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| 00:00:00 | Jesse<br>Thorn | Promo | <p>Hey, folks! It's Jesse. We're getting close to the end of the year. Maybe you're thinking about gifts you're getting your friends and family, maybe you're thinking about what causes you can support. I wanna take a second to talk to you about supporting your local public radio station.</p> <p>I'm literally a life-long listener to public radio. Shoutout to KQED and KALW, in the Bay Area. Now, you might be thinking, "If I listen to <i>Bullseye</i> on my phone, why should I donate to a radio station?"</p> <p>Well, it's pretty straightforward. <i>Bullseye</i> is part of a public radio network. Because all those stations give money to NPR, NPR is able to pay us to make shows like <i>Bullseye</i>. And, bonus: when you support public radio, you're helping build curiosity, conversation, and community right in your backyard. That's why I support my local NPR Member Station and why you should too.</p> <p>This year, we're making it really easy. Just go to <a href="https://donate.NPR.org/bullseye">donate.NPR.org/bullseye</a> to support your local NPR Member Station. And again, that is <a href="https://donate.NPR.org/bullseye">donate.NPR.org/bullseye</a>. And thanks!</p>   |
| 00:00:59 | Music          | Music | <p>Gentle, trilling music with a steady drumbeat plays under the dialogue.</p>   |
| 00:01:01 | Promo          | Promo | <p><b>Speaker:</b> <i>Bullseye with Jesse Thorn</i> is a production of <a href="https://MaximumFun.org">MaximumFun.org</a> and is distributed by NPR.</p>  |
| 00:01:11 | Jesse          | Host  | <p>[<i>Music fades out.</i>]</p>   |
| 00:01:13 | Music          | Music | <p>I'm Jesse Thorn. It's <i>Bullseye</i>.</p> <p>"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.</p>   |
| 00:01:20 | Jesse          | Host  | <p>Imelda Marcos became part of the zeitgeist, at least here in the United States, when we found out about her shoes. 3000 pairs kept neatly inside a palace, in Manila. The cameras found them after Marcos fled her home in the Philippines. Her husband, Ferdinand, was the president of that country for over 20 years and the two worked together, closely.</p> <p>[<i>Music fades out.</i>]</p> <p>It was a reign that saw countless human rights abuses, the imprisonment and assassination of political rivals, billions of dollars stolen, and a 14-year long period of martial law. For a time, the Marcoses lived in exile. Ferdinand died in Hawaii. Then, in the 90's, Imelda returned. She's now a member of the Philippine House of Representatives, and she's still crafting her legacy. It's all in <i>The Kingmaker</i>, a new documentary. And that documentary's director, Lauren Greenfield, might be the perfect person to profile Imelda Marcos. Greenfield, who is also a photographer, has made wealth and power her life's work. Like in <i>The Queen of Versailles</i>, which tells the story of a family trying to build a 90,000 square foot mansion, in Florida. Ninety-thousand. Or <i>Generation Wealth</i>, a film about materialism and money, in the US.</p> <p>In <i>The Kingmaker</i>, Greenfield portrays Imelda Marcos as a smart, unflappable, and confounding person who is still relevant in</p> |

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|          |                    |                 | Philippine politics today. Is she haunted by her past? [Beat.] Maybe not. [Beat.] Anyway. Here's a little bit of Imelda in <i>The Kingmaker</i> . Music swells and fades.   |
| 00:02:58 | Sound Effect Clip  | Transition Clip | <b>Music:</b> Dramatic string music.  |
|          |                    |                 | <b>Imelda Marcos:</b> It's more than a fairytale. Because it's really unbelievable. I gave birth to what I dreamt of. And I always got my way. Now's the important thing. And so, the past is past.   |
|          |                    |                 | <i>[The sound of birds chirping.]</i>   |
|          |                    |                 | There are so many things in the past that we should forget. In fact, it's no longer there.  |
| 00:03:27 | Sound Effect Jesse | Transition Host | Music swells and fades.   |
| 00:03:28 | Jesse              | Host            | Lauren Greenfield, welcome to <i>Bullseye!</i> I'm glad to have you on the show.  |
| 00:03:31 | Lauren Greenfield  | Guest           | Thank you for having me.  |
| 00:03:33 | Jesse              | Host            | So, you've made a lot of work about wealth. And, to the extent that I know Imelda Marcos, I know her as, like, a late 1980's, early 1990's joke about wealth. And I wonder why you wanted to make a film about her, in particular?  |
| 00:03:56 | Lauren             | Guest           | Yeah, I mean I think it's one of these jokes that we learn is no laughing matter. I also came to her with that idea—as this, kind of, icon of materialism. And that grew out of, for the last 25 years, I've been looking at wealth and materialism and the 1% and inequality, in my photography and filmmaking. And so, that was what initially brought me to Imelda. But what we learn in the film and what I learned over the five years making it, is that—in many ways—the 3000 pairs of shoes, for which she was so famous, are a distraction. And she's really an incredibly powerful power-broker.                    |
|          |                    |                 | There is a money aspect to it, but the money is really what brings the power.   |
| 00:04:46 | Jesse              | Host            | When did you find that out? And how did you find that out?  |
| 00:04:49 | Lauren             | Guest           | Well, I came in—actually—because of the historic extravagance. I, as the person who left 3000 pairs of shoes in the palace, she'd always been a kind of iconic reference, in my work. But I read an article about what, to me, was the ultimate extravagance. She had depopulated a small island, in the south China Sea in 1976, of 254 indigenous families. And brought in, in their place, animals from Africa, on a ship. A kind of Noah's Ark.   |
|          |                    |                 | And this, to me, was the symbol of, kind of, the most egregious extravagance. Because it involved living things and human rights and decades of damage. So, I came into the story thinking it was gonna be about the survival of this island, after they lost their benefactor and had to, kind of, fend for themselves without any resources. And also, the survivor of Imelda, who I learned had come back to the Philippines after they fled—with people storming the palace. And in this article, I also learned that she had gone back to Manila and had even gone—gotten into public office, again, as a congresswoman. |

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|          |        |       | So, that's—that was kind of the starting point: how did this happen? How did Imelda get back into power and how did these poor animals survive?  |
| 00:06:14 | Jesse  | Host  | Was it always your intent to speak directly with Imelda Marcos?  |
| 00:06:18 | Lauren | Guest | I thought I would do—I—yes. I always wanted to do an interview and, actually, I didn't go until she agreed to do an interview. But I didn't know if it would be more than that. But that one interview did open up into more generous access. And she allowed me to go around with her, show me Manila—both her Manila and also the kind of Manila that she saw as a very deteriorated, lessened Manila than when they were in power.  |
| 00:06:57 | Jesse  | Host  | It began to be a more... inside access documentary.<br>Let's start, a little bit, at the beginning—or the relative beginning—of her story. How did she meet Ferdinand Marcos, who became the president of the Philippines?   |
| 00:07:09 | Lauren | Guest | Yeah. And I love this story. She was a beauty queen, and her being in a beauty pageant is how she met President Marcos. He noticed her. She lived in The Province. She was—she did not—she grew up in a—in humble circumstances. She was the poor part of a rich family. So, she <u>saw</u> something else and wanted it, was very ambitious. And she became a beauty queen. And that's how he noticed her. I think it was in the first hour, he proposed. And they got married in 11 days.  |
| 00:07:45 | Jesse  | Host  | That seems <u>bananas</u> , to me.   |
|          |        |       | <i>[Lauren laughs.]</i>  |
|          |        |       | And as she described it—I mean, she says—in the first 20 minutes, in the movie...  |
| 00:07:53 | Lauren | Guest | Yes. And I think that, you know, he... They were both strategic, in some ways. I mean, I think she loved him, and he was certainly smitten with her beauty. And yet, it was also a good strategic marriage. He was from the north; she was from the south. She was extremely charismatic. She sang. Which, both singing and beauty, goes a long way in the Philippines. And so, she helped him politically and he got her out of dodge. She left The Province, went to Manila. And was with a man who already had ambitions to be president.   |
| 00:08:34 | Jesse  | Host  | At what point did their government become... what we know it as, from the time of its fall? Which is to say, like—you know, kleptocratic <i>[laughs]</i> , plutocratic, all of these despotic—all of these adjectives.   |
| 00:08:52 | Lauren | Guest | Right. The dictatorship. I think it was an evolution. Because when you talk to their friends, Frank and Mary Yturria, who are in the film. Mary said that, at some point, things—a dry rot began to set in. This is not in the film, but that's what she told me. And I think that they started with a certain amount of idealism. And the major turning point was in 1972, when he declared martial law. And the martial law was a way to hang onto power and also to—it was, kind of, the nail in the coffin of the kleptocracy. They had many cronies who were operating the biggest businesses in the country. They took over all of the biggest businesses. |
|          |        |       | And then, under martial law, there were many human rights abuses. People incarcerated, tortured, killed, no tolerance for the opposition.  |

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|          |        |       | They threw Benigno Aquino, the opposition leader, in jail. And then—I’m trying to remember what was the year that Benigno Aquino was assassinated. I think it was in 1983? And then, over the next three years, the uprising really started. And people did not wanna tolerate it, anymore. And then, finally, in 1986, there was an election and Cory Aquino—the widow of Benigno Aquino—won, but the Marcos cheated, and they said they won.   |
| 00:10:36 | Jesse  | Host  | And so, there was a moment where there were two presidents who declared themselves president. And then, the Americans—who had been propping them up—just weren’t gonna tolerate it, anymore. When you walk into a situation where you are pointing a camera at a person who is... as charismatic and skilled at being a public figure as Imelda Marcos undoubtedly is, how does it make you... change the way you interact with them, relative to when you—you know—point your camera at Joe Blow off the street?  |
| 00:11:09 | Lauren | Guest | Yeah. You know, it really did fundamentally change the way that I handled her, in this film. Because I’m really used to people telling me the truth. I feel like—in my work, up to this point—the surprising thing is that these rich and powerful people, like David Segal or like Florian Homm and <i>Generation Wealth</i> , kind of bare their souls and tell the truth in some way that allows us to understand why they do what they do and give them some humanity and give us some empathy for them. Even, sometimes, unexpectedly.  |
|          |        |       | With Imelda Marcos, it was little bit the opposite—that I realized, pretty soon into it, that she was an extremely unreliable narrator. That she was actually spinning her own rewriting of history in ways that did not align with any of the historical accounts that I read or any of the first-person witnesses and were actually a kind of erasing of history. We heard it in the clip you played, in the beginning, when she said, “The past is the past. In fact, it’s no longer there.”  |
|          |        |       | It’s like, she realized that people did not remember the past and they could, kind of, create their own past—erasing the sins of martial law and of the corruption of the regime. And so, I definitely let her talk and I think it’s important for us to hear and understand the past and the history that she’s, kind of, pushing forward. But I also realized, when it—when I knew it wasn’t true—that I needed both to have the truth in the film and for the audience to be able to decipher and understand what was true and what was not. And so, I had to, kind of, contrast what she said with other voices that were credible voices. |
| 00:13:06 | Jesse  | Host  | Did you have to ask her questions that you were uncomfortable asking her?  |
| 00:13:11 | Lauren | Guest | Well, I was definitely scared to ask her about the assassination of Benigno Aquino, because... people generally thought that she and General Ver were responsible for it. And it’s—it was so, kind of, egregious that it ended up bringing down the regime.  |
| 00:13:30 | Jesse  | Host  | How did you gird yourself to—  |

*[Lauren laughs.]*

—ask her? I mean, like I’m imagining... looking at, you know, frankly an old woman in front of my camera, who is both obviously smart and charismatic and is also somewhat frail, and there’s—she

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|          |                    |            | has a quality of—I think frailty is the best word. Like, she just has a quality of frailty. And this is this, like, unspeakable horror that changed the fate of a nation.  |
| 00:14:01 | Lauren             | Guest      | Yeah. I mean, she's not—she's not really frail, in the sense that her strength is just unbelievable. I mean, you're just, kind of, filled with admiration even knowing all the terrible things that she's done by her, kind of, indomitable strength. In fact, she'll talk about how she never needed any sleep. That she would sleep like three hours a night. But the thing—so, before I did the first interview, I asked William Mellor—the journalist who introduced me to her—if there was anything that I should not ask. Like, it was the beginning of my project. I wanted to open up access. I didn't wanna say anything that would offend her.   |
|          |                    |            | And he said: the thing about Imelda Marcos is that you can ask her anything. She is not afraid. And it was really true—that there was really nothing that threw her off. I mean, of course, this is not her first rodeo. She has had a lot experience with the international press and has been a public figure since she was a young woman. But it was still amazing how you could kind of ask her anything and she would answer. And she would not... fault you for asking. And so, when I asked her about the assassination of Benigno Aquino, she just responded without missing a beat, "Why would I do that? Why would I kill him? I had nothing against him, except that he talked too much." |
|          |                    |            | So, she even had a sense of humor when she's responding to... you know, this most serious of questions.  |
| 00:15:44 | Jesse              | Host       | I wanna play another clip from the film, <i>The Kingmaker</i> . And my guest is Lauren Greenfield, the director of the film. And... Imelda Marcos constantly is describing her life and her relationship to the Philippines in maternal terms. And this is—this is sort of an example of that. She's talking about her... lifestyle, which is obviously ostentatious. You know, the film opens with clips of her passing money through the window of her car to kids on the street. And she, somehow, brings it around to her maternal qualities towards the nation.   |
| 00:16:28 | Sound Effect Clip  | Transition | Music swells and fades.  |
| 00:16:29 |                    | Clip       | <b>Music:</b> Bright string music.   |
|          |                    |            | <b>Imelda:</b> Always criticized for being excessive, but... that is mothering. That is the spirit of mothering. You cannot quantify love.   |
|          |                    |            | <i>[The music transitions to something tender.]</i>  |
|          |                    |            | And with my spirit and character of mothering, I want to mother not only the Philippines, but the world.   |
| 00:16:48 | Sound Effect Jesse | Transition | Music swells and fades.  |
| 00:16:49 | Jesse              | Host       | When she said, in the film, what we just heard—which is that... her ostentatiousness, or her lifestyle, is reflective of her boundless love, I was stunned.  |
|          |                    |            | <i>[They laugh.]</i>   |

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| 00:17:10 | Lauren | Guest | <p>What did it—what did it feel like sitting in the room? And she has another great line where she says, um, “Beauty is the extravagance of love.” She has almost, like, a moral justification for extravagance and her, kind of, quest for maternal hegemony. I mean, she’s obsessed with mothering, for one. And, to me, that was very interesting. Because she was an orphan. She lost her mother when she was a little girl and that really marked her. And I feel like her early loss of her mother created this, kind of, pathological obsession with mothering—where she feels that she is doing good in the world by, you know, giving money to people, taking care of the sick, getting in public office, bringing her whole family into public office. And yet, the facts bare out, you know, a family that’s stolen five to ten billion dollars and then rewritten history, lying to the people about what they have done, so they can get back into power.</p> <p>But the mothering is very key to the story, in the film. Because—in the film—we tell the story of her son, Bongbong’s, candidacy for vice president, and the way her mothering him and mothering the country kind of come together in her prince—trying to make her prince the new king, as the vice president. And, in the Philippines, being vice president is also a possible backdoor into the presidency. And so, they have their sights on getting back into the palace. And so, her mothering of Bongbong is also the way to get back into power.</p> |
| 00:18:51 | Jesse  | Host  | What’s the relationship between the Marcos family and the current president of the Philippines, Rodrigo Duterte?   |
| 00:18:59 | Lauren | Guest | <p>Well, at the risk of being a spoiler, that alliance—that connection—was really the breaking news piece of this film that happened quietly in the process. So, Duterte—President Rodrigo Duterte—won in 2016, in a kind of shocking win that—very reminiscent of how we felt when Trump was elected. I shouldn’t say reminiscent, because it happened first. And when he won, it was really, like, this repetition of the past—of a—of a new kind of authoritarian leader. A new strong-man that was really reminiscent of President Marcos.</p> <p>But there was a press conference after he was elected where he revealed, very unexpectedly—to everybody’s shock and surprise—that Aimee, the daughter of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos, had given him money to finance his campaign. And that really revealed this alliance, which has become understood since then, where the Marcoses helped Duterte come into power.</p>  |
| 00:20:09 | Jesse  | Host  | We’ll wrap up with Lauren Greenfield, in a bit. After the break, she’ll tell me about how a lifetime spent covering wealth has affected her relationship with money. It’s <i>Bullseye</i> , from <a href="http://MaximumFun.org">MaximumFun.org</a> and NPR.   |
| 00:20:22 | Music  | Music | Thumpy electronic music plays.   |
| 00:20:25 | Jesse  | Promo | This message comes from NPR sponsor: Smartwater.   |
|          |        |       | <p>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.”</p>   |

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|          |       |       | Smartwater: that's pretty smart!  |
| 00:20:50 | Promo | Promo | <p>[Music fades out.]</p> <p><b>Music:</b> Festive music plays.</p>   |
|          |       |       | <p><b>Linda Holmes:</b> When it's too cold to go out or too icy to make it out of the driveway, where do you go to find <u>just</u> the right movie, <u>just</u> the right book, <u>just</u> the right show to binge? <i>Pop Culture Happy Hour</i>, from NPR, can help you keep warm and keep up at the same time! Join us twice a week on <i>Pop Culture Happy Hour</i>.</p>                      |
| 00:21:09 | Jesse | Promo | <p>[Music fades out.]</p> <p>Hey, gang. It's Jesse with a quick reminder. We're in the middle of the holiday season and it's a great time to donate to your local NPR Member Station. They're the reason you're listening to <i>Bullseye</i>. And we need their journalism now, more than ever. Go to <a href="http://donate.NPR.org/bullseye">donate.NPR.org/bullseye</a> to give. And thanks.</p> |
| 00:21:26 | Promo | Promo | <p><b>Music:</b> Upbeat, fun music.</p>   |
|          |       |       | <p><b>Lisa Hanawalt:</b> Hey, if you like your podcasts to be focused and well-researched, and your podcast hosts to be uncharismatic, unhorny strangers who have no interest in horses, then this is not the podcast for you.</p>  |
|          |       |       | <p><b>Emily Heller:</b> Yeah, and what's your deal?</p>   |
|          |       |       | <p>[Lisa laughs.]</p>   |
|          |       |       | <p>I'm Emily.</p>   |
|          |       |       | <p><b>Lisa:</b> I'm Lisa.</p>   |
|          |       |       | <p><b>Emily:</b> Our show's called <i>Baby Geniuses</i>!</p>  |
|          |       |       | <p><b>Lisa:</b> And its hosts are horny adult idiots. We discover weird Wikipedia pages every episode.</p>  |
|          |       |       | <p><b>Emily:</b> We discuss institutional misogyny!</p>   |
|          |       |       | <p><b>Lisa:</b> We ask each other the dumbest questions, and our listeners won't stop sending us pictures of their butts.</p>   |
|          |       |       | <p><b>Emily:</b> We haven't asked them to stop! But they also aren't stopping.</p>  |
|          |       |       | <p><b>Lisa:</b> Join us on <i>Baby Geniuses</i>.</p>  |
|          |       |       | <p><b>Emily:</b> Every other week on <a href="http://MaximumFun.org">MaximumFun.org</a>.</p>  |
| 00:22:02 | Jesse | Host  | <p>[Music ends.]</p> <p>It's <i>Bullseye</i>! I'm Jesse Thorn. I'm here with the director Lauren Greenfield. She made the films <i>Generation Wealth</i> and <i>The Queen of Versailles</i>. Her new film, <i>The Kingmaker</i>, is a profile of Imelda Marcos. She's the deposed first lady of the Philippines and now serves in the country's House of Representatives.</p>                       |

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|          |           |           | I feel like there are some really particular aesthetic touch-points for wealth in our culture. Like, the ones I was thinking about—what do I think of when I think of the aesthetics of wealth? Reality television is obviously—it's a really big one. I think... fashion, editorial and advertising, is a pretty big one. And, you know, in relatively recent years, the world of—especially Instagram—but social media, generally. You know, they're all places where the values of [laughs] wealth, such as they are communicated to us. And I wonder if, when you are... shooting, you know, <i>The Queen of Versailles</i> or when you're shooting in one of Imelda Marcos's homes—or when you're shooting still photography of, you know, a rich person in Russia. You're aware of those kinds of aesthetic touchstones and how the images that you're creating relate to them?   |
| 00:23:31 | Lauren    | Guest     | Definitely. I mean, I've always—in my photography—incorporated aesthetics of the world of image and advertising and, kind of, the seduction of the clothes or the bodies or the tropes from advertising in the media, and incorporated those into my imagery to both draw you in and criticize them. In <i>Generation Wealth</i> , for example, in this 25-year journey, there were certain tropes. Like the Birkin bag, which is a five to six-digit purse.  |
| 00:24:09 | Crosstalk | Crosstalk | [They chuckle.]<br><b>Lauren:</b> Which, I—   |
| 00:24:13 | Lauren    | Guest     | <b>Jesse:</b> In cost. That's in dollars. Five or six digits of dollars. Yeah. And this is a sought-after item. So sought-after that there are waiting lists for, you know, this unimaginably expensive purse. And there's one person in—that I photographed, who has a closet where there's literally box after box of these Birkin bags, in every color. I mean, I think one of the things that ties together <i>The Queen of Versailles</i> and Imelda Marcos is this, kind of, aspiration to royalty. This, kind of... French aristocratic style, where—you know—there's gilded furniture and Corinthian columns and portraiture. Paintings. Commissioned paintings of oneself, that—we see that in the beginning of <i>The Queen of Versailles</i> . They've had all of these commissioned paintings of themselves.<br><br>And, in the beginning of <i>The Kingmaker</i> , there's this extraordinary portrait of the Marcos family in one of the palaces that they built, where they're depicted as, like, mermaid and merman. And the children are in a shell in Imelda's hands. |
| 00:25:55 | Jesse     | Host      | And I think, you know, the through-line in all of—in all of this work, for me, is really about aspiration: that it's not so much about wealth as about the aspiration to it. And so, you know, even Imelda is a little bit of a fake-it-till-you-make-it, in that she begins from the poor part of the rich family and, you know, is gonna—is gonna get there. And is incredibly ambitious.   |
| 00:26:11 | Lauren    | Guest     | How do you make a still image that draws on the parts of, you know, the photography of luxury that are seductive to us, that also... criticizes—  |
| 00:26:12 | Jesse     | Host      | Yes.  |
| 00:26:13 | Lauren    | Guest     | —that culture?<br>I mean, that's really the cornerstone of my work. I think that one of the things that I've always done, in my photography—and the filmmaking, in a way—is, kind of, show the façade and show the  |

falseness of it. And revealed—kind of deconstructed the tropes. Deconstructed the aesthetics to reveal what's behind it, or what's underneath. Or what's—in a way, how it promises us something and then does not fulfill on that promise.

You know, I think in *The Queen of Versailles*, they're making the biggest house in America. And... get, kind of, destroyed along the way. And, in the financial crisis, they're unable to build the house, but it also reflects how we all, kind of, chase that brass ring. And, kind of, what happened to us along the way. In the beginning of *The Kingmaker*, we see how Imelda Marcos is presenting to camera. How she's, in a way, running the show as the storyteller. I began in an interview that is very much like my photographs. Around her, she's surrounded by priceless paintings, a Picasso painting, a lot of gold—gold framed paintings, gold everywhere on her table. And the servants come in and they're kind of—her hair and makeup person comes in. And so, we see her—she asked if—how she looks for the camera.

But she asks in Tagalog, so, presumably, we don't understand. And then I ask her to look at my camera and she says, "Should I look at you?"

And I say, "Yes." And then she looks down and that's the picture that's there. So, I'm kind of showing—around the edges—both how she's trying to control the story and also how I'm showing you how she's trying to control the story.

00:28:19 Lauren Guest

There's a scene where she has—she's displaying hundreds of photographs, framed photographs, from her glory days as first lady, with all of the world leaders that she met. Including people she says are called monsters by others but are really nice people, like Saddam Hussein and Chairman Mao. And she's got all of these photographs kind of beautifully displayed for my camera. And she's going around showing them to me.

And as she pulls one up, like dominoes they start to knock each other over and fall on the ground and the glass starts to break. And she doesn't even... pay any attention to it. It's as though it didn't happen. And somebody starts—on her staff—starts cleaning it up, and our camera shows the guy cleaning it up, too, but Imelda pays no attention to that.

00:29:29 Jesse Host

And so, in a way that's... that's a character moment about who she is. She's got everything, kind of, beautifully displayed and yet when things go wrong, it doesn't stop her at all.

In your movie *Generation Wealth*, you talk a lot about—or you depict—the ways—and in some of your other work, as well—the ways in which the expressions of wealth are often compulsions and addictions.

*[Lauren hums an agreement.]*

And in making the film, I think you found yourself looking at your own compulsions and addictions, which are—which were, you know, primarily around your relationship to making more and better

work through, you know, working more and harder. And you sort of question the sustainability of that as a life. Particularly as a parent.

And I wonder if doing this work on these themes has changed your own... relationship to the way you work and, more broadly, the way you live your life? In a meaningful way.

00:30:35 Lauren Guest Well, I felt—so, when I was doing *Generation Wealth*, it was incredibly overwhelming, and I went through hundreds of thousands of pictures and... it was 25 years of work and I spent more than five years putting it together. And I made a book and a museum exhibition and a film and also was working on *The Kingmaker*, at the same time. And it made me really think about my own addiction to work, as I was looking at these, kind of, great... addictions and rise and falls of my subjects—mostly around money and beauty and youth and sexuality.

And so, it just forced me, as a artist kind of contemplating this in my own work, to think about how it reflected in my own life. And also, to think about how we were all complicit—myself included—in this, kind of, culture of excess and of, kind of, nonstop perfectionism and—in the film, all of the characters, kind of, have crashes. Both a financial crash, but also personal crashes, where the crashes are also moments of awakening. And I think for me, while I was making this film, I started interviewing my family members and my kids. And began interviewing my kids about their generation, their generation of materialism and social media, and what ended up coming out was—in a way—their critique of me for... working so much. You know, sometimes at the expense of not being there, as a parent. Not—traveling too much and really, I think, not listening. Not listening to how it affected them.

And, I think, for all of the characters in the film—including myself—it's the waking up to how you're—to what's really going on. In my case, it was how I was affecting members of my family—that does change your behavior. And that said, you know, the film is about addiction and my husband always says, "Who you are is who you've always been." And so, I can't say that I'm not that worker bee, anymore. That's kind of just who I am. But I do think that being conscious of the downside of what most people see as a kind of positive thing and the way that it can negatively impact the people in my life—particularly my family—is definitely something that I'm much more aware of and, I think, that awareness affects my actions.

00:33:30 Jesse Host Lauren, thank you so much for taking all this time to be on *Bullseye*. It was really nice to get to talk to you.

00:33:35 Lauren Guest Thank you for having me.

00:33:37 Jesse Host Lauren Greenfield. Her film, *The Kingmaker*, is in theaters now. It will be on Showtime, early next year.

00:33:43 Music Music Bright, chiming transition music.

00:33:50 Jesse Host That's the end of another episode of *Bullseye*. *Bullseye* is produced at [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org) world headquarters, overlooking MacArthur park in beautiful Los Angeles, California—where, this past week, a Filipino-American youth group held a rally just outside the office, only a few hours before we recorded our interview about Imelda Marcos.

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 Kaupling and Melissa Dueñas. Our interstitial music is by Dan Wally, also known as DJW. Our theme song is by The Go! Team. Thanks to them and their label, Memphis Industries, for letting us use it.

And one last thing—we've done a lot of interviews in our show's almost two decades. They're available on our website, [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org)—which, recently, got a refresh! It's looking very nice! We're also on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Just search for *Bullseye with Jesse Thorn*. You can keep up with the show there.

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

**Speaker:** *Bullseye with Jesse Thorn* is a production of [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org) and is distributed by NPR.

*[Music fades out.]*

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