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| 00:00:00 | Music | Music | 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 | Music | <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 | Host | It’s Bullseye, I’m Jesse Thorn. If you know Will Forte from one thing, it’s probably Saturday Night Live. He was a cast member for eight years and among the hundreds of parts he played was my favorite: MacGruber. |
| 00:00:32 | Sound Effect | Transition | Music swells and fades. |
| 00:00:33 | Clip | Clip | Music: <i>MacGruber</i> intro song. <i>MacGruber! The guy’s a freaking genius</i> <i>MacGruber!</i> |
| 00:00:37 | Sound Effect | Transition | <i>[Music ends.]</i> Music swells and fades. |
| 00:00:38 | Jesse | Host | He also starred in and created the hit TV show Last Man on Earth, had parts on 30 Rock and a bunch of other television comedies. There was the Academy Award nominated Nebraska, in which he starred alongside Bruce Dern. |
| 00:00:52 | Sound Effect | Transition | Music swells and fades. |
| 00:00:53 | Clip | Clip | Music: Country music plays in the background. David Grant (Nebraska): How did you Mom end up getting married? Woody Grant: Uh, she wanted to. David: And you didn’t? Woody: <i>[Beat.]</i> I figured, what the hell? |
| 00:01:02 | Sound Effect | Transition | Music swells and fades. |
| 00:01:03 | Jesse | Host | But what about <i>Extra Ordinary</i> ? When I talked with Forte last year, it had just come out. It’s a comedy—sort of a horror comedy—set in Ireland. It’s really fun. This is the premise: ghosts are real. They can haunt just about anything: a home, or processed cheese, or... a gravel. So, they’re usually easy to miss, unless you have a gift of second sight. Rose, the hero of the film, has that gift. She’s played, brilliantly, by our friend Maeve Higgins, who’s been on our show before. Rose got it from her father, a professional medium and TV host. Only, the whole paranormal world isn’t really Rose’s scene, anymore. She has a steady job as a driving instructor. She likes it okay. The villain, Christian Winter, played by Forte. He’s an American singer, who wrote a hit song decades ago and is living off the royalties from that song in a castle not far from Rose’s small, |

Irish town. He has a plan, though: make a deal with the devil, sacrifice a virgin, and he'll be famous again. Of course, only Rose can stop him.

Before we get into my interview with Will, I wanna play a clip. *Extra Ordinary* uses a lot of faux archival footage on faux VHS. This comes from the beginning of the film. It's kind of a TV profile on Will's character, Christian Winter.

00:02:28 Sound Effect Transition
00:02:29 Clip

Music swells and fades.

Music: Surreal rock with heavy synth. Christian Winter provides vocals.

And I sang la-la-lala, 'cosmic woman, la-la-la. Cosmic wooooooman.

Interviewer (*Extra Ordinary*): And what was it about Ireland that made you want to move here, 20 years ago?

Christian Winter: I was seeking solitude. Ireland is steeped in the poetic, mystical, magic. The people are, uh... [*smugly*] a simpler people. Yes.

Claudia Winter: Yeah, and all the tax exemptions, of course.

Christian: [*Chuckles.*] Eh, yes.

Music:

And I sang la-la-lala, cosmic woman, la-la-la. Cosmic wooooooman.

Interviewer: Few songs in rock history have such instant success. Christian shot from anonymity to mega-stardom practically overnight. But that was it.

[*Record scratch followed by low, ominous tones.*]

Interviewer: A one-hit wonder. Christian's success was short-lived. None of his subsequent records even made it to the charts.

Claudia: Yes, everyone does call him One-Hit Winter and laughs at him, etc.

00:03:32 Sound Effect Transition

Music swells and fades.

00:03:34 Jesse Host

[*Laughing.*] Will Forte, welcome to *Bullseye*. And I so enjoyed *Extra Ordinary*.

00:03:37 Will Forte Guest

Thank you very much! It's so funny. It—when I'm—when I'm listening, without a visual component and I—the conceit of this movie is basically—there is—I play a character that—sorry, I'm jumping right into this, but I play a character who was—who had one huge hit and then I'm a washed-up old rock star and I want another hit, so I sell my soul to the devil, basically. And the movie's about this woman, Maeve Higgins, who tries to come after me. But there's always a little suspension of disbelief in watching any kind of movie. But—

[*They laugh.*]

But when I heard that—to believe that that was a—was a huge hit?! That song? Is like—oh. Huh.

[Jesse giggles and continues to laugh in the background.]

[Singing.] And I sing la-la-lala.

[Speaking.] That's something, I guess. You know. Well, I was gonna say a song that I didn't think should have been a hit but was a hit and I feel—I don't wanna be mean to anybody.

[Will agrees several times as Jesse speaks.]

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| 00:04:41 | Jesse | Host | I mean, you get the pleasure of—in this film—wearing some truly glorious—your character lives in a castle. You get to wear some castle-appropriate garb, in the film. And do some nice—some really cool prancing that I really <i>[laughing]</i> enjoyed. |
| 00:05:02 | Will | Guest | <i>[Chuckling.]</i> I guess that the wardrobe was great, 'cause a lot of—a lot of satanic robes and stuff like that. But it was kind of cold, when we were making this! And we were in this, you know—castles in Ireland don't have great, uh, heating systems. So. So, it was nice to stay warm and, yeah. It all worked. |
| 00:05:25 | Jesse | Host | There's some multi-scarf systems going on around your neck. |
| 00:05:28 | Will | Guest | Oh yeah. No, it's a real—it's a real Stephen Tyler meets... Alistair Crowley, I guess. <i>[Chuckles.]</i> |
| 00:05:37 | Jesse | Host | Were there any particular rock stars that you observed in preparing to play this character? |
| 00:05:45 | Will | Guest | I didn't really do anything like that. But the guys—Mike and Enda, who directed and wrote the movie—they kept talking about Chris de Burgh and I was—like, I—you know, I like “Lady in Red” and—god, I feel like he had some other songs that were popular, but that's the one he's most known for. But he seemed like a very nice guy, so I don't know why they kept bringing up— |

[Jesse laughs.]

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| 00:06:19 | Jesse | Host | You know, him as this person to be pointed to as <i>[laughing]</i> a Satanist! I don't think he's a Satanist! You know, he's—maybe he's very religious! I don't know. But, uh, yeah, I didn't— |
| 00:06:21 | Will | Guest | <i>[Laughing.]</i> It's possible he's a Satan—do you know that he's not a Satanist? |
| 00:06:47 | Jesse | Host | I don't. I'm—no! I will—I'm openminded to everything, because—another question that always comes up is, “Do you believe in ghosts?” And what—what the hell do I know?! I don't know. Maybe! I don't <u>not</u> believe in ghosts. I think too many people, you know, make the—just stand by this belief that they're not 100% about, but then they get real stubborn on it. I don't know. |
| 00:06:55 | Will | Guest | I think I don't believe in ghosts, because... if ghosts were real, I don't think I could deal that. |
| 00:06:56 | Jesse | Host | Really?! But I— |
| 00:06:58 | Will | Guest | I would get freaked out! <i>[Chuckles.]</i> |
| | | | But that's the thing, is I tend to believe that there might be ghosts. Some—you know, in some form or another. And—but they could be—but, you know, just like the movie shows, they're in just—like—little, teeny things. |

[Jesse laughs.]

00:07:23 Jesse Host It's not—it's not all *[makes a spooky "oooooh" ghost sound]*. It could just be, *[whispering meekly]* "Hey, I'm a ghost over here! I'm gonna help you with your day!" You know, that could be—
Maybe my favorite joke in the movie *[laughing]* is, "Have you ever had a bad dream after eating cheese?"

[Will laughs.]

00:07:37 Will Guest "It's very easy for ghosts—it's very easy for ghosts to occupy the live cultures in cheeses."
There's so much little fun stuff. In fact, when they sent me the script, they sent along with the script this—a thing that they had put together. Like, a three-minute clip—three minute short—that is made to look like an old, videotaped show. It, essentially, is the very beginning of the movie, if you go and see the movie. Which is Maeve Higgins' father used to—he'd do this series where he would, kind of, explain the "talents", which were—you know—basically the talents were your abilities to, you know, interact with ghosts and stuff like that. So, in this it's—you know, it's explaining how, *[in an airy, narrator voice]* "Ghosts are everywhere! They're in, you know—you could—anywhere you look, you could find them!"

And about ten seconds in, they're talking about the different places you can find them. And do you remember what he says? *[In the same airy voice]*, "A gravel!"

[Jesse cackles.]

00:08:47 Jesse Host Like, and there's just like a little spare, you know, one piece of gravel skittering along the *[breaks into a laugh]*—the driveway! And I was like—just, from that moment on. I hadn't even read the script, yet and I'm like, "Oooh, I'm gonna do this thing."
Let's hear a little bit more from *Extra Ordinary*, where my guest—Will Forte—plays one-hit wonder/tax shelter seeker, Christian Winter, who signs a deal with the devil. So, part of his plan is a virgin sacrifice. And he has gotten himself a virgin, in the film. But he—when he goes into his sacrificing area, while he's waiting for the Bloodmoon, he finds that the virgin is now in two pieces and the two pieces are basically the top third and the bottom third of the virgin.

[They chuckle.]

00:09:32 Sound Effect Transition And he's pretty upset about it. We find out that the fault for this lies with Claudia, his wife, who's played by the very funny Claudia O'Doherty.
Music swells and fades.

00:09:33 Clip **Music:** Distorted and ominous discordant tones.

Christian: *[Shouting in despair.]* Oooh, the virgiiiiin! Oh, where are you?! What in God's green undergarments did you do?!

Claudia: What?! I woke her up to ask her something and she kind of exploded. Sort of fell apart. It'll still work, yeah? I just sacrificed her a bit early.

Christian: Bloodmoon is tomorrow night. The ceremony can only happen then! *[Through gritted teeth.]* Now I shall have to procure another virgin!

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| 00:09:59 | Sound Effect | Transition | Claudia: I said sorry! Music swells and fades. |
| 00:10:01 | Will | Guest | <i>[Jesse laughs.]</i> |
| 00:10:03 | Jesse | Host | She is <u>so</u> funny, yeah. |
| 00:10:04 | Will | Guest | Claudia O'Doherty is <u>very</u> funny. And so cool, too. 'Cause she—she plays my wife, so we were on the same schedule. There were very few scenes that I was in that she wasn't, or that she was in that I wasn't. In fact, I think it was everything except for one scene, we were in together. So, we'd have the same days off and we would go out and just, you know, hang around Ireland. It was really fun to get to know her and she's a fantastic person. And just so funny! God. I just had a great time. |
| 00:10:34 | Jesse | Host | <i>[Will agrees several times as Jesse speaks.]</i> You mentioned how hard you worked on your sitcom, <i>Last Man on Earth</i> . There were three creators of the show—of whom you were one. Two of them almost immediately upon creating the show became the most successful, uh... action-comedy writer/producers in Hollywood, after they made <i>The Lego Movie</i> . |
| 00:11:00 | Will | Guest | Oh dear. <i>[Laughs.]</i> |
| 00:11:01 | Jesse | Host | And <i>[chuckles]</i> you were—you became the—basically the sole showrunner of the show, along with being its star. I can't imagine how much work it was to star in a network television sitcom where, if it's working, you're making literally almost two dozen episodes a year, while also... <i>[laughing]</i> writing! Or supervising the writing of all of those. |
| 00:11:31 | Will | Guest | It was sooo insane. It was just... it was a crazy amount of work. I never knew what went into doing a show. And I came up as a writer! And so, but it—but, you know, I got the <i>SNL</i> job before—before I was that high up the ranks that you were involved in too much production stuff. So, you know—so, I—all this stuff, I agreed to be the showrunner, at first, just thinking, "Oh! Well, you know, it's my show. I'm a control freak. I want it to turn out the way I want it to." But I had no idea what I was getting myself into, and I—it was the most amount of—it just— <u>crazy</u> amount of work. 'Cause it—you know, you'd be—for a while, you're just writing and you're trying to bank as much material as you—as you can. But then production starts, and so you have to be—especially for this show—I'm into—I was into everything, in the beginning! 'Cause it was just me and then Schaal—Kristen Schaal. And then there were, like, three people. |

But you're in everything! Also, when it's your show, you're—

[Will agrees several times as Jesse speaks.]

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| 00:12:45 | Jesse | Host | I mean, the premise of the show—to be clear—is that a virus has destroyed the human race. And initially, you believe yourself to be the only survivor. Eventually you find a couple of other survivors. <i>[Chuckling.]</i> But, like, basically—especially in the beginning—the camera is always on you. Like, there’s no... there’s no B-story where another guy from the office is stuck in the elevator, or something, so that you’re offscreen for 7 of the 23 minutes of the show. It’s just you. |
| 00:13:17 | Will | Guest | Yeah. And then—and then even later on, when more people came in and there were a couple—there would be scenes that I wasn’t in, it’s still my show. So, I gotta stay down there and kind of check out what they’re doing. And then—then, once we start editing, then it’s just—then you’re trying to write... and try—you’re acting all day, trying to find times within that day to write. And then editing on weekends. It was... I don’t know. I think I worked it out, at some point. It was like... 120-hour work weeks for six months in a row or—I forgot the exact thing, but it was just so mentally and physically draining. The best—the best way to describe it was it was the type of—the type of workload where I remember New Year’s, one year, writing until five minutes before the ball dropped, on TV. Just scrambling over to my next-door neighbors, grabbing a cup of champagne, as it—you know, hit midnight. Cheers-ing, slurp down the champagne. Go back over at 12:10, and then start writing again. |
| 00:14:49 | Jesse | Host | It’s—that was the kind of <i>[laughing]</i> it was just bonkers! I must have gone out of the house—besides, you know, six times? To do—over that first season. It was—it was just an insane amount of work. How did you handle that workload over that period of time, like, physically and emotionally? |
| 00:14:55 | Will | Guest | Uuh, I got very selfish. I lived selfishly, is the—is the—that’s the overall way. But it was—you know, I drank a little too much. I got unhealthy physically. I, you know—I... back then I was—I was a runner, so I—that’s how I’d get my stress out. And—but there was just so much going on all the time that I couldn’t. I didn’t have time to run, anymore. And I was staying up too late to do everything. And so, I wouldn’t get enough sleep. And then you’d be eating and snacking more to keep your energy up, during the days. And just—and then the stress. I couldn’t get to sleep at night, ‘cause you’d be amped up. But it’d be like, “Geez, I—if I go to bed right now, I’m only gonna get five hours of sleep. Uuugh.” You know. |
| 00:16:44 | Jesse | Host | So, I’d have a drink to, you know, help me fall asleep. And that’s not a healthy way to get to sleep. And then you wake up a little, you know—little hangover. I’d learn to—I don’t know. I just was... I would gain 30, 40 pounds during the season and then try to start taking it of in—it was—it was no way to live. And that’s just the physical part. The mental part was, you know—tons of friendships that were just put on hold. Not being able to be a great friend or boyfriend or—just family member. It was—it was tough. And I have—you know, after the show got canceled, I just went out and traveled and just got to know myself again. I feel like I am a version of myself that I like more than I was. And I wasn’t a monster or anything, but— <i>[Solemnly.]</i> You seem like a monster, now. |

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| 00:16:45 | Will | Guest | Thank you. |
| 00:16:50 | Jesse | Host | <p><i>[They wheeze into laughter.]</i></p> <p>More <i>Bullseye</i> after a quick break. Still to come: we haven't talked with Will Forte about <i>Saturday Night Live</i>! He was on that show for eight years! We'll talk about it after the break. It's <i>Bullseye</i>, from MaximumFun.org and NPR.</p> |
| 00:17:03 | Music | Transition | Cheerful music. |
| 00:17:04 | Jesse | Promo | <p>This message comes from NPR sponsor Odoo.</p> <p>Do you run a business or manage a team? Then it's time to switch to Odoo. Odoo is a suite of business applications designed to streamline, automate, and simplify any company. Odoo has apps for everything! CRM, inventory, manufacturing, sales, accounting, you name it, Odoo's got you covered. So, stop wasting time and start getting stuff done with Odoo. For a free trial, go to Odoo.com/Bullseye.</p> |
| 00:17:40 | Promo | Clip | <p><i>[Music fades out.]</i></p> <p>Music: Ominous, disorienting music.</p> <p>Speaker: What happens after a police officer shoots someone who's unarmed? For decades in California, internal affairs investigations—how the police police themselves—were secret. Until now. Listen to <i>On Our Watch</i>, a podcast from NPR and KQED.</p> |
| 00:18:00 | Promo | Clip | <p><i>[Music fades out.]</i></p> <p>Music: Cheerful, jazzy, old-timey music plays in background.</p> <p>Freddie Wong: Hey, you like movies? How about coming up with movie ideas over the course of an hour? 'Cause that's what we do every week on <i>Story Break</i>, a writers' room podcast where three Hollywood professionals have an hour to come up with a pitch for a movie or TV show based off of totally zany prompts.</p> <p>Will Campos: Like that time we reimagined <i>Star Wars</i> based on our phones' autocomplete!</p> <p>Will: Luke Skywalker is a family man and it's <i>Star Wars</i> but it's a good idea.</p> <p><i>[Multiple people laugh.]</i></p> <p>Matt Arnold: Okay. How about a time we wrote the story of a bunch of Disney Channel Original Movies based solely on the title and the poster?</p> <p>Matt: Okay, Sarah Hyland is a 50-foot woman. Let's just go with it, guys.</p> <p>Freddie: Or the time we finally cracked the Adobe Photoshop Feature Film.</p> <p>Matt: Stamp Tool is your Woody, and then the autofill—</p> <p>Freddie: Ohhhh.</p> |

Matt: —Is the new Buzz Lightyear!

[Multiple people laugh.]

Freddie: Join us as we have a good time imagining all the movies Hollywood is [accusatory voice] too cowardly to make! [Dramatic voice] *Story Break* comes out every Thursday on Maximum Fun. [Regular voice] I don't know why I'm using this voice now.

[Music ends.]

00:18:46 Jesse Host

Welcome back to *Bullseye*. I'm Jesse Thorn. My guest is Will Forte. He was a cast member on *Saturday Night Live* for eight years. He created and starred in *The Last Man on Earth*, on Fox, the movie *MacGruber*, as well. When we talked last year, he'd just starred in the film *Extra Ordinary*. You can stream that now, at home. Let's get back into our conversation.

I don't want to let any more of this conversation pass before I bring up *MacGruber*.

[They chuckle.]

Your... your recurring *Saturday Night Live* sketch turned television commercial turned feature film. Um.

00:19:28 Will Guest

We like to hit the commercial part the most. You know.

00:19:30 Jesse Host

Yeah. [Laughing.] Well! I mean, that's one of the—!

00:19:32 Will Guest

We usually lead with commercial. [Chuckles.]

00:19:34 Jesse Host

That's one of the craziest parts of the—there are many crazy parts of the *MacGruber* story.

[Will agrees.]

Which, as I like to think of it as a story—a sort of hero's journey. But, like, one of the craziest parts of *MacGruber* is that it was a recurring *Saturday Night Live* sketch. Which—I mean, we can—let's start—we'll—let's start by listening to the *Saturday Night Live* version of *MacGruber*. Um. Which is basically—the joke of which... started out as... you know, MacGyver was famous for coming—improvising solutions to episodic television challenges through, like, things that were left around.

Initially, *MacGruber* was kind of like what if those things were gross things. And then the joke sort of became, over time, what is the worst person that could star in a regular television show. And also, like, how much badness can we cram into a profoundly short sketch that just ends with everyone exploding?

[Will chuckles.]

Um, so this is—this is *MacGruber* on *Saturday Night Live*. And he and his coworker are racing the clock, diffusing a bomb—as they always were—when an oddly familiar stranger shows up with some advice.

00:20:56 Sound Effect Transition

Music swells and fades.

00:20:57 Clip Clip **Music:** Suspenseful music.
[The sound of a siren.]
Vicky: *[Distressed.]* MacGruber! This door is welded shut! And from the looks of that dynamite, we've got exactly 20 seconds!
MacGruber: Okay, just stay calm. Because everything I need to diffuse this bomb is inside this room. Vicky, toss me that pen cap.
Vicky: On the way, MacGruber!
MacGruber: New guy! What's your name again?
New Guy: *[Beat.]* MacGyver.
[Audience laughs.]
MacGruber: MacGyver? That's a stupid name. MacGyver, pass me that thumbtack.

00:21:17 Clip Clip **MacGyver:** I'd go with the gum wrapper.
MacGruber: And I care about what you're saying because?
[Jesse chuckles over the audio.]
MacGyver: I'm just saying, I'd do it a little differently.
MacGruber: Well MacGyver, you're not MacGruber!
MacGyver: That's what you think.
MacGruber: What's that supposed to mean?
Vicky: *[Cartoonishly alarmed.]* Ten seconds!
MacGyver: It was a cold December night.
[Chiming transition music fades into a wintry scene, complete with the sounds of sleigh bells and the click of a typewriter. Slowly, heartwarming music begins to swell.]

00:21:34 Clip Clip **Doctor:** It's a boy, Mr. MacGyver. What are you gonna call him?
MacGyver: MacGruber.
[Scattered laughter from the audience.]
Doctor: MacGruber MacGyver?
[Jesse laughs over the audio.]
MacGruber: The perfect name for the perfect baby.
Vicky: Three seconds, MacGyver!
[A beep.]

MacGyver: Don't you worry, MacGruber. Nothing bad is ever gonna happen to you. Not on my watch—

[MacGyver is interrupted by a loud explosion.]

MacGruber: MACGYVEEER!

[Trilling transition music.]

00:21:57 Sound Effect Transition

Music swells and fades.

00:21:58 Jesse Host

So, years ago the great film critic, Roger Ebert, wrote this review of one of my favorite movies—*Wet Hot American Summer*—that was a parody of the... “Hello Muddah! Hello Fadduh!” song?

[Will agrees.]

And Roger Ebert, for all his many gifts... it wasn't the world's greatest parodist, but the—

[The giggle.]

Like! The point of it was that this movie was just totally execrable. It was just really, really horrible. And I remember feeling so betrayed by that review, when I saw the movie and it became one of my favorite films. And I was thinking of that as I read the *New York Times* review of *MacGruber*, by AO Scott, who's a wonderful critic—really insightful, brilliant critic—who opens, essentially, with the question—and he literally asks this question, “Why does this exist?”

[Will wheezes into a soft laugh.]

And then *[laughing]* I was also struck—it continues along those lines, questioning why a movie like *MacGruber* would have come into existence. Later on, he says, “Kristen Wiig”—who was your costar in the film—“Kristen Wiig is one of the funniest people alive. Mr. Forte is not.”

[They laugh.]

00:23:20 Will Guest

Agreed!

00:23:21 Jesse Host

Which gains extra poignance—now, I disagree, but it gains extra poignance with the—with the, you know, style guide formality of *The New York Times* referring to you as Mr. Forte. But yeah, like, *MacGruber* was really brutally received.

[Will agrees.]

00:23:39 Will Guest

I will say, I thank God my—of—

00:23:42 Jesse Host

I will—wait, go ahead. And then—

Here, what I was gonna say is: my friend, Jordan—God bless him—saw the movie in an early screening, a pre-release screening, and said, “Oh my god, *MacGruber* is so funny. You have to go see *MacGruber*.” And I went and saw *MacGruber* and I... cried with laughter. It was one of the funniest—

[Will thanks him.]

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| | | | —one of the most laughing I've ever done in a movie theatre. But! It was a box office bomb and broadly— |
| 00:24:10 | Will | Guest | Def a box office bomb. |
| 00:24:11 | Jesse | Host | Broadly, poorly reviewed. Not universally, but broadly. |
| 00:24:15 | Will | Guest | Oh, I would say... I would say... I would argue that. |
| 00:24:20 | Jesse | Host | Okay. |
| 00:24:21 | Will | Guest | Um, certainly there were a lot of places that gave it horrible reviews, but there were some very good reviews from respected critics. You know, Peter Travers loved it. And, God, I can't remember the other people. But I would say—I wouldn't... I was actually happy that it was not skewered as much as it could have been. Like, you know, you go to Rotten Tomatoes and, you know, there's... <i>Catholic Mothers Digest</i> , or whatever, that's reviewing it and that's part of the 100%. And it's like, well—you know, yeah of course! Of course, this is not a movie for that. |

[Jesse laughs.]

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| | | | And I'm—but I was raised Catholic. So. So, I knew specifically that—I knew <i>[laughs]</i> —I knew this was not for my Catholic brethren. You had tried putting a celery stick in your butt, at Sunday School. |
| 00:25:09 | Jesse | Host | You had tried putting a celery stick in your butt, at Sunday School. |
| 00:25:13 | Will | Guest | Yeah, exactly! |
| 00:25:14 | Jesse | Host | And found that it did not fly in that context. |
| 00:25:15 | Will | Guest | No! But certainly, certainly that—you know—that the... there were bad reviews and I understand that. I... loved the movie, am proud of the movie, and I think that, um... I would say that I think a lot of the people who reviewed it—you could tell who wasn't gonna give it a chance in the first place. You'd go through and you'd go, "Oh, this person never was gonna give it a chance. Or maybe didn't even watch it." Or, like, you just—there were so many things about—you could—you know, they would make a joke about, you know, "Why would you do, you know..." Something about how... review it in a way that made it seem like it was the <i>SNL</i> sketch, where it—the movie had nothing to do with the sketch. |

So, it was like, "Wait, did you—did you see the movie?! This was not this repetitive romp of explosions over and over again." I don't know. It—you know, people gonna review it how they want to and, you know, AO Scott reviewed it! Yeah, sure, fine! I don't know—you know. I disagree and I don't—I don't know that I would have trust in his reviews of comedy movies, to be honest. Or—you know, it's fine. Review! If that's how you feel, that's fine. You know.

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|----------|-------|-------|---------------------|
| 00:26:44 | Jesse | Host | He was wrong! |
| 00:26:45 | Will | Guest | I think he's wrong. |

[Jesse agrees.]

| | | | |
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| | | | But, you know, what do I know?! I wrote the actual movie, so it's certainly gonna— |
| 00:26:49 | Jesse | Host | I didn't! |
| 00:26:50 | Will | Guest | It's definitely gonna be up my alley, because it's all freaking dumb stuff that I like. |
| 00:26:53 | Jesse | Host | Look, I'm a revered culture-critic, too, AO Scott. You're wrong on that one. |

[Will cackles.]

00:26:58 Will Guest Jesse Thorn from NPR says so.
I don't know that I'd want to sit next to him at a dinner party!

[Jesse laughs.]

00:27:03 Jesse Host It sounds like, you know. You know.
He doesn't sound like a fan.

[Will agrees.]

00:27:34 Crosstalk Crosstalk But I imagine that having that—having that kind of deeply mixed reception to the film is, in a way, in its own way, galvanizing. Like, I also thought... I don't know, *Anchorman* was very funny. I don't know what is a good example of a well-reviewed—*Bridesmaids*! *Bridesmaids*, very well reviewed, super funny. I also thought it was super funny.
Will: Love that movie.

Jesse: *Bridesmaids* isn't as important to my personal identity as *MacGruber* is—in part because *MacGruber* was divisive. Just as, like—I don't know. I love both the movie *Babe* and the movie *Babe: Pig in the City*.

Will: Okay.

00:28:03 Will Guest **Jesse:** Like, both those are two movies that I really loved. But you'll hear me talk a lot more about *Babe: Pig in the City*, because it was reviled by many, and I think unfairly so! I think it's just as wonderful as *Babe*. It's just different.
Is *MacGruber* kind of like your Rush? The band?

[Jesse agrees with a bright laugh.]

00:28:19 Jesse Host It's like they're—you feel like, because there are some people who are super pro it, some people are very anti, so you're like—it gives you—it just gets up your dander and you—
It's a real thrill! But I imagine that when you make a movie like that, what you get is—you know, certain people certainly avoiding your gaze, in the immediate aftermath. But many people, like, texting you and saying, "Look, I saw *MacGruber*. It ruled!" You know what I mean?

00:28:37 Will Guest Well, I will—for sure, we do not—or at least, you know, I don't wanna drag your man, John, into this but my—I've always thought, like—I'm not trying to make something for, you know, for everyone. I'm trying to make something that I would wanna see, that's something that I would like. So, you know, certainly it makes sense that a ton of people wouldn't like it, too! But, you know, I feel like when you don't—you know, if you water it down and try—not water it down, but if you try to... try to think too much about, "Oh! This joke wouldn't work 'cause some people might think this is gross!" Or, you know, and you think too much about what people might not like. Just go through—make yourself happy. And if you're doing that, the product is gonna show how much you like it and—

00:29:40 Jesse Host I don't know. Does that make sense? I feel like I'm doing a bad job of putting words together. I mean, I think your passion for it is evident. And your colleagues', who created it with you, is evidenced by the fact that it's now ten years later and, you know, you had a network television show for a while. And, like... in that ten years, it's clear that the three of you who created this film have really focused a lot of your career juice on either making a sequel to the film—

[Will agrees enthusiastically.]

00:30:13 Crosstalk Crosstalk —or making, now—now it looks like there will be a television sequel to the film.
Will: Yeah! Things are looking good.

00:30:15 Will Guest **Jesse:** A streaming sequel. You know, it's... you know, if this works out, it will be a dream come true, because we just had so much fun doing it. We... it was another situation like *Last Man on Earth*, in that—not the—not the hard work part of it. It was—this was... we just got to work with—the part that is very much like *Last Man on Earth* is the people involved in the making of the *MacGruber* movie were fantastic. And it was just this really magical experience of doing this thing with a bunch of people you love. So, we just have been wanting to get that group back together.

00:31:11 Jesse Host Obviously, it's—you know, people are on different shows, so we can't get the whole group together. But, you know, it's just exciting to get to work with people that you like and have a good time and, you know... if—I'm just very excited to hopefully be in that position. I wanna play a *Saturday Night Live* sketch that you did where you—I think pretty much all the—all the setup this needs is that you are a kid competing in a television spelling bee.

00:31:25 Sound Effect Transition Music swells and fades.

00:31:26 Clip *[The sound of something brushing against a microphone.]*

Spelling Bee Host: The word is business.

[A long beat. The sound of breath against a microphone. The audience laughs.]

Contestant: *[Timidly.]* Could you repeat the word, please?

[The audience laughs and continues to laugh intermittently as the sketch goes on.]

Host: Business.

Contestant: Could you use it in a sentence, please?

Host: Business. I'm in the insurance business.

Contestant: *[Beat.]* Could you spell the word, please?

Host: *[Dryly.]* No.

Contestant: *[Beat.]* Could you repeat the word, please?

Host: The word is business.

Contestant: *[Beat.]* Business. B-R-D-T-F-K-L-N-G-H-R-K-W-T-F-N-Y-L...

00:32:30 Sound Effect Transition

Music swells and fades.

00:32:31 Jesse Host

Now, I think—Kevin had to—my producer had to fade that out, there.

[Will laughs.]

00:32:37 Will Guest

It goes on for a good while. *[Laughs.]*

00:32:39 Jesse Host

It goes on for a long time. *[Chuckles.]*

00:32:42 Will Guest

[Laughing.] Especially for network television.

That was one I used to do at The Groundlings for a long time. And it was... it—I put it up at the—at *SNL* to see if they would let me do it, and it went well at the table read, but then they ended up not picking it. So, every once in a while, you can put a sketch back up a second time. So, I put this one up—‘cause I had done it 50 times at The Groundlings, or something like that. It was my favorite sketch I had ever done.

[Jesse chuckles.]

Or among my favorite three. And... and so, put it up a second time. They didn't put it in. So, then I put it up a third time! Which is—I maybe have seen once or twice, but—

00:33:30 Jesse Host

Pretty thirsty move.

00:33:31 Will Guest

Yes. Did not get put in. Put it up a fourth time! Didn't get in. And it would still go well at the table reads! And finally, on the fifth time, Jack Black was the host and he, I think, talked Lauren into doing it.

[Jesse chuckles.]

And it was... I'm so—I will always be thankful to Jack Black, 'cause it was a really special experience to get to do something that you had done on the—there's something about doing stuff at *Saturday Night Live* that you used to do at The Groundlings—or anywhere before you were at *SNL*—and it is—and that was a very special experience.

00:34:15 Jesse Host

I'm imagining, now, you pitching that sketch to, like, Derek Jeter. Someone like that.

[They laugh.]

00:34:22 Will Guest

Well, it's a—I understand why it took so long to make it in, because there's not really anything for the host to do. So, it's—and, you know—I think I—

00:34:30 Jesse Host

[Teasing.] I don't know that that's the number one reason it didn't get in.

[Will agrees.]

I would say probably the number one reason it didn't get in is that it's too weird to be on television. *[Laughs.]*

00:34:39 Will Guest It is! I mean, it—and I will give Lauren a ton of credit for putting it on, because it is—it must be very scary, because there's—there's really very few jokes. It's really that thing where they either... are... laughing at it or they don't laugh at it all and then you're just sitting there while they don't laugh at all. But the—it's—it was—I was—So, I was happy that he gave it a chance.

00:35:06 Jesse Host You were on *Saturday Night Live* for a long time, doing that kind of thing. Very consistently. And it was a lot of fun for me and other people who grew up really loving, like, an end of the night Jack Handey sketch, or whatever.

00:35:28 Will Guest Ah, Jack Handey. You were the best.

00:35:29 Jesse Host But *[laughs]* I wonder if you ever thought, like, maybe if I just worked up one... impression of a senator.

[They laugh.]

00:35:50 Will Guest Or, like, one good Kardashian bit. Or whatever. I don't know, it just—it doesn't—it doesn't work like that! So, you know, I like kind of weird stuff. And it's... for some reason, some people like my brand of weird and other peoples don't. And it's—that's why I always—oh my god, like—people like Wiig are—I'm so impressed by, because she—her stuff is so weird and absurd, but it's also like she's able to convey it in a way that, just, so many people—it hits home for so many people, and I was never fully able to, like, you know. Like AO Scott says, you know.

[Jesse cackles.]

Kristen Wiig, incredibly funny. You know, some people just are like—AO Scott me and some people do not AO Scott me. But it's—you know, it's—so I have so much—Wiig is so amazing. Or, like, Will Ferrell! So—is so absurd and weird and fun and just, like, you know—it's—I just don't have that same gift of being able to connect with everyone.

Chris and Phil—Chris Miller and Phil Lord, who were my partners in *Last Man on Earth*—they're really good with that, too. Just, you know, incredibly absurd and fun, smart stuff that is really—somehow, they're able to really just convey it to audiences in a way that I'm still learning to try to do. So, you know. I'm not—I'm not in the grave, yet. So, who knows? Maybe when I'm 70 *[laughing]* I'll figure it all out.

00:37:27 Jesse Host Well, Will Forte, I am so grateful to you for coming to be on *Bullseye*. It's something I've hoped could happen on the show, one day, for years and year and years.

00:37:36 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Will:** Oh my god, thank you for having me!

00:37:40 Will Guest **Jesse:** And I'm such a fan. I'm so glad to get to sit here. This has been very therapeutic, and I appreciate—thank you. I, uh... you know. It is fun to come here and talk about *Extra Ordinary*, too. 'Cause I love that movie.

00:37:51 Jesse Host I mean, good news, Will: when *MacGruber* the television show comes out, we're planning an hour long special.

| | | | |
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| 00:37:58 | Will | Guest | <i>[Music fades in.]</i> |
| 00:38:01 | Jesse | Host | I would love to come back. This is great! <i>[Laughing.]</i> With the support of our friends at National Public Radio! |
| | | | <i>[They laugh.]</i> |
| | | | They're gonna send Robert Siegel over here to help me out. Will Forte, thank you. |
| 00:38:11 | Will | Guest | Thank you! |
| 00:38:12 | Music | Music | "Cosmic Woman" from <i>Extra Ordinary</i> plays. |
| | | | <i>In my summer house in Berlin</i> <i>Just as winter ends</i> <i>My darling</i> <i>A spaceship landed on the lawn</i> <i>We danced until the dawn</i> |
| | | | <i>[Music lowers in volume as Jesse speaks.]</i> |
| 00:38:30 | Jesse | Host | Will Forte! As you heard in this interview, I am a very big <i>MacGruber</i> fan, so it brings me profound delight to inform you there will be a <i>MacGruber</i> TV series. It will star Forte alongside his movie co-stars, Kristen Wiig and Ryan Phillippe. They also just announced co-stars on the show will include Sam Elliott, Laurence Fishburne, and Mickey Rourke. Look for that on the streaming service Peacock, later this year. |
| | | | If you need a Forte fix now, you can hear him later this month in the animated movie, <i>America: The Motion Picture</i> , which is a funny and very fictionalized retelling of the founding our great republic, brought to you by some of the same folks who made <i>Archer</i> . |
| 00:39:17 | Music | Music | <i>[Volume increases.]</i> |
| | | | <i>And I sang la-la-lala</i> <i>Cosmic woman, la-la-la</i> <i>Cosmic woman</i> |
| | | | <i>[Music decreases in volume as Jesse speaks.]</i> |
| 00:39:27 | Jesse | Host | That's the end of another episode of <i>Bullseye</i> . <i>Bullseye</i> is created from the homes of me and the staff of Maximum Fun, in and around great Los Angeles, California—where spring is springing and my kid is going to summer camp at the Los Angeles Arboretum, where there are a lot of peacocks and sometimes, they do that whole peacock thing with the little dance and the feathers all the way out and you're like, "Man. <i>[Chuckles.]</i> Peacocks are amazing! We really take peacocks for granted." |
| | | | Our 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. Watch out for The Go! Team's new record, just around the corner. |

You can also keep up with our 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 sign off.

00:40:36 Promo Promo

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

00:40:43 Music Music

[Volume increases.]

*And I sang la-la-la
Cosmic woman, la-la-la
Cosmic woman*

[Music fades out.]