

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.
00:00:12	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 guest this week is David Letterman. Dave is, of course, the longtime late-night talk show host—perhaps the most well known of them all: the <i>Late Show</i> , <i>Late Night</i> , the <i>Tonight Show</i> . He also had his own morning show for a long time. And before he was on national TV, Dave was a weatherman and local radio DJ in his hometown of Indianapolis, Indiana. I have to say that for years, when I have gotten interviewed, people have asked me the question, “Who would you most like to interview in the world?”
			And along with a few of my public radio colleagues—Ira Glass and Terry Gross and maybe the old play-by-play guy for the San Francisco Giants, Hank Greenwald—David Letterman is the broadcaster who led me into a career in broadcasting. He’s the funniest broadcaster ever. He revolutionized late-night television and comedy on network television. He is, in my opinion, an actual genius.
			In this interview, we talk about Dave’s early days breaking into show business, his time in Indiana and Los Angeles, and his ascent to the <i>Late Show</i> . We also discuss how his personal life intersected with his professional life. Letterman had multiple affairs with subordinates on shows he hosted. He’ll tell me how those relationships affected him, the people around him, and the workplaces. And of course, we’ll talk about Letterman’s latest project. It’s called <i>My Next Guest Needs No Introduction</i> . You can watch it on Netflix. In it, Letterman sits down for a long, informal chat with people who quite literally do not need an introduction: Barack Obama, Kanye West, Ellen DeGeneres, and Iron Man himself: Robert Downey Jr.
00:02:04	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:02:06	Clip	Clip	David Letterman (<i>My Next Guest Needs No Introduction</i>): I—when they—when that thing clamps onto your head, is that thing really there? Or is it not really there?
			Robert Downey Jr.: Excellent question.
			David: Does it—?
			<i>[The audience and David erupt with laughter.]</i>
			Robert: Initially, it was—everything was really there. They wanted to spend as little as they could on CG replacement. So, I remember this helmet went on and, like, there’d be a shot and I’d be in this whole suit and they’d say, “Alright, Robert. You’re gonna—it’s like you landed on the roof. So, when we say action, just go like that, like you just landed, and then start moving forward.”

[As Robert describes it, the sounds of winding gears and rumbling engines play in the background.]

So, I put this helmet on and it slammed closed and I couldn't see anything and then these LED lights went on. And it was like *Manchurian Candidate*. Like, I couldn't—I was absolutely blinded. By the time we were doing the last *Avengers*, they'd just be like, "Hey, Robert? Would you mind putting on that—" "Helmet? No!" "Yes?" "No. Put two dots here and then you can paint it in later."

[The audience chuckles with scattered applause.]

00:03:02	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:03:03	Jesse	Host	David Letterman, welcome to <i>Bullseye</i> . I'm so happy to have you on the show.
00:03:06	David Letterman	Guest	Great pleasure to be here. Thank you very much for your time, attention, and interest, Jesse.
00:03:11	Jesse	Host	I like that question that you asked Robert Downey Jr. It reminds me of—I did a show about interviewing where I interviewed professional interviewers. And I remember Larry King told me that the question that he was most proud of—or maybe was most emblematic of his interviewing style—was he had an airline pilot on his show and he asked him the question, "When you take off in your airplane, do you know that you're going to be able to land it?"

[David chuckles and agrees.]

00:03:42	David	Guest	And I was like, <i>[laughing]</i> "What a wonderful question!" I—yeah. I—come to think of it, I was expecting something trivial, but that really is the essence, isn't it?
00:03:49	Jesse	Host	Yeah! I mean, I feel like—I feel like, "Is that helmet a real helmet or not a real helmet?" is—you know, it's the same honest curiosity.
00:03:58	David	Guest	You know, this—sort of tangential to this, when I was a kid in Indianapolis and working at a television station, which was the—in those days—the ABC affiliate, and I had a—I had a show—I had several shows for one reason or another. But this one show, we would have people on that we thought would be interesting. And there was a story in the local newspaper, the <i>Indianapolis Star</i> , about two women who had been cab drivers in the city of Indianapolis for 20 years, 25 years, 30 years. And we thought, "Well. This—how can this not be great?"

And so, they came in and they were all mic'd up and I was in my suit and we were ready to go and I introduced them and I said, "So, in all the time that you guys—you women—have been driving a cab, has anything unusual ever happened?"

And there was a long pause. "Nope. Not really."

[Jesse laughs.]

00:05:09	Jesse	Host	"Okay. Thanks for stopping by." And there you have it! <i>[Laughing.]</i> I wanna talk about when you were a kid. And let's talk about when you were a <u>kid</u> , when you were a kid. Can you tell me a little bit about your parents and what kind of people they were?
----------	-------	------	---

00:05:22 David Guest Um, my mother was older than I was and so was my father. She and my father got married when she was, I think, maybe five, six years younger than he was. They were both from the same small town in Indiana, in southwestern Indiana. Which, in its day, was strip mining country. They got married, moved to Indianapolis, and my father got a job at a flower shop. Although, I think he—what he really wanted to do was get into show business, but when you're from a small town in southwestern Indiana, no one really knows how to get into show business or even if it's legal.

And she was very quiet. And the hard work—hardest working person I've known in my lifetime. And she had a regular schedule of working very, very hard and doing things that I believe, today, are probably not done regularly. Or, if they are done regularly, you call someone in to do it. Like stripping and waxing the floors. Like cleaning the wallpaper. Like changing the screens. Like painting the woodwork. Like rolling up the carpets and cleaning them. Like doing the laundry by hand. Like canning fruits and vegetables out of the garden. And it was endless. And it certainly made an impression on me. And one would think that because of this routine, this daily influence, that I would be hardworking. But god, I just—uh, couldn't keep up with her! It was really hard. And I would mow the lawn once a week and that was my nod to my mother's indefatigability. But it was a crazy—I mean, a very positive trait, but crazy to witness.

00:07:26 Jesse Host It's a very different kind of hardworking from the kind of hardworking that you were and are. But I don't want you to suggest *[laughs]* that you're not hardworking.

00:07:39 David Guest *[They chuckle.]*
Okay, I won't suggest that.

00:07:43 Jesse Host What led you to think that your dad maybe would've wanted to get into show business?

00:07:49 David Guest Well, I—he—first of all, he was funny. He had a very active, strong sense of humor. He would like—he would join organizations just so he could—like, there were church groups that he would join at the church we attended and he would become president of those church groups so he could be the center of attention. And he would always, you know, open with funny remarks. He was a wonderful musician. He could play the organ, the church organ. Just sit down and play it. And if anyone knows anything about these organs, it's like flying a helicopter. You're—everything is busy. And he could just sit down and—wow, go crazy. And my grandmother, knowing that he was this good as an organist, wrote to a radio station in Louisville, Kentucky—the call letters of which escape me now—but it was, and still is, AM clear-channel 50,000-watt radio station. And in those days, they did quite a lot of live programming which featured somebody who would play organ music interludes between programs or as part of the programs.

And unbeknownst to my father, my grandmother wrote a letter to the station in Louisville—WHAS, I think may be the station—asking if it would be possible for them to audition my father for a job there. And if that had happened, I think my father would've been so much happier in his life and our lives would have been quite a lot different. But it didn't happen. So, he then continued to find circumstances in his life where he could entertain. And the—I think the most

memorable one was when he discovered he was an alcoholic and joined Alcoholics Anonymous. Again, he became president of the local AA group and he would run the meetings and he would be at the center of attention and he would have funny stories. And so, it was always apparent that this is a need that he had and a skill that he was really good at.

And the gesture of my grandmother recognizing this and trying to get him an audition, I think, is a lovely—looking back on it now—I never really gave much thought to it when I learned of it, but it was a lovely, selfless gesture. And I’m—one wonders what would have happened.

00:10:26 Jesse Host
00:10:28 David Guest

Did you mom think your dad was funny?
No.

[They laugh.]

No. She didn’t. She, uh—my mother is taciturn and when she was being contemplative or just being herself, her face gave one the impression that she was upset or unhappy. And this had a huge effect on the kids. We would always say, “Mom! Are you alright? Is—”

“No, I’m fine. I’m just thinking.”

So, that—we had to learn to overcome that, because the visual read was that, “Oh my god, something—something’s wrong here. We gotta—” But it—routinely it was not, because when something was wrong, she would become more demonstrative.

00:11:14 Jesse Host
00:11:18 David Guest

She was a wonderful character on your show for many years. Did she like going on your show?
Oh yeah. She enjoyed it and she was the most liked thing about that show. Not surprisingly. But I will say—and this is true for anybody—the woman that we saw on the show was not the—was not the way my mother was when I was growing up. But, you know, I was not the way I was growing up when I was on the show either. So, that’s no diminishment of her. It’s just that we *[laughs]*—we got to see a different person. And it was great. You know. She—it was a high point for her at a stage of her life when you don’t get to do a lot of exciting things. And she found it very exciting and people liked her and knew of her and always asked about her. So, it was a good thing and certainly good for the show. I mean, she was great for the show.

00:12:12 Jesse Host

I like to—I am imagining right now how taciturn she must have been, in your childhood, to have been significantly more taciturn than she was on the air on your television show. *[Laughs and tries to start a sentence several times but trails off.]*

00:12:24 David Guest

[Laughs.] Well! You see, now, I’m glad you said that, because I didn’t want to say that, but you’re exactly—this is the dynamic I’m discussing. Yes. Absolutely.

00:12:38 Jesse Host
00:12:42 David Guest
00:12:45 Jesse Host
00:12:48 David Guest

How old were you when your father died?

I was 27.

That must have been immensely difficult.

Well, for anyone. You know, there’s no—I guess the circumstance where Dad is 100 and passes away in his sleep—I’ve not experienced that and I don’t know people who have, but you know,

the myth—medically, I don't know if it holds up as well, you know, "Died peacefully in his sleep." I wonder if that death in one's sleep isn't preceded by misery and agony in the subconscious. But we won't know. Certainly not gonna find out on this program. But I can remember getting the call in the middle of the night and knowing exactly what it was. My younger sister called and when my wife said, "Your sister's on the phone," I knew.

And I—you know, I drank my way through that. That's how I got through that. I just—my next-door neighbor had a quart of some Canadian whiskey, Canadian Club or whatever it was. And I just—that was my constant companion through everything. The worst of it is picking out the coffin. The casket. That's just—that's brutal. That's ugly. Unpleasant. But just—I was drunk the whole time. So, I managed it.

00:14:12	Jesse	Host	My—I lost my dad this year. And, um...
00:14:16	David	Guest	How old was he?
00:14:18	Jesse	Host	He was 76.
00:14:20	David	Guest	And what were the circumstances? If it's any of my business.
00:14:23	Jesse	Host	Uh, he had cancer. But he also—uh, he had progressive dementia. So, he had—he was present in the moment, but not much further than that by the time he passed away. So, in some ways I was, like, more scared of him going beyond that in his—in his dementia than passing away from the cancer. Like, sort of—
00:14:49	David	Guest	And the cancer is what killed him?
00:14:51	Jesse	Host	The cancer ultimately was what killed him, yeah.
00:14:53	David	Guest	Yeah. And how long had he suffered the dementia?
00:14:56	Jesse	Host	I mean, it had—you know, he had had—he had been— <i>[chuckles softly]</i> he was forgetful in his forties. You know. But probably five or seven years, it had gotten. You know. To the point where he would forget to make himself lunch after he went downstairs to make lunch and that kind of thing.
00:15:17	David	Guest	And that predated the cancer diagnosis?
00:15:20	Jesse	Host	Yeah. So, he was a very, um... he was a very convivial man. And that was one of the things that I immediately missed. Like, it wasn't just, you know, father/son intimacy, but I just missed... hanging out with him.

[David hums in affirmation.]

00:15:54	David	Guest	You know what I mean? And I wonder if you enjoyed spending time with your dad in that way and missed that piece of it? Well, it's—that's an interesting question. My father worked six days a week. So, we didn't really get a chance to hang out much. There was a vacation once a year for about a week and it would be a car trip to a convention for FTD—the Florist Telegraph Delivery. And that was—we didn't hang out so much. But I, you know, I loved him. And what I—when he died, uh, I went through a panic—maybe fueled by the liquor—but that I'd forgotten what he looked like. And that—that scared the crap out of me, because I thought, "Oh, now wait a minute. Here's a man I've known all my life and I'll never see again, and I can't remember what he looks like." And that was the deep troubling panic that befell me. So, maybe that's a form of actually missing him.
----------	-------	-------	--

You know, we had activities, but he just didn't have the time to, you know, spend with his kids.

00:17:01 Jesse Host I asked you whether your mom thought your dad was funny. Did your mom think you were funny?

00:17:06 David Guest Uh, I don't—I don't think so. Uh. Not many—no, I don't think so. I was—I used to get my mouth washed out with soap. So, in terms—if you put that in show business terms, that's kind of the ultimate heckler.

[Jesse chuckles.]

Uh, "Here, let me show you how unfunny I think you are. I'm gonna shove a bar of soap *[laughing]* in your mouth." So, I think that was, uh, no. I—I don't know, but... I don't know that she had to. I don't know that she needed to. She raised three kids. As far as I can remember, all of us had happy childhoods, with the exception of the bar of soap here and there. But it just—now it just seems like, "Well, what was that all about?" I mean, it certainly wasn't a deterrent. And it—it's not the most unpleasant thing a person can endure, but it—now, it just seems like, "Oh, come on!" *[Laughs.]* "What? Seriously, the bar of soap?" You know, it doesn't—it doesn't seem to have scarred me. But I don't know if she thought I was funny or not.

I can remember when she was on the show, if I would make an alleged joke it would be met with, *[patronizingly]* "Ohh, Daviid." Which led me to believe she maybe didn't get it or didn't like it. And then she'd come after me with a bar of soap and I'd say, "Good lord! I'm 40! Leave me alone."

00:18:44 Jesse Host We have more with David Letterman still to come. We found a recording of Letterman's radio reel from 1969 and we're going to make David Letterman listen to it. It's *Bullseye*, from MaximumFun.org and NPR.

00:18:58 Music Transition Synth-heavy, cheerful music.

00:18:59 Jesse Promo This message comes from NPR sponsor Smartwater.

Smartwater is for the curious drinkers—the ones who are always looking for ways to make things a little bit better. That's why Smartwater created two new ways to hydrate: Smartwater Alkaline with 9+pH, and Smartwater Antioxidant with added selenium. And now, you can order Smartwater by saying, "Alexa! Order Smartwater."

Smartwater: that's pretty smart!

[Music fades out.]

00:19:28 Promo Clip **Music:** Cheerful, upbeat music.

Rachel McElroy: Congratulations! You've won a ticket to attend an exclusive opportunity in a relaxing environment with *[breaking on a laugh]* two lovers.

Griffin McElroy: Wooow! Well, this sounds like a sort of proposition of sorts, but really it's an ad for our podcast, *Wonderful!* It's a show we do here on Maximum Fun where we talk about things that we like and things that we're into.

Rachel: I'm Rachel McElroy and you just heard Griffin McElroy and we are excited for you to join us as we talk about movies and music and books!

Griffin: Things like sneezing. Or... the idea of rain.

Rachel: *[Laughs.]* Can you get news or information you can use? I don't think so.

Griffin: Ab-so-lute-ly, you cannot! Because we're here to talk to you about pumpernickel bread.

Rachel: You can find new episodes on Wednesdays.

Griffin: *[Intensely.]* So catch—catch the waaave!

[Music ends.]

00:20:14 Jesse Host

Welcome back to *Bullseye*. I'm Jesse Thorn. This week, my guest is David Letterman. Letterman is, of course, a longtime talk show host. He hosted over 6000 episodes of *Late Night* and the *Late Show*. These days, he has another show. It's called *My Next Guest Needs No Introduction*. That show's third season just hit Netflix. Let's get back to my conversation with David Letterman.

You must have at some point had the idea you were going to go into show business, 'cause you went to—you know, you majored in broadcasting in college. Did you think you were gonna be a comic or an actor or a TV weatherman? Which was, you know, one of your first jobs. Did you think you were gonna host a TV show about the 4-H Club for the rest of your life? *[Laughing.]* Another one of your first jobs.

[David confirms.]

00:21:00 David Guest

Did you have a scheme?

No, I didn't have a scheme. I—it was so good. I was so lucky that because I couldn't—I didn't get very good grades, but I took a class in public speaking when I was a sophomore in high school, and you had to get up and give an ad-lib four or five minute introductory speech in front of the class. That was our first assignment. And I did that, and it was the only thing I can remember doing in school that seemed effortless. Everything else was difficult. And from that day, I thought to myself, "Okay. This problem is solved. You just have to find a place that'll pay you to do that."

And the only logical place seemed to be radio or TV. So, I studied radio and TV and then immediately started—I got a job at the same television station when I was still in college. So, that was—that was very fortunate. And I don't know how it works now. I don't know if it's easier or harder to get a job in radio or TV or showbusiness than it used to be. I just don't know. But I knew that at the time, me getting a job in show business or television was really easy. I got very lucky. My—a friend of mine, Jerry Norris—his brother Dick Norris worked at the television station. And they were looking for a summer announcer. And so, Dick said, "Well, have your friend Dave come down and audition."

			So, I went in just as kind of a hoot. And for—I don't know why, but they gave me the job and I worked there for three or four years, during and after college.
00:22:47	Jesse	Host	Dave, I'm sorry to do this to you, but we do have a clip of your reel from, I think, 1969? Your radio reel.
00:22:55	David	Guest	Okay, I'm sorry to do this to you, Jesse, but I'm getting chest pains. So, I'm gonna have to call the medics.
			<i>[Jesse chuckles.]</i>
00:23:05	Sound Effect	Transition	So, don't be alarmed. I'm leaving now. Music swells and fades.
00:23:06	Clip	Clip	David: This is Dave Letterman inviting you to blow off all the tensions from that first week of classes, this weekend at TeenCo—a mile east of Post Road on Pendleton Pike. Friday night, the action is with Yours Truly and the Irresistible Force. Move to it from 8:30 'til 12. Saturday night, Michael T. John Griffin joins the Brand X at TeenCo, and the action happens all over again. Remember, the place to blow off all that steam this weekend is TeenCo! A mile east of Post Road on Pendleton Pike. Friday night, from 8:30 'til 12, Yours Truly and the Irresistible Force. And Saturday night, same time—8:30 to 12—Michael T. John and the Brand X. The place is TeenCo, one mile east of Post Road on Pendleton Pike.
00:23:43	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:23:45	Jesse	Host	<i>[They chuckle.]</i>
00:23:48	David	Guest	That's at TeenCo, Dave. <i>[Giggles.]</i> I have no memory of that. That's—are you certain that's me?!
00:23:53	Jesse	Host	<i>[Laughs.]</i> It's a heck of an impression if it's not, Dave.
00:23:56	David	Guest	Oooh, that's—that's just crazy! Oh lord. But I'll tell you something, if I had stayed doing that the rest of my life, I probably would have been just as fulfilled as I have, having taken the other road.
00:24:12	Jesse	Host	Do you think that's true? I mean, I feel like, in reading about your life and career, there is a really big inflection point. Which is that you <u>have</u> a local television career going. You have a job that is, you know, reasonably locally prestigious. You know? A guy that appears on the local TV news is a—is a big star in anywhere but Los Angeles and New York. You know what I mean? And you're—whatever—26, 27, 28 years old. You left town! You packed it all up in a car and went to Los Angeles to become a standup comedian and try and host television programs.
00:24:56	David	Guest	Right. But, you know, had—if I had listened to that TeenCo spot, I don't know that I would've ever left. Because that was solid gold. Come on.
			<i>[They laugh.]</i>
00:25:09	Jesse	Host	Well, when you've got pipes like those, you're basically printing money.
00:25:13	David	Guest	What— <i>[laughs]</i> what the hell was TeenCo?! I mean— <i>[laughs]</i> honest to God. You know what happened? There's always <i>[struggles for the word]</i> You said flection, is that what you said?
00:25:24	Jesse	Host	Inflection, yeah.

00:25:25	David	Guest	<p>Inflection. That's—I heard a joke the other night about a guy who called a yoga place and was gonna sign up for yoga lessons. And the woman said, "Oh, that's great. We'd like to have you join one of our classes. May I ask, are you flexible?"</p> <p>And he said, "Well, I can't be there Tuesday."</p> <p><i>[Jesse chuckles.]</i></p> <p>Anyway. Um. Yeah. The—it was the <i>Tonight Show</i> that changed everything. Because you would see young men and women making their comedic debut on the <i>Tonight Show</i> and the next day or two, they would become huge, huge stars thanks to Johnny Carson. And I thought, "Oh! I wonder how you can do that?" And then I became aware of The Comedy Store on Sunset Boulevard. Which was a feeder system for comics to the <i>Tonight Show</i>. And once I found out how it was done, I thought, "Okay. Well, now it's just a matter of getting in line and seeing if you ever get your number called. You know?" As at a bakery.</p>
00:26:30	Jesse	Host	Did you have an act?
00:26:33	David	Guest	No. Of course not. Well, TeenCo! Geez.
			<i>[Jesse laughs.]</i>
			Did you—you never went to TeenCo?
			<i>[They laugh.]</i>
00:26:39	Jesse	Host	Well, I—it—one wonders—
00:26:41	David	Guest	I couldn't get <u>in</u> to TeenCo!
00:26:43	Jesse	Host	Did—I mean, if it's TeenCo, that means—
00:26:47	David	Guest	Andy Warhol in front of me in line, sure. <u>He</u> got into TeenCo!
			<i>[Wheezes with laughter.]</i> But TeenCo—so, you're not—there's no alcohol involved. So, what is going on at TeenCo, one wonders, by way of entertainment?
00:26:57	Jesse	Host	Cigarettes and <i>[censored]</i> , Dave.
00:27:00	David	Guest	Yeah, I guess. Uh, yeah. So, I thought maybe I would go out there and try and act, because they—The Comedy Store had beginner's night and you can go in and get onstage and try your two or three or four or five minutes. And that's what I did. And I started with that and kept building on that to—I got right up to the height of mediocrity, in terms of standup comedy. And then it took off like a rocket!
00:27:31	Jesse	Host	When did you get sober?
00:27:34	David	Guest	Uh, I think it was 1984? Eighty-three? Something like that. Yeah. Eighty-four. Summer of '84, I believe.
00:27:43	Jesse	Host	So, you were—you were very well into your career by the time you got clean.
00:27:47	David	Guest	Yeah. I started when I was a kid. Which is, you know—I think, in those days, it was— <i>[sighs]</i> the kind of era when there was a glass cut cigarette dish on the coffee table. So, anybody who came over and wanted to light up in the living room could just light up and there was always liquor being served. And so, I had my first taste—when I was a kid—right around Christmas. It was scotch and soda and I thought, "Wow. Not only is this tasty, it makes you feel much better than I felt a moment ago."

So, I put in—I certainly put in some hard years. And then I decided—I lost one show. The morning show got taken away. I don't know how long that was on. It seemed both quick and lengthy. I just don't know. But it came and went, nonetheless. So, when I got the second show, I thought, "Geez, if I screw this up, I'll be 0 and 2." So, I realized that drinking every night was an impediment—could be an encumbrance. And I would never forgive myself if I drank away this opportunity. So, I just—bang, zoom—quit.

00:29:00 Jesse Host Were you thinking about your dad?
00:29:02 David Guest Well, I knew I had a problem, because of him. But I didn't know that it had affected me the way it affected him. So—and several doctors had questioned me about why my liver was larger than it needed to be. And I would just say, "Oh, I—you know, it's from the factory. I got the big liver."

[Jesse chuckles.]

So, I knew I was in trouble one way or the other. You know, by the diagnosis or by the history of my family. But I just could not have lived with myself if I screwed up by being drunk and lost the show, which I think could have happened. But it didn't. And I—god, I forget, now, that I even ever drank, it's been so long.

00:29:51 Jesse Host Do you remember how it changed the way you lived your life? I mean, did you have to—were there things that you had to look at that you hadn't—that you had been avoiding looking at? Or parts of your life where you could do things that you weren't able to do, before?

00:30:06 David Guest Well, what I know now is that my entire life I found ways to self-medicate. And cigarettes and alcohol was certainly one. The other one was the television show. Because if the television show went well, I would feel good about myself. So, there's the medication of that. And I was lucky enough to do that for a long, long time. And if the television show didn't go well, I would—I would punish myself and be upset and embarrassed and embarrassed for the people who worked with me and embarrassed for the fact that I was on a American television network and then, the—but the good part was I got to try it again the next day.

So, you could overcome that. So, that was a fairly, you know, good version of self-medication. And in between I started running. And some people do it to the extreme and I was never extreme, but I—that was also self-medication. But again, a positive version of that.

00:31:09 Jesse Host Yeah. I get the impression that—from reading about you and your show and having talked to people who worked on your show—that your relationship to the show changed as you did it, over the—I mean, you were on—you did some version of your late-night talk show for almost 35 years.

[David confirms.]

But that over time, you sort of receded further and further from the production part of it. Were you aware that you were—you were doing that? I mean, was that something that you were—?

00:31:44 David Guest Uh, I—yeah, I think it was... *[sighs]* I think in my case it's just hard to spend that level of effort and attention to the same thing for that

length of time. And also, in the beginning, I was feeling my way through this and the last thing I wanted to do was have another show canceled. So, I didn't know whether it was safer to be more of a regular talk show or safer to be a different kind of talk show that might attract an audience that a usual, ordinary talk show might not. So, it was always a bit of push and pull. And then we had restrictions from the *Tonight Show*, which was useful. Because we pretty quickly realized that, "Well, maybe we would be better off doing an unusual kind of talk show."

And then I was so lucky, because the people involved from the beginning of that show—and the morning show—were so good that I could kind of recede and concentrate more on other aspects of the show. So, that continued to move along as the show moved along. And also, I think after a while you just—it takes quite a lot out of you, emotionally. It certainly did me. Emotionally and creatively and on and on. So, at that point I just started to rely on what the writers and producers and directors were doing more than actual daily input. You know. I would still have ideas, but the heavy lifting was done by the—you know, the writers and the other people in production.

00:33:28 Jesse Host

When I was very young, I worked on a radio show with a really wonderful, gifted host and he would walk onstage—it was a live, onstage in front of an audience show—he would, like, park his car three minutes before live air, sort of walk onstage and do the show. And I worked with the producer of the show [*chuckles*] and she would, you know, try and get him on the phone a couple times a week. And he wasn't rude; he just wanted to be in his own world. And at the time, I was like, "I don't understand how he could run this show, be the boss of this show, and never show up."

And then, years later, when I had my own shows and—you know—my own staff and business and stuff like that, I really felt the appeal of receding. Because I think I just, um... I wanted to take all the responsibility [*laughs*] and, like, have control over everything, but not by intervening. By, like, limiting the scope of my world.

[*David agrees.*]

And so, I just sit here in my home office, where I'm talking to you from now, rather than sit at my desk in the office-office, just because someone might come talk to me [*laughing*] if I was sitting in my desk at the office-office.

00:34:46 David Guest

Well, this is interesting, because I've never heard anybody else express this in their own circumstance the way I felt it in my circumstance. It does take a toll, somehow. I don't know—physically, emotionally, psychically. I can remember talking to Dennis Miller when he had a late-night talk show or a syndicated talk show or something, and we were talking about just this very thing. And he said, "Don't—" He said, "Let me ask you this." He said, "Every time I turn around, I'm standing there at the curtain ready to be introduced."

And I said, "Yep. That's the way that goes." Because time compresses and the next thing you know, it's Tuesday, and then the next thing you know it's Wednesday, and then the next thing

you know it's five years, 10 years, 20 years. And if you can gird yourself or—in your case—hide, it's—I think it's self-preservation. It's a factor of it.

00:35:42 Jesse Host I mean, I think there are people who embrace that. Who, like, enjoy that. I mean, there's—certainly, I know comics who like the fact that if they go up onstage and eat it, that they just go on up again that night, somewhere else, or the next night. That they like just being there in the moment and they like the fact that there's always another shot.

00:36:27 David Guest But to me, as somebody who hosts a weekly show that feels, like, all-consuming [*chuckles*], I feel like to do a daily television show for any length of time—much less 33 years—terrifies me. Because of how all-consuming it is.

00:36:59 Jesse Host Yeah, it's all-consuming and you don't realize it. Because, as you described somebody doing standup comedy, chances are that's the be all and end all of that industry. Whereas, if you're doing a television show, you've got hundreds of people interested in hundreds of different things. And of course, since you're lucky enough to have your name on the show, a lot of it comes by you and you think, "I'm not very good at this kind of thing."

00:37:33 David Guest Tell me who the guy was who parked his car three minutes before air. I just love that story.

00:37:34 Jesse Host Well, we're gonna have to take it—we're gonna have to take it, uh, out of the show. 'Cause I don't wanna embarrass him. But it was *West Coast Live* host, Sedge Thomson. And Sedge—I remember one week, the producer of the show—Kathi Goldmark—and this was—I was 23 or 24 years old, something like that? And not getting paid to work on the show. And we were at the Freight and Salvage, a club in Berkeley, and Sedge had gotten stuck in traffic and the theme music was playing and I was standing downstage center holding the microphone, 'cause Kathi had said, "You have to start the show if Sedge doesn't get here on time." [*Laughs.*]

00:37:39 David Guest This is great.

00:37:51 Jesse Host And while the theme music was playing, came in the stage—came through the stage door.

00:37:56 Crosstalk Guest Now, I'm interested why, if Sedge were to hear this, I don't know what about this would be unflattering to him. Because this just fills me for admiration for a guy I've never met.

00:38:05 Jesse Host [*Laughs.*] I'm glad! He's a very, very gifted host.

00:38:14 David Guest **David:** Yeah, I guess so!

00:38:18 Jesse Host **Jesse:** A really gifted host. Yeah.

David: I just love the idea that he's parking his car on his way to the theater. That's cool.

[*Jesse laughs.*]

00:38:05 Jesse Host So, especially I think in the mid/late-eighties, you had a reputation for being mean to guests.

00:38:14 David Guest [*Laughs.*] Yeah. That's right.

00:38:18 Jesse Host And I wondered if... you felt like you were picking on guests on purpose—if that was your intent—or if you were surprised that people reacted in that way?

00:38:35 David Guest Well, I know exactly what this is. Because the first time I hosted the *Tonight Show* and one of the guests—the first guest out, so this was my first ever behind the desk, behind Johnny’s desk, and the first guest comes out and it was—I think it was Jayne Meadows. I’m not sure. And before she even sat down, I said, “Oh! They must have had a sale on jewelry,” or something. Some stupid joke about—she was wearing big jewels.

And I got roasted for that. People thought, “Oh, he’s so mean! Why—? The woman”—and what it was I was so driven to the goal of letting people know, forcing people to know, that I was funny that it—later—seemed aggressive. Well, from the beginning seemed aggressive and therefore mean. And I’m well aware that I—yeah, that was a mistake.

I *[laughs]*—I didn’t—I wasn’t being mean, I just wanted to prove, “Yeah, what?” And I guess, “I’m funny!” So, I had to apologize to a lot of people. And again, if I were starting out I would—but again, if you’re starting out, all you wanted people to know is you’re funny. That’s all I had. That’s all I ever had, was I can—I can try to make people laugh. And I wasn’t about to waste time, I—I mean, I didn’t even wait ‘til the woman was seated in the chair before I made fun of her jewelry. Thank you. Yeah. We’ll be right back.

[They laugh.]

00:40:13 Jesse Host And that’s, like—that’s fear talking, right? You’re in front of an audience and...

00:40:16 David Guest That’s right. *[Chuckles.]* That’s exactly what it was.

00:40:19 Jesse Host You spent 33 years doing a daily show and the way you talk about it now makes me wonder if you would have made an entirely different choice, retrospectively.

00:40:34 David Guest Uh, in terms of what I did for a living? In terms of the length of the run? In terms of—?

00:40:40 Jesse Host Yeah, I mean I think you—I’m not suggesting that you wouldn’t have gone into show business or you wouldn’t have done comedy. But I wonder, the way you talk about going out and doing a TV show every day for that length of time, whether you feel like that might have been—even in part—a mistake?

00:40:59 David Guest Well, perhaps. But that’s all I could do. There’s nothing else I could do. I maybe could have written for a show, maybe. I don’t know. But I couldn’t—I can’t—I can’t do anything. I don’t have any—I mean, any time I’m asked to participate in a comedy presentation, like a sketch or something, I don’t—I feel—I don’t know. I can’t do it. I can’t act. I can’t sing. I can’t dance. All I can do is make fun of somebody and their jewelry. So, I’ve kind of gotten to the point where the best part of this for me was actual talking. And I don’t know when this happened, but it evolved where I—the fear of making people laugh diminished and the idea that a person that I don’t know, but who I admire... I can talk to. That became highly appealing.

And toward the end, the last ten years or so, we would be in editing, almost to airtime, trying to cut down the talk segments because I couldn’t stop talking to the—to whomever the guest was. So, that is a residue of the show. But it’s not so much different. I mean, honestly, I’m—I don’t know what else I can do. And ask my son, for

00:42:35	Jesse	Host	<p>heaven's sakes, I—<i>[laughs]</i> I do everything at about a C- level. And I guess that's good enough for a talk show.</p> <p>We'll finish up with David Letterman after a break. Stay with us. We have so much more to talk about with Dave. After the break, we answer the eternal question: How many Spider-Men can you fit into a Jamba Juice? And where did Dave get the idea to put them in there? Also, wizards. There were also some wizards. It's <i>Bullseye</i>, from MaximumFun.org and NPR.</p>
00:42:58	Music	Transition	Cheerful music interspersed with occasional cheers.
00:42:59	Jesse	Promo	<p>Support for this podcast, and the following message, come from TodayTix.</p> <p>With the TodayTix app, getting tickets to your favorite shows is a fast, easy process. This Cyber Monday use TodayTix as your go-to hub for everything from theater and arts to comedy and opera. Try TodayTix now by going to TodayTix.com/bullseye. And use promo code "bullseye" to get \$10 off your first purchase.</p>
00:43:26	Promo	Clip	<p><i>[Music fades out.]</i></p> <p>Music: Chiming, eerie music.</p> <p>Sidney Madden: Since the 1980s, hip-hop and America's prisons have grown side-by-side.</p> <p>Rodney Carmichael: And we're gonna investigate this connection to see how it lifts us up and holds us down.</p> <p>Speaker: Hip-hop is talking about what we live: trying to live the American dream, failing at the American dream—</p> <p>Sidney: I'm Sidney Madden.</p> <p>Rodney: I'm Rodney Carmichael. Listen now to the <i>Louder Than a Riot</i> podcast from NPR Music.</p> <p>Sidney: Where we chase the collision of rhyme and punishment in America.</p>
00:43:56	Jesse	Host	<p><i>[Music ends with the sound of blaring sirens and slamming cell doors.]</i></p> <p>It's <i>Bullseye</i>. I'm Jesse Thorn. If you're just joining us, my guest is David Letterman. For over 30 years, Dave was a late-night TV host. In this public radio host's opinion, the best who ever did it. These days his newest project is on Netflix. It's an interview show called <i>My Next Guest Needs No Introduction</i>. The third season just dropped. Let's get back into the interview.</p>
00:44:20	David	Guest	I wanna play a bit from the show, because we haven't—
00:44:23	Jesse	Host	<p>I hope it's the TeenCo spot!</p> <p><i>[Laughs.]</i> This is a bit that I cannot even begin to tell you how much of my mind is occupied by this bit at any given time. I think it probably ranges from like 2 to 28% of my—of my mental capacity is occupied by this bit from the <i>Late Show</i>, your CBS show that's called "How Many Spider-Mans Fit in a Jamba Juice?"</p>
			<i>[David affirms several times as Jesse continues.]</i>

And this is a static shot—so, you’ve got a locked-off, across the street shot of a Jamba Juice in Manhattan that has a big picture window. And you’re in the studio at your desk, with a—you know, walkie talkie or a telephone handset or something like that. And you’re sending guys in Spider-Man suits—a broad variety of people in Spider-Man suits, some Spider-Man-like in their physique, some less so—into the studio. And as we—as we’re about to listen in, you’ve just sent in three Spider-Men simultaneously, bringing it to a total of five Spider-Men in the Jamba Juice.

00:45:26 Sound Transition

Effect

Music swells and fades.

00:45:27 Clip

[The audience laughs and applauds intermittently throughout.]

David (Late Show): At five, we ran out of the red boots. Had to go to the—with the black boots for one of the Spider-Men.

Paul Shaffer: I did notice that.

David: Alright, let’s just let this simmer for a moment.

[The live band begins to play cheerful background music.]

David: I wonder if we could get them to mill around. I don’t know. Could you guys mill around a little bit, like you’re at a high school dance or something? Yeah. Just—that’s good. Kind of a meet and greet, say hi to everybody. “Hey, how’s it going? Good to have you here. Do you get a lot of Spider-Men in these places?”

[Jesse chuckles over the recording.]

David: “Yeah, and at these prices, you won’t get many more.”

Alright, send in five. Let’s just run it all the way up to ten.

00:46:06 Sound Transition

Effect

Music swells and fades.

00:46:07 Jesse Host

[Beside himself with laughter.] There’s a point where you run out of Spider-Men and start sending in wizards.

[They laugh.]

00:46:28 David Guest

Dave, do you have a feeling for how you, uh *[laughs]*—what the right kind of dumb thing to do on your show was?

Well, uh, that’s an excellent question, because there—in the world of dumb things, you would think there is no right thing to do. But this is a prime example of the right dumb thing to do. And again, it harkens to our discussion previous, which is: as you can see, I’m not doing anything here.

[Jesse laughs.]

This was not my idea. They told me what the idea was. All I have to do is make wiseass remarks and cue in people in costumes that may or may not be Spider-Men. And I don’t know what the outcome was—hoped for, whether it would be the police would come or—it’s—clearly, it’s a peaceful demonstration, but it is civil disobedience in a Jamba Juice.

[They chuckle.]

And—I don't know, but it was—it delights me, now, to have been part of that. When I—when I hear it, it's—yeah. And the thing I like about that is I think in those days you might not have seen much of that on television.

00:47:32 Jesse Host

[Laughs.] No, I think that was—that was pretty much the golden age of sending Spider-Men into juice restaurants on television.

[David agrees with a laugh.]

00:47:41 David Guest

They were doing that on *Mad About You*, at the time.

[Laughs.] But it, uh—again, one wonders. Because I was always a stickler and it was my way of saying no to many things. I said—I would say, to whomever, “Alright, we need a beginning! Alright. And we have a middle. What we don't seem to have here is an end.” And that usually would kill the bit. So, I wouldn't have to worry about extending myself. But this clearly has no end. But yet, it was endless fun for me. And we did it—I think the only time we really got in trouble was at tax time. It was H&R Block and we sent in—I'm not sure what we sent in, but it was the same joke. And the H&R Block people—I don't remember if it was H or R, but one of them got really worked up and came running out and was threatening people with the short-forms and we had to—had to call a halt to it.

00:48:33 Jesse Host

A lot of your show, especially in the early days, was built around kind of odd symbols of midcentury camp—things like canned hams—and I think you had a reputation at the time for being—for being some kind of *enfant terrible*. Like, you were—like you were dismissing all that stuff, like you were contemptuous of all that stuff. And I kind of wonder if it wasn't maybe a little bit the other way around. Like, you really love a watermelon exploding or a canned ham. And I wonder, like, what are your favorite corny things?

00:49:13 David Guest

Well, the canned ham—this is left over from adolescence. I can remember, as a—as a child, thinking it was odd that here was this can full of meat. And then when you could get pretty much a 5, 10, 20-pound ham in a can—I don't know. I just thought, “Is this the best delivery version of pork?” And it amused me. I can remember we would give them out before—in the audience warmup. And I took a question one night from a guy and he said, “You know, those canned hams?”

And I said, “Yes, sir.”

And he said, “I was here about four years ago and you gave me a canned ham.”

And I said, “Well, congratulations. You're, you know, one of the lucky few.”

And he said—and he said, “I went home, and I put it on my mantle in the family room and about two years later, the thing exploded.”

[They chuckle.]

I said, “Hey, dumbass, I think you're supposed to refrigerate those.”

00:50:20	Jesse	Host	<i>[Laughing.]</i> But I mean, you did 10,000 “Will It Float”s. I was <u>never</u> disappointed to see “Will It Float” on the <i>Late Show</i> .
00:50:27	David	Guest	Well, that—again, that’s me being lazy. I mean, rather than come up with a new idea—
00:50:31	Jesse	Host	<i>[Interrupting.]</i> But hold on, Dave. But—that’s true. I’m not gonna—I’ll grant you that <i>[laughs]</i> it was a well-used runner. Okay?
			<i>[David agrees.]</i>
			But there is something—there was something about your genuine glee at the question of whether something would float that is—that feels like something that could be on—that, like, Soupy Sales could be hosting or something.
00:50:54	David	Guest	Well, that’s flattery. But I like—I just, as an idea—as an experiment in physics, displacement, you know, it seemed like <i>[sighs]</i> yeah. That is infinitely refillable. It just—well, let’s see if it floats. Let’s see if this floats. Let’s see if that floats. And often, uh, surprising results. So, there you go! You could have learned something if you were paying attention. So, I appreciate that—the vote of support for “Will It Float.”
00:51:26	Jesse	Host	One of my favorite parts in Jason Zinoman’s biography of you is him basically quoting a series—this is how I remember it, anyway—him basically quoting a series of writers. And you know the writers on your show that he talked to were progressively further from frequent direct interaction with you, over the years of the show. And you were a more famous person and more, you know, legendary comedy figure—type dude. And they were a little scared of you by the end. But, like, it’s clear that the one thing that they all shared was immense pride in thinking of a joke—not only that you would approve of, not just that you would like the perfect joke, but that they had thought of a joke that had a word in it that they thought you would enjoy saying.
			<i>[They chuckle.]</i>
00:52:21	David	Guest	I like that.
00:52:22	Jesse	Host	And they would like—they would be—that was what gave them—that was how they knew that Daddy loved them was—
			<i>[David laughs and then makes an “Awkward!” noise.]</i>
			—was when they—was when they were like, “Oh, he’s gonna enjoy saying ‘synecdoche’” or whatever it is.
00:52:36	David	Guest	Yeah. Yeah. Well, good. I’m glad that they found <u>some</u> enjoyment out of those years.
00:52:44	Jesse	Host	<i>[Laughs.]</i> Um. Did you think, later, about whether they were having enjoyment out of those years?
00:52:56	David	Guest	Um. Here was what I thought would work: to try and be generous in ways to indicate my pleasure with their service—and that’s... that was my philosophy. And now I realize that, while that was a philosophy, I don’t know that it conveyed the meaning I hoped it would and perhaps more personal interaction would have. But this is—when I talk about—when I left the show, I realized I had been there too long. And I now know so many more things about myself, so many more things about people and the world that I would, were I to be 30 again and given a show with that information, I would run it completely differently. And one of the first things I would do would

be term limits. I... I don't think you—you know, if you can't get it said in the first five or six years of a TV show, it's not gonna happen in 30 years.

00:54:43 Jesse Host But it becomes, I guess, like a daily newspaper where, you know, there are enough things coming in that one can comment on or make fun of. But there's no reason for these things to last that long. Certainly not in my case. In Johnny's case, I see clips of him from year two or three to the last year and it's the same. It's just so consistent, so effortless, not trying hard, not breaking a sweat, that it was... easy. Easy to watch and hard to miss, when it was gone. I mean, I'll say that I also think for a viewer—which is the position I was in—there is a lot of value to—in a daily show, like yours, to visiting your friend. You were certainly my television friend. You know what I mean? Like, I—the length of that relationship, even if you're not necessarily saying something, is meaningful and I think, especially in the later years of your show, often the best segments were—you know—you turning to Paul Shaffer and saying a little funny thing that happened to you. Which were the ones that were, you know, closest to being social rather than having something to say.

[David affirms.]

00:55:29 David Guest So, it's kind of a different thing. But... Yeah, it—that, um... there's two pieces to that, one of which is—I have to credit Regis Philbin, who was to me just the best at what he did. And he began every day of his life on television talking about how Joy burned the bacon, or he couldn't find his loafers. And because it was Regis and you just automatically loved him, that was—that was great. So, I remember thinking, "I wonder if I could do that? I wonder if I could emulate that." That was the A. And the B of it was Paul Shaffer, who I grew to really love over the years, because he and I were out there every night. Good and bad. Night after night after night. I don't know how many shows, but it was always Paul and myself. And I felt like Paul and I were in the trench together. And nobody else had the same expectation or the same reaction to that experience besides myself and Paul.

00:57:08 Jesse Host So, uh, I felt very comfortable talking to Paul about it, but the initial thought of doing that—and then I got to the point where your ego overwhelms you and you think, "Oh, well, this'll be so much funnier than anything else I can do." Maybe that's true one out of 100, but typically not that true. But on the other hand, I don't know that Regis was the funniest man on television, but he was certainly the guy you wanted to watch.

00:57:08 Jesse Host So, you had a lot of romantic relationships with people who worked on your show. And you know, you obviously dealt with that on the air late in the show's run. You've dealt with it since and talked a lot about your regrets in that area. One of the things that, at the time on the air you didn't talk a lot about was—because you were understandably focused on the effect that this had on your family—was the effect that it had on your workplace. Have you changed how you see—like, well, I guess two questions. One is, did you realize the effect it was having on your workplace when it was happening in the, you know, eighties or nineties or whenever? And

00:58:07	David	Guest	<p>did your thoughts about how it was affecting your workplace—or, have they changed, since?</p> <p>Well, I have to say that a lot of my life was led in ignorance. And it wasn't 'til after the fact that I realized how damaging that situation was. And the... absolutely—like I said, I've changed quite a few things about how I feel and think and—about other people and... relationships with them and what's a positive way to... live one's life, that I never gave much thought to. I was always more concerned with the hour between 5:30 and 6:30 or 4:30 and 5:30. Whatever it was. That's—that was all-consuming and all-consuming to—I think, things that needed attention from me didn't get the right kind of attention. So, I have learned from that. I realize I was making mistakes and I've tried to make amends.</p>
00:59:23	Jesse	Host	What's it like to live with those feelings of remorse?
00:59:31	David	Guest	Well. I talk to people and they have said to me, "You can't change it. This all happened. You're responsible." All anyone can do is apologize and do what mending is required or needed or at least attempt it—to mend. And don't do that again. And as clumsy as that sounds, that's the basis for how I'm looking at life now.
01:00:08	Jesse	Host	Dave, I've taken too much of your time, but thank you very, very much.
01:00:10	David	Guest	Just please, can we hear it one more time? Seriously.
			<i>[Jesse laughs.]</i>
			<i>[Flatly.]</i> Please. Let me hear it. Please.
01:00:15	Jesse	Host	<i>[Laughing.]</i> Keeevin! We need to hear about TeenCooooo!
01:00:19	David	Guest	Just once more.
01:00:20	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
01:00:21	Clip	Clip	<i>[David and Jesse laugh breathlessly over the clip on and off as it goes on.]</i>
			David: This is Dave Letterman inviting you to blow off all the tensions from that first week of classes, this weekend at TeenCo—a mile east of Post Road on Pendleton Pike. Friday night, the action is with Yours Truly and the Irresistible Force. Move to it from 8:30 'til 12. Saturday night, Michael T. John Griffin joins the Brand X at TeenCo, and the action happens all over again. Remember, the place to blow off all that steam this weekend is TeenCo! A mile east of Post Road on Pendleton Pike. Friday night, from 8:30 'til 12, Yours Truly and the Irresistible Force. And Saturday night, same time—8:30 to 12—Michael T. John and the Brand X. The place is TeenCo, one mile east of Post Road on Pendleton Pike.
01:00:58	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
01:00:59	David	Guest	Yeah, I think the key word there is "action."
			<i>[They laugh.]</i>
01:01:09	Jesse	Host	Thank you, Kevin! Well, Dave, I'm very grateful that you took this time to talk to me. It's a real dream for me to get to talk to you. I wouldn't be in this job if it—if it weren't for your work.
01:01:17	David	Guest	It's very kind of you, Jesse. And I've enjoyed this immensely. And again, thank you for your interest and thank you for the time.

01:01:26	Jesse	Host	David Letterman. All three seasons of <i>My Next Guest Needs No Introduction</i> are streaming now, on Netflix. There are some really great interviews there. Go check it out.
01:01:36	Music	Transition	Funky, thumpy music.
01:01:38	Jesse	Host	That's it for another episode of <i>Bullseye</i> . <i>Bullseye</i> is created out of the homes of me and the staff of Maximum Fun, in and around greater Los Angeles, California—where, here in my house, my youngest son, Frankie, wanted a second beverage after his evening beverage. My wife did not want to give it to him, because he does not wear a diaper to bed. And, uh, he said to my wife—and this is a direct quote—“A body <u>needs</u> two dinks. That's science.”

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 and Kristen Bennett. Our interstitial music is by Dan Wally, also known as DJW. Our theme song is by The Go! Team. Thanks very much to them and their label, Memphis Industries, for sharing it. Our special thanks this week to Tom Keaney, Letterman's executive producer, who helped facilitate this interview. We're very grateful to Tom for making that happen. Extra special thanks to two people in my life: my friend, Sedge Tomson, my old boss. The host of *West Coast Live*. A truly gifted radio host and a kind and generous boss. And I hope that you weren't embarrassed by that anecdote. And also, in the interest of talking about mental health, how about a thank you to my therapist, Dr. Munson. She suggested one of the questions in this week's episode, because she is a huge fan of David Letterman.

If you wanna hear the latest about what we are up to on *Bullseye*, you can keep up with the show on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. We post all of our interviews there. And I think that's about it. Just remember: all great radio hosts have a signature sign off.

01:03:25	Promo	Promo	Speaker: <i>Bullseye with Jesse Thorn</i> is a production of MaximumFun.org and is distributed by NPR.
----------	-------	-------	---

[Music fades out.]