

00:00:00	Music	Transition	Gentle, trilling music with a steady drumbeat plays under the dialogue.
00:00:01	Promo	Promo	<b>Speaker:</b> <i>Bullseye with Jesse Thorn</i> is a production of <a href="http://MaximumFun.org">MaximumFun.org</a> 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.
00:00:18	Jesse Thorn	Host	It’s <i>Bullseye</i> . I’m Jesse Thorn. My first guest this week is Christopher Walken. He and I talked from his home. Walken is a great character actor—maybe one of the greatest ever? So many iconic parts: <i>King of New York</i> , <i>Pulp Fiction</i> , <i>Saturday Night Live</i> . I could go on basically forever. These days, you can see him on <i>Severance</i> . It’s a new TV show written and directed by Ben Stiller.  <i>Severance</i> is a sort of dystopian workplace dramedy. It’s set mostly inside the confines of a giant, bleak office building. When employees there start their workday, they forget completely about their personal lives. And when they go home, they forget completely about their work. What could possibly go wrong? Along with Walken, <i>Severance</i> stars Adam Scott, Patricia Arquette, and John Turturro. It’s airing now, on Apple TV+.  Walken’s character is a middle manager, named Burt. In this scene, he’s wandering the sparse, severe halls of the Lumen Industries office. He runs into John Turturro’s character, Irving. The two are looking up at a huge, grotesque painting on the otherwise bare wall. When I say grotesque, I mean like Hieronymus Bosch level upsetting.
00:01:39	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:01:40	Clip	Clip	<b>Music:</b> Peaceful, contemplative music.  <b>Burt (<i>Severance</i>):</b> Oh, I’m sorry! I’m sorry. I didn’t think that anybody was down here. I was getting off from my session.  <b>Irving:</b> I was just going in. I was admiring the, uh, art while I wait.  <b>Burt:</b> That piece hung in the perpetuity wing for many years.  <b>Irving:</b> I know! And it broke my heart when they took it down.  <b>Burt:</b> It’s better here. It’s calming.  <b>Irving:</b> I’m Irving, macro-data refinement. Are you a department head?  <b>Burt:</b> Well, optics and design. A two-person department, so. Barely!  <b>Irving:</b> So, this is your work, hm?  <b>Burt:</b> We don’t paint them. We do hang them.  <b>Irving:</b> I love that you did the Ambrose cycle in the team building space, last quarter.

**Burt:** Huh.

**Irving:** I had never seen it.

**Burt:** It's rare to meet a sophisticate! Most people only thing of O&D when new handbook totes come in.

*[They laugh.]*

00:02:38	Sound Effect	Transition	<b>Irving:</b> Well, I love those, too. Music swells and fades.
00:02:40	Jesse	Host	Christopher Walken, I'm so happy to have you on <i>Bullseye</i> . Thank you for coming on the show.
00:02:43	Christopher Walken	Guest	Hi.
00:02:44	Jesse	Host	One of my favorite things about watching this show— <i>Severance</i> —was getting to watch you and John Turturro. You're both such New York guys and such—such just wonderful, consummate actors. They're like—you're like two of the actors that I would never pass up the chance to see do something onscreen or onstage. And for that reason, I think I imagined that you were best friends. In fact, I might have already imagined the two of you as best friends before I saw you working together. <i>[Laughs.]</i> But what was it—what was it like to work with this other man with such extraordinary and elegant and distinctive qualities, as a performer?
00:03:30	Christopher	Guest	Well, you're right. You know, I've known John for a very long time. He makes movies. He writes and directs and produces his own movies. And I think I've been in—I think four of them, now. And I just—I know him very well. He's one of the only actors that I talk to on the telephone once in a while. And I see him—I love John. Being with John every day, I get to go to work, and we sit—it's a lot of time between takes. And you sit and you talk. And... it was—it was a real pleasure.
00:04:09	Jesse	Host	You started working as an actor when you were a kid. Did you have any regular jobs?
00:04:15	Christopher	Guest	I grew up in Queens, which was about 15 minutes on the subway from Manhattan, where television kind of got born after the second World War. You know, there were three networks, and they were all kind of around the area of Rockefeller Center. And there were 90 live shows every week. And in the '50s, television was very family oriented and... especially at holidays. Christmas, Easter. And they used these kids—we weren't really actors. We—you know, would sing a little, dance a little, say a couple of lines.
			And, uh—you know, there were a lot of those kids and they used them in a lot of those shows. There were schools for those kids. I went to one of them. So, that's what I did. My father had a bakery, and I sometimes worked there. At one point, I—when I got a driver's license, I used to deliver his wedding cakes. But mostly, since I was five years old, I've been in showbusiness.
00:05:34	Jesse	Host	Was your dad always out of the house before you woke up?
00:05:37	Christopher	Guest	Yes. He had a—he had his bakery and my father worked very hard. He—really seven days a week, and he was always at his bakery.
00:05:47	Jesse	Host	Were there things there you liked to eat?

00:05:50	Christopher	Guest	Of course! My house was full of cakes and, you know, bread and as I got older—these days, I don't eat dessert much, 'cause I think I had dessert all the time when I was a kid.
00:06:03	Jesse	Host	I know you like to cook. Did he teach you things?
00:06:05	Christopher	Guest	Sure. And in fact, in those days the bakeries would—they would kind of sideline doing other things at holidays. They would—you know—take your turkey for you and put it in the bread ovens and—your turkey and your ham. You could bring it there and they'd cook it for you. And he did that.
00:06:29	Jesse	Host	Yeah, my father was a good cook. How do you think your mom got the idea for you and your brothers to be actors?
00:06:35	Christopher	Guest	She was really taken with showbusiness and the movies and theatre and—and the time was ripe, really, for that sort of thing. Like I was saying, after the second World War, television got started. I remember when I was a kid, there were just a few TVs around. Sometimes the neighborhood saloon would have a TV, and everybody would go there and watch baseball and so on. Boxing and horseracing in those days were very big.
			My family had a TV early on, and I remember there were certain nights a week—you know, Uncle Miltie or Sid Caesar or... or there were always these specials, especially at holidays. My parents' friends would come to our house. Everybody would go there basically just to watch a TV show. TV was very interesting. People would—they would watch test patterns.
			<i>[Jesse chuckles.]</i>
			You know, they would have these patterns where you could adjust the focus on your TV. And they would just sit there and watch these patterns, 'cause it was TV. It was—it was so—such a novelty. And then of course, within just a few years, and there were millions of TV sets. But in the beginning, they were rare. Great big box, you know? A great big box with all these nobs on it and a little, tiny screen the size of a toaster. People were transfixed.
00:08:18	Jesse	Host	Were there acting jobs that you were particular excited about, as a kid?
00:08:23	Christopher	Guest	No. I—it wasn't acting, as I say. We weren't actors. We were child performers. And in fact, when it came to the shows themselves, we were more like set dressing. You know, it'd be Christmas, so you'd have a lot of kids around a tree. Or Easter and we'd all be searching for eggs. And it was that kind of thing. I can't say that we were actors.
00:08:54	Jesse	Host	What was the first thing you'd say you really acted in?
00:08:57	Christopher	Guest	Well, when I—I grew up doing that and then I kind of graduated into doing musicals. Everybody in those days took dancing lessons, and—the boys and the girls. The girls would take ballet. The boys would take tap and acrobatics. And people sent their kids to these classes, especially in the part of New York that I grew up in. So, I learned to dance and then I started to get into musicals. And I remember when I was about 18 or 20, somebody said there's an audition for a play; you should go down.

And I went and I auditioned even though I had no experience. I got the part. And then I started to get acting parts. So, I became an actor a little bit by accident.

00:09:50 Jesse Host We actually found a clip of you performing in what we're pretty sure is a short film when you were a kid. It's from 1956 and it's kind of a—it's kind of a spooky *Twilight Zone* type thing called *The Boy Who Saw Through*.

00:10:08 Christopher Guest That's right, *The Boy Who Saw Through*. That's right. I would've been about 13 or something. A kid who sees through walls. Right?

*[Jesse confirms.]*

Yeah. And I don't know what it was for, but yeah. That was an acting job, and I don't know how I got that. I'm not sure I've ever seen it.

00:10:30 Jesse Host Well, it's—this is just—you're about to hear it. It's a little—it's a little scene where you and your mom are getting ready for church.

00:10:39 Sound Effect Transition Music swells and fades.

00:10:40 Clip Clip *[Church bells sound loudly.]*

**Mother (*The Boy Who Saw Through*):** Oh, Ernie. Now do hurry or we're going to be late.

*[A supernatural sound warbles above the bells.]*

**Ernest:** It's alright, mother. The vicar is only just getting into his church clothes.

**Mother:** Nonsense, Ernie. how can you tell what the vicar's doing?

**Earnest:** Mother, he's combing his hair in front of a mirror.

**Mother:** Now listen, I won't have you talking to your mother like that. And on Sunday, too!

00:11:07 Sound Effect Transition Music swells and fades.

00:11:09 Jesse Host You have the kind of odd accent of like a, uh—of a—like a master thespian, and you're a 13-year-old from Astoria. And as I was listening to it, I was wondering like do you think you were doing a mystical boy voice? Or do you think that was the voice in which you performed?

00:11:27 Christopher Guest I have no idea what I was doing.

*[Jesse laughs.]*

You know, I just—I got a job. You know? It's funny. There's a lot of stuff—what they used to call kinescope. And in fact, there's a museum not far from where I was born, in Astoria, near the Kaufman studios. It's the Television Archives, and they have all these kinescopes. And they got one from me doing a *Colgate Comedy Hour* when I was ten years old. And it's a skit with Jerry Lewis. And I saw it and what really struck me was how little I've changed.

*[Jesse chuckles.]*

I have the same voice, the same kind of mannerisms. I don't know what to call it. But I have a feeling we don't change as much as we think we do.

00:12:22 Jesse Host

Did you do a lot of those kind of—there were a lot of TV sketch shows at the time. *Colgate Comedy Hour*, *Caesar's Hour*, and *Your Show of Shows*, were—a pretty fantastically great sketch show at the time. Did you do a lot of stuff like that?

00:12:38 Christopher Guest

Oh, yes. Absolutely. That's really what I did, basically. And there were all sorts of really good dramatic television. Like, the *Armstrong Circle Theatre* and *Philco Playhouse* and *Lux Video Theatre* and so on. And they did—you know—serious plays by Paddy Chayefsky and directors like Sydney Lumet and George Roy Hill and people directing them. And you know, you've got early days of George C Scott and lots of people. James Dean. Television had a lot of very interesting stuff. It's all pre-videotape. Videotape got invented I think somewhere around 1957, but up until then everything was live. And if you didn't see it, you know, you never saw it. Except for the kinescope, which was basically a film taken of the—off the TV set.

And there's lots of records of that, but videotape changed everything. It's when television basically moved from New York to California. And after that, you know, you could do a show and then you could show it over and over again. And, you know, episodic TV and all those series and *Route 66* and all that sort of started with videotape. But before then, it was much more like live theatre.

00:14:16 Jesse Host

We've got a lot more to get into with Christopher Walken. Later, we'll talk about why he loves performing on *Saturday Night Live*. It's *Bullseye*, from [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org) and NPR.

00:14:27 Music Transition

Thumpy rock music.

00:14:31 Jesse Host

Welcome back to *Bullseye*. I'm Jesse Thorn. My guest is the actor Christopher Walken. He's an Academy Award winner. He's been performing for over 60 years. 60! He's been in just about every kind of movie. In fact, he's been in just about every movie! *[Chuckles.]* From *The Deer Hunter* to *Catch Me if You Can* to *Hairspray*. These days, you can see him on the new TV series *Severance*. It's a science fiction show, let's say maybe a little like *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* meets *Brazil*. You can watch *Severance* now, on Apple TV+. Let's get back into our conversation.

I was talking to an actor yesterday, named Sam Riegel. He's a voice actor and he actually went to the same high school as you, although he went in the '90s. He was telling me about when he was—I think it was about 12 or something like that. He was in the national touring production of *Les Misérables*. You know, I think he must have been the only 12-year-old. There may have been one other 12-year-old doubling his part or something, but you know, he's going to like Louisville or whatever to play the regional theatre and do *Les Mis*. And he told me about—he was like, "Well, there was this one guy on the crew who like would take me to the comic book store." *[Chuckles.]*

And I was thinking about that when I was reading about your days as a kid actor. Like, I wondered if—you know, Jackie Gleason or somebody every like threw their arm around your shoulder and said, "Let me tell you about—something about showbusiness."

00:16:03 Christopher Guest I don't think so. But I certainly was around some great performers. I remember I did a show—a live special show with Danny Thomas, Lucille Ball, Jack Benny, and Jerry Lewis. And I can't say that I got to know them, but I did get to sit there and watch them work. And that was really fascinating. It's an education unlike anything I think you could get, except by happening to be accidentally in showbusiness during the '50s. And I did watch a lot of people do what they do at very close range. But I can't say that I was ever mentored by them. But I did get to watch them.

00:17:02 Jesse Host They obviously were in—you know, a different version of showbusiness than the showbusiness of today or the showbusiness of the—you know—'60s and '70s, when you went from being a—you know, a working performer to being a star and, you know, successful character actor. Are there things that you think about seeing someone do when you were a kid? Or have thought about seeing someone do when you were a kid, that informed the work that you've done since?

00:17:31 Christopher Guest Oh yes! Of course. You know, when I—when I became an actor, I started to get into plays. And people would say—I'd be in a play, and they'd say to me, "Why do you keep turning to the audience and talking to the audience?"

And I'd say, "Well, that's what I learned how to do." I learned how to be on the stage from musicals. And in musicals, the audience is—you know—always the other character in the scene. There's no such thing as a fourth wall. You're talking to whoever you're talking to in the scene, and you're also talking to the audience. And I frankly still feel that way. I even feel that way in movies. You know? The camera is basically another character in the room. And you don't pretend they're not there. And that's—you know, that's the way I do it.

I realize it's not typical, but the fact is that television and the time I grew up in the '50s came out of radio. And radio came out of vaudeville. And vaudeville probably came out of burlesque and all that stuff that happened before that. So, it's true that there was a kind of performance that doesn't exist much anymore, but I was kind of on the—I had one foot in that world and another one in the world that was coming. I think it's a very interesting experience—you know, for me, anyway—to have... to be that kind of hybrid almost performer.

00:19:15 Jesse Host I think that just your presence is so distinctive that there's no amount of—there's no amount of performance or entertaining that wouldn't read as natural simply because you're not like other people we watch! *[Laughs.]* You know what I mean?

00:19:37 Christopher Guest Well, I think that that—you know, that kind of—there are very few people who've been in showbusiness since they were five years old. And you know, I never played baseball. I never played basketball. I can't swim. I was raised in New York City, and I went to dancing school and learned how to sell a song. And that's pretty unusual. It's a certain kind of education. You know, for better or worse. It makes you who you are.

What's that old saying? That, you know, you give me a child at the age of seven and—you know, that will determine what kind of man he is. And I think that I was formed by that world, which has gone

away to a large extent. Everything's different now. Even most recently, you know, the way people go to the movies. And when I was growing up, there were these big movie palaces. You'd buy a ticket and you'd be inside this very ornate place with balconies and a ceiling with, you know, artificial stars and you'd see two features and cartoons. And that's all gone. Now people watch movies on a tablet.

00:21:19	Jesse	Host	So, it's not—it's not one thing or the other. It's just different. You mentioned that your first role as an actor in a play was when you were a young man. That was a play that you—correct me if I'm wrong—both essentially got fired from and ended up winning awards for.
00:21:39	Christopher	Guest	Oh, yeah! That—yes. The—I was in a musical, called <i>Baker Street</i> . And somebody said, you know, "Why don't you go down and audition for this play that they're doing, called <i>The Lion in Winter</i> ." And it was before the movie. It was the original— <i>Lion in Winter</i> was a play on Broadway with Robert Preston, the great Robert Preston as the king, and Rosemary Harris, and all these interesting actors. And they said, "Why don't you go down and audition?" And I did. And I—and I got the part! I don't know why.
00:22:57	Jesse	Host	And then we went out of town, and everybody started to realize that I didn't know what I was doing. And I was so nervous that I was just making a mess of the whole thing. And they told me that they were gonna—they said, "You're a nice guy, but we're gonna have to replace you." And I asked them to give me a few days, and they did. And I somehow pulled it together, and it worked out very well.
00:22:59	Christopher	Guest	Do you remember what you were making a mess of? No, the whole thing! I was so nervous that I was—you know—forgetting my lines. I remember I had to hand the king a goblet of wine, and my hand was shaking so badly that I was spilling it all over the stage. But somehow, the kind of—the part that I was playing, that seems somehow okay. So, probably my own insecurity worked for me, in the part. Anyway, it worked out well. I think I ended up being pretty good in it.
00:23:36	Jesse	Host	I feel like I probably would have a hard time handing a goblet of wine to Robert Preston.
00:23:42	Christopher	Guest	Exactly! Although, I have to say—you know, he was the most wonderful man and so supportive. And I think maybe it was largely him who kept me in the show. He used to come up to me and say, you know, "Don't worry so much." You know? He said, "Don't stand in the wings and say your lines over and over again. You know your lines. You know? Just walk onstage and enjoy it."
00:24:14	Jesse	Host	And he was—he was really great to me. It's funny, like I think of you as one of the great guest performers on <i>Saturday Night Live</i> .
00:24:19	Christopher	Guest	Well, they use cue cards.
00:24:21	Jesse	Host	That's what I was about to say! I don't think anyone has turned in a better performance on <i>Saturday Night Live</i> while so obviously reading lines directly off the cue cards.
00:24:30	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:24:31	Clip	Clip	<i>[The audience laughs regularly.]</i>

**Speaker (Saturday Night Live):** And Bobby, you are right! I am being selfish. But the last time I checked, we don't have a whole lot of songs that feature the cowbell.

**Bobby:** I gotta have more cowbells, baby!

**Speaker:** *[Shouting.]* And I'd be doing myself a disservice and every member of this band if I didn't perform the hell out of this!

**Bobby:** Guess what?! I got a fever! And the only prescription is more cowbell!

00:24:57 Sound Effect Transition

Music swells and fades.

00:24:58 Christopher Guest

Yes, they use cue cards and the guys who do the cue cards are absolutely, of course, experts. That *SNL* thing sort of spoils me, because it makes me wanna use cue cards for everything. You know. I would love to make a movie sometime with cue cards. As a matter of fact, sometimes I think it would be nice to just go through life with cue cards.

*[Jesse laughs.]*

00:25:26 Jesse Host

It might be nice to do this interview with cue cards. You know, everybody in Hollywood has an assistant. I feel like a second assistant—they would have to have that kind of good handwriting and those big, fat, permanent markers.

00:25:37 Christopher Guest

That's right. They use these big, white cards with magic markers—black magic marker. It's printed really big. And it's absolutely divine to use cue cards.

00:25:54 Jesse Host

*[Chuckles.]*

00:26:02 Promo Clip

We'll wrap up with Christopher Walken in just a minute. Stay with us. It's *Bullseye*, from [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org) and NPR.

**Music:** Gentle harp music.

**Janet Varney:** Hi. I'm Janet Varney and just like you, I survived high school. And we're not alone! On my podcast, *The JV Club*, I invite some of my friends to share the highs and lows of their teen years. Like moments with Aisha Tyler.

**Aisha Tyler:** But when you're a kid, the stakes are just pretty low! Go to school, try not to get in trouble, get laid.

**Janet:** Jameela Jamil.

**Jameela Jamil:** I watched television probably every waking hour during that time, when I was *[censored]* faced on medicine.

**Janet:** And Dave Holmes.

**Dave Holmes:** We talked and talked and then everybody left. It was just us two and I was like, "I love you."

**Janet:** Learn how you too can be a functioning adult after the drama and heartbreak of high school. Every week on *The JV Club*



with Janet Varney. Find it on Maximum Fun or wherever you get your podcasts! This is a judgement free show.

*[Music fades out.]*

00:26:49 Music Transition  
00:26:53 Jesse Host

Thumpy synth with light vocalizations and a steady beat. It's *Bullseye*. I'm Jesse Thorn. I'm talking with actor Christopher Walken. He's starring in the new Apple TV+ show, *Severance*.

One of the things that I thought of as I was watching *Severance*, the premise of which basically is that there are people living their lives—their professional and their personal lives—completely separated from each other, which is to say they're not aware of what's going on in the other half of their life. Is that—

*[Christopher agrees.]*

You know, being onset especially—I mean, it's to this—in my very limited experiences, a little bit like this onstage, but being onset especially is like a space world that is so separate from like a house and being normal. *[Chuckles.]* And I thought, "Well, maybe Christopher Walken has never worked in a cubicle before." But I think you can understand the idea of the sort of odd alienation between the worlds. Even though, you know, your wife is in showbusiness as well. She's a pretty legendary casting director and you met her when she was a performer. But like, these are two places that are so different from each other.

00:28:26 Christopher Guest

What's it like to like go home and read a book after you've spent the day in the weird world of a television or a movie set?

Well, you know, for me they are—you know, it is going to work. Maybe because I started doing it so young, but for me, being an actor is—you know—going to work. And I go and then I'm done, and I come home. But the big deal for me is I'm done. They say, "It's a wrap." Or "See you in the morning." And you change your clothes, and you get in the car, and you go back to the hotel. And that ride back to the hotel is really what it's all about. I sit in the car going back to the hotel and I think, "That was good. I was good, today. And that scene is gonna be good. And this was great." Or I think, "I could've done it so much better." And I feel lousy 'cause I didn't do what I'd hoped I could do. And I'm disappointed in myself. And it's all about that.

00:29:56 Jesse Host

It's about feeling good about what I did or wishing I could've done better. And it's funny how it's always that way, no matter what it is. It's not that I carry my character around with me; it's just whether or not I was good.

00:30:03 Christopher Guest

Are you able to appreciate in retrospect what you've done? Like, do you feel like you're able to have distance on things?

No, I feel really lucky. You know? This—you know—just say yes... frame of mind of mine has—you know, led to wonderful things. I live in a nice place. And you know, I've always believed in taking care of myself. Dancers, you know, have a strange kind of discipline. They tend to do the same thing all the time. And even when they're not working, they remain active just because if they don't, they don't feel good. So, it's a funny old discipline, being a dancer. You're

always aware of your body. And so, I'm very grateful for that. I really feel like I've been terrifically lucky.

00:30:58 Jesse Host Do you get sick of getting asked to dance in stuff?

*[Christopher confirms.]*

00:31:05 Christopher Guest You've been asked to dance in so many things that are not musical theatre. *[Laughs.]*

00:31:20 Jesse Host I know. Everybody—they always—they always put a scene in, you know, with dancing. And I like to... I like to oblige. So, I usually do it, but I am tired of it.

00:31:22 Christopher Guest Do you dance for fun?

00:31:44 Jesse Host No. And dancers really don't. I—you know, when I was a dancer, I always noticed that dancers would go to a party—you know, and they were the only ones who didn't dance. They just... it's—they go to class, you know, and they dance in the show and that's enough.

00:31:52 Christopher Guest Was there a time when you felt like you were really an actor?

00:32:01 Jesse Host Eh, no. No. I've always thought of myself as a—as a performer.

00:32:08 Christopher Guest Did that make the acting extra challenging or scary or, conversely, easy?

00:32:08 Christopher Guest Not really. When I've been a good actor, I've always—it's 'cause I got a little bit lucky. You know? Things just sort of aligned and came together. And also, you know, certain parts just suit the actor's temperament. There's something about them that—you know, that lines up with the character. And that's why really good directors understand that thing about casting. There are certain directors who understand so clearly when they look at an actor that that's the guy for the part. And you know, if they say, "Come be in my movie," it's because there's something about you that's gonna fit perfectly with all the rest of the elements. And I really appreciate that when I'm in that situation.

00:33:06 Jesse Host When have you had the most fun as an actor?

00:33:10 Christopher Guest Oh! For lots of reasons. Uh. You know, sometimes—you know, movies in particular—you know, they're pictures so that when you go somewhere to make a movie, chances are it's an interesting place to look at, just because there's gonna be a camera taking pictures of what's in back of you all the time. So, I've been to many interesting places in the world. I don't particularly like to travel, because being an actor, I travel, and I travel to interesting places. Interesting places to look at. But that could be somewhere far away. You know, when I did *The Deer Hunter*, I lived in Thailand for months and that was absolutely fascinating—to be in the city and the jungle and among a different culture, the food and the sounds. And there'd be the monsoon—this rain that comes down like a wall. You know? Just relentlessly. And that sort of thing.

Or I get a movie—I shot a movie in Asbury Park, down in Jersey in the wintertime. And it was just wonderful. You know? The beaches were empty, 'cause it was so cold. And the wind blowing just absolutely so clean—so, it can be Asbury Park and Thailand and sometimes that's what makes—you know—doing a movie terrific, just where you are. Other times, it's the people you're with. You know, to be with terrific actors and terrific people, spend time with certain people. And making a movie—it's an intense situation. You know? You're intimate with people for—you know, six weeks or three months and you spend time with these really talented,

interesting people in a kind of situation that you would never be in, except if it was a movie.

So, there's all sorts of things that are—while we're talking about, you know, having fun.

00:35:34	Jesse	Host	I worked in Laos for a little bit, and my—I didn't speak Lao. And the thing I remember the most is my boss, <i>[inaudible]</i> , ordering food for me different places and him explaining that he had ordered like the least spicy food available. And then I would eat it—and I'm not even—I don't have any problem with spicy food, as a rule. But I would have like tears running down my face and stuff. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:36:02	Christopher	Guest	No, yes, I do—I remember that. In Thailand, they had these peppers that were absolutely tiny. I don't know if you remember that from Laos. They had these really small peppers, and you look at them and you think, "Well, that's not much." But you'd eat one, it'd be like a bomb going off inside your head.
00:36:27	Jesse	Host	<i>[Laughs.]</i> Yeah! They eat—in Laos, they eat a lot of this thing called larb, which is a chopped salad of chicken and herbs. And it has a lot of peppers in it and they're—they're like—the pieces are, you know, the size of a grape nut. And <i>[laughs]</i> you hit one, and just your—
00:36:45	Christopher	Guest	Yeah. Oh, I know. And well, it's—you know, it's very good for you. So.
00:36:51	Jesse	Host	But I have to say that when I was in Laos, I didn't— <i>[laughing]</i> as I read you did when you were in—when you were in Thailand—eat any opium. So.
00:37:02	Christopher	Guest	No, that's right. I did. Somebody said, "Here."

And I said, "What do you do with it?"

And he said, "I don't know." So, I ate it.

*[Jesse laughs.]*

And I—I got—I got a terrible intestinal infection.

00:37:18	Jesse	Host	Why did the—how did the opium give you an intestinal infection?
00:37:22	Christopher	Guest	Because they mixed it with buffalo dung or something like that.
00:37:26	Jesse	Host	And that'll do it.

*[Christopher confirms.]*

I can't imagine it tasted very good.

00:37:30	Christopher	Guest	No, it was terrible. And it—you know, it didn't really even have any effect. It just made me sick.
00:37:36	Jesse	Host	Aw, I'm sorry.

You're still acting so much. You're in your late 70s, now. Is acting keeping you from anything? Or are you just—you know—are you just a fish in water?

00:37:52	Christopher	Guest	Yes, I am a fish in water. I don't really like to travel. I don't play golf or tennis or—I don't have children. I read scripts and I go to work. You know?
00:38:11	Jesse	Host	Well, Christopher Walken, I've so enjoyed your work for so many years. I sure appreciate you taking the time to talk to me.
00:38:17	Christopher	Guest	Well, thank you! I enjoyed talking to you.

00:38:21	Jesse	Host	Christopher Walken. Thanks to him for taking so much time to talk with us. You can catch him in the new Apple TV+ show, <i>Severance</i> , right now.
00:38:31	Music	Transition	Thumpy synth with bright vocalizations and a steady beat.
00:38:39	Jesse	Host	That's the end of another episode of <i>Bullseye</i> . <i>Bullseye</i> is created from the homes me and the staff of Maximum Fun, in and around greater Los Angeles, California. Here in Los Angeles, <i>[chuckling]</i> it was 87 degrees. And then I think it was two days later, it was snowing?! <i>[Laughs.]</i> So, I don't really know what to make of that. Granted, the snow was in Pasadena, a couple miles from my house. But it was bonkers.
			Our 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 booking help from Mara Davis. Special thanks this week to Jed Kim for recording Christopher Walken at his home in Connecticut. 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, for sharing it.
			<i>Bullseye</i> is also on YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook. You can find us there. Give us a follow; we'll share with you all of our interviews. And I think that's about it. Just remember: all great radio hosts have a signature signoff.
00:39:50	Promo	Promo	<b>Speaker:</b> <i>Bullseye with Jesse Thorn</i> is a production of <a href="https://MaximumFun.org">MaximumFun.org</a> and is distributed by NPR.
			<i>[Music fades out.]</i>