

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.
00:00:19	Jesse Thorn	Host	It’s <i>Bullseye</i> . I’m Jesse Thorn. Up next, Busy Philipps. She’s being interviewed by my friend and co-host, Jordan Morris. Busy’s first big break came when she was just 20 years old. She starred alongside Seth Rogan, Linda Cardellini, and Jason Segel in the acclaimed and influential TV show, <i>Freaks and Geeks</i> . She followed that up with an appearance on <i>Dawson’s Creek</i> and has since amassed well over 60 credits on the big and small screens. Including, by the way, an appearance on one of my favorite shows: <i>Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt</i> , created by Tina Fey and Robert Carlock.
00:00:53	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:00:54	Clip	Clip	Lillian Kaushtupper (<i>Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt</i>): I control her trust. And I know exactly what she wants! More money for one of her stupid business ideas! <i>[Quirky music fades in.]</i> Sheba Goodman: It’s a white noise app, but instead of doing that quiet sound for hours, it makes one loud sound all at once. Time saver! <i>[Scene change.]</i> Sheba: The largest human organ is the skin, right? Nnnot anymore! <i>[Scene change.]</i> Sheba: I need \$10,000. I found the perfect space for my year-round Halloween store. It’s a year-round Christmas store that went out of business for some reason.
00:01:19	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:01:20	Jesse	Host	These days, Busy is starring in <i>Girls5Eva</i> . <i>Girls5Eva</i> , that’s spelled by the way, with a number 5 and an “eva”. E-V-A. <i>Girls5Eva</i> is about a fictional girl group. Like kind of Spice Girls or N-SYNC era thing. They had a handful of smash hits right at the turn of the millennium. Their videos were on MTV. Their logo was on kid’s backpacks. And then, like a lot of acts from that era, they just sort of faded away. But when our story starts, on the TV show <i>Girls5Eva</i> , things are changing. Seemingly out of nowhere, a hot, young rapper samples one of <i>Girls5Eva</i> ’s hits. Suddenly, the band is getting buzz again. The remaining members have a shot at revitalizing their careers. The only thing is, it’s been almost two decades. Our guest, Busy Philipps, plays Summer. Summer is the self-proclaimed hot one of the group. Since the band broke up, she hasn’t done much in the entertainment world, aside from bombing a

handful of *Real Housewives* auditions. Anyway, the scene we're about to hear from *Girls5Eva* happens early on in the show. The band has just gotten a lifechanging offer: Jimmy Fallon has invited them to do a reunion performance live on *The Tonight Show*.

They leave their managers office in a daze. It's a huge gig, but are they up for it after all these years? Summer, who's portrayed by our guest Busy Philipps, swoops in with some words of inspiration at the end of the clip.

00:02:57 Sound Effect Transition

Music swells and fades.

00:02:58 Clip Clip

Speaker 1: I haven't even performed since our follow-up album tanked.

Speaker 2: Why did it have to come out on September 10th!?

[Scene change with a record scratch.]

Music: An upbeat pop song.

*Quit flying planes at my heart
(Quit flying planes at my heart)
Quit flying—*

[Scene change with a record scratch.]

Summer: You guys. *[Horn honk.]* You never forget how to perform. It's like riding a bike into the river to get your husband to pay attention to you.

00:03:17 Sound Effect Transition

Music swells and fades.

00:03:18 Jordan Morris Host

[Chuckles.] Uh, Busy Philipps. Welcome to *Bullseye!*

00:03:21 Busy Philipps Guest

Hey! Thanks so much for having me.

00:03:23 Jordan Host

So, your new television show, *Girls5Eva*—which I think I'll just go ahead and do a little editorial here and say is the hardest I've laughed at TV in five years? Ten years? It's so funny.

00:03:38 Busy Philipps Guest

Wow! Thank you!

00:03:39 Jordan Host

Yeah. It's an insanely funny show. So, it sends up the pop music of the kind of late '90s and early 2000s. Is this the stuff you were into in that era? Were you into, you know, Spice Girls and 98 Degrees and all the kind of TRL stuff that the show is parodying?

00:03:47 Busy Guest

No, I was—I was way too cool for that.

[Jordan laughs.]

00:04:05 Jordan Host

I was—I was really—I was very into indie rock. And—yeah.

00:04:07 Busy Guest

Oh, okay, okay.

And I went to Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, and they had an amazing radio station, KXLU, that still is around. And so, you know, like Built to Spill and Modest Mouse and like—I mean, just, I was—yeah. I was really into that vibe. I will say this, though: I sort of like jokingly, ironically liked the Spice Girls.

[Jordan laughs.]

And, in retrospect, I just liked them. I was never a pop music fan in those years. I just was like too cool for school in that respect. Also, I was like on *Freaks and Geeks*. I was just on a whole other journey in the late '90s, early 2000s. But I will say that I related very deeply to Summer's experience—the character from the show. And all of the ladies' experiences, as young women in entertainment in the late '90s, early 2000s.

00:05:08 Jordan Host

Uh, yeah! I wanna circle back and talk about *Girls5Eva* a little bit more later, but like you mentioned, I think this show is kind of parodying a world that—you know, it was kind of the time where you were starting out being in showbiz.

[Busy agrees several times as Jordan continues.]

And I wanted to mention *Freaks and Geeks*, the show you just talked about. I was seeing a commercial for a streaming platform that is not the one that *Girls5Eva* appears on, so I will not mention the name of the streaming platform. But they were using *Freaks and Geeks* to promote it. They were saying like, "We have *Freaks and Geeks*." They weren't talking about any of their new shows. They were talking about this classic show. It was a cult hit. It had only lasted one season. Why do you think it's stuck around in the same—in the way that it has?

00:05:53 Busy Guest

Oh, I mean, because it's a great show!

[They laugh.]

Like, it's actually just really good! And it does feel timeless. I think because it was always a period piece and it's set in the very, very early '80s, late '70s, early '80s. You know, you can watch it and not really know when it was made. In fact, like that is one of the weirdest things about having this career that I've had that has spanned decades now, from the time when I was a teenager to now I'm a woman who just turned 42. *[Beat.]*

00:06:34 Jordan Host

Happy belated birthday, by the way.

00:06:35 Busy Guest

Thank you. I was waiting for it. I was—that was the pause in which I was waiting for the happy birthday. But, um—

00:06:39 Jordan Host

Yes, from NPR and me, happy belated birthday.

00:06:42 Busy Guest

[Laughs.] But, you know, with all the streaming services and all the content that's available, a lot of times people in the world will ask me about a particular show and then have no frame of reference for how old that show is. "So, when did you do that? Was that like five, ten years?" That was 20 years ago. That show was 20 years ago. And new generations keep finding it. I was with friends yesterday and my friend Sarah was like, "You know, I think it's time for the boys to watch *Freaks and Geeks*. I think they're at the age, now. I'm so excited."

So, that is very cool. But you know, during the pandemic, I got a lot of people reaching out to me about *Dawson's Creek*. Like a lot of people were rewatching that from the beginning. And it is awesome that these things are available. I mean, I'm so proud of *Freaks and Geeks* and that I was able to be a part of it and that it was the first thing that I did, professionally, in Hollywood.

00:07:38	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:07:39	Clip	Clip	Kim Kelly (<i>Freaks and Geeks</i>): I wasn't talking to you, Brain. Don't you have a test to take or something?
			Speaker: Hey, would you be cool? Please?
			Lindsay Weir: Did I do something to you?
			Kim: You're here.
			Speaker: Kim.
			Lindsay: I have as much right to be here as you do.
			Kim: Hey, Brain. Shoplift in your daddy's store. You're just some rich kid who's trying to piss off her parents. You think you can hang with these guys? You think that's gonna make you cool?
00:08:08	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:08:09	Busy	Guest	Like the fact that it's gotten its due, now—because at the time, it was like we felt like, you know, the forgotten stepchildren of the network.
			<i>[They chuckle.]</i>
			Like no one cared about us at aaall! And of course, in retrospect, everybody is like, "I was the executive fighting for you."
00:08:33	Jordan	Host	I'm like, <i>[disbelieving]</i> "Oh, okay. Were you? Uh-huh. Sounds good." <i>[Chuckles.]</i> Do you think that if that show had come along, you know, in the age of streaming we'd be on season ten of it?
00:08:41	Busy	Guest	Yeah! I think that that's a possibility, but I think that there are always great shows that don't find audiences until later. You know? I think that that's just a thing that happens. Like no matter when its time is, some things are just ahead of its time. Right?
			<i>[Jordan agrees.]</i>
			You know what I'm saying? So, like, yeah—it's possible. But it's also possible that it could, you know, struggle and be like—you know, one of the many shows that are always hoping against all odds not to get canceled in the first year. It's a tough business, is what I'm saying.
00:09:16	Jordan	Host	Can you remember a moment where you realized that—and this—and maybe this is something that happened pre- <i>Freaks and Geeks</i> , but do you remember a moment where you thought, "Okay, acting is now my job. I am now an actor and I'm doing it."
00:09:33	Busy	Guest	I remember very clearly being in my high school production of <i>The House of Blue Leaves</i> , the John Guare play.
			<i>[Jordan affirms.]</i>
			And we had like a cool theatre teacher who was always challenging us with kind of—yeah.

00:09:45 Jordan Host Yeah, that's a cool choice. That's not, you know—that's not *Bye Bye Birdie*. [Chuckling.] That's—

00:09:49 Busy Guest No. To be fair, they also did do *Guys and Dolls*, but I remember doing that play and afterwards feeling like, "Oh, there's no stopping me. Like, I am an actor. Like, I'm going to do this thing." And my first professional job was like an industrial tradeshow job, working as a live Barbie doll for Mattel at their toy fairs.

[They laugh.]

00:10:15 Jordan Host So—so!
Okay!

00:10:16 Busy Guest Listen! But here's the thing! I was 17 years old. I worked at California Pizza Kitchen. I got hired—cast. I was cast to be...

00:10:27 Jordan Host An iconic character!

00:10:28 Busy Guest Yeah! Well, mm. Sort of. Honestly, what I was actually cast to be was they were—Mattel was making a *Clueless* doll line from not the movie, the TV show.

[They laugh.]

Obviously. And so, I was hired to be the life-size version of Cher from *Clueless* at the toy fairs. But I do remember, I got flown to New York for two weeks to do the toy fair. They had the pre-toy fair in Scottsdale, Arizona where I grew up, where I went to high school. And I do remember just like being in New York City, walking to the trade show job, like getting my coffee, going into the dressing room. All the other actors getting ready, putting on makeup and everything, and feeling like, "Well. I am really doing it now."

00:11:15 Jordan Host "I've made it."

00:11:16 Busy Guest "I have made it." [Laughs.]

00:11:18 Jordan Host Are you, um—[laughs] were you—before you got this job, were you like a huge Barbie fan? Were you like, "Oh my god, I'm Barbie." Or—?

00:11:25 Busy Guest No. I mean, I loved Barbies. Loved Barbies. Played with them far too long, like hid it from my friends. But I loved Barbies. I had a million of them. But I loved *Clueless*. Loved. I mean, this is my era. And I—

00:11:41 Jordan Host Iconic.

00:11:42 Busy Guest An iconic film. And in fact, I was like—when I heard—and I probably heard about it like on the radio that they were gonna make— Do you remember like when you would listen to the radio?

[They laugh.]

00:11:57 Jordan Host I do. I do!

00:11:59 Busy Guest No, but, you know—

00:12:00 Jordan Host I was stoked to see *Clueless* because the Mighty Mighty Bosstones were in it, if that's...

[Busy agrees enthusiastically.]

00:12:07 Busy Guest As long as we're—as long as we're dating ourselves, uh, yes. Suuure! I think we're similar ages.

[Jordan confirms.]

But so, I had heard somehow like the entertainment report on the local, you know, radio station that they were gonna make a TV show of *Clueless*. And I was convinced that I needed to be cast. I was 16 in high school, in Arizona. But I was just like, “This is my moment. I’m going to do it.” And that was like the impetus for me—for sending my mother to try to find some sort of local agent to represent me in Scottsdale. Which did not lead to me getting an audition for the *Clueless* TV series but did lead to me getting hired *[laughing]* as the doll!

00:12:52	Jordan	Host	Playing the <i>[laughing]</i> Barbie version of the doll of the character from the TV series.
00:12:59	Busy	Guest	Yeah! So, in a way, it all really worked out.
00:13:02	Jordan	Host	Were you like a live version of the doll or did you have to like stand still?
00:13:06	Busy	Guest	No, no, no. Oh. Oh my gosh. First of all, these trade shows—it was <u>wild!</u> I was given like 15 pages of dialogue, of monologue really, that had to be memorized in character but also included like sales projections and facts and figures about the projected sale of the toy and the markets and all this stuff. So, it was actually weirdly a difficult sort of undertaking, depending on the toy buyers that came through. There was like a short version and a long version. Sometimes, they would stop you. If you got stopped, that was terrible. But I had like sort of <i>[laughing]</i> a reputation that people wanted to see me do it. ‘Cause I could do such a good impression of Alicia Silverstone, even though technically the doll was Rachel Blanchard.
00:13:56	Jordan	Host	But guys, we don’t need to—you know.
00:13:58	Busy	Guest	Sure. It’s complicated. It’s complicated.
00:14:13	Jordan	Host	Semantics. So, people did like to hear my whole spiel. But it was fun! I really enjoyed it. But I also—I have a very—I have a talent for memorization. I’m one of those people.
			It’s interesting. You were—you know, you mentioned hearing the radio ad and then you were just convinced that, “I need to be on this show.” You know? I think you’re so funny at playing characters who have like kind of a comical amount of confidence.
			<i>[Busy hums in agreement.]</i>
00:14:34	Busy	Guest	Are you—do you think you’re a naturally confident person? I think I was, yeah. I think I had an insane amount of confidence in my abilities. I lacked confidence in other areas of my life, but as far as <i>[chuckling]</i> me perceiving myself to be the best at what I could do, that I <u>belonged</u> on television, that I—that of course this was gonna happen for me. I just had like a lot of false confidence.
00:15:06	Jordan	Host	Do you feel like you draw on some of that early teen confidence when you are playing these types of characters?
00:15:14	Busy	Guest	Yeah! I mean, I think that, for me—especially with Summer in <i>Girls5Eva</i> , although I think Laurie from <i>Cougar Town</i> had that as well—I am fascinated, always have been and I seem to draw them to me—fascinated by people who are incredibly confident that they’re correct even when it’s totally insane.

[Jordan affirms intermittently as Busy continues.]

And I've always enjoyed talking to those people and just soaking in whatever that thing is that drives them. Because I do think that, in life, I'm very much a person who's not afraid to ask a question and is like, "I don't—I don't know what that is. Explain that." You know, "Explain that to me." I'm well aware that I don't know everything about everything. But I love it when people do! It's fascinating.

So, I think that that is definitely like a piece of a lot of these women that I have gotten to play. But I also always think about, when people have that trait, what is the underlying thing. And most of the time, it's like a deep insecurity and sadness. You know? I guess what I've always enjoyed about these characters that I've gotten to play is that like I think, on the page, you could read it one way. But I think, as women—you know, a lot of expectations are put upon us at first meeting. And I think that how you subvert that or, you know, how you round it out with what is really going on—that, to me, is like the trick. And always super interesting.

00:17:04 Jordan Host

Yeah. It is interesting thinking about that when watching *Girls5Eva*. It's such a funny show, but there is like a darkness there about like the way in which showbusiness messes up young people. What is like doing such a joke-dense show with that kind of little bit of darkness under the surface?

00:17:25 Busy Guest

Well, I mean, you have to find the moments for that to live in. You know? Because—yeah, the jokes are just nonstop. Tina Fey is truly, to me, a magician. *[Laughs.]* Like I'm always like, "How am I watching a show I was on, that I was there, and I'm now getting new jokes?" Like, "How am I now understanding other people's—" You know what I mean? Like—

[Jordan affirms.]

They're just so packed in there. My dad was like, "I had to turn on the subtitles so that I could catch all the jokes." I was like, "Yeah, that makes sense. I get it. I get it."

00:18:01 Jordan Host

Yeah, there's like jokes on boxes.

[Busy confirms.]

There's like funny—there's like funny labels in the show.

00:18:06 Busy Guest

Yes! But also, like the lengths we would go to for some of the visual gags in the flashbacks, when those are over in one and a half seconds—you know, like it's one and a half seconds of screen time, but we took half a day to get it. *[Laughs.]* You know what I mean?!

00:18:27 Jordan Host

I—you know, I specifically wanna mention one, 'cause you're right. 'Cause it does have that kind of cutaway humor. And there is a five or six second bit where you and Andrew Rannells are married in the show, and it flashes back to like an exercise video that you made as a couple.

00:18:43 Busy Guest

We did a—we did, yeah. *Sweating with Your Sweetheart*.

[Jordan confirms with a chuckle.]

We did like *[laughing]* an exercise—and exercise video together. Mm-hm.

00:18:51 Sound Effect Transition

Music swells and fades.

00:18:52	Clip	Clip	<p>Summer: I'm sorry, but that would never happen with me and Kev. We're Summer and Kev!</p> <p><i>[Scene change to Kev and Summer singing together. Bombastic music plays.]</i></p> <p>Music: <i>Summer and Kev's sweetheart sweats Sweating with your sweetheart's better than sex!</i></p> <p><i>[Scene change.]</i></p>
00:19:10	Sound Effect	Transition	<p>Summer: We're boyband and girl group's royal couple! Music swells and fades.</p>
00:19:12	Jordan	Host	<p>Yeah! What is like making those, those like period accurate clips? And also, I am so curious what it's like doing a show that requires so much physicality? There's so much like dancing and mugging in insane outfits. Is it pure fun or is it kind of exhausting?</p>
00:19:31	Busy	Guest	<p>Well, it's both, but also we had the added benefit of doing this all during the height of the COVID pandemic.</p>
00:19:40	Jordan	Host	<p>Ah yes. I remember.</p>
00:19:42	Busy	Guest	<p>Pre-vaccines.</p> <p><i>[Jordan affirms.]</i></p> <p>In the fall of 2020 and then like winter '21. So, it was hard <i>[laughs]</i> to—you know? Because also, I likened... do you have children?</p>
00:19:59	Jordan	Host	<p>I don't.</p>
00:20:00	Busy	Guest	<p>Okay, well. So—</p>
00:20:01	Jordan	Host	<p>I have a cat kind of just out of frame that you can't really see. But we're more roommates. Go ahead.</p>
00:20:06	Busy	Guest	<p><i>[Laughing.]</i> Okay, yeah. Your cat is not—doesn't do the thing to you that I think COVID did to most people and what I likened it to was new mom baby brain. Because when you have a baby, people talk about like mom brain, mom baby brain or whatever. When you have a baby for the first time, like a whole chunk of your brain that you don't even—aren't aware of—your subconscious—is fueled by wanting to keep your baby alive. And during COVID, I think we like sort of all collectively experienced that, which was that we're like—a big chunk of our brain, all of us, was—for most of us. I mean some people I think don't care. But that's not the people listening to this.</p> <p><i>[They chuckle.]</i></p> <p>So—let's be real. I've looked at the charts. You know</p> <p><i>[They laugh.]</i></p> <p>But there's a—you know—chunk of your brain that is preoccupied with like, "How do I not get sick? How do I not die? How do I not infect the people that I love?" And so, then add on top of that, we go to work and we're the ones that have to take our masks off and then there is dancing and singing, which is like a lot of breathing heavy.</p> <p><i>[Laughs.]</i> I mean, it's like—so, I do have to say like there was always, for me, a level of stress in those months. Because—and the</p>

protocols were amazing that Universal, who was the company producing *Girls5Eva*, put in place. And I always felt safe enough because of that. But still!

[Jordan affirms.]

And so, then the physicality—like learning the dances—we couldn't really do that together a lot of times, because of COVID protocols. Or we would have to do it wearing masks, which—I don't know if you've tried to do like some pop dance moves and combinations whilst wearing a mask.

00:21:58 Jordan Host
00:21:59 Busy Guest

I have not.

It's not pleasant. *[Laughs.]* And so, a lot of times it was really fly by the seat of our pants. On set, cameras are ready, and we're in the back room like the first time we've done the—you know, the four of us have done the dance together, trying to like make sure that we have the moves right. And I think, you know, Renée has an advantage from her Broadway days of picking up dance moves.

[Jordan chuckles.]

I just think it's true. I just think it's true. And, you know, Sara's a real perfectionist and also has like—has that part of her, that skill sort of engrained in her. And I just feel like I didn't have that thing in me picking up choreography real fast. So, it was hard. It was challenging. But then I always was like, "But it's TV! We'll just cut to somebody else. *[Laughing.]* It's fine!"

00:22:52 Jesse Host
00:23:00 Music Transition
00:23:02 Jesse Promo

[Jordan laughs.]

Even more with Busy Philipps still to come. Stay with us. It's *Bullseye*, from [MaximumFun.org](https://www.maximumfun.org) and NPR.

Jazzy music with light vocalizations.

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00:23:36 Promo Clip

[Music fades out.]

Music: Beach rock playing.

Speaker: NPR's *Planet Money Summer School* is back.

[School bell rings.]

Speaker: This season is all about investing. We've got stories of big bets, bubble spotting, and cute animals too. Every Wednesday 'til Labor Day, from NPR's *Planet Money*.

00:23:52 Jesse Host

[Music fades out.]

It's *Bullseye*. I'm Jesse Thorn. We're listening to Jordan Morris's conversation with Busy Philipps, star of the new TV show *Girls5Eva*.

00:24:01 Jordan Host It's so interesting, the cast of this show, because—you know, you have a pop star and you have a Broadway star and then, you know, you have like improv sketch, homerun hitter Paula Pell, and—

00:24:15 Busy Guest Genius, yeah.

00:24:16 Jordan Host Yeah. And everybody is so funny in this. When you're acting in a scene with three people who come from such wildly different backgrounds, can you tell that everybody has different training?

00:24:29 Busy Guest I mean, I think that the casting of the show really speaks to the vision of Meredith Scardino and Tina, because we all just sort of fit into the groove of it so easily and seamlessly. And... yeah, no. I mean, not really. I mean, aside from the fact that Sara Bareilles has like an insane voice. And there's a lot of live singing in the show, too. Like, we sing live and acapella a fair amount.

But everybody was just very supportive of one another. And, you know, Sara would like—if I was like, “Oh god,” she would give me my note. *[Chuckles.]* She would help—you know. Paula was always on the—on the alto. So, she can do that. You know. She would help us with the music stuff. 'Cause again, not a lot—not a ton of rehearsal, mostly because of COVID.

[Jordan affirms.]

And, you know, I think that also—it's interesting. When you have people who are put together on a show—that is to say, like none of us auditioned *[laughing]* for this. It's kind of funny! 'Cause you walk into it and you're like, “Well, what's everybody—what are you gonna do? What do—do you know what you're gonna do? Have you talked to them about what you're gonna do? Did they tell you what they want you to do?” And we were all just given a lot of freedom to bring whatever it was that we wanted to the table. And I think, certainly for Renée and myself—like I feel like we took some big swings in moments. You know? Like I think I was sort of feeling like, “You know what? Let's just go for it.” I just wanna go real hard and just like do a wild, fun thing that is—yeah, different and—yeah. I don't know.

00:26:34 Jordan Host Yeah. I mean, that is interesting, 'cause I like this show a lot, but I also like the other shows in the, you know, Tina Fey-o-verse a lot. You know, *30 Rock* and *Kimmy Schmidt*. And they're so interesting, because they're this kind of midpoint between sitcom and like cartoon. You know?

[Busy agrees.]

Like the characters are pretty real but the logic of it is kind of close to a cartoon logic sometimes. And you were—you know, you are great in a supporting role in *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt*, so I think you've kind of played in this zone before. Yeah, I imagine maybe that kind of little layer of being surreal maybe helps to make some of those big, crazy choices?

00:27:14 Busy Guest Yeah. I mean, I also though—listen. I'm not—I don't—I'm gonna say this quietly 'cause I feel like people get mad. I have—I'm not passing like a judgment. This is not a judgment.

[Jordan affirms.]

I'm just saying, I'm not a person that watches *The Real Housewives*.

[Jordan gasps dramatically.]

00:27:32	Jordan	Host	I know.
00:27:33	Busy	Guest	<i>[Flatly.]</i> Gasp. People get like—I don't know, people get weird about it. They're like, "Oh, you think you're too good?"
00:27:38	Jordan	Host	I'm like, "No! I just haven't—I just—guys, I just haven't watched it!"
00:27:41	Busy	Guest	<i>[Laughing.]</i> "There's a lot of TV!" However, like entering into this show—since I was playing a woman who, you know, had had a bit of fame as a teen, had been trying to hang on to it, married her boyband sweetheart, Kev, and was really trying to be on <i>The Housewives</i> . You know, I did some research! And one thing that I found is that, in the portrayals on television—and of course we know it's like all fake, right? Well! I mean... reality TV is produced and put together in a—
00:28:14	Jordan	Host	You're breaking some big news here on the show.
00:28:15	Busy	Guest	Shhhh! <i>[Whispering.]</i> Guys.
00:28:16	Jordan	Host	Big scoop.
00:28:17	Busy	Guest	You know in <i>House Hunters</i> they bought the house already? Anyway.
00:28:20	Jordan	Host	<i>[Softly.]</i> Oh my gosh.
00:28:21	Busy	Guest	I do remember—
00:28:22	Jordan	Host	<i>[Chuckling.]</i> You're breaking a lot of hearts. You're breaking a lot of hearts, here today, Busy.
00:28:24	Busy	Guest	I do remember my mind being blown with that one. Anyway. I don't think that it's so far off, what I'm doing on the show.

[Jordan cackles.]

As Summer. You know?

[Jordan affirms gleefully.]

00:29:02	Jordan	Host	And! Furthermore! When we do those flashbacks with the lyrics that Meredith Scardino and the other writers have written for our past hits and the music that Jeff Richmond has put together, it's not far off from what kinds of things pop stars were saying in the late '90s and early 2000s. I mean—
00:29:04	Busy	Guest	It is—yeah. I mean—oh, sorry, go ahead. No, I just was like—remember Katy Perry with like the whipped cream coming out of her <i>[censored]?! Like, I feel like—was that—is that—? Did I make that up?!</i>
00:29:12	Jordan	Host	No, no. That—that happened. I can confirm. That happened.
00:29:14	Busy	Guest	It happened! I just feel like it is satirical, but I think it's like—it's less of a leap than you might think.
00:29:25	Jordan	Host	It's interesting, yeah, 'cause it seems like one of the themes of the show is like realizing that the pop culture of your youth was like kind of problematic. Is that something you can relate to?
00:29:37	Busy	Guest	Well, yeah—and I also think, as a woman and specifically a woman who was trying to break into the entertainment industry in that exact time—you know, having the realization that you didn't have your own agency in your story, that you were being told things were

empowering to you and that this was your choice and you wanted to do it. And then you look back on it and you're like, "Oh wait, I really did not wanna pose for *Maxim*. That is messed up. Why did I do that? Oooh. Right. I get it now."

And I think that that's sort of like the reckoning that a lot of women—especially my generation, especially Gen X—have been having over the last several years. You know?

00:30:24 Jordan Host

Yeah. You know, it's interesting hearing you talk about this stuff, 'cause it is like you do talk differently in interviews than a lot of actors do and not only are pretty honest in interviews, but also you—you know, you wrote this memoir and you have had podcasts that are very honest, that—you know. Does that kind of rawness come naturally to you or is that something you had to—you had to work on?

00:30:56 Busy Guest

I think that I spent a long time, in the early part of my career, trying to fit into a thing that wasn't for me. You know? I think that I took the bait of Hollywood. And the thing that they sell particularly young women, which is like, "If you can only just be—" And then fill in the blank. So, I mean, thin enough, pretty enough, you know, quiet enough, slutty enough, like sexy enough. I mean, I had literal phone conversations where my manager would say, "You know, this studio, they just don't think you're [censored]able enough." That's a big word that, in the late '90s, early 2000s, mid-2000s? I can't remember the last time I heard it, but people would say a lot on the executive side, the studio side.

And now, I'm married to Marc Silverstein who's a writer and a director and he and his partner had like big TV deals back in the '90s and early 2000s and did tons of shows. And he was like, "Oh yeah, that was the word. That was what they would say. They would say that." And every time, you like stiffen, but you never say anything like, [dopily] "I don't know. I mean, I'd [censored] her."

00:32:14 Jordan Host

[Yelling.] What are you supposed to say to that?!

00:32:15 Busy Guest

[Chuckles sadly.] Geez, yeah. Wow.

You can bleep it out. I know. But like the amount of phone calls where I was like, "Okay, so I have to go buy something new to wear to go back again to show them that I am like sexy enough." Or whatever. So, I was trying my hardest to work and I was trying my hardest to continue to work, because I definitely understood the message that I was expendable, especially because I was woman and a young woman. And so, if I wanted to continue doing this thing that I loved, I needed to like shut up and show up and try to fit myself into all of the things that I was being told I wasn't yet.

[Chuckles.]

And then the freedom of getting older, and I had had a great job. I was on *Cougar Town* and Bill Lawrence is married to an actress—Christa Miller—and was always just very, "I don't care what you—wear what you wanna wear. I don't care. I'll, like—you know, feel comfortable. You look great. It doesn't matter to me." Like none of that part mattered. And I felt really comfortable in that job. And then, post that job, going back, as a woman in their 30s who now has had two kids, I was like, "What's happening?! Also, who am I?! What am I?!"

'Cause I've spent so many years trying to like play this game that—by the way, didn't service me! Doing *Maxim* didn't fulfill the promise of the head of casting at the studio that was like, "You gotta do *Maxim* if you want a film career." Guess what? I don't have a film career and I did *Maxim* and I still like will get presented with like pictures of me spreadeagle—like when I'm walking into the airport with my kids. *[Chuckling.]* My older kid is like, *[nasally]* "Why?! So gross!"

I'm like, "I know, dude! I know! I get it!" But so, I think that the re-finding who I am and wanting to move through the world in a more honest place just came from being sick of trying my hardest to do all of the things I had been told I needed to do. And still, it didn't work. And, by the way, I worked a ton! *[Laughs.]* Like! In spite of all of it. You know what I mean? Like I still feel like the jobs that were my jobs found me. The right people found me and then the rest of them were just full of it.

00:34:59 Jesse Host

We'll wrap up with Busy Philipps soon. After a quick break, which Spice Girl is she? Have you ever wondered that? We found an official, completely scientific quiz to give us the answer. Stay tuned. We're doing very important journalism. It's *Bullseye*, from MaximumFun.org and NPR.

00:35:19 Music Transition
00:35:20 Jesse Promo

Bright, thumpy music.

This message comes from NPR sponsor Green Chef.

Green Chef is a USDA certified organic meal kit, offering plans for every lifestyle—including paleo, plant-powered, keto, and balanced living. With their wide variety of high quality, clean ingredients seasonally sourced for peak freshness, you can feel great about what you're eating and how it got to your table. Get \$100 off your first month, including free shipping at GreenChef.com/bullseye100 and use code "bullseye100".

00:35:57 Promo Clip

[Music fades out.]

Music: Strumming acoustic guitar.

Jordan Morris: Hey! Thanks for coming.

[Three voices overlap in thanking him.]

Jesse Thorn: These are real podcast listeners, not actors!

Jordan: We took the identifying marks off this podcast. Just... tell me your impressions.

Speaker 1: It's really sexy.

Speaker 2: My first thought is, like, Radiolab?

Speaker 3: Definitely something popular.

Speaker 1: Yeah. Really popular. A hit show.

Speaker 2: But funny, too. Like, does Tina Fey have a podcast?

00:36:21 Promo Clip

Speaker 3: *[Stifling laughter]* Or the Marx Brothers?
Speaker 2: Yeah, is this podcast Radiolab, but hosted by the Marx Brothers?

Speaker 1: And sexy? Like *Chaude*? It reminds me of *Chaude*.

Speaker 3: Exactly. *[Stifling laughter.]* And they're all riding in a BMW?

Jordan: Close! But not quite. Take a look behind these panels!

[Sound of metal doors lifting.]

All three listeners: *[Gasp!]*

Jordan: And then watch this rocket blast off into space!

[Sound effect of rocket taking off.]

Speaker 1: Whoa!

00:36:45 Promo Clip

Speaker 2: Oooh!
[Timer dings.]

Jordan: And—there's the pies we made you!

[Listeners make excited noises.]

Jordan: Now. Let's show you the podcast!

[Whooshing noise.]

All three listeners: Ooooooh.

Speaker 2: Wow! It was *Jordan, Jesse, Go!*

Speaker 1: *Jordan, Jesse, Go!?*

Announcer: Hold on!

[Sounds of metal things falling and clanging. Listeners make concerned noises.]

00:37:00 Promo Clip

Speaker 3: Oh my goodness.

Jordan: That...was 514 JD Power & Associates Podcasting Awards!

Speaker 2: That was really scary.

Speaker 1: But...compelling!

Speaker 3: I guess I should definitely subscribe to *Jordan, Jesse, Go!*

Jordan: Um...yeah. I'd say so.

Jesse: *Jordan, Jesse, Go!*: a real podcast!

00:37:22	Jesse	Host	<p><i>[Guitar music fades out.]</i></p> <p>Welcome back to <i>Bullseye</i>. I'm Jesse Thorn. Our guest is Busy Philipps. She's an actor who starred in <i>Freaks and Geeks</i>, <i>Cougar Town</i>, <i>Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt</i>, and many, many more. These days, she's starring alongside Renée Elise Goldsberry, Sara Bareilles, and Paula Pell in <i>Girls5Eva</i>. It's a sitcom about a turn of the millennium girl group and their attempts to reunite almost 20 years later. You can stream the whole first season of <i>Girls5Eva</i> right now on Peacock.</p> <p>Busy is being interviewed by Jordan Morris, my old pal and co-host on the show <i>Jordan, Jesse, Go!</i>. Anyway. Busy Philipps, lets get back into it.</p>
00:38:02	Jordan	Host	<p>Busy, we're kind of coming up on the end of our time and I'm kind of thinking about the best ways to use the kind of balance of our time. And you mentioned, at the top of the show, that—you know, when you were listening to your Modest Mouses and your Built to Spills you were, you know, secretly sneaking a little Spice Girls on the side.</p>
00:38:23	Busy	Guest	<p>It's true. It's true.</p>
00:38:25	Jordan	Host	<p>Also, I should mention you and your castmates performed "Wannabe" on the—on the Jimmy Fallon <i>Tonight Show</i> program.</p>
00:38:33	Busy	Guest	<p><i>[Music fades in.]</i></p> <p>I know, that was exciting for me.</p>
00:38:35	Music	Music	<p>"Wannabe" by the Spice Girls as covered by Girls5Eva.</p> <p><i>I wanna, (ha) I wanna, (ha) I wanna, (ha) I wanna, (ha)</i> <i>I wanna really, really, really wanna zigzag ah</i></p> <p><i>If you want my future, forget my past</i> <i>If you wanna get with me, better make it fast</i> <i>Now don't go wasting my precious time</i></p> <p><i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i></p>
00:38:52	Jordan	Host	<p>Busy, how would you feel about taking Buzzfeed.com's "Which Spice Girl are You?" quiz?</p>
00:38:57	Busy	Guest	<p>Yeah, but I'm gonna say right now, I think I'm Ginger.</p>
00:39:00	Jordan	Host	<p>Okay, you—okay! Let's see. Let's see!</p>
00:39:01	Busy	Guest	<p>I'm predetermining.</p>
00:39:04	Jordan	Host	<p><i>[Laughs.]</i> Well, if you're not—</p>
00:39:06	Busy	Guest	<p>I think—I think I'm Ginger.</p>
00:39:07	Jordan	Host	<p>If you're not Ginger, then Buzzfeed is wrong.</p>
			<p><i>[Busy agrees.]</i></p> <p>And—well, yeah. Let's start. Let's see. Let's see how you do. Okay. The first question. "Choose a word. Loofah. Cowabunga. Dingus. Blip. Poinsettia (point-seta). Or boobie."</p>
00:39:22	Busy	Guest	<p>Well, I would say poinsettia (point-set-ia).</p>
00:39:24	Jordan	Host	<p>We'll say poinsettia (point-set-ia), okay.</p>

00:39:29 Busy Guest "Chose a scent. Dryer sheets. Lavender. Freshly baked cookies—"
00:39:30 Jordan Host *[Interrupting.]* Lavender.
00:39:39 Busy Guest Okay. Lavender. We're not even gonna read the other ones. "Pick a
00:39:42 Jordan Host spice. Cumin. Paprika. Cinnamon. Ginger. Catnip. Or Old."
00:39:51 Busy Guest Oh. Um. Cinnamon.
00:39:52 Jordan Host Cinnamon. "Choose a city in Europe. Paris. Amsterdam. Berlin.
00:40:00 Busy Guest Berlin.
00:40:07 Jordan Host Madrid. Prague. Or Rome."
00:40:15 Busy Guest Berlin.
00:40:16 Jordan Host Berlin. Alright. "Choose a hairstyle. Ponytail. Braid. Bun. Shaved.
00:40:21 Busy Guest Bob. However I woke up."
00:40:22 Jordan Host I mean, I'm gonna say bun. Or ponytail. Well, bun. Let's say bun.
00:40:25 Busy Guest Let's say bun.
00:40:26 Jordan Host Let's—we'll go in with bun. "Choose a Spice Girl song. 'Stop'. '2
00:40:27 Busy Guest Become 1'." Using the numbers instead of the words. "'Spice Up
00:40:28 Jordan Host Your Life'. 'Wannabe'."
00:40:37 Busy Guest "Spice Up Your Life". "Spice Up Your Life". Yeah.
00:40:38 Jordan Host "Spice Up Your Life". Good choice. *[Sighs.]* Busy, I don't know, you
00:40:39 Busy Guest know—
00:40:37 Busy Guest Oh no.
00:40:38 Jordan Host —if Buzzfeed's math is off. *[Chuckles.]* Or what.
00:40:39 Busy Guest Who am I?
00:40:37 Jordan Host You're Scary Spice!
00:40:38 Busy Guest Weeell.
00:40:39 Jordan Host "You are one bad *[censored]*. Not only do you have the best hair on
00:40:37 Busy Guest this side of the '90s, but also you sing one of the most important
00:40:38 Jordan Host lyrics ever to be sung in the history of music: 'zigazig ah'."
00:40:39 Busy Guest *[With enthusiasm.]* "Zigazig aaaah!"
00:40:37 Busy Guest *[Whispering.]* "Aaaaah!"
00:40:38 Jordan Host You know what? That also—I get that. I get Scary Spice.

[Jordan laughs distantly.]

I do get it! I get it. I just liked the fashion of Ginger Spice. I liked that
sequined union jack dress, minidress that she wore with the giant
platform shoes. That was—that's what I was going for. I just want
the wardrobe. I want that.
00:41:03 Jordan Host *[Laughs.]* Do you—how—the fashion in *Girls5Eva* is kind of insane.
00:41:07 Busy Guest It's amazing.
00:41:08 Jordan Host Yeah! How do you—how do you feel about your various costume
pieces?
00:41:11 Busy Guest I mean, I love it so much. Tina Nigro is a genius. She's our costume
designer, wardrobe guru. She really was so incredibly thoughtful
about every outfit that was put together in the flashbacks, even if we
knew it was just gonna be a second and a half. You know what I
mean? She just was like—it had to be exactly right. I love—I mean,
I think the camo for me is like a real highlight, the camo outfits. But
all of our looks were just so good. And Summer's style evolution
was also amazing, as adult Summer. Present-day Summer, I
should say.
00:41:54 Jordan Host Busy Philipps, thanks for talking to us.

[Music fades in.]

Girls5Eva is so funny. I hope people watch it if they haven't already.
And yeah. Thanks for hanging out with us on *Bullseye*.

00:42:03	Busy	Guest	Thanks for having me!
00:42:05	Music	Transition	Relaxed music with light vocalizations.
00:42:09	Jesse	Host	<p>Busy Philipps. Busy's show, <i>Girls5Eva</i>, is streaming now on Peacock and, checking the news, it just got picked up for a second season. So, look for that later on. It is a super funny show. I definitely recommend it. Shout out to past <i>Bullseye</i> guest, Paula Pell, who is—man, she's so funny. Anyway. Thank you also to our correspondent Jordan Morris for conducting this interview. When he's not conducting interviews, Jordan is busy writing hilarious graphic novels, specifically the hilarious graphic novel <i>Bubble</i>, which is based on his hit podcast. <i>Bubble</i> is in stores now. It's very funny. Go to your local bookstore or comic store. Get yourself a copy of <i>Bubble</i> by Jordan Morris.</p>
00:42:55	Music	Transition	<i>[Music fades out.]</i>
00:42:56	Jesse	Host	<p>Bright, brassy music.</p> <p>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 greater Los Angeles, California. And from our offices in the beautiful Westlake neighborhood of Los Angeles, overlooking MacArthur Park—where, recently, in our neighborhood there have been a bunch of neofascists coming out on the weekends to act like jerks. And I just wanna say that, in our neighborhood, in our city, and at our company, we think that trans rights are human rights and we stand with and care about our transgender colleagues and family members and friends and neighbors.</p> <p>The show is produced by speaking into microphones. Our senior producer is Kevin Ferguson. Our producer is Jesus Ambrosio. Production fellows at Maximum Fun are Richard Robey and Valerie Moffat. We get help from Casey O'Brien. Our interstitial music is by Dan Wally, also known as DJW. Our theme song is by The Go! Team. Thanks to them and to their label, Memphis Industries, for sharing it. They've got a brand-new record in stores that is great.</p> <p>You can also keep up with <i>Bullseye</i> on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. We post our interviews in all of those places. And I think that's about it. Just remember: all great radio hosts have a signature signoff.</p>
00:44:29	Promo	Promo	<p>Speaker: <i>Bullseye with Jesse Thorn</i> is a production of MaximumFun.org and is distributed by NPR.</p> <p><i>[Music fades out.]</i></p>