

00:00:00	Music	Transition	Gentle, trilling music with a steady drumbeat plays under the dialogue.
00:00:01	Promo	Promo	<b>Speaker:</b> <i>Bullseye with Jesse Thorn</i> is a production of <a href="http://MaximumFun.org">MaximumFun.org</a> 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. A fast, upbeat, peppy song. Music plays as Jesse speaks, then fades out.
00:00:19	Jesse Thorn	Host	It’s <i>Bullseye</i> . I’m Jesse Thorn. Look, the reality is this: baking a cake is hard, especially the kind of fancy cake that goes on television. Exhibit A: <i>The Great British Bake Off</i> on Netflix. A reality competition show that contestants spend years preparing for. If something is off about your cake, even the slightest bit off—maybe a little too much lemon or cardamom or maybe your mirror glaze never set right—you’re gonna go home. But then there’s exhibit B: <i>Nailed It</i> , also on Netflix. <i>Nailed It</i> takes the same basic premise—bring people together in a big kitchen, have them make a big, pretty cake. Only none of the people really <i>[chuckling]</i> know anything about baking or cooking. And instead of four hours, they give them 90 minutes. So. What could possibly go wrong?

The answer, of course, is everything. Sad, droopy cupcakes that are barely baked, burnt fondant monstrosities, ingredients materializing that were never in the recipe. *Nailed It* is a celebration of failure. It’s a warmhearted ode to, “Well, at least you tried your best and that’s good enough.” The baked goods are never pretty. The tone is never mean. And the show is always very, very funny. Nicole Byer is *Nailed It*’s host. She’s great at it. So great that she was nominated for an Emmy last year. She’s now also hosting another show, *Wipeout* on TBS, alongside the former wrestler, John Cena. She also hosts four podcasts! In short, Nicole Byer is busy.

Interviewing Byer for us is the one and only Tre’veil Anderson. They’re a veteran entertainment writer and co-host of our podcast *FANTI*. Before we kick things off, let’s hear a clip from *Nailed It*. In the latest season of the show, there’s a twist. The contestants are working in pairs, which—it will not surprise you to learn—does not make things any prettier. Like here. Nicole, her co-host Jacques Torres, and guest judge A\$AP Ferg are reviewing what is supposed to be a cereal bowl cake.

00:02:39	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:02:40	Clip	Clip	<b>Music:</b> Bright, suspenseful music.

**Nicole Byer (*Nailed It*):** Alright! Logan and Caitlynn! Let’s remember the cereal bowl cake you were trying to make and let’s see what you did!

*[Drumroll.]*

**Logan and Caitlynn:** *[Sheepishly.]* Nailed iiiit.

**Nicole:** NOOOOO!

*[Jacque and A\$AP Ferg laugh. A cartoonish, sad trombone sound plays.]*

**Nicole:** Oh god!

*[The music turns melancholy.]*

**A\$AP Ferg:** This cake has me stressed out.

**Nicole:** *[Laughs.]* Nooo, it looks so saaaaad! Can you spin it around?

**Ferg:** Damn.

**Logan:** Look at his shoes, though. Look at his shoes.

**Nicole:** I don't know why you want me to look at anything!

*[Everyone laughs helplessly.]*

**Nicole:** Ohhh, lord. I'm tiiired.

**Jacques:** It looks like a little animal that's just dying on the side of the streets.

**Nicole:** Oh looord, oh noooo. You know, I will find a positive. I like the lips. They're very juicy.

**Logan:** *[Laughs.]* Thank you.

**Nicole:** You're welcome.  
Music swells and fades.

00:03:21 Sound Effect Transition

00:03:22 Tre'vell Anderson Host Nicole Byer, welcome to *Bullseye!* How are you?

00:03:27 Nicole Byer Guest I'm great. How are you?

00:03:30 Tre'vell Host I'm doing alright! You know. Still in this parallelogram, so. You know.

00:03:34 Nicole Guest Yeeeeeah. It's the pandemmy that won't end! It's delightful and I love it.

00:03:40 Tre'vell Host *[Laughs.]* So, I wanna start our conversation today just by letting everyone who's listening know that this will be a wide-ranging conversation. We're gonna talk about *Nailed It*. We're gonna talk about *Wipeout*. We're gonna talk about some other things. But it's all mainly because you are super-busy, and you have so much going on. The success is just—I feel it emanating from the screen right now.

*[Nicole thanks them.]*

As we talk to each other. I wanna start by asking you how does it feel to be in this really, like—I would call it a weird moment, where you have all of this success happening, but yet we're all still stuck at home navigating this pandemic?

00:04:18 Nicole Guest It is very strange to have things happen while you can't, like, go out and celebrate. Like, I got my first Emmy nomination last year and my roommate, John Milhiser—who's a comedian; he's so funny. I

love him so much. But he made a step-and-repeat for me, in my backyard, so it was just like—

*[Tre'vell "aw"s.]*

It kind of takes the wind out of it, but then it's just like people step up in your life and do some really amazing things. So, honestly, having success but not being able to, like, celebrate it publicly has been okay 'cause I'm surrounded by, like, my chosen family and they're very, very, very good to me.

00:04:57 Tre'vell Host

I love that. Now, we should say you got that Emmy nomination for being the host of *Nailed It*. For the folks who, for whatever reason, haven't stumbled on *Nailed It* as they're binging on Netflix, could you give us just, like, a really quick rundown of what is going on on this show?

00:05:16 Nicole Guest

Sure! Um, I guess the elevator pitch would be they're Pinterest fails! We ask people to recreate these delicate, delightful, delectable confections, but they're not professional bakers so chaos ensues and we're gonna cast some kooky characters. Some of the contestants are just so funny.

*[Tre'vell chuckles.]*

But yeah, it's just like baking disasters.

00:05:40 Tre'vell Host

And this season—which is currently out on Netflix right now—it's got a new subtitle than previous seasons called, "Double Trouble". So, it's slightly different. You all—instead of the contestants being individuals, they're in pairs.

*[Nicole confirms.]*

So, it's like a mother and a daughter or brothers or something like that. I just need to know, did having a pair of people making these confections improve what they were actually delivering to you all?

00:06:07 Nicole Guest

Yes and no. Ummm.

*[Tre'vell laughs.]*

For the most part, things—'cause, like, we had to do things differently because of COVID and those protocols. But yeah, we tasted some, like, better tasting things, but still, some truly wild things.

00:06:26 Tre'vell Host

*[Laughs.]* I love this face you give me as you say, "truly wild things".

*[Nicole laughs.]*

Because anyone who watches knows that, like, while the contestants are given, you know, recipes—right—to follow, the recipes aren't necessarily super-exact. Right? It does have some room for people to—let's just say improvise a little.

00:06:45 Nicole Guest

I'm not 100% sure. I don't—I'm not in culinary, so I don't really go over that stuff, but I think they get a recipe and then things like "vanilla extract" or, like, "mint flavoring". It's like, "However much you think!" And then I don't think we tell you how to assemble it.

00:07:01 Tre'vell Host

Oh fun! So, y'all are really setting them up to fail. Although, I will say, I have seen some contestants who do fairly decent jobs. And

00:07:17 Nicole Guest I'm always surprised 'cause I'm like, "I don't think I would succeed at that."  
Well, I think if you're a competitive person—I'm a very competitive person so, like, you just look at it and then you're like, "Okay. What do I actually have to do?" And if you can compartmentalize that and only do the task at hand, I think you'd do pretty good.

00:07:34 Tre'vell Host Yeah, I always send good energy to every episode that I watch. I'm just like, "I hope somebody gives me something that is remotely reflective of what they're supposed to be recreating." But I wanna take us back to the beginning, to before the first season. How did this even—hosting opportunity for *Nailed It* come to you?

00:07:54 Nicole Guest Um, I got really, really, really *[censored]* lucky.

*[Tre'vell laughs.]*

A lot of times, you have to go through a lot of auditioning, but I believe someone at the production company, which is called Magical Elves, I think they saw me do standup somewhere and then they brought me in for a meeting, pitched me the idea, and they were like, "We really want a host who kind of teeters on pointing out the silliness and the wildness of it, but also not an *[censored]*." And I don't think my comedy is mean, per se. I mean, I can roast you if like you interrupt me or whatever. Like, I can do it!

*[Tre'vell laughs.]*

00:08:37 Tre'vell Host But like, it's not what I'm getting out of bed for. *[Chuckles.]* So, yeah. It just—we kind of just gelled and then kind of snowballed from there.  
I was hoping you would reveal to the world that you are like this—you know—private, amazing baker at home that no one knows about.

*[Nicole denies it.]*

00:08:53 Nicole Guest Are you? Are you deep in the kitchen? Are you making three-tier cakes and such?  
No. I'll empty the dishwasher and have to ask my roommate like, "Where does this go?"

*[Tre'vell laughs.]*

00:09:03 Tre'vell Host I don't—I'm not a—I'm not in the kitchen. It's not for me.  
And we should say that your—one of the judges on the show is the legendary Jacques Torres. Which, for me—for those who aren't familiar, I'm one of those folks who used to watch, like, Food Network shows back in the day. And Jacques had a chocolate show that he would do.

*[Nicole confirms.]*

And so, I've long been a fan of him when I thought I was going to be a chef and then my mom was like, "I'm not paying for you to go to culinary school. Don't do that."

*[Nicole laughs.]*

00:09:36 Nicole Guest How is it—your relationship with him and going through this process with him?  
It's been really incredible. He is just a treat of a human being. He's so nice. He's so kind. He loves teaching, so when I genuinely don't know something, he's happy to show me or teach me what it is. He cooks for me when he's in town. He takes care of me. He's like a daaad! But also, he, like, wants to learn how to tell jokes and he's pretty—he likes dirty jokes. Like, he loves a raunchy joke. We—like, almost immediately start—like, we got along really quick. Honestly, I have nothing bad to say about him. Like, literally—if anything, he's too nice. And I'm like, "No, Jacques, you have to be mean sometimes!"

00:10:19 Tre'vell Host *[They laugh.]*  
It's interesting, 'cause I think you mentioned earlier just kind of your comedy style and what the production company was looking for in terms of somebody who could, like—you know—point out the foolishness that someone's created but not necessarily be mean about it.  
*[Nicole agrees.]*  
And I think that the pair of you two together, and then whatever third judge that you all have there, I'm always interested to figure out how you find something to compliment.  
*[Nicole laughs.]*

00:10:50 Nicole Guest Whether it's the color or *[chuckles]*—  
Weeell, it's because somebody took time to make it. It's like when someone gives you a gift that you don't want, you're not gonna be like, "This is *[censored]*. I don't *[censored]* want this. Get out of my house." You go, "Oh my god! Thank you so much! I... I like this part of the gift!" Just so you—just—I don't know! You don't want someone to like leave your house feeling like *[censored]*. I don't want people to leave the studio feeling like *[censored]*. So, like, when somebody looks like they're about to cry or something, it's like, "Oh okay, the jokes have to end." And we have to, like—you know. Everyone—*[chuckles]* I guess boomers are just like, *[nasally]* "Everyone gets a trophy in your generation!"  
I'm like, "Yeeeah, but not really—" It's 'cause, like, I don't know, there's something about trying.

00:11:28 Tre'vell Host Yeah, and it takes courage to try! And I think, for me, to sign up for a TV show when you know that your final product you create is probably not going to be the accurate replica, I feel like you should be rewarded for that! Like, people are signing up to entertain us and the least you can do is say, "Thank you for, you know, getting the right red color for whatever you were supposed to make." Or something like that.  
You mentioned that you were nominated for the Emmy for Outstanding Host of a Reality or Competition Program last year, becoming the first Black woman ever nominated in that category. So, shoutout to you. I'm wondering if the last year—after being the

00:12:18 Nicole Guest Emmy-nominated Nicole Byer—has changed you. Has your head gotten bigger?  
No. Why would it? It's just a nomination.

*[Tre'vell laughs.]*

*[Theatrically wistful.]* I didn't win. I don't have a trophy. *[Returning to normal.]* No! It's just—I think it just—it's validating, I think, when you're nominated, when people recognize that you put in a lot of work and that you try hard to make the show funny and—yeah. It was—it was truly just validating. It was just nice. *[Chuckles.]* Like people say, *[mockingly]* “It's an honor to be nominated.”

And you're like, “That's *[censored].*” It's not *[censored]*. It's like that's something that's always with me, that somebody thought that my work was good enough to be nominated for a prestigious award with other—like, being nominated with RuPaul? Like, what the *[censored]*?! Like—you know? It's like *[laughs]*—it's a dream come true! It's like—sometimes you do a lot of work, especially in the beginning of your career, and say—like, I performed at the Upright Citizens Brigade Theater, in New York and LA, and you're just doing show after show after show in a basement and you're like, “Am I performing in a void? Is anyone seeing me? Is any traction happening?”

And so, then when someone finally goes, “Yeah, traction's happening. Like, we like you! Here's an Emmy nomination!”

You're like, “Oh! *[Chuckles.]* So that—all that work was not for nothing.”

00:13:27 Tre'vell Host Yeah. Well, how would you—for people who haven't been following you and following your career, like, how would you describe your journey to this point, as a comedian?

00:13:38 Nicole Guest I guess my journey as comedian... I would say it's been—I mean, not like a long-long time, but I've been working for a while. I decided in 2008-ish to pursue comedy and take improv classes. So, 2008 to 2021. That's a long time.

00:14:00 Tre'vell Host Speaking of comedy, comedians I feel like have been deeply impacted over the last year, not being able to tour. So many folks—I've seen more and more, you know, basically Zoom comedy shows popping up to give folks a chance. What has that been like for you as somebody—I know prior to the pandemic you were always touring, I feel like.

*[Nicole hums in agreement.]*

00:14:27 Nicole Guest You were always going somewhere. In what ways do you think that the pandemic has impacted your comedy?  
I mean, the pandemic has impacted every single person who does live performance. Comedians, drag queens, musicians, the people who work at those venues, the people at the air—like, it's just—it's sooo many *[censored]* people who've been affected by it and it's so lovely that our government's like, “We're not gonna do anything to help you!”

*[Tre'vell chuckles.]*

But I'm lucky that I have podcasts. So, like, I have other ways to do comedy and whatnot. But yeah, it's truly been—I haven't done an hour of comedy in a year. So, it's like when states are opening back up and it's like, "Okay, time to get back on the road." I'm like, "Wait, do I feel okay actually charging people to watch me—" Not learn how to do standup again, but get into the rhythm of it? I did a show—it's Wednesday now, I did a show over the weekend and my first set—I was doing, like, 15 minutes. My first set I was like, "Oooh booo, this is a little..." Not rough, but like, "Oooh, what comes next? Yikes! I don't know!" And then the second set I was much more comfortable and, like, in the material. So, it just—it's—yeah, it's hard. It's like—I don't know. I'm sure musicians get rusty. Everyone's rusty.

00:15:36 Tre'vell Host

I love that—you mentioned earlier that for *Nailed It*, part—I guess this season was done partly in quarantine. Is that—is that right? Or in the last year or so?

*[Nicole confirms.]*

How was that—how was it different for you, this go-around than, say, the previous seasons?

00:15:53 Nicole Guest

Weeell, I didn't go near the contestants. There was six—we were six feet apart. I pitched—I was like, "Yo. Lemme get in a hamster ball so I can talk to the contestants." And that did not happen. Then I was like, "Yo. Lemme come out of the ceiling, six feet away, and talk to them in a shield." And they were like, "No." And I was like, "Okay." But *[laughs]* it's hard to come up with funny, creative things when you're in the midst of a production and you have to do, you know, a ton of COVID testing and COVID protocols and make sure everything's clean and handwashing stations. You know? Dressed in all your PPE. It's nerve-wracking and a little *[chuckle]*—it's tough! It was tough. And then, like, I interact with Wes and the camera operators and that's hard to do in a mask. So, yeah. It was just—it was a different experience for me. Very, very different.

00:16:51 Tre'vell Host

Mm-hm. I—yeah, I will say—having watched some of the episodes of *Nailed It*—that it doesn't—it doesn't feel any different than previous seasons. Like, it's still funny. It's still engaging. And I think what you all were able to do, even with the distance and the social distancing and all of that, it still—it still is that good, easy viewing, something you can throw on TV and just recognize hours later that you've been watching *Nailed It* for five hours.

*[They chuckle.]*

And it's—and it's really good. So, kudos to you all for still, I think, delivering something despite the foolishness we've all been dealing with.

*[Nicole thanks them.]*

I wanna ask about Wes, as one of your people you interact with on the show. Those are some of my favorite moments. Could you tell the people a little bit about who Wes is, if they're not watching *Nailed It*, and the relationship that kind of unfolds throughout the episodes?

00:17:52	Nicole	Guest	<p>Sure. Wes is the 1st AD, so he's the assistant director. The director and EPs—the executive producers—are all in Video Village. That's where everyone's watching the monitors and watching everything happen. So they're pretty far away from me, so they can't give me direction from there. So, Wes is the one who's directing me essentially. So Wes is, like, in charge. And I guess it was the first episode, we hadn't fully figured out who was bringing out the trophy, if the trophy was just gonna appear, and then one of the EPs was like, "Wes will bring it out." And then I was like, <i>[chuckling]</i> since he is the AD, he's the one who's like, "We're rolling. Go for it." So, he wasn't there to tell me to go for it. So, I was like, "Go for it? Like go?"</p> <p><i>[Tre'vell chuckles.]</i></p> <p>And I wear an earpiece, and nobody was answering me, so I was just like, <i>[calling out]</i> "Whes?" And then it's now become, like, a running gag. I call for him and he comes out with the trophy and then, I don't know. I like to push the envelope. I like to just see how much can I do? What—like, "We have PAs. I want lasagna."</p> <p><i>[They laugh.]</i></p> <p>So, then it seems like Wes is, like, going to run me errands and stuff. Honestly, I categorize our relationship as, like, I am the little sister he never asked for.</p>
00:19:05	Tre'vell	Host	<p><i>[Laughs.]</i> Before we kind of switch gears and talk about one of your other projects, I did wanna ask. Some of the stuff that the folks create on <i>Nailed It</i> does not look appealing, does not look appetizing, and yet I feel like every single thing I see you all taste—even if it's just like a little nibble—have you ever said, "Oh, I'm not eating that. I saw how you made it."</p>
00:19:35	Nicole	Guest	<p>Nooo. Um. Because... there's producers on the floor watching them, so everything seemed pretty safe in the COVID era. Also, it's being heated up and I feel like the one consistent through this pandemmy is, like, it doesn't transfer via food. But also, I was like, "I don't wanna be the show that discovers it does!" But, um.</p> <p><i>[Tre'vell laughs.]</i></p> <p>There's been things where I'm like, "I don't wanna eat that." But, like, commit to the bit. The bit is we eat weird <i>[censored]</i>. So, it's like—I don't know, I'm not—what, am I gonna not eat it? No, I'm gonna eat it. You made it. I'll eat it. Maybe I'll spit it out, but I'll—I will eat it.</p> <p><i>[Tre'vell laughs.]</i></p> <p>I will taste it.</p>
00:20:16	Tre'vell	Host	<p>Alright, I wanna queue up another clip that we have. One of your other many jobs is you're hosting the <i>Wipeout</i> reboot, on TBS, with John Cena, Camille Kostek. Here's a clip from the trailer.</p>
00:20:31	Sound Effect	Transition	<p>Music swells and fades.</p>
00:20:32	Clip	Clip	<p><i>[Each line is punctuated by cartoonish collision sound effects.]</i></p>

**Music:** Inspirational music.

**John Cena (*Wipeout*):** Here's to the everyday warriors.

**Nicole:** The ones who punch above their weight.

**John:** Those with a dream to conquer the most absurd obstacle course in the world. But what they don't know is that TBS—

**Nicole:** —has made the course even tougher!

**Speaker 1:** Oh no!

**Speaker 2:** Nooo!

**Speaker 3:** Oh my gosh.

**Speaker 4:** [*Warped by slow-mo.*] Nooooo!

**John:** Oh, fudge and mustard! Oooh, yikes!

**Nicole:** [*Laughs.*] I hope people start saying that instead of profanity. Oh, fudge and mustard!  
Music swells and fades.

00:20:59 Sound Effect Transition

00:21:00 Tre'vell Host [*Laughs.*] So, I have to ask how familiar were you with the earlier iteration of the show before signing on?

00:21:09 Nicole Guest I had never like sat down and watched an episode. I had just seen, like, tons of clips online and I was a very big fan of that. I thought it was very funny. I love watching people fall down. YouTube has some delightful compilations that you can just sit down, get lost in.

[*Tre'vell laughs.*]

00:21:28 Tre'vell Host But yeah, I was really excited to do it, 'cause I just thought the—I just think it's so funny.

00:21:42 Nicole Guest Yeah. And we should say, for the listeners, *Wipeout*—it's basically, right, this huge obstacle course that has a number of different ways in which people could potentially injure themselves. And—[*Laughs.*]

00:21:42 Nicole Guest Yeah. It's like there will be little pegs coming out of a wall that you have to run through, but as you leap from peg to peg, there's something in the wall that, like, pushes you. So, it's just an obstacle course really designed for you to not get through it.

[*They laugh.*]

00:21:59 Tre'vell Host I need to know; did you happen to jump on the obstacle course and try it out yourself?

00:22:05 Nicole Guest So, I asked. I was like, "I would love to do it. Like, our last day I wanna do it." And Matt—the creator [*chuckling*—very much was like, "No." And I think another producer was like, "Mayyybe." This was over a Zoom call. And then I fell in November. I fell down my stairs and I dislocated my ankle. So, while we were shooting, I was in a medical boot and [*chuckles*] it was just like, "Well, hard no. You can't do anything! You have to sit. You don't even get up. You sit. You cannot get more injured."

00:22:35 Tre'vell Host *[Laughs.]* Help me understand why we think people potentially getting injured—falling off of big red balls, getting accidentally punched in the face by something that juts out of a wall—funny and entertaining.

00:22:51 Nicole Guest I think it's because it's a little bit of escapism. It's just like this fantasy world where people are doing these big, weird obstacle courses and you're like, "I could do that! Oooh, maybe I don't wanna do that! No, I could do that. Oooh, I don't want to!" You know? Oscillate between gleefulness and horror and it's just—I don't know. It's just funny to watch people fall down. I think it's truly as simple as that.

00:23:14 Tre'vell Host I see different things happening and I'm like, "Oh, that's probably a concussion, there." Or, "You're going to feel that in the morning and next week, as well."

*[They laugh.]*

It just—and I say that as somebody who's super, like, not physical at all. I barely want to, you know, walk around the block. And I'm just like, "I know that person's going to be super-sore from that." But one of the beauties, I think also, of what I've seen thus far of the show is this way that you—even from that clip we just—we just heard, I mean, you talked about this earlier. Your style of comedy—retrofitting for this type of show, you get—it can be a little, you know, blue. But still family friendly in a really interesting way. And I can tell, like, when you're untethered, I know. I've seen—I've seen some of your shows. You can let loose with the best of them. But there's this unique balance that I think you find to ensure that anybody could really, you know, watch *Nailed It* or watch *Wipeout*.

00:24:21 Nicole Guest Could you talk to me about finding and perfecting that balance? Yeeeah! Well, on *Nailed It*, the only scripted thing is me explaining the challenges. Everything else is like, "Whatever!" And then, like, when we're critiquing—I used to do this more so than now, just 'cause like now people know the show and it's like, "Oh my god! The woman my daughter loves is looking at my cake being like, 'What the *[censored]* is this?!'" So it was, like, I reign it in a little bit more now. But in the beginning, I would say—I do work pretty like dirty, like—you're not gonna see a set where I don't talk about being horny or like my *[censored]* if you see me live. So, I kind of go very blue, go very much like, "You can't air this," and then work my way backwards to like, "Okay. Here's a less dirty version. Here's a very clean version." And then editing! Editors are great!

*[Tre'vell laughs.]*

00:25:13 Tre'vell Host Editors, they make the show.  
Is there a moment from filming *Wipeout* that, like, just sticks out to you as being particularly memorable for you?

00:25:20 Nicole Guest Yeah, there was this one man. I wish I could remember his name. He said it so many times; maybe it was Dan? I don't remember. But he just didn't do it. He just stood there the whole time and would, like, pretend to do it. He would like, "Euugh!" And then he'd go, "No." And he'd go, "Euugh!" And then, "No."

And then I was like, “I get it. Like, you have to get on this spinning thing, hold onto it. You’ll be upside-down. You have to climb to the middle.” Like, it was a lot, you know?

*[Tre’ve ll chuckles.]*

00:25:54	Tre’ve ll	Host	But I was truly like, “So, we’re just gonna let this man stand here? For as long as this man wants to? Oh, okay.” <i>[Laughs.]</i> And what about working with John Cena and then the person who’s in, like, the—what is it? On-the-ground reporter role, from the originals? Camille? What’s it like working with them as well?
00:26:05	Nicole	Guest	I mean, John is a true joy, a delight. Also, very funny. So, like, I get to work with two different men who are not comedians by trade who are just naturally funny. And John Cena is—he’s naturally funny. He’s charismatic. He’s a consummate professional. Yeah, it was just really delightful to work with him. He’s easy to banter with. He’s—yeah, I really just like him! <i>[Laughs.]</i> Like, he’s giving me good advice ‘cause we’ve got, like—we’ve had a lot of like downtime in between setups and whatnot. So, it’s just like having real conversations with him and it’s just like, “Oh, yeah, you’re like way more than this persona that you have.”  ‘Cause at first I was like, “Okay, I don’t—does he like me?” And then after two or three days I was like, “Oh! Okay! I get you. I think—I think I get you?” So, yeah.

*[Tre’ve ll laughs.]*

00:27:12	Jesse	Host	I—working with him is really awesome. And Camille is delightful. I haven’t had much interaction with her because she’s down with the contestants and we are away from the contestants. So—but honestly, the few interactions we’ve had, she’s been truly so nice. We have even more Nicole Byer still to come. In case it wasn’t super-clear, Nicole is very busy. She even just got a gig playing Susie’s mom in the upcoming <i>Rugrats</i> reboot. We’ll hear more about that after the break. It’s <i>Bullseye</i> , from <a href="http://MaximumFun.org">MaximumFun.org</a> and NPR.
00:27:30	Music	Transition	Relaxed music.
00:27:31	Jesse	Promo	This message comes from NPR sponsor Odoo.

Running a company’s hard, but over 6,000,000 people found a way to make it easier thanks to Odoo. Odoo is a suite of business applications designed to streamline, automate, and simplify any company. Odoo has apps for CRM, accounting, eCommerce, manufacturing, inventory management. You name it, Odoo’s got it. Each app is user-friendly, intuitive, and fully integrated. For a free trial of Odoo, go to [Odoo.com/bullseye](http://Odoo.com/bullseye).

*[Music fades out.]*

00:28:09	Promo	Clip	<b>Music:</b> Bright, cheerful music.
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**Linda Holmes:** Whether you’re looking to discover a new series to binge, find your next great read, or check out that movie everyone’s talking about, NPR’s *Pop Culture Happy Hour* podcast is your guide to all things entertainment. Every weekday, we keep pop culture in

high spirits. Listen now to the *Pop Culture Happy Hour* podcast from NPR.

00:28:30 Promo Clip

[*Music fades out.*]

**Music:** Fun, jaunty, upbeat music.

**Renee Colvert:** Well, hello. I'm Renee Colvert.

**Alexis Preston:** Hi, I'm Alexis Preston. And we're the hosts of [Can I Pet Your Dog?](#)

**Renee:** And we got breaking news. We got an exposé! All the beans have been spilled, via... an Apple Podcast review that said, "This show isn't well researched."

[*Alexis gasps.*]

**Renee:** Well, yeah, no duh. Of course it's not! Not since the day we started has it been well researched! Guessing and anthropomorphizing dogs is what we do.

**Alexis:** The *Can I Pet Your Dog?* promise is that we will never do more than ten seconds of research before telling you excitedly about any dog we see.

**Renee:** I'm gonna come atcha with top-ten enthusiasm, minimal facts.

**Alexis:** [*Chuckling.*] We're here for a good time, not an educated time.

**Renee:** So, if you love dogs and you don't love research—

[*Alexis cackles.*]

**Renee:** Well, you know what. Come on in to *Can I Pet Your Dog?* podcast, every Tuesday on Maximum Fun network.

00:29:17 Jesse Host

[*Alexis giggles as the music ends.*]

Welcome back to *Bullseye*. I'm Jesse Thorn. If you're just joining us, our guest is the wonderful Nicole Byer. She's a standup comic, podcaster, and the host of two television shows: *Nailed It*—which just entered its fifth season on Netflix—and the newly rebooted *Wipeout*—which is airing now, on TBS. She's being interviewed by our friend Tre'vell Anderson, host of our podcast *FANTI*.

00:29:40 Tre'vell Host

You mentioned earlier—I'm making another pivot to one of your other jobs, and that is you have, like, 12 podcasts.

[*Nicole laughs.*]

00:30:06 Nicole Guest

And I wanna go through each of them so that folks listening know the different bits that they can get about you and your life and whoever your co-host is for each of them. Let's start with *Why Won't You Date Me*. Tell the people about that podcast. So, *Why Won't You Date Me* is, like, my first podcast and so it's—in its inception, it was like, "Ooh, I'm gonna interview people I've hooked up with and my friends and we'll talk about love and my

dates and whatever.” And it’s evolved to so much more, now. Now—I mean, like, I haven’t been dating during the pandemic. I just—I’ve said it 100 times, I won’t die for mediocre [censored]. I’m not doing it.

[Tre’ve ll laughs.]

But yeah. It’s like—I’ve just gotten to explore a lot of really interesting things over the last year. Like I’ve had some sex workers on, sex worker advocates who’ve been working for rights for sex workers, because—say strippers, they have such [censored] work environments that it’s, like, mindboggling. I’ve gotten to talk to full-service sex workers. Like, it’s just been really interesting. I’ve talked to activists and then also I do, you know, ask them about their dating lives. Yeah, it’s really fun. So, the older stuff is very much, like, “I’m traveling, I’m hooking up with people, I’m talking about sex and like having it and having a great time.” And now it’s just like, “Alright. I’m old. Still alone. And I can’t leave my home and I’m the [censored] I’ve ever been! Would you like to listen to thaaat?”

[Tre’ve ll laughs.]

00:31:22 Tre’ve ll Host  
00:31:26 Nicole Guest

But I do have a good time on it. And then you also have *Best Friends* with Sasheer. Yes, Sasheer Zamata. She’s been my dear friend for—I wanna say ten years. She, at this—she’s probably like, “No, that’s not right.” She knows all of it. [Laughs.] But it’s, like, really silly. Yeah, it’s just us exploring our friendship, just chit-chatting, catching up, ‘cause we’re both little busy bees. One episode I found out that I’m not [chuckles] the height I thought I was. ‘Cause I accused her of lying about her height because I—we always thought we were the same height, but in pictures I’m shorter. So, I was like, “You’re the liar.”

And she was like, “No. Nicole, you’re smaller.”

And I was like, “No!” Then I measured myself and I was like, “Oh no, my whole life has been a lie.”

[Tre’ve ll laughs.]

00:32:11 Tre’ve ll Host

So it’s, like, very dumb [censored] like that. We tee-hee-hee and have a very nice time. Love that as well. I listen to that one, personally.

[Nicole thanks them.]

00:32:19 Nicole Guest

*90 Day Bae*. Yeah, so me and my friend Marcy Jarreau both love *90 Day Fiancé*. *90 Day Fiancé* has turned into the *90 Day Universe*. There’s *Before the 90 Days*, *90 Day the Other Way*, *90 Day Diaries*, *90 Day Bares All*, *90 Day: The Single Life*, *90 Day Love Games*. There’s so—*Darcey and Stacey’s* a spinoff, *The Family Chantel’s* another spinoff. We watch them all and we were, like, talking about it for—it was, like, an hour and a half or something. And I think I said to her I was like, “We should do a podcast about it!”

And she said, “Oh, okay. Let’s do it!” And she was like, “Well, you have so many.”

And I was like, “But I’m watching it anyway. So, why not just take an hour out of my week and record it?”

So, we started a Patreon, and it is \$5 a month, but you can share the RSS feed with a friend. And if you do that, it’s \$2.50 a month. And you get a third friend, it gets even cheaper. You got five friends? That’s \$1 a month. And then Patreon has also been like, “Yeah! You can do that.” So, I don’t think I’m doing anything wrong. I don’t think they’re gonna come for me. But yeah, it’s a very fun time. I just love *90 Day*, my god.

00:33:22 Tre’veil Host

I feel like *90 Day Fiancé* is also one of those shows that a lot of people have been watching in the pandemic. Like, just binging because it is something that pulls you in and there are so many different versions and spinoffs of it. And so, I know a lot of people really enjoy *90 Day*.

00:33:46 Nicole Guest

And then I think *Newcomers* is your last one.

Yes. So, me and Lauren Lapkus—neither one of us had seen *Star Wars*. And I guess she had said it on a podcast and then some—and she was, like, promoting the podcast on Twitter and someone tweeted, “Nicole Byer’s never seen *Star Wars* either. You guys should watch it as a podcast.” So, I think Lauren texted me or I texted Lauren, and I was like, “Let’s [censored] do this!”

So, then we pitched it and then we went with Headgum and we watched almost every piece of *Star Wars* in the first season. And oh boy, after the first episode we were like, “We made a grave mistake.”

[Tre’veil laughs.]

Because the first *Star Wars* movie—no one tells you—is not like a modern-day action movie. It’s more like an indie with some action. Long shots of the desert. They say, “We’ll be there in 30 minutes.” It takes them 30 minutes to get there. I’m like, “It don’t have to be in real-time, George. What are you doing?!” So, then the second season we did *Lord of the Rings*. I—no shade to people who like *Lord of the Rings*, but rethink your choices. Like, what? It’s so boring. And now we’re exploring the original MCU, the Mad Max Cinematic Universe, [laughing] and we’re watching Tyler Perry movies! And I’ve learned so much about the man that I didn’t [censored] know. Also, his movies are wild. But fun.

So, like we’re finally having fun. [Laughs.] And some of our listeners are like, [angrily] “This is not what I signed up for! I signed up for women suffering!” And, uh—

[They laugh.]

00:35:20 Tre’veil Host

We’ll probably come back with another season of, like, the other MCU and [censored] get through that.

I love that you all are going through Tyler Perry movies. My small suggestion? The plays are a lot better.

00:35:26 Nicole Guest That's what people keep saying! I saw a play growing up; I don't remember any of it other than a joke where a woman is wearing a green dress and someone says, "You look like a can—of Sprite!" And the crowd erupted, and I was like, "Huh."

[Tre'vell laughs.]

00:35:46 Tre'vell Host "Huh. HUUUH." [Yawns.]  
I believe that's *Dairy of a Mad Black Woman*, the play.

00:35:48 Nicole Guest Oh, that's so funny that you—

00:35:49 Tre'vell Host I consider myself ironically to be a Tyler Perry historian. I grew up on the plays, in particular. And then now Tyler Perry has this whole empire.

00:36:01 Nicole Guest Do you know much about his personal life?

00:36:04 Tre'vell Host I wish! I don't. You know, Tyler Perry's very—a very quiet and, like, I don't wanna say secretive, but doesn't like broadcasting a lot of that information.

00:36:12 Nicole Guest No, but we did a quick Google and found out that he had—he had a partner for like ten years and has a kid!

00:36:18 Tre'vell Host Oh, yeah. I knew that.

00:36:20 Nicole Guest Do you know the kid's name?

00:36:21 Tre'vell Host No.

00:36:22 Nicole Guest I think it's Aman, but it's spelled A-M-A-N. So, I like to say, "A Man, Tyler Perry." That's child's middle name is Tyler Perry. Or his last name is Perry. And I was like, "That's so funny that he truly named his child, [brightly] "A Man! Tyler Perry!" And I was like, [struggling for words] "This man's funny."

Madea's so [censored] funny.

[Tre'vell agrees.]

I didn't know! There's this scene in *Diary of a Mad Black Woman* where he's using a calculator that Lauren and I could not stop talking about. He's just, like, bashing it with his hands and his titties are flopping and it's—it's—it's a simple joke. It is such a simple joke, but he commits and it's so funny. I truly just hope—like, people been a little like, "Ugh, why are you doing this?! Da-da-da-da." I just hope, like, we open Tyler Perry up to other people. 'Cause I hadn't seen them! And I'm like—I'm sure our audience hasn't seen them... [speaking confidentially] They white... [back to normal] so, yeah. I just like—I don't know.

00:37:17 Tre'vell Host I did not expect to be talking about Tyler Perry plays and movies with Nicole Byer on *Bullseye* today. But there you go.

00:37:23 Nicole Guest Here we are!

00:37:25 Tre'vell Host We were just talking about your four podcasts that you're doing. My question is, why podcasts? Like, what about the podcast medium is attractive to you and makes you want to keep doing them?

00:37:38 Nicole Guest Why not?

00:37:40 Tre'vell Host Good question. Good answer.

00:37:42 Nicole Guest I don't know! It's a way to—I mean, *Why Won't You Date Me...* I come up with a lot of material from that. So, my manager—I love him so much. Joel is truly incredible. He listens to it. It's so funny. I had a manager prior who I was like, "Just listen to it. I think it's good." And he never would. But Joel listens to every episode and

he'll be like, "Nicole, this little nugget that you said is good for a joke. You should try to turn that into a joke."

And then I'll work on it and then I'll be like, "Oh, I have like a five-minute bit on this now." So, it is a way to, like, work out jokes before you get onstage even. Also, it's fun. It's fun to watch *90 Day* and, you know, talk about it with a friend. It's fun to watch movies and talk about it with Lauren. It's been, like, really nice to just like connect with friends. Yeah, it's over Zoom. Yes, it's work. But, like, it's nice to just see them. Yeah. I don't know. Why not? Why not do it?

00:38:38	Tre'vell	Host	The last category of stuff I wanna ask you about is just, like, a lot of the acting opportunities that you have done. You've done a lot of voicework, in terms of like voicing different characters. And the one that sticks out to me—I was on your IMDb page, which is extensive if I do say so myself. A little birdie named IMDb told me that you are going to be the voice of Susie's mom on <i>Rugrats</i> .
00:39:04	Nicole	Guest	Yeees!
00:39:06	Tre'vell	Host	I think that's amazing.
00:39:08	Nicole	Guest	Thank you! I was so excited. Like, I went in for the audition and I was just like, "This is so iconic. I don't know if they're gonna go with me." And then they ended up going with me! And it was so nice!
00:39:21	Tre'vell	Host	I love that and I feel like—I feel like Black folks, we love Susie on the <i>Rugrats</i> , in particular.

[Nicole chuckles.]

There's a gif of Susie that's just, like, the blank stare, the blank blink situation that I use all the time. And I love to know now that I'm going to hear your voice on *Rugrats*! What of your—of your projects and the types of characters that you've voiced—what character sticks out in your mind as like, "Oh, I really loved that opportunity."

00:39:48	Nicole	Guest	I mean, I really do love Lucy. I think she's, like, no-nonsense. She's fun. But I do this voice on <i>Big City Greens</i> called—the character's called Andromeda. And she's just an ornery little purple girl and she's a conspiracy theorist and I get to, like, scream and I get to go pretty big and broad with her, which is so much fun. Honestly, like, I don't—the voiceover world is just—it's fun. It's a lot of fun.
00:40:18	Tre'vell	Host	I love that. And now, between <i>Nailed It</i> and <i>Wipeout</i> and the voice work and the other acting work that you're doing, your four podcasts, I'm wondering just, like, what do you hope is like the through line between all of the different projects that you do, in terms of audience members and what they're seeing and getting from you?
00:40:39	Nicole	Guest	I hope—I hope I'm funny. I hope that you laugh. I hope you forget about, like, maybe something that's bothering you that day. Yeah. I hope to just bring you joy.
00:40:49	Tre'vell	Host	That's—I say "I love that" a lot, but I think we don't—we don't talk about joy enough. We don't talk about escaping the foolishness in our world and I think you're right that comedy can be one of those tools, in particular. Particularly for, you know, folks who come from various marginalized and oppressed communities. Sometimes you just need to throw something on and laugh to get through it.
00:41:14	Nicole	Guest	Yeah. Also, I hope that, like, another little fat girl, little fat, Black girl who sounds like me, goes, "Oh. I don't have to sound a certain type of way. She sounds the way she sounds. I sound the way I sound. I

			can be an actress too.” So. Yeah. I just—and I hope I open the door for some more little fatties to roll on in. Waddle on in!
00:41:37	Tre'vell	Host	I was going to ask, you know, who are some of your—you know, those comedic reference points that you always go back to over and over when you're looking to laugh, when you're looking to—for various points of inspiration?
00:41:51	Nicole	Guest	When I'm looking to laugh and, like, feel comfort—'cause that's a thing for me. I like—I like watching the same things again 'cause it's comforting. I watch <i>Death Becomes Her</i> , <i>My Cousin Vinny</i> , <i>Sister Act</i> , <i>The Associate</i> , <i>Ghost</i> . One of those. One of those movies. Marisa Tomei in <i>My Cousin Vinny</i> is so funny. And when I was little, I was like, “Oh, she's a lady who's into cars! I like cars.” So, honestly like the older I get the more I'm like, “Oh, representation is so [censored] important.” Because, like, maybe if I didn't see Marisa Tomei I'd be like, “Oh, cars are for boys. They're stupid.” Or whatever.
			<i>[Tre'vell chuckles.]</i>
			And then <i>Ghost</i> —every scene Whoopi Goldberg is in is a perfect comedy bit. It's like every scene she's in has like a full game. She's playing it. And she—and the performance is nuanced and really just amazing. And then <i>The Associate</i> —big premise movie. Many people haven't seen it. I love it so much. I think it's great. Also, <i>Eddie</i> . Doesn't stream anywhere, but it's one of my favorite movies. In <i>Eddie</i> , Whoopi Goldberg is a limo driver who becomes the head coach of the <i>[in an exaggerated New York accent]</i> New York Knickerbockers! Owned by Frank Langella!
			<i>[They laugh.]</i>
			And— <i>[cackles]</i> and it's— <i>[wheezes]</i> it's so good! And I don't know why it doesn't stream anywhere! Also, <i>Made in America's</i> a perfect movie, with Ted Danson and Whoopi. That's perfect. There's like an elephant scene in the middle of the road that you were like, “Nobody would greenlight this now!” Uh, yeah. I just—I love it.
00:43:24	Tre'vell	Host	My—I think that I just want to wrap up by saying you're hilarious and I think everyone should check out all of the many things that you're doing and that you have coming down the line. Is there something that I didn't ask you about that you wanna plug really quickly?
00:43:40	Nicole	Guest	No, that's it! For now, I've got my podcasts, <i>Wipeout</i> , <i>Nailed It</i> . And then, in the fall, I'll have a show on NBC that I'm very excited about.
00:43:53	Tre'vell	Host	Nicole Byer, thanks so much for joining us.
00:43:56	Nicole	Guest	Thank you so much for having me!
00:43:59	Jesse	Host	Nicole Byer, friends! You can watch all five seasons of <i>Nailed It</i> on Netflix. <i>Wipeout</i> is airing Thursdays at 9/8c on TBS. Nicole also hosts four podcasts. They're called <i>Why Won't You Date Me</i> , <i>Best Friends</i> , <i>Newcomers</i> , and <i>90 Day Bae</i> . Thank you to Tre'vell Anderson for interviewing Nicole. They are the host of the great podcast <i>FANTI</i> here on Maximum Fun. Together with their co-host Jarrett Hill, they take a look at some of our problematic faves and how to enjoy culture in the complicated age in which we currently live.
00:44:37	Music	Transition	Relaxed, jazzy music.

00:44:41 Jesse Host That's the end of another episode of *Bullseye*. *Bullseye* is created out of the homes of me and the staff of Maximum Fun, in and around greater Los Angeles, California—where, this week, the completely barren, Charlie Brown Christmas tree-esque tree in my backyard burst to life like a caricature of spring. It's now entirely covered in green leaves and it all happened within the course of a week. Nature is really something.

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. Production fellows at Maximum Fun are Richard Robey and Valerie Moffat.

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. You can also keep up with the show on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. We post all our interviews there.

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

00:45:49 Promo Promo **Speaker:** *Bullseye with Jesse Thorn* is a production of [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org) and is distributed by NPR.

*[Music fades out.]*