

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, if you’re not from New York but you have any kind of idea what a chopped cheese sandwich is, I’m willing to bet you can thank two people for that: Desus Nice and The Kid Mero. They’re natives of the Bronx. They started first as podcast hosts, with their show <i>The Bodega Boys</i> . It’s a fast paced, chaotic, and very funny show where two best friends just kind of shoot the <i>[censored]</i> . They’ll talk about news, music, or how former NBA great, Derek Fisher, looks like a Verizon store manager.
			In 2017, they got their own TV show on Vice. In 2019, they moved over to Showtime. And since then, they have become a pretty big deal. Here’s just a partial list of their guests: Ludacris, Glenn Close, Bernie Sanders, Eddie Murphy, Barack Obama, and recently one Yo-Yo Ma, who was kind enough to play them the cello line from the song “Ruff Ryder’s Anthem”.
00:01:22	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:01:23	Clip	Clip	<b>Music:</b> A cello cover of “Ruff Ryder’s Anthem”.
			<i>[Desus and Mero cheer and hoot.]</i>
			<b>Desus:</b> I thought we were in Boston. We in Yonkers! Y-O, baby!
			<b>Mero:</b> Y-O!
			<b>Desus:</b> Home of the brave.
			<b>Desus and Mero:</b> <i>[Singing.]</i> Yo. Yo. That’s how Yo-Yo Ma rolls.
			<b>Mero:</b> WHAAAT!? Oh! Classic, classic! Let’s go! Oh my god!
00:01:38	Sound Effect	Transition	<b>Desus:</b> Right there, right yourself. Right yourself. Right yourself. Music swells and fades.
00:01:39	Jesse	Host	Anyway. When we had Desus and Mero on the show in 2017, we found the perfect person to interview them: Brooklyn native and public media legend, Ray Suarez. Let’s listen.
00:01:49	Music	Transition	Thumpy music with light vocalizations.
00:01:54	Ray Suarez	Host	Desus and Mero, welcome to <i>Bullseye</i> .
00:01:55	Mero	Guest	Heeeeeey!
00:01:56	Desus	Guest	Thanks for having us!
00:01:57	Mero	Guest	Thanks for having us, buddy! We’re here!
00:01:59	Ray	Host	The show has been on for not that long, right? Still pretty new.
00:02:03	Desus	Guest	<i>[Mero confirms.]</i> 61 episodes.

00:02:04	Mero	Guest	61 episodes, just wrapped 61 today. You know?
00:02:08	Desus	Guest	Still new. Still fun to do. Still pretty fresh. You know?
00:02:12	Ray	Host	Four nights a week. It's tough! You know, yes, the world keeps throwing up new things to talk about, but you gotta churn it out, day after day.
			<i>[They agree.]</i>
00:02:19	Desus	Guest	As it— But you know what? We've both had much worse jobs. So, when people are like, "It's tough," I just remember when I used to have to collect dead rats for a living, at a Bronx mechanic. And I say, "You know what? This is actually not that bad!"
00:02:31	Ray	Host	<i>[Mero agrees.]</i> Well, yeah, if you set the bar there. Yeah.
			<i>[They agree.]</i>
			You're probably right. <i>[Chuckles.]</i> Like any superheroes, you guys need an origin story. What's yours?
00:02:40	Mero	Guest	<i>[They chuckle.]</i> Summer school in the Bronx, man! We briefly crossed paths and then, like the internet does, it brings you back together, years later. And we kind of like reconnected on Twitter and then, through talking, we realized that we actually knew each other.
00:02:54	Desus	Guest	Think of it as a <i>Brokeback Mountain</i> Bronx High School edition, but with less sex.
			<i>[Mero agrees.]</i>
			But basically, when we first met at like summer school, we did not know we'd ever like cross paths again, let alone be on TV. But we just took a—we ran in different circles and we knew of each other. I was like, "Oh, there's that guy there." He was like, "Oh, that's that guy there." We're funny on the internet. We talked about the same topics. So, generally if something Bronx related popped up on Twitter, we'd both have comments on it.
			<i>[Mero chuckles.]</i>
00:03:28	Ray	Host	And people really enjoyed the banter, there. From there, it went to a podcast. Podcast went to a TV show. Boom, bang, bing, now we're on Viceland. We're in your homes four nights a week. So, summer school—I guess you guys were such good students, they wanted you there all year round?
00:03:32	Mero	Guest	<i>[Laughing.]</i> Yeah! All year! Of course!
00:03:33	Desus	Guest	Oh, yeah. Couldn't leave. Actually, the truth is—
00:03:34	Mero	Guest	Yo, the worst thing in the world actually is going to summer school for gym.
			<i>[Ray laughs.]</i>

00:03:45 Desus Guest I actually went to summer school for chemistry. For chemistry, 'cause I was not good at chemistry. But there's a lot of people that go to summer school for gym, believe it or not. Also, summer school is one of the few places you're guaranteed to have air conditioning in New York City.

*[Mero confirms.]*

00:03:52 Mero Guest So, if you had to go to summer school, it wasn't the worst thing. Shout out to Lehman High School for actually having air conditioners, 'cause I went to DeWitt Clinton High School and they did not have air conditioners. You know what I'm saying?

00:03:57 Desus Guest Lehman High School by White Castle. Shout out to—shout out to Lehman lions, my alma mater.

00:04:01 Ray Host Now, Desus, did you say you once picked up dead rats for a job? Did I hear that right?

00:04:06 Desus Guest I've had almost every possible job a person can have in New York City. You can ask Mero. Every day, I come up with a new job that I've worked.

*[Ray laughs.]*

I've had everything from high level computer programming jobs doing encryptions for credit card transactions, all the way down to collecting dead rats in a mechanic—a car mechanic on Webster Avenue in the Bronx, across from Twin Parks East projects—shoutout to King Bear. That's what we—that was the name of the mechanic shop. What happened was, an exterminator came through and laid out—they had a huge rat problem. When I say huge rat problem, I mean numerous rats and also very large rats. Large rats that could kind of push a Toyota Camry to the side when they were running. And it was the middle of the summer. The exterminator put down rat poison. It was a huge—it was like a warehouse. And so, it's 100 degrees. We're in the middle of a heatwave. And there's just this overwhelming stench of dead rats all over the place.

And the owner comes out with a compound bucket and a shovel and he says, "You need to find the dead rats around here."

And I thought he meant there were two or three. By the end of the day, there were like eight dead rats. That was me. I got my bucket full of rats and I went home, and that job aged me 14 years in one week.

00:05:16 Ray Host Now, when you negotiate upfront for that, is it by the rat or by the hour? Or is like the—

00:05:20 Desus Guest It's even—no, here's is the part where I blow your mind. I was not legally supposed to be working that job. That was my father's friend from Jamaica on that thing. There was no working papers signed. There was like no W2s. I was working off the books and, at the end of the week, he gave me \$60. And I had been working from almost 7AM to 7PM, Monday through Friday. And I walked off the job. I was so mad. I was like, "I'm never coming back here." Which was a huge embarrassment to my father, because that showed I did not have the Jamaican work ethic. But I was literally like—I was not getting paid a fair deal. Turned out, that \$60 was actually for my bus

fare for the next week, but even then, I had too much pride to go back. And I was like—I felt I had more to offer life than just picking up dead rats.

00:06:02 Ray Host And I think me being interviewed at NPR proves it. Yeah, I can—I could see the garage owner, you know, saying, “You know, what’s the matter? You get to work with animals!”

*[They laugh.]*

00:06:08 Desus Guest Don’t you love animals? I also—I wanted to know what he was doing with the rats, because he was like, “Don’t put them in the trash. I have something else for them.” Soooo...

*[They laugh.]*

00:06:14 Mero Guest He was making *[chuckles]*—he was making *[inaudible]*.

00:06:15 Desus Guest I don’t know if he’s selling them, if he was making furs.

00:06:18 Ray Host *[Laughing.]* Secondary market.

00:06:20 Jesse Host You’re listening to *Bullseye*. I’m Jesse Thorn. Our guests are Desus and Mero.

00:06:25 Ray Host What did you learn about how to be funny on Twitter or on the podcast? And how does that translate to being funny in front of a camera?

00:06:33 Desus Guest Oh, well being funny—anyone can be funny on Twitter, because you can sit in a dark room and not have to make eye contact with another human. The problem—

00:06:40 Mero Guest And you can think about a tweet for 20 minutes.

00:06:42 Desus Guest And you can workshop a tweet.

00:06:43 Mero Guest You know what I’m saying? Like...

00:06:44 Desus Guest But to make the jump from being funny on Twitter to being funny on a podcast is one thing. To make the jump from being funny on Twitter to being funny in front of a camera is a whooole—we’re talking the difference between shooting layups in your driveway versus playing basketball on an Olympic level. And that sounds very gas, but what we do? It takes—it’s—for us, it seems effortless. It seems effortless. But it’s—like, we’ve been doing it for so long, people forget that you’re standing in front of a room full of people who are just sitting there like, “Alright. Make me laugh.” You know what I’m saying? Like some mornings, you do not have it in you. Some mornings, you do not wanna crack jokes. You just wanna be grumpy and sit there. But you have to make the jokes. You gotta—listen. You gotta make the donuts.

And it’s easier to do that on Twitter, ‘cause you can have a bad day. You’re not getting paid to tweet. But then, to make a podcast and then do the podcast every week and be funny every week and not have a bad episode and then to add to that, four shows a week. You know? Like, it takes some time. It takes a while to get into that groove and to have the chemistry we have that’s trying to be funny. Like—not trying to be funny, but achieve being funny almost 24/7, it seems like.

00:07:47 Ray Host You’re working in a—in a genre and in a space that didn’t even exist practically until you guys were—and along with some others, inventing it. I don’t—with a media landscape broken up into so many little pieces, what is success? How do you even measure it?

00:08:06 Mero Guest Just making that—I feel like, for... for us, like, the success—we feel like we attained success like when we made that jump from like the internet to television. You know what I mean? And then—you know, being now on this deal with Vice, doing a show that we’re doing like autonomously. Like, “Yo, this is what we’re doing.” And it’s never like a—there’s never any bickering with like production. Like, “Yo, we’re gonna do this, we’re not gonna do this.” To me, that’s success. Autonomy, getting paid an amount of money that you think is worth what you’re doing and then just kind of making—getting to create on your own terms.

00:08:38 Desus Guest Yeah. Twitter is not—you know, like a lot of people do not get longevity from Twitter or from going viral.

*[Mero agrees.]*

Like, ask—uh, what was her name? The werewolf mom? What was it? The Chewbacca mom!

*[Mero echoes him.]*

You know, like, you can go viral with a hit once. Do that again. Do that three times. Do that four times. We basically went viral and stayed viral. You know? It’s not like—we didn’t accidentally end up on *The Ellen Show* doing the nae nae with Hillary Clinton.

00:09:01 Ray Host So, do you go in with a plan? You must go in with a plan!

*[They deny it.]*

00:09:07 Mero Guest There must be a sort of roadmap for the show? Or—  
The roadmap for the show is basically—is we get there in the morning. Me, Desus, and the crew on the show—Victor, shoutout Victor Lopez. He’s there. And we just—it’s literally, we sit around and talk about what we were interested in that happened the night before or is happening right now. And then just kind of distill that into, you know, a run of show that we then take and use like arbitrarily. Like, we could use stuff on there. We might leave some stuff out, but it really is just coming in in the morning, talking to a group of pals about *[censored]* you’re interesting in and then making it into a TV show.

00:09:42 Desus Guest And the core to running the show is—it’s a bit formal, because it’s very loose.

*[Mero agrees.]*

It’s like—they’ll basically show—tell us what assets they have available for whatever story we wanna talk about. And there’s not necessarily you have to use those assets. There’s no necessary—there’s no point A and point B; it’s not like, “Start here and end here.” We get to talk about whatever. It’s up to them to edit it. So, we try to leave it loose enough that it can be edited in any way. It doesn’t have to follow any—we never say, “Okay, we’re doing a Trump story, this story about kissing polar bears, and this story about a car crash.” So, it’s very loose and it’s very freeform. Just almost—it’s not there’s no thought to it, but we just walk in and we just kind of just record for two hours and the show is there.

			And the idea of doing research for the show, that's kind of funny, because there's almost no facts or—it's like go with your gut. A lot—
00:10:25	Mero	Guest	Yeah, facts don't matter.
00:10:26	Desus	Guest	There's been some very clearly... uh, I don't wanna—I really don't say "alternate facts"; I wanna say straight up lies and slander have been stated at times of the show, but you know, it's said with a good heart. So, that's why we can't be sued.
			<i>[They laugh.]</i>
00:10:39	Ray	Host	Well, you know, I was watching, and you guys were talking about Bob Marley's birthday and it was apparent to me that this had been a deeply researched subject. Let's take a listen.
			<i>[They chuckle.]</i>
00:10:50	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:10:51	Clip	Clip	<b>Music:</b> Upbeat music.

**Desus:** Shoutout to Bob Marley. He'd have been 72, today.

**Mero:** That's right.

**Desus:** Burning one in his honor. He was killed by the American government. Yes, I said that about other people last week, but it's true for Bob Marley as well. They killed him so that White students at NYU could put a poster of him on the wall. And that's the only reason they killed Bob Marley.

**Mero:** That's true. So, go to every—

**Desus:** I didn't fully flesh out that theory, but—

**Mero:** And genuflect.

**Desus:** I'm just throwing that out there.

*[Mero laughs.]*

**Desus:** Shout out to Bob Marley. He was a beautiful musician, great honor of Jamaica, and now all you guys think of him as a pothead and dirty White kids with dreads. So.

**Mero:** I mean, that—the most—yo.

*[Laughing from the background.]*

**Desus:** *[Laughing.]* Never have I—now, was that problematic or was that true?

**Mero:** Nooo, that was true.

**Speaker:** Slightly.

**Desus:** When you're spliffing tonight, when you're chiefing your keef, you pull out the acoustic guitar, you go on the quad.

**Mero:** Know what I mean? Take your shoes off first. Gotta be barefoot.

**Desus:** Right? After some hacky sack and you play “One Love”.

**Mero:** Know what I’m saying?

**Desus:** I forget—it was some protest in Astor Place—no. What’s that—Union Square! And they were doing the acoustic version of “One Love” and the whole crowd was singing along and I was like, “This is *[censored]* terrible.”

*[Laughter from the crew.]*

**Desus:** This is *[censored]*—this—I’m Jamaican. Break it up.

*[Cash register sound.]*  
Music swells and fades.

00:11:51 Sound Effect Transition  
00:11:52 Ray Host

*[They laugh.]*

00:12:01 Desus Guest  
Now, Desus, you know, I really appreciated that you tried to do a little fact check on the fly. “Was that problematic or was that true?” You wanted to get down to the bottom of it. You know what? Uuuh, I wanna say that’s true for the sake of I have to teach these devils and talk about what’s really happening, but no. That was—I feel like that kind of joke, if you’re not familiar with our show, you’d hear that and you’re like, “That’s not funny. That’s pretty much borderline racist.” But once you watch the show and you kind of get the temperature of the show and the tone of the show, you realize that’s clearly a joke. Like, I don’t really think the US government killed Bob Marley.

00:12:26 Mero Guest  
Also, Desus is Jamaican, so he thinks that he can just make up facts about Jamaican people and you have to just accept it.  
00:12:30 Desus Guest  
Who’s gonna check us? We have no—  
00:12:31 Mero Guest  
*[Laughing.]* Yeah, who’s gonna check us?!  
00:12:32 Desus Guest  
We have no fact board in Jamaica!  
00:12:33 Mero Guest  
*[Laughing.]* There’s no fact board in Jamaica! You don’t need that! *[Inaudible]* is the prime minister of Canada! Fact check that! Doesn’t matter! You don’t—you can’t!

00:12:40 Jesse Host  
Even more with Desus and Mero still to come. Don’t go anywhere! It’s *Bullseye*, from [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org) and NPR.

00:12:48 Promo Clip  
**Speaker:** This message comes from NPR sponsor Fidelity Wealth Management. VP Dylan Sanders shares why it’s important to understand clients’ values.

**Dylan Sanders:** People quantify dreams differently. So, it’s essential to be able to sit with a client and listen and ask questions and just begin to understand what it is in their life that they wanna pursue and help them create a roadmap to get there.

**Speaker:** To learn more, go to [Fidelity.com/wealth](http://Fidelity.com/wealth). Fidelity Brokerage Services LLC, member NYSESIPC.

00:13:22 Promo Clip  
**Music:** Discordant music overlaid with distorted police walkie talkie conversation.

**Speaker:** An officer pins a 16-year-old to the ground and punches out his teeth. But are there any consequences for the cop? For the first time, we take you inside the secret investigations that show how police protections in California shield officers from accountability. Listen to *On Our Watch*, a podcast from NPR and KQED.

00:13:44    Promo    Clip

*[Music ends.]*

**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:** That's how you get Joel Schumacher putting nipples on Batman!

**Speaker 1:** Yeah! It's like—no!

**James:** I didn't ask, and I made this as a gay—I say this as the gay man. Didn't ask for it. I don't need to see Batman's nipples on his suit!

**Speaker 1:** *[Laughs.]*

**James:** Who is this for?!

**Speaker 1:** *[Laughing.]* Who is this for?

*[Scene change.]*

**Speaker 2:** I did a bunch of research. I wanted to just know about the history of Black people in Argentina. So, not only did they erase Black people from their history, they also started to flipping use it as slurs.

*[Scene change.]*

**James:** We're not done. Like, we're not done with the work that needs to be done.

**Speaker 2:** Yeah.

**James:** And so, stay awake.

*[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.]*



00:14:34	Jesse	Host	It's <i>Bullseye</i> . I'm Jesse Thorn. If you're just joining us, our guests are Desus Nice and The Kid Mero, AKA the Bodega Boys, AKA Desus and Mero. They're the hosts of the Showtime talk show, <i>Desus &amp; Mero</i> , which you can catch Sundays and Thursdays at 11 o'clock, 10 Central. This interview originally ran in 2017. They're being interviewed by our friend Ray Suarez, the veteran public radio journalist, and native of Brooklyn, New York City. Let's get back into it.
00:15:05	Ray	Host	The... the local references. When Fat Joe is talking, in like total surprise about hearing birds chirp in the Bronx, I'm laughing my head off, because when I was a teenager watching Woodie Allen movies, and there's hardcore New York references and everybody—you know, I'm sitting in Manhattan, so everybody in the theater would laugh and I'd be sitting there thinking, "How's this going down in Pepper Pike, Ohio? Are they laughing at this in Council Bluffs, Iowa?" I don't know! Do they—or do they laugh because they think that something's funny and they kind of get it, but they don't really, but it's kind of funny?
00:15:48	Mero	Guest	Do you even care about that stuff? No, not at all. Personally, not at all. And I feel like people use context clues.
00:15:52	Desus	Guest	I mean, it's comedy you have to work for.
			<i>[Mero agrees.]</i>
			There's one level you'll get where it's just like, "I'm passively listening to this. This is funny. I get it." And you know there's some references you don't get, and I think that happens a lot with our podcast and the show. The first couple of times we'll make a reference or something, you're like, "I didn't really get that reference. I didn't know what they were—" You might turn on the closed captioning and you see something, you're just like, "I don't know if that was a place or if that's a thing. No need for me to ever google it or whatever." We might mention it again and now in your head, you're like, "Yo! What is—is that a place?"
00:16:18	Mero	Guest	"What is this thing?"
00:16:19	Desus	Guest	"Is that a thing? What the hell is a chopped cheese sandwich?" So, probably by the third or fourth time, you're like, "Okay, let me google this so I'm really—I really understand the references they're making and therefore I can get a better appreciation of the humor."
			We get a lot of people who say, you know, "I don't—I never go to East Tremont. I don't know anything about Houston Street in New York City. But when I listen to your podcast, I feel like I'm on the 2 train, I feel like I'm on the 6 train. I feel like I'm walking through that terrible tunnel that connects the B and the L train." And I think that's another reason people like to listen to us, because we definitely sound like we're from that New York that people wanted to grow up and move to—not this new, gentrified, safe, don't get stabbed in Time Square New York that exists now, but the little scary New York that used to exist in the beginning of <i>Law &amp; Order</i> , when the cop cars were still blue.
00:17:05	Ray	Host	And yet, there are some people who romanticize that old, scary, terrible New York.

*[They agree.]*

00:17:14 Desus Guest Where, you know—  
Which is—which is funny, because as people who grew up in there, that New York was not fun to live in. I grew—I remember, as a child, looking out the window in the Bronx and seeing constant fires every night, back when the whole Bronx was burning thing was happening. And because I was so little and I did not understand—my father was a photographer at the time, so he'd go out and take pictures of the burning buildings and in my head, I'd assume my father was an arsonist and was burning down half the Bronx, alone, on his own.

*[Mero chuckles.]*

But I remember—I remember, in the morning, like the smell of the fire and we had a German shepherd, and we'd play in the rubble that, a week ago, used to be a six-family apartment building across the street from my house. You can kind of hear that gruffness in our voices and our stories. And also, I feel like the Bronx is the last borough, too. They're still kind of recovering from that part of its history. So, there's still definitely that feeling of the old New York is still—when you talk to New Yorkers in the Bronx, they still have those memories and there's still a lot of reminders of the old New York. It hasn't really gone anywhere.

00:18:09 Ray Host Can you see the change, though, finally sticking its fingers up from upper Manhattan, across the Harlem River, up into the Bronx now?

00:18:17 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Desus:** Oh yeah! It's pretty terrifying.

**Mero:** Uuuuh, I mean, you see it. You see it, a little bit. Yeah.

**Desus:** A little thing called the Piano District, which was also—it also was called So-Bro, which is also—originally was South Bronx—to see—to go there and see like luxury condos and cafés on the street.

00:18:32 Desus Guest And sidewalk cafés on the street and you're like, "Wow! This is great! Finally, the Bronx is on the rise!" But then you see that these same stores and these—what look like opportunities for the Bronx are actually pushing very poor residents out of their own neighborhoods. The real Bronx is going to get washed away and just like overpriced condos and cafés. So, you see it and it kind of breaks your heart, but you can't—it's hard to stop gentrification.

00:18:52 Mero Guest I always felt safe, though, in the Bronx, man. Because like I always was—I would always like steel myself like, "Yo, the Bronx will never get gentrified because of its lack of accessibility to Lower Manhattan and blah, blah, blah." And this—'cause Brooklyn was ripe for the taking, bro. 'Cause you could get from Brooklyn downtown in like a blink of an eye. But from like certain parts of the Bronx, man, it takes you forever to get into Manhattan and Brooklyn. So, I was always like, "Man, we're good. We're safe. Blah, blah, blah." But the South Bronx—yeah, they started to kind of like dip their toes in there. *[Censored]* like that, and I doubled down on my, "Yo, the Bronx is safe," 'cause I was like, "Yo, they're starting in the literal worst part of the Bronx."

00:19:40	Ray	Host	Like, the South Bronx is the part of the Bronx that like even people from the Bronx are like, “Yooo, we’re going to a party over <u>there</u> ?!” You know what I mean? Like <i>[chuckles]</i> , “Word?! Uuuh, who’s going?!” You know what I mean? “Do they have a weapon?” You know what I mean? So, it’s like—if somebody—
00:19:43	Mero	Guest	Maybe it’s time to lay off that, “The Bronx is really safe,” stuff, to slow this down.
00:19:44	Ray	Host	You know what I mean?
00:20:01	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Let’s talk a little bit about culture—a little bit more about cultural references, because I got a real kick out of you basically taking the audience by the hand and... leading them along to something called “Héroe Favorito”. Let’s listen. <b>Mero:</b> <i>[Whispering.]</i> El “Héroe”.
00:20:03	Sound Effect	Transition	<b>Desus:</b> <i>[Whispering.]</i> Tu “Héroe”. Music swells and fades.
00:20:04	Clip	Clip	<b>Mero:</b> Yo, middle America, understand something—  <b>Desus:</b> They gotta put the wild, dramatic, acoustic guitar.  <i>[Playful guitar plucking.]</i>  <b>Mero:</b> Yeah, that’s right. Da-lala-da-dalale! America, the world is bigger than you, Iowa. I’m sorry.  <i>[Audience laughs.]</i>  <b>Mero:</b> We <i>[censored]</i> you, but we’re bigger than you. And there’s a lot of people that speak Spanish, and they need their own Drake. Romeo Santos is their Drake. You know what I’m saying?  <b>Desus:</b> Who would be the White equivalent of Romeo Santos?  <b>Mero:</b> Uh, the guy from Dashboard Confessional, probably?  <i>[Someone laughs. A bell dings.]</i>  <b>Mero:</b> Right?  <b>Speaker:</b> Whaaat?! What?!  <b>Mero:</b> <i>[Laughs.]</i> So, no?  <b>Desus:</b> What? WHAT?! You think Kenny G?  <b>Mero:</b> Kenny G!?  <b>Desus:</b> Kenny G!  <i>[Saxophone music.]</i>  <b>Desus:</b> What’s that guy’s name? Music swells and fades.
00:20:34	Sound Effect	Transition	

00:20:35	Ray	Host	So, that was about Romeo Santos, obviously. Now, a lot of people probably haven't heard of Romeo or his original band, Aventura. He's a singer. He's got Puerto Rican and Dominican parents. But when you use someone, you talk about someone in the show like Romeo Santos, you're taking a lot of the audience someplace new, but you're kind of using the familiar to do it.
00:20:56	Mero	Guest	Yo, for sure, man. Listen, Jeff Sessions just got—you know—activated as the evil leader attorney general and he's very anti-Dominican and I'm the antithesis of that. You know what I mean? I'm very pro-Dominican. I'm very proud of my roots. I'm very proud of my culture, my heritage. So, I just am blowing the trumpet everywhere I go. And I feel like, you know, people—you know what it was? A long time ago, a kid—this Italian kid came up to me, he was like, "Yo, what are you? Are you Black?" And I was like, "Uuuuuh." I was like—I didn't even know what that meant, 'cause I'm like six years old. I'm like, "I'm Dominican."
			And he was like, "What is that?" You know what I'm saying? Nobody—and he didn't even know what it was! So, I'm like, "Alright, so I'm gonna teach y'all what it is to be Dominican and have this swagger and this—you know what I'm saying? Limitless flavor to your whole being."
00:21:42	Ray	Host	Woow!  <i>[Mero laughs.]</i>
00:21:46	Mero	Guest	Limitless flavor to your whole being! That's <u>right</u> ! That's what we do! You know what I'm saying? But yeah, no, I mean like I think—again, like—
00:21:50	Ray	Host	I'm Puerto Rican. I'm sitting here getting paler as you speak.
00:21:53	Mero	Guest	Yo! <i>[Laughs.]</i> Don't worry about it!  <i>[They laugh.]</i>
			But you know what it is! As a Puerto Rican, you already know. Like, you bring your culture with you from your, you know, your motherland and you wanna just put people on. You know what I mean? And if you're from Iowa, you have no idea who Romeo Santos is, maybe you saw that episode and then you went and you listened to some early Aventura and your life has changed now! You know what I mean? And now you went, and you bought an acoustic guitar and you're working on your jams.
00:22:17	Ray	Host	You know, I love how White people—and the way you talk about them—come off as like you guys are in a different country. So, you're two Bronx guys sitting in Williamsburg.  <i>[They affirm.]</i>
			Which, let's face it, once you go out the front doors...  <i>[Desus and Mero agree repeatedly.]</i>
00:22:34	Mero	Guest	But they are— Pita restaurants galore!
00:22:36	Ray	Host	It's almost the way Margaret Mead talks about people in Samoa. You're talking about White people like... the way they talk and the

way they live and the way they dress. And everything else in America—everything else in American—you know—cultural products is geared toward White people.

*[They agree.]*

00:22:57 Mero Guest 'Cause that's the default! That's like America's default is White people. You know what I mean?

00:23:00 Desus Guest That's—a lot of the controversy and like quote/unquote "complaints" we would get in the beginning of the show were, "Why do you keep saying 'Whites' so much? Why do you keep—" Like, "Everything out your mouth is 'White people this, White people that, White people this'." And what people don't realize is a large portion of our show—a large portion of our show, rather, is—it's a othering of White people. For example, on TV you always see—sometimes even on Viceland, if you see Black people, they're on TV with closed captioning. You know, captions—subtitles underneath them. Or they're being explained, or they're being studied as this, "Ooh! What are these people doing?"

*[Mero groans.]*

Like, "How do they live?" And when you come to our show, it's like, no. We are the default people in our universe.

*[Mero agrees.]*

You guys are the other and now we're gonna study you and we're gonna do to you on this show what you guys do to us on maybe 99% of the other programing on TV. And it's just so jarring for people, because people are just—like, even quote—I'm gonna use a problematic term, here. Even "good" White people, good, East Coast liberals, they get offended at the show 'cause they're like, "I'm White and I don't do that. Why would you say that?"

00:24:03 Crosstalk Crosstalk And it's just like—  
**Mero:** Bro, if the shoe don't fit, don't put it on!

**Desus:** Damn! If it doesn't apply to you, what are you getting upset for?

00:24:06 Desus Guest **Mero:** Yeah! If it don't apply, let it fly!  
You know?! Like, is it that jarring to—and people will write and they're just like, you know, "It was my White privilege. I had to check it because I was getting—I—you know, it was honestly bothering me. It was—certain things you were saying were bothering me."

And I'm just like, "Why is this bothering you?"

*[Music fades in.]*

And if you take it at face value, it seems just like a lot of cursing and hip-hop and two guys from the Bronx. When you actually break it down to like the bone—you know, the bone marrow, it's a pretty intelligent show. We try to be intelligent and talk about smart things in a smart way.

00:24:34 00:24:37	Music Jesse	Transition Host	<p><i>[Mero agrees.]</i> Mellow, thumpy music. Desus and Mero from 2017, interviewed by the one and only Ray Suarez. Our thanks to Ray for interviewing them. You can catch their extremely funny show, <i>Desus &amp; Mero</i>, Sunday and Thursday nights, on Showtime. Their podcast, <i>The Bodega Boys</i>—which they are still doing—drops every week.</p>
00:24:59 00:25:02	Music Jesse	Transition Host	<p><i>[Music fades out.]</i> Relaxed piano music. That's the end of 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, thanks to a bit of late-night sale spotting, I bought a truly absurdly huge monitor. I mean, it is like... I basically feel like I am working in a scene in a Tom Clancy movie set in CIA headquarters.</p> <p>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.</p>
00:26:09	Promo	Promo	<p>You can also keep up with the show on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. We post all our interviews there. I... am on Twitter <a href="#">@JesseThorn</a>. And I think that's about it. Just remember: all great radio hosts have a signature signoff.</p> <p><b>Speaker:</b> <i>Bullseye with Jesse Thorn</i> is a production of <a href="#">MaximumFun.org</a> and is distributed by NPR.</p> <p><i>[Music fades out.]</i></p>