

00:00:00	Music	Transition	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.
00:00:14	Music	Transition	<i>[Music fades out.]</i> “Huddle Formation” from the album <i>Thunder, Lightning, Strike</i> by The Go! Team.
00:00:20	Jesse Thorn	Host	It’s <i>Bullseye</i> . I’m Jesse Thorn. My next guest is standup comedian Kyle Kinane. If you’ve been listening to <i>Bullseye</i> for a while, you might have heard him before. Kyle has been on several of our year-end standup comedy specials. We’ve also interviewed him—and I’m looking at my notes—three times, now. Three times! Kyle might also sound familiar to you because for years, he was the voice of Comedy Central. And let’s face it—nobody says, “Wednesday nights at 10PM” quite like Kyle Kinane.
			Kyle’s comedy is a special brand of self-deprecation. A lot of his jokes are about failing at life, sometimes pretty spectacularly. Like the time he literally threw away some money or the time he fell out of the shower or when he almost died in a ramen shop. Very scary situations, but always very funny when Kyle talks about them. He released his fifth standup album, <i>Trampoline in a Ditch</i> , earlier this year. It’s kind of a departure. A lot of the record deals with his life changing. He’s older, now. There are new social norms. Being a loveable failure maybe isn’t quite as loveable as it used to be. And what else is on his mind? Well, he’s in his 40s, so—death!
00:01:29	Sound Effect	Transition	Let’s listen. Music swells and fades.
00:01:31	Clip	Clip	<i>[The audience laughs at regular intervals as Kyle speaks.]</i>
			Kyle Kinane (<i>Trampoline in a Ditch</i>): I’m 42 years old and my name’s Kyle. <i>[Beat for laughter.]</i> Yeah. You know what that means, right? It means I’m on borrowed time! That’s what that means. There’s no such thing as a old Kyle. You’re trying to think of one, right now. You can’t, ‘cause there isn’t any. Nobody went to Grandpa Kyle’s for Christmas, this year. Doesn’t work out that way. Kyles die in their early 20s in free-climbing accidents, the way God intended. That’s how it works.
00:02:16	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:02:17	Jesse	Host	Kyle Kinane, welcome back to <i>Bullseye</i> . It’s nice to talk to you again, Kyle.
00:02:20	Kyle Kinane	Guest	You too, Jesse. How you doing, buddy?
00:02:23	Jesse	Host	Well, I’m doing poorly, but this isn’t my— <i>[Kyle wheezes with laughter.]</i>
00:02:35	Kyle	Guest	I almost said this isn’t my show. <i>[Laughs.]</i> It is my show! It’s not—it’s not a show about me. It’s a show about you, Kyle.
00:02:39	Jesse	Host	Maybe we want it to be about you! <i>[Laughs.]</i> Let’s—why don’t we just flip it, today? Let’s talk about you, Kyle.

[Kyle agrees with a laugh.]

I feel like I—this might be counterintuitive to folks who don't know a lot of comics in real life. But I think a lot of the comics that I know, while they're missing stage time and the kind of controlled social interaction that comes with being onstage and proving that you're worthwhile by forcing people to laugh, I feel like a lot of comics I know are—like doing that because they are introverts and want to control their social circumstances and are perfectly fine staying at home and focusing on their hobbies while—

[They laugh.]

00:03:31 Kyle Guest

While they're basically unemployed.

Uuh, absolutely. *[Laughs.]* I was—I was a little worried. It was only recently where I kind of heard that definition of an introvert being someone who just—not that you dislike people, but you just get exhausted by social interaction.

[Jesse agrees.]

I mean, you wouldn't think that of me at one AM, at a bar, while I'm just bellowing and spitting from the top of a bar stool somewhere, but *[laughs]* I, uh—yeah. Outside of the pressing circumstances of the world crumbling, I've been alright. I've been pretty good, really.

[They laugh.]

I haven't been—I've still—you know, it's still fun to write comedy and write bits. I finally did a show a couple weeks ago, an outdoor show. And it was weird, because I've just been writing material for six months and it's where—as a standup, you write it and you get to try it out that night or the next night to find out if you're at least on the right path. Of like, "Oh, yeah. This will develop into a funny story!" But six months of just writing and then revealing that to people—it felt like I got some sort of drastic plastic surgery or something where I'm like, "Eeh? What do you think of these?!"

And everybody's like, "Wh—wow! So, that's what you thought was a good idea." *[Laughs.]* I feel like maybe what I've been writing more of are manifesto-inspired humorous observations rather than jokes.

[They laugh.]

00:05:11 Jesse Host

So. It was nice to get to hip-checked a little bit. But yeah, I haven't—there's been enough Zoom interactions to keep me settled, socially.

I mean, there is a significant chunk, on this new record, about your affinity for old men who love model trains.

[They laugh.]

Kyle, I am—I'll turn 40 soon. And it is looking clearer and clearer to me why people—especially 70-year-old men—go in their

basements to work on model trainsets. I felt you so deeply on that.
[Laughs.]

00:05:41 Kyle Guest I am envious of the people that are 80 years old and they're just the spunky senior in their neighborhood and they love going out to talk to everybody. I want to be that person. I know I'm not gonna be that person. I'm gonna be the model train guy creating the world as he wishes it was, in his basement.

[Jesse laughs.]

00:06:13 Jesse Host And that was—that—that truly—that joke did come from—I've been buying a lot of RC cars and it's just me tinkering being like a micro mechanic with RC cars, in the garage.

00:06:31 Kyle Guest The thing about remote control cars in 2020—as I understand it—is that you buy the different pieces and put them together and then when the cars crash you fix them. Rather than what I imagine, which is like you go to RadioShack and you buy yourself a Tandy Bigfoot.

00:06:32 Jesse Host No. No, the—

00:06:34 Kyle Guest Or the one where the claws come out of the wheels. I don't remember what one was called.

[Jesse laughs.]

00:06:37 Jesse Host Quality reference, though.

00:06:38 Kyle Guest *[Laughing.]* Thank you.

No, that's—well, that's the joy of it, is I'm 43 and I missed the... I missed everything about technol—I missed the moment that I could have jumped onboard and been like, "Alright! I'm going to learn even the basics of just computer storage or any kind of common sense that goes with technology." And I didn't—I never had office jobs where you kind of learned by default of like, "Oh, if I save something, it goes into a file and goes here." I missed all of that. I think I was in maybe first grade or something and god forbid I got put in a—the gifted class, which what—what a way to handicap your child at an early age, by elevating their slightly more curious nature than the other kids by taking them out of the practical classes and then giving them gifted classes.

00:07:51 Jesse Host So, I got to go to a computer class in first grade, which was just—we just, like, would type a coordinate in every lunch break. And then at the end of two weeks, you pressed enter and it made a circle. And I was like, "I don't care." And I—so I just ignored it!

00:07:53 Kyle Guest *[Laughs.]* That's just a logo.

00:08:00 Jesse Host Yeah! I was like—I just ignored it! And now it's like, "Oh boy, I really should have stayed on that path." *[Laughs.]* "That really could've helped me out."

00:08:15 Kyle Guest That program, the box that it came in—on the back there was like a picture of the ultimate aspirational product of that little turtle wandering around, and it was—you could have a triangle-square picture of sailboat.

Yeah. Yeah, it's like, "You did that!"

I'm like, "I didn't do anything. I sat here pressing buttons and pressed enter." I'm like, "I could have been out playing in the dirt

with my friends.” So, the cars—the cars, they break. I fix them. There’s a sense of accomplishment there. Even—no matter how small, there’s a sense of real-world accomplishment, which I think is kind of lacking in, like—comedy’s great. I love comedy. I’m gonna do comedy forever. And you tell jokes and people laugh, but like I didn’t do anything. *[Laughs.]* I just—as I’ve said before, I’m just capitalizing on a personality trait. That’s all comedians are doing. *[Laughs.]* It’s the physicality of it. Like the fact that it is an actual object that you’ve repaired rather than the ephemerality of making people laugh.

00:08:51 Jesse Host

00:09:00 Kyle Guest

You know, even something just the next step up of home repair past fixing a lightbulb, where there’s a step two involved in the process. I sit back and I’m like, *[smugly]*, “Yeeeah. Alright. Good for you. Look what you did. That sink was leaking. It’s not leaking anymore. You did that. You should probably—maybe—maybe you’re a plumber now.”

Like I kind of need that stuff. And this whole being at home and just tinkering with different things and like, “Oh! This is broken.” We moved. This house has a broken lawnmower in it. That’s gonna be my project—getting a lawnmower to work. And I understand every retiree that I ever met that just sits in the garage pulling things apart and putting them back together.

00:09:39 Jesse Host

I drove past the model train store, in Burbank. Actually, I think there may be two model train stores in Burbank.

00:09:45 Kyle Guest

Oooh, I know the one you’re talking about.

00:09:47 Jesse Host

Model train capital of southern California. And I was looking at it and I was thinking of—there’s a model train club that meets at Travel Town, which is a train museum in Griffith Park, here in Los Angeles. And sometimes if you take your two year old to Travel Town on a Saturday, you wander past the little window into their workshop and it’s just all these 70 year old men, you know, working on the—on the tracks. And it reminds me of once Mark Maron told me that he likes to cook at parties, because it’s a great way to be the center of attention without talking to anyone.

[Kyle agrees with a laugh.]

And I think of, like, this—the model train club, it’s like the perfect club to join if you want to connect with others without having to talk to them. *[Laughs.]*

00:10:39 Kyle Guest

It’s not connection. It’s just vicinity. *[Laughs.]*

00:10:43 Jesse Host

Everyone—there’s like eight people in this room and everyone—they, like, they’re all on the same page as far as what’s going on, but everyone’s just working on their little junction.

00:10:53 Kyle Guest

Yeah, yeah. It’s just a—it’s a vicinity club. There’s no socializing. It’s just—you can be in a physical room with somebody. Also! That—I know that train store you’re talking about. If you go—because they are very elaborate setups.

[Jesse agrees.]

The—creating the models. You could spend, you know, “Okay, this month I’m gonna design this one square foot and hand paint all the characters.” And I go on Instagram. There’s this place called

Miniature World. It's in German. It's in Germany and the site's in German. But that's all they do; they just create Miniature World.

There's um... there's this odd level of horniness... involved.

[Jesse laughs.]

If you go to that one in Burbank and you look around—you look around their big dioramas and their big—there might be a different term for the train setup. I call them dioramas. And you, like, walk around and look into the woods, where like, “Oh, they just put some trees over here.” And then there's like a little tent and there's two naked people just... having their way with nature in there. And like a guy put that there. This is a model train store! Yet, if you look hard enough... there's uh, there's a little naked easter egg.

And then I—then I went to other—because I'll go to hobby shops, and you can just buy little naked people!

00:12:13 Jesse Host
00:12:14 Kyle Guest

Wow!

Like, that's one of the things you can purchase! Are little, naked people to put in your—not for, like, “Hey, you could paint it like it's got molded clothes on.” They're just nude!

00:12:26 Jesse Host

There's a type of model train person that I imagine, and they're the kind of people who invented modern computers. Right? Like, all modern computers were invented by these dudes at the MIT model train club who wanted better ways to control their trains. Right?

00:12:44 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Kyle: *[Laughing.]* It all stacks.

Jesse: In 1957 or whatever.

00:12:47 Jesse Host

Kyle: Yeah.

And god bless them. But there's another group—and I think of a friend I had in college, named Dan. Still my friend. And he was known as the guy who could use his one hair paintbrush to change the number on your driver's license so you could get into clubs when you weren't 21. Which, you know, if there's young people listening, you know, don't do that unless you're just trying to go see Del the Funky Homosapien at The Catalyst and they won't let you in otherwise.

And like, the personality trait that I have never been able to generate is someone who is artistic but careful. *[Laughs.]* That combination—I've never taken care in anything that I've ever done in my life. I just can't muster the focus to do anything like painting a miniature. And one of the things about building model trains is that it is about taking extraordinary care. And control, as well. Just as you said with your—with your remote-control cars. Like, I think having something with discreet boundaries that you have control over, in an uncontrollable world...

00:14:06 Kyle Guest

Yeah! It's—this is—this is entirely within—yeah. Within your control. You're the boss. That—I never had it either, the idea of... you know, I liked drawing, as a kid. And then eventually like, “Well, if you like drawing, maybe you'll take art classes.” And as soon as we got to any kind of painting, where you would have to wait for something to dry, I was like, “Life's short! Let's go, man!”

[Jesse laughs.]

Like watercolor?! I would always be like, “I can get close enough and not let the colors bleed together.” And everything I painted was just a dreary sunset. Just—

[Jesse chuckles.]

And then oil paint? Yeah, I—everything I did, like, I never had the patience to wait it out. And so, I’m in awe of the people that can sit there like, “Today, I just—I just paint three figurines. That’s all I do. And then they sit there, and they dry, and I have tea on my porch and that’s my life.” And, oh, I’m—I’m close to that, now. Even though it took a global collapse to force me into this kind of patient, semi-retired lifestyle.

00:15:11 Jesse Host

Even more with the hilarious Kyle Kinane still to come. What has being a former punk musician taught him about being a standup? A lot about humility, says Kyle. More on that after the break. It’s *Bullseye*, from MaximumFun.org and NPR.

00:15:28 Promo Clip

Music: Ominous, rhythmic music.

Rodney Carmichael: I’m Rodney Carmichael. And on this episode of *Louder Than a Riot*, the bias against rap lyrics seal the fate of No Limit’s Mac Phipps.

Speaker: This guy should be incarcerated. And I know that his music got him incarcerated, but they got the wrong guy.

Rodney: Listen now to the *Louder Than a Riot* podcast from NPR Music.

00:15:52 Promo Clip

[Music fades out.]

Music: Straightforward, thump-y electric bass guitar beat with light drums.

Jackie Kashian: Hi, I’m Jackie Kashian.

Laurie Kilmartin: Hi, I’m Laurie Kilmartin.

Jackie: Aaand we have a podcast called, “*The Jackie and Laurie Show*.” Who are you, Laurie Kilmartin?

Laurie: Oh, my God. So much pressure. Uh, let’s see, I’m a stand up. I’ve been doing stand-up since 1987. Uh, I’m a writer for *Conan*, I’ve written a couple books, have a couple CD’s out, have a special out. Who are you, Jackie?

Jackie: Well, I too am a stand-up comic, since 1984. And, uh, I do the road like a maniac and, uh, don’t have a cool writing job, but I have four albums out. Working on a new album. We talk about stand-up. We talk about, uh, all the different parts of stand-up comedy. So, that’s *The Jackie and Laurie Show*, and you should subscribe on MaximumFun if you want to hear that.

Laurie: [Chuckles] And I would encourage you not to.

[Jackie laughs.]

[Music fades out.]

00:16:36 Music Transition
00:16:40 Jesse Host

Thumpy music with prominent bass.
It's *Bullseye*, I'm Jesse Thorn. I'm talking with the standup comedian Kyle Kinane. He's got a new record out. It's called *Trampoline in a Ditch*. Let's get back into our conversation.

One of the big themes on your new record is coming to terms with middle age, essentially. And I think your public persona—because of your distinctive voice, best known as the voice of Comedy Central of course.

00:17:06 Kyle Guest
00:17:09 Jesse Host

Ah! The previous—previously. *[Laughs.]*
Previous host—voice, of Comedy Central. Because of your distinctive voice and your big beard and your jean jackets and your talking about shower drinking, you—

[They laugh.]

00:17:41 Kyle Guest

You kind of built—you built a gilded cage for yourself, publicly, as like the original punk rock party dude. And this record I think is largely about you coming to terms with what that means in the context of being in your early 40s, rather than your mid-20s. Part of that was strategic. Like, I don't wanna live that—well, you know. I'm gonna have my fun how I have my fun. And it still involves having some drinks, but now it's not having drinks and screaming and yelling and being nuts, it's like I'm sitting in a yard with a stray cat by a fire pit.

[Jesse laughs.]

And that's okay. It was also—I didn't want to just be, you know—I didn't wanna be that one note, as a comedian. And I didn't want—because it was also, like, self-preservation and career preservation, because I feel like there's only so much you can laugh at somebody whose routine is all about, like, "Aren't I crazy party animal?" And eventually that gets—that's a sad thing, when someone's old. I'm already past the age where that's... acceptable in most circles. But I think—hopefully the stories have been funny enough that they're still engaging. But I can't—I—I don't—I would feel bad if I'm still like, *[gutturally]* "Woooah! Man! You guys! I got so wasted the other night!"

And people would be like, "You're... you're halfway to the end of your life! Maybe slow it down!" Like, I would rather—I don't wanna be this guy that is—that sounds sad when you keep doing those stories. And it's also one note. I would like to be—*[stammering]* you know, show people that I have more facets to my existence than just that. And I feel that's also a challenge, as a comedian, is to be like, well, maybe don't rely on the things you know people will laugh at. Try and get—try and challenge the audience as much as you challenge yourself by exploring new topics.

And I see so many other comics that are afraid to lose this core audience they've built up. But that core audience, the—in my head, they'll get bored if it's the same thing over and over again. I'd rather

			have a smaller amount of people be constantly curious with what I might come up with as life progresses, versus a large audience that dwindles all the way away because, like, “Oh! He’s just gonna talk about being drunk again.” You know?
00:19:52	Jesse	Host	Earlier in your life, when you were a young man, you were in a band. Not a famous band, but a band that worked a little. And, you know, when you’re a punk rock guy—especially as a young man, that can be a huge part of your identity to almost all of your identity. To what extent do you still think of yourself that way and what does it mean to you, as a 42-year-old?
00:20:20	Kyle	Guest	Uh, well 43 now, since the album was recorded. But before the world collapsed.
00:20:26	Jesse	Host	Right. So, 42 when the album was recorded and 79 now.
00:20:31	Kyle	Guest	Back—aw man, back when. Back when, baby. Let me tell you. I think some of the—at the time, the ethos of punk rock—not that the... mid-90s punk scene was as much ethos-based as your, like, late-70s or... uh, you know, mid-80s type was. But... yeah, it was—it was—it was the look, and it was the attitude, and it was the—you know, “No future, party all the time. Who cares? There’s no such thing as shame. There’s no such thing as embarrassment.” And basically, just being obnoxious was the—that was what was at the time. But there’s that weird irony of punk rock, how it was all about, like, the “welcome everybody” thing, but then it still had its own cliques within it. But that’s every scene.

But it definitely—I looked at that more as—you know, some kids, their personality got built up because of being on a sports team. They learned the idea of teamwork. And maybe they used that positively, maybe they used that negatively—of, like, “Oh,” you know, “We’re like a gang.” But other people are like, “No, I’m gonna get into this office job,” or any kind of job, “And realize how to build up different individuals and praise their strengths and get things done as a team.” And that’s—you know—that’s the wisdom that only comes with years, is to be able to look back and go, like, “Oh, these were values I was adopting without realizing it.”

I also think it did push me into uh... pursuing comedy. Only because comedy was kind of viewed—I mean, we’re thinking like mid-90s. Like, I didn’t know how standup comedy started. And it was always kinda—I always loved it from a childhood. Like, seeing comics on *Johnny Carson*. That’s how I would see it. My mom would let me stay up late and I didn’t understand how one person could just stand, like—he—they weren’t actors. And they weren’t sports stars. Yet they were on the show. They weren’t musicians. All they did was stand there and talk and that’s all they had to do. I’m like, “I can do that!”

Especially playing in—playing music, I’m like, “I know I’m not good at this!” I had fun ‘cause I was playing in a band with my friends. And we had a good time. But I was like, “Oh! I—” You know, the individualism with punk rock of, like, “Yeah! Who cares what anybody thinks? Do you own thing.” I had to go against punk rock, because punk rock thought standup comedy was silly. Like, *[mockingly]* “Oh, you’re gonna stand up there and make people laugh on purpose? Just do it between songs.”

00:23:04 Kyle Guest I'm like, "Yeeeah, but it's kind of different when it's, uh, standup." So, I had to apply the principles of punk rock to—*[laughing]* to lead myself astray from punk rock and try standup comedy, in '99, when everybody thought that was like the corniest thing you could be doing. So. It—well, it does eat itself eventually. That's what I learned about punk rock ideals. They do eat themselves.

00:23:27 Jesse Host *[Chuckles.]* My friend, John Roderick, who is mostly a podcaster now but was—is and was a musician for a long time, and his... was a gen-xer who fell into the beginnings of the indie rock scene in Seattle, where he's from. In the—you know, 20 years ago. He wrote this piece for the Seattle alternative newspaper. I think it was called "Against Punk Rock". *[Chuckles.]* And you know, he's like the kind of guy who could write that kind of piece, both because he's a charming blowhard and because he's enormous.

[Kyle affirms.]

Just, like, a very physically powerful man. *[Laughs.]* Rhetorically powerful as well. And you know, so many people with punk rock backgrounds got upset at him. And I think not unreasonably, but I found the whole thing—as not a punk rock guy, myself—very interesting and informative from both perspectives. Because... I saw what Roderick had to say, which was that especially the punk that he had seen as a—you know—as a kid in the beginnings of punk was so built around anger and contempt. And it's not a sustainable way to live your life and it's—you know—rarely a productive way to live your life.

But I also saw—I also saw, you know, many of my peers when I was a teenager and, you know, folks I knew from the arts community far beyond just making punk music, whose lives had been informed by being punk rockers, because they learned how to be in an artistic community and believe in something. And, you know—and in a way, like, care for others. I guess that's what being in a community is, but I could really see both of those things. And I was glad that conversation happened, because it was something that—you know, when you're 17 or 20, you can just rush headlong through picking up an ethos.

[They laugh. Kyle agrees.]

00:25:53 Kyle Guest And when you're 35, I think it's worthwhile to think about what of this still has consequence and meaning for me and what's still valuable for me?

I—well, I'd say some of it was—I mean... yeah. When you, you're know, yeah—17 to 25 or whatever the age range—especially, speaking for myself, being from the suburbs. Like, there was no element of survival. Everybody was gonna be fine no matter what you did. So, it wasn't like, "Oh, I need this sense of team or this sense of community." I did make lifelong friends in it, but my thing was I—you know, I always liked to point out the hypocrisy in stuff. Like that's... you know, that makes—and boy, does that make me just a delightful party guest.

[Jesse chuckles.]

Is to be like, *[smugly]* “Oh! But what about this!” The problem with punk rock is it never—they love pointing out the hypocrisy everywhere else except in its own scene. It’s like, you know, “Burn down—burn down all the churches! Except for your own.” Which, as I always thought, was kind of ridiculous. That, like, “We make fun of everything ‘cause we don’t care.” But, aw man, say something bad—say something bad about the Ramones and see what people have to say.

[They chuckle.]

So, it did teach me a more—I don’t wanna say cynical, but... like, especially in comedy, it helped with like—just trying to find hypocrisy in any sort of argument, because it led me to, like, “Oh, I have to find the hypocrisy in my own beliefs.” It’s just—I mean, it’s a simple, like, high school debate tactic is, “Are you for the side that you’re against?” ‘Cause either you’ll just be—you’ll prove yourself correct even more for your—what stance you’re taking. Or you’ll become more open minded and go, “Oh! I didn’t think of it this way until I—until I tried to argue against myself on a subject.”

One of the reasons I’m sure I’m incorrect by saying I don’t go to therapy and I don’t think I need it is because I analyze everything I do with—from both sides so much. From a right—from a creative standpoint, to come up with comedy, but also *[laughing]* like, I come to conclusions about myself. Like, “Oh! Hey! Remember how you felt this way for so long, Kyle? And it turns out you’re kind of full of *[censored]*? Ah! Well, that’s from sitting in your room and having—arguing both sides of a debate in your own mind.” And that came from a lot of the punk rock like, “Well, we hate institutions and we’re gonna—this is gonna be all DIY!” And then I’d get angry. I’d see people that would do DIY because they didn’t wanna deal with institutions, but then I saw people that were DIY and it’s just ‘cause what they were doing was bad and nobody wanted to help them. That’s why they were doing it themselves.

00:28:25 Kyle Guest

That informed my comedy. ‘Cause I’m like, “Alright. I’m only gonna—I’m never gonna ask to be on someone’s show. I’m only gonna just do as well as I can on the show that I’m performing on and have somebody ask me. Because that’s gonna be my quality control.”

And that I learned from all these DIY like, “Aw! We booked our own tour, and nobody showed up!”

It’s like, “Yeah, we’ll it’s ‘cause your band sucks and you keep doing this every year and the numbers are getting smaller. And maybe you need to be a little more—you know, introspective as to why this is happening. Did somebody ask you to go on tour? Or did you just book your own tour?”

So, I kind of looked at the fail—I always look at the failures and try to learn from those. In music, in comedy. Like, “Why did that person fail? Alright, I’ll just avoid that.” Why’s somebody successful? You can’t control those things. But you can avoid pitfalls.

00:29:21 Jesse Host

Kyle, there’s a fleeting moment in your new record where you say—and I guess we probably have to bleep this on the radio anyway.

[Kyle laughs.]

Where you say that there was a *[laughs]*—there was a—there was a moment when being a comedian was cool and then some people had to take their *[censored]* out.

[Kyle agrees.]

And I wonder what your experience was of having a few of your peers, in comedy, who were—you know—straight dudes deal with the consequences of being in a—doing bad person stuff in a way that... I guess maybe they just hadn't expected they would ever have to do?

00:30:11 Kyle Guest

Some of—some of these were heinous crimes. Some of it was, like—I think, and this isn't in any way a defense... but you're taking these people that, like, "Oh, I'm—you know—life of the party!" And you build somebody up as the life of the party and center of attention. And there's this sense of infallibility that comes along with it. With any kind of stardom. You know? And it's—I'm sure this, sadly enough, this behavior exists with professional athletes. I'm sure that behavior exists, you know, within entertainment. I think it exists anywhere with power and money involved. I mean, you see it with executives and CEOs and all that kind of stuff. And I don't know why the focus was on comedians. I mean, the focus should be on anybody who's doing that stuff, 'cause it's wrong.

But to watch comedians and be like, "Ah! This guy did that." It's like... a lot of times it hasn't been unbelievable. I've had no—but I just know I'm in it. I understand what it can do to someone's personality. If there's—even if there's already a fraction of that added to it in there. And again, I'm—I—you know, people—like, that—they're the center of attention. "Aah! I'm wild and crazy!" "Oh, this guy's wild and cra—" They're getting celebrated for being wild and crazy—not to put any darkness on Steve Martin's routine.

But—you know? "Oh! This guy's stories are about being nuts! And ooh! Look at him! We're all laughing at his crazy stories." And like, when somebody laughs at your crazy story, it also equates to a level of acceptance. I mean, that's what I've used. Like, I've—I'll say horrible things that I've done or been privy to that are usually about myself, but if somebody laughs it's like, "Oh, if you're laughing it means you've... you're not judging me." You know? If you tell—if you tell a very self-deprecating story and somebody laughs along with you, you feel better about it. 'Cause like, "Oh, even though I look like a fool in this, I'm laughing at myself. Somebody else is laughing at me. Maybe it wasn't so bad. And so, that leads into—like I was saying before. "Well, now maybe I can just do this stuff. Because laugh at me talking about how—oh, boy, I'm nuts! I do crazy stuff. They know who I am."

And it leads to this sense of infallibility, possibly. You lose an idea of decency, I think, when every night is just drinks and partying. Where's your—where's your moral center. Like, man—man, it was musicians, it was—it was athletes, and it's comedians. There's scumbags everywhere.

00:33:09 Jesse Host I was—I was sad to find out things that I did not like finding out about people that I had known, but I think ultimately—and that, you know, *[laughing]* then I went through many other emotions. Anger among them, certainly. But ultimately, I feel like I was relieved to feel like maybe I was living in a world with consequence.

[Kyle agrees.]

I was like—and I was like, I—if you find out you’re living in a world with consequence and your reaction is purely defensive, then—you know—I wish you had found out—found that out a long time ago. *[Laughs.]* Because, you know, we should all deal with the consequences of our actions.

00:33:57 Kyle Guest It’s—yeah, it’s more upsetting when it’s a—the surprise. I mean, there were certain scenes, like where—you know, some of these guys I’m like, “Oh yeah.” It was kind of a clique or a scene where I never had any proof or knew about it, but I wouldn’t be surprised. Like, “Oh yeah.” Like—and again, it goes back to the punk rock thing of like, “Well, we’re on the right side, right?” And then you find out you’re not. Well, how—it means you really gotta do some introspection and analyze the team that you’re playing for just as much as you’re being outwardly critical.

00:34:29 Jesse Host Well, Kyle, thanks for coming on *Bullseye* again. And thanks for this great record. It’s really hilarious.

00:34:34 Kyle Guest Ah! Thanks, Jesse!

00:34:36 Jesse Host Kyle Kinane! His new standup album, *Trampoline in a Ditch*, is one of his funniest yet. You can stream it or buy it pretty much everywhere. He’s also hosting a podcast these days, called *The Boogey Monster*. In it, he and fellow comedian Dave Stone talk about cryptids, curses, and other supernatural mysteries—just in time for Halloween, if you’re looking for something spooky. Kyle’s one of the funniest folks out there! Check out his work.

00:34:59 Music Transition Relaxed, thumpy transition music.

00:35:01 Jesse Host That’s the end of another episode of *Bullseye*. *Bullseye* is produced out of the homes of me and the staff of Maximum Fun, in and around greater Los Angeles, California—where my daughter deemed our backyard balance beam “not high enough!”, so I went on a popular eCommerce website and ordered a higher balance beam. Can’t go anywhere! It’s 2020.

The show is produced by speaking into microphones. Our producer is Kevin Ferguson. Jesus Ambrosio and Jordan Kauwling are our associate producers. We get help from Casey O’Brien. 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. You can keep up with the show on Facebook, on Twitter, on YouTube. Just search for *Bullseye with Jesse Thorn*.

And I think that’s about it. Just remember: all great radio hosts have a signature signoff.

00:35:55 Promo Promo **Speaker:** *Bullseye with Jesse Thorn* is a production of MaximumFun.org and is distributed by NPR.

[Music fades out.]