

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	Jesse Thorn	Host	I'm Jesse Thorn. It's <i>Bullseye</i> .
00:00:14	Music	Music	"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.
00:00:22	Jesse	Host	<i>Joe Pera Talks With You</i> is a small, quiet show. Maybe one of the quietest shows on TV. The conceit is pretty straightforward. In fact, it couldn't be any more plain. Joe Pera, the host, plays a version of himself. He guides you through his life, in the city of Marquette, Michigan. He talks about iron or chairs or breakfast or the rat wars of Alberta, Canada, in 1950. And while he talks with you about those subjects, he lives his life. He visits his nana. He teaches choir at the local middle school. He goes on a date with the band teacher. It's a sweet show. It's funny, though there aren't really any jokes. And it'll catch you by surprise with some incredibly moving moments. Anyway, I genuinely love it. I got to talk with Joe last year, when the show was wrapping up its second season. And we have some good news! <i>Joe Pera Talks With You</i> is back for its third season. That's airing now, on Adult Swim. It is fantastic. When Joe and I talked, we kicked things off with the introduction of the show's second season. Joe is growing snapbeans in his garden. But he's doing something special. He's growing them into a bean arch. Here's Joe Pera.
00:01:43	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:01:44	Clip	Clip	<i>[Gentle piano music plays in the background.]</i> Joe Pera (<i>Joe Pera Talks With You</i>): Right now, it's just a regular arch. But later this afternoon, we'll plant seedlings on either side. Over the next 65 days, they'll climb this structure, and if all goes well, meet in the middle. The snap beans will hang down, so that when I walk under, I'll be able to just reach up and pick a bean. Imagine that. Not having to bend over to pick a bean, but to reach up and pick a bean. If you're tall, maybe even with your mouth.
00:02:21	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:02:22	Jesse	Host	Joe Pera, welcome to <i>Bullseye</i> . I'm so thrilled to have you on the show. I love your show.
00:02:26	Joe Pera	Guest	Thanks for having me, Jesse.
00:02:28	Jesse	Host	How did you get the idea that this thing that you are doing on your

television show could be a television show?

- 00:02:38 Joe Guest Growing the bean arch? Well—
- 00:02:40 Jesse Host Not—*[laughs.]* Not specifically growing the bean arch, although that is—what is it, a synecdoche? A metonymy? What’s the thing where one thing stands in for the group of things? But, um, uh, no, I mean like your show is really not like any other television shows, and I wonder like, at what point you brought this to a manager or an agent or something like that, and they were like, “Yeah, we should take this out and pitch it to television.”
- 00:03:14 Joe Guest Um, well, it’s highly based on my stand-up and it kind of came about when I did an animated special for Adult Swim called *Joe Pera Talks You To Sleep*. And that was just—you know, that was just the goal, to talk about nice things until people actually fell asleep, and maybe laughed a little bit along the way. And then I guess yeah, and then it kind of just grew from there.
- 00:03:43 Jesse Host Your show’s on late. Do people tell you that *Joe Pera Talks With You* puts them to sleep?
- 00:03:48 Joe Guest Uh, sometimes. But no, actually I’ve heard from a number of people that the sleep show actually works. I don’t know if it’s the show or just them getting themselves in the mindset to go to bed, but I really appreciate it. When, uh, my dad would come to choir concerts that I did in high school, he would fall asleep. And I understand he worked hard, and it was the end of the day, and then he had to come sit through a concert.
- But uh, my orchestra teacher, Mr. Thomas actually said, you know, “Don’t worry about it. Falling asleep is a reaction, and it’s kind of a good one.” So, I guess I kind of started from to see if I could create that reaction, or just the environment and the feeling where people would feel good going to bed right after the show and I think that the fact that it’s on late is great, ‘cause they might have the opportunity to do so.
- 00:04:51 Jesse Host You know, as a podcaster myself, people often tell me that they use one of my shows to—one or the other of my shows to fall asleep to. You know, they’ll put it on their headphones as they go to sleep.
- 00:05:08 Joe Guest I think that that’s a nice thing. Yeah, no, that’s very nice. A little bit—yeah, I guess people could take it as a little creepy that—or you could take it as creepy that they want to listen to your voice last before they drift off. But, I don’t know, I guess that’s a nice thing that you could give them enough of a feeling of calm or just boredom to sleep.
- 00:05:32 Jesse Host Yeah. I mean, it really is—first of all, it hadn’t even occurred to me that I could take it as creepy, but now in the future I will bear that in mind. But I think it’s hard for me to remember that what they mean when they say that is that the show is a safe and comfortable place for them, and if they’re doing this to fall asleep, it may be that they don’t feel safe and comfortable otherwise when they’re falling asleep, rather than that my work is boring. *[Laughs.]*
- 00:06:05 Joe Guest Yeah. No, I was just kidding. But um, I don’t know, it could be a lot

of things. It could be, I don't know, just the radio noise, or—there's got to be something. I mean, they definitely put it on for a reason. They, you know, they don't listen to another show. But maybe if you're not a fan of that, you could introduce a ten-minute scream, where every ten minutes during your show you just scream.

[Jesse giggles delightedly.]

And um, that'll put an end to that pretty quick.

00:06:39 Jesse Host Were there other shows that, when you were pitching *Joe Pera Talks With You*, or even pitching your *Joe Pera Talks You To Sleep*, that you talked about as touchstones for what kind of thing you wanted to make?

00:06:57 Joe Guest Yeah. It's a bunch of things. I mean, it's meant to be kind of an informational show at the start, and I guess each time it gets away from that. So, I've been saying it's kind of like a CBS Sunday Morning that's done by a middle school choir teacher, and often times he gets distracted, and also there are jokes.

But I think some of the development happened with the series—a web series I did called *Pancake Breakfast Critic* where I would go to critique community pancake breakfasts, spaghetti dinners, and stuff. And um, I was a big fan of *Fishing With John* by John Lurie, and it was inspiring in a way. And I think maybe I was in—uh, certain styles type stuff might have made its way into the *Pancake Breakfast Critic* and from that into the show. But *Fishing With John*, if you haven't seen it, I highly recommend it. It's so funny and kind of calming at the same time, too.

I think he was trying to do something a little bit similar in terms of just having a fishing show late at night, but then it kind of became a—something different every time. But it also kind of captured that feeling of watching television late at night and not quite—thinking you would know what to expect, or just getting ready to fall asleep while watching it, but then seeing something else.

00:08:39 Jesse Host Let's hear another clip from *Joe Pera Talks With You*. So, in this scene Joe is out to breakfast. There's a lot of breakfast on the show. He's out to breakfast with his neighbor Mike, who's played by Connor O'Malley, who also is a writer and creative contributor to the show, otherwise.

And they're talking about what constitutes the perfect egg bite, and they sort of settle on one bite that includes everything that's on the breakfast plate. Toast and butter and hashbrowns and ketchup and jam and the egg all in one munch. But it's really key that in this sunny side up egg, the yolk stay intact.

So, we're about to hear Mike having just assembled all the layers, and Joe and the family are all watching in this diner. And we will hear as he fails at getting the perfect bite.

00:09:36 Sound Effect Transition Music swells and fades.

00:09:37	Clip	Clip	<p><i>[Uplifting piano music plays over the faint ambiance of a busy diner.]</i></p> <p>Mike: If we've done our work properly, we're gonna have a pretty good egg bite. I love you, babe. Here we go.</p> <p><i>[Sound of chewing, and then a censor bleep, followed by someone grunting and pounding the table repeatedly in frustration. Someone else is heard giggling faintly.]</i></p> <p>Speaker 1: Calm down!</p> <p>Mike: Do you—</p> <p>Speaker 1: No, don't laugh. This isn't funny, okay? It is serious to him. He is trying.</p> <p><i>[Sound of metal utensil clanging down on the table.]</i></p> <p>Mike: I need a win.</p>
00:10:04	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:10:05	Jesse	Host	<p><i>[Laughing.]</i> Connor O'Malley's aesthetic is, you know, you've worked with him a lot, but his aesthetic is much more intense than yours. How do you decide— <i>[He breaks, laughing.]</i> How do you decide when there will be a sharp joke moment like that on a show that is almost entirely, you know, consistent and gentle in tone?</p>
00:10:30	Joe	Guest	<p>I guess just by putting Connor in the episode.</p> <p><i>[Jesse chuckles.]</i></p> <p>That's good. Yeah, he's so funny and yeah, we have really similar interests. Like that egg bite is actually based on something that he does for real at breakfast, and I was like, "Why don't we just kinda put it in the script and do the step by step?" And that's all there was to it. But yeah, it's a balance of the—you know, when to hit on really hard jokes and when to kind of resist. But yeah, I don't know, having Connor is just—it's great.</p> <p>As a writer, I think he wrote one of my favorite episodes this coming season about going to the grocery store. And he's not even in it, but you can tell that there's some really sharp jokes and stuff I could never think of because of it, and stuff that hits, you know, outside of my comedy tone that is just very, you know, straightforward and funny. I don't know any other way to describe it.</p>
00:11:40	Jesse	Host	<p>So, you started doing comedy when you were 18 in Buffalo, which is your hometown. What were the circumstances?</p>
00:11:48	Joe	Guest	<p>I don't think about my starting out in comedy in too much. I think I just haven't taken the time to reflect back. But it was, uh—I thought about this the other week. It was a stand-up comedy class at University of Buffalo. I took it while I was just—maybe, I guess it was between junior and senior year of high school. And it was</p>

taught by Alan Zweibel, who was an original SNL writer. He wrote on Garry Shandling's show and he's a great writer now, and a lot—he's done a lot of great books.

But uh, there was like, me and like—it was not big. Less than ten other people. Nothing wrong with it, but there were a lot of middle-aged people like, looking to—you know, get into comedy. So, at the end of the week, that was my assignment, to do a stand-up set, and I did it. And I don't think it was very good, but Alan was very nice, and it was good to do it there.

- 00:12:56 Jesse Host When you started doing it seriously, was it in New York City?
- 00:13:00 Joe Guest Uh-huh. Yeah, uh, I was doing it a little bit in Buffalo, but I realized that—I mean, I wanted to do it hopefully for a living someday, and that's not the—it's pretty tough in Buffalo. So, I wanted to do it and I knew I had to move, so I did and—yeah. It was good. I met a lot of my closest friends through doing stand-up in New York, and it was really great. It was like, yeah. I'm glad I did. It was tough to start here, but I'm very happy that I did.
- 00:13:37 Jesse Host We've got so much more to get into with Joe Pera. Don't go anywhere. It's Bullseye, from MaximumFun.org and NPR.
- 00:13:45 Music Transition Gritty, futuristic synth.
- 00:13:49 Jesse Promo Support for NPR and the following message come from LEGO. Who would've thought that the key to inner peace would be so simple? Take some me time to deep dive into a LEGO set. Whatever your passions are, from wonders of the world to movie magic, intrepid space exploration, and pop culture icons, there's a LEGO set waiting for you. Experience the joy of a rewarding challenge at LEGO.com/adults-welcome. Build something you love and find your flow with LEGO sets. Adults welcome.
- [Music fades out.]*
- 00:14:27 Music Transition Thumpy, relaxed music with light vocalizations.
- 00:14:31 Jesse Host It's Bullseye. I'm Jesse Thorn. I'm talking with Joe Pera. He's the star and creator of Adult Swim's *Joe Pera Talks With You*. Let's get back into our conversation.
- Was it a difficult decision, not just to move to New York but to decide, yes, I actually do want to do this for a living? Especially being in Buffalo where, as you said—you know, you can't do it for a living in Buffalo, or it's very difficult to do it for a living in Buffalo.
- 00:14:59 Joe Host Yeah. I don't—I just—I don't want to be corny, but it is really kind of a dream. I knew I wanted to do it, and so when I had the opportunity, I moved, and then I put my head down and I lived really cheap. And I kind of—it's gonna sound weird, but I said like, "I'm just gonna focus on this and not worry about other things."
- Or, you know, I put aside a bunch of other stuff to just work on, focus on comedy, and it was so great. It was like the coolest thing,

just to be—kind of like when we're working on the show. When you're—people just kinda, I guess, just focus on doing a good job at the one thing. That's such a treat, to just focus on comedy and just think about comedy all the time. And I still do. It's just neat.

- 00:15:51 Jesse Host What's something that you didn't know when you moved to New York that you learned through that discipline?
- 00:15:58 Joe Guest I guess the biggest thing that—and there was a bunch of things—was just how to do comedy at the pace that I wanted to. 'Cause I'm not, you know, I'm not witty or quick-thinking. So, I figured out how to do it and taking at my own pace, hopefully without boring the audience, and that was kind of the goal over time.
- 00:16:23 Jesse Host That must have been a very difficult thing to learn to do on a New York standup stage. I mean, I'm sure you were playing a lot of rooms that were relatively friendly to that. You know, there are plenty of great, you know, so called "alt rooms" that you can play in New York, where people are there to see something interesting. But there's also, you know, a huge tradition of fast-talking, slightly belligerent New York comedy. And like, to step on stage and own the stage without matching that energy, after something like that is on stage, strikes me as a real challenge. You know what I mean?
- 00:17:07 Joe Guest Yeah. It makes—it is fun, and I'm kind of glad that I did start in New York for that reason. I guess, someone said earlier. It's like, it might be the reason why the show works on Adult Swim is that there's something louder and faster coming before it that, when my show come on, or you know, if I go on stage in New York during a show and the person before me was like, "I love sex. Here's how I like to *[censored]*." Sorry to swear, but—and then I go and I, you know, I do a bit about my favorite piece of pie.
- [Jesse chuckles.]*
- There's a good contrast and getting to—to keep that interesting. I mean, sometimes the audience would be interested off the bat, but—you know, how did I get my writing to the level where I'm writing stuff that can hold the attention the entire set? Not just, you know, be talking about my favorite piece of pie, but how do I take my pie bit to the next level and make it ten minutes, and quietly entertaining for ten minutes?
- And then the next guy comes on and goes, "Yes, I also love to *[censored]*." Excuse me, I can't—I'm sorry to swear on here, but—but then, you know, and then I guess it kind of worked in a nice way that they thought about the piece of pie bit. Maybe I will write that actual bit when we get done with the interview.
- 00:18:36 Jesse Host *[Chuckling.]* What was the first thing that you remember writing that really worked, that you were really proud of?
- 00:18:44 Joe Guest Um, I think it's online, but—and those people in Buffalo like it for obvious reasons, but I wrote a joke about the Buffalo Bills, about how they lose so that families in the area can bond more. And I remember, it's like uh, on paper it's like a few pages. It's a six-minute bit, and then it's—it ties together a lot of stuff, and I was very

proud.

I remember I spent a lot of time working on that on paper, and then testing it on stage, and when it came together it's kind of a bit that is hopefully funny and surprising, but also maybe makes people feel a little something. I don't know, I'm not sure about that. But it seems to, and you know, it kind of leaves the spaces in there to let people think about their own Sunday afternoons watching football or going on a drive with their family.

And that kind of—putting those things together, I think that bit in particular kind of combined the things that I'm still working on now. It's on YouTube if anybody's interested. You just search uh, "Buffalo Bills joke".

00:19:58 Jesse Host It is titled "Buffalo Bills Joke."

[Joe laughs quietly.]

I was about to mention that. I was watching it before we started talking. *[He laughs.]*

00:20:04 Joe Guest Oh, cool. Yeah. Not so relevant this year. Going to the Superbowl, Jesse.

00:20:10 Jesse Host Well, we'll see what the San Francisco 49ers have to say about that when they both get there.

00:20:16 Joe Guest Alright. I mean, if the Bills win a playoff game—

[Jesse laughs.]

—that would be enough. But I shouldn't say that. I shouldn't say that. The Buffalo Bills are gonna win the Superbowl this year.

00:20:27 Jesse Host I'm Jesse Thorn. This is Bullseye. My guest is Joe Pera.

What was it like to uh, not just have dedicated your life to comedy but to have moved to the biggest city in the United States, one of the biggest cities in the world?

00:20:45 Joe Guest *[Chuckling.]* That sounds so sad. I dedicated my life to comedy.

00:20:52 Jesse Host *[Laughing.]* You did a great job! You're bringing a lot of joy to a lot of people's lives, Joe. You should feel great about it.

00:20:57 Joe Guest No, it's just funny. It's just very funny to say. No, I—it's ridiculous, but I also think, I mean, if you gotta dedicate your life to something—and you said that, not me—but I'll just say, if you gotta dedicate your life to something, comedy is not the worst thing.

00:21:15 Jesse Host Yeah, I mean, you were just talking about the value of dedicating your life to a thing, and just practicing a craft, you know? Like, that's what you were—that's at least how I heard you talking about focusing on stand-up and, you know, figuring out a way to live on almost no money so that you could do it.

It's that feeling of, you know, you do it once and then you see if you

can do it a little better the next time. And that is like, such a fundamentally human experience, you know?

00:21:47 Joe Guest Yeah. Um, yeah, I may have taken it too far. I had a twin bed until I was 26, 27. It was—I don't—like, I had such a small room, it was what fit. But also, after the *Talks You To Sleep* came out, then I was like, "Alright, I got a check, and I'm gonna buy a big boy bed."

[Jesse laughs.]

I just got—I don't know. I got used to it and then, I don't know.

00:22:16 Jesse Host Did you go double? Did you go full queen?

00:22:18 Joe Guest It was bad. Yup, double. Double, 'cause then double was all that would fit, 'cause I had to work out in my room, and I had to fit a desk in there, and this was—the twin bed and the desk and then that was it. And then, I just kind of got rid of the desk and had a bed and that was most of my room.

00:22:38 Jesse Host Do you have that thing that a lot of uh, comics have, where if you're not doing time on stage, if you're not getting up, then you are sort of itchy and out of sorts?

00:22:51 Joe Guest Mm-hm. Yeah. And it's been bad. Last season I did a better job of getting on stage while—throughout the process, but this season I have not done a good job. And I think that I'm more anxious because of it.

00:23:07 Jesse Host What do you get out of doing it?

00:23:11 Joe Guest Um, the—I don't know that much about meditation or anything, but I think for those moments on stage you have to be very present, and it's kind of a focus thing and you get the energy from it. Also, people laugh.

00:23:28 Jesse Host Yeah, that part is great.

[Joe responds affirmatively, and both laugh.]

But I have to say like, I had a—for two glorious months, I had a standup show at The Ice House in Pasadena that a friend who's a comic sort of bequeathed to me and my buddy. Neither of us is a standup. And we had done a lot of comedy on stage of various kinds, but I have to say that by the second one was done, I was like, "I don't think I care enough to develop the skills to entertain people who aren't there because they want to be entertained by me."

[They laugh.]

You know what I mean? Like, there's a certain—I know a guy who's like, a cabaret performer, and he feels the way about—he feels about busking the way that stand-ups feel about doing stage time, which is he's gotta get out there on the street corner. Even when he's booked in a stadium that night, he gets out on the street corner that afternoon and does his act, because he loves the challenge and the thrill of convincing people who are just wandering past to

pay attention.

00:24:43 Joe Guest Yeah. One time, I was a couple years in—it was kind of dumb. Well, I don't know. But I got the idea of maybe I could try and do standup on the subway platform and make some money. So, I got a—I asked two—uh, the first time I did it by myself. The next time I asked some comedians. But basically, it was late at night on the platform and the trains would come every ten minutes, and I just kind of—I had a sign that says, "Jokes, complimenting ladies, and guesses your favorite food." And I would just kind of—

[Jesse laughs.]

If nobody approached me, I would just start telling jokes, and hopefully it would catch somebody's ear and it would get a laugh and then they'd turn. It was kind of neat. And—or a few hours, you know, in ten minutes you have to catch people's attention, and then once the crowd starts growing and laughing, then you're kind of in business. And then once you got that, you know, then the pressure's on. Then if you can deliver, you make a couple bucks, and it was kind of—it wasn't—yeah, I didn't do it all that often, but it was like a good learning experience in just how to make sure the jokes are super sharp. Especially like, you know, quieter ones.

It kind of like helped that when I was—had a bunch of jokes at that period of time, I kind of threw them out there at that point, and they—I knew which ones were like, very good, and which ones were only medium, based on how they worked. If they could keep people's attention there. And they kind of, I don't know. I don't think it changed the way I do comedy, but it definitely helped me identify what's a good joke versus what's a great joke.

00:26:36 Jesse Host Did it help you make the rent?

00:26:39 Joe Guest Uh... mm, I think I made like fifty bucks.

00:26:45 Jesse Host I mean, that's not nothing, Joe.

00:26:47 Joe Guest Not quite there, but I remember the next morning I went out for breakfast and bought myself a New York Times and I read it while eating breakfast, and that was like—that was pretty fun.

00:26:58 Jesse Host *[Chuckling.]* Yeah, that totally rules. Reading the New York Times while eating breakfast is great.

00:27:04 Joe Guest Well, it was more ethical than stealing it from somebody's front porch.

00:27:08 Jesse Host *[Laughs.]* I mean, if you can up it to two shows a night, maybe you treat yourself to a New Yorker.

00:27:17 Joe Guest Yeah. Yeah, true.

00:27:20 Jesse Host We'll finish up with my guest, Joe Pera, after the break. Don't go anywhere. It's Bullseye from MaximumFun.org and NPR.

00:27:27 Music Transition Gentle, relaxed music.

00:27:30 Jesse Promo This message is brought to you by NPR sponsor Airbnb. Millions of people earn extra income by hosting their extra space on Airbnb. Income that can help with home renovations, paying for vacations, or saving for retirement. Maybe you have questions about whether hosting might be right for you? You can now ask a super host and get free one-on-one help from Airbnb's most experienced hosts. Go to [Airbnb.com/askasuperhost](https://airbnb.com/askasuperhost) and start asking.

[Music fades out.]

00:28:03 Promo Clip **Music:** Bright, warm piano.

Jesse Thorn: Hi, it's Jesse Thorn, the founder of Maximum Fun. It's the Thanksgiving season, and I wanna talk this opportunity to thank you, the members of Maximum Fun. This Max Fun Drive, your generosity and your love of pins helped us raise over \$90,000 to help bridge the digital divide. Families without internet access struggle to do things that the rest of us might take for granted, especially during COVID. Going to school, applying for jobs, finding medical care. Your donations helped the nonprofit Everyone On. They provide equipment, services, and training to get people online so they can access opportunity. You can find out more about the great work Everyone On does at [EveryoneOn.org](https://everyoneon.org). Thanks for supporting Maximum Fun. Thanks for supporting Everyone On. And thanks for being awesome people who wanna do good in the world.

[Music fades out.]

00:29:06 Music Transition Thumpy rock music.

00:29:11 Jesse Host Welcome back to Bullseye. I'm Jesse Thorn. My Guest is Joe Pera. He's the creator and star of the TV show *Joe Pera Talks With You*. On that show, Joe guides viewers through his hometown of Marquette, Michigan, where he works as a school choir teacher. *Joe Pera Talks With You's* third season just kicked off on Adult Swim. Joe and I talked last year. Let's get back into our conversation.

I wanna play a scene from *Joe Pera Talks With You* that's really lovely. It's from the second episode of this new, second season. Your character on the show has a girlfriend named Sarah Connor. Yes, the same name as the woman from the *Terminator*.

She's played by Jo Firestone, who's a great New York comedian and also hosts a podcast in the podcast network that I own. And basically, the two of you work at the same school, and you're spending all this time trying to figure out whether to tell the people around you that you're dating. And she maybe is uncomfortable with it, and you are burdened by her discomfort.

And in this scene we hear you, Joe, tell Sarah that you got kicked out of little league for running around the bases even though you were out in the last at-bat of the season.

[Joe responds affirmatively.]

00:30:34	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:30:35	Clip	Clip	<i>[Sound of wind and birds chirping in the background.]</i> Joe Pera: I know it sounds childish, but it feels so good to get that off of my chest. I guess I was still embarrassed from when Coach Hasler had me turn in my cap and uniform. Sarah Connor: It takes guts for you to tell me that, and I don't fully understand it, but I can respect it. Joe: Every time we've driven by a diamond, I've held it in.
00:30:57	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:30:59	Jesse	Host	Are there things you do or choices you make to ground the show in humanity and reality, rather than it being either abstract absurdity or abstract corniness? You know, Hallmark channel type abstraction?
00:31:21	Joe	Guest	Yeah. I just—I guess, I mean, none of us are—well, there's some exceptions. Jo Firestone and Jo Scott and also Connor, maybe just—maybe I'm not a great actor, but also like a lot of the people that we cast on the show aren't—like a lot of the kids in the choir, they're kids from the Milwaukee area that—you know, we don't want a bunch of child actors who sing perfect. We want the kids to be themselves and sound like a choir kid. And when we did this new season, we needed a beauty salon, and we found not only the perfect beauty salon that kind of reminded me of the one where my own grandmother got her hair done, but the owner—Yvonne—was such a great personality and interesting person. I mean, she spends her entire career talking to people all day long and finding out what they know and keeping them entertained while she cuts their hair. You know, who better to cast than that? Sometimes it makes things tougher, but I think these decisions to shoot in real places, use real people, and let the unpolished stuff go is just—it kind of adds up and hopefully grounds the show and a bunch of choices, and also me and Marty Schousboe—the excellent director—don't 100% know what we're doing, so just kind of embrace a bunch of the flaws of the show and, instead of trying to spool them out, include them. And hope that that's fun. Like, Jo Firestone's not gonna like this, but in episode eight of last season, she walked right into a doorway. And I don't know if anybody really noticed, but the stuff like leaving in shots where she walks into a doorway or where I almost trip or something like that. It just—don't bother taking them out, 'cause that's what p—people want to see people run into doorways, I think.
00:33:31	Jesse	Thorn	Are you proud of the show?
00:33:33	Joe	Guest	Uh, yes. We put everything we have into it. I know it's not like, the most polished show or anything else, but kind of the thing that we said going into it is, you know, we don't have the biggest budget or,

I mean, 50 million dollars an episode, but um—*[sheepishly]* sorry, bad joke.

But yeah, what we just tried to say is, everybody on the cast and crew, we try and care as much as we can about the show and all the decisions and the edits. And every step of the way from the scripts to the edit we just try and care more about the show, or as much as possible, because that's—you know, I'm not the smartest, so we can't make the smartest show or even the outright funniest show, 'cause Danny McBride is doing that.

But, I don't know, I think—I hope that those intangible qualities kind of carry across, and just that caring and the—from everyone is just—people will be able to sense it when they watch it.

00:34:48	Jesse	Host	Well, Joe, I'm glad you're proud of it, because as much as I love Danny McBride—and I do—I think your show's my favorite thing on TV. I love it so much, and I'm—
00:34:58	Joe	Guest	Really?
00:34:59	Jesse	Host	Yeah, for real.
00:35:00	Joe	Guest	Oh, thank you.
00:35:01	Jesse	Host	Absolutely for real. I mean, <i>Mandalorian</i> is fun, too, don't get me wrong. But—
			<i>[Both laugh.]</i>
00:35:08	Joe	Guest	Oh, no. You're going hard on Baby Yoda now, too? Oh, no.
00:35:11	Jesse	Host	No! I like—I like Baby Yoda. I like <i>Mandalorian</i> . But I like your show better.
00:35:17	Joe	Guest	Hey, thanks.
00:35:18	Jesse	Host	That's the honest truth, and I'm really grateful that you took this time to be on <i>Bullseye</i> .
			<i>[Music fades in.]</i>
			I really appreciate it.
00:35:24	Joe	Guest	Thanks, Jesse.
00:35:25	Music	Transition	Cheerful, upbeat music.
00:35:29	Jesse	Host	Joe Pera. His show, <i>Joe Pera Talks With You</i> , is airing now on Adult Swim. You can also watch it on the Adult Swim app. If you haven't seen it before and you're looking for a place to start, I recommend the episode “Joe Pera Reads You the Church Announcements”, from season one. In it, Joe's character hears “Baba O'Riley” by The Who for the first time.
00:35:54	Music	Music	Chiming, upbeat synth.
00:35:55	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—where, this week as I am recording this, my children are maybe 100 feet away screaming pretty loud, so sorry if they're *[chuckles]* occasionally interrupting this narration.

Our show is produced by speaking into microphones. Our senior producer, Kevin Ferguson. Our producer, 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.

You can keep up with our show on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. We post all of our interviews there. And I think that's about it. Just remember: all great radio hosts have a signature signoff.

00:36:48 Promo

Promo

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

[Music fades out.]