatic line of the song: “running through the house with a pickle in my mouth.” And, uh...

00:27:24 Jesse Host
00:27:25 Edi Guest

[Laughing in delight] Y-yes!

[Laughs] And sent it back and—I don't know, it was perfect! It was—it just was immediately so... sticky and fun and we kinda knew we were... onto something cool, because Danny had taken, like, our rough—our rough cut of it... just the very, very initial, like, uh—all the stuff in one. Or maybe he even took that voice memo. Something he played for his kids, and the kids were immediately into it and—I don't know, that sort of showed us like, “Oh, that's weird. There's something about that beat of it that is some—I don't—almost kind of hits on a primal level. Let's say it slaps.”

[Jesse laughs.]

Um... but yeah, it was really, really fun and, uh... once he said that stuff like, *[singing]* “mama told me not—mama told me not to, I did it anyway. Misbehavin’.”

I don't know. It—it just, like, opened a portal in my mind and I was like, “Ooooooh, got it! Okay!” *[Laughs.]* And then, yeah, just... e-each thing added onto each thing and then we had a song.

00:28:34 Jesse Host
00:28:37 Clip Clip

Let's hear “Misbehavin’” from *The Righteous Gemstones*.

[Transition sound swells and fades. “Misbehavin’” from The Righteous Gemstones plays—toe-tapping country with people clapping to the beat in the background.]

AIMEE-LEIGH GEMSTONE:
*Mama told me not to, I did it anyway
Misbehavin'*

BABY BILLY FREEMAN:
*Daddy said don't but I said I'm gonna
Misbehavin'*

AIMEE-LEIGH:
Pies on the windowsill, swimming in the creek

BABY BILLY:
Catching crawdads and playing with a stick

AIMEE-LEIGH:
I wore lipstick

BABY BILLY:
And I got caught shaving

BOTH:
*Just two little country kids outside misbehavin'
We thought we was just messing around
'Til we met that man in the thorny crown
He taught us that tricks and mischief leads to Satan*

BABY BILLY:
Satan!

BOTH:
So from now on, there's no misbehavin'

BABY BILLY:
Here we go, now!

[Sounds of a clogging dance break—rhythmic wooden thumping on the ground. Plays for a minute, then fades into the transition sound; which swells and fades.]

00:29:15	Jesse	Host	Gotta write a clogging break into all the song—had you even written a song before?
00:29:19	Edi	Guest	Yeah, I have written songs before. I, uh, I was part of this— <i>[sighs]</i> I have—I've written them for, you know, stuff for the Groundlings and then I was also part of this, uh, um, musical parody of <i>The Lord of the Rings</i> , a chunk of time ago. And I co-wrote songs for that. So, I like writing songs. I—I haven't—I can't read music, or anything, but, uh... I like writing songs and I like making up melodies and stuff.
00:29:44	Jesse	Host	Did you... <i>[teasingly, like he knows something he isn't saying]</i> tour your musical parody of <i>The Lord of the Rings</i> ? Were you... taking it... to <u>cons</u> or anything?
00:29:53	Edi	Guest	Yeah. I—we started it as this thing we were... gonna do, I think—I think for, like... a month of weekends? Like, four weekends or something. And then the response was <u>crazy</u> , so we ran it for... at <u>least</u> six months straight. In LA, and then we did it at Comic Con and it was <u>craazy</u> . We did it at this giant theater in San Diego and everyone came in costume and it was sooo fun.

And it got real culty and then... because it was getting cool and because they... uh—a big, uh, dramatic *Lord of the Rings* musical was about to be released in the West End, so we got this Cease and Desist, 'cause ours was getting kinda popular and then we stopped and then... I think that didn't do well, or something, and then they were back interested in our show. And then we—then we were legal and with, you know, signed on with, uh, the people who owned all the rights to the books.

And then, um... I did it—we did it for two weeks in New York, once, as the—as part of the New York Musical Festival and—yeah, we did it a few different places.

00:31:04 Jesse Host

I mean, that is wild! I had no idea... like, that the—the fact that you got a license to do it, at some point, is extraordinary, to me. Because I know about my friend Jonathan Coulton, who's one of the hosts of *NPR's Ask Me Another*, is a musician with a deep geek fanbase and he'll play a con and I'll be like, "Oh, how did that con go, Jonathan?"

And he'll be like, "It was great! There was 10,000 people at my *[laughing]* show!!"

And I'll be like, "WHAT!? WHAT!?"

00:31:35 Crosstalk Crosstalk

[Edi laughs loudly in the background.]

Jesse: I mean, he's wonderful.

Edi: Oh my god.

Jesse: He deserves 10,000 people at his show, but there is... like, the culture is so deep and strong—

Edi: Yesss.

Jesse: —of geekdom that...

Edi: Yeah.

00:32:04 Edi Guest

Jesse: It is really amazing when something kind of rides that lightning. Like, when you get into the slipstream of that, it's kind of an amazing thing. Especially, I imagine, if you're *[chuckling]* you know, if you're used to doing, uh... long-form improv in a 50-seat theater.

Yeah! I mean, we were—all of us who, uh, worked on this thing were improvisers. All of the original cast. And so, yeah, we all co-wrote the songs and, um—yeah. It was a crazy thing. It was a crazy thing *[chuckles]* for—for a bunch of improvisers. And we all kind of were into that stuff, anyway.

So, it was—yeah. It was amazing. And that slipstream feeling is the exact *[chuckling]* perfect way to describe it. Of—all of a sudden, you're, like, part of a thing that people come in—come to in capes, you know?

[They both giggle.]

00:32:43	Jesse	Host	<p>Like. <u>Boom!</u> One day to the next. It's a giant crowd of people in capes. <i>[Edi laughs.]</i></p> <p>You had a long career in all of the types of comedy where you... almost can't make a living.</p> <p><i>[Edi cackles in surprise.]</i></p> <p>Into your mid-thirties. Or at least early thirties.</p> <p><i>[Edi laughs breathlessly in the background.]</i></p> <p>You know what I mean? Like, if you're—if you're a m-moderately successful standup comic, you can't work the road. You know? You don't have to be a famous standup comic to make a living being a standup comic.</p> <p><i>[Edi gives several affirmatives as Jesse speaks.]</i></p> <p>But when you're doing sketch and improv... there's, you know... 30 theater jobs at, you know, a—the Second City, in Chicago and the Second City Cruise Ship, or whatever. And there's, you know, 30 jobs on <i>Saturday Night Live</i> and there's being in TV commercials, and stuff. And, like, you have had <u>extraordinary</u> success at a point in your career where many people might have bailed.</p>
00:34:02	Edi	Guest	<p>And I wonder if you considered... bailing, as you had the kind of medium success that, in sketch and improv particularly, can make it hard to, you know, just pay rent and eat.</p> <p>You know... okay. To answer part of your question—no, I—I never thought about bailing, 'cause I always felt like I was moving forward. And I always knew... I don't know. I just knew this—that—I knew this was what I was supposed to be doing and I knew—and I knew I was good at it. And... the thing is, I never thought, like, "Oh, I need a sketch job."</p>
00:34:41	Jesse	Host	<p>'Cause I—I just happen to be, uh, an actor who is an improviser who has done sketch at the Groundlings. You know what I mean? I never thought, like, "Hoo-boy, I better find a sketch job."</p>
00:34:42	Edi	Guest	<p>Right.</p> <p>Um... <i>[clicks teeth]</i> so, yeah, and then there's, you know, there's all those—those jobs that sort of propel you and push you forward, but maybe, like, the world doesn't know they're happening, yet. Like, uh... when you get a commercial and that, you know, pays for you to live for a while, or when you do a pilot that doesn't get picked up or—when you do, uh... you know. Ten episodes of something that, just, happened to be that no one watched or—you know what I mean? I—I always felt like I was moving forward.</p>
00:35:35	Jesse	Host	<p>And I'm—I'm <u>not</u> saying, like, it didn't get scary or existential, at times. But I always—I always just kind of knew, like, I have something cool that is specifically me. And... I—I just, uh, I don't know. I just always knew that it was gonna be good.</p>
00:35:41	Edi	Guest	<p>Well, Edi, thank you so much for being on <i>Bullseye</i>. And thanks for your awesome work. I've gotten so many laughs out of it.</p> <p>Oh, I'm glad, Jesse. Thanks for having me.</p>

00:35:43	Jesse	Host	Edi Patterson. <i>The Righteous Gemstones</i> is wrapping up its first season, right now. Don't worry, Danny and Edi and everyone else are already hard at work on season two.
00:35:53	Music	Music	Jazzy music plays.
00:35:55	Jesse	Host	That's the end of another episode of <i>Bullseye</i> . <i>Bullseye</i> is produced at MaximumFun.org world headquarters, overlooking MacArthur park in beautiful Los Angeles, California—where my producer, Kevin, has noted the question of the week: can pigeons swim!?
			You been doing <u>research</u> into that, Kevin? He says no. He has not been doing research into that. Just to—just something that he's been—he's been mulling over while he looks out the window.
			Our show is produced by speaking into microphones. Our producer is Kevin Ferguson. Jesus Ambrosio is our associate producer. We get help from Casey O'Brien, and our production fellow is Jordan Kauwling. Our interstitial music is by Dan Wally, also known as DJW. Our theme song is by The Go! Team. Thanks to them and to their label, Memphis Industries, for letting us use it.
			And we have two decades of past <i>Bullseye</i> interviews. You can find them all at MaximumFun.org . Like, uh, let's say—we talked about Danny McBride and how great he is. He was on <i>Bullseye</i> . Find it at MaximumFun.org . We're also on YouTube. All the interviews from this week's program are up there, if you wanna share them with somebody or post them to social media or—or whatever. We're also on Facebook and Twitter. Just search for <i>Bullseye with Jesse Thorn</i> . You can keep up with the show there, as well.
			All of our past episodes also available in your favorite podcast app. And I guess that's about it. Just remember: all great radio hosts have a signature signoff.
00:37:22	Promo	Promo	Speaker: <i>Bullseye with Jesse Thorn</i> is a production of MaximumFun.org and is distributed by NPR.
00:37:36	Music	Music	Music fades out.