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| 00:00:00 | Music | Music | Gentle, trilling music with a steady drumbeat plays under the dialogue. |
| 00:00:02 | Promo | Promo | Speaker: <i>Bullseye with Jesse Thorn</i> is a production of MaximumFun.org and is distributed by NPR. |
| 00:00:12 | Jesse Thorn | Host | I'm Jesse Thorn. It's <i>Bullseye</i> . |
| 00:00:15 | Music | Music | "Huddle Formation" from the album <i>Thunder, Lightning, Strike</i> by The Go! Team. A fast, upbeat, peppy song. Music plays as Jesse speaks, then fades out. |
| 00:00:22 | Jesse | Host | <i>Joe Pera Talks With You</i> is a small, quiet show. In fact, it might be the smallest, quietest show on television. It is also, frankly, I think my <u>favorite</u> show on television. The conceit is pretty straightforward. It basically couldn't be any more plain. |
| | | | Joe Pera, who's the host, plays a version of himself. In real life, he's a stand-up comedian. In the show, he teaches middle school choir. He basically guides you through his life, in the city of Marquette, Michigan. He talks about iron and breakfast and there's one where he talks about the rat wars of Alberta, Canada. Long story. And then while he talks with you about those things, he lives his life. He visits his nana. He teaches choir. He goes on a date with the band teacher. |
| | | | It is a deeply sweet show. The stakes are never life and death, there aren't any fights, and it's funny, but there are very few jokes. Anyway, I truly love <i>Joe Pera Talks With You</i> , and I'm so thrilled to have him on <i>Bullseye</i> . |
| | | | Uh, the show is wrapping up its second season right now on Adult Swim. Here's a little bit of it. Uh, in the beginning of this new season, Joe grows some snap beans in his garden, only he is working on something really special: a bean arch. Here's Joe. |
| 00:01:50 | Sound Effect | Transition | Music swells and fades. |
| 00:01:51 | Clip | Clip | <i>[Gentle piano music plays in the background.]</i> |
| | | | Joe Pera: Right now, it's just a regular arch. But later this afternoon, we'll plant seedlings on either side. Over the next 65 days, they'll climb this structure, and if all goes well, meet in the middle. The snap beans will hang down, so that when I walk under, I'll be able to just reach up and pick a bean. Imagine that. Not having to bend over to pick a bean, but to reach up and pick a bean. If you're tall, maybe even with your mouth. |
| 00:02:31 | Sound Effect | Transition | Music swells and fades. |
| 00:02:32 | Jesse | Host | Joe Pera, welcome to <i>Bullseye</i> . I'm so thrilled to have you on the show. I love your show. |
| 00:02:35 | Joe Pera | Guest | Thanks for having me, Jesse. |

00:02:38 Jesse Host How did you get the idea that this thing that you are doing on your television show could be a television show?

00:02:45 Joe Guest Growing the bean arch? Well—

00:02:48 Jesse Host Not s— *[He breaks off, laughing.]* Not specifically growing the bean arch, although that is—what is it, a synecdoche? A metonymy? What’s the thing where one thing stands in for the group of things? But, um, uh, no, I mean like your show is really not like any other television shows, and I wonder like, at what point you brought this to a manager or an agent or something like that, and they were like, “Yeah, we should take this out and pitch it to television.”

00:03:24 Joe Guest Um, well, it’s highly based on my stand-up and it kind of came about when I did an animated special for Adult Swim called *Joe Pera Talks You To Sleep*. And that was just—you know, that was just the goal, to talk about nice things until people actually fell asleep, and maybe laughed a little bit along the way. And then I guess yeah, and then it kind of just grew from there.

00:03:54 Jesse Host Your show’s on late. Do people tell you that *Joe Pera Talks With You* puts them to sleep?

00:03:55 Joe Guest Uh, sometimes. But no, actually I’ve heard from a number of people that the sleep show actually works. I don’t know if it’s the show or just them getting themselves in the mindset to go to bed, but I really appreciate it. When, uh, my dad would come to choir concerts that I did in high school, he would fall asleep. And I understand he worked hard and it was the end of the day, and then he had to come sit through a concert.

But uh, my orchestra teacher, Mr. Thomas actually said, you know, “Don’t worry about it. Falling asleep is a reaction, and it’s kind of a good one.” So I guess I kind of started from to see if I could create that reaction, or just the environment and the feeling where people would feel good going to bed. I went right after the show and I think that the fact that it’s on late is great, ‘cause they might have the opportunity to do so.

00:05:02 Jesse Host You know, as a podcaster myself, people often tell me that they use one of my shows to—one or the other of my shows to fall asleep to. You know, they’ll put it on their headphones as they go to sleep.

00:05:20 Joe Guest I think that that’s a nice thing. Yeah, no, that’s very nice. A little bit—yeah, I guess people could take it as a little creepy, or you could take it as creepy that they want to listen to your voice last before they drift off. But, I don’t know, I guess that’s a nice thing that you could give them enough of a feeling of calm or just boredom to sleep.

00:05:43 Jesse Host Yeah. I mean, it really is—first of all, it hadn’t even occurred to me that I could take it as creepy, but now in the future I will bear that in mind. Um, but I think it’s hard for me to remember that what they mean when they say that is that the show is a safe and comfortable place for them, and if they’re doing this to fall asleep, it may be that they don’t feel safe and comfortable otherwise when they’re falling asleep, rather than that my work is boring. *[Laughs.]*

00:06:20 Joe Guest Yeah. No, I was just kidding. But um, I don't know, it could be a lot of things. It could be, I don't know, just the radio noise, or—there's got to be something. I mean, they definitely put it on for a reason. They, you know, they don't listen to another show. But maybe if you're not a fan of that, you could introduce a ten minute scream, where every ten minutes during your show you just scream.

[Jesse laughs uproariously.]

And um, that'll put an end to that pretty quick.

00:06:51 Jesse Host Were there other shows that, when you were pitching *Joe Pera Talks With You*, or even pitching your *Joe Pera Talks You To Sleep*, that you talked about as touchstones for what kind of thing you wanted to make?

00:07:05 Joe Guest Yeah. It's a bunch of things. I mean, it's meant to be kind of an informational show at the start, and I guess each time it gets away from that. So I've been saying it's kind of like a CBS Sunday Morning that's done by a middle school choir teacher, and often times he gets distracted, and also there are jokes.

But um, I think some of the development happened with the series—a web series I did called *Pancake Breakfast Critic* where I would go to critic community pancake breakfasts, spaghetti dinners, and stuff. And um, I was a big fan of *Fishing With John* by John Lurie, and it was inspiring in a way.

And I think maybe I was in—uh, sort of instyles type stuff made its way into the *Pancake Breakfast Critic*, and uh, from that into the show. But *Fishing With John*, if you haven't seen it, I highly recommend it. It's so funny and kind of calming at the same time, too.

I think he was trying to do something a little bit similar in terms of just having a fishing show late at night, but then it kind of became a—something different every time. But it also kind of captured that feeling of watching television late at night and not quite—thinking you would know what to expect, or just getting ready to falling asleep while watching it, but then seeing something else.

00:08:47 Jesse Host Let's hear another clip from *Joe Pera Talks With You*. So, in this scene Joe is out to breakfast. There's a lot of breakfast on the show. He's out to breakfast with his neighbor Mike, who's played by Connor O'Malley, who also is a writer and creative contributor to the show otherwise.

And they're talking about what constitutes the perfect egg bite, and they sort of settle on one bite that includes everything that's on the breakfast plate. Toast and butter and hash browns and ketchup and jam and the egg all in one munch. But it's really key that in this sunny side up egg, the yolk stay intact.

So we're about to hear Mike having just assembled all the layers, and Joe and the family are all watching in this diner. And we will hear as he fails at getting the perfect bite.

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| 00:09:45 | Sound Effect | Transition | Music swells and fades. |
| 00:09:46 | Clip | Clip | <p><i>[Uplifting piano music plays over the faint ambiance of a busy diner.]</i></p> <p>Mike: If we've done our work properly, we're gonna have a pretty good egg bite. I love you, babe. Here we go.</p> <p><i>[Sound of chewing, and then a censor bleep, followed by someone grunting and pounding the table repeatedly in frustration. Someone else is heard giggling faintly.]</i></p> <p>Speaker 1: Calm down!</p> <p>Mike: Do not—</p> <p>Speaker 1: No, don't laugh. This isn't funny, okay? It is serious to him. He is trying.</p> <p><i>[Sound of metal utensil clanging down on the table.]</i></p> <p>Mike: I need a win.</p> |
| 00:10:11 | Sound Effect | Transition | Music swells and fades. |
| 00:10:12 | Jesse | Host | <p><i>[Laughing]</i> Connor O'Malley's aesthetic is, you know, you've worked with him a lot, but his aesthetic is much more intense than yours. How do you decide— <i>[He breaks, laughing.]</i> How do you decide when there will be a sharp joke moment like that on a show that is almost entirely, you know, consistent and gentle in tone?</p> |
| 00:10:35 | Joe | Guest | <p>I guess just by putting Connor in the episode.</p> <p><i>[Jesse laughs quietly.]</i></p> <p>That's good. Yeah, he's so funny and yeah, we have really similar interests. Like that egg bite is actually based on something that he does for real at breakfast, and I was like, "Why don't we just kinda put it in the script and do the step by step?" And that's all there was to it. But yeah, it's a balance of when to hit on really hard jokes and when to kind of resist. But yeah, I don't know, having Connor is just—it's great.</p> <p>As a writer, I think he wrote one of my favorite episodes this coming season about going to the grocery store. And he's not even in it, but you can tell that there's some really sharp jokes and stuff I could never think of because of it, and stuff that hits, you know, outside of my comedy tone that is just very, you know, straightforward funny. I don't know any other way to describe it.</p> |
| 00:11:48 | Jesse | Host | So you started doing comedy when you were 18 in Buffalo, which is your hometown. What were the circumstances? |
| 00:11:56 | Joe | Guest | I don't think about my starting out in comedy in too much. I just haven't taken the time to reflect back. But it was uh, I thought about |

this the other week. It was a stand-up comedy class at University of Buffalo. I took it while I was just—maybe, I guess it was between junior and senior year of high school. And it was taught by Alan Zweibel. He wrote on Garry Shandling's show and he's a great writer now, and a lot—he's done a lot of great books.

But uh, there was like, me and like—it was not big. Less than ten other people. Nothing wrong with it, but there were a lot of middle aged people like, looking to get into comedy. So at the end of the week, that was my assignment, to do a stand-up set, and I did it. And uh, I don't think it was very good, but Alan was very nice, and it was good to do it there.

00:13:05 Jesse Host When you started doing it seriously, was it in New York City?

00:13:08 Joe Guest Uh-huh. Yeah, uh, I was doing it a little bit in Buffalo, but I realized that—I mean, I wanted to do it hopefully for a living someday, and that's not the—it's pretty tough in Buffalo. So I wanted to do it and I knew I had to move, so I did. Yeah. It was good. I met a lot of my closest friends through doing stand-up in New York, and it was really great. It was like, yeah, I'm glad I did. It was tough to start here, but I'm very happy that I did.

00:13:44 Jesse Host Was it a difficult decision, um, not just to move to New York but to decide, "Yes, I actually do want to do this for a living." Especially being in Buffalo where, as you said, you can't do it for a living in Buffalo, or it's very difficult to do it for a living in Buffalo.

00:14:01 Joe Host Yeah. I don't—I just—I don't want to be corny but it is really kind of a dream. I knew I wanted to do it, and so when I had the opportunity, I moved, and then I put my head down and I lived really cheap. And I kind of—I'm gonna sound weird—but I said like, "I'm just gonna focus on this and not worry about other things."

You know, I put aside a bunch of other stuff to just work on, focus on comedy, and it was so great. It was like the coolest thing, just to be—kind of like when we're working on the show. When you're—people just kinda, I guess, just focus on doing a good job at the one thing. That's such a treat, to just focus on comedy and just think about comedy all the time. And I still do. It's just neat.

00:14:50 Jesse Host What's something that you didn't know when you moved to New York that you learned through that discipline?

00:14:59 Joe Guest I guess the biggest thing that, and there was a bunch of things, was just how to do comedy at the pace that I wanted to. 'Cause I'm not, you know, I'm not witty or quick-thinking. So I figured out how to do it and taking at my own pace, hopefully without boring the audience, and that's kind of the goal over time.

00:15:24 Jesse Host That must have been a very difficult thing to learn to do on a New York stand-up stage. I mean, I'm sure you were playing a lot of rooms that were relatively friendly to that. You know, there are plenty of great, you know, so called alt rooms that you can play in New York, where people are there to see something interesting.

But there's also, you know, a huge tradition of fast-talking, slightly

belligerent New York comedy. And like, to step on stage and own the stage without matching that energy after something like that is on stage strikes me as a real challenge, you know what I mean?

00:16:09 Joe Guest Yeah. It makes it fun, and I'm kind of glad that I did start in New York for that reason. I guess, someone said earlier, it's like, it might be the reason why the show works on Adult Swim is that there's something louder and faster coming before it that, when my show come on, or you know, if I go on stage in New York doing a show and the person before me was like, "I love sex. Here's how I like to *[beep]*." Sorry to swear, but—and then I go and I, you know, I do a bit about my favorite piece of pie.

[Jesse chuckles.]

There's a good contrast, and getting to—to keep that interesting. I mean, sometimes the audience would be interested off the bat, but, you know, how did I get my writing to the level where I'm writing stuff that can hold the attention the entire set? You know, not just be talking about my favorite piece of pie, but how do I take my pie bit to the next level and make it ten minutes, and quietly entertaining for ten minutes?

And then the next guy comes on and goes, "Yes, I also love to *[beep]*." Excuse me, I can't—I'm sorry to swear on here, but—but then, you know, and then I guess it kind of worked in a nice way that they thought about the piece of pie bit. Maybe I will read the actual bit when we get done with the interview.

00:17:38 Jesse Host What was the first thing that you remember writing that really worked, that you were really proud of?

00:17:45 Joe Guest Um, I think it's online, but—and those people in Buffalo like it for obvious reasons, but I wrote a joke about the Buffalo Bills, about how they lose so that families in the area can bond more. And I remember, it's like uh, on paper it's like a few pages. It's a six minute bit, and then it's—it ties together a lot of stuff, and I was very proud.

I remember I spent a lot of time working on that on paper, and then testing it on stage, and when it came together it's kind of a bit that is hopefully funny and surprising, but also maybe makes people feel a little something. I don't know, I'm not sure about that. But it seems to, and you know, it kind of leaves the spaces in there to let people think about their own Sunday afternoons watching football, or going on a drive with their family.

And um, that kind of putting those things together, I think that bit in particular kind of combined the things that I'm still working on now. It's on YouTube if anybody's interested. You just search uh, Buffalo Bills joke.

00:18:58 Jesse Host It is titled "Buffalo Bills joke."

[Joe laughs quietly.]

I was about to mention that. I was watching it before we started talking. *[He laughs.]*

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| 00:19:04 | Joe | Guest | Oh, cool. Yeah. Not so relevant this year. Going to the Superbowl, Jesse. |
| 00:19:09 | Jesse | Host | Well, we'll see what the San Francisco 49ers have to say about that when they both get there. |
| 00:19:15 | Joe | Guest | Alright. I mean, if the Bills win a playoff game— <i>[Jesse laughs.]</i> —that would be enough. But I shouldn't say that. I shouldn't say that. The Buffalo Bills are gonna win the Superbowl this year. |
| 00:19:31 | Jesse | Host | We have lots more to get into with Joe Pera. Don't go anywhere. When we come back from the break, I'll ask him how he makes the show feel so grounded and real, and whether he's proud of it. It's <i>Bullseye</i> , from MaximumFun.org and NPR. |
| 00:19:45 | Promo | Promo | Guy Raz: Hey, it's Guy Raz here, host of <i>How I Built This</i> from NPR. How do you turn an okay idea into a better one? Check out the <i>How I Built This</i> podcast and my live conversation with Stewart Butterfield, founder of Slack and Flickr, as he explains the art of the pivot. Listen now. |
| 00:20:00 | Promo | Promo | <i>[Music begins.]</i> Speaker 1: I can't hear myself, but— Speaker 2: Are you plugged in? <i>[Voices overlap.]</i> Announcer: These are <u>real</u> podcast listeners, not actors! <i>[Voices continue to speak over each other.]</i> Announcer: Hey, thanks for coming. Here's a list of descriptors. What would <u>you</u> choose to describe the perfect podcast? Speaker 3: I mean, vulgarity. Speaker 4: Dumb. Definitely dumb. Speaker 5: I like, uh, right here. This one. Meritless. Announcer: What if I told you there was a podcast that <u>did</u> have all of that? <i>[Someone gasps.]</i> Speaker 6: No. Announcer: <i>Jordan, Jesse, Go!</i> And it's free! |

[Speakers sound awestruck. There is applause.]

Several speakers, overlapping: *Jordan, Jesse, Go!? Jordan, Jesse, Go!*

New Announcer: *Jordan, Jesse, Go!* A real podcast.

[Music ends.]

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| 00:20:40 | Jesse | Host | Welcome back to <i>Bullseye</i> . I'm Jesse Thorn. My guest, Joe Pera, is the creator and star of the Adult Swim show, <i>Joe Pera Talks With You</i> . Its second season is wrapping up right now. Let's get back into our interview. What was it like to uh, not just have dedicated your life to comedy— <i>[Joe starts laughing.]</i> —but to have moved to the biggest city in the United States, one of the biggest cities in the world? |
| 00:21:08 | Joe | Guest | <i>[Through laughter]</i> That sounds so sad. I dedicated my life to comedy. |
| 00:21:15 | Jesse | Host | <i>[Laughing]</i> You did a great job! You're bringing a lot of joy to a lot of people's lives, Joe. You should feel great about it. |
| 00:21:20 | Joe | Guest | No, it's just funny. It's just very funny to say. No, I—it's ridiculous, but I also think, I mean, if you gotta dedicate your life to something—and you said that, not me—but I'll just say, if you gotta dedicate your life to something, comedy is not the worst thing. |
| 00:21:41 | Jesse | Host | Yeah, I mean, you were just talking about the value of dedicating your life to a thing, and just practicing a craft, you know? Like, that's what you were—that's at least how I heard you talking about focusing on stand-up and, you know, figuring out a way to live on almost no money so that you could do it. It's that feeling of, you know, you do it once and then you see if you can do it a little better the next time. And that is like, such a fundamentally human experience, you know? |
| 00:22:10 | Joe | Guest | Yeah. Um, yeah, I may have taken it too far. I had a twin bed until I was 26-27. It was—I don't—like, I had such a small room, it was what fit. But also after the <i>Talks You To Sleep</i> came out that I was like, "Alright, I got a check, and I'm gonna buy a big boy bed." <i>[Jesse laughs.]</i> I just got—I don't know. I got used to it and then, I don't know. |
| 00:22:38 | Jesse | Host | Did you go double? Did you go full queen? |
| 00:22:40 | Joe | Guest | It was bad. Yup, double. Double, 'cause then double was all that would fit, 'cause I had to work out in my room, and I had to fit a desk in there, and this was—twin bed and the desk and then that was it. And then I just kind of got rid of the desk and had a bed, and that |

was most of my room.

- 00:23:00 Jesse Host Do you have that thing that a lot of uh, comics have, where if you're not doing time on stage, if you're not getting up, then you are sort of itchy and out of sorts?
- 00:23:12 Joe Guest Mm-hm. Yeah. And it's been bad. Last season I did a better job of getting on stage while—throughout the process, but this season I have not done a good job. And I think that I'm more anxious because of it.
- 00:23:28 Jesse Host What do you get out of doing it?
- 00:23:34 Joe Guest Um, the—I don't know that much about meditation or anything, but I think for those moments on stage you have to be very present, and its kind of a focus thing and you get energy from it. Also, people laugh.
- 00:23:53 Jesse Host Yeah, that part is great.

[Joe responds affirmatively, and both laugh.]

But I have to say like, I had a, for two glorious months, I had a stand-up show at The Ice House in Pasadena that a friend who's a comic sort of bequeathed to me and my buddy. Neither of us is a stand-up. And we had done a lot of comedy on stage of various kinds, but I have to say that by the second one was done, I was like, "I don't think I care enough to develop the skills to entertain people who aren't there because they want to be entertained by me."

[Both laugh again.]

You know what I mean? Like, there's a certain—I know a guy who's like, a cabaret performer, and he feels the way about—he feels about busking the way that stand-ups feel about doing stage time, which is he's gotta get out there on the street corner. Even when he's booked in a stadium that night, he gets out on the street corner that afternoon and does his act, because he loves the challenge and the thrill of convincing people who are just wandering past to pay attention.

- 00:25:09 Joe Guest Yeah. One time, I was a couple years in, it was kind of dumb. Well, I don't know. But I got the idea of maybe I could try and do stand-up on the subway platform and make some money. So, I got a—I asked two oth—uh, the first time I did it by myself. The next time I asked some comedians. But basically, it was late at night on the platform and the trains would come every ten minutes, and I just kind of—I had a sign that says, "Jokes, complimenting ladies, and guesses your favorite food." And I would just kind of—

[Jesse laughs.]

If nobody approached me, I would just start telling jokes, and hopefully it would catch somebody's ear and it would get a laugh and then they'd turn. It was kind of neat. And—or a few hours, you know, in ten minutes you have to catch people's attention, and then once the crowd starts growing and laughing, then you're kind of in

business.

And then once you got that, you know, then the pressure's on. Then if you can deliver, you make a couple bucks, and it was kind of—it wasn't uh—yeah, I didn't do it all that often, but it was like a good learning experience in just how to make sure the jokes are super sharp. Especially like, quieter ones.

Kind of helped that when I was—had a bunch of jokes at that period of time, I kind of threw them out there at that point, and they uh—I knew which ones were like, very good, and which ones were only medium based on how they worked. If they could keep people's attention there. And kind of, I don't know. I don't think it changed the way I do comedy but it definitely helped me identify what's a good joke versus what's a great joke.

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| 00:27:00 | Jesse | Host | Did it help you make the rent? |
| 00:27:02 | Joe | Guest | Uh, mm, I think I made like fifty bucks. |
| 00:27:09 | Jesse | Host | I mean, that's not nothing, Joe. |
| 00:27:11 | Joe | Guest | Not quite there, but I remember the next morning I went out for breakfast and bought myself a New York Times and I read it while eating breakfast, and that was like—I thought it was pretty fun. |
| 00:27:22 | Jesse | Host | <i>[Laughing]</i> Yeah, that totally rules. Reading the New York Times while eating breakfast is great. |
| 00:27:26 | Joe | Guest | Well, it was more ethical than stealing it from somebody's front porch. |
| 00:27:33 | Jesse | Host | <i>[Laughs]</i> I mean, if you can up it to two shows a night, maybe you treat yourself to a New Yorker. |
| 00:27:40 | Joe | Guest | Yeah. Yeah, true. |
| 00:27:43 | Jesse | Host | I want to play a scene from <i>Joe Pera Talks With You</i> that's really lovely. It's from the second episode of this new, second season. Your character on the show has a girlfriend named Sarah Connor. Yes, the same name as the woman from the Terminator. She's played by Jo Firestone, who's a great New York comedian and also hosts a podcast in a podcast network that I own. And basically, the two of you work at the same school, and you're spending all this time trying to figure out whether to tell the people around you that you're dating, and she maybe is uncomfortable with it, and you are burdened by her discomfort. And in this scene we hear you, Joe, tell Sarah that you got kicked out of little league for running around the bases even though you were out in the last [???] bat of the season. <i>[Joe responds affirmatively.]</i> |
| 00:28:40 | Sound Effect | Transition | Music swells and fades. |

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| 00:28:41 | Clip | Clip | <i>[Sound of wind and birds chirping in the background.]</i> |
| | | | Joe Pera: I know it sounds childish, but it feels so good to get that off my chest. I guess I was still embarrassed from when Coach Hazler had me turn in my cap and uniform. |
| | | | Sarah Connor: It takes guts for you to tell me that, and I don't fully understand it, but I can respect it. |
| | | | Joe: Every time we've driven by a diamond, I've held it in. |
| | | | Sarah: Can I share something with you? |
| | | | Joe: Sure. |
| | | | Sarah: I've dated men from each branch of the U.S. military, and I still keep in touch with two of them. |
| | | | Joe: Okay. |
| | | | Sarah: We're friends, but it's primarily for intelligence. |
| | | | Joe: Makes sense. |
| 00:29:27 | Sound Effect | Transition | Music swells and fades. |
| 00:29:29 | Jesse | Host | Are there things you do or choices you make to ground the show in humanity and reality, rather than it being either abstract absurdity or abstract corniness? You know, Hallmark channel type abstraction? |
| 00:29:50 | Joe | Guest | Yeah. I just uh, I guess, I mean, none of us are—well there's some exceptions. Jo Firestone and Jo Scott and also Connor, maybe just—maybe I'm not a great actor, but also like a lot of the people that we cast on the show aren't—like a lot of the kids in the choir, they're kids from the Milwaukee area that, you know, we don't want a bunch of child actors who sing perfect. We want the kids to be themselves and sound like a choir kid. |
| | | | When we did this new season, we needed a beauty salon, and uh, we found not only the perfect beauty salon that kind of reminded me of the one where my own grandmother got her hair done, but the owner, Yvonne, was such a great personality and interesting person. I mean, she spends her entire career talking to people all day long, and finding out what they know and keeping them entertained while she cuts their hair. You know, who better to cast than that? |
| | | | Sometimes it makes things tougher, but I think these decisions to shoot in real places, use real people, and let the unpolished stuff go is just—it kind of adds up and hopefully grounds the show and a bunch of choices, and also me and Marty Schousboe, the excellent director, don't 100% know what we're doing, so just kind of embrace a bunch of the flaws of the show. Instead of trying to spool them out, include them, and hope that that's fun. |

Like, Jo Firestone's not gonna like this, but in episode 8 of last season, she walked right into a doorway, and I don't know if anybody really noticed, but stuff like leaving in shots where she walks into a doorway or where I almost trip or something like that. It just—don't bother taking them out, 'cause that's what p—people want to see people run into doorways, I think.

00:32:06 Jesse Thorn

Are you proud of the show?

00:32:07 Joe Guest

Uh, yes. We put everything we have into it. I know it's not like, the most polished show or anything else, but kind of the thing that we said going into it is, you know, we don't have the biggest budget or, I mean, 50 million dollars an episode, but um—sorry, bad joke.

But yeah, what we just tried to say is, everybody on the cast and crew, we try and care as much as we can about the show and all the decisions and the edits. And every step of the way from the scripts to the edit we just try and care more about the show, or as much as possible, because that's—you know, I'm not the smartest, so we can't make the smartest show or even the outright funniest show, 'cause Danny McBride is doing that.

But, I don't know, I hope that this intangible qualities kind of carry across, and just that caring and the—from everyone is just—people will be able to sense it when they watch it.

00:33:24 Jesse Host

Well, Joe, I'm glad you're proud of it, because as much as I love Danny McBride, and I do, I think your show's my favorite thing on TV. I love it so much, and I'm—

00:33:32 Joe Guest

Really?

00:33:33 Jesse Host

Yeah, for real.

00:33:34 Joe Guest

Oh, thank you.

00:33:35 Jesse Host

Absolutely for real. I mean, *Mandalorian* is fun, too, don't get me wrong. But—

[Both laugh.]

00:33:42 Joe Guest

Oh, no. You're going hard on Baby Yoda now, too? Oh, no.

00:33:46 Jesse Host

No! I like—I like Baby Yoda. I like *Mandalorian*. But I like your show better.

00:33:53 Joe Guest

Hey, thanks.

00:33:54 Jesse Host

That's the honest truth, and I'm really grateful that you took this time to be on *Bullseye*. I really appreciate it.

00:34:00 Joe Guest

Same, thank you. I hope you like the rest of the season, 'cause I think it's pretty uh, special where—the places it goes to through the finale at the end of th January.

00:34:11 Jesse Host

Well, I'm excited. Thank you, Joe.

00:34:14 Joe Guest

Thanks, Jesse.

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| 00:34:15 | Jesse | Host | <p>Joe Pera. If you haven't seen <i>Joe Pera Talks With You</i>, you really should. It very sincerely gets my highest, highest recommendation. I genuinely love the show. It's like nothing else on television.</p> <p>You can watch both seasons at AdultSwim.com. There are also two specials, <i>Joe Pera Talks You To Sleep</i> and <i>Joe Pera Helps You Find The Perfect Christmas Tree</i>, which is right up there with the <i>Pee Wee's Playhouse</i> Christmas Special on the list of best television Christmas programming.</p> |
| 00:34:46 | Music | Music | Laid back, jazzy music. |
| 00:34:50 | Jesse | Host | <p>That's the end of another episode of <i>Bullseye</i>. <i>Bullseye</i> is produced at MaximumFun.org world headquarters, overlooking McArthur Park in beautiful Los Angeles, California—where the city of Los Angeles is planting some new plants! And they appear to be mostly native! So, hey. Shout out to the city of LA. And while we're at it, shout out to the county of LA! They do good work, too.</p> <p>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. 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 band The Go! Team. Our thanks to them and to Memphis Industries, their label, for letting us use it.</p> <p>And, one last thing. We're also on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Just search for <i>Bullseye with Jesse Thorn</i>. You can find it on any of those platforms. All the interviews on this show and all of our interviews from the past few years are on YouTube, if you wanna go browse around our YouTube channel.</p> <p>I think that's about it. Just remember: all great radio hosts have a signature sign off.</p> |
| 00:35:52 | Promo | Promo | <p>Speaker: <i>Bullseye with Jesse Thorn</i> is a production of MaximumFun.org and is distributed by NPR.</p> <p><i>[Music fades out.]</i></p> |