

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.
00:00:13	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.
00:00:21	Jesse Thorn	Host	It’s <i>Bullseye</i> . I’m Jesse Thorn. My first guest this week is Benedict Cumberbatch. He is, of course, one of the biggest actors around. He was nominated for an Academy Award for his role as Alan Turing in 2014’s <i>The Imitation Game</i> . He plays Dr. Strange in the Marvel movies, including the brand-new <i>Spider-Man: No Way Home</i> . He’s also in the western <i>Power of the Dog</i> , which is playing in theatres and streaming now on Netflix. In 2010, Cumberbatch got the title part on the BBC’s modern day Sherlock Holmes reboot, called <i>Sherlock</i> . The show ended up being a breakthrough for him. He earned a bunch of awards nominations. Critics loved him.
			When he and I talked in 2012, it was on the heels of <i>Sherlock’s</i> second series. We talked about the challenge he faced when taking on the role. Because, I mean, how many other characters have been onscreen more times than Sherlock Holmes? He and I also talked about his harrowing experience being kidnapped and robbed while on set abroad.
			<i>[Music fades in.]</i>
00:01:28	Music	Transition	It’s a great conversation, one I’m excited to share with you again. Let’s get into it.
00:01:31	Jesse	Host	Thoughtful piano. Benedict Cumberbatch, welcome to <i>Bullseye</i> ! It’s great to have you on the show.
00:01:33	Benedict Cumberbatch	Guest	Thank you very much. Lovely to be on the show.
00:01:36	Jesse	Host	Your parents have been working actors for pretty much all of your life.
			<i>[Benedict confirms.]</i>
			But neither of them has ever been a major star. So, I imagine that you’ve gotten to see—especially as a kid, you got to see sort of some of the fruits of what it’s like to be a working actor. Which is to say that, you know, when you’ve got a gig—especially in film or television—it pays well. It’s a great job. It’s very fulfilling. But also, that—you know, someone else has to sign off on you working and it has to happen, you know, every three months if you’re working on film and television often. And that if no one is casting you, then you are not working for money.
			<i>[Benedict affirms.]</i>

00:02:40 Benedict Guest And I wonder what that was like for you as a kid and if the idea of acting seemed cool and glamorous to you or it seemed like a bummer.

Uh, both at times, I think. I mean, a mixture. And that's the way it is. It was a—you know, I didn't walk into this with any need for a reality check or preconceptions as to it all being, you know, a glittering ascendancy to the stars. It's just kind of really, honestly about hard grind faith in the people you work with and hopefully the people that are trying to get you the work. And some certain professional courtesy. And I know this sounds obvious. I've been getting criticized by fans for being obvious in interviews, but if you've not been an actor before, you need to hear this sometimes.

And I think Mum and Dad were wonderful at giving me every opportunity to do anything but be an actor. To avoid the peripatetic nature to be completely beholden to your career rather than your lifestyle or your family choices or any other kind of form of shaping your life. Your one and sole aim was to be around and available for work and try and get it in order to pay the bills at—I don't know if this is anything to do with what I'm saying, 'cause I'm thinking about this as I'm going along. I'm not making it up; this is what I think, but I haven't said it for a while. I think, you know, when people say, "Oh, he's the rising star—Benedict Cumberbatch." I've been rising for about ten years, now. People have been saying that about me. And long may that continue! I mean, if I—

[Jesse laughs.]

00:04:13 Jesse Host If I've got to the top, I've only got one way to get back and that's down. So, you know. *[Chuckles.]* I'm very happy with being called that. And, yeah, it's all about the work for me. It's just about the quality of the work, who I get to work with, and being in work. And I'm so spoiled on all fronts. So, I work very hard at trying to justify people's faith in me.

00:04:23 Benedict Guest Did seeing your parents' example helped you imagine what kind of actors' life you wanted to have when you decided to become an actor?

Um, well, no. And it'd be unfair to judge them in comparison, because the landscape's so different now. It's a far more open field, which is great, but there's even more of us in surplus to requirement than there were in their time. And I think that the kind of route that a lot of their peers have taken—whether it be McAllen, Dench, *[inaudible]*,--all of whom, you know—well, Mum was at school with Judi. She was at Central Drama School with her and I think Maggie Smith. I might have got that wrong. I think Maggie Smith might have been there a bit before. But, you know, a great stable of talent at the same time as Mum was starting out and doing very well commercially.

And they, at that time, the ones that have the longevity that Mum wishes she'd had by doing more classical roles—have that because they had these huge breaks and wonderful roles in their youth at the RSC and the National Theatre and other subsidized theatre companies or independents as well as commercial theatre

and television and film. So, people would structure a career through theatre work that would then translate onto the small screen and the big screen. And while that still happens, you can now wake up to being 15, say, "I wanna be an actor," and do a casting, and get a lead gig in a *Harry Potter* film or a—you know, a massive franchise and that's your life, really. You know. It's incredible how you can kind of jump to a very accelerated point in our profession.

And it sort of points out the truth of it, that what everyone's aiming for is very different and you're never gonna be aiming towards one point. They'll be better moments and worse moments. There are always gonna be ups and downs. But longevity is the only thing I'm interested in. I want to do this for as long as I can, because I absolutely love it. I've been doing it for ten years now and I still get a kick out of the fact that I'm being paid to do it. And, you know, long may that continue.

00:06:02 Jesse Host

Were there things that you were scared of when you decided to become an actor?

00:06:06 Benedict Guest

Yeah. A little bit, but I went into it with the confidence of a generation that had done it before. But like I said, it was hard to compare. So, I just set out to try and—I don't know, give a—have a variety of work. I enjoyed being, you know, an impersonator and a bit of a showoff at school, and that got sort of tailored into taking responsibility. I—you know, turning a story to an audience where you had to focus that showing off capacity. And then I got very into the idea of exploring different realities and different characters and different traits and ages and size and shapes. You know. That, to me, is the thrill of it, or was at the beginning: this idea of transformation.

And then—and then, I don't know. You move into a softer territory when you enter the marketplace, because you have to market yourself as you are. You can't go in all singing, all dancing. It kind of scares people to put their backs against the wall and run out the building screaming. But if you—if you just—you know, when you begin, you are—you look and sound the way you look and that's the sort of casting mold you begin with. And then you can kind of spread your wings a bit in the other direction. So, I was aware, I guess—to get back to your question—that I wanted to appeal to as wide an employment base as possible, I guess. So, whether that be a cross-medium thing or whether it be playing as wide a variety of characters in those mediums as possible, that was—that was kind of my concern. Not because they didn't, but just because I had the opportunity to do that, and I really have been spoiled by that.

And so, I just—I think I went into it very prepared, you know, for the failings and acheries of the profession and just applied myself, hopefully, you know, with the kind of professionalism that would make them proud and people that are their peers who I've worked with—you know—happy to work with me. And say, "Oh, that's Wanda and Tim's son." You know. And that's—yeah. That's kind of what I started out with. They were very—they are very good role models for how to live a life as a working actor. So, you know, I owe a lot to them.

00:08:03	Jesse	Host	Even more with Benedict Cumberbatch after a quick break. Stay with us. It's <i>Bullseye</i> , from MaximumFun.org and NPR.
00:08:11	Promo	Clip	Speaker: Support for NPR and the following message come from Better Help, offering online counseling. Better Help therapist, Haesue Jo, knows that lockdown has been hard on us as humans. Haesue Jo: We, as people, are hardwired to connect with others, which is why this whole time is so difficult. The connection that happens between people can be very powerful, and how healing it can be to have a healthy relationship with someone. Speaker: To get matched with a counselor within 48 hours and save 10%, go to BetterHelp.com/bullseye .
00:08:43	Music	Transition	Thumpy rock music.
00:08:47	Jesse	Host	Welcome back to <i>Bullseye</i> . I'm Jesse Thorn. If you're just joining us, we are replaying my conversation with actor Benedict Cumberbatch. He plays Dr. Strange in the new Marvel movie <i>Spider-Man: No Way Home</i> and stars alongside Kirsten Dunst in the new western <i>The Power of the Dog</i> . When I talked with Cumberbatch in 2012, he'd just wrapped the second series of the BBC show <i>Sherlock</i> . It was a breakout performance for Cumberbatch, one that earned him a primetime Emmy award for Outstanding Lead Actor in a Miniseries or Movie. Let's get back into it. Let's talk about <i>Sherlock</i> . Sherlock Holmes, depending on your definition of fictional character—I think that God, Jesus, and Santa Claus appear in more films and television shows than Sherlock Holmes. <i>[Benedict chuckles.]</i>
00:09:40	Benedict	Guest	But, um—
00:09:41	Jesse	Host	Only just. Yeah. Sherlock Holmes has been in hundreds of films and television programs, portrayed by dozens of actors. And when you auditioned for this role, you're running up against not just—you know, Basil Rathbone or whatever, but this accumulation of craft of hundreds of people. <i>[Benedict agrees.]</i>
00:10:23	Benedict	Guest	And ideas of hundreds of people. How can you—when you get the sides for an audition for a part like that, how can you do anything that's not just a pastiche of your ideas of what this guy is? How do you find something that's actual in that? That's a good question. Well, what did I do? I saw the strengths of the script. I saw what they were wanting to bring to life. But yeah, you're entering a pantheon of, what? 70+ actors have already trodden in the footsteps of that role, but you can't—you just disassociate with all that. It's a little bit like going for any audition. You walk into the room, and you forget the fact that you've just left the waiting room with five other people who are equally, if not better, suited for the part than you. And you think, "I'm the only person they're seeing today." And that's all that matters is what

happens now. 'Cause you can't take on that baggage. You know, any level of performance and craft in the performing arts is about being present in the moment.

And I think while there are some massive technical things to master with Holmes, feats of memory and line learning, which I always struggle with and—you know, the physical technicalities of hitting a mark, speaking at that pace, and the alacrity of his movement as well as his intellect. You know, all of that requires a certain amount of technical skill. But you still—the best takes, the ones that work are the ones where you—that just happens and it's there and it's a given and something fresh occurs. Christ, I mean, we had a bit of a blank canvas with this one. It's 21st century, after all. And while Holmes is a modern man and was, you know, up to his eyeballs in cutting edge science and the burgeoning technology of—you know, criminal pathology in his original state. You know.

00:11:47 Jesse Host
00:11:50 Benedict Guest

He's always pouring one beaker into another beaker. Well, you know. *[Chuckles.]* There's a bit of that going on. Exactly. But you know, my point is that—you know, there's—you know, he's somebody who—there's a lot to draw parallels within modern life from the original as there is, obviously, having him in modern life. There's a lot that I can use that's modern that's gonna make it feel as if it is a fresh take on Holmes. And also, I think what they thought I'd lend to it—which is true—because of the way I look and I have a high neck and, you know, have done stuff in period costumes before, is that—you know, I've got a slightly old-world, old soul, otherworldly quality which sort of marries that junction between someone who is Victorian, who we are honoring as a Victorian hero even though he's playing with an iPhone and surfing the net. And, you know, performing a million sort of social and modern media functions in the blink of an eye.

00:12:47 Jesse Host

I guess that was it, really. I guess that was it. It was just going in with confidence—the confidence that that character required and the script and the updating of it required.

The confidence of Sherlock Holmes is more than just confidence. It comes from the fact that he essentially lives in a different world than everyone else who surrounds him—even the person that he relates to most, which is Dr. Watson. He still is—he still is in his own world, and his confidence is really just a matter of almost floating above or dazzling above everyone else. It's like a crazy, headlong dash through space.

00:13:24 Benedict Guest

Yeah. It is. It's something sort of slightly other-than-human. I mean, what it is really is that he's making synaptical connections faster than we can think, but he's verbalizing them at the same time. So, he is speaking at a speed of thought which is pretty daunting to most people, let alone the deconstruction language around it to communicate and explain it. And I think what he cyphers out of his life, much to the cost—and that's a lot of what this second series' story arc of his development is—is these obstructions, as he sees them, to being robotic in his ability to solve things logically and have control and power through being able to organize and understand the world logically. And then he meets his polarity in Moriarty, who is all about trying to explain that there is no logic. There is no control. There is only chaos, and

I am going to bring about chaos and you will have to embrace it, because you need me. Or if you don't, you will have to fight it. But either way, you need me.

And I think that's kind of—you know, what he achieves, Sherlock, is almost superhuman. But actually, what I love about him as a hero and as an iconic hero and one that took—with the first series—children back to the original books to read him and love him as a hero in the modern world or in the original books, in the Victorian world, is the fact that it's achievable. It was based on a doctor that, you know, Conan Doyle knew, who formed these massive—well, narratives, really, out of sporadic detail that were sewn together to form facts of deduction to bring together points of view or an understanding—you know, an A to B commute with Sherlock Holmes in London is suddenly a popup book of adventure and possibility.

It's—he turns the world into something rich with narrative. And that's why he works. That's why he still works. That's why stories love—the storywriters love to use him, because he's a gift to storywriters. He is—he carries around so many stories in what he sees. You can watch one series or one episode of ours and you think—you know, "Gosh, so much happened!" *[Stammering.]* Sometimes, an awful lot doesn't happen, because it's about what is perceived to have happened through this man. He makes these massive leaps which cut out huge needs for, you know, slow, procedural, bit-by-bit, "Oh yeah, that's right. Oh, that's right. That's right." He just gets it all in the blink of an eye. And it's just thrilling to go on a ride with him. But what I do like about the superhuman qualities, actually, in a weird way—a) how being human is his gravity and actually what I think this series is also about is discovering that's a strength: that feelings, emotions, things that he has ostracized himself from in order to protect and maintain and master this cold, calculating, logical machine that he wants to be, are actually sources of strength for that cold, calculating, logical machine. Because he still has to have an understanding of humanity in order to control it or save it or whatever it is that he, as an ego, wants to achieve.

00:16:18 Jesse Host

One of the things that I found the most compelling about the relationship between Watson and Holmes is that Watson—as portrayed by Martin Freeman—is a veteran. He's an army doctor, as in the stories.

[Benedict confirms.]

And he's struggling with post traumatic stress disorder or post traumatic stress syndrome. And you know, PTSD is something that can—it can cause tremendous difficulties in relating to others. That's one of the greatest challenges that people with PTSD suffer from. And you know, I—it's—you know, very vivid for me, because I grew up—I grew up in a family with a father who was disabled by service-related PTSD. And you know, watching these two characters who each in their own way is struggling to—are struggling to find a way to relate to each other and to the world, is—is a—

It's kind of moving, isn't it? I mean, it's kind of moving. And it's, in a way—you know, jokes aside about what the sexuality or implied sexuality of either of them are—I mean, John's a lady's man and he's asexual until he meets Irene Adler and then suddenly it switches on in him, which he thought he had control over, but I agree with—I think what you were pointing out, which is that they are two men trying to find a context in society. And both have; one, through something imposed—I guess—by the trauma of being in the theater of war and the other self-imposed that make them both outsiders. So, they find a community with each other and a source of strength from each other. And that's very touching to me.

And I think—you know, I spoke to a lot of people—two or three people, particularly, at an awards ceremony—GQ Awards, this year—who were so grateful to Martin's performance and portrayal of Watson. Because, you know, while it's great fun and it's distracting and it's good, fun telly for them to watch, they felt that something was being represented. And of course, with his character, it's not—it's not a disability through an idea, it's not a— it's not a trauma that's marked him physically. He has a sort of socio—*[to himself, as though it wasn't the word he was looking for]* sociopathic—a sort of psychosomatic associated wound, which—you know—Sherlock gets very, very early on as not being to do with his leg, but something else. What his problem is is that he, in a sort of Travis Bickle vein, I guess, can't re-assimilate with society because he actually misses the thrill of the theater of war. And that's a very dark and awkward and difficult thing to confess to, which I guess is why it sort of surfaces as nightmares and the limp, because you're suppressing a desire to go back into combat—the thrill of being that adrenalized by knowing your life is held in the balance by a thread and, you know—and your colleagues around you and your entire situation is constantly insecure.

I mean, that's quite something to admit to actually enjoying. And I think it's sort of shameful in a way to some people. But you know, it's born out of service and dignity and honor and being a good soldier, which are all qualities that should be anything but shameful. And I think, you know, an awful lot of people coming back from service in the wars that we're fighting at the moment and have been fighting over the last ten years, have a huge problem with assimilating back into a society that views them as doing a necessary job, but that's a little bit offput by the idea that, you know, they might have killed people or experienced things which are beyond their understanding and, you know, was it really a legal war and all the politics that confuse the basic, pure fact of being a soldier, which is just—well, from my point of view—unfathomably hard. I don't know how people do it.

And it's—you know—people talk about heroics and lists of people and all sorts of nonsense just going on at the moment with me and I just think it's embarrassing, because you think of the people who deliver our security—whether they're fighting abroad, whether they're policing our borders here, whether they're people who take care of the elderly, who are single mums, people who are

teaching the underprivileged in our world, who are doctoring areas in the—there's a huge body of heroism going on all the time. So, it's very nice that we have a character that's *[stammering]* fully engrained in that world and that Sherlock has a real respect and understanding of Watson's military background capabilities and that—you know, that's metered out in the first instant they meet. And obviously, by the end of that episode—for those who haven't seen it, I won't say anything—but basically, Sherlock owes his life to Watson and that's the bond that bears them through all the highs and lows of living with a very difficult flat mate, which alone is a heroic feat on Watson's part, I think. I would not like to live with Sherlock. Anyway. There we go. I prefer my fridge to be clean of fingers and heads—of more fresh lettuce in the crisper drawer and stuff like that.

00:21:26 Jesse Host

Even more with Benedict Cumberbatch still to come. After the break, he'll talk about what he learned after being carjacked, abducted, and left for dead in the trunk of a car, all of which really happened.

00:21:43 Music Transition
00:21:44 Jesse Promo

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00:22:16 Promo Clip

[Music fades out.]

Music: Upbeat, sci-fi music.

Dan McCoy: Hi! I'm Dan McCoy.

Stuart Wellington: I'm Stuart Wellington.

Elliott Kalan: And I'm Elliott Kalan!

Dan: And the three of us host *The Flop House*. It's a podcast where we watch a new bad movie and then we talk about it.

Elliott: Dan, you say it's hosted by the three of us, but we've had a lot of great guest co-hosts, like Gillian Flynn, Jamelle Bouie, John Hodgman, Jessica Williams, Wyatt Cenac, Joe Bob Briggs, Josh Gondelman, Roman Mars.

Stuart: Yeah, and you said new movies, but what about the time we did *Meatballs II*?

Dan: Okay, okay. Yeah, sometimes we do older movies and sometimes we have guests, but mostly it's about us talking about like recent bad movies.

Stuart: And don't forget about the ones where I made you do a roleplaying game where you played cartoon doooogs!

Dan: Alright, yeah, but—

Stuart: Shouldn't a promo be a really simple explanation about what our show's about? So, what's the show about, Dan?

Elliott: What's it about?

[Dan sighs.]

Stuart: What's it about?!

Dan: *[Frustratedly.]* It's about friendship, alright?! It's about our friendship and how we love each other!

Stuart: *The Flop House.* It's a podcast mostly about bad movies on Maximum Fun.

[Music ends.]

00:23:05 Music Transition
00:23:09 Jesse Host

Thumpy rock music.
It's *Bullseye*. I'm Jesse Thorn. My guest is Benedict Cumberbatch.
Let's get back into it.

I wanna ask you a sort of a personal question and you can—you can answer this to the extent that you feel comfortable.

[Benedict affirms.]

Quite a while ago, you were—you were carjacked and abducted in South Africa, while shooting an entirely different project.

[Benedict confirms.]

This was in 2004, I believe. And you know, the trauma associated with that I can only—I can only presume must have been tremendous. And I wonder how going through that experience effected your life.

00:23:55 Benedict Guest

Well, it's interesting. I mean, there's one *[inaudible]* where I can empathize with Sherlock's impatience. I think it made me—for a while, that was the hardest thing for anyone around me to deal with was that I yearned for a life less ordinary with every second I had to breathe, because I came face-to-face with some very plain facts. One is that you die on your own, no matter who you're with or who you're leaving behind, you have to face death on your own. And also, the fact that I was too young to die made me angry to live, if that makes any kind of a sense. So, I had a sort of profound insight, really, and a fantastic dinner party anecdote at the hands of these people who—you know, it could've been a lot worse. I could've been left with scars, physical and emotionally that could have been a lot worse.

I wasn't—I wasn't beaten up. I was pushed around a bit, but—and tied up and put in the boot as well as the side of the road, but—and I had a gun put to my head, but I wasn't pistol-whipped. I wasn't beaten with a stick. I wasn't kicked. I wasn't raped. I wasn't cut. You know, there was an awful lot that didn't happen that I can

be thankful for. Because ultimately, it was a small event in a very big country. And the next day there was a newspaper headline to give perspective and immediately rationalize what had happened to us and—you know—give a context for how this is something to be got over rather than be traumatized by. A man was hijacked—carjacked at the side of—not the side of the road, at the crossing. And the guy panicked and shot him before he even knew what was in the car. And there was a two-rands coin which is—I mean, it's decimal points. It doesn't even value a cent. And a lighter. That was all that was in his car. There was the car and the guy got caught and I don't even know if he was shot as well or whether he was taken down.

But it was—it was a very, very big event in my life. But it's one that I've learned from rather than being traumatized from. I went to see a counselor the minute after it happened, and we had that on offer and one of the actors I was with didn't and the other actress did. And I think it was harder for them. And I'm not gonna speak for them on this program, but I think—you know, the main way it changed me was it made me—in the immediate aftermath—was that I—well, I was—I cried the first time I felt the sun on my face the next day. You know. There were a lot of sort of almost born again, resurrected feelings. This thing of the preciousness and wonderful and beauty that is life. I mean, it is just such a blessing. And I know it sounds a bit sappy, but when you've come near death, you really, really, really, really learn to reevaluate it and appreciate it. And that's a great thing to get in your 20s, because you start—you know, using your vivacity not to kick against the idea of, "Oh, I'm immortal, there's no such thing as mortality," but to embrace your mortality and take control of it.

So, I went off and sky dove and I swam with sharks, and I did lots of kind of crazy, adrenaline-fueled stuff. But I also traveled on my own for a month afterwards, around Namibia and Cape Town, and sat in it: sat in my feelings, pondered it, dwelled on it, moved around in it, dismissed it, came back to it. You know. It's always there and I'm fine talking about it. It's a [censored] exhausting anecdote and I'm not going to excuse my swearing there, 'cause it is. [Chuckles.] It's a really big story to go into.

00:27:11 Jesse Host
00:27:12 Benedict Guest

Seems reasonable. [Chuckles.]

It is, in a sense. And it's something you can bleep me out on that, and I think people might understand. It's a big—it's a big story and it's a wonderful one to tell, but I do kind of feel a bit pale and worn after going through it. But it's not something—I don't know. You know, I've had near death experiences since then and that's obviously been the most acute one, I should say. I would say, rather. But I've got nothing other than good out of it, really. I think the positive drive you get out of wanting to live a life less ordinary has borne fruit, I think. I—you know, I quelled the other things in me that sort of knocked my equilibrium or calm about a bit. I've kind of dealt with a lot of those.

Yeah. So, I mean, it kind of—it happened—not for a reason, because I don't think these things do. It just—I was in that place at that time. But it was an extraordinary, extraordinary thing and it has definitely shaped part of who I am.

00:28:11 Jesse Host
00:28:19 Benedict Guest

Were you able to find a way to find equilibrium again?
Yeah! I mean, I had the job, for a start. So, I had to focus on a very different reality and set of circumstances to my own, and that was a massive—as it is, in an actor's life—it's a massive headspace to occupy. And then to settle the equilibrium, yeah, it took time. Of course, it took time. And, you know, I struggled with it and with the other two actors and—you know, you go through—well, I don't know that "you" in general, one goes through in general, but I certainly went through the thing of, "Wow, I need inoculating. I need to just be knocked out. You know, drink a little whiskey and take a sleeping pill." Then I got ill because I came off the sleeping pill and then that day passed and then I was completely fine again.

And that was—I had a very sort of accelerated experience on the night and a very accelerated recovery. And I went to see the counselor twice. The second time, he says, "You're more than fine. You are. You're a strong man. You're gonna be good." And I believed him and he's right! *[Chuckles.]* Thank god. But you know, yeah, of course. It throws you, but it takes you a while to—I mean, extraordinary things happen like that, and I don't know how much detail you've read about it, but one of the things that happened was as we found our salvation in this roadside curio shop that was run off the back of this other drive through safari park, where all these cooperatives had been making woven baskets and fantastic, beautiful, beautiful, beautiful original artifact carvings and bowls made out of wires and recycled beads and just extraordinary objects. And it was run by about three or four women who were in this hut and there was—there were two or three men standing guard, 'cause it was a roadside truck stop for the nights that people would come and, you know, get some Coca-Cola or whatever or would just relieve themselves and have a gossip.

And that was our—that was the light on the horizon we ran to after we discovered that we were actually finally left alone tied at the side of the road and they'd gone. And when I was there, I had—my shoelace was still tied around my right hand. I hadn't bothered untying it. And as I was telling the story and these women were clucking and tutting and ticking and just—and crying and shaking their heads, saying, "For shame, for shame. They steal from us, too. They steal from the poor. It's so bad. We're so sorry this happened to you in our country." It was profoundly moving. And then to add to that, this hand came out—this Black hand came out and untied the thing that had been used for my bondage and my White flesh and the whole thing just snowballed in my head. Everything. Everything we've—Whites—have done to that culture and just the whole thing just suddenly smashed in, and it was a profoundly moving moment that—and I looked up into this man's face, having been scared by the men that were there initially, because could they be part of the gang?

'Cause obviously everybody—I know especially because we had our head to the ground and our eyes—our eyes averted from their face because they didn't want us to—if you could identify them, it's—you were a far more likely target for a killing. So, you practice

hard at not witnessing what's going on. And to be able to look into a Black man's face in the night in South Africa and say thank you with tears running down your face as he takes away this final sort of token, I guess, of the night's trauma—it was—that was wonderful. And I—that was a huge part of the healing. And I wrote to him soon afterwards to explain that to him and he understood exactly what I meant. You know.

00:31:39	Jesse	Host	Well, I really appreciate you taking the time to be on our show, Benedict. It was really nice to talk with you.
00:31:42	Benedict	Guest	No, it's a pleasure. An absolute pleasure. I hope that was alright.
00:31:46	Jesse	Host	Benedict Cumberbatch from 2012. If you haven't seen <i>Sherlock</i> from the BBC, it is a great, fun show. You can download all four series through Apple, Amazon, or Google Play.
00:31:58	Music	Transition	Bright, cheerful music.
00:32:01	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 greater Los Angeles, California. Here in Los Angeles, I am headed off to take a stick shift driving lesson. I've only driven automatics; please don't judge me. But hopefully we'll learn quick.

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 "Huddle Formation", recorded by the group The Go! Team. Thanks to them and to their label, Memphis Industries.

You can also 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.

00:32:56	Promo	Promo	Speaker: <i>Bullseye with Jesse Thorn</i> is a production of MaximumFun.org and is distributed by NPR.
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