

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. A fast, upbeat, peppy song. Music plays as Jesse speaks, then fades out.
00:00:20	Jesse Thorn	Host	It’s <i>Bullseye</i> . I’m Jesse Thorn. The first time I had the opportunity to chat with my next guest, Killer Mike, he was just coming off the release of his solo album, <i>I Pledge Allegiance to the Grind</i> . It was back in 2007. It’s now 14 years later, and I’m proud to report Killer Mike is still on his grind. He’s one half of the critically acclaimed hip-hop duo, Run the Jewels, whose fourth album dropped last year. He’s active in politics, too. He recently campaigned for senators Jon Ossoff and Raphael Warnock to represent his home state of Georgia. He also joined Bernie Sanders in Bessemer, Alabama, to support the Amazon workers trying to form a union there.
			Mike is on screen a lot more these days, too. He’s acted in movies like <i>Baby Driver</i> and TV shows like <i>The Good Lord Bird</i> . When he and I talked in 2019, he had his very own Netflix show. A documentary series called <i>Trigger Warning with Killer Mike</i> . In the show, Killer Mike tackles some of the most complicated racial and social issues in America. And like everything Killer Mike does, he does not do it halfway.
			In the first episode, Mike tries to spend three days buying, using, and consuming products that have only come from the Black community. And it turns out to be very, very difficult. In this scene, Mike heads to the Black owned Dawg Gone Good BBQ in Athens, Georgia, where he meets EI-P, his co-MC in Run the Jewels. At this point, Mike hasn’t had a meal in a long time—almost an entire day—so, he is very excited to finally get something he’s allowed to eat.
00:01:57	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:01:58	Clip	Clip	EI-P (<i>Trigger Warning with Killer Mike</i>): Yeah. Here you go. Black owned restaurant.
			Mike: Black owned, baby. Pro Black!
			EI-P: Black owned produce and meat, probably. Right? From a Black farm? <i>[Beat.]</i> What’s up?
			Mike: Excuse me. Sir.
			Speaker: Yes, sir?
			Mike: My White friend just reminded me—I’m living so Black that I’m technically only supposed to eat meat from a Black farm or produce. Please tell me like this came from the west Georgia, like, Black Farmer’s Collaborative or—
			Speaker: No, it didn’t.

Mike: *[Beat.]* May I get a to-go box, please?

EI-P: You're a good man, Michael Render. *[Chuckling.]* And I gotta be honest with you. It's really, really honestly some of the best barbeque that I've ever had.

Mike: Why are you still eating in front of me?

EI-P: It's just that the hotel room that I was in, last night—some of the room service—I—you know, the lobster, um...

00:02:45 Clip Clip

Mike: You ate lobster?

EI-P: I had a lobster roll.

Mike: I was on a park bench.

EI-P: Yeah.

Mike: That is the literal definition of White privilege.

EI-P: Yeah.

Mike: How's the macaroni? The only weed I've been able to find has been trash *[censored]* Mexican weed, which I can't smoke 'cause it's Mexican.

EI-P: Weed dealers aren't White. You can get—

Mike: The growers are White. Like, you guys gentrified marijuana.

EI-P: Yeah, we're an unstoppable force.

Mike: That's what all the books say.

00:03:08 Sound Transition
 Effect

EI-P: Yeah.
Music swells and fades.

00:03:10 Jesse Host

[They laugh.]

00:03:15 Mike Guest
 Render

Killer Mike, welcome to *Bullseye*! It's nice to see you. How y'all doing? And that—that *[laughing]*—"that's what all the books say" actually comes from me reading *Guns, Germs, and Steel*.

00:03:24 Jesse Host

[They laugh.]
I feel like that was the line of the show—I watched a number of episodes and I kept thinking back to *[laughing]*, "That's what all the books say."

00:03:32 Mike Guest

I wanna get a t-shirt made that say, "White people want. Stay woke."

00:03:38 Jesse Host

[They laugh.]
Well, Mike, I'm so happy to have you on *Bullseye*. I looked it up. The last time I interviewed you was on the phone and it was—I was thinking 5 or 7 years ago, but it was actually 12 years ago.

00:03:50	Mike	Guest	Oh, wow!
00:03:51	Jesse	Host	So, I guess what have you been up to?
00:03:53	Mike	Guest	I—well, funny thing, I did start and have yet to finish the series of undergrounds called <i>I Pledge Allegiance to the Grind</i> . I made up to pledge three. Then I made rap music with this interesting guy named EI-P, from Brooklyn—formerly of Company Flow. And we developed a friendship and bond that seems to be unbreakable and dropped three classic duo albums called <i>Run the Jewels 1, 2, and 3</i> . And, you know, by my superstition, you have to be four album—four classic albums in before you're officially a group that's worthy of being talked about. So, we're working on <i>Run the Jewels 4</i> and securing our place in mythology—you know, rap music history. And...
00:04:31	Jesse	Host	So, how did you end up in Run the Jewels? Because Run the Jewels is, aesthetically, very different from the records that you were making the last time I interviewed you.
00:04:41	Mike	Guest	Yeah, but I don't think anyone who's born—who's been born is better equipped to rap over EI-P's beats than me. And I think that it was just a matter of me and EI-P finding one another. And—you know how in any mythology, the hero must go on this journey or this quest and you end up finding yourself as you burn off old things? You know. I think that when I came in the music industry, I had a feeling about the music I wanted to make. 'Cause even the stuff I made that got me my deal was more in line to Run the Jewels than the stuff you ended up hearing me make in the beginning. But I think it was about finding my way to it. EI and I finding ourselves in a way where, once we found each other, we were absent of ego, absent of expectations, and just kind of open to make dope <i>[censored]</i> .
00:05:24	Jesse	Host	You're also grown adults.
00:05:26	Mike	Guest	Yeah, exactly! But that's where the ego and the expectation—like, when you're young, you have expectations, and your ego is often getting in the way of your creativity and your growth. So, yeah. We were adults. 35 years old.
00:05:37	Jesse	Host	I mean, EI-P had run a record label that put out some really important records.
			<i>[Mike agrees.]</i>
			The record label was done. You had been signed to a major, put out a record on a major. You started your own record label. Like, you had been through—
00:05:55	Mike	Guest	The underground.
00:05:56	Jesse	Host	You'd been through the wringer by then!
00:05:58	Mike	Guest	Yeah. Yeah. And that—and we—so, when you get there—you know, it's like Clyde Drexler going to Houston. Like, I've spent all this time being great in Portland and nobody was watching Trail Blazer ball at that time, and now I'm in Houston. And now I'm Houston. And now I'm a ball—
00:06:10	Jesse	Host	<i>[Seriously.]</i> Do not speak ill of Kevin Duckworth.
00:06:12	Mike	Guest	No, hey, yo, I got no problem with the Trail Blazers. I'm just simply saying Drexler in Houston brought those rings on. You know? And Run the Jewels is that. We are—we are kicking <i>[censored]</i> left and right. That's what we're gonna continue to do hopefully the rest of our careers.
00:06:25	Jesse	Host	How did you meet EI-P?

00:06:27 Mike Guest I knew of his work, in the peripheral. But I'm—and I think it's important to clarify, like I'm a—I love East Coast, the sound of East Coast. I mean, I miss—all hip-hop nerds, you know, our homage goes back to East Coast music, so, it wasn't hard for me to love his music and stuff once exposed. But I—we had a mutual friend in Jason DeMarco, who's a fan of both of us and he works at Adult Swim. And he put us together. He gave me an opportunity to make rap music to essentially just make the music I always wanted to make without commercial expectation. Just make the record you always wanted to make. El-P was supposed to do three beats. I got in, I rapped over three beats, I decided this guy's supposed to be producing for me. He was making an album. I was like, "[Censored] that [censored]. You're producing my whole album, too."

00:07:11 Jesse Host [Laughs.] It's hilarious that the first record—there was this weird period where Adult Swim, a sub-television network, a television subnetwork?

00:07:22 Mike Guest Whatever it is.

00:07:23 Jesse Host Half of a television network. They put out a—I remember, they put out a Witchdoctor album.

[Mike confirms.]

But I was like utterly baffled at the idea that the guys from *Squidbillies*—

[Mike laughs.]

00:07:42 Mike Guest No offense to *Squidbillies*. It was funny. We're like, "Oh yeah, and also we're trying to bring Flying Lotus around."

Well, Jason is amazingly good at picking TV programming. Right? But Jason has a musical ear that's amazing! You know. Jason is—you know, he's diverse in his listenership and because he's a pure fan and he doesn't have any aspiration to being a music executive, he only puts together this stuff because it's dope. You know. He put Killer Mike and Flying Lotus together, when we did "Swimming". He put me and El-P together and thought, "You guys could potentially make something dope."

00:08:29 Jesse Host So, you know, I say that just to say to all the fans out there, like, your dreams, your imaginations, you know, they come true. So, follow whatever you're passionate about, whatever you're good at. And if you get an opportunity to hook up a super producer and an amazing rapper, do that too. 'Cause Jason did it without expectations. He just did it. And now you have Run the Jewels.

When your first album came out and didn't do very well, was there a time when you thought you might have to find something else to do with your life?

00:08:38 Mike Guest Well, relatively speaking, not doing very well in the early 2000s just selling, like, three to 500,000 records and 50 Cent sells 10,000,000 records.

[Jesse agrees.]

You know I'm saying? So. Not doing very well 15 years removed is amazing. You ought to celebrate an artist going gold again. But, you know, for me, what I—what I considered is maybe I'm not built for

this commercial rap [censored]. I was gonna be a rapper. It's all I wanted to do. And because I went to Texas and met people like Lil Flip and Hump, Paul Wall and Chamillionaire, Slim Thug and—I saw that independently you could make your way. Now, what I wasn't prepared for was the death of CDs, the increase of streaming and stuff. But I can say things like Myspace, Facebook, later IG, Twitter, have helped me in my independent career and to grow. So, I knew I was gonna be rapping and when I wanted to quit, my wife was like, "This is what you were put on Earth to do and you're gonna keep doing it."

So, for the two years I got really down and really beat up and depressed. You know. Didn't get out of bed, didn't take full advantage of it. It was doing—you know, it was just having a great wife that kicking me in my [censored] saying, "You gotta do this." That's what brought us to *Pledge Allegiance to the Grind 2*, *Pledge Allegiance to the Grind 3*, and later rap music.

00:09:45 Jesse Host

Speaking of Myspace, how much of your success would you attribute to having your interview with me from 12 years ago up on your Myspace for a long time?

00:09:53 Mike Guest

[Laughing.] Lots of it. Lots of it.

00:09:55 Jesse Host

Probably like—I'm not gonna say a majority, but like, 30%. Right? [Laughs.]

00:09:58 Mike Guest

Yeah, in early days, man, that—you know, having those things were big looks. Like, people—people don't understand how much the interview and how much people who are on that side of the mic that are firm believers and help use their platform to expose the talent—what it does. If it wouldn't have been for those interviews and if it wouldn't have been for things like Myspace and what I call the pledgeheads, people that have followed my career all the way through the *Pledge Allegiance* series until *Run the Jewels*, and I wouldn't be here, so I'm very appreciated for those things and very appreciative for that core group of fans in particular.

00:10:28 Jesse Host

When you went to college, which you did for, what? A year, year and a half, something like that?

[Mike confirms.]

00:10:38 Mike Guest

Did you think that your career was going to be as an MC, or did you think you were—

Yeah! I wanted to be—I mean, I dropped out in chase of the rap thing. You know? Once I got—once I got attached to Big Boi and them and I knew I could do it, I decided to do it—you know, pursue it full speed. But I shouldn't have done that. I should have stayed in college, 'cause I ended up getting a deal around the same time I would have graduated. So, that—if I have a regret, that's the regret. I went to Morehouse. I'll let you guys google that. It's a pretty prestigious college. So, you know, I should have stayed in, but I didn't. And with that said, you know, I can go back, and I will. But I should've stayed in. So, the kids that are out there that are passionate about it and are smart enough to get into it, stay! And not just because of the education you get or saying that's gonna save you. The networking opportunity you have in college, the people you're gonna meet and where they're gonna go! You know, if you're good to them, you build good networks. It just makes your transition to whatever you're gonna do easier.

00:11:22 Jesse Host How did you meet Big Boi?
 00:11:23 Mike Guest I met Big Boi because his good friend went to Morehouse also. Cielo Reddick, from Savannah, and his brother went to Morris Brown and we were all little homies and we all wanted to make music too and we were trying to impress James' brother.

00:11:36 Jesse Host Well, I can imagine you were trying to impress him! He was basically the—certainly the king of Atlanta hip-hop at the time and one of the kings of hip-hop in the world. Yeah.

00:11:44 Mike Guest Southern hip-hop, period. Yeah. At that time, yeah. And still is. Big Boi has not stopped working. At this point, his solo career's longer than his Outkast career. Yeah, that's amazing when you think about it. You know what I mean? I'm incredibly impressed by his work ethic and, you know, he employs over 100 people. You know, through touring and through all of his studio and things of that nature. Like, he's one of the most focused businessmen and MCs I've ever come across, and I try to model much of myself after him.

00:12:10 Jesse Host Did you pass him a tape or a CD or did you give him some bars in person?

00:12:13 Mike Guest *[Chuckling.]* Nah, he had me freestyling. He had me freestyle and, um... I wasn't pressuring him. I was pressing up my own stuff, working my butt off. And Rock D, the guy who brought "Kryptonite" into being is an amazing MC. He's also the guy that you hear on the end of "Kill Jill" doing a little patter, you know. *[Rhythmically.]* "Hold up, listen, just like I told. Coco, my logo is pimping." That's Rock D. Me and Rock D were messing around freestyling. And Big was getting his hair braided by Princess, from Princess Palace Braiders, and he was like, "Yo. I like you. And I'm gonna give you a deal."

And I was like, "I appreciate it, bro." And I was like, "I still got a pound of weed in my trunk I gotta sell. I've gotta—"

[They laugh.]

You know what I'm saying? I went back to focusing on that and, you know, like a year or two later he calls me like, "Hey, I really wanna do it. Let's get it."

00:13:03 Jesse Host How old were you? Like 20?
 00:13:04 Mike Guest Um. Might have been 23? 24?
 00:13:09 Jesse Host I mean, 23 or 24 is old for a rapper getting a deal.
 00:13:13 Mike Guest It definitely was, then. Now it's not so much. But yeah, by then—you know, 'cause what they do is they sign you at 24 and tell the world you were 22, 21. But you know, I didn't care how old I was. Like, I don't care now. I don't think about my age. I've had that discussion with Stacks, before me and Dre talked—him just saying, you know, "I'm just trying to see what these younger guys are doing, just, you know—" And he'll feel, you know, a certain way sometimes. You know, what he said. I'm just like, man, I don't feel no way, but when I get in the room, I wanna have the dopest album in the room. You know? So, my whole thing is—I guess I've avoided thinking about my age 'cause I've always wanted to style.

You know. I've—if you hear me on different tracks, different features with different people, I probably am one of at least the top ten rappers in terms of being able to style flip, depending on what beat. You know what I mean? And I'm always taking pride in that,

00:14:09	Jesse	Host	'cause it's not easy. So, for me, age kind of dies with style. Like, E-40 is ageless to me, because his style is ageless. Like, you can't—
00:14:10	Mike	Guest	You're pandering to me now but go ahead. Nah, man, nah, 40-Watt is what's up! Like, I'm from Atlanta. Like, Atlanta is the Bay Area part Deuce. Like, you don't understand. Like, Too Short, 40, you know what I mean? Like, we grew up on this, on some player <i>[censored]</i> . So, for me, like, his style is literally timeless. You know what I mean? Scarface, who I've considered the greatest rapper of all time. Style is timeless. So, that's what I would rather be, timeless, than really think about age.
00:14:34	Jesse	Host	When you came out, you came out with Outkast. Big Boi signed you won a Grammy for one of the first records that you made that came out. <i>[Mike confirms.]</i> An Outkast song. <i>[Mike confirms.]</i>
00:14:53	Mike	Guest	That must have been incredibly heady, because that was Outkast at the height of their artistic and commercial powers, both. Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. It was a trip, you know, because... you know, you have to reconcile. This is not your record. So, the Grammy you're on—but, with that said, I recognize that I wasn't just a benefactor of good luck. I ripped that <i>[censor]</i> verse.
00:15:06	Jesse	Host	You sure did. <i>[Mike laughs.]</i>
00:15:19	Mike	Guest	I mean, I remember in—I remember being in my dorm room watching MTV 2, which had the music videos on it, watching that video and was like, "Oh! Who's that dude? He just ripped it." Yeah, that's the—I was very proud of myself then and now. I wish I would have went to the ceremony then, 'cause I won, and we didn't 'cause I think Jay Z had us protesting that year 'cause they weren't showing the rap division. And then when I went to the Grammy's last year—'cause we were nominated for the "Chase Me" song—we didn't win. So. When I didn't go, I won, and when I went, I didn't win. That was really sad. <i>[They chuckle.]</i>
00:15:39	Jesse	Host	We'll finish up with Killer Mike after a quick break. Stick around. It's <i>Bullseye</i> , from MaximumFun.org and NPR.
00:15:47	Promo	Clip	Music: Light, chiming music.

James Arthur M.: Hey, folks! It's me, James Arthur M., host of *Minority Korner*—your home through these bewild times for weekly doses of pop culture, history, news, nerdy stuff, and more through a BIPOC, queer, and allied lens.

[Scene change.]

James: Sexyass from *Moonlight*—who was in the third act of *Moonlight*, Trevante Rhodes—who was like—*[inaudible]*^.

Speaker 1: Yes, yes, yes, yes. “I cook now. You want something to eat?”

James: “I work—and I work—I work out.” Yeah, I do! Yeah, I do want a piece!

Speaker 1: Let me have a taste! *[Laughs.]* Ew, gross!

James: *[Laughing.]* This is just—you know what, it’s been a long pandemic, girl!

[Scene change.]

James: What are you doing now to deconstruct this system?

[Scene change.]

Speaker 2: He basically did a covert genocide of Black people.

[Scene change.]

James: So, join me and some of your new BFFs every Friday, here on Maximum Fun, to stay informed, empowered, and have some fun. *Minority Korner*. because together, we’re the majority.

[Music fades out.]

00:16:36 Promo Clip

Music: Bright, bubbly music.

Speaker: On NPR’s *Pop Culture Happy Hour* podcast, we talk about movies, music, and more. Like why *The Great Pottery Throwdown* is a comforting binge-watch, and a look back at some of Chadwick Boseman’s essential performances. All of that in around 20 minutes every weekday. Listen now to the *Pop Culture Happy Hour* podcast from NPR.

00:16:58 Jesse Host

[Music fades out.]

Welcome back to *Bullseye*. I’m Jesse Thorn. If you’re just joining us, my guest is the rapper, actor, and television host Killer Mike. He’s half of the critically acclaimed rap duo, Run the Jewels. When we talked in 2019, Mike had just hosted his first TV show. *Trigger Warning with Killer Mike* is an exploration of issues like education, small business, and crime and how they intersect with race. Let’s get back into our conversation.

00:17:31 Mike Guest

When you started working with EI-P, what was it that clicked for the two of you?

Just listen to me on his beats! That’s what it is. It’s just—it sounds like it’s supposed to be. You know. It’s like Ice Cube over a Sir Jinx beat. Or, you know, or—you know? It’s like hearing Chuck over a Bomb Squad beat or even Cube over a Bomb Squad beat. It just fits. I don’t know why, and I don’t waste time questioning why. I don’t know why I love my wife more than any other woman I’ve ever loved. You know? I just know there’s something so special about her, I can’t not love her like that. So, I don’t question those mysteries, I just go in and, you know, hopefully one day it won’t—

00:18:08 Jesse Host you know, I mean hopefully it'll never stop. And if it ever does, we're just gonna have the most fantastic run we've ever had. You know. Were you surprised at how well it worked? You must have just thought this was just like a—

00:18:12 Mike Guest Nah! I knew the first day.

00:18:13 Jesse Host —cool thing you were doing.

00:18:14 Mike Guest Nah. Once I heard—once he played—he played big beats for me first and he played another couple beats and I knew then, like, “This guy’s supposed to be making beats for me for the rest of my life.” I knew. Like, I fell in love instantly. It was like me and my wife! I knew within two weeks of knowing her, like, “I wanna marry you.” Now, well, she said no, and we spent two or three years breaking each other’s hearts. You know what I mean?

But with me and El, at first, he was like, “Nah, I can’t do it. I gotta do my own album.”

I’m like, “Nah, b. You gotta do this album.” And I aggravated the heck out of him for 90 days, him and Jason, ‘til he—‘til he succame and just said, “Alright, I’ll do the record.”

00:18:47 Jesse Host Were you surprised at the number of White people showing up for your work *[laughs]* at that point?

00:18:51 Mike Guest Well, I’d seen what I—actually, that—

00:18:52 Jesse Host I’m not saying—look. I’m a White person and there were—some of us were showing up before.

00:18:57 Mike Guest Yeah, and imma definitely say I was definitely encouraged by your Whiteness.

[Jesse laughs.]

Like, I was—there was—I learned from Outkast that, you know, the people who you most look like or who like you or who you’re making the music or that even inspire the music you’re making, they’re valuable to you ‘cause they’re there. They—that’s what makes you, your community. You know. It grows you. Your village, right? But who appreciates you, you have no choice in. You just—you gleefully accept that appreciation and you sing, rap, and dance your *[censored]* off while you have the chance, because you’re lucky enough to have a job. Right?

So, as much as the South loved Three 6 Mafia and as dope as Paul and Juicy are, you know, I don’t know if we’d hear the sounds that are imitating Three 6 Mafia now if it wasn’t for the White hipster crowd in Williamsburg that somehow rediscovered them and all of the sudden, you’d be walking into the Max Fish hearing Project Pat, in 2013. Where—I know I can hear Pat in Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, north Florida, but I didn’t know Pat was playing in *[censored]* Williamsburg. You know what I mean? So, you love who loves you. And my audience, no matter what color, race, creed, or religion they are, if they’re rocking with the raw, dirty *[censored]* that’s hip-hop that me and El do, then that’s fine by me. You know. Doesn’t matter to me what color you are. I still love you. If you love Wu-Tang and Outkast as much as I do, we probably can kick it. You know?

00:20:16 Jesse Host When you were campaigning with Bernie Sanders—

00:20:18 Mike Guest The OG!

00:20:19 Jesse Host In—a couple of years ago, when he was running for president, I found my—when you first started campaigning with him, I found myself thinking like, “How—where did this come from?” *[Chuckles.]*

00:20:31 Mike Guest There was a DJ in his campaign and when they were asked about getting black influencers from the music world, this DJ—I can’t remember his name right now to save my life, unfortunately—but he was adamant about them checking out Killer Mike. You know. So, the work—the work, you know, spoke for me and he spoke up for me and senator sanders—and I have to give a lot of credit to Cornel West at the time, who was a part of it, who cosigned me. And a bigger, bigger, bigger just shout—thanks and gratitude to former senator out of Ohio, Nina Turner, who now leads our revolution. She is a Shirley Chisholm of our time. She’s an absolutely dynamic politician, advocate on the behalf of the people. One of the more powerful organizers and mobilizers I’ve ever seen and should be nationally talked about by people who are members of the democratic party and I don’t understand why she’s not. But I wanna do, you know, everything I can to yell her name.

But she’s the person that really kept me engaged. After I saw, you know, the DNC sabotage what I thought was a campaign that could have defeated Trump, after I’ve seen them make—you know—poor decisions afterwards, you know, in terms of—if you wanna accept him in your party or not or you like him or not, you can’t say he didn’t electrify the democratic vote in millennials. You can’t say that his policy has not affected the greater fabric. It has in everything from marijuana law to the raising of minimum wage across the nation, as we’re seeing. And to a grander push for Medicare for all. So, the OG knew what he was doing, and I think that Senator Turner was a very big part of the reason I stayed engaged and is a very big part of the reason I’m still engaged, locally and nationally. So, I look for her, hopefully, to do something. You know. I don’t know what’s next, but she’s one of the people who admires Senator Sanders.

I, like everyone else within our revolution, would love to see him run again in 2020. I don’t think anyone else is gonna beat him, is gonna beat the current guy in there. I think to put out fire, you need water. You know. I think that the only way you can get Magneto out of office is to have Professor X. You know. So, we’ll see what happens.

00:22:37 Jesse Host *[Mike agrees multiple times as Jesse continues.]*
I think a lot of people see, in that movement, the possibility that issues having to do with race—issues having to do with the unique experiences, particularly of being African American in this country, but any ethnic category other than White, certainly, can be subsumed into class rhetoric and ignored. Was that something that you were worried about?

00:23:06 Mike Guest It’s something I worry about, because we’re allowed to argue race in this country. Because race is polarizing, and we all belong to a tribe. Right? So, whether you’re ethnic, White, you know, or Black, or a descendant of a slave African American or an African American that’s an immigrant, you’re chopped up into all these things that cause extreme arguments. But if we spent as much time talking about John Brown in schools as we do Robert E. Lee, how would

the radically different—how would relationships between Black and White kids who were both born in West Virginia be different? Or in Ohio be different? How does that start to change? How does solidarity start to change amongst people who don't look like each other? And how does that change our government? Are people harder to control when they understand, "Yes, we're different."

When people say, "Well, I'm gonna look past race," or "I don't see race." I don't wanna hear that *[censored]*. You know, that's a lie. I don't look past race. I see a White man in front of me with a glorious beard. *[Chuckles.]*

[Jesse thanks him.]

00:24:03	Jesse	Host	And a pair of glasses on.
00:24:04	Mike	Guest	You also have a glorious beard, friend.
			Thank you, sir! But I also see an ally. You know what I mean? And that's what matters most. You know? If we are at war for our very freedoms and lives, no war's won without allies. And to too tightly cling to my tribe and the tribalisms that we have makes me less likely to be cooperative and collaborate with others that also have my best interests or the better interests of us all. So. I try my best not to let it get in the way. I worry that we all let it get in the way too much and instead of arguing issues of the class that can be won by us all, we end up all suffering more because we get baited into something that's race. That—you know, it feels like race 'cause I'm Black, but it also is gonna feel like poverty. You know. If you're north Georgian and White. You know, it all—it's unfair either way. But I can't think just because it's my tribe, it's just us. We all serve the same masters. We all have the same enemies.
00:24:58	Jesse	Host	Outside our studio, behind my desk, you know, six feet from here is a poster that my mom bought me at the flea market for Dick Gregory's presidential campaign.

[Mike affirms.]

00:25:12	Mike	Guest	Dick Gregory, who was one of the—
00:25:13	Jesse	Host	My friend! Oh! There you go! One of the most important standup comics of the 1960s.

[Mike agrees several times.]

00:25:26	Mike	Guest	Quit show business and spent the next 50 or so years as an activist. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. I got a chance to see him thanks to my sister, Zoe, who's like a sister to me. She's a amazing woman. She's a lesbian woman out of Chicago. Amazing. She manages standup comics and acts and she had me and T.I. get on the phone with him about three years ago. He cursed us out really bad.
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[Jesse laughs.]

Tip hung up, called me back later to say, "What'd he say?"

I was like, “[Censored] man, he cursed [censored] out bad.” But we went to see him at a show. I befriended him and for the last three years of his life was a very good friend. And one of the most wise and smart and brilliant men and personally knew Malcolm and Martin and Medgar. And was just about the work of freeing people. And not just Black people, but freeing people’s minds. And like Carlin, like Bruce, like Bill Hicks, like Pryor before him—I mean, a lot of those people aren’t even before him, but just also comedians. He did a lot more to enlighten me that it’s easier to teach people— ‘cause I saw him when he started coming back and doing some comedy. Zoe was actually handling him, taking him around.

Trigger Warning, I knew would work. Even though I was nervous, I knew it would work when people understood Mike is funny. He’s satirical. He has a subversive sense of humor and he’s—you know, people who know me know, “Michael, you know, he’s always saying [censored] this. He’s always pushing it online by saying whatever.” I knew if people got that part, it’ll work. So, I’m thankful for Mr. Gregory for showing me that through an example. You know, by watching him. I got a chance to just see him in regular conversation. He’d say stuff and it’d open your [censored] mind like, oh [censored]. And that’s all I wanna do with the show—to get people to create conversation and to be open from different perspectives. Well, Mike, I’m so grateful to you for taking all of this time to be on *Bullseye*. It was nice to see you.

00:27:15 Jesse Host
00:27:19 Mike Guest
00:27:21 Jesse Host
00:27:22 Mike Guest

Aw man, I love the show. Thank you! [Laughs.] Thank you. Come back anytime. Alright, love.

00:27:23 Jesse Host
00:27:36 Music Music

[Music fades in.]
Killer Mike, folks. Before we say goodbye, let’s go out on a Run the Jewels track. This song is from their most recent album, *RTJ4*. It’s called “Ooh La La” and it features Greg Nice and DJ Premier.
“Ooh La La” from the album *Run the Jewels 4* by Run the Jewels.

...you want maximum stupid, I am the guy

*First of all—law, we is raw
Steak tartare, oysters on the half-shell, sushi bar
Life a— and the— fish, still raw (raw)
I’m a dog, I’m a dirty dog, ha-ha-ha-ha-ha*

*Ol’ Dirty Bastard, go in your jaw, shimmy, shimmy, ya
Got the— in the hemi, go and gimme, gimme, ya
Pugilistic, my linguistics are Jeru the Damaja
And I rap it pornographic, set (set) up the camera*

Ooh, la, la...

00:28:01 Jesse Host

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]
That’s the end of another episode of *Bullseye*. *Bullseye* is created from the homes of me and the staff of Maximum Fun, in and around greater Los Angeles, California—where I learned that the construction site dirt that covers my car every day is something

called, "fugitive dust". Uh, so. I don't know. Maybe that's useful to you. Didn't help me, unfortunately.

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.

00:29:01 Promo Promo

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

00:29:08 Music Music

[Volume increases.]

Ooh, la la, ah, oui oui (Hey)

Ooh, la la, ah, oui oui (Hey)

Ooh, la la, ah, oui oui (Hey)

Ooh, la la (DJ, DJ)

Ooh, la la

Ooh, la, la, la, la

Ooh, ooh

Ooh, la la, ah, oui oui

La, la, la, la, la

Ah, oui, ah, oui, ah

Ah, ah, ah, oui, oui, oui, oui, oui

[Music ends.]