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| 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 production of MaximumFun.org and is distributed by NPR. |
| 00:00:12 | Jesse Thorn | Host | <i>[Music fades out.]</i> 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 | My next guests are a dynamite songwriting duo: Kristen Anderson-Lopez and Robert Lopez. Together, they've written some of the catchiest movie songs of the last ten years. Like, for example, you have probably seen <i>Frozen</i> , right? |
| | | | <i>["Let It Go" from the movie Frozen fades in.]</i> |
| 00:00:38 | Music | Music | And even if you haven't, you probably know this song. "Let It Go" from the movie <i>Frozen</i> . Excited, triumphant singing. |
| | | | <i>Let it go, let it go Can't hold me back, anymore Let it go, let it go</i> |
| | | | <i>[Music fades out to be replaced by "Remember Me" from the movie Coco.]</i> |
| 00:00:46 | Jesse | Host | Or do you remember "Remember Me", from <i>Coco</i> ? |
| 00:00:48 | Music | Music | "Remember Me" from the movie <i>Coco</i> . Upbeat, fast singing. |
| | | | <i>Remember me Though I have to say goodbye Remember me</i> |
| 00:00:54 | Jesse | Host | <i>[Music fades out as Jesse begins to speak.]</i> They wrote that, too. They also wrote the music for <i>Frozen 2</i> , which is just out on home video. Robert has also written music for <i>The Book of Mormon</i> , <i>Avenue Q</i> , <i>Scrubs</i> , and more. He is one of only 12 people to have won an Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, and Tony award. Yes, he is an EGOT. When I talked with them, in 2018, it was just after <i>Coco</i> had come out. |
| | | | If you haven't seen <i>Coco</i> yet, you—first of all—should. It's great. The story revolves around Miguel, a young boy who's living in a small town in Mexico. He's an aspiring musician, even though his family has—for quite some time—banned music entirely. And, on the Day of the Dead, when families all over the country remember their lost loved ones, everything comes to a boiling point. He runs away from home and, by a stroke of magic, meets his ancestors in the land of the dead. |
| | | | It's a fantastic premise, told with rich, striking colors. Is it a kid's movie about death? Yes, kind of. But it's also about the legacies that we leave behind and the ways that families change. "Remember Me", the song that Kristen and Robert wrote, drives |

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| 00:02:09 | Music | Music | <p>that point home. Let's listen to it right now. This is a version from the movie—a duet between two characters.</p> <p>“Remember Me” from the movie <i>Coco</i>. The same tune as before, but much slower, more bare, more tender—a father singing a lullaby to his daughter.</p> <p><i>HECTOR:</i> <i>Remember me</i> <i>Though I have to say goodbye,</i> <i>Remember me</i> <i>Don't let it make you cry</i> <i>For even if I'm far away</i> <i>I hold you in my heart</i> <i>I sing a secret song to you</i> <i>Each night we are apart</i></p> <p><i>Remember me</i> <i>Though I have to travel far</i> <i>Remember me</i> <i>Each time you hear a sad guitar</i></p> <p><i>HECTOR & COCO:</i> <i>Know that I'm with you</i> <i>the only way that I can be</i> <i>Until you're in my arms again</i> <i>Remember...</i></p> <p><i>HECTOR:</i> <i>... me</i></p> |
| 00:03:12 | Jesse | Host | <p><i>[Music fades out as Jesse speaks]</i> Kristen Anderson-Lopez and Bobby Lopez, welcome to <i>Bullseye!</i> I'm so happy to have you on the show—or back on the show, as well.</p> |
| 00:03:17 | Kristen Anderson-Lopez | Guest | <p>Thank you so much for having us. We were so excited when we saw this on our itinerary.</p> |
| 00:03:24 | Jesse | Host | <p><i>[They all laugh.]</i> I am worried for you, because you guys have a show opening on Broadway—</p> |
| 00:03:29 | Crosstalk | Crosstalk | <p><i>[Robert makes several “shh”ing noises.]</i> Jesse: Which is 3000 miles where—from where we're sitting right now.</p> |
| 00:03:32 | Jesse | Host | <p>Robert Lopez: Don't tell them anything. <i>[Laughs.]</i> In, like, two and a half weeks.</p> <p><i>[Kristen agrees.]</i></p> |
| 00:03:40 | Kristen | Guest | <p>Is this—are you, like, frantically rewriting songs, right now? Or are you locked in? Um—well! Let's see.</p> <p><i>[Jesse giggles.]</i></p> |

In the car, on the way here, we were mixing—or, like, working on the final mix for the tracks that we’re releasing on *Frozen* Fridays, starting February 23rd. We—we may have rewritten some of the opening number the night before we flew out here, for the Oscar luncheon.

[Jesse cackles.]

00:04:05 Robert Guest We may, uh...
You know, there’s just no telling—

[Kristen agrees and laughs.]

00:04:08 Kristen Guest —whether we did or not!
00:04:11 Jesse Host There’s a lot—it’s a lot! It—there’s a lot.
I mean, you have been at this level of intensity and efficiency, now, for something like five or seven years. Like, I don’t think I’ve ever—I don’t think I’ve ever corresponded with you, which I do once or twice a year, without you being in crunch time to deliver a giant project.

[Robert and Kristen laugh, and Robert apologizes.]

00:04:31 Kristen Guest Yeah, see—that’s a sad, sad truth.
00:04:35 Jesse Host What do your children think of—and the two of you are married and have children—what do they—what do your children think of your lives when Mom and Dad are in crunch time, *[chuckling]* getting a musical onstage?

00:04:50 Kristen Guest Well, this one is different than any other, ‘cause we have never actually had to both birth a Broadway musical, which is basically like taking med school boards for five to seven weeks. So, this one, we—we’ve armored up. We’ve prepared them. Since October, we’ve been talking about February and March, like, *[ominously]* “Winter is coming.”

[Robert chuckles.]

And we have my sister and her writing partner coming to live at our house, starting February 15th. So, if we need to see a preview and then spend all night writing the show and then spend the whole next day putting it in... um, I mean rewriting the show and spend the whole next day putting in the rewrite, we can. You need to have that flexibility. Um, do you have anything to add to that? ‘Cause I’m talking a lot.

00:05:42 Robert Guest Well, it’s funny, because—you know—they’ve never—they’ve always been mildly annoyed at our trips to go to award shows and stuff like that. And this time, we—they’ve been incredibly supportive. And I think it has something to do with the fact that we’re bringing them as our dates.

[Jesse and Kristen laugh.]

00:06:02 Crosstalk Crosstalk Uh, to the Oscars. They were like, “When are nominations announced?!”
Kristen: Yeah, actually they were clocking it.

Robert: “Who are we up against?!”

00:06:06 Kristen Guest **Kristen:** They were like, “Nominations, seven days from now!” And we actually did just go buy their dresses on Saturday afternoon, at Saks Fifth Avenue. And they’re very excited. They’re—they have skin in the game, on this Oscars. But we’ve been preparing them for, you know—it’s just gonna be a wonderful time for us to, in the middle of previews for *Frozen*, to just leave New York and just be together! And yes, we do have to walk a red carpet and wear some fancy clothes, but it will be 24 hours—

00:06:36 Robert Guest Of quality time!
00:06:37 Kristen Guest Of quality time!

00:06:40 Jesse Host *[Jesse and Kristen laugh.]*
That’s a—that’s a very ambitious way to look this trip.

[They all laugh.]

00:06:50 Kristen Guest It sounds like it will be 24 hours of trying to get children and their luggage onto airplanes, and that kind of thing.
Oh, they’re good. They’re very good travelers, I have to say. They know—they know the rolling bag. They’re really good with that.

00:06:58 Robert Guest The flight attendants always give us compliments on them.
00:07:00 Kristen Guest They like to sit together and be really, really polite. And then the flight attendants give them free stuff. They have worked it out where if we are—if we are model children and we pretend like we really love each other—

[Robert breaks into a wheezing laugh.]

00:07:21 Jesse Host —and we’re very polite, that we will get so much sugar from those flight attendants! Uh, it’s a system.
Kristen, I get the impression that you fell in love with Bobby, like, when you laid eyes on him.

00:07:28 Kristen Guest *[Chuckling.]* Yeah, maybe you heard the story!

[Jesse chuckles.]

00:07:31 Robert Guest I did! I totally did.
00:07:32 Kristen Guest She did.
I—he walked in the door and I—I was just out of a, like, a six-year relationship. And definitely having that moment of, like, “What’s next for me?” And he walked in and I was like, “That’s my husband! He’s—I hope he’s not too young. I hope he’s not gay.”

00:07:49 Robert Guest Because I was coming in to play some songs.
00:07:51 Kristen Guest ‘Cause he was coming in to play a song and play a female puppet.

[Jesse and Robert laugh.]

00:08:05 Robert Guest ‘Cause it was—he was presenting the first two songs he had written for *Avenue Q*. But there was just this very electrical thing. And it turns out—
00:08:07 Kristen Guest She was right.
Uh—*[laughing]* yes, turns out he was my husband. He’s not gay. And he’s a little younger.

[Robert chuckles.]

00:08:12 Jesse Host I know about the incredible power of—having graduated from an arts high school, where I did theatre and met my wife—I know how much juice it carries to be heterosexual in that *[chuckling]* environment.

[Robert agrees and they all laugh.]

00:08:40 Kristen Guest It's a real thrill. It's like something—I would never ask for another partner. I'm thrilled to be married. Once in a while, I do think, "Remember how fun it was when you were *[laughing]* the only straight guy around?"

00:09:10 Robert Guest *[Laughing.]* Well, in the case of the BMI workshop, that was the one place where it was opposite. Because it was a writing workshop. So, you know, if girls are socialized—if they love theatre and everybody—all their parents and everyone around them says, "You're an actress!" That's why you have so many girls doing the plays and only, like, two guys. The two straight guys who get it all. BMI was the opposite. It was a bunch of straight men—

00:09:11 Kristen Guest Bunch of dudes, yeah.

—who can't really express themselves, so they've chosen to express it through music and rhyme and rhythm. And, like, two girls. That was the one time that I ever felt like the hot girl, was at the BMI workshop for that year.

[Jesse chuckles.]

00:09:28 Robert Guest Man, we gotta change that, honey.

[Jesse laughs.]

00:09:31 Kristen Guest No, it's all about picking your context! I'm trying to think where else I could go to be the hot girl. Um.

[They chuckle.]

00:09:39 Jesse Host I mean, the Oscars, right?

[Robert laughs.]

00:09:41 Kristen Guest Oh, yeah! Yeah, yeah, yeah. Um—Margo Robbie, like, walked by and—*[stammering]* at the Oscar luncheon yesterday, and it just—she it made—

00:09:50 Robert Guest There is no one more beautiful, at the Oscar luncheon, than you.

00:09:53 Kristen Guest Oh, you're so sweet. But Margo Robbie was.

[They laugh.]

00:09:59 Jesse Host She's like not a real person.

00:10:01 Robert Guest My friend, Kumail Nanjiani's, very beautiful.

00:10:02 Kristen Guest He—yeah!

Oh yeah! Yeah.

[Jesse chuckles.]

00:10:04 Robert Guest That guy—and he—they're another married couple that are both nominated. They—

00:10:09 Jesse Host Are you guys gonna go on a, like—an Oscar double date?

00:10:10 Robert Guest We should do that!

00:10:11 Kristen Guest We were the only two people who—like, we were each other's dates, and when you get called up you go on this platform, just like middle-school graduation. And we were the only two collaborators

that got to stand next to each other, because we're married and sitting next to each other.

00:10:29 Jesse Host Do you feel, Bobby, when you are writing or performing musical theatre, like you can... sit comfortably in the kind of... I think the word I'm looking for is "shamelessness" that the medium requires?

00:10:46 Robert Guest *[Wheezes on a laugh.]* Um, I think it—I think there's a lot of joy for me, and I think for Kristen too, in inhabiting a more dramatic part of yourself and imagining what a character in a—in a highly charged situation would be feeling. And we also, you know, we grew up loving this stuff, you know? Grew up wearing out these cast albums on, you know, Walkmans. On tapes and on record players. And, you know, I think once that—I—that is—that is the greatest hits of our brain. And he wanted to—we wanted to be like them.

00:11:26 Jesse Host What about you, Kristen? Are you naturally shameless?

00:11:29 Kristen Guest I'm hopelessly shameless.

[Jesse laughs.]

I've been shameless—there's, in terms of the—embracing the large, vibrant, stylized world of musical theatre—I mean, I just said that with very large gestures of my hands. I also think—I think that we have a little too much shame about expressing our emotions in the current climate, right now. I think we'd all be a lot healthier if, when we needed to express something, we were able to say, like, *[yelling]* "Perón! Perón!"

[They laugh.]

Or, you know, *[singing]*, "The sun'll come out tomorrow!" Like, I—they—these are human emotions taken to an extreme and I think extremes are good, because that is what being alive is.

00:12:26 Jesse Host Well, I think it seems appropriate that we should listen, now, to one of your most iconic songs.

[Robert and Kristen laugh as the music fades in.]

00:12:37 Music Music Which is "Let It Go", from *Frozen*—which is basically about that. "Let It Go" from the movie *Frozen*.

*The snow glows white on the mountain, tonight
Not a footprint to be seen
A kingdom of isolation
And it looks like I'm the queen*

*The wind is howling like this swirling storm inside
Couldn't keep it in, heaven knows I've tried
Don't let them in, don't let them see
Be the good girl you always have to be
Conceal, don't feel, don't let them know
Well, now they know*

Let it go, let it go

[Music fades out as Jesse speaks.]

00:13:27 Jesse Host So, something I like about that is I heard that, Bobby, you actually came up with "a kingdom of isolation, and I'm it's queen".

00:13:37 Robert Guest *[They chuckle.]*
Yeah. Yeah, that's kind of a drag queenish line, isn't it?

00:13:42 Kristen Guest *[They laugh.]*
Bobby—Bobby has big emotions. For this mild-mannered guy, he actually—I do think, every once in a while... I turn to him and I'm like, "Okay, Elsa."

[They laugh.]

00:14:16 Jesse Host Bobby definitely has this, like, part of him that needs to stay perfect and small and then, it—something'll just happen and this huuuge, huge heart just sort of bursts out of him. And so, I think that's where those early lines in the song come from.
00:14:19 Kristen Guest Can you give me an example of that, in your life?
Okay, here's a great example. The first time that we had to take my daughter to get her first shots, the newborn—our first daughter—we went to the doctor and the doctor was like, "Okay, we're gonna do it now." And I held the baby, and they gave the baby the shot and, you know, she sort of went *[makes the sound of a baby crying]*.

[Robert wheezes with laughter.]

And Bobby just started sobbing! Absolutely, like, body-shaking sobbing. And that's just, sort of, who he is. Like... things will hit him, and it'll just be a sudden wave of emotion. Whereas I'm very Lutheran, and Scandinavian, and I don't—

00:15:05 Robert Guest Takes a lot more than a shot to do that.
00:15:07 Kristen Guest It takes—I have to, you know—it takes a lot to take me out of the needle—the safety of the needle, to make it go past the line. And that's always shocking, too, but it's only happened like three times in my life.

00:15:19 Jesse Host I definitely, like, try and white-knuckle that needle.

[Kristen and Robert laugh.]

I'm like, *[through gritted teeth]* "You're not going anywhere, needle! Noooo. You're staying moderately upbeat!"

00:15:29 Kristen Guest Yes. Yes.

[They all chuckle.]

00:15:35 Jesse Host It's fine. It's fine. I'm very resilient. I'm very resilient.
It seems like that song was part of the catalyst for transforming *Frozen* from a traditional fairytale into—in some ways, kind of a deconstruction of the kind of fairytale that Disney movies had been. Especially for, you know, princess-driven, female-driven Disney stories. That there was something about, "Oh, maybe this character who was just gonna be an evil—an evil queen type, is actually a different thing."

I presume that when you're writing a song from a character's perspective, there's no way to do it without empathizing with that character. But it seems like in writing that villain song, you know, in writing, "I'm the bad guy" song—or in this case, the bad woman—

00:16:43 Kristen Guest you found points of empathy that were so deep that you—and so relatable to you. Maybe you, personally, Kristen. That, like, you couldn't simply let this be a villain.
Absolutely. I think once I started—I was taking—we were taking a walk in Prospect Park and just talking about how do we deepen this song, and we started talking about the pressures that we feel. And I started unleashing, as a wife does, on my husband—you know—all the pressure I was feeling at the time with small kids, to be an incredible mom and cook the good food and be around but also have a career and also be thin and also have a nice house. And just—I started realizing, “Oh my god! I'm trying to be perfect in so many ways. No wonder I'm exhausted and dying to drink white wine at 3PM in the afternoon!”

00:17:41 Jesse Host And I tapped into that part of myself. 'Cause what woman doesn't feel the need—like she has to be perfect? Because the movies are telling us that we have to be!
What was it like for you to hear that, Bobby, in such a concrete—I mean, that's a—those are themes that we hear, as dad-types.
[They laugh.]

00:18:01 Robert Guest But it—I feel like it's really powerful to hear it from someone that you're in love with, so explicitly.
You know, I have to admit that that movie itself—I mean, first of all, hearing it from Kristen, you know, you hear your wife say things like that a lot. And you assume, “Well, she has it tough and I have it tough.” And I think it was the process of making this film and then seeing the film and seeing the response to it that really changed the lens through which I look at these issues and, you know—I think made me a lot more of a feminist than I even was, before. Just how hard it is to get past all of the baked in bias that we all just have from being born, you know? From being born and being raised in a culture. And it being time for the culture to change, and our—the culture of our family certainly changed.

00:19:18 Kristen Guest The—our... before *Frozen*, it felt like I was the main writer and Kristen was helping. And now it feels like an equal partnership. It—I realized how much she has to say, how much she has to say that no one has heard in a big, mainstream way. And, you know, I'm constantly in awe of how blind I was... you know, for so long.
Bobby's acting woke.
[They all laugh.]

00:19:25 Jesse Host Which is good! It's good, because—
[Laughing.] That whole time, I thought you were looking at him lovingly!
[Kristen and Robert laugh.]

00:19:30 Robert Guest You were just waiting—*[laughs.]*
This is—this is—it's very hard to crack Kristen. She is not—she does not—she's not good at vulnerability.

00:19:34 Kristen Guest Ha, no. No. I do see a huge transformation, and I'm not kidding, in my husband over the last couple of years, as he—as he really

realized—he realized the lens. He was able to see the metal frame around the lens, because *Frozen* was—you know—here he was representing this thing that was widening the lens a bit. And he realized, “Oh my gosh! There really is a lens!” And, you know, when I say—when I notice that, “Oh, almost everything we do, we have to get through a committee of men, and then it has to get through critics, which are mostly men of a certain age.” And, you know, I was just pointing it out. Like, look at—it’s the numbers. Look at the numbers. Look at the—how many men are in this room and how many women are in this room. And he’s just paying a little more attention to it. That’s all changing. And that’s a really exciting thing.

But we’re at the beginning of a—of a—of a change. And it’s exciting for me.

00:20:42 Jesse Host More *Bullseye* after a quick break. Still to come: Bobby and Kristen tell me how to sneak grownup jokes into kid’s movies, like *Frozen*. It’s harder than you’d think. It’s *Bullseye*, from MaximumFun.org and NPR.

00:20:54 Music Music Relaxing, jazzy music plays.

00:20:56 Jesse Promo Support for this podcast and the following message come from Kohler Intelligent Toilets.

With a range of smart features for pampering, relaxation, and cleanliness, Kohler Intelligent Toilets are designed to provide an elevated experience. Enjoy warm water cleansing, warm air drying, and heated seat control. Surround yourself with ambient lighting and automatic air freshening, because every moment with a Kohler Intelligent Toilet is designed to make you feel your cleanest and most comfortable.

Kohler invites you to discover what you’ve been missing, at Kohler.com/intelligenttoilets.

00:21:34 Promo Promo *[Music fades out.]*
Music: Light piano music.

Manoush Zomorodi: Hi, I’m Manoush Zomorodi and I am the new host of NPR’s *TED Radio Hour*. I am so excited, because we are working on a bunch of new, amazing episodes. We’re exploring big ideas about reinvention, making amends, and the psychological effects of climate change. Our first show drops March 13th. Please join me.

00:21:54 Promo Promo *[The muffled sounds of a crowd of people milling about in the background.]*

Ben Harrison: Alright, Adam. Uuh, Maximum Fun wants us to record, like, a promo to tell people that they should listen to *The Greatest Generation*. You wanna do that?

Adam Pranica: *[Beat.]* No! I am tired of all the extra work. I just wanna talk about *Star Trek* with my friend!

Ben: I think it would—it would be good to, like, try and get some new listeners by appealing to the audiences of other shows. Like, this’ll only take a minute or two. It could be good for us.

Adam: We sit down for an hour every week and talk about a *Star Trek* episode and make a bunch of idiotic fart jokes about it. It's embarrassing! If it got out that we made this show, I think it would make us unemployable.

Ben: Adam, I have bad news for you. We have tens of thousands of listeners at MaximumFun.org.

Adam: [Softly.] Oh my god. I think I'm gonna throw up.

Ben: *The Greatest Generation!* A *Star Trek* podcast by a couple of guys who are a little bit embarrassed to have a *Star Trek* podcast. Every Monday, on MaximumFun.org.

00:22:41 Jesse Host **Adam:** I'm really gonna be sick.
Welcome back to *Bullseye*. I'm Jesse Thorn. My guests are the Academy Award winning song writers, Kristen Anderson-Lopez and Robert Lopez. They talked to me in 2018. They wrote "Let It Go", from Disney's *Frozen*, "Remember Me", from *Coco*, and "Into the Unknown", from *Frozen 2*—which is available to watch at home now.

I wanna play a song that the two of you wrote together, but I'd like you to tell me a little bit about it, first. It's called "Wide, Wide World".

00:23:10 Kristen Guest [Robert and Kristen laugh.]
00:23:12 Robert Guest Aw, it's our first soong together!
00:23:14 Jesse Host How did you find that?
00:23:17 Robert Guest It's from a smash-hit show, called *Bear in the Big Blue House*.
Oh no.

00:23:18 Jesse Host [Kristen laughs.]
00:23:19 Kristen Guest On Playhouse Disney.
00:23:23 Jesse Host Oh, woow. Wow, you dug deep, Jesse Thorn!
00:23:25 Robert Guest I'm a professional, ma'am.
So, I got this assignment because I was in with the music supervisor of the show, long ago, when we were in the BMI workshop. And Kris and I hadn't worked together at all. We were dating. We had just really started dating. And I tried a couple of takes, and the song—my other collaborator, my main collaborator at the time, kind of begged out and he was like, "I—you take this one." And then I kind of got stuck, 'cause I was used to writing with someone, by then.

And I said, "Kristen, why don't you—why don't you come over. And the guy doesn't know you're writing it with me, but let's just write it and then we'll—then, if he says he likes it, then we'll tell him that you worked on it, too. And then we can split the money."

And I think we had to write five different versions of the song. I remember, they sent us back and back and back. And it was mostly about these two otters that loved clams.

[Kristen laughs.]

And everything that they said had to be about clams.

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| 00:24:20 | Kristen | Guest | Had to be about clams! Yes. The clam jokes—‘cause we did, like, three more songs for <i>Bear in the Big Blue House</i> and there’s just <i>[laughing]</i> not much you can say about clams! |
| 00:24:31 | Crosstalk | Crosstalk | Robert: That hasn’t been said. Kristen: But we’ve said it all. <i>[They laugh.]</i> |
| 00:24:32 | Jesse | Host | Well, particularly for children! |
| 00:24:34 | Kristen | Guest | <i>[Laughing.]</i> Yeah! |
| 00:24:36 | Jesse | Host | Let’s take a listen to the smash-hit song, “Wide, Wide World” from <i>Bear in the Big Blue House</i> , by my guests—Kristen Anderson-Lopez and Bobby Lopez. |
| 00:24:46 | Music | Music | “Wide, Wide World” from <i>Bear in the Big Blue House</i> . I think that it sounds great! The wide-open road! The wind in your fur! The whole world to explore! <i>The wide, wide world It’s open and free The road, the wind, The sun, and the sea I hear adventure calling to me Out there in the wide, wide world</i> <i>The wide, wide world I’m hearing the call But the road seems so long And the trees seem so tall</i> |
| 00:25:23 | Jesse | Host | Those are the voices you dream of singing. <i>[Robert and Kristen cackle.]</i> |
| 00:25:30 | Kristen | Guest | Just spectacular. But did you see the dueling philosophies at work, there? <i>[Jesse agrees.]</i> |
| 00:25:48 | Jesse | Host | That was just a prototypical dueling philosophy song that we tend to—we tend to really try to avoid, from now on. <i>[Jesse and Kristen laugh.]</i> |
| 00:26:21 | Robert | Guest | Bobby, you co-wrote two huge, smash musicals. And both of them— <i>Avenue Q</i> and <i>The Book of Mormon</i> —were partly very sincere emotional journeys, and partly kind of parodic and satirical. And I wonder if you ever worried that you were good enough to write a parody song, but were you good enough to write a quote-unquote, “real song”? That’s—I <i>[laughing]</i> never worried about that. <i>[Jesse cackles.]</i> |
| 00:26:24 | Jesse | Host | ‘Cause I only worried if I was— Oh, good. Can you <u>start</u> worrying about that?! <i>[They all laugh.]</i> |

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| 00:26:28 | Robert | Guest | Thank you. Thank you. I will add it to my worry list. |
| 00:26:30 | Jesse | Host | Now that you got the EGOT, I just wanna— <i>[laughing]</i> I just wanna take you down a few pegs. |
| 00:26:36 | Robert | Guest | I—you know, I didn't—I didn't—I didn't get into songwriting to be funny. I never thought that that's where I would go. It was always one thing I wanted to do—to make a musical where you laugh from beginning to end, that drew from great spoof material, like <i>Airplane</i> or <i>Spinal Tap</i> or one of those great—you know, <i>The Simpsons</i> musicals that show up in the episodes. |
| 00:26:56 | Jesse | Host | Let's hear a song from <i>The Book of Mormon</i> —which one of my guests, Bobby Lopez, co-wrote. This is the opening number. It's called "Hello". |
| 00:27:03 | Music | Music | "Hello" from the musical <i>The Book of Mormon</i> . |

ELDER PRICE:

Hello

My name is Elder Price

And I would like to share with you

The most amazing book

ELDER GRANT:

Hello

My name is Elder Grant

It's a book about America

A long, long time ago

ELDER PRICE:

It has so many awesome parts

You simply won't believe how much

This book can change your life

ELDER GREEN:

Hello

My name is Elder Green

I would like to share with you

This book of Jesus Christ

ELDER YOUNG:

Hello

My name is Elder Young

ELDER HARRIS:

Hello!

ELDER YOUNG:

Did you know that Jesus lived here

In the USA?

| | | | |
|----------|-------|------|--|
| 00:27:43 | Jesse | Host | <i>[Music fades out as Jesse begins to speak.]</i> I think one of the cool things about <i>The Book of Mormon</i> is—you know, it has much of the... the tone that the <i>South Park</i> guys have spent the last 20-some years working on. Which is to say that it, you know—it's pretty no-holds-barred, particularly for a Broadway musical, etc., etc., etc.. |
|----------|-------|------|--|

[Robert agrees.]

But I think the subject matter and the medium both lend themselves to a kind of generous open-heartedness that you don't get from... *Airplane* or any of the—you know, *Spinal Tap* or those other ten thousand jokes—spooof things. Like, the fact that these are young, Mormon missionaries—are the subjects of this—which is, like, the most emotionally vulnerable person in the world.

[Robert wheezes into laughter.]

The person who's as—in that opening number—just, like, showing up at someone's door because they believe in God.

00:28:41 Robert Guest
00:28:42 Jesse Host

As well-meaning as possible. Yeah.

Which is, like, a really beautiful and amazing thing, you know?

[Robert agrees.]

And so, you can make an infinite—I mean, there's a wonderful song in the show, called "I Believe", which is—like—an inspirational tune about believing in—about having faith, but also the weird specifics of Mormon theology. And I don't mean to single out Mormon theology. All theology sounds weird if you don't believe in it.

00:29:05 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Robert: That's the point.

Kristen: Right, that's the point of *The Book of Mormon*, really.

00:29:08 Kristen Guest

Jesse: [Laughing.] Yeah.

It's all—it all sounds crazy, but it's so important.

[Robert agrees.]

Like, how do we get through the big highs and the big lows if you don't believe in something.

00:29:16 Robert Guest
00:29:18 Jesse Host

If you don't believe in something impossible, yeah.

Yeah, and I don't think the whole thing works without that emotional generosity to those characters.

00:29:21 Robert Guest

Oh yeah. They say that parody closes on—closes on Friday night, on Broadway. You know, you need—you need to have an emotional through line of your show, otherwise people are like, "Huh. Fun." And then they don't go home and recommend it. You need—you need to feel something. And that's what Broadway is all about.

00:29:39 Jesse Host

You guys wrote some great jokes into the—into the *Frozen* songs. And I feel like you guys have—like, a lot of the jokes that are slipped into *Frozen* are sort of... rhyme scheme feints and, like, little things that I would recognize from, like, friends who improvise musicals.

[Robert chuckles.]

Where, you know, you take a—you take a, sort of, a prosaic word and then you surprise them with a weird word that rhymes with it and that kind of thing.

00:30:07 Kristen Guest

Yes. That tends to be what cracks us up. I don't know. We were just recalling—Bobby did a version of *Mystery Science Theater*, and

was just vamping to something onscreen, and he wrote this little song about smelting and then—

00:30:26 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Robert:** Oh yeah, there were iron workers smelting.

Kristen: Like, *[singing]* “We smeeelt! We smeeelt! We smeeelt!”

[Robert laughs.]

00:30:30 Kristen Guest Um, it’s—language can be really goofy and it’s fun to lean into that.
00:30:34 Jesse Host Do you have... a story about how you got the joke, “How can you have a ballroom without any balls?”

00:30:43 Robert Guest Oh yeah, I was gonna bring that one up.

[Kristen chuckles.]

00:30:45 Jesse Host Into a children’s film!

[They all laugh.]

00:30:48 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Robert:** I think it was, you know—

Jesse: Deeply sincere children’s film?

Robert: You know, the original line was, *[singing]* “We got the ballroom, just no balls!” Which I think is a better dual-meaning one.

Kristen: *[Laughing.]* I thought it was, *[singing to a slightly different tune]* “We have the ballroom, just no balls.” Um, that one did not get through.

[They all laugh.]

00:31:03 Kristen Guest That one we had—we had to soften it a little. But somehow, “Why have a ballroom with no balls”, uh—

00:31:11 Robert Guest It didn’t—it didn’t move the needle. They were kind of like, “Yeah, that’s great. That’s a good line. They had this ballroom and no balls for years.”

00:31:16 Kristen Guest I think one of the things we had to cut from that was, *[singing]* “I hope that I don’t vomit in his face!”

[Jesse and Robert laugh.]

They were like, “You can’t say vomit. You just can’t say vomit. It makes people vomit.”

00:31:27 Robert Guest Yeah, there was a—there was a girl in the story room who we—you could tell, every time we mentioned it or talked about it, she just got sicker and sicker.

00:31:32 Kristen Guest She just went, *[makes a heaving sound]*.

[Robert and Kristen laugh.]

00:31:35 Robert Guest She was turning green at the end of the song. And so, we were kind of—we were like, “Come on! Come on, that’s—it’s funny!” And then our daughter came up with the alt line.

00:31:46 Kristen Guest Well, we were at the dentist’s when they were like, “No, it can’t go through.”

And so, I was trying to write it, and she was like, “Mommy, what are you doing?”

And I was like, “Oh, I have to rewrite ‘I hope that I don’t vomit in his face’.”

And then she went, *[singing]* “I wanna stuff some chocolate in my face!” So, she actually wrote that line. Ironically, at the dentist, who was probably saying, “Don’t eat chocolate.”

[Robert agrees.]

00:32:07 Jesse Host It’s good to know that the line is somewhere in between vomit and—“am I nervous or just gassy”, which is in the film.

[They laugh.]

00:32:17 Kristen Guest “Don’t know if I’m elated or gassy” is certainly—like, when we talk about writing from a very personal place—

[All three of them break into laughter.]

00:32:25 Robert Guest Yes, the root chakra.

00:32:30 Jesse Host How did the song that you wrote for *Coco*, which is called “Remember Me”, come to you? Like, what was the—what was the RFP: the Request for Proposals. Like, what was the remit? What was the thing they needed?

00:32:44 Kristen Guest Lee Unkrich—we—he had seen *Finding Nemo*, ‘cause he was a co-director on it, and I think he had always said that he wanted to do a pieced where the music was the emotional turning point. And so, very, very early on, he reached out to us and we were working on—he knew he wanted to do something about memory and death and music and Día de Muertos. And he asked us, “Can you write a song that can mean two completely different things depending on the singer and the arrangement?”

And we kind of said, you know, “I hope so!”

00:33:23 Robert Guest Yeah, it sounded like an amazing challenge, ‘cause how can—how can a song, you know, be one thing and another at the same time? And we thought, “Well maybe we need—when he goes to the land of the dead, he has to discover a missing part of it.” But then we realized, no, it’ll be a lot cooler if we could write one song with the same chord progression, the same tune, the same lyrics that means—that means one, you know, completely shallow thing and can be completely deep and emotional at the turning point of the movie.

So—and we—I remember, sort of, almost tearing up when Lee was describing what he wanted. And we were kind of really hungry to write this song. Especially ‘cause, you know, as we’ve said, we have two girls that our lives really center around, and we have to leave them so much to come out here. And we’re constantly, you know, writing little songs to them and for them. And then, luckily, we were able to turn it into a mariachi version that, uh, that worked really rousingly.

[Music fades in.]

00:34:23 Kristen Guest That was more like, you know, *[in a Spanish accent]* “Goodnight ladies, remember me.”

[They chuckle.]

00:34:28 Music Music “Remember Me” from the movie *Coco*.

*Remember me
Though I have to say goodbye
Remember me
Don't let it make you cry*

00:34:37 Jesse Host *[Music drops in volume as Jesse talks.]*
Kristen Anderson-Lopez and Bobby Lopez from 2018. Hollywood's premier songwriting power couple! If you haven't seen *Coco*, I recommend it no matter what your age is. They also wrote the music for the Broadway version of *Frozen*, which is still playing on the great white way. And I'm gonna tell you this: my favorite song from *Frozen 2* is "When I Am Older", by Olaf the snowman. I stan a legend.

00:35:08 Music Music
00:35:12 Jesse Host *[Music ends.]*
Surreal transition music.
That's the end of another episode of *Bullseye*. *Bullseye* is produced at MaximumFun.org world headquarters, overlooking MacArthur Park in beautiful Los Angeles, California—where firefighters came and shot their hoses into the lake! From their big, tall ladders! I guess MacArthur park is the ideal venue for big, tall ladder hose spraying exercise.

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 fellow is Jordan Kawling. 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, many, maaany interviews in the show's nearly two decades. If you love the movie *Coco*, check out our conversation with Lee Unkrich, the director of the film. We're also on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Just search for *Bullseye with Jesse Thorn*. You can keep up with the show there.

00:36:21 Promo Promo And I think that's about it. Just remember: all great radio hosts have a signature sign off.

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

[Music fades out.]