

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.
			<i>[Music fades out.]</i>
00:00:12	Jesse Thorn	Host	I'm Jesse Thorn! It's <i>Bullseye!</i>
00:00:14	Music	Music	"Huddle Formation" from the album <i>Thunder, Lightning, Strike</i> by The Go! Team. A fast, upbeat, peppy song. Music plays as Jesse speaks, then fades out.
00:00:21	Jesse	Host	Megan Mullally is one of those actors who just kind of radiates confidence and poise. And in the nearly 100 roles she's had on film and television, that's made her stand out. I guess you could say she's a character actress. She plays people with huge personalities, but if she is a character actress, she's one of the best in the game. Like maybe you're a fan of <i>Parks and Recreation</i> . She played Tammy, the ex-wife of Ron Swanson.
			<i>[Music fades out.]</i>
00:00:53	Sound Effect	Transition	She's a kind of menacing, toxic seductress. Ron, by the way, is played by Nick Offerman, who's her real-life husband. Music swells and fades.
00:00:54	Clip	Clip	<i>[A quiet slapping sound in the background.]</i>
			Ron Swanson: I admit there was a time when that sort of behavior would have driven me <u>wild</u> . But I'm in a healthy relationship, now, Tammy.
			Tammy Two: A relationship? With whom!?
			Ron: A lovely, intelligent, self-possessed pediatric surgeon named Wendy.
00:01:09	Sound Effect	Transition	Tammy: Sounds like a real whore. Music swells and fades.
00:01:10	Jesse	Host	By the way, that slapping sound was Tammy enticingly tapping her face with a stick of beef jerky.
			She also had unforgiveable credits on shows like <i>Bob's Burgers</i> , <i>Children's Hospital</i> , and <i>30 Rock</i> . But she's probably best known for her role in the groundbreaking sitcom, <i>Will & Grace</i> . She plays Karen Walker—a kind of deranged, sociopathic, judgmental socialite who works for Grace, on the show.
00:01:33	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:01:34	Clip	Clip	Music: Piano plays a few transition notes in the background.
			Karen Walker: Welcome to the Metropolitan Museum of Art for the Stanley Walker Foundation Benefit! <u>Oh</u> . Stanley loved ancient Egyptian culture. They invented the pyramid, which later became the pyramid <u>scheme!</u>

00:01:51	Sound Effect	Transition	Audience: <i>[Laughs.]</i> Music swells and fades.
00:01:53	Jesse	Host	During its original run, between 1998 and 2006, the show earned 16 Emmy Awards and over 80 Emmy nominations. The show made a comeback a couple years ago. It's still funny. Still weird. And also, still touching. Will & Grace's 11 th and final season is underway now, on NBC.
			Let's listen to a little bit from the previous season. In this scene, Karen's in the bedroom of a fancy country club. She's on the phone with reception. She found a morphine drip, in the room, and mistook it for a gift. It turns out, the room she booked was already occupied by a fellow socialite—and a frenemy—Beverly Leslie. Beverly, played by Leslie Jordan, is an elderly, somewhat flamboyant southern gentleman.
00:02:34	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:02:35	Clip	Clip	Karen Walker: Hello, this is Mrs. Walker, in 705. Who do I have to <u>thank</u> for this lovely morphine drip in my room?
			Audience: <i>[Laughs.]</i>
			Karen: <i>[Offended.]</i> <u>What?</u> ! I'm not recovering from plastic surgery! I've never had anything done in my life!
			<i>[Quietly, as a mumbled aside.]</i> In the United States.
			Audience: <i>[Laughs uproariously. One particular member of the audience shouts in shocked delight.]</i>
			Karen: What do you mean <u>someone else</u> booked the room? I pay a lot of money to belong to this country club and I booked this hospitality suite <u>months</u> ago! I'd like to see who has balls big enough to ask <u>ME</u> to move!
			Beverly Leslie: Well, well, well.
			Audience: <i>[Cheers and applauds for a long time.]</i>
			Beverly: I must have died during surgery, 'cause the devil herself is before me.
			Audience: <i>[Laughs.]</i>
			Karen: <i>[With disdain.]</i> Why, Beverly Leslie. I thought they'd torn down all the corroded old confederate statues.
00:03:28	Sound Effect	Transition	Audience: <i>[Laughs.]</i> Music swells and fades.
00:03:29	Jesse	Host	<i>[Chuckles.]</i> Megan Mullally, welcome to <i>Bullseye</i> . It's great to have you on the show.
00:03:34	Megan Mullally	Guest	Ooh, thanks for having me! <i>[Chuckles.]</i>

00:03:35 Jesse Host You know, when I was prepping for this interview, I watched a little bit of you doing Karen, from the very beginning of the show.

[Megan hums in acknowledgement.]

00:03:45 Megan Guest And the Karen voice was much less ridiculous.
00:03:47 Jesse Host Yeah. Totally different.
How did it become that—like, were you—was it always a scheme of yours, to get to the point where you were doing something completely ridiculous, rather than slightly ridiculous?

00:03:57 Megan Guest I think, like, subconsciously it was. But I think what happened was I used to take really big chances, in auditions. And I used to go in with really weird characters. And sometimes I would get the job, and sometimes they would call the police.

[Jesse laughs.]

So, *[chuckling]* it was about a 50/50.

[Laughing through her words.] Um, so—um, when I auditioned for *Will & Grace*, for that character, I thought, “Yeeeah. I’m not gonna do anything too crazy, because, you know, I won’t get the job.” And... so, in the pilot I thought—the only problem was, I guess, it is so—it was mildly subconscious to the extent that my normal speaking voice is very laconic, and the tone of the show is very farcical and fast-paced. So, it didn’t really fit.

So, over the course of the first—I’d say like—10 episodes, my voice just gets higher and higher and higher. And then, suddenly, I seemed like I was in a farce.

[They giggle.]

But then, you know, that’s—that’s my—‘cause I’m an instinctual, you know, performer. I don’t really, like—I’m not super analytical. But then, analytically, it makes sense, because... you know, the character is the most judgmental person on the planet and nothing that anyone says or does or wears is good enough for her. But then she has this quality that’s inescapable. Her voice. Which is the most irritating thing in the world.

[They laugh.]

00:05:34 Jesse Host You auditioned for Grace first, right?
00:05:36 Megan Host Yeah. I did. I went in and auditioned for Grace and they were like, *[dismissively]* “Next!”

[Chuckles.]

00:05:42 Jesse Host Did you make a big—I mean, were you—did you make a ridiculous choice when you were...
00:05:46 Megan Host No! I just, no. Uh-uh. I went in and I just—it was written very real, so I just tried to be real and they kind of flatlined. And then I went home and forgot all about it and two weeks later my agent called and said, “They want you to audition for this pilot called *Will & Grace*.”

And I said, “I already went in, on that.”

And she was like, “No, it’s for a different part.”

And I said, “There wasn’t another part.”

And she said, “I’m gonna send you the script again.”

So, she sent me the script and I read it and I was like, “Oh yeah, there’s that secretary.”

00:06:16 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Megan: And then that show, *Cybill*, had recently been on, ‘cause this was 1998, with Chris—uh.

Jesse: Christine Baranski.

Megan: Cybill Shepherd and Christine Baranski, who played her rich... you know.

Jesse: Smart-talking.

Megan: Smart-talking sidekick! And I thought, “Well I can’t—”

Jesse: And was spectacularly great.

Megan: And is—and Chris—and it’s Christine Baranski.

Jesse: Yeah.

Megan: So, you can’t beat that, right? So, I thought, “Well I can’t do it better than Christine Baranski did it.”

00:06:43 Megan Guest

And then I thought, “Well, maybe I can make her weird.” So, I kind of thought of some ways to make her sort of quirkiest and weirder. So that’s what I—that’s how I auditioned. I didn’t have the voice, but I did have some weird—she was just a little weirder.

00:06:58 Jesse Host

Sometimes I feel like people who can make big, clear acting choices, right away—it’s because they are brave. Like, they have, like, almost a foolhardy courage to make a big choice. ‘Cause it’s scary to make a big choice that’s far from yourself.

Then, other times I wonder—and I wonder if this is true of you—if part of it is actually self-protective. That, by making a choice that is really big, if you do not get a part, they didn’t like your giant choice, not that they didn’t like you.

00:07:36 Megan Guest

[Thoughtfully.] Hmm. Hmmmm. Very interesting. I think, from—in my situation, it’s like I might—there might be a brain disorder involved.

[Jesse Laughs.]

Because, for me *[chuckles]*—for me it’s like, when I first read—my initial response to the material—I always have a take on it. And then I can’t shake it. So, I’m sort of—I’m sort of screwed, in a way, because whatever my first reaction to the material is, I have a hard time... like, if I have one of those initial reactions and I go into an audition and they’re like, “Yeah, can you do it like totally differently?” I have a little bit of a hard time shifting gears, because I innately feel that my choice is absolutely the right one.

[They laugh.]

00:08:27 Jesse Host
00:08:32 Megan Guest

So, yeah. There might be a slight mental disorder involved. Where were you at, in your career, when you got the part of Karen? Well, shortly before I auditioned for *Will & Grace*, I was in the basement parking garage of a Bed Bath & Beyond, on a payphone with my agent of the time, telling him that I would no longer be auditioning for sitcoms. That I had obviously... it—I had played it out, I had reached my limit. It wasn't panning out. I mean, I'd done a pilot, every year, for many years. And they either didn't go or they went for seven episodes or thirteen episodes and then that was it.

And I said, "Look. Clearly this wasn't meant to be."

And he was like, "I think it is meant to be and I think you're wrong."

And I was like, "Okay! Well, agree to disagree, but I'm not auditioning for any more pilots." And then I didn't have enough money to pay my rent.

[Jesse laughs.]

00:09:33 Jesse Host
00:09:41 Megan Guest
00:09:42 Jesse Host
00:09:44 Megan Guest

And I said, "Hey. Could I get some pilot auditions for sitcoms?" So, that's when I auditioned for *Will & Grace*.

I kind of get the impression that you... committed to being an entertainer at the age of, like, one and a half.

Mm-hm.

And never relented.

One and half days in my mother's womb.

[They laugh.]

Yeah, no. There was no other—I—you know, I've said it before and I'll say it again, that I came out of the womb in a top hat and tap shoes.

[Jesse chuckles.]

00:10:05 Jesse Host
00:10:06 Megan Guest
00:10:16 Crosstalk Crosstalk

And it's just true! I just—it was—that was it. And, you know...

Your first word was *[whispery "Whit-chaa!" kind of noise]*.

Yeah. *[Laughs.]* Ha-cha-cha! Yeah. No, I was very showbiz from the switch. And, um...

Jesse: But your—your family...

Megan: I was an only child.

Jesse: But your family had—you had been—you were born in Los Angeles and moved to Oklahoma City and your father had been an actor in Los Angeles.

Megan: Mm-hm.

Jesse: And moving to Oklahoma City must have been a—in some way—a rejection of showbusiness.

Megan: Yeah.

00:10:36 Megan Guest
Jesse: You don't move to Oklahoma City to renew your contract with showbusiness.
No. My father was done with... he thought he was done, but then he never could stop trying. But—yeah, no. I wasn't too happy about it, trust me. I mean, we moved to Oklahoma City on my sixth birthday and I was like, "Mmm. What's up, parents?"

[Jesse laughs.]

"What are you guys thinking? Tell me—uh, lay out your thoughts behind this weird plan." But then it turned out to be a really great place to grow up. People in Oklahoma City are really, really nice. Very, you know, kind, generous, neighborly types of people. Not everybody. I mean there are *[censored]*, just like everywhere else. But well, for the most part, very nice. And so, I was—it was a good place to grow up.

00:11:33 Jesse Host
00:11:34 Megan Guest
00:11:56 Jesse Host
00:12:02 Megan Guest
00:12:03 Crosstalk Crosstalk

But my father was not... as a matter of fact, I think when I announced that I would like to be an act-or...
How—how old were you?
Well, I mean, I think the cat was way out of the bag already, but I think when I verbalized it I was about seven or eight. He said, "Oh no, no. No, no, no. That's—I don't—I do not want, you know, you to—that's a terrible—it's a very hard business. I don't want you to do that. I don't want—" And he said to my mom, "I don't want her doing that."
And this coming from a man who—I heard—literally wore an ascot around Oklahoma City.
No, it's insane.
Megan: He—it's—it's...

Jesse: A city with a relatively small ascot community.

00:12:09 Megan Guest

Megan: It's a crazy miracle that he wasn't murdered. Because he not only wore an ascot, but he also—at one point, when I was in second grade—purchased a Rolls-Royce Phantom 3, silver-grey, and drove that around town wearing his ascot. And the fact that some *[censored]* kicker on the back of a pickup truck didn't just take him out is... really fortunate.

00:12:34 Jesse Host
00:12:40 Megan Guest

Were you self-aware about how unusual that part of your family was, when you were ten years old?
I knew that my father was different from the other parents, because he was very, very eccentric and flamboyant and his humor was extremely, um... dark and weird and he would really commit to a joke like nobody's business. Like, he would—you know. *[Clears throat.]* Just a minor example is he would pretend that he was having a massive heart attack and then he would fall over, you know, dead in his plate of spaghetti at the dinner table. And my mom and I, at first, were like, "Is he... dead?"

And then, after a while, we were like, *[unimpressed]* "Alright. Get out of the spaghetti." And then, like, another thing he would do routinely—from the time I was in, like, second and third grade—in third grade, I took the bus. And so, I came home, one day, and my

mom wasn't home and being alone with my father was not my preference, because he was terrifying.

So, uh... I—first thing I said when I walked in the door was, I said, “Where’s Mommy?”

00:14:11 Megan Guest

And he said—‘cause he’d—he had this vocal affectation that he did. He did a lot of accents around the house, but he also had this grandiose persona, and he said, *[lavishly, with a transatlantic accent]* “My darling, I’m sorry to tell you... but your mother is dead.” And I—first, just a second, I was like... “Woah. This is not good news.”

And then he was like—and he kept going. He was like, *[in a transatlantic accent]* “You’re just going to have to... live the rest of your life without a mother.”

And then I finally was like, *[resigned]* “Okay. Where is she really, though.”

And he was like, *[plainly, without the accent]* “The grocery store.”

So, um...

00:14:35 Jesse Host

[Megan makes several sounds of agreement as Jesse talks.]

I had a therapist tell me, one time, that... uh, that, like, the thing that I had to provide for my children—if I was gonna provide one thing to my children—was just a sense that... their family and their home were their home.

That whatever happened in the world, no matter what, they had security in our family. Even if they did—even if they went out and murdered someone, or whatever. Um, or someone tried to murder them, they could always...

00:15:08 Megan Guest

That’s amazing. That’s really, really good advice. Yeah, see, I had the opposite. The thing I didn’t realize about my father... I knew that he was, like, his personality was different, because my friends would say, “Your father is really weird.” Or, like, “I don’t... I’m afraid of your father” or “I don’t like being around your father.” But I—what I didn’t understand was that my father was, like, a huuuuge... like, ginormous alcoholic, um... and incredibly emotionally and verbally abusive. *[Laughs.]* And, um, and also that he was a—well, I knew he was a womanizer, because my mom would kinda... you know, used me as her... co-conspirator to try to get to the bottom of certain, you know, flings that he was having.

But *[clears throat]* the thing that I didn’t realize is that everybody’s... household wasn’t like that? Like I thought everybody was terrified to go home, after school. I just thought everybody was. And I never talked about it. I never mentioned it. I never said anything to anybody. I’ve never spoken about it, publicly, until very recently. Like, within the last year or so.

But yeah, it was a thing. And I guess I just didn’t, um... know that I was out of the ordinary. And it really wasn’t even until the last—‘cause I have friends that I’ve known since first grade, since I went

to that school where you go for the whole time, and it wasn't until the last—you know—ten years or so, even, that I said to them, like "Did you know [*chuckling*] that my dad was like this?"

00:17:12 Jesse Host And, uh, yeah. I kept a lot in. I don't know why I did. I guess because I couldn't do anything wrong or I would—like, something terrible would happen. So, I just tried to never do anything wrong. So, I guess I never talked about my dad, even though he died in 1992, I never talked about him because I thought I'd get in trouble. I know, for me, like—a big thing about thinking about my own parents was recognizing that it was okay for me to have had my own experience and that the fact that it—the problems in my relationship with my parents were not me, like, saying they were fundamentally evil human beings, or whatever, 'cause of my own wish to avoid conflict with them.

00:17:34 Megan Guest Mm-hm.

00:17:35 Jesse Host But that it was okay for me to have had this experience that said these—that changed me and affected me in these ways, irrespective of whether it was something fundamental about who my parents were. It was something fundamental about who I was. Yeah! Right? So, yeah. I mean... that's your experience and... so... it is what it is. And I, whatever happened... Well, I wanna tell you about my conversation with my mom, but also I just wanna say that whatever happened with my—in my upbringing and with my dad—my father, I feel like I've transcended that, now. You know? I feel like, now, that is behind me. I don't—that doesn't inform my day-to-day existence. And, you know, I feel bad. I feel bad that my father and a lot of people in my whole father's family had a lot of problems and were unhappy and there was—seemed to be, like, a pattern with the—especially the men, on my father's side.

And I feel bad. I feel sorry that that happened. And a lot of that was a product of the time and the culture. You know, it's kind of like a *Madmen* thing where it's like you have affairs and you drink a lot. But then there was a little bit extra element added to my father. But anyway. I'm—I feel that I've stopped the bloodline.

[*They laugh.*]

00:19:45 Megan Guest And [*laughing through her words*] I personally have transcended those things for my own, personal day-to-day life. Which is great. But back to when I spoke to my mom. It was so incredibly poignant, because it started—the whole thing started because I... I was at—visiting my mom in Oklahoma City. I try to get there, like, four times a year. And I was standing by her bedside, because she has 24-hour care, in her home. Paid for by *Will & Grace*. [*Chuckles.*] And I was standing by her bedside and I said, "Mom, guess what? Nick's coming in, tonight."

And she goes, [*wistfully*] "Oh! Nick is such a good man. Your father was a bad man."

And I don't know why, but in that moment—it's not the first time she'd ever said something like that, or the... you know, 20th. But for some reason, in that moment, it just all hit me like a ton of bricks. And that was when the whole, like, thinking like, "Well, was he a narcissist? Or was he something else? Or this or that?" That's when

that started. And it set me on this path of talking to my uncle who is the last living sibling of my father's. And talking to other people who knew my father and this and that.

And I spoke to my mom, of course, and she said, "You know. He wasn't a good man... I just, I loved him."

I said, "Well, why didn't you ever leave him?"

She said, "I loved him. I always thought I could change him and that—I thought, well tomorrow is gonna be different and he's gonna—" Because he wasn't like that, at the beginning. And so, she was all, "He was great, at the beginning." He lured her in. She's the perfect one, because she's so... loving and kind and open and positive. Totally positive, mental attitude. To coin a phrase.

And uh... so she's the perfect person for someone like that. And then, he was so good to her, at the beginning, that she spent 27 years of marriage trying to recapture that. She was like, "Well I know he can be like this, because he was once before." And then he would, like, push it to the very brink. And then he would be really amazing, again. And very Svengali-like. And get her back and then he'd go back to being horrible.

00:21:30 Megan Guest

Then they divorced and then he never—he never really left her. He came over to her house every single afternoon. And she would make him lunch. And he would hang out, sometimes through dinner and into the evening.

00:21:46 Jesse Host

Did you think about his career, when you were going through your career?

00:21:50 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Megan: Um. Well...

Jesse: 'Cause he must have been a—

Megan: This is probably none of the stuff you were planning to talk about, right? *[Laughing.]*

Jesse: You know.

Megan: *[Still laughing.]* This has gone down a very, very interesting, different road.

Jesse: You hunt where there's deer.

00:22:03 Megan Guest

Megan: There's comedy!
You know, I—no, I didn't think about his career. I thought about my own. I was just trying to hone my own talents and... develop my skills, you know, to the—as best I could. But I will say that when I first moved to Los Angeles—I moved here in 1985, when I was 26 years old. And I was here for a very short time. And then the first television show that I auditioned for was a show called *The Ellen Burstyn Show*, starring none other than Ellen Burstyn. And...

00:22:38 Jesse Host

[Teasingly, under his breath.] I was gonna say Carol Burnette, but, okay.

00:22:40 Megan Guest

[Laughs.] Starring Carol Burnette.

00:22:41 Jesse Host

[Under his breath.] Whatever.

00:22:42 Megan Guest And, so it was—Ellen Burstyn played my mother and Elaine Stritch played my grandmother. And we shot 13 episodes of that, in New York. And, anyway, came back to Los Angeles and my father called and announced to me that he would be moving to Los Angeles and I needed to get him an agent.

And I said, “Uuuuum... okay.” You know. I said, “Okay.” I didn’t have the balls to say no. Or, you know, “get your own agent” or “don’t move here” or, you know, “I’m not your...” I don’t know. I just was confused, and I was trying to help and be—*[stammering]* a total people pleaser, you know? So... he did! He moved out. He got an apartment a block away from my apartment. And I was with ICM, that agency, at the time and he had a crazy headshot that wasn’t cute.

[Jesse chuckles softly.]

And he was, you know, 60 years old. Ish. Somewhere in there. And he didn’t have any credits of note. And I took it to ICM, and they were like, “We can’t... I mean, we can’t really do a lot with your dad. He doesn’t really—he doesn’t have a... reel or—he doesn’t have anything on film. He doesn’t have credits, really. He’s like a—kind of a hard type to cast.”

And I said, “Okay.”

00:24:19 Megan Guest And they said, “But how about the voiceover department?” So, the voiceover department at ICM actually took him on. And so, he did have some voiceover auditions. And that was at—and then after about a year, he became very, um... He packed up and moved back to Oklahoma City in a huff, saying he would never set foot in California again. And he didn’t.

You know, at the time, nobody said—like, nobody said anything to me, but, like, after the fact I know people have said, like “I just couldn’t believe it when your father moved out to Los Angeles and blah, blah, blah.”

And I’m like, “Well, why didn’t you say that *[laughing]* to me!” Like, nobody said anything! Like, I was just out there, like, trying to get my dad into showbusiness.

00:25:01 Jesse Host I mean, it’s kind of an only child thing—to not have any, like, to not even think to run it by somebody else. ‘Cause you’re just—

00:25:11 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Megan:** Yeah. Well—*[sighs]*.

Jesse: I feel like people with siblings, they’re used to having, like, a special coven that they encircle whenever there’s a question in their lives. Especially a family question.

00:25:24 Megan Guest **Megan:** Yeah! I just—I didn’t have that. And nobody ever said—and my mom, for whatever reason—I’m sure my mom was fit to be tied about it. I’m sure she was furious about it. But she didn’t say that to him or me, because of—you know—the way things were. ‘Cause, you know, you didn’t wanna incur his wrath.

So, you know, that was a cute year. *[Laughs.]* Um...

[Clicks teeth.] And now I work in comedy!

[They laugh uproariously.]

00:26:01	Jesse	Host	<i>[While Megan continues laughing in the background.]</i> I feel like that should be the tag on half of the serious things said on this program.
00:26:05	Megan	Guest	I know! It's so true! It's like every comedian has the same, exact story, right? Don't we all have the exact same story? I just never told mine until, like, I'm sitting here with you. So, there's a first time for everything. Um.
00:26:18	Jesse	Host	I believe, in my heart, that there are performers who just have a gift they had to share.
00:26:23	Megan	Guest	Yeah!
00:26:24	Jesse	Host	But mostly, there's something going on if your goal is to get people you don't know to <i>[laughing]</i> like you.
00:26:30	Megan	Guest	<i>[Laughing.]</i> Yes! Right. Right. I don't—no, I don't even ever think about that, honestly. I know that that's a—that's a common—commonly thought. But I never think about that. I want people to like me, in real life, but in—but professionally, I just—I'm more of a—I'm more of a—I'm like a punk, you know? Like I have a very punk attitude about it. Like, I'll do—I'll do anything if I feel like it's the funniest thing to do or the saddest thing to do or the most right thing to do. I'll just—I'll do anything. If I feel like that's the right thing.

If somebody gives me a direction that I don't agree with... I can be reluctant. I'll be like, "I don't know. That doesn't feel right, to me." But then, you know, I'm a team player. So, you know, I can take direction. But... um.

[Jesse bursts into big, belly laughter very suddenly.]

00:27:24	Crosstalk	Crosstalk
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Megan: I just *[laughing]* have—I just have—Yeah.

Jesse: For the at-home listener, we got a facial expression that means, *[high pitched and skeptical]* "MMM."

Megan: Yeah. For all those people who might, potentially, be thinking of hiring me for something: Sure. I can take direction.

Jesse: *[Laughing in the background.]*

Megan: What do you mean? Where'd you get the idea that I couldn't?

00:27:42	Megan	Guest	But I don't know. I always have such a strong idea about something and I'm—sometimes my ideas are a little radical. And I just wanna do that. I wanna do something radical and weird. Like my band, Nancy and Beth, which is sort of my favorite thing in the world—it's very—it's very radical, in its own, extremely entertaining way.
00:28:02	Jesse	Host	We'll finish up my interview with Megan Mullally after a break. She'll tell me about the time she sang the theme song from <i>Green Acres</i> , onstage at the Emmys, with—now president—Donald Trump. Life is strange, folks. It's <i>Bullseye</i> , from MaximumFun.org and NPR.
00:28:19	Music	Music	Bouncy interstitial music.
00:28:20	Jesse	Promo	This message comes from NPR sponsor: Smartwater.

Smartwater is for the curious drinkers. The ones who are always looking for ways to make things a little bit better. That's why Smartwater created two new ways to hydrate: Smartwater Alkaline, with 9+pH, and Smartwater Antioxidant, with added selenium. And now you can order Smartwater by saying, "Alexa! Order Smartwater."

Smartwater: that's pretty smart!

[Music fades out.]

00:28:51 Promo Promo

Scott Simon: News breaks and big stories change every day. That's why we're giving you NPR's ten-minute morning news podcast on Saturdays, too. I'm Scott Simon.

Lulu Garcia-Navarro: And I'm Lulu Garcia-Navarro. *Up First*: start your days with us weekdays at six eastern and Saturdays at eight—a bit later to suit your weekend—from NPR news.

00:29:10 Promo Promo

Music: Faint, suspenseful violin music in background.

Justin McElroy: We're the hosts of *My Brother, My Brother and Me*, and now—nearly ten years into our podcast—the secret can be revealed. All the clues are in place. And the world's greatest treasure hunt can now begin.

Griffin McElroy: Embedded in each episode of *My Brother, My Brother and Me* is a micro-clue that will lead you to 14 precious gemstones, all around this big, beautiful blue world of ours.

Travis McElroy: So, start combing through the episodes—eh, let's say—starting at episode 101 on.

Griffin: Yeah, the early episodes are pretty problematic, so there's no clues in those episodes.

Travis: No. No, not at all.

Griffin: The better ones—the good ones? Clues ahoy.

Justin McElroy: Listen to every episode repeatedly in sequence. Laugh if you must, but mainly, get all the great clues. *My Brother, My Brother and Me*: it's an advice show, kind of, but a treasure hunt, mainly. Anywhere you find podcasts or treasure maps, *My Brother, My Brother and Me*—the hunt is on!

00:30:03 Jesse Host

It's *Bullseye*. I'm Jesse Thorn. My guest is Megan Mullally. You've seen her in *Parks and Recreation*, *Children's Hospital*, many other shows and films. She also stars on *Will & Grace*, where she plays Karen Walker. The show just kicked off its 11th and final season on NBC.

[Megan agrees several times as Jesse speaks.]

This new season of *Will & Grace* was, like, more than a decade after the last season of *Will & Grace*. Did you know when—the possibility of it happening, coming up—that it was a good idea to do it?

00:30:35 Megan Guest Well, I don't—I guess this is as good a time as any to reveal that I'm a famous psychic.

[Jesse chuckles.]

But, um, *[laughs]* when we—when we first got the script for the Vote Honey video, the YouTube video, that started the whole thing. The election video? We got that script that Max and—the creators of our show, Max Mutchnick and David Kohan—had written. I read it. I was laughing and crying. I put it down, picked up my phone. I texted Max and I said, “Why can't we just do the show again?”

And he texted right back, “We can.”

And, of course, neither of us knew what we were talking about. We were just blowing it out of our b-holes. I just had this overpowering instinct that we could literally bring the entire show back to television. Right back where we left it.

00:31:33 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Megan:** I just knew.

Jesse: It's funny, 'cause it—like, when I hear people who work on the show talk about the show—whether it's the creators or the cast members or writers or whomever—I see the, you know, the question comes up, like, “How's it different?” And, you know, there are things that are different about it. It's set in the contemporary world.

Megan: Mm-hm.

Jesse: And that's—you—11 or 12 years after the last ones were set.

Megan: Mm-hm.

Jesse: But basically, everybody seems to just say, “No. It's the—yeah. We're doing our—the show that we do.”

00:32:05 Megan Guest *[Laughs.]* Well, it's almost all the same people, too. So, it, I mean, Jim Burrows, who's directed every single episode. We're now into the two hundred and... somewhere around 220 or something like that. We have the same department heads. Same camera guys. It's almost all the same—it's like 70-75% the same people. The key is, of course, the writing. And the writing is so good, and we have—I think we have, right now, seven or eight of our original writers. Like our best, best, best—the best of the best.

And, I mean, I think the second season is really coming along nicely. We've already shot three to four episodes, depending on how you count it. And I think it's really solid. I think it's gonna be really good.

00:32:54 Jesse Host Can I ask you—you did a bit with Donald Trump, the—who is the president of the United States, now.

00:33:00 Megan Guest Mm. I'm familiar.

00:33:01 Jesse Host At the time he was a television star.

00:33:04 Megan Guest Mm-hm.

00:33:05 Jesse Host And, I mean, I—I—I don't know how you feel about that experience, but I am gonna play a little bit of it.

00:33:12	Megan	Guest	Oh, okay. Great. Yeah.
00:33:14	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:33:15	Clip	Clip	<i>[The sound of a crowd chattering and cheering in the background.]</i> Music: Bouncy, brassy. The <i>Green Acres</i> theme song, “Green Acres”. Donald Trump: <i>[Singing “Green Acres”.]</i> Jesse: <i>[Speaking over the clip.]</i> This is the Emmys, like, ten or twelve years ago. Megan: <i>[Speaking over the clip.]</i> It’s from 2004, I think? Jesse: <i>[Speaking over the clip.]</i> Six. Megan: <i>[Speaking over the clip.]</i> So, it was— <u>was</u> it? Jesse: <i>[Speaking over the clip.]</i> 2006. <i>[Clip volume increases to focus on the singing.]</i> Megan: <i>[Joins in on a verse.]</i>
00:33:41	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:33:42	Jesse	Host	<i>[They both chuckle.]</i> I mean, you’re selling it, there, Megan! I loved it. Um, okay. Lot of funny, hilarious aspects to that little story. First of all, they did a thing on the Emmys called Emmy Idol— ‘cause this was at the height of <i>American Idol</i> ’s popularity. So, they were gonna do a little thing where they would have well known people come on and perform theme songs from various golden age television shows, right?
00:33:45	Megan	Guest	
00:34:10	Jesse	Host	And then people would literally call in and vote on a winner.
00:34:13	Megan	Guest	And then people would vote in real-time. Which was, for that time it was—you said it was 2006? <i>[Jesse confirms.]</i> For that time, that was quite progressive. So, normally... even before my agent could finish the sentence, “They want you to do this weird thing on the Emmys.” I’d be like, “Eh, nooo.” But they said—they got through the sentence, which was, “They want you to do the theme song to <i>Green Acres</i> , as Karen, with Donald Trump.” And I was like, “I will be doing that.” <i>[They laugh.]</i>
00:34:50	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Megan: And I will be... Jesse: Because he’s nothing—there’s nothing weirder that you could do on network television.
00:34:58	Megan	Guest	Megan: Yeah. “I will <u>definitely</u> be doing that.” For that <u>exact</u> reason. Of course, at the time, no one would have ever—at least, I would <u>never</u> have ever, in a billion years—have guessed that he—I didn’t

know he ever had political aspirations. I mean, now I know, but I didn't know then. He was just this funny—he was a caricature of himself. He was this person hosting a—that was when *The Apprentice* was super popular. Everybody was watching. Everybody was going around saying, [*mimicking Trump's accent*] “You're fired!” And doing the finger and, you know. Everybody was doing it!

And I thought, “Well, certainly this guy is playing kind of a character, on *The Apprentice*. He's not really like that, in real life. He's, like, exaggerating his personality for—to make some good television.” But no. Turns out, in real life, he was exactly like that. And I thought, “Oh, that's even better. Now it's really funny.”

So, I sprained my ankle the night before. Like, dancing to a commercial jingle on television, trying to entertain Nick by doing a stupid dance. I sprained my ankle. And so, when we got out there, they had to, like—I came out on crutches, in the commercial, and then I was just, like—if you watch, I'm balancing on one foot for the entire song. And then, at the end, he started to leave, and he forgot that I couldn't walk. So, he came back and he picked me up like a sack of potatoes, under his arm. Like, literally under his arm. Like a—and carried me offstage. It was very gallant.

And backstage, he introduced me to Melania—his wife. “The most beautiful woman in the world,” that's how she was introduced to me. And there's not a lot you can say [*chuckles*] to that.

[*Jesse laughs.*]

00:36:51	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	You can just be like, “Congratulations!” Jesse: [<i>Amused.</i>] To each of you.
00:36:54	Megan	Guest	Megan: I mean, you look really pretty. Yeah. So, then I was in my <i>Will & Grace</i> dressing room, like the next day, and the phone rang, and it was Donald Trump. And he said, “Listen, it was a competition, Emmy Idol, and we won. Okay? We got the most votes.”
00:37:11	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Megan: He said, “Listen.” Jesse: Congratulations.
00:37:15	Megan	Guest	Megan: Thanks. Thank you. [<i>Laughs.</i>] He said, “Listen... we really needed to win that thing and we did. And you were a big part of that, and I just wanted to say that we won... and, not only did we win, but it was a landslide. I hear—” He said, “I hear it was a landslide. We killed them. Nobody else was even close. And so, I'm just calling to say that we really needed to win it, and we did.” And that was Emmy Idol. [<i>Laughs for a few moments until it turns into a strained moan and a sigh.</i>]
00:38:01	Jesse	Host	Megan Mullally, I'm so grateful to you for taking all this time to come and be on <i>Bullseye</i> .
00:38:05	Megan	Guest	[<i>Laughs.</i>] Thank you so much for having me. It's been a real... a lot happened.

[*They laugh.*]

The [censored] really went down.

[They continue laughing as music slowly begins to fade in. Megan's laughter turns to a groan.]

00:38:23 Music Music
00:38:26 Jesse Host

Dreamy interstitial music plays.
Megan Mullally, from last year. Catch her on *Will & Grace*, Thursday nights, on NBC. Also, watch her in everything else she's ever done. She is always great. She rules.

[Music fades out.]

00:38:45 Music Music
00:38:47 Jesse Host

Upbeat interstitial music plays.
That's the end of another episode of *Bullseye*. *Bullseye* is produced at MaximumFun.org headquarters, overlooking MacArthur Park in Los Angeles, California—where we have spent the entire fall roasting. I mean, just absolutely roasting. And our colleague, Christian, was nice enough to buy the office ice-cream sandwiches.

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. Our production fellows are Jordan Kauwling and Melissa Dueñas. Our interstitial music is by Dan Wally, AKA DJW. Our theme song is by The Go! Team. Thanks to them and their label, Memphis Industries, for letting us use it.

And there are so many years of *Bullseye* interviews available to you. You can find them on our YouTube page. You can find them in your podcast app. You can find them on our website, MaximumFun.org. We're also on Twitter and Facebook. [Twitter.com/bullseye](https://twitter.com/bullseye), that's one place you can go to follow us. And I think that's it.

00:39:56 Promo Promo

Just remember: all great radio hosts have a signature sign off.
Speaker: *Bullseye with Jesse Thorn* is a production of MaximumFun.org and is distributed by NPR.

[Music fades out.]