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| 00:00:00 | Music | Transition | Gentle, trilling music with a steady drumbeat plays under the dialogue. |
| 00:00:01 | Promo | Promo | **Speaker**: *Bullseye with Jesse Thorn* is a production of [MaximumFun.org](http://www.maximumfun.org) and is distributed by NPR.*[Music fades out.]* |
| 00:00:12 | Music | Transition | “Huddle Formation” from the album *Thunder, Lightning, Strike* by The Go! Team. A fast, upbeat, peppy song. Music plays as Jesse speaks, then fades out. |
| 00:00:20 | Jesse Thorn | Host | It’s *Bullseye*. I’m Jesse Thorn. Eddie Peppitone is our first guest this week! Being interviewed by Julie Klausner, a terrific writer, performer, and podcaster.Eddie is a standup comic—a veteran standup comic. He’s been performing since 1984. He was born in Brooklyn, raised on Staten Island. His dad’s Italian. His mom’s Jewish. He’s got the accent to prove it. And if you hadn’t seen Eddie live before, you might start to make some assumptions about his act. Maybe you’d imagine he yells a lot, that he says, “Men these days aren’t tough like they used to be.” That kind of comic. The kind of guy who says he, “tells it like it is, sorry if you’re offended.” But Eddie Peppitone is not that kind of comic. Instead, he kind of subverts that persona. He yells. *[Chuckles.]* Yes. But more often than not, he yells something absurd.Like, he’ll go on a fever pitch rant about, I don’t know, magicians. How they’re a waste of time and they’re dumb liars with stringy hair. He’ll shout, he’ll scream. Just as you think he’s about to run out of breath, he turns on a dime. He’ll move onto a new topic, cool as a cucumber. It’s really something to watch. He taped his latest special, *For the Masses*, a little before we all started staying home and staying inside. But it’s a special that fits the moment. Eddie sees all the scary, horrible, and confusing stuff happening in the world and he helps us find joy in the absurdity of it all.Anyway, before we get to Eddie’s interview with Julie Klausner, let’s hear a clip of that special. In this bit, he’s on another rant—this time about his dad, who—as we’re about to hear—worked on the docks. |
| 00:01:57 | Sound Effect | Transition | Music swells and fades. |
| 00:01:58 | Clip | Clip | *[The audience laughs at regular intervals as Eddie speaks.]***Eddie Peppitone (*For the Masses*)**: My father just sucked on salt to survive at the docks! He slept at the docks! He didn’t have *[censored]* flowers on his lattes! He drank his own urine! Before the war, the world *[censored]*. He just drank his own urine in little shot glasses with the other guys. He didn’t have *[censored]* blankets! Cuddle blankets! *[Dropping into a calm, conversational tone.]* I did, recently, get a cuddle blanket. I’m a man of comfort. I’m also a man of revolution, but I’m a man of comfort. |
| 00:02:42 | Sound Effect | Transition | Music swells and fades. |
| 00:02:43 | Julie Klausner | Host | *[Chuckles.]* Eddie Peppitone, welcome to *Bullseye*! |
| 00:02:46 | Eddie Peppitone | Guest | Hi! Hi, everybody. |
| 00:02:48 | Julie | Host | Oooh, Eddie! Your new special’s so funny! |
| 00:02:52 | Eddie | Guest | Thank you, Julie! Yeah! I have gotten super good feedback on it. I think because, you know, the world has crumbled more than I predicted, but I definitely—you know—always talk about, you know, the dissolution of our *[chuckling]* world! You know, what’s funny is that I kind of do that because I’m just a guy who, like, always has a feeling of inner doom. Like, I’ve always felt *[chuckling]* an inner doom! And now, the world has caught up to my personal feeling. And I had no idea it was gonna happen *[laughing]* this quickly!*[Julie agrees.]*I was hoping for another five years or so. |
| 00:03:36 | Julie | Host | Well, it’s sort of a backhanded kind of satisfaction of being ahead of one’s time and then…*[Eddie agrees.]*And then actually, you know, being oddly prescient and then also… our—you’re like, “Do people want to escape?! Or do they wanna face it, full force?” And how much of what you recorded on the special was… I mean, even related somewhat to COVID? Was it completely before COVID? |
| 00:04:04 | Eddie | Guest | Oh, yeah! *[Julie laughs.]*I mean, this was totally before COVID. And you know, I wish I had seen—I address the environment deteriorating because that was obvious. But I didn’t see a pandemic coming. I should have watched *Contagion*. *[Laughs.]* |
| 00:04:25 | Julie | Host | Well, you were friends with that monkey. I know it’s hard for you to watch your friends onscreen. |
| 00:04:30 | Eddie | Guest | *[Laughs.]* Yes, I did an organ grinder thing for a while with that fella. *[Cackles.]* |
| 00:04:36 | Julie | Host | So, Eddie, you’re in LA right now, which is experiencing these horrible fires and climate change has affected California. We were saying before we started recording, just worse every year.*[Eddie agrees.]*How do you—I mean, is *[laughs]*—this is kind of a corny question, but is comedy your means of dealing with the fact that we live in a nightmare? In a horror movie? And does it help? |
| 00:05:02 | Eddie | Guest | Yes. I mean, yeah. When I’m not overwhelmed by it, because we’re like the border of Studio City, Valley Village, North Hollywood. And we don’t live particularly close to the fires, but the smoke has descended on us. And I gotta tell you, it’s hard to have a spring in your step and a song in your heart when you’re having trouble freaking breathing and your eyes are dry and your throat is dry and it’s a pandemic on top of that. And I think they should now do *La La Land 2*, where—you know, two characters are just dancing through *[chuckling]* the entire city, being a nightmare.*[They laugh.]*I think that would be a funny parody. And that’s all I can do, is try to—you know, cope with it through dark humor. I’ve always kind of done that. |
| 00:06:04 | Julie | Host | I mean, is there any comfort to looking around and seeing, “Oh! I was right!” |
| 00:06:10 | Eddie | Guest | *[Laughs.]* You know, not really?!*[Julie affirms.]*Because it’s actually quite frightening and scary. And—now, you’re in New York right now, where you don’t have that, like, environmental stuff, right? |
| 00:06:25 | Julie | Host | Not as bad. Not as much. But give it time! You know—you know how they always like to say, “You don’t like the weather here? Wait a minute.” It’s like, “If you don’t like the weather here, don’t wait a minute, because you might be dead!”*[Eddie agrees.]* |
| 00:06:39 | Jesse | Host | It’s *Bullseye*. I’m Jesse Thorn. Our guest is the wonderful comedian, Eddie Peppitone. The bitter Buddha. His newest special is called *For the Masses*. It’s out now. |
| 00:06:49 | Julie | Host | You talk about your dad a lot, onstage. I love seeing him in the documentary that you starred in—*The Bitter Buddha*. I wanted to know how he influenced your sense of humor and— |
| 00:07:01 | Eddie | Guest | Well, I—you know. *[Laughing.]* My dad is—you know, he’s Sicilian, right? I’m Italian and Jewish. My mom’s side of the family, Jewish. And my dad’s side of the family, Sicilian. And my dad is, like any good Sicilian, very operatic. So, his moods—I—he did a lot of melodrama. I mean, not even drama. Melodrama. Things are a big deal. Like, he would say things to me like—and it would be an intense grilling. “Did you touch the thermostat? Did you raise the thermostat?” Things like that. And I would be like, “Why, Papa?”And he’d be *[laughs]*— |
| 00:07:49 | Julie | Host | ‘Cause you were a little French boy! |
| 00:07:51 | Eddie | Guest | *[Giggling.]* I was a little French kid! Uh, but—yeah, so. My dad was such an imposing kind of large figure, in my psyche, that I have—I really realized that the persona that I use onstage is very much channeling my dad, in an extreme way. Like, when I go out there and just kind of rage against things, I’m really kind of channeling him, I believe. And he also had a really good sense of humor. |
| 00:08:27 | Julie | Host | Does he love your comedy? When he sees you doing him, is he thinking, “Now, that’s funny!” |
| 00:08:35 | Eddie | Guest | *[Laughs in surprise.]* Um, yeah. He does. He does love my comedy. He has come around to that. So, that’s nice. You know. That is nice. |
| 00:08:43 | Julie | Host | But he didn’t—he didn’t at first? Did you cuss too much? Or—? |
| 00:08:46 | Eddie | Guest | No—well, no. He didn’t—you know, like any good dad, he didn’t want me going into showbusiness.*[Julie affirms.]* He—you know, he’s basically a blue-collar guy. I mean, both my parents were high school teachers, and my dad was, like, a dean for a while. In high school. He was a history teacher. And it was a typical thing where he wanted me to, you know, be like a doctor type of thing. And when I dropped out of Fordham University to study acting, he really didn’t take it well. *[Chuckles.]* |
| 00:09:25 | Julie | Host | I can’t—I can’t imagine why! I mean, did he really work on the docks? |
| 00:09:30 | Eddie | Guest | No! *[Laughs.]* No, that was—like I said, he was a teacher, but his brother—one of his brothers was a contractor who was, like, an amazing carpenter. And so, my dad worked with him a lot in the summers. And my dad loved doing all that stuff. Like just blue-collar labor. So, I just extrapolated from that. You know. And I used to—I used to have to work. And I say “have to” because I didn’t want to, but I used to have to work with my uncle doing, like, home repair in the summers, for a while. And I was so uninterested in that. And not into it. |
| 00:10:06 | Julie | Host | Did you just wanna be at home reading a book? |
| 00:10:10 | Eddie | Guest | I said, “Papa!”*[Julie bursts into a laugh.]*I said, *[in a French-affected accent that begins to lean Slavic]* “Papa! I just wanna—I just want to play with the other children!”*[They laugh.]* |
| 00:10:18 | Julie | Host | It’s getting more Transylvanian! |
| 00:10:22 | Eddie | Guest | Yes, yes. My accent work is, uh, not the best. |
| 00:10:27 | Julie | Host | Speaking of character work—I mean, you’re doing a lot in this special where you’re going back and forth between this operatic Sicilian, this ranting, wonderful, angry, crazy Eddie Peppitone.*[Eddie confirms.]*And then you very quickly switch, and you sort of become this quiet, civilized, introspective Eddie Peppitone. And I know that you’ve done that in past, but it seems like you’re doing that a lot more in this hour. And I’m wondering how that kind of came to be? |
| 00:10:57 | Eddie | Guest | Well, that came to be because—you know, I was doing a ton of standup, before this special. And—because when I first started doing standup—I’m trying to remember when I started. Let’s see. *[Thoughtfully.]* John F. Kennedy was shot in ’63… |
| 00:11:14 | Julie | Host | *[Laughs.]* Or was he!? |
| 00:11:15 | Eddie | Guest | Uh. *[Laughs.]* Or was he!? |
| 00:11:16 | Julie | Host | Yeah, they faked the moon landing in six—*[breaks for laughter]*. |
| 00:11:21 | Eddie | Guest | You know, being part of this world right now, you know, the truth is just a concept at this point.*[Julie agrees several times as Eddie continues.]*When I first started doing standup, I was up here vocally, just—like, screaming for my life! You know what I mean? Like I just was so up there. And that was very grating on audiences after a while. And I just calmed down enough and kind of—going into my own skin. And being comfortable in my own skin and realizing the comic potential of going high and then really taking it down low. And I just noticed the reaction.Like, I would be yelling, yelling, yelling and then going, *[peacefully]* “Yeah, I got—I got a cuddle blanket.” And, you know, it’s just a cool thing. And then I would even comment on that sometimes, saying, “I hope you’re enjoying the modulation, folks.”*[Julie laughs.]*“Um, I took a modulation workshop. Ah, in London. And um—on the Thames River.” You know, like—and they just love that. I think that I’m basically being kind of schizophrenic right before their eyes. |
| 00:12:36 | Julie | Host | Right, the variations of…*[Eddie agrees.]*Well! I also will say that it’s not just tonal or, I guess, vocal or volume related. But there are two sides of Eddie Peppitone, which is the loud, bombastic kind of—you know, crazy, angry guy. |
| 00:12:53 | Eddie | Guest | Ham! Like a—yeah. Yeah. |
| 00:12:55 | Julie | Host | Yeah! And then, on the other hand, you have this like vegan, progressive *[laughs]*—you know! Just like! You would—you are constantly battling with your contradictions onstage.*[Eddie agrees several times.]*And I think that’s a really exciting way to watch someone who is crazy, because *[chuckles]* because it’s not predictable!*[Eddie laughs.]*I mean, there’s nothing worse than someone that’s just, “Oh, I know where this is going.” And do have these, like—you know, in a lot of ways, you’re kind of like the biggest hippie I know! And then on the other hand— |
| 00:13:26 | Eddie | Guest | That’s true! That’s true! |
| 00:13:27 | Julie | Host | You’re kind of like the angriest dirtbag!*[Eddie agrees.]*So, how do you—I mean, it seems like you’re very self-aware of that dichotomy. |
| 00:13:36 | Eddie | Guest | Yeah, yeah I am. And the way I described it is like—I am, like, this kind of primal, blue collar guy who is trying to be a Buddhist. You know? Like, going for enlightenment and—you know, it’s a rough road, because I—you know, the Buddha—and not to drop names, but the Buddha, he talks about not being attached to things. And for someone like me, or just about anybody, it’s so hard not to be attached to all the pleasures, all the fears in life—which, you know, in Buddhism—you know, you’re supposed to just kind of give that up and lead what they call the middle path. Which is not too high, not too low, just kind of right in the middle. You know. Letting things roll off your back. Oh! The—California’s on fire.*[Julie laughs.]**[Peacefully.]* Let me go over here. Let me go over here and just make a nice salad. |
| 00:14:45 | Julie | Host | That just sort of leads me to the, like—how can you be funny when you just know—*[laughs]* you know about all the sinister stuff that people try not to talk about when they talk about politics or even social change, because it’s just too dark? |
| 00:15:03 | Eddie | Guest | *[Beat.]* Oh. And how do I be funny? Right! Well, I think—for me—it’s realizing the contradictions in it. And—like, I have—I also have this real hatred for authority. I have a real hatred for the elites that are destroying everything right now. And I feel like—you know, without sounding pretentious, I feel like it’s my job as a comedian to go after the people, you know, the system that is making a large segment of the population of the world miiiserable!*[Julie agrees.]*You know. Being responsible for all that. So, I wanna talk about that and to make it funny is just, like—I tap into, like, the fact that I—like, I rail against corporate culture, right? However, I’m a big sports fan. And that’s’ a huge contradiction, because sports is just as corporate as anything else. You know? And sports is a commercial for the military and I just make fun of my—you know, it’s crazy that I love these teams. *[Chuckles.]* Like, I’m from New York, so I love the Rangers, in hockey. I love the Giants, in football. The Yankees. While the world is—like, just yesterday the Yankees won a big game, and most of California is burning. And I was like, “Yes! The Yankees! Yes!”And I think it’s what—you talked about it a little before, about can people—do people want to escape or face it. And I think the answer is, you know, they want to escape. You know? Because they face it only when they really have to. |
| 00:17:03 | Julie | Host | How do you reconcile escapism with feeling like you should be informed? And how much of it is, “Well, if I’m any more informed, it’s not gonna help anything.”? |
| 00:17:14 | Eddie | Guest | Well, yeah! I mean, that’s me. I mean—and I—also I realize, there’s a big element of addiction, the way stuff is sold to us. And one thing I really realized is that I have gotten addicted to bad news. I just notice how they’re—they hook you in with, like—and they say it very kind of matter of factly, “Do you know, folks, that there’s gonna be incredible carnage?”*[Julie laughs.]*And it’s subtle, sometimes! But it’s just all about the vision! And… crap, you know? |
| 00:17:54 | Julie | Host | Do you watch old movies, at night? I know you like—*[Eddie affirms.]*You like *Antique Roadshow*. Is that true? |
| 00:18:00 | Eddie | Guest | Yes! Yeah, me and my wife watch *Antiques Roadshow* and we love Agatha Christie. We love *Poirot*! Like, gentile murders in English country. |
| 00:18:12 | Julie | Host | You’ve become a PBS couple. You’ve—you’re immersed in these—*[Eddie agrees with a laugh.]*In gentle British wit. |
| 00:18:22 | Eddie | Guest | Gentle British wit and murder. Because, you know, the murder that people are addicted to, in America, is brutal and I don’t know if I addressed it in the special— |
| 00:18:33 | Julie | Host | Oh yes! Oh yeah, you—*[stuttering]*. Yeah! |
| 00:18:34 | Eddie | Guest | Oh yeah! I did, I said, “When did—when did murder become entertainment?” Because people are listening to murder *[giggling]* podcasts! Every other channel is a serial killer! And you know, I’ve been drawn to that, too. Again, hypocrisy, because you know I watched the Ted Bundy doc on Netflix. And it’s this kind of— |
| 00:18:56 | Julie | Host | Do you think that that’s appealing because we just have so much stuff that we need to cut through it all? Do you think that there’s some, “Well, it could be worse!” to it? |
| 00:19:07 | Eddie | Guest | *[Laughs.]* Yes! I think that—yeah! Yeah, that’s one of my lines. Like, out—that I like to watch *Forensic Files* with an eating shirt on, at—like—two or three in the morning. And I’m eating soft, comfort food. And I’m going, “My career may have gone to hell, but at least I wasn’t murdered in the shower by a drifter.”*[They laugh.]*You know what I mean?*[Julie agrees.]*Like it is that type of thing where you’re like, “Wow! I thought I had a screwed-up life! You know, but at least I’m not a dentist—you know, killing people in my basement!” |
| 00:19:46 | Julie | Host | Dentists! |
| 00:19:47 | Eddie | Guest | And I have three wives! You know what I mean? |
| 00:19:49 | Julie | Host | Um—*[They laugh.]*When you look at stuff that you like or you enjoy or that you were—I guess influenced by is a different question, but I mean—do you like comics like you? Or do you tend to say, like, “Oh, I prefer someone completely apolitical or, you know—" |
| 00:20:10 | Eddie | Guest | Well, Bill Hicks was an idol of mine, because he was scathing when he attacked corporate stuff! You know? And advertising and I loooved that. Carlin, big hero. But then again! I love anybody who’s funny. Like—me and my wife actually saw Bob Newhart not long ago. He’s not that—he’s not very political, he’s just a funny guy. Rickles! I love Don Rickles. So, I love—I love both. But you know what I don’t love is when I think a comic is just kind of lowbrow and just talking about sex stuff. And just going for the lowest common denominator thing. Which I think is prevalent—and I wanna see a comic make an effort to, like, say—you know, something that is acknowledging that—I don’t know, that we’re getting… freaking screwed over. You know? |
| 00:21:10 | Julie | Host | Also, like, that’s not to say that your stuff isn’t filthy, because it is. And it’s—*[They laugh.]*It’s less about—it’s less about being offended by the content as much as I’m hearing you’re just annoyed at the dishonesty or—just, like—what’s the context? What’s the point? |
| 00:21:25 | Eddie | Guest | Right. Right. Like, I even was joking that we’re in this, like, incredibly bad time and when—you know, let’s say we get out of this—I don’t know. I mean, I’m hoping we’ll be out of it… *[sighs]* oh god, I can’t—I can’t think that this is gonna go on for another year! But— |
| 00:21:45 | Julie | Host | The pessimist—I don’t know. I’m a pessimist, too. And I do think, in a way— |
| 00:21:49 | Crosstalk | Crosstalk | **Eddie**: Oh, you are, huh?**Julie**: Of course! And I think we’re—in a way, we are sort of prepared more than other people. Is that fair to say?**Eddie**: Right. Yeah. Yeah.**Julie**: Not that we’re any—you know—less depressed, but I *[laughs]*—I just think that there’s—there is something about the world matching up with your worldview that is—if not, you know, happiness inducing, at least somewhat—**Eddie**: I just feel like—**Julie**: Not even satisfying as much as just logical! I guess. |
| 00:22:15 | Eddie | Guest | Yes. I just feel like to live with the constant threat of death… *[laughs]* is not great. You know. |
| 00:22:24 | Julie | Host | Well. I guess that’s life. |
| 00:22:26 | Eddie | Guest | And I think that should—that should be a bumper—well, you guess, what? That’s life? |
| 00:22:29 | Julie | Host | I guess that’s life, right?! |
| 00:22:31 | Eddie | Guest | I mean, that is true! But it’s—it seems to me that it’s just so much more ominous. Like, I was filming yesterday, on a Netflix special—Sarah Cooper. I don’t know if you know Sarah Cooper. But, um— |
| 00:22:47 | Julie | Host | Yeah. The gal who lip-syncs to the Trump stuff and—yeah. |
| 00:22:51 | Eddie | Guest | Yeah. The gal. All of the sudden, you’re in the aristocracy. The gal. |
| 00:22:55 | Julie | Host | *[Yelling.]* Oh my gooosh! What should I say?!*[Eddie laughs.]*M’lady! |
| 00:23:00 | Eddie | Guest | I’m kidding! So, anyway, I filmed two days. And I was around a ton of people. And you know, everybody got tested a lot. You know what I mean? |
| 00:23:12 | Julie | Host | Is it still scary? |
| 00:23:13 | Eddie | Guest | But, you know, I have to take—oh, I think so! You know, I had to take the mask off a lot. You know, when you—when you—when it’s camera time, the mask has to come off. And it’s just, like—wow. It’s fatiguing! It’s really fatiguing to constantly be on guard. |
| 00:23:29 | Julie | Host | That’s also challenging, to reconcile what you do for living with your hatred of capitalism, because you have to make money to show up set! In order to—you know.*[Eddie agrees.]*To get your word out there that this whole system really stinks! But I— |
| 00:23:44 | Eddie | Guest | Absolutely. I’m a total—well, yeah. |
| 00:23:45 | Julie | Host | I’m thrilled you’re on—anytime you’re on TV, I’m thrilled. And I saw that you were with Helen Mirren! |
| 00:23:49 | Eddie | Guest | Me too. Yeees! |
| 00:23:50 | Julie | Host | Looked so gorgeous. |
| 00:23:51 | Eddie | Guest | And not only that, but I mean—she’s funny and sweet. You know. |
| 00:23:54 | Julie | Host | *[Exclaiming, overwhelmed.]* ACK! Too, ack! Unfair! Must be nice! |
| 00:23:58 | Eddie | Guest | Oh man. And you know, the day we filmed, the smoke was acrid. You know. In the air. And she was just like, you know, that Churchill— |
| 00:24:10 | Julie | Host | Yeah. Stiff upper lip. |
| 00:24:12 | Eddie | Guest | —uh, saying of, “Keep calm and carry on.” You know what I mean? And stiff upper lip, whatever. But she was like—just so cool and I just took my lead from her, you know? Like, “Oh, okay.” |
| 00:24:26 | Jesse | Host | Even more with Eddie Peppitone still to come. Stay with us. Eddie recently played his first in-person, live gig since the pandemic—on a little league field, in Ventura County, California. It was very weird. More about that after the break. It’s *Bullseye*, from [MaximumFun.org](http://www.maximumfun.org) and NPR. |
| 00:24:45 | Music | Transition | Thumpy, bright music punctuated with cheers. |
| 00:24:47 | Jesse | Promo | This message comes from NPR sponsor, Microsoft Teams. Now, there are more ways to be a team with Microsoft Teams! Bring everyone together in one space with a new, virtual room. Collaborate live. Drawing, sharing, and building ideas with everyone on the same page. And make sure more of your team is seen and heard with up to 49 people onscreen at once. Learn more about all the newest Teams features at [Microsoft.com/teams](http://www.microsoft.com/teams).*[Music fades out.]* |
| 00:25:19 | Promo | Clip | **Music**: Low, gloomy music.**Rund Abdelfatah**: With the unemployment rate at record highs right now, millions of Americans are without health insurance.**Ramtin Arablouei**: This week on *Throughline*, how our healthcare became tied to our jobs.**Rund**: And how a temporary solution turned into an everlasting problem.**Ramtin**: Listen now, to *Throughline* from NPR, where we go back in time—**Rund**: —to understand the present.*[Music fades out.]* |
| 00:25:40 | Promo | Clip | *[Cheering crowd.]* **Danielle Radford:** Mmmacho man, to the top rope! *[Thump!]* **Danielle:** The flying elbow! The cover! *[Crowd cheering swells.]* **Speaker 2:** *[Distant; impact on each word]* One! Two! Three! *[Ding ding ding!]* **Danielle::** We've got a new champion! **Music:** Excited, sweeping music. **Lindsey Kelk:** We're here with Macho Man Randy Savage after his big win to become the new world champion! What are you gonna do now, Mach?!**Hal Lublin:** *[Randy Savage impression]* I'm gonna go listen to the newest episode of the [*Tights and Fights*](https://maximumfun.org/podcasts/tights-and-fights/) podcast, oh yeah! **Lindsey:** Tell us more about this podcast! **Hal:** *[Continuing impression]* It's the podcast of power, too sweet to be sour! Funky like a monkey! Woke discussions, man! And jokes about wrestlers' fashion choices, myself excluded! Yeahh! **Lindsey:** I can't wait to listen! **Hal:** *[Continuing impression]* Neither can I! You can find it Saturdays on Maximum Fun! Oh yeahhh! Dig it! *[Music fades out.]* |
| 00:26:26 | Jesse | Host | Welcome back to *Bullseye*. I’m Jesse Thorn. Our guest is Eddie Peppitone. Eddie is a longtime standup comic. He has a bunch of albums and specials to his name. He’s got a new special out, called *For the Masses*, available to stream or buy online, now. The woman interviewing him is the great Julie Klausner. She is the creator of the Hulu show *Difficult People*, and the co-host of the podcast *Double Threat*. Anyway. Let’s get back into Julie’s conversation with Eddie Peppitone. |
| 00:26:56 | Julie | Host | Can you tell me a little bit about what went into this special, as far as—was it a year of touring? Was it sort of something that you went into with a theme? I’m just curious about your process with putting an hour together. |
| 00:27:07 | Eddie | Guest | My process of putting an hour together is very—it’s not—I have the worst problem with structure. Like, I don’t do this. I don’t say, “Okay, I’m gonna do a special in February of 2019, so let me start working on, you know, this bit and this bit and this bit.” What I do, is I just perform a lot. And I—before the pandemic, I was a regular at The Comedy Store. I was a regular at The Improv. I was touring a bunch. And it just coalesced into, like—these bits just kind of came together and I had a couple people helping me who listened to—I tape all of my sets, audio-wise. And they would listen to them, come up with themes. I really had a bunch of help with that.And then kind of put it all on a—is it a—not a chalk board, *[inaudible]*. |
| 00:28:05 | Julie | Host | Oh, a dry erase board? Or—? Dry erase board? |
| 00:28:07 | Eddie | Guest | A what? *[Laughs.]* |
| 00:28:10 | Julie | Host | *[Amused.]* Bulletin board?! Cork board. |
| 00:28:13 | Eddie | Guest | Yeah, yeah, bulletin board or a cork board. Vision board. You know. |
| 00:28:17 | Julie | Host | Vision board! Yes! Pictures of me, thinner. Mm-hm. |
| 00:28:20 | Eddie | Guest | *[Chuckles.]* Same here. Same here. |
| 00:28:21 | Julie | Host | You have pictures of me, thinner, on your vision board? *[Laughs.]* |
| 00:28:25 | Eddie | Guest | *[Amused.]* Yes, I do! Just to inspire me. |
| 00:28:27 | Julie | Host | If I do good enough, maybe Julie’ll lose some weight. *[Eddie giggles.]*Um. That must be really challenging, that you haven’t been able to perform in the last six months. And to be generating material exclusive of an audience must be really, really challenging. |
| 00:28:42 | Eddie | Guest | Yeah, but you know—that really goes back to, like, what are you gonna do? I mean, I actually did do my first live show—which, again, was risky. I went and performed in Oxnard, which I love that name because it just—like, denotes, “Wow, you’ve sunk to a new level.” And, like, I went to perform in Oxnard in a little league baseball field, outdoors. I was—you know, the guy who was running it was like, “You know, we’re gonna socially distance everybody. Da, da, da, da, da.” And they were, but at the end of the show people had been drinking, smoking pot, and they’re coming up to me.*[Julie makes a sound of distress.]*And I’m like, “Am I gonna get out of here alive?” You know. |
| 00:29:24 | Julie | Host | Yeah, the meet and greet would be the challenging part of that experience. Also, that seems like a sequel to *Bad News Bears* that I need yesterday: Eddie Peppitone in a—in a baseball field, avoiding people trying to kiss him. |
| 00:29:37 | Eddie | Guest | Yeah, I was screaming—I was actually, like, screaming stuff like—it was just funny to me. I was like, “Here I am! In a little league field, in Oxnard! What has happened to the world?! What has happened to my career? I’m in a little league field in Oxnard, and I’m not even doing well!” Like—which was the truth. I had added an up and down set. It was fun, though, to perform. |
| 00:30:03 | Julie | Host | It must have been exciting to be around people and performing around people. |
| 00:30:09 | Eddie | Guest | A little bit. I was also super anxious! Like, driving. Like, I don’t know about you, but the thing with COVID—maybe it’s more so in LA, because we get in our cars and do stuff, but I’m like, “Oh god, I gotta—I have to go out and do something?!”*[Julie agrees emphatically several times.]*Like, I have anxiety! You know what I mean? Like, I’ve gotten so used to being at home! You know what I mean? |
| 00:30:31 | Julie | Host | Yeah! And I mean, I don’t know if you’re like me, but I’m an introvert and it’s tough to leave the house even when there is not a pandemic. |
| 00:30:37 | Crosstalk | Crosstalk | **Eddie**: Me too! Yeah. Same here.**Julie**: So, to be, kind of, you know… comfortable in that sort of strange way, it definitely ups the social anxiety when things are changing, or you have to put a foot forward and—**Eddie**: Yeah. |
| 00:30:51 | Julie | Host | It’s really challenging to have to navigate, you know, when am I gonna see people and does seeing people make me feel better? And if so, why don’t I do it more? *[Laughs.]* |
| 00:30:59 | Eddie | Guest | Right. Right, right. And I have been also doing a bunch of the Zoom shows. And it’s weird, you know. It’s weird doing those, but I’ve started to just look at it as like another art form. Like, another way to do stuff. And my—I think, though, the show I had the most fun on was—it was a show where I was able to scroll through the audience and talk to the audience. Like, each of them in their apartments or wherever they—and to do crowd work like that was hilarious! |
| 00:31:37 | Julie | Host | Oh, that’s great. |
| 00:31:38 | Eddie | Guest | Like, “You—you have a poster of…” You know, whatever their post was, on the wall. “Why do you have a poster of Farrah Fawcett?” You know, like, whatever it is. |
| 00:31:48 | Julie | Host | “How do you live like that?!” That’s very exciting. That’s a brave new frontier in crowd work, is Zoom crowd work.So, Eddie, tell me what else is on the horizon and if you are collecting pandemic material for your next special and what we can look forward to before the world ends. |
| 00:32:09 | Eddie | Guest | Let’s see. You know, I’m like everybody—and I don’t know if everybody’s like this, but I thought I was gonna write a lot, during this pandemic. But I don’t know what it is about having too much time on your hands. I—it’s weird. So, I haven’t written as much as I’d like. But now I’m starting to *[laughs]*—starting to. You know. I am gonna try to put together, you know, a new hour. You know. Shortly. I keep doing Zoom shows. Like I said, I’m trying to write a script with my wife. You know. For our show about me—just kind of like what we were talking about, the blue-collar guy trying to be enlightened in—*[laughing]* in a world gone mad! |
| 00:32:53 | Julie | Host | In hell times! Of course! Well, I have to say, whatever stars aligned to give us this special during this moment in time, is a blessing—all things considered. Because if you wanna laugh and you don’t necessarily want to escape completely, I think it is a—as you Buddhists say, a nice middle ground to enjoy time with a very funny person that came up with this stuff before COVID, but is still very, very relevant. |
| 00:33:23 | Eddie | Guest | Thank you, it’s been so funny where people have been, like—when it came out and it was during COVID and people were like, “Are you happy now? Your predictions came true.” Like. Yeah. Yeah. |
| 00:33:35 | Julie | Host | *[Disbelieving.]* “Are you happy now?!” Like! Do you know how happiness works? ‘Cause I don’t! But no. I’m not. |
| 00:33:41 | Eddie | Guest | Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, right! Right, right, right. And they were, like, “Peppitone, this is great for you! This pandemic is great for you! Like, you *[inaudible]*.” |
| 00:33:48 | Julie | Host | Yeah! You probably caused it! Did you cause it? |
| 00:33:51 | Eddie | Guest | *[Laughs.]* You’re right, that’s basically the implication. |
| 00:33:55 | Julie | Host | I believe that you did not. |
| 00:33:57 | Eddie | Guest | No, I don’t think I did. |
| 00:33:59 | Julie | Host | I don’t think it’s in your capability, honestly.*[Eddie agrees with a laugh.]**[Cackles.]* I can’t help but give you the business! Eddie Peppitone, the special’s called *For the Masses*. You’re one of the funniest people’s who’s ever lived, and when you said Don Rickles I was thinking that you’re up there with Don Rickles, Rodney Dangerfield, people that I like to say, “Even dogs would know are funny.”*[Eddie laughs.]*And you are absolutely in that category, my friend. Eddie Peppitone, thank you so much for coming on *Bullseye*. |
| 00:34:28 | Eddie | Guest | Hey! Thank you for having me. This was fun! |
| 00:34:31 | Jesse | Host | Eddie Peppitone, everyone! His new special, *For the Masses*, is typically great! You can stream it on Amazon Prime. You can also rent or buy it on pretty much any other platform, and you should definitely watch it. Eddie is one of the best in the business and a wonderful man. Thank you again to Julie Klausner, for conducting that interview with Eddie. Julie is the creator and star of the TV show *Difficult People*—a wonderful sitcom that you can watch on Hulu. She’s also the host of the comedy podcast *Double Threat*, along with my friend Tom Scharpling. They are both brilliantly funny and the show is fantastically funny. |
| 00:35:08 | Music | Transition | Relaxed music with a punchy drumbeat. |
| 00:35:11 | 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 nine-year-old daughter has decided to start freezing plastic spiders into ice cubes. Gotta remember the reason for the season.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 that wonderful band and their label, Memphis Industries, for letting us use their music on our show. You can also keep up with the show on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Just search for *Bullseye with Jesse Thorn*.And I think that’s it. Just remember: all great radio hosts have a signature sign off. |
| 00:36:01 | Promo | Promo | **Speaker**: *Bullseye with Jesse Thorn* is a production of [MaximumFun.org](http://www.maximumfun.org) and is distributed by NPR.*[Music fades out.]* |