

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>
00:00:11	Jesse Thorn	Host	I'm Jesse Thorn. It's <i>Bullseye!</i>
00:00:13	Music	Music	"Huddle Formation" from the album <i>Thunder, Lightning, Strike</i> by the band The Go! Team. A fast, upbeat, peppy song. Music plays as Jesse speaks, then fades out.
00:00:21	Jesse	Host	Marianne Jean-Baptiste is a classically trained actor who has over 50 credits in what has to be one of the most varied resumes in all of acting. Her breakthrough part was in <i>Secrets and Lies</i> , the acclaimed British drama from the 1990s, directed by Mike Leigh. The role earned her a Best Supporting Actress nomination at the Academy Awards. In 2002, she got a lead part on the American TV show, <i>Without a Trace</i> . She played an FBI agent named Vivian Johnson for seven years. You might also have seen her, recently, in <i>Homecoming</i> .
			Her latest film is a departure from all of that, though. It's called <i>In Fabric</i> . It's a movie that—I mean, <i>[laughs]</i> well. Look, there isn't a more elegant way to say this. It's a movie about a haunted dress. It is a bizarre, psychedelic movie about a haunted dress. A beautiful, striking red dress that literally burns itself into the person who wears it. It's a dress that's worshipped by occultists. And in <i>In Fabric</i> , Marianne Jean-Baptiste's character is the first person unlucky enough to buy it.
			In the scene you're about to hear, Sheila Woodchapel—her character—has just tried it on for the first time. In a strange, almost church-like department store.
			<i>[The song ends with a chorus of cheers and applause.]</i>
00:01:46	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:01:48	Clip	Clip	Music: Light, airy department store music plays over the loudspeakers.
			Sheila Woodchapel: Isn't it small? What size is this?
			Speaker 1: 36.
			Sheila: But I'm not a 36.
			Speaker 1: In a number is only the creation of actuality. Dimensions and proportions transcend the prisons of our measurements.
			Shelia: You're not getting any more in? <i>[Clicks her teeth dubiously and lets out a heavy sigh.]</i>
			Speaker 1: There's a lucky man somewhere in the vista of this mysterious mirror. May I ask his name?
			Shelia: His name is Adonis.

00:02:23 Sound Effect Transition Music swells and fades.

00:02:25 Jesse Host Marianne Jean-Baptiste, welcome to *Bullseye*. It's great to have you on the show.

00:02:28 Marianne Jean-Baptiste Guest Thank you.

00:02:29 Jesse Host As I was watching that scene, in particular—which is pretty early on in the film—I thought to myself, “What would it be like to get the script in the mail, for this *[cracking up]* film?”

[They both laugh.]

00:02:49 Marianne Guest Like, to like look at that list of words!
I know.

00:02:52 Jesse Host *[Chuckling.]* So, my first question is: what was it like *[cracks another laugh]* to get that script in your email inbox or your mailbox outside your front door?

00:03:00 Marianne Guest Well... it was pretty amazing, actually. I got the script from my agent, in England, with the offer letter and sort of saying, you know, “You’re gonna do it. It’s gonna be here, and da, da, da, da, da, da.”

And the first thing he wrote—he sent the script and he said, “Okay. I absolutely love this filmmaker. I don’t know if you’re familiar with him, but I’m really into what he does.” Etc. “But it’s not your average, kind of—you know, storytelling.”

So, I was like, “Okay, cool. This sounds great.” Then I get another email, quite swiftly, with, “Don’t read it yet. Watch these.” And, you know, links to *Berberian Sound Studio* and *Duke of Burgundy*. But it was too late. I’d already start—I mean, I was intrigued, so I’d already started it. And I was reading through and thinking, “This is either gonna be brilliant, or it’s not gonna work at all. But the way in which it is written, I wanna know.” Do you know what I mean? And it’ll be worth trying to find whatever it is.

00:04:23 Jesse Host Then I saw his work and I thought, “I’ve gotta do it. Gotta do it. I love this mind. This crazy kind of unusual... really quite unique way of telling stories.”
Did you make any adjustment to your performance style based on what the film was going to be or what he told you to do? Or did you approach it the same way you would approach anything else?

00:04:36 Marianne Guest Um, I approached it pretty much the way I’d approach everything else. Although, you know, we talked about certain things to do with the style of it. For example, in the car—I get into the car. We’re gonna go driving. So, I’m like, “Okay, this is—I’m *[stammering]*—it’s in England, so it’s gonna be stick shift and it’s changing gears.”

And he’s like, “No, no, no, no. I don’t want you to do any of that. I just want you to hold the steering wheel up high and gaze just below the rearview mirror.”

And I was like, “What?!”

[Jesse laughs.]

“That doesn’t look like—nobody drives like that.”

And he’s like, “Nooo, you’re not supposed to look as if you’re driving.”

And I’m like, “Aah. What else would I be doing?”

“Because now we’re gonna—we’re gonna put the same scenery behind you, it’s just gonna keep going in a loop, like those old movies and stuff.”

And I’m like, *[sighs]* “Okaaaay. I’ll go with it. Let’s go—okay. Fine. Let’s go.”

00:05:36	Jesse	Host	<i>[Marianne agrees several times as Jesse speaks.]</i> In that scene that we heard, your character buys this red dress. And she’s buying it to go on a date. She’s found out that her kid’s dad is seeing someone. They’re separated. And she, like, circles a classified ad. Like a lonely-hearts ad. And she wears the dress on this date, and it is—I’m just gonna play the scene. It is <u>very</u> ... distinctive.
00:06:08	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Marianne laughs.]</i> Music swells and fades.
00:06:09	Clip	Clip	Sheila: So, you like dancing, then? <i>[Beat.]</i> Lonely Heart: <i>[Despondently.]</i> Not tonight. I sprained my ankle. Sheila: <i>[Awkwardly.]</i> Oh, I didn’t mean tonight! Just in general. You like dancing. Lonely Heart: <i>[Monotone.]</i> Yeah. Sheila: <i>[Beat.]</i> It says in your lone-hearts advertisement that you like laughing. Lonely Heart: Yeah. Sheila: <i>[Beat.]</i> What kind of things? Lonely Heart: Funny things. Sheila: What about cooking? Lonely Heart: Uh, what is this? An exam? <i>[The clink of plates.]</i> Music swells and fades.
00:06:37	Sound Effect	Transition	
00:06:38	Marianne	Guest	<i>[Jesse laughs in the background.]</i>
00:06:42	Jesse	Host	He’s just horrible. He’s just— <i>[laughs]</i> . Listening to that scene, now, I was thinking it was funny. And watching it, earlier, it was like... <u>upsetting</u> . Like, there’s a

00:06:58 Crosstalk Crosstalk suffocation scene in the film, later on, and it felt the same way the suffocation *[laughs]* felt.
Marianne: Right. Right, right, right.

Jesse: Right? Like, it really just dances on the edge of—this is so absurd and ridiculous that it is funny.

Marianne: Mm-hm.

Jesse: But it is also so specific that it is scary.

Marianne: Yeah. It's disturbing.

Jesse: Yeah.

00:07:18 Marianne Guest **Marianne:** I think it—what he's very, very good at is unsettling you. Even in those moments of comedy, you're kind of like... it's bizarre. You don't know where this is gonna go. Do you know what I mean? You—what is he gonna pull out of that suitcase? A wilting rose or a bloody machete? You know, because—ugh. Yeah.

00:07:36 Jesse Host I wanna talk a little bit about your life. You grew up in South London.

[Marianne confirms.]

00:07:43 Marianne Guest Where particularly in South London did you grow up?
 00:07:44 Jesse Host Peckham.
 00:07:45 Marianne Guest Now what is Peckham like?
 Peckham—Southeast London. Well, when I was growing up in Peckham, it was very working-class neighborhood, without housing estates and stuff.

00:07:54 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Jesse:** Is it—what—is a housing estate what we would call a—

Marianne: Projects.

Jesse: Is it a public housing project?

00:08:00 Marianne Guest **Marianne:** Yeeeah. Public housing. Lots of outside activity, do you know what I mean? Everybody played outside. And, you know, people from one project and the other project—they'd all get together and play big games of things. Like, we have this game called rounders, which is a bit like your baseball. And it would be, like, about 30, 40 kids all playing that. Yeah, it was a fairly mixed neighborhood, when I was growing up. I would say it was... it was a bit of a dodgy area. Not as bad as some, but it had its edge, you know? It was a bit edgy.

00:08:38 Jesse Host Was it like—you kinda gotta keep your chin up when you're walking around?

00:08:41 Marianne Guest Yeah, yeah. You have to—I mean, everybody kind of knew everyone and who was there, but you had to be very aware of what was going on and when, and who.

00:08:53 Jesse Host I know that you're a pretty serious musician.

[Marianne agrees.]

Did you have music in the house, when you were a kid?

00:08:59 Marianne Guest All the time. Yeah! My dad played several instruments.
00:09:02 Jesse Host What did he play?
00:09:03 Marianne Guest A lot—self-taught. He played the piano, the guitar, the violin, clarinet.
00:09:10 Jesse Host The clarinet seems like a hard one to *[breaking into laughter]* teach yourself!
00:09:13 Marianne Guest I know!
00:09:14 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Jesse:** You know, I can't—

Marianne: I took classes at school.

Jesse: I'd like just be holding the clarinet in one hand and the reed in the other hand and just going, "Eeeeeh."

Marianne: Yeah!
00:09:20 Marianne Guest Those instruments are quite tricky. I learnt the clarinet at school... and did a bit of that and I was just like, "Ugh, the squeaking."

[Jesse laughs.]

00:09:35 Crosstalk Crosstalk It was just—I had more squeaks than anything else.
Marianne: So, I put that down quite quickly.

Jesse: What kind of music did he play?
00:09:38 Marianne Guest Jazz. You know.
00:09:41 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Jesse:** For the at-home listener, you made the hand symbol—

Marianne: For the at-home—

Jesse: You made the hand symbol for—

Marianne: *[Uncertainly.]* Jazz.

Jesse: Eeeeeh.

Marianne: Yeah. *[Mimicking Jesse's inflection.]* Jaaazz-ish.
00:09:48 Marianne Guest In the house—like records-wise? He had a very eclectic taste. So, we would have calypso, jazz. Reggae. Classical music. He loved Handel. So, you know, he'd have The Fireworks. He'd have The Messiah. The Waterworks. All that stuff.

00:10:06 Jesse Host And, occasionally, the Mighty Sparrow
00:10:08 Marianne Guest And then, occasionally, yes. "Sugar Bum Bum", Lord Kitchener and all that stuff. We would have that.

00:10:15 Jesse Host Did you think you were gonna be a musician or did you have a practical idea in mind?

00:10:19 Marianne Guest Oh my god! I wanted to be a barrister. I wanted to be a lawyer.
00:10:23 Jesse Host *[Confused.]* Whyyyyy is that?
00:10:24 Marianne Guest So I could perform in court.
00:10:26 Jesse Host Mm-hm.
00:10:27 Marianne Guest Closing arguments, that's what it was about.
00:10:28 Jesse Host *[Amused.]* Uh-huh.
00:10:29 Marianne Guest In retrospect. *[Cackles.]*
00:10:30 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Jesse:** You wanted to be a television *[chuckling]* lawyer. You wanted to be like *Perry Mason*, or whatever. *Perry Mason* was maybe a detective.

Marianne: *[Through laughter.]* Well, I grew up watching *The Paper Chase*.

Jesse: Yeah.

Marianne: And stuff like that. So, yeah. I think that's what it was about—being able to stand up and... argue.

00:10:47 Jesse Host
00:10:49 Marianne Guest

How far did you go down that road?
Not very far. I took a gap year, and—in that year—I did a lot of studio singing sessions.

00:10:56 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Jesse: How old were you?

Marianne: To make money.

00:10:58 Marianne Guest

18. So, I did a lot of studio sessions, like backing singing and bits and pieces. And some theatre. And I thought, "I might as well get my Equity card, while I'm at it. For the year." *[Sighs.]* And then I thought, "You know what? I quite like this. I don't wanna do... anything else. I'm gonna apply for drama school." So, I did.

00:11:18 Jesse Host
00:11:20 Crosstalk Crosstalk

I'm gonna play a little clip of you singing.

Marianne: *[Gasps.]* Don't!

Jesse: This is—yes, you sound great.

Marianne: Oh nooo.

Jesse: You'll hear—this is from a theatre promo from a few years ago. So, it is you singing for the benefit of a photographer. So, you'll hear the photographer clicking, clicking, clicking.

Marianne: Yeees.

Jesse: In the background.

Marianne: And that character couldn't sing.

Jesse: Well—

Marianne: I've gotta preface *[laughs]*—

Jesse: You sound like a—then you did a bad job.

Marianne: Okay.

00:11:41 Sound Effect Transition

Jesse: *[Laughing]* Because you sound really good.
Music swells and fades.

00:11:42 Clip Clip

Marianne singing with a wavering vibrato. A monitor screeches with feedback occasionally throughout. In the background, you can hear the click of a camera shutter go off at regular intervals.

*Come to Jesus
Come to Jesus
Join us, now
Join us, now
He will save you
He will save your soul*

*And set you free
 Then he will save you—
 Join us, now
 Join us, now*
 00:12:28 Sound Effect Transition Music swells and fades.

00:12:29 Jesse Host I was listening to you talk to my... buddy, Aisha Tyler, on her podcast.
[Marianne cheers in delight.]
 And... you told her the name of a band you toured with.
 00:12:42 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Marianne:** Oh god. Oh no.
Jesse: I was—I was on the subway and I was like, “Okay, I gotta remember this so that I can spring it on her. But I’m gonna let you spring it on... America’s public radio listeners.
 00:12:57 Marianne Guest *[Laughs.]* Flesh Mesh Yum Yum.
 00:12:59 Jesse Host Yeah, Flesh Mesh Yum Yum. That’s the one.
[They laugh.]
 00:13:03 Marianne Guest We were awful!
 00:13:08 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Jesse:** Well, I mean, you were working the road! You said you were touring.
Marianne: It was crazy.
Jesse: You were touring Europe.
Marianne: I knooow. Yeah, we were.
 00:13:13 Marianne Guest It was fun, but it was like—you know, only young people could do it.
[Jesse laughs.]
 Surely, you’d have to be young and optimistic. Geeeee.
 00:13:23 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Jesse:** Nobody has a midlife crisis and decides to start a band called Flesh Mesh Yum Yum?
Marianne: Oh my god. Nooo. Oh god.
 00:13:30 Jesse Host What kind of band was it?
 00:13:31 Marianne Guest *[Struggling for words.]* I—I couldn’t even define the music we were making, because we were so, sort of like—this, we can’t be defined. You know? It’s got a bit of rock in it. It’s got some *[hitting the word on a growl]* funk. It’s got every—I mean, we had everything. Punk. Everything.
 00:13:47 Jesse Host Were you singing in the band?
 00:13:48 Marianne Guest *[Shamefully.]* I was singing in the band. Screeching.
 00:13:51 Jesse Host Did you wear outfits?
 00:13:53 Marianne Guest No! We, kind of, would—no!
 00:13:55 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Jesse:** *[Yelling.]* You’re telling me you were—!
Marianne: We didn’t. No. There was a guy called Fitz, who was the lead guitar.
Jesse: Flesh Mesh Yum Yum didn’t have outfits?!

Marianne: The lead guitarist.

Jesse: Uh-huh.

Marianne: His name was Fitz. His real name—this is a really funny—I’ve got a, yeah—anyway. His name was Fitz, and he wore all the outfits. He had gold teeth all across here.

Jesse: Yeah.

00:14:19 Marianne Guest **Marianne:** All the top row. And he wore extensions in his hair and stuff. Before it was, kind of, you know... and he was the—he was kind of the lead singer. I kind of shared that position with him. He was reluctant to share the position, though. ‘Cause it was his band and he would have tantrums. He was from Montserrat. I mean, I worked with him for months. And I was sort of—one day, I sort of said, is “What’s Fitz short for? Is that like Fitzgerald? Fitzroy? Blah, blah, blah.”

And he went, “No, my name’s Eric.”

[They laugh.]

He said, “Yeah, they called me Fitz ‘cause I had epilepsy when I was kid. So, they just—the name just stuck.” I swear, I laughed so much. Because, obviously, being Caribbean—he’s from Montserrat. My mum’s from Antigua. There were so many stories of people who had these names. You thought their name was one thing and you found out it was something else, ‘cause they’d been given—there was a called Halfie. I thought his name was Harvey.

But Mum said, “No, Halfie.”

I said, “What’s that for?”

She goes, “‘Cause he’s got one leg.”

[Jesse chuckles.]

00:15:35 Jesse Host So, they called him Halfie. *[They laugh quietly.]* It’s a cruel sense of humor.
How did you end up at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts—RADA?
00:15:39 Marianne Guest Well, I auditioned.
00:15:41 Jesse Host Did you have to, like, come out to your parents as an aspiring professional actor?
00:15:45 Marianne Guest I know, yeah. My mum was like, “That’s ridiculous.” And my dad said, “Okay. Do whatever you wanna do, as long as you do it well. Do it well.”
00:15:56 Jesse Host That’s even... worse than telling you not to do it.
00:15:58 Marianne Guest Yeah, I know. Yeah.
00:16:00 Jesse Host That’s, like, a real...
00:16:03 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Marianne:** Not sure if it was—

Jesse: That’s real responsibility.

00:16:06 Marianne Guest **Marianne:** It's very hard. 'Cause you kind of go, "Yeeeah! He told me to do it! Da, da, da." And then you go, "But now I gotta do it well? Okay. How do I do that, then?" Yeah. My mother never, ever sort of accepted it, in a funny way.

[Jesse chuckles.]

She's always be like, "When are you gonna get a proper job?"

"But, Mum, I've just been nominated for an Academy Award!"

"Yes, but... when will you settle down?"

00:16:32 Jesse Host *[Laughs quietly.]* Did you learn to do old-timey actor things? Like fence and ride horses?

00:16:37 Marianne Guest Oh, yeah. We did some fences, man. Didn't do the horse-riding. I would have loved that.

00:16:42 Jesse Host Yeah, it seems like it'd be pretty fun.

00:16:43 Marianne Guest Yeah! We did the old—

00:16:44 Jesse Host I—actually, I take it back. I would get motion sickness.

00:16:47 Marianne Guest *[Softly.]* No.

00:16:48 Jesse Host Yeah. I think 'cause it bounces up and down a lot.

00:16:50 Marianne Guest Oh, I love—well, *[laughing]* that's the best bit.

00:16:52 Jesse Host And my butt would hurt.

00:16:53 Marianne Guest No, your butt does hurt, after a while. Unless you're cushioned adequately.

00:16:58 Jesse Host I am *[laughing]* not.

[They laugh.]

00:17:04 Marianne Guest I'm gonna go ahead and stipulate that. Yeah, rapier and dagger... what do they call it? Um. Oh no. We did movement for actors—where you'd learn the polonaise and things like that, like you're gonna need it if you're doing a Shakespeare and they decide that they're gonna do some old Russian dance.

00:17:22 Jesse Host We'll finish up with Marianne Jean-Baptiste after the break. When we come back, we'll talk about what it's like to play an FBI agent on network TV for seven years. I mean, how many expository interrogations can one person conduct?

00:17:39 Promo Promo It's *Bullseye*, from MaximumFun.org and NPR.
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.

00:17:57 Promo Promo **Lulu Garcia-Navarro:** And I'm Lulu Garcia-Navarro. *Up First:* start your days with us, weekdays at 6 Eastern and Saturdays at 8—a bit later to suit your weekend, from NPR news.
Music: Upbeat, cheerful music plays in the background.

Allie Goertz: Hi, I'm Allie Goertz!

Julia Prescott: And I'm Julia Prescott. And we host—

Both: —[Round Springfield!](http://RoundSpringfield!)

Julia: *Round Springfield* is a new *Simpsons* podcast that is Simpsons-adjacent—

Allie: Mm-hm.

Julia: —um, in its topic. We talk to *Simpsons* writers, directors, voiceover actors, you name it, about non-*Simpsons* things that they've done. Because, surprise! They're all extremely talented.

Allie: Absolutely. For example, David X. Cohen worked on *The Simpsons*, but then created a little show called *Futurama*!

Julia: Mm-hm!

Allie: That's our very first episode.

Julia: Yeah!

Allie: So, tune in for stuff like that with Yearly Smith, with Tim Long, with different writers and voice actors. It's gonna be so much fun, and we are every other week on MaximumFun.org or wherever you get your podcasts!

[Music fades out.]

00:18:39	Jesse	Host	It's <i>Bullseye</i> . I'm Jesse Thorn. My guest, Marianne Jean-Baptiste, is an actor. She stars in the new thriller, <i>In Fabric</i> : a brilliant and bizarre film about a haunted dress. She was also nominated for an Academy Award for her role in Mike Leigh's <i>Secrets and Lies</i> .
00:19:01	Marianne	Guest	Were you familiar with Mike Leigh's work before you went in to meet him or audition for him? Oh, yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. I'd seen much of it, actually. A lot of his stuff for the BBC, of course. <i>Abigail's Party</i> . We all grew up with that. So, I'd always loved his work and thought, "Aw, mate—the chance of working with him would be fantastic!"
00:19:18	Jesse	Host	What happened when you went in to audition?
00:19:20	Marianne	Guest	When I went in, the first time I actually met him was for <i>Naked</i> . And the audition was me visiting him in, like, a lounge. You had a sofa and you had tea and stuff like that that you could make and so on. And he kind of sat off. And he said, "Okay. I'd just like you to just think of a character that you'd like to play and stuff. And then just be the character in the space."
00:19:48	Jesse	Host	Did you know that that's what you were gonna—like, did you agent say, "Okay, when you go in to see Mike Leigh, he's just gonna tell you to be a character in the—in a space."
00:19:56	Marianne	Guest	No.
00:19:57	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Jesse: Oh boy.
00:19:59	Marianne	Guest	Marianne: They didn't tell you anything. So, I go in, and I sort of go, "Okay, then. Lovely." So, I just sat there reading a newspaper. I made myself a cup of tea and read the newspaper for 45 minutes or so.

[Jesse snorts with laughter.]

While he watched. *[Beat.]* And that was that!

00:20:20 Jesse Host You really showed us how he watched, which was over the top of his glasses. *[Laughs.]*

00:20:24 Marianne Guest Yeah. Oh, mate. That guy would spy on you from different places. But—it's like, ugh.

00:20:32 Jesse Host *[Chuckling.]* That is, like—at the point where he said—I've auditioned for some acting job in my time, and it's—I've never enjoyed it. But at the point where he said, "But I just want you to be a character in a space." Uh, that's when I would have just started crying and left! Basically!

00:20:49 Marianne Guest Really?! *[Cackles.]*

00:20:50 Jesse Host Or just—yeah, like, *[through laughter]* gotten too sick of my stomach and had to run to the bathroom.

00:20:54 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Marianne:** Oh my god.

00:20:57 Marianne Guest **Jesse:** That is horrifying to me. You know what it was? I was only too happy to sit. As long as I'm sat down, I wasn't gonna play it—I wasn't gonna find a character that stood up for 45 minutes or an hour. Just make yourself comfortable and try not to peep at him. So, be aware what—of where he is in the room, but just—sort of, like—continue. Yeah. Were you tempted to be, like, a traffic policeman?

00:21:19 Jesse Host *[They laugh.]*

00:21:26 Marianne Guest Something? Something where you had some schtick? No, no. You know what's funny about it is, I'd get—instinctively, I kind of knew that the less I did, the more appealing it would be to him. 'Cause that's the thing with improvisation. You—and I've even done it, sometimes, with some young actors, working with them. Trying to get them to improvise. They think that they need to talk, constantly and be something, and do something. When, really... you just wanna be. Just wanna see if somebody can sit. Or, you know. Do something really simple. Nothing at all.

00:22:14 Jesse Host And I think that I kind of got that that was the way to go. How long did you work on the movie before you started shooting the movie?

00:22:17 Marianne Guest *[Censored.]* Six—sorry.

00:22:27 Crosstalk Crosstalk *[They laugh.]*

Six months. I'm sorry. I'm moving away from the microphone, 'cause I wanted a sip of coffee.

Jesse: *[Laughing.]* You were also collapsing in laughter at the thought of—

Marianne: I was! Six months.

Jesse: —how long you worked on that movie without even shooting any movie.

Marianne: I know! I know, six months rehearsal. *[Lets out a deep sigh.]*

00:22:29 Jesse Host Were you scared that you were not getting it right, at any point?

00:22:43 Marianne Guest No! I mean, what... you work in—the character I played was a bit of a loner. So, I worked in isolation quite a lot. Quite a lot. Also, in the

six months, about threeeee and half of those six months were spent doing the birthing of that character, basically. And all the research and backstory that that character has to have. All the tools. The index box of facts and, you know, relationships and all that sort of thing. So, in that time, I had to find out where she grew up in London. I had to find the street she grew up on. I had to create the neighbors that lived on either side of her, who lived across the road. I had to find her school. I had to work out what bus she would have taken to school, or if she walked. And if those busses still exist, 'cause sometimes they would shut numbers off.

So, the number 12 doesn't run anymore from there to there. It's now the number 73, but back in the day—

00:23:55 Jesse Host
00:23:57 Marianne Guest
00:23:58 Jesse Host
00:24:00 Marianne Guest

When you say you had to...

Yeah?

Were you, like, filling out a *[laughing]* worksheet?

Literally—listen. It's like that, because you'd have to report to him and he'd go, "Okay, where does she live? Okay. Enough. Get my notes out. Okay, she lives on Elmhurst Road, number 47. And who lives next-door?"

"Oh, the Caspers live on that side. They get on very well with those. But, Hortense's mother doesn't like the older sons. They're a bit of troublemakers, da, da, da. And on the other side, then, lives those people. And down there—and the church they go to is two bus stops away."

I mean, yeah. You literally have to do all that research and that work and talk to him about what you found. *[Beat.]* Your findings. And then you study whatever they do for a living, you then go away and you do your placement.

00:24:51 Jesse Host

[Marianne agrees several times as Jesse continues.]

Let's hear a scene from *Secrets and Lies*. And this is one that I remember—like, I saw *Secrets and Lies*—I *[stammering]*, maybe I was—when'd that come out? 1996?

[Marianne blows a puff of air through her lips.]

So, I would have been a—I was in high school, at the time. And I remember it from watching it in the theater in high school. And, basically, your character's name is Hortense and she is adopted, and she's done some research into who her biological parents are. She finds out her biological mother is white, which is a big surprise. And your character calls her bio-mom on the phone. And immediately, the mom—Cynthia—hangs up. Finds out what's going—figures out what's going on and hangs up. And then you call back and we see—the camera cuts back and forth between the two ends of the phonenumber.

00:25:44 Sound Effect Transition
00:25:46 Clip Clip

Music swells and fades.

Cynthia: *[In tears.]* Promise me you won't come 'round!

Hortense: Alright, I promise.

Cynthia: Thank you.

Hortense: Um... can I meet you, somewhere?

Cynthia: Oh, I shouldn't think so, darling.

Hortense: See, I've got lots of, um... I've got lots of questions I want to ask you.

Cynthia: Yeah, well—I gotta go, now.

Hortense: Please.

Cynthia: *[Beat.]* What's your name, anyway? Ey?

Hortense: Hortense.

Cynthia: Hortense?

Hortense: Yeah.

Cynthia: Hortense what?

Hortense: Cumberbatch.

Cynthia: Cumberbunch? That's a funny name, isn't it?

Hortense: Yeah, I suppose it is.
Music swells and fades.

00:26:27 Sound Effect Transition

00:26:29 Jesse Host

00:26:35 Marianne Guest

00:26:39 Crosstalk Crosstalk

[Laughs.] It's... it's such a—it's such a gut punch. And—
Oh, it's horrible.

Jesse: When you listen to it, are you, like, reminded of the
[laughing] eight months of your life when you were that person?

00:26:46 Marianne Guest

Marianne: Oh my god.

It was nine, in total. But yeah! Yeah. It was—it was—some of it was very hard. Like that, you know. Those moments like that. 'Cause you really—'cause you are so in. It's like you feel it, in a different way. And I think—his whole thing, the way that he—you're in character and you're in deep, but he gets you onto this system where he goes, "Come out of character." And by the—when he says, "Come out of character," you literally have to... come back. Right?

But if you don't, this—I mean, that's the danger of staying in character, 'cause you—it would—you'd just get messed up, the whole time. I mean... *[sighs]*. That is—that was horrible. I've not seen the film—I don't watch the stuff that I'm in. But I haven't seen that. I saw that very early on. But I haven't seen that for years, that film.

00:27:44 Jesse Host

It's really good.

00:27:45 Marianne Guest

Yeah!

00:27:46 Jesse Host

If you're wondering, it's really good. *[Giggles.]*

00:27:47 Marianne Guest

Yeah, I know. I know it is! Do you know what I mean? I know it's a good film. You know. But—oof!

00:27:54	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	<p>Jesse: You worked for a long time on a network cop show called <i>Without a Trace</i>.</p> <p>Marianne: Yeah, that's true.</p> <p>Jesse: FBI show. I guess that's not technically... police. But that is, like, exactly the opposite job of being in <i>[laughing] Secrets and Lies</i>.</p> <p>Marianne: It is!</p> <p>Jesse: Like, that's—you've gotta make 40 minutes a week of television! 30 or 40% of the dialogue has to be expository, to move the plot.</p> <p>Marianne: <i>[Lets out a long breath.]</i></p> <p>Jesse: And it's a lot of standing and looking stern and high status. But I guess you're—you probably had—you—your kids were probably young when you started it.</p> <p>Marianne: Yeah! Very young!</p> <p>Jesse: So, that's, like the dream job for an actor with a family, 'cause you get to go home to your family.</p>
00:28:37	Marianne	Guest	<p>Yeah. I mean, the first year of that was grueling, because the hours were crazy. We were doing, like, ridiculous hours. And it wasn't really kid-friendly, because—you know—didn't get to see them. Well, I did. Because I'd take the youngest to work, with me. <i>[Beat.]</i> But, yeah. It was tough. That was tough. It took me a few years to actually, kind of, get into the groove and understand... how it worked. You know. And that this was a different world, because you do—you go into it and you kind of go, "But I... want to create the character! And she wouldn't wear Gucci. She'd wear Sears or, you know, Banana Republic or something like that. She's on a FBI salary. Why has she got Prada shoes? And—"</p>
00:29:36	Jesse	Host	<p>But it's like—it's all about an aesthetic and... yeah.</p>
00:29:42	Marianne	Guest	<p>Yeah, I mean, you're making a television show. American television show. You're making 20-some of them a year.</p>
00:29:44	Jesse	Host	<p>Mm. 24.</p> <p><i>[She agrees several times as he continues.]</i></p> <p>Yeah. It's a lot of—that's a lot of hours of entertainment that you're creating. And you're trying to create a consistent viewing experience for the, like—the audience wants to see the thing that they wanna see. That's why they watch the thing.</p>
00:30:03	Marianne	Guest	<p>Did you, during that time, have times when you were like, "I should be making art movies?"</p>
00:30:13	Jesse	Host	<p>Oh, every day you think that. But then you kind of go, "But then, I'm not making art movies. I'm doing this. So, how the hell am I gonna stay sane and do it?"</p>
00:30:20	Marianne	Guest	<p>It's also, like, <i>[chuckling]</i> the greatest job ever as an actor. Like, to be on a successful television show is the dream!</p> <p>Oh yeah! Oh, totally. And you can learn so much. I mean, I got to direct one of the episodes on the show. And you just get—you know</p>

what it was? 'Cause I got to the point where I was just like, "You know what? I've gotta try and make this interesting. And I wanna be able to grow. I don't want to stay... in that, you know, that horrible spot of phoning it in."

So, what I would do is I would invent these acting exercises for myself. For, you know—so, like, the character, Vivian, she'd be interrogating somebody, but I'd make her write her shopping list. So, her grocery list at the same time. So that she's got stuff going on. Do you know what I mean?

And just try and get that inner world. What's going on with her, today? Because, I mean, on TV we see—there doesn't seem to be room for playing with—for example, you're interrogating someone. You interrogate people every bloody day! I mean, are you that focused? I mean, everything was just, like... serious. Asking questions. Blah, blah, blah. Were you all—do you all have that attitude? Like all of us FBI agents? Isn't one slightly doesn't care that much or, you know, got something else going on? Or... so. It was really fighting to try and find those little moments where you could create something. Just... I don't know.

00:31:49	Jesse	Host	Does... this film represent you recommitting yourself to doing the <i>[laughing]</i> weirdest thing you can find?
00:31:58	Marianne	Guest	Yeah! Definitely. Definitely. Yeah.
00:32:01	Jesse	Host	And I wanna emphasize, I really like the film. <i>[Laughing.]</i>
00:32:04	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Jesse: I'm trying to not—

Marianne: I love it.

00:32:07	Marianne	Guest	Jesse: I don't mean that pejoratively. Yeah, yeah, yeah. No. Definitely. 'Cause, for me, it's about the process. You know. And it kind of stopped being about that. I stopped enjoying the process, because there was no process. So, it's just finding things where somebody is going for something. And it might not work. It's not about being result-oriented. It's about the process. Trying to find it. Trying to, you know... tell stories in a different way.
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00:32:38	Jesse	Host	Well, Marianne Jean-Baptiste, thank you so much for being on <i>Bullseye</i> . It was so great to get to talk to you.
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00:32:42	Marianne	Guest	Likewise, thank you.
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00:32:44	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Jesse: I admire your work so much.
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Marianne: Thanks for having me.

00:32:46	Marianne	Guest	Thank you.
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00:32:47	Jesse	Host	Marianne Jean-Baptiste. Her latest film is called <i>In Fabric</i> . It is truly a marvel. I can't—I—haunted dress movie doesn't even begin to describe how beautiful and mesmerizing the film is. If you haven't seen <i>Secrets and Lies</i> , for which Marianne was nominated for an Oscar—one of the best movies I've ever seen, so you should definitely watch that. It's on the Criterion Channel, right now.
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00:33:13	Music	Music	Mellow transition music.
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00:33:19	Jesse	Host	That's the end of another episode of <i>Bullseye</i> . <i>Bullseye</i> is produced at MaximumFun.org world headquarters, overlooking MacArthur Park in beautiful Los Angeles, California—where, just before the holidays, there was another park concert! Now, usually we get those park concerts during the summer concert series. This time, it
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was a holiday show: a group of dads playing Christmas music and also one White Stripes cover.

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

And we have decades of interviews that you can listen to from past episodes of *Bullseye*. They're all at our website, MaximumFun.org. You can also find them in other channels, like YouTube, your favorite podcast app. So on and so forth. For example, today on this show we talked a lot about Mike Leigh! Guess what? Last year, we interviewed Mike Leigh! It was really great. Go listen to it.

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

00:34:37 Promo Promo

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

[Music fades out.]