

00:00:00	Music	Music	Gentle, trilling music with a steady drumbeat plays under the dialogue.
00:00:01	Promo	Promo	Speaker: <i>Bullseye with Jesse Thorn</i> is a production of MaximumFun.org and is distributed by NPR.
			<i>[Music fades out.]</i>
00:00:12	Jesse Thorn	Host	I'm Jesse Thorn. It's <i>Bullseye</i> .
00:00:14	Music	Music	"Huddle Formation" from the album <i>Thunder, Lightning, Strike</i> by The Go! Team. A fast, upbeat, peppy song. Music plays as Jesse speaks, then fades out.
00:00:21	Jesse	Host	The stereotype goes, usually, that there are character actors and stars. A character actor can show up in a couple scenes—maybe only for five minutes—and even in that small moment, they could make a film. My guest, Tony Shalhoub, can do that. While a star, of course, you build a whole movie or a TV show around. They're relatable. Charming. Vulnerable. But my guest, Tony Shalhoub can do that, too. He's a veteran of both the big and small screens.
			<i>[Music fades out.]</i>
			He's had unforgettable parts in movies like <i>Bart & Fink</i> , <i>Men in Black</i> , <i>Quick Change</i> . He's starred in movies like <i>Big Night</i> and TV shows like <i>Wings</i> . And, of course, the hit detective series, <i>Monk</i> . These days, he's a regular on the Amazon show, <i>The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel</i> . It's a dramedy set in the late 1950s. Rachel Brosnahan plays the title character, Midge Maisel. When the series starts out, Midge is a housewife living in Manhattan who puts her old life behind her to take up stand-up comedy. She leaves her husband, takes her kids, and moves back in with her parents. And in fits and starts, her stand-up career takes off.
			My guest, Tony Shalhoub, plays Abe Weissman—Midge's dad. A role that's gotten Tony a handful of awards, including an Emmy last year. <i>The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel</i> just dropped its third season, this past month, but when Tony and I talked—last year—the show's second season had just launched. In it, Midge is still living with her family. Her mother, Rose, has moved out of the apartment. She fled to Paris. And, at first, that hadn't really sunk in, for Abe. After all, Rose has a big party coming up, back home. But in this scene we're about to hear, it finally, actually dawns on him.
00:01:58	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:1:59	Clip	Clip	Midge Maisel: Papa, are you kidding me?!
			Abe Weissman: What?!
			Midge: Mama <u>moved</u> to Paris!
			Abe: <i>[Disbelieving.]</i> What?! Oh, that's ridiculous.
			Midge: Did you hear what you just said?
			Abe: What?

Midge: You just told me that Mama told you she was moving to Paris!

Abe: I never said that.

Midge: “I don’t feel like I have a life here? Everyone and everything that I have ever counted on has let me down?” And you said, “Okay!”

Abe: No, I said lamb was okay. And it was.

Midge: *[Makes a disgusted, exasperated sound. A car honks in the distance.]* Good grief. Honestly, Papa, you don’t listen.

Abe: Not true!

Midge: You don’t listen to anyone!

Abe: *[Growing more agitated.]* Not true!

Midge: “I don’t feel like I have a life here?!”

Abe: Stop repeating that! Alright. I’ll admit that SOMETIMES I tune people out, but mostly because they rarely have anything useful or interesting to say.

Midge: It’s empty.

Abe: What?

Midge: Her closet’s empty! Her drawers are empty! Her perfume’s gone.

Abe: *[Helplessly.]* Where’s her things? Where did they go?

Midge: I’m guessing Paris!

Abe: But what was she gonna wear to the party tonight?

Midge: You didn’t notice this? You sleep right there!

Abe: You live here, too! You didn’t notice either!

Midge: You’re her husband!

Abe: You’re in her closet way more than I am. Music swells and fades.

00:02:25 Clip Clip

00:02:55 Sound Effect Transition

00:02:56 Jesse Host *[Chuckles.]* Tony Shalhoub, welcome to *Bullseye*. It’s great to have you on the show.

00:03:00 Tony Shalhoub Guest *[Laughing.]* Thank you, nice to be here.

00:03:01 Jesse Host I saw you wince at your character saying he doesn’t listen to other people mostly because they don’t have anything *[laughing]* interesting to say.

00:03:12 Tony Guest That sounds a little arrogant, I suppose.

00:03:16 Jesse Host *[Laughs.]* I mean, one of the funny things about your character, on this show is—I think... the show is not about your character. Your character's a secondary character, on the show.

00:03:24 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Tony:** Ooh, oh it's the best. Yes.

Jesse: A supporting character, on the show. Right?

00:03:27 Jesse Host **Tony:** Yes.
And... in a lot of shows like this, especially funny ones—which, this show's very funny—it would be fine to let the protagonist have the journey. Right? Like, the protagonist gets to go on a journey, everybody else has a funny thing about them that the audience recognizes.

00:03:47 Tony Guest Yeah, and then we support that protagonist's, you know, arc. I suppose.

00:03:51 Jesse Host And your character has changed a lot in two seasons of the show.

00:03:56 Tony Guest Yeah. It's a very—it's rare for series—for a character in series television, really—because, as you say, normally you're—you know, you get hired and then you're kind of... you're somewhat limited to what you're being called on to do and what purpose you serve. And for actors, that can be frustrating at times. Because you—you're the guy that does this or you're the, sort of, stupid guy. Or you're the, you know, the Lothario or whatever it is. And you get kind of confined or, you know, kind of constrained into playing two colors. Three if you're very lucky.

And I've been fortunate in that—in this case, particularly, that—you know—they're just... my character happens to be in a—in a place in his life where he's in—he's in transition. Like—and I think it's because of the transition that Midge is in that, you know, that my daughter is going through. All her changes are impacting all of the people around her. And we're not just—we're not just stuck in our—in our little mode.

00:05:10 Jesse Host I was watching the first episode of the second season, earlier today, where you and your daughter travel to Paris and you're wearing an overcoat—a brown overcoat with a blue check—that... if they had just showed me that overcoat, I'd be like, "Yeah, okay. How many years is the contract for?" Like, *[snickering]* "Yes." I mean. "I get to wear that overcoat? Yes."

[Tony agrees.]

00:05:40 Tony Guest "Sold." *[Chuckles.]*
Yeah. Yeah. That—and that speaks to this whole idea that, you know, this—I like—I love this idea that we're, you know, we're in the late '50s. I just—it's—I guess the '40s and the '50s have always been a really good—those good decades for me, in terms of playing characters. And especially today, because I think we all need—as views and as, certainly, as actors—a respite from present day craziness. And what this—the other thing that this affords us is this, you know—there are no cell phones in this show. There are no computers, or—I mean, the computers are the size of this room. You know, there's no—there—we're low-tech. We're super low-tech.

And I just find that so refreshing.

00:06:30	Jesse	Host	You were the star of <i>Monk</i> , for many seasons. This won't be news to you, <i>[laughing]</i> Tony.
00:06:37	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Jesse: <i>[Amused.]</i> I said it as though it might be.
			Tony: <i>[Teasing.]</i> See—it sounds familiar...
00:06:40	Jesse	Host	Jesse: Yeeeah. Which was a detective procedural on USA—a comic detective procedural in which your character was the brilliant genius detective who, in part, his genius detecting was colored by his obsessive compulsiveness. And I really think it is one of the best of this kind of show that has ever been made. It is so hard to make a show like this that is pleasant to so many people, that also is sharp and specific and <i>[chuckling]</i> so on and so forth. You know what I mean?
			Like, it sort of defined what the USA network even—to some extent still is, today—but, like, it's about an incredible specificity and especially in your performance.
00:07:33	Tony	Guest	Thank you.
00:07:34	Jesse	Host	And I wonder what it was when it came to you and how it came to you.
00:07:40	Tony	Guest	<i>[Takes a deep breath.]</i> Um. The pilot had been—'cause it was first at ABC, for a number of years, and was kind of languishing there. They—you know, they—with a lot of these things, you know, you—it all has to kind of fit together. You have to have the right person and the right—at the right time and, you know... that script was just—was just not getting any traction. And then, I think, an executive was departing ABC and going over to USA and asked to take this property and see if they could develop it and that was fine. And then—and then, I believe it was at ABC—I mean, I'm sorry—I believe it was at USA for a year, you know, before it came to me.
			You know, a number of people had—they had approached a number of different actors at both networks. Some actors had approached them and it just—it just never worked—I even think Michael Richards, I heard, was circling it for a while. Or they were circling him. And I, you know, I just—it was just fortunate. My manager, at the time, was reading the pilot for another client of hers. Who was—she was actually reading it for the character of Sharona, the assistant. And then, while she was reading it, she thought of me and so sent it to me. And I had never heard of it. I didn't know anything about it. And then I met with the network and the writers and then we were off to the races.
			And we had to—you know—I was the first one attached, so they asked me—I mentioned that I would like to be involved as a producer, too, so I could have some input and a voice. And so, they asked me to read with people, you know, audition—we were auditioning people for Sharona and Stottlemeyer and all the other regulars. And—which I was happy to do. And that's how we put it all together.
00:09:44	Jesse	Host	What did you think about it, when you first saw it?
00:09:47	Tony	Guest	Well. When I first read it, I didn't really respond to it. Because I didn't—I thought it was good, but I didn't see <u>my</u> way into it. And I called my manager and I said that. I said, "Look, I get—I get what you're—I don't get how... how is this me?"

And she *[laughing]* said—she’s very subtle—she said, “You better read it. I think you should read it again. Because this is more you than you probably want to admit.” And so, I did! And I read it a second time and it started to become clear.

[Jesse wheezes a laugh.]

And, um... you know, and the truth is, the script that I read—the pilot script, as I remember it—now, this is a long time ago, okay? But the script that I read was, um... it wasn’t really the pilot that we—it wasn’t exactly the pilot that we shot. It was written more... it was broader. It was written—I think it originally was conceived more—almost like—almost like a Inspector Clouseau-ish thing, except with OCD. It was broader comedy, you know?

And that was a part that I felt was not a good fit for me. And—well, I spoke to my manager about this and then she said, “Well, you should just sit down—you can sit down with the writers and express this and, you know, tell them what it is about it that works for you and how you would like to have them change it and maybe they will!” And uh—and that’s exactly what I did.

00:11:22 Tony Guest

And they were fantastic. They were open and—and I said, “Look, I love comedy. But I think we should, you know, maybe tone down the really, really broad stuff and let the comedy come out of the guy’s pain and out of the guy’s problem.” And also, you have to remember, we’re talking about a time—when we did this is right after 9/11. Not long after 9/11. So, culturally I think we entered a new level. We were entering in the age of anxiety—of higher anxiety. Which this character—I don’t, I mean, you know—certainly the show, the script and the idea was conceived before 9/11, as I said. It laid around for years. But... when it came down—came time to actually put it on—do it and put it on the air, people were, you know, I think feeling—they were—we were all in a bit of a state of “Uh oh, what now?” And, you know, “How fragile is it all?”

And so, we enter—we kind of enter the mindset of this character how he’s been living his entire life, really. Until he met his wife and got better and then she died and then he got worse. So—but then, we were entering, also at the same time, we were—we knew that we were on a slippery slope, because we’re dealing with OCD which is a very real and tragic, kind of debilitating disorder. And so, you don’t wanna send that up too much. You wanna honor the people who have it. So, we had to—you know, we just were kind of, like, holding our breath that it was gonna be received by that—by those people alright. You know. That community. In the right way.

And do it in a—do it in a way that... we wanted—what we were trying to do, really, was to sort of destigmatize the disorder. And—because the character had so many good qualities and was so talented in so many ways and could make all these gigantic contributions to society... um, you know, but it—but maybe just getting out the door taking 15 minutes was—would be funny. *[Chuckles.]* You know? But we did. We fought—I think we—the writers did a really good job and also the whole creative team. Because, you know, in capturing the tone we found that sweet spot.

And we got a lot of very positive feedback from people who suffered from the disorder or people who had family members who did. Or even doctors.

I'd get letters from psychiatrists and psychologists and people'd say, "You know, I've referenced your show in our book! In my book that I'm writing about, you know, mental illness." And oh my god! It was *[laughs]*—it went way beyond what we intended.

00:14:28	Jesse	Host	<i>[Tony agrees several times as Jesse talks.]</i> Yeah, I mean I think that the challenge—the fact that the challenge that the character faces is what leads to the resolution and that the challenge and the pain inherent in the challenge is real, makes the hopefulness of it. You know, which is fundamental to this kind of TV, is that—like—part of what you're offering is that the problem will be resolved. So, it's comforting in that way. And so, the fact that you know that you will get that comfort, but that you will get it from something that actually feels like it might mirror pain that you might have? Or fear that you might have?
00:15:07	Tony	Guest	Exactly. Because we all—I think we all do. Many, many people do, to a degree. You know, we have these kinds of obsessive-compulsive tendencies... But—or we just get fixated on things or... we—but many of us have ways of dealing with and coping with it and filtering it so that it's not as <i>[chuckling]</i> obvious to the rest of the world. And we don't voice or demonstrate these kinds of things. Where Monk doesn't have that filter—he just says it and does it and feels it and demonstrates it.
00:15:47	Jesse	Host	Let's hear a scene from <i>Monk</i> and my guest, Tony Shalhoub. So, in this episode—this is from the 7 th season of the show.
00:15:54	Tony	Guest	Wow.
00:15:55	Jesse	Host	Monk's personal assistant, Natalie, helps a thief steal the bicycle—accidentally helps a thief steal the bicycle of a biotech CEO. And so, in this clip, Monk and Natalie are getting a tour of the biotech company from one of the lab assistants—who's played by a past guest of this show, brilliant actress Pamela Adlon.
00:16:13	Tony	Guest	<u>Oh</u> , love her.
00:16:14	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:16:15	Clip	Clip	Lab Assistant: Dean? Dean Barry? Founded Beta VeggiTech five years ago.

Monk: So, what exactly do you do?

Lab Assistant: We're saving the world.

Monk: Oh, good for you. I was getting a little worried about the world. *[Beat.]* Is that a square tomato?

Lab Assistant: Yes, it is. It's a pet project of Dean's. The square shape means that farmers can pack 35% more tomatoes per carton. It's cheaper. More efficient.

Monk: So—so that means... every slice is exactly the same size?

Natalie: How's it taste?

Monk: Who cares!? It's a square tomato! You're doing the Lord's work.

Natalie: Literally.

[The hiss of a mechanical door being opened.]

Natalie: Dean—uh, Mr. Barry, I just wanted to say I'm sorry about the bike.

Lab Assistant: We're testing new corn seed. They're genetically engineered to sprout in 20 minutes.

Dean Barry: Or less.

Lab Assistant: What you're seeing is gonna revolutionize the agriculture industry as you know it.

Monk: Congratulations on the square tomato.
Music swells and fades.

00:17:09 Sound Effect Transition

00:17:12 Tony Guest

[Chuckles. Jesse laughs in the background.] I'd forgotten that. I love Pam. Um... god, I'd forgotten the square tomato. That was...

00:17:18 Jesse Host

It is a—it's a great line when he says, *[laughing]* "I've been feeling a little worried about the world" or whatever it is that he says there.

00:17:29 Jesse Host

[They chuckle quietly.]

Even more from the great Tony Shalhoub when we come back from a quick break. Still to come, he'll tell me where and why he gets the drive to make art. It's *Bullseye*, from MaximumFun.org and NPR.

00:17:42 Promo Promo

Music: Suspenseful music plays.

Ramtin Arablouei: The world is complicated. But knowing the past can help us understand it so much better.

Rund Abdelfatah: That's where we come in. I'm Rund Abdelfatah.

Ramtin: I'm Ramtin Arablouei and we're the hosts of *Throughline*, NPR's history podcast.

Rund: Every week, we'll dig into forgotten stories from the moments that shaped our world.

Ramtin: *Throughline*, from NPR. Listen and subscribe now.

00:18:02 Promo Promo

[Music fades out.]
[Computer beeping.]

Music: Light, inspirational music plays.

Jean-Luc Picard: Nearly two decades ago, Commander Data sacrificed his life for me...

[The clip continues in the background, inaudible under the dialogue.]

Ben Harrison: *The Greatest Discovery* is also about *Star Trek: Picard*.

Adam Prancia: Jesse Thorn won't let us stay on the network unless we do all the *Star Trek* series.

[Ben chuckles.]

Adam: And so, here we are, doing a show about maybe our favorite *Star Trek* character of all time.

Ben: If you're excited to watch the new *Star Trek: Picard* series and you'd like some veteran *Star Trek* podcasters to watch it along with, we're your guys! Sorry you're stuck with us.

Speaker 1: The hell are you doing out here, Picard? Saving the galaxy?

[The clip continues in the background.]

Adam: So, subscribe to *The Greatest Discovery*. You can find it anywhere you find podcasts.

Ben: Or at MaximumFun.org.

Speaker 2: [Screaming, distant.] Jean-Luc Picaard!

[The beep of a communicator.]

00:18:47 Jesse Host

Welcome back to *Bullseye*. I'm Jesse Thorn. My guest is actor Tony Shalhoub. He is, of course, an incredibly talented actor. He's been in films like *Big Night*, *The Man Who Wasn't There*, *Spy Kids*—just to name a handful. He's currently in the cast of *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*. You can stream that show's third season now, on Amazon. He and I talked last year.

00:19:14 Tony Guest
00:19:15 Jesse Host

I wanna play a clip from a movie that you were in. It was much earlier in your career. That...

[Scoffs.] Uh-oh.

I—no, no, this is—I love—this is one of my favorite movies. It's a movie called *Quick Change*, from 1990.

[Tony sighs.]

And it's a—it's a really—it's a really wonderful movie, all told. I think maybe one of—[stammering] if not Bill Murray's best... maybe *Rushmore*, but maybe besides *Rushmore*, Bill Murray's best movie that he ever did. And he co-directed it and...

[Tony agrees.]

00:19:59 Tony Guest

It was a really great movie. You played a character, in this movie that could have been so awful. You played—you're Lebanese-American, and your character is basically "ethnic cab driver". He speaks in nonsense words. And, uh...

Yeah. They didn't want it to be an identifiable ethnicity. So.

00:20:03	Jesse	Host	Yeah. Like, it's a—it's very surreal. I mean, like, partly the tone of the film saves it from being the awful thing it could have been.
			<i>[Tony agrees.]</i>
			But I think, largely, it's saved from the awful thing it could have been by a really wonderful performance by you—both really funny and, like, human and humane in a way that it didn't necessarily have to be, for a cab driver character in a comedy in 1990—when those <i>[laughing]</i> —those characters often were just, uh, you know. Broad ethnic jokes.
00:20:34	Tony	Guest	Yeah. Stereotypical. Yeah.
00:20:37	Jesse	Host	Yeah. So, I wanna play a clip from it. I don't know how this plays, in audio, because you're mostly—
00:20:44	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Jesse: —quiet except when you're making nonsense sounds.
			Tony: Because I'm making big—I'm making big faces. Yeah.
			<i>[They chuckle.]</i>
			Jesse: Um, but...
00:20:51	Jesse	Host	Tony: You gotta see the shameless faces I'm making. Uh, yeah—so, Bill Murray is a bank robber. He dresses as a clown, robs a bank...
00:20:58	Tony	Guest	With Geena Davis.
00:20:59	Jesse	Host	With Geena Davis. And his best friend, Randy Quaid, and then they all get into a taxicab and they're having a hard time telling what you—they're trying to get away. They're having a hard time telling what you're saying.
00:21:12	Tony	Guest	They're trying to get to the airport, yeah.
00:21:14	Jesse	Host	Yeah, exactly.
00:21:15	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:21:16	Clip	Clip	<i>[Street noise and distant music in the background.]</i>
			Grimm: He's got it.
			Phyllis: <i>[Relieved.]</i> Oh, great. And why don't you take us straight to Sing Sing?
			Grimm: Please don't say that. You're gonna upset Loomis.
			Phyllis: <i>[Sarcastically.]</i> Oh, god forbid!
			Cab Driver: <i>[Speaking a fake language.]</i>
			Phyllis: <i>[Makes a frustrated sound.]</i>
			Loomis: IT'S REEED! STOOOP! STOOOOOP! <i>[Inconsolable.]</i> You don't even understand <u>colors</u> , do you? You don't know red from hell!
			Cab Driver: <i>[Answers in a fake language.]</i>
			Loomis: There's a real cabby. STOP! TAXIIII!

[Phyllis, Loomis, and Grimm scream along with the sound of tires shrieking.]

00:21:46 Sound Effect Transition Music swells and fades.

00:21:47 Jesse Host Randy Quaid freaks out so much that I think he jumps out the passenger door. You—this was probably a part in your—a part of your career where, if you get a multiple scene part in a movie—

00:21:57 Tony Guest It's my first movie, really.

00:21:58 Jesse Host Yeah, you're not in a position to question it. But did you think about it, at the time? Like, how many movies have a—you know—a broadly unidentifiable, middle eastern guy who yells things? As a taxi driver?

00:22:15 Tony Guest It—no, it didn't—I was so—first of all, I loved the script. And I really think it is a great movie. An underrated movie.

00:22:22 Jesse Host I think it's, like, a legit great movie. Like I think, even leaving aside its rating—which I think is under—

[Tony agrees.]

00:22:31 Tony Guest I think it's a great movie. It's—it's a very, very clever movie. The premise itself is brilliant. And it's—you know, it reflects New York City in the '80s very beautifully, in a really genuinely funny way and... but, no, I love the idea and I love the idea that when I read the script, when it came to my part there were no lines. It just said, "The cabby speaks, and we don't understand."

And so, when—but I had to audition for it. So, I went in and met the casting—and the director—and Bill was there, Bill Murray was there. And I had to, you know—it was basically a gibberish language. But instead of just, you know, like mumbling and blah-beh-beh-bah-blah-blah, I actually... wrote it out. I wrote out my lines. I just made up... a gibberish language so that I could—so that I would have repeated words or repeated sounds for, you know, what I was supposed to be talking about.

00:23:33 Jesse Host You're like, "I'm gonna Tolkien this thing."

00:23:35 Tony Guest Yeah, I just—I just thought, "This is the only way I'm gonna do it and not just look like I'm blathering and mumbling and..." Because the cabby knows what he's saying. *[Chuckles.]* The cabby's a real guy.

00:23:51 Jesse Host *[Chuckles.]* I mean, I—

00:23:52 Tony Guest It was my first—and it was—I gotta tell you this, too. So, my first movie, I think—and I had auditioned for things. I was doing mostly theatre, but I had auditioned for a lot of things. And it's the first time—and maybe the only time where I was offered, you know—was offered the job in the room. That never happens. You know, they say, "Thank you very much." You go away. You wait a few days.

Your agent calls you. "Yeah, you have a callback. Yeah, you blah-blah-blah. You have a offer, they wanna give you the part." That's how it goes. But this was, you know—I did actually have a callback for this. Maybe two.

And—but finally, on the—whatever the final callback was, Bill Murray says, “You wanna do this? Because we’re good. Let’s do it.” And uh... we had a blast. We shot it all—most of it was night shoots in Queens. And I got to work with Jason Robards, who was—is a god, to me. An inspiration, when I was younger. And—a lot of people in this. Stanley Tucci’s in this, movie. Lotta great people in this movie! And... but that was it. I made it my own language.

00:25:02 Jesse Host Did you ever watch the movie *A Thousand Clowns*, with Jason Robards?

00:25:05 Tony Guest Only about 50 times. It’s the reason I became an actor. *[Beat.]* And that was—that was at a time when I was in high school, when—you know—you couldn’t—we didn’t have, you know, VHS and *[chuckles]* there wasn’t any of that. When you saw a movie, you waited a year. You know, it was on TV—you waited another year for it to come around on TV again, maybe. And I was devoted to that film. And I—it was a—it was—it was a—it really moved the needle, for me.

00:25:36 Jesse Host Now, when you say *A Thousand Clowns* made you wanna become an actor, I need—it’s a movie about—Jason Robards plays a...

00:25:43 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Tony:** A single father.

Jesse: Moderately unsuccessful comedy writer, who needs to get a job because he’s responsible for taking care of his teenaged son.

Tony: No, he’s—it’s actually—

Jesse: His teenaged, uh, nephew.

Tony: It’s his sister’s kid.

Jesse: Yeah.

Tony: His sister left. Yeah.

Jesse: Yeah.

00:25:59 Jesse Host And so... he is basically facing this choice, in his life, which is, he has the opportunity to get a job on something that does not meet his artistic standards.

[Tony laughs.]

Which, you know, are difficult to pin down maybe, because he’s a comedy guy, you know? *[Laughs.]* And he is struggling to accept the responsibilities of adulthood. It’s—he’s knows that he has to, and he knows how important it is, because there’s this kid and he’s falling in love, as well. And it is very, very painful for him and difficult for him to be frank with himself about that and do what he has to do. Compromise.

00:26:42 Tony Guest

[Tony agrees several times as Jesse speaks.]

00:26:44 Jesse Host Yeah. And I know a ton of comedy people who love this movie. I’ve had many a conversation with long-time *Conan*, now *Colbert*, late show writer—Brian Stack—about it, for example. A real funny guy. And I think for a lot of comedy people, it is a deeply difficult film to watch, because it asks them to confront their own complicity

[laughs] in the kind of irresponsibility of creating art—especially completely frivolous art—with their life.

00:27:31	Tony	Guest	So, you saying that it makes you—made you <u>want</u> to become an artist... [laughs], like, it's a movie about the horrors and pains that come from the self-centeredness of wanting to be an artist.
00:27:34	Jesse	Host	[Deadpan.] Exactly. Yeah. That's how sick I am. [Jesse laughs for a long time, eventually causing Tony to chuckle.] Where did you—where did you first see it? Did you first see it on TV?
00:27:46	Tony	Guest	Yeah. I grew up in Green Bay, Wisconsin. I was—I think it was in high school, when I first saw it. And I just remember being so struck by it and those performances and just the whole message behind it—the whole idea about it behind it.
00:28:37	Jesse	Host	You know, in a sense, you know, that's always—that's always the dilemma of the creative person. I think, you know, that it's what <i>Big Night</i> was about and, you know, that sort of balancing act that you have to—that you have to deal with between art and commerce. It's—that's, you know, one can rarely exist without the other. And it's a—it's an ongoing challenge. Yeah, I mean, not even just art and commerce, but also the solipsism and self-regard that's required to think, "Oh, I could make things and that could be my whole life." [Tony laughs.] Like, you know, the amount that you have dedicate yourself to being an artist, to be an artist. You know. And the kind of presumptiveness of that and the tension that that creates with your responsibilities to others. To your community, to—and that's, I think, why I—whenever I watch <i>A Thousand Clowns</i> I cry like a—just like a river. 00:29:18 Tony Guest Well, but I think it's even beyond that, because what you're talking about is—it implies a choice. A decision. Kind of an intellectual decision. And [chuckles]—and for my experience and, you know—the reality is that that's certainly—that's there. But, you know, the part—part of the thing about creativity and the pursuit of art is, you know, there's a <u>compulsion</u> there, too. You know, people can't help it. They <u>have</u> to do it. They—I mean, real—I mean, the really great people, the good people. And even the maybe not so good people who just have the compulsion, I'm not sure. But there's a thing where it's less of a—it's less of a intellectual decision as it is just, "I need to do something. I need to create this. I need to do it." And when—if that's there, you're screwed. Because then you—you know, then you can't stop. And if you do stop, then you're just setting yourself up [chuckling] for a life of a different kind of torture. 00:30:29 Jesse Host Well, Tony, we're out of time. I didn't even ask—I mean, you got— 00:30:31 Tony Guest Damn! [Tony stutters and laughs as Jesse continues.] 00:30:32 Jesse Host —nine brothers and sisters and I didn't even <u>mention</u> it this whole time!

00:30:36	Tony	Guest	I've just gotten started!
00:30:37	Jesse	Host	Normally, that would have been the whole hour! I'm very grateful to you for taking all this time to be on <i>Bullseye</i> . Thank you so much for coming by.
00:30:44	Tony	Guest	Thank you.
00:30:45	Jesse	Host	Tony Shalhoub, from last year. All three seasons of <i>The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel</i> are streaming on Amazon Prime, right now. And this probably goes without saying, but pretty much <u>all</u> of the movies we talked about in this interview are great. <i>Quick Change</i> , classic. <i>A Thousand Clowns</i> , better than classic. <i>Big Night</i> , exceptional. Watch them all if you haven't seen them already.
00:31:07	Music	Music	Jazzy piano music with a steady drumbeat.
00:31:10	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 the birds have discovered the barge, the raft that kind of floats around the lake. I think it was once a boat landing. Anyway, they've covered it in what birds cover things in.

The show is produced by speaking into microphones. Our producer is Kevin Ferguson. Jesus Ambrosio is our associate producer. We get help from Casey O'Brien and his giant electric piano. Our production fellows are Jordan Kauwling 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 have done many interviews in our show's nearly two decades! Starting with the time that my friend, Jordan, went to DickDale.net, on the web, and called the king of the surf guitar at his trailer in the desert. All of those interviews are available on our website, at MaximumFun.org. If you're a big fan of *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*, we talked with Amy Sherman-Palladino—the show's creator.

We're 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.

00:32:32	Promo	Promo	Speaker: <i>Bullseye with Jesse Thorn</i> is a production of MaximumFun.org and is distributed by NPR.
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