

00:00:00	Music	Transition	Upbeat, jazzy music.
00:00:01	Jesse Thorn	Promo	This message comes from NPR sponsor Discover. Discover matches all the cashback you earn on your credit card at the end of your first year, automatically. With no limit on how much you can earn. It's amazing because of all the places where Discover is accepted. 99% of places in the US that take credit cards. So, when it comes to Discover, get used to hearing "yes" more often. Learn more at Discover.com/match . 2021 Neilson Report. Limitations apply.
00:00:31	Music	Transition	<i>[Music fades out.]</i> Gentle, trilling music with a steady drumbeat plays under the dialogue.
00:00:32	Promo	Promo	Speaker: <i>Bullseye with Jesse Thorn</i> is a production of MaximumFun.org and is distributed by NPR.
00:00:44	Jesse	Host	<i>[Music fades out.]</i> From MaximumFun.org and NPR, it's <i>Bullseye</i> .
00:00:47	Music	Transition	"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.
00:00:54	Jesse	Host	Artists, musicians, filmmakers, people who make stuff in the world are often inspired by what they see or hear. And sometimes, that thing is so great, they tell us they wish they'd made it themselves. It happens so often that we made a segment about it! It's called I Wish I'd Made That. Today, you're gonna hear from the one and only Nick Offerman.
00:01:14	Nick Offerman	Guest	Hello, this is Nick Offerman, and I am an actor and writer and woodworker.
00:01:21	Jesse	Host	Maybe you remember Nick as the lovable Ron Swanson on <i>Parks and Recreation</i> . He's one of the hosts of the reality competition show, <i>Making It</i> , alongside Amy Poehler. It's a bit like <i>The Great British Bakeoff</i> , but with pipe cleaners and table saws instead of fondant and laminated pastries. <i>Making It</i> just wrapped up its third season on NBC. You can stream it on Peacock or Hulu.
00:02:03	Nick	Guest	When we asked Nick Offerman if there was a TV show or a movie or an album he wished he'd made, Nick said he leaves that to the professionals. He decided to channel his woodworking roots and tell us about the greatest guitar he ever held in his hands: the Gibson J-200. Here's Nick Offerman. I'm not clever enough to make TV or films. I have tried and that's how I learned that I'm not clever enough. So, I depend on much greater brains than my own for those mediums. But in the woodworking shop, I can take a swing at challenging projects. And so, I chose—once I switched over to woodworking, I immediately thought when I first saw the Gibson J-200 guitar—also known as the Jumbo or the Super Jumbo—I wish I had made that.
00:02:39	Music	Transition	Relaxed acoustic guitar plucking.
00:02:52	Nick	Guest	This is a— <i>[He strums a few chords as he describes the sounds.]</i> It has a beautiful, booming bass but also a bright top end. <i>[He plays several bars of gentle guitar.]</i>

00:03:29	Music	Transition	I was teaching myself guitar. My wife is an incredible singer and musician, and I had a dream that one day maybe we could perform together. And she had a birthday party to which she invited Patty Griffin to come play in our yard.
00:03:30	Nick	Guest	Bright, harmonic guitar music. And Patty, thankfully, was a fan of <i>Will & Grace</i> , so she agreed. She came and played a handful of songs on this vintage Gibson J-200, and she had a lot to do with it, obviously. She's wonderfully elfin. She, you know, is just magical. And her voice is beautiful, her songs are incredible, and her guitar playing is exquisite.
00:03:52	Music	Music	"River" from the album <i>Patty Griffin</i> by Patty Griffin.

*You can't really have her
But you can hold her for a time*

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]

00:04:03	Nick	Guest	And so, I just was absolutely bewitched by her playing. And I said, "I gotta find out what that guitar is and get me one." I did a lot of homework and discovered, of course, that I had chosen the most expensive possible vintage guitar [<i>giggles</i>] to chase down. This was probably 10, 12 years ago. Anywhere in LA or New York or Chicago or Nashville or Austin, at any given time, you could find two or three of these exquisite, top of the line, vintage guitars. And they were running \$10-\$12,000. So, around the time, uh—you know, obviously it had immediately disqualified them from my consideration. Then I got my job on <i>Parks and Rec</i> and a couple years in, it looked like the show might keep going a little bit.
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And I said, "Oh. Lemme go try and play one of these." And I went into the vintage guitar shop, and I played one, went back in the little room. And when I heard myself play it—

[A few bars of guitar music fades in.]

It sounded an awful lot like me playing my own crappy guitar. And I realized, "Oh. I—" [*Giggles*]. "I have no business spending \$12,000 on a guitar on which I'll sound as mediocre as I will on any guitar." And I was sitting there playing the expensive, beautiful J-200 and I thought, "Oh, I'm not gonna buy one of these. I'm gonna make one. 'Cause if I'm gonna sound mediocre, might as well have the rich story of making one myself."

[Quiet sounds of sawing and drilling continue behind the dialogue.]

And I got a—I got one book all about how to build a guitar, including plans for a J-200. And at the end of the book, everything in the book was a no-brainer if you've built wooden boats. You're like, "Oh, okay, yeah. Steam bending, got that. Hand shaping the neck. Putting—installing the frets and the tuning machines—that was new territory, but not insurmountable. And then you get to the end of the book, and it says, "The catch about an acoustic guitar is you wanna make it lightweight enough—this sort of beautifully shaved and toned vessel—so that when you put the strings on, it vibrates in the most delightful, sonorous manner."

So, you can't leave it too thick. It can't be too heavy duty, otherwise you might as well put strings on a two-by-six. But if you shave it a little too—a little too thinly, when you tighten up the six steel strings, it applies about 200lbs of pull on this shell of wood you've created. And so, if you've gotten it a little too right, then the whole thing explodes.

00:06:54 Nick Guest *[A loud splintering and snapping.]*
And that's the end of the book! And *[chuckles]* I was like, "Well, that's terrifying." I imagine you've talked 99% of potential luthiers out of taking a shot at it. So, what do I do? I go out and get another book. And then I got a third book. And each book ended the same way. They all said that. They're like, "You gotta shave it just enough, 'cause if you shave it too much, it'll explode." So, after three books, I said, "I'm daunted." But what about a ukulele? A ukulele has plastic strings. It's not nearly the pressure that's on a guitar. And so, I figured out how to build a ukulele and I built my first one, which I brought in here. It's, uh—it's a soprano ukulele and it's built entirely of mahogany to sort of match the aesthetic of the old Martin ukuleles. And, you know, it's got some peccadillos. The frets, especially, required a finesse that I'm still learning. So, the frets are pretty crappy. But all in all—

[He plays a few notes on the ukulele as he continues speaking.]

It sounds like a ukulele, and I wrote a song called "The Ukulele Song", and I wrote the song first so that I would have—I had to make myself get started, 'cause it was really scary to try an instrument. But you know, like anything, I made mistakes and—I mean, I've made mistakes building tables and that's a lot less difficult. The thing is, the mistakes are important because if you're gonna become exquisite, if you're gonna become exceptional at anything, you're never gonna just do it on your first try. You're gonna ruin a lot of wood before you make a trophy piece.

[Music fades in.]

00:08:55 Music Music
So, I made this ukulele. I toured with it, performing my ukulele song. They made a real nice video of it at the Fayetteville Roots Festival. "The Ukulele Song" by Nick Offerman.

*I love beer and whiskey, perhaps a bit too much
Given the chance, I'd fall off a barstool daily
To keep me out of the pub and also out of dutch
I make things like this soprano ukulele*

00:09:14 Nick Guest *[Music ends.]*
I've paddled a canoe that I built across a river, and playing a ukulele that I made and making an audience laugh with my song, both of them feel sort of equally super heroic. You're in touch with an elemental part of the human capacity, like, "Oh. If *[censored]* goes down and society gets wiped out, I am able to make a tree into a floating vessel that will get us to Catalina, so we can still have a wine mixer even after the apocalypse."

00:09:49 Music Music
"The Ukulele Song" by Nick Offerman.

*Why can't we all get along for a minute?
Everybody's all Palestinian or Israeli
If we'll just head down to the shop and enjoy the tools in it
We could build a pacifying ukulele*

00:10:12	Jesse	Host	<p><i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue.]</i></p> <p>Nick Offerman on the thing he wishes he made: the Gibson J-200 guitar. As we said before, Nick's reality competition show is called <i>Making It</i>. You can watch it on NBC. You can also hear Nick's voice on the very funny animated sitcom, <i>The Great North</i>. And if you want some drama, he starred on the science fiction show <i>Devs</i>, which you can stream on Hulu. He also has his own woodshop, called The Offerman Woodshop, here in Los Angeles. They make all kinds of stuff. And he was nice enough recently to refer me to a guy named Max Wilson who made some built-in shelves for my house. So, thank you Nick.</p>
00:10:52	Music	Music	<p><i>[Volume increases.]</i></p> <p><i>Uku-I love ukulele, ukulele</i></p>
00:11:04	Music	Transition	<p><i>[Song ends and Nick bursts into laughter.]</i></p> <p>Upbeat music.</p>
00:11:11	Jesse	Host	<p>That's the end of another episode of <i>Bullseye</i>. <i>Bullseye</i>, created from the homes of me and the staff of Maximum Fun, in and around greater Los Angeles, California. Where, earlier this week, the television show <i>NCIS</i> shot a scene at MacArthur Park, right outside our office, where a bus blew up. Sort of like the movie <i>Speed</i>, only the bus blew up.</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. I'm excited to meet Richard Robey in real life for the first time. <i>[Chuckles.]</i> He's been working for us for months! That's our lives, these days. 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 with us.</p> <p>You can keep up with our show on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. We post our interviews there. And I think that's about it. Just remember: all great radio hosts have a signature signoff.</p>
00:12:15	Promo	Promo	<p>Speaker: <i>Bullseye with Jesse Thorn</i> is a production of MaximumFun.org and is distributed by NPR.</p>
00:12:25	Promo	Clip	<p><i>[Music fades out.]</i></p> <p>Music: Classical orchestral music.</p> <p>John Hodgman: Hey, everyone! It's I, John Hodgman of the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast.</p> <p>Elliott Kalan: And I, Elliott Kalan of the <i>Flop House</i> podcast.</p> <p>John: And we've made a whole new podcast! A 12-episode special miniseries called <i>I, Podius</i>. In which we recap, discuss, and explore</p>

the very famous 1976 BBC miniseries about Ancient Rome called *I, Claudius*! We've got incredible guests such as Gillian Jacobs, Paul F. Tompkins, as well as star of *I, Claudius*, Sir Patrick Stewart! And his son! Non-Sir Daniel Stewart.

Elliott: Don't worry, Dan, you'll get there someday.

John: *I, Podius* is the name of the show! Every week from MaximumFun.org for only 12 weeks. Get 'em at MaximumFun.org, or wherever you get your podcasts.

[Music fades out.]