

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'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.
00:00:21	Jesse	Host	A warning before we get into this conversation you're about to hear: there is a little bit of talk about sex and also some talk about mermaid genitals. That's all. Just a head's up. It's a weird email to have to send to Standards and Practices, but we're grateful to them for fielding it. So, anyway. The other day I saw this movie called <i>The Lighthouse</i> . <i>[Music fades out.]</i> It's about these two men on an island. Two very old-timey sailor men, living in New England in the late 1800's. One of the men is old, the other is young. The whole film is in black and white. The wind is howling outside. The older man, played by Willem Dafoe, doesn't really like the younger one. Younger one is played by Robert Pattinson. The two of them drink a lot. Somewhere off the shore, there is a mermaid. A storm comes. There are tentacles. And the two men slowly lose their sanity. That, basically, is the gist of <i>The Lighthouse</i> . It is a strange, disturbing, intense, brilliant film. It lives with you— <i>[sighs and chuckles]</i> I've been living with it since I saw it. Robert Eggers, my guest, directed the film. He wrote the script with his brother, Max. Before <i>The Lighthouse</i> , Eggers wrote and directed <i>The Witch</i> —another disturbing, brilliant film, set in old New England. Here's a clip from <i>The Lighthouse</i> . In this scene, Dafoe's character, Thomas, lectures Ephraim, played by Pattinson—about how he performs his duties.
00:01:56	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:01:57	Clip	Clip	Ephraim Winslow: I mopped and swept twice over, sir. Thomas Wake: You lying dog. <i>[A silence.]</i> Ephraim: I swept them. Thomas: It's begrimed and bedeviled. Unwiped, unwashed, and distained. Ephraim: You get some kind of pride out of molesting me. Thomas: Come now? Ephraim: <i>[Beat.]</i> I already says—

Thomas: [*Loudly*] How dare ye contradict me, you dog!

Ephraim: Now, look here. I ain't never intended to be no housewife, nor slave, in taking this job. And it ain't right. These lodgings is more ramshackle than any shanty boy's camp I ever seen! The Queen of England's old, fancy housekeeper couldn't even done no better than what I done! 'Cause, I tell you, I scrubbed this here place twice over!

Thomas: [*Yelling*] And I say you did nothing of the sort! And I say you swab it again, and you swab it proper-like, this time. And you'll be swabbing it ten times more, after that!

00:02:47	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:02:49	Jesse	Host	Robert Eggers, welcome to <i>Bullseye</i> ! It's great to have you on the show!
00:02:52	Robert Eggers	Guest	It's great to be here. [<i>Stammers</i>] You know, Willem just—he's just about to get going!
00:02:59	Jesse	Host	[<i>They laugh.</i>] We got the clips we got. The other option was, uh, sneaking into the movie theatre with a directional microphone. [<i>Laughs.</i>]
00:03:06	Robert	Guest	Right.
00:03:09	Jesse	Host	So, I guess the idea for this film—to you—started with, like, almost like an atmospheric feeling?
00:03:18	Robert	Guest	Yeah. I tend to think—I mean, not always, but I tend to have the atmosphere before the movie. Atmosphere and some images sort of get things going. My brother, who wrote this with me, was working on a screenplay that was a light—a ghost story in a lighthouse. It was different than this. But when he said, “ghost story in a lighthouse,” I pictured this black and white, crusty, dusty, rusty, musty atmosphere. A movie in a box. The aspect ratio, with stumpy clay pipes and facial hair a-almost as extravagant as yours!
00:03:52	Jesse	Host	[<i>Laughs.</i>] All of those key elements of the film.
00:03:58	Robert	Guest	Yeah.
00:03:59	Jesse	Host	It is really striking, like—I went to see the movie at, you know, a fancy movie theatre in Hollywood, and I walked in just as it was transitioning from, you know, logos into the movie. And it really feels shocking to look at a screen and, in a movie theatre, and see—not only black and white cinematography, but the aspect ratio where this film is almost square.
00:04:28	Robert	Guest	Correct. It looks square, to one's eye, being used to seeing cinemascope, you know. [<i>Stammering</i>] If you watch a movie in 1.33, like—which some people might call full-screen—that seems wide [<i>laughs</i>] compared to what we're doing. This is a rare aspect ratio from the early sound era and it's extra boxy, but it's very helpful for shooting vertical objects like lighthouse towers and conveying cramped interiors and claustrophobic spaces and it's great—it's a great format for close-ups.
00:05:01	Jesse	Host	That's what—that's what struck me, immediately. Like, faces take up almost the entire... screen, in a way that you can't do in a wider screen...
00:05:14	Robert	Guest	No, and why would you want all that flab on either side of two of the greatest faces that have ever been born and four of the sharpest

[chuckling] cheekbones, you know? I'm doing press with these guys and, like—

[Jesse laughs in the background.]

And I'm not, like, a big dude, but I feel like I look like a chubby, chubby chipmunk in between these two guys. And, spoiler alert, the two other faces in this movie are quite, uh... impressive as well. Um, nobody wanted to dye Willem Dafoe's moustache. No one wanted to bleach it out. He's not—*[stammering]* he's not very grey. We wanted him to look greyer. So, that meant bleaching out his moustache and people were afraid of burning Dafoe's flesh, in Halifax.

00:05:59 Jesse Host
00:06:00 Robert Guest

For hairdresser insurance reasons.

Indeed. And so, I said, "There's gotta be some hipster barber shop that has, you know, blue moustaches and stuff." And Rob Cotterill, the first AD, recommended this barbershop and we went there, and I saw the barber, Logan Hawkes, and said to myself, "This is our lumberjack."

And so, I said, you know, "Hi! Nice to meet you. Would you like to punch Robert Pattinson in the face?"

[Jesse laughs.]

00:06:31 Jesse Host

And he was, uh, happy to do so.

You know, there's a lot of natural misery, in the film. There's a brutal, extended storm and there are a lot of exteriors, in that situation. You shot this film in Nova Scotia, *[stammering]* at a coastal area, where you built a lighthouse that—it was, like, as close as you can get to a... brutal, storm-battered, remote island, while still bringing film equipment to it and going home to go sleep somewhere, at night.

00:07:05 Robert Guest

True!

[Jesse laughs.]

00:07:09 Jesse Host

True! It's all true!

But how much of that brutality, like, natural brutality that we see onscreen, was something that you had to deal with while you were also lugging around these film lenses from the 1930's and stuff?

00:07:25 Robert Guest

You know, most of the worst weather, in the movie, is real. We had a rain machines and we had wind machines and so if it was gloomy, we could do a scene with light rain, with the wind machines or whatever. But most of the really extreme stuff is real. I mean, obviously, there is a scene where Rob Pattinson's, like, pulling a—a lifeboat out of a boathouse, like, and there's giant waves, like, crashing at him. Like, that can't be done for real or we lose Robert Pattinson to a riptide. And that's not a good idea.

But I'm not complaining, but it is not easy to shoot a movie in gale-force winds and the pouring rain, you know, with—where it's just above or below freezing, on a rock, in the Atlantic. You are not going to move quickly. Your camera gear is going to break down. But that's what we needed to shoot this movie, you know? We

needed this terrible weather to tell the story. So, there's no other option but to go out and do it.

I don't mind the cold. I like the cold. Now, I have—I've been in much more extreme temperatures on the thermometer, but I've never felt colder than I have Cape Forchu, with—'cause the wind just—you're never dry and the wind never stops. Like, even that one, nice blue sky, it was still... *[laughs]* miserably windy. And everyone was up for it. The crew was up for it. They know, you know, these Nova Scotia crew—I mean, they are—they're hardy and they get it. Rob and Willem knew what they signed up for, but—you know—again, we're not complaining, but if the rain's not reading in your close-up and you have to then be sprayed in the face with a firehose so the rain reads in your closeup, like—it's not pleasant? But it informs the performance, that's for sure. You know?

00:09:26	Jesse	Host	Spoiler alert, if you're buried alive in dirt and made to eat it, like, that's not <u>pleasant</u> . But you know what you signed up for. <i>[Laughs.]</i> Both this movie and your previous movie, <i>The Witch</i> , have a lot of historical detail in them. Especially in the production design. There's just a lot of real stuff. And I wonder what the value of real stuff is, in the context of two stories that have a lot of mystical and fairytale qualities to them?
00:09:58	Robert	Guest	I mean, I think that you've answered the question yourself. One could say if the setting—the more realistic and grounding the setting is, the easier it is to believe in a—in a mermaid or a—or a sea monster or a witch or whatever. I also just like doing it like that. Certainly, having period accurate design does not equal good design, but I prefer it. I also, because I'm—want, really want to put you in a time machine, if I'm—if I'm saying that our goal is accuracy—it's always, of course, by the way it's always gonna be an interpretation 'cause, like, you know, we didn't have access to a time machine—but if all my collaborators know, like, historical accuracy is the high bar we're reaching for, then choices are made for you and you're not laboring over, like, "Is this lapel the right lapel to convey this character?"

And because you're not wasting time with those things, you can put more and more and more and more and more details in there to create a more specific atmosphere. And I just—and I, you know, I'm researching as a means to an end, but I also just enjoy the act of research. I like learning about how people used to live, and I love when you think, "Man, these people are so crazy! How could they possibly think like this?" And then, all of a sudden, reading a little more and opening the door into their heads and realizing, "Oh! I see why. And if I lived then, that's how I would think, too."

And you wanna know what else? Like, I can see how aspects of that still exist, today. And then it's my job, as a storyteller, to try and make that relevant. And, of course, I don't try to make it relevant, you know? Like, I actually just try to stay in their heads, but I am somehow influenced by the zeitgeist and it—and it comes... it comes out. I mean, *[stammering]* I hope. I mean, you know, certainly—if only people who lived in the 1630's enjoy *The Witch* and only people who lived in the 1890's can enjoy *The Lighthouse*, I'd have a problem.

00:11:56 Jesse Host Narrow target market.
 00:11:57 Robert Guest Yeah, yeah.
 00:11:59 Jesse Host I mean, you could do it, maybe, at Hollywood Forever.
 00:12:01 Robert Guest Yeah, yeah, a lot—lots of graveyard screenings.
 00:12:06 Jesse Host *[Laughs.]* I'm Jesse Thorn, you're listening to *Bullseye*. My guest is the director Robert Eggers. His newest film, *The Lighthouse*, is in theaters now.

Did you imagine the way, when you first thought of the, like, feeling of the film—the way that two men on an island, who live inside a phallus, would, like—how their sexuality would color the entirety of their experience in the—in the film?

00:12:36 Robert Guest It wasn't, like, that... very first moment of inspiration, but certainly, you know, within the first week of thinking about it, yeah. That's gonna be a big part of it.

00:12:47 Jesse Host It freaked me out!

00:12:49 Robert Guest *[Uncertainly]* O-okay.

00:12:51 Jesse Host *[Laughing]* I mean! A lot of stuff in your movies—I'm not against it! I'm not saying I'm against it, I'm just saying, like, it was, uh...

00:12:58 Robert Guest I mean, there's a lot of, you know, when you're stuck in situations like that, there's a lot of erotic energy with nowhere to go. And so, there's violence and fantasy and alcoholism. It goes everywhere.

[Chuckles.]

00:13:11 Jesse Host Yeah, I mean it's like, um—I don't know what the right metaphor is. I was gonna say "squeezing a balloon," but it's like pressing a liquid and it—and it gets into the seams.

00:13:20 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Jesse:** You know what I mean?

Robert: Yeah, for sure. Yeah.

00:13:23 Robert Guest It's like smashing a gull to death against a cistern.

00:13:27 Jesse Host *[Laughs.]* What—what's—one of the really interesting things to me, about the tone of the movie, is that there are elements that are signposted like a fairytale. You know? Like, in a fairytale... you know what the—roughly what the witch represents—

[Robert agrees several times as Jesse speaks.]

—and that she's—that a witch is bad news and, you know, for the kids and—you know—you know what rosy cheeks mean and that kind of thing. Like, you mentioned there's this—there's a seagull bashed against a cistern. That is preceded by a declaration that killing a seabird is bad luck for a sailor. And so, there are these elements that are—that have that feeling. That have that feeling of, like, "this is a machine that's built on... centuries, or thousands of years, of how human brains work." And we're just—we're acknowledging them and showing them.

There are also a lot of things that are very differently presented. You know, much more subtly presented. And I wonder, like, how do you decide what to leave open and what to give the quality of, you know, of myth?

00:14:44 Robert Guest Yeah, I mean, that's a good question and, I guess, it's just—to give a bad answer—it's kind of by instinct. But it's also by trial and error. I mean, we—you know—there are—the movie's very ambiguous on purpose. To use the old, like, filmmaker cliché, "I'm looking to provoke questions more than to provide answers."

[Jesse agrees.]

00:15:03	Jesse	Host	Which is just the case with this kind of movie. But do you, like, film answers that you decide are too answey and leave them out?
00:15:08	Robert	Guest	Yeah! I mean, you have to—my brother and I had to answer—have these questions answered, for ourselves, to <u>write</u> this thing and to have control over it. Otherwise it's just an unwieldy beast that you don't have control over. It could work out, but it could just feel like complete nonsense if you don't have the control over it. So, yeah, certainly there were versions that were too on the nose, overall. But we needed to, kind of, situate ourselves with Robert Pattinson's character and kind of go mad with him. So that was a good way to, kind of, figure out where we needed to throw up stumbling blocks and—for the—for the audience, as well.
00:15:50	Jesse	Host	We'll finish up with Robert Eggers after a quick break. Still to come: he's made two disturbing, scary films. <i>[Chuckling]</i> I know that I was scared by <i>The Lighthouse</i> . I'll ask Robert Eggers what he's afraid of. Stay tuned. It's <i>Bullseye</i> , from MaximumFun.org and NPR.
00:16:10	Music	Music	Relaxed, interstellar sounding music plays.
00:16:12	Jesse	Promo	This message comes from NPR sponsor: ZipRecruiter. Hiring can be a slow process. Café Altura COO, Dillon Miskiewicz, needed to hire a Director of Coffee, so he went to ZipRecruiter, posted his job, and found the right person in just a few days. Find out why four out of five employers who post on ZipRecruiter get a quality candidate within the first day. Try ZipRecruiter for free at ZipRecruiter.com/bullseye . B-U-L-L-S-E-Y-E.
00:16:44	Promo	Promo	<i>[Music fades out.]</i> Music: Gentle, rhythmic music underscores the dialogue. Janet Varney: We are <u>so</u> thrilled at your interest in attending Hieronymous Wigenstaff's School for Heroism and Villainy! Wigenstaff's beautiful campus boasts state-of-the-art facilities and instructors with <u>real</u> -world experience! We are also proud to say that our alumni have gone on to be professional heroes and villains in the most renowned kingdoms in the world! But of course, <u>you</u> are not applying to the main school, are you? You're applying for our sidekick and henchperson annex! You will still benefit from the school's <u>amazing</u> campus and! You'll have a lifetime of steady employment. Of course... there's no guarantee how long that lifetime will be. Travis McElroy: Join the McElroys as they return to Dungeons and Dragons with <i>The Adventure Zone: Graduation</i> . Every other Thursday, on Maximum Fun or wherever podcasts are found.
00:17:37	Jesse	Promo	<i>[Music ends.]</i> Hey, everybody! So, here's something unusual. If you've listened to <i>Bullseye</i> for a while, you might have heard of a comic named Chris Garcia. In 2016, we ran one of his sets as part of our Best Comedy of the Year special. He's got a brand-new podcast called <i>Scattered</i> .

So, if you know Chris's comedy at all, you know that he does a lot of material about his father, but his father died a couple of years ago and Chris realized that there was a lot that he, himself, didn't know about the man who raised him. His dad had a lot of secrets about his last years in Cuba, about his life in America, and he took those secrets to the grave. So, now Chris is trying to dig up the truth and find out what happened. You can check it out. It's called *Scattered*, from WNYC Studios.

Best of luck to Chris Garcia. Funny guy, good guy. Available wherever you get your podcasts.

00:18:31 Promo Promo

Music: Thumpy guitar underscores the dialogue.

Robin Hilton: The past decade saw a lot of changes in the way music is made, shared, and experienced. Social media blew up, genres blurred together, and Beyoncé dominated nearly everything. I'm Robin Hilton. Join NPR Music as we look back at the 2010's: its defining trends and moments. Listen to new episodes twice a week on *All Songs Considered*, from NPR.

00:18:52 Jesse Host

[Music fades out.]

It's *Bullseye!* I'm Jesse Thorn. My guest, Robert Eggers, directed and co-wrote the new film, *The Lighthouse*. It's a brilliant, claustrophobic descent into madness. It tells the story of two men living on a remote island off the main coast. Let's get back to my conversation with Eggers.

I think Robert Pattinson's character is the, you know, the main character in the film. But, as it goes on, it feels like we see the world less and less through his eyes. Like, at the beginning, it feels very explicitly like it is a story told from his perspective: a guy who, you know—the new guy in town, basically.

[Robert agrees.]

00:19:42 Robert Guest

And as time goes on, that changes. What do you do, as a director, to make that happen for the audience?

It's just—you—it's all—it's all about camera placement. That's it! That's the end of it. You know? If you wanna really be in engaged with, like—you know, I mean, this is, you know, like—by the way, some of these ideas are, of course, subjective. You know? Like, I think that there are some things that Eisenstein and Hitchcock and John Ford and Spielberg have, like, proved. But there's other things that, I think, are more... subjective.

But I would say, if the scenes from Rob's perspective and it's shot, reverse-shot, that—you know, we might have Rob's shoulder in Willem's shot. But if I was gonna do a scene where it was both... over-the-shoulder, um... shot, reverse-shot, then it feels more balanced, you know? And even if they're close-ups that are framed the same and there—and there—nobody's dirty, like, just the amount of time we spend on Rob can make it feel like it's more his scene.

I mean, Dafoe's sea spell, where he has a unbroken... take for, like... two and half minutes, where he doesn't blink, that is the same take that he began—he begins the speech with. Like *[stammering]* so it was really more like three minutes of him killing it and not blinking, but we had to cut to Rob to see Rob's reaction, because we needed to, like, be with Rob, in that moment. So... I don't know if that answers your question, but I said some things.

00:21:12 Jesse Host
00:21:18 Robert Guest

[Chuckles.] Yeah. How do you decide what a mermaid looks like? So, in the middle ages and the renaissance, mermaids generally had a split tail. You may recognize that shape from the Starbucks cup mermaid. That split tail. They could perform their function as anima figures to their male fantasizers. So, they could, you know—

00:21:40 Jesse Host
00:21:42 Robert Guest
00:21:44 Jesse Host

It was obvious, the way that it worked.

Yeah.

In other words, if you have legs, there—you can have a between-the-legs.

00:21:48 Robert Guest

Indeed. Yeah. And—yeah, but Victorian mermaids, you know, like—the Victorians did away with that, obviously, in a very Victorian fashion. And so, that single-tail mermaid becomes the archetypal mermaid shape of today. By the way, there are single-tail mermaids, also, like earlier than the 19th century, but whatever. But that's—it was certainly solidified, then. But we needed to have, uh... she needed to have genitals.

So, um, we... I looked at shark genitals. I started looking at different things, like oysters and just different kind of sea life that looked labial. But, the shark genitals are nice, because they look a little bit human, but not really. And then we also gave her some pelvic fins that I—that I think helped that design. The paint job on her tail was really beautiful. Like, it's one of the few things that you actually—that is not quite as impressive in black and white, because she really looked like a North Atlantic mermaid and not a tropical mermaid, you know.

And then, of course, Valeriia, herself—you know—has incredibly, incredibly wide-set eyes that seem, you know, marine-like.

00:23:04 Jesse Host

It reminded me of, um... *Peter Pan*. I read *Peter Pan* in eighth grade, in class.

[Robert agrees several times as Jesse talks.]

And, one of the things that I remember having the strongest reaction to was—there's a part where they go to meet the mermaids. And... the... threatening quality of the mermaids is their adult sexuality. Which, you know, obviously in a story about coming-of-age or not-coming-of-age, is, like, really scary. And... I feel like I am not used to seeing feminine sexual imagery that has that—in film—that has that scariness to it. Like, usually it's just straight-up male gaze, lustful *[chuckles]* whatever.

And, like, the threatening quality of the mermaid's sexuality really threw me for a loop.

00:24:02 Robert Guest

Welp. *[Beat.]* I'm glad.

[Jesse laughs for a few moments.]

00:24:12 Jesse Host I'm glad. That was—that was the intention. Do you remember ever feeling that level of fear or threat about sexuality? Like, as an adolescent or something?

00:24:22 Robert Guest I mean, um... I watched *Conan the Barbarian*, like, far too young. With, you know, my mom present. And she made me close my eyes, uh, when Conan's, like, having sex with the witch. And... the sounds of that were, like—as a little kid, were quite... terrifying. I also remember, like, as a little kid—like, thinking Madonna's sexuality was, like, very scary. As a little kid. Um. Obviously, like, women's power and sexuality has, like, been threatening to men throughout the ages. We probably wouldn't have, like, this patriarchal society if it wasn't the case.

00:26:01 Jesse Host So, I think... you know... this movie is through the eyes of two men—mostly one man—that were alive in the 19th century. So, like, having the powerful female character be, like, powerful through her sexuality is complicated in today's culture, because you don't wanna say, like, "That is female power." But it is an aspect of it, and it is definitely, you know—the mermaid begins, literally, as an object. Literally, she's a scrimshaw carving of a mermaid. But then, that object becomes so sexualized and threatening that, like, the object of desire then becomes more powerful than Robert Pattinson's character.

00:26:16 Robert Guest Yeah, and I mean, these characters are also... deeply troubled and deeply troubling. Like, there's no question whether one of them and their attitude toward their situation represents your authorial voice, or anything like that.

00:26:36 Jesse Host No, of course not! But you—one needs to be... aware of what they're putting out into the world. Like, I am not ever gonna whitewash history, you know? If I—if this thing actually gets made—my Viking movie that got leaked, last week—like, the Vikings did a lot of stuff that... isn't good! *[Laughs.]*

00:26:38 Robert Guest Yeah. Horrible, horrible things.

00:26:59 Jesse Host You know. But if I'm gonna be photographing that, I really need to be thinking about, like, why and how I'm doing it. Because you have a responsibility to the culture that you live in, with—about what you're putting out there. I'm not saying I believe in censorship, but I still think, you know, you can be responsible. And should be.

00:27:01 Robert Guest You're a New Englander. You were—

00:27:03 Jesse Host It can't be helped.

00:27:23 Robert Guest *[Amused]* Yeah. And your first two films were very New Englandy films. Films set in particular things about New England. Are there things about New England that someone who isn't from there—who might not understand or might—you know—misunderstand?

[Beat.] I don't know. I mean, it's like, I'm sure that there's plenty of New Englanders who like the... Red Sox and the Bruins and a lobster roll and can just, kinda, get on with it.

[Jesse chuckles.]

But I—*[stammers]* doing press for these movies, I'm constantly running into fellow New Englanders who felt like New England was a scary, weird, strange, folkloric place full of, like, austere, mean people.

[Jesse cackles.]

And, uh, there's more old stuff there. There's more old white people stuff. It's where white Anglo-Protestant culture has been around for the longest, in the US. And so, there's old, dilapidated white Anglo-Protestant architecture and field-markers and cemeteries in the woods and... [timidly] ghosts? Question mark?

[Jesse laughs.]

I mean, you can't, like, if you find a family burial plot from the 18th century in the woods behind your house, as a kid—like, tell me you're not gonna think about, like, the people who were buried there and what they're doing now. My grandpa lived in a house from, uh, 1740. I mean, you know, obviously, like, the romance of New England clapboard architecture is in both of my movies, but it tells a story when you—when you see it and when you grow up around it. Did you ever read this, uh, children's book called *The Ox-Cart Man*?

00:28:48 Jesse Host
00:28:54 Robert Guest
00:28:55 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Of course!
Jesse: By Donald Hall.

Robert: Yeah.

00:28:56 Jesse Host

So, that book—which is about, essentially, the year of a farmer in New England in, I guess, probably the early 19th century or something like that...

00:29:05 Robert Guest

Yeah, something like that.

00:29:06 Jesse Host

It's a spectacularly beautiful book, and I read it as a kid, and I've read it with my own kids—

00:29:12 Robert Guest

Yeah! I'm like—[stammering] I'm gonna go buy it, after this.

[Chuckles.]

00:29:15 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Jesse: Yeah. [Laughs.] It's such a great...

Robert: I haven't thought of it in a long time.

Jesse: It's such a beautiful book.

00:29:19 Jesse Host

[Robert agrees several times as Jesse speaks.]

And, like, I remember—as a kid, growing up on the west coast—there are those beautiful, like, apple cider, autumn leaves feelings that one associates with New England. But there's also a kind of awareness of the severity of the situation that is quite discomfiting, when you're a kid. Like, it is very easy to see, around the edges of this, like, pain and disaster and cold and those things.

It's something that, you know, there's other—well, you know, there's weird things about San Francisco and Los Angeles, the places I've lived, but, like, they are very different.

00:30:06 Robert Guest

Yeah. You know, and—and the other thing that's—it's, like, weird 'cause you have all this history, but the folk culture's not... like, alive the same way that it is in the south or in the west, you know?

People don't wear Puritan hats, but people wear cowboy hats.

[Chuckles.]

[Jesse agrees.]

You know? So, you—so, on—like, on the one hand, like, it's everywhere, but on the other hand, like, you're also kind of—if you're someone like me, you're kind of looking for it. And it takes some *[putting on a thick, old-timey New England accent, like the characters in The Lighthouse]* effort to find it.

[Normal voice] And both of these movies are me, kind of, communing with the folk culture of my region, you know? There's a—there is a slight—someone asked me if there was a preservationist quality, which I didn't really think about, but yeah! Sure! Like, I'm—you know—I'm digging into lost costal Maine dialects and capturing them in a way that might survive for a little while.

Well, *[stammering]* I don't know, what do we have, like, 20 years before we're all underwater? But, you know. And then, when—in the post-apocalyptic world, when people are doing street theatre around garbage fires, it'll all be, you know, tales from *The Avengers* as street theatre. Or, even weirder, people doing—like, pretending to open... packages of things that they pretended to have bought, around the garbage fire theatre.

00:31:36 Jesse Host

So, you're an adult man.

[Robert makes a soft, high, sustained sound of protest in the background.]

00:31:42 Robert Guest
00:31:43 Jesse Host

And, you know, you've made two films...

My wife disagrees with you on that one.

[Laughs.] You've made two films, one of which is—I think—probably a horror film and one of which is not a horror film, but deeply discomfiting. And I wonder what... you, as an adult man, are irrationally afraid of?

00:32:04 Robert Guest

[Beat.] I'm not irrationally afraid of much, to be frank. I need solitude. I really do. I need a lot of solitude, but I also need, uh, like, a lot of family and some—and some parties. And being alone is very scary, to me. I am a bit claustrophobic. I'm a bit claustrophobic, right now, in this padded cell.

[Jesse chuckles.]

00:32:56 Jesse Host

Um, but I think—more than anything—like, you know, I don't wanna go... mad. Which, you know, obviously—you know, and... you can see, both these movies, being interested, like—in the occult and stuff. You come across figures who are interested in it and then, like... end up believing it and then get lost in it. So, that scares me. Is it—is the fear of madness about... like, losing control of your own life?

00:33:05 Robert Guest

[A long beat.] I mean—yeah?

[They laugh.]

I mean, it's about—yeah, it's about—well, it's about losing yourself. You know? *[Beat.]* That's, you know—and that's what's fun about reading Poe and Macan and M. R. James and, you know—that's the fun of this. It's the fun of... you know. If you find it fun. The fun of *Lost Highway*.

00:33:37	Jesse	Host	<i>[Beat.]</i> But sometimes, you know, it's good to watch <i>Mary Poppins</i> . I mean, <i>Mary Poppins</i> is kind of intense, too. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:33:41	Robert	Guest	Well... uh. <i>[Chuckles.]</i>
00:33:44	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Jesse: <i>[Laughs.]</i> It has a more genial affect to it.
			Robert: I—I mean, I would take <i>Mary Poppins</i> ...
			Jesse: It's still a weird, like, magical power, control fantasy.
			Robert: I would take <i>Mary Poppins</i> over, like, the—the Mystery Man from <i>Lost Highway</i> , any day.
00:33:57	Jesse	Host	<i>[Laughs.]</i> Well, Robert Eggers, I'm so grateful that you came here to talk about your work and this amazing, amazing movie.
			And there's, like—there's 20 thousand things that I would love to ask you about, but <i>[stammering]</i> you'll have to come back, another time, so we can talk about those things.
00:34:14	Robert	Guest	Okay. Thanks!
00:34:16	Jesse	Host	Robert Eggers! <i>The Lighthouse</i> is an absolutely, spectacularly compelling film. I was awed by it. Not usually my kind of thing, I have to say. But I was so happy that I watched it. I hope you'll watch it. It's playing in theaters, now.
00:34:34	Music	Music	Upbeat interstitial music plays underneath the dialogue.
00:34:37	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. If you're wondering, there's a woman who makes quesadillas at 7 th and Alvarado. Highly recommended by our staff. I gotta get over there. I had a quesadilla for lunch, but I had a quesadilla al pastor from a taco truck, a few blocks away. Maybe I should have gone to the quesadilla lady!
			Show is produced by speaking into microphones—I'm gonna be honest, I saw a picture of Kevin's quesadilla, my producer Kevin's quesadilla, that he ate yesterday. It looked <u>good</u> . Maybe some picked red onions in there, it looked like?
			Anyway, our producer Kevin Ferguson—aforementioned. 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, who's also known as DJW. Our theme song is by The Go! Team. A great band from England. Thanks to them and their label, Memphis Industries, for letting us use it.
			And I guess that's about it. Just remember: all great radio hosts have a signature sign off.
00:35:42	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>