

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.
			<i>[Music fades out.]</i>
00:00:12	Jesse Thorn	Host	From MaximumFun.org and NPR, it's <i>Bullseye</i> .
00:00:15	Music	Transition	"Huddle Formation" from the album <i>Thunder, Lightning, Strike</i> by The Go! Team. A fast, upbeat, peppy song. Music plays as Jesse speaks, then fades out.
00:00:18	Jesse	Host	My first guest this week is Nick Kroll, and I think this is his third appearance on our show over the course of many years. It's a hattrick. Nick is a comedian, actor, and writer. He starred on the FX show, <i>The League</i> . He created the sketch series, <i>Kroll Show</i> . If you watched VH1 a lot in the early 2000s, you probably saw him making jokes about pop culture, on <i>Best Week Ever</i> . Nick also co-created the Broadway show, <i>Oh, Hello</i> , where he and John Mulaney play Gil Faizon and George St. Geegland—two men who embody a very specific kind of New Yorker. The kind you might find going through coats at a house party or hosting a \$900 acting seminar despite never having acted much.
			Let's put it this way: they were inspired by two real men who were comparing notes on Alan Alda's autobiography.
00:01:15	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:01:16	Clip	Clip	<i>[The audience laughs.]</i>
			George (Oh, Hello): Who are we, really? You know? What is our essence? How to describe?
			Gil: You know when you get to the bottom of a tub of hummus? And you can't fit your carrot in there, so you gotta use your fingies to scoop it out? BAM! That's us, babyyyy!
			<i>[The audience cheers.]</i>
00:01:35	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:01:36	Jesse	Host	Lately though, Nick has focused more on the world of animation. In 2017, he co-created the show <i>Big Mouth</i> , on Netflix. It's a hit comedy about puberty, more or less. There's the group of upstate New York teenagers who experience puberty, the hormone monsters who cause puberty, and the friends and family who have to live with those pubescent teens. It's a bit like Pixar's <i>Inside Out</i> , but I guess it's more like if— <i>[chuckling]</i> if Nick Kroll made Pixar's <i>Inside Out</i> .
00:02:10	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:02:11	Clip	Clip	Nick (Big Mouth): Oh! Hey, Olivia. You wanna get a drink or something? I think they have La Croix. It's only the coconut kind, which is a little gross, but it's still kind of—

Olivia: *[Interrupting.]* Nnnno. Sorry. Dylan.

Nick: Oh, who? I thought we were going to this dance like together?

Olivia: Nooo? No. Noooo.

Dylan: Sorry, bro. She wants a real man. Ninth grade. Top of the food chain.

00:02:31 Sound Effect Transition

Music swells and fades.

00:02:32 Jesse Host

Now, Nick has a new show in the same universe, called *Human Resources*. It centers around those same monsters and their workplace, along with the adult feelings they represent. It features the voice talents of folks like Aidy Bryant, Rosie Perez, Thandiwe Newton, Maria Bamford, and many, many more. I mean, it is a murderer's row. And *Human Resources*, like *Big Mouth*, is very, very weird and more than a little bit crass.

00:03:00 Sound Effect Transition

Music swells and fades.

00:03:01 Clip Clip

Tyler (*Human Resources*): Guys! Make room for birthday caaake! Shhh! He's coming!

Connie: C'mon, Maury! The meeting I told you about, which is very real, is happening here! In the break room!

Maury: I don't know why we'd be having a meeting in the break room, but I do believe you.

Everyone: *[Overlapping and out of key.]* Happy birthday to you! Happy birthday—

Maury: *[Screaming.]* No, no, no! Shut the *[censored]* up! I don't want a birthday cake!

Tyler: But Maury, it's a cookie cake! Not a regular cake! It's cookie cake! I'll explain. It's basically cookies, just mushied into a cake shape!

Maury: Tyler, if you say the words "cookie" or "cake" one more time, I'll mushie you into a dead shape! Ugh!

Connie: *[Censored]*, Maury, what the hell?!

00:03:43 Sound Effect Transition

Tyler: You think that's gonna stop me from eating cookie cake?! Music swells and fades.

00:03:44 Jesse Host

[Chuckles.] Nick Kroll, welcome back to *Bullseye*. It's nice to see you.

00:03:47 Nick Kroll Guest

Nice to see you, as well.

00:03:48 Jesse Host

I see that you've expanded your—you've expanded your empire of our most disgusting and horrible feelings.

[Nick giggles.]

00:04:03 Nick Guest Feelings and bodily functions beyond puberty, here. *[Laughing.]*
 You're like—
 Yeah. It's uh, yeah. My empire of dirt, I guess we could call it?

[Jesse agrees with a laugh.]

Uh, to quote Nine Inch Nails. Uh, I don't know if that is the line. Is it?

[Jesse makes a noncommittal sound.]

00:04:29 Jesse Host If it's not, I don't know. I know, weirdly, the Johnny Cash version of it better than I know the—anyway. Uh, yes. Yes, I am, uh—there's so many more disgusting emotions for us to explore that it felt necessary to do so.

00:04:47 Nick Guest Well, you keep expanding the palate of *Big Mouth* with like new characters and new sort of big subjects *[laughs]* of horrible adolescent discomfort. And just at a certain point, you're like, "Oh, let's get involved in adult shame, here."
[Chuckling.] Yes. Yeah, I think—you know, we—you know, in *Big Mouth* it was—it's always been through the lens of puberty. And each season just about, there's a new character or creature that is anthropomorphizing—whether it's the Shame Wizard in season two or Tito the Anxiety Mosquito in season—I think in season four. And in season five of *Big Mouth*, we introduce Love Bugs and Hate Worms, which are to heads of the same coin. And in doing so—in addition to the other, you know—the hormone monsters who've been there since the beginning, we realized at the end of season two—we did this episode where the kids go up into the—what we call—where the hormone monsters work, when we see their workplace. And that's where we got a glimpse at the Ambition Gremlins and DNAs and all these other characters.

And as we continued to develop the show, I think we realized that that world was super rich. And as we build stories for *Big Mouth* and it's—you know, it's a show about kids going through puberty, and unless the story really has a focus on adolescence or puberty, they're great stories that we've wanted to tell or stories that are interesting to us that we wanted to tell that just didn't fit inside of that space. So, we created *Human Resources*, which is in the workplace of the monsters and creatures. And it allows us to talk about all the other—the myriad of human experiences—and tell a lot of different kinds of stories that you just can't tell through the lens of 13-year-old kids going through puberty.

00:06:27 Jesse Host Did you already talk to other people about the discomforts of puberty before you started making *Big Mouth*?

00:06:36 Nick Guest Um, I'm trying to think. You know, I think when my partners—Andrew Goldberg and Mark Levin and Jen Flackett—they approached me with this idea. Andrew Goldberg and I have been friends since childhood, and they approached me with this show about kids going through puberty, and specifically Andrew and I's experience in that. It felt immediately like, "Oh! Yeah. That—this makes sense." I mean, I had done—the first thing I ever did was a book, called *Bar Mitzvah Disco*, with Roger Bennett and Jules Shell. I think I may have spoken to you about that many, many years ago.

00:07:06 Jesse Host *[Chuckling.]* Yeah! I think I interviewed you on that show—I had forgotten completely until this second!

[Nick confirms.]

00:07:14 Nick Guest But I think I interviewed you about that on my college radio show. *[Chuckles.]* I believe so! And so, that was—you know, that was the first thing I kind of did, almost that official like thing that got made. So, I've been sort of looking at that period of time of adolescence and the awkwardness of that time. I guess the majority of my professional career in that time was, I think as for all of us, very formative. It's foundational, going through puberty. And we carry so much of what happened to us in that myriad of time to the rest of our lives. So, it became incredibly important to—it was a very important time in my—the formation of who I am.

And yet, now—doing *Human Resources*—there are just—I mean, it's just like the first episode is about a woman giving birth and not immediately falling in love with her child. Our co-created—so, it's me and Andrew and Mark and Jen, and then we brought Kelly Galuska, who is one of the senior writers on *Big Mouth*, in to write the show. And she just had a baby, and she didn't have the feeling of our character in the show—of not—but it's not an uncommon thing to—you have this baby and then it's thrust on you, whether you're the mother or the father, it's like you're—it's assumed that you're gonna be madly in love with this child that you've never laid eyes on before. Oftentimes you are, but oftentimes there's a lot of other factors that go into birth that make it hard to immediately be like, "Oh my god, I've never loved anything more."

And so, it felt like an interesting experience to be the first episode of what that experience is. Now, the other difference between *Human Resources* and *Big Mouth* is our—*Big Mouth* is always told from the perspective of the kids, and it's then—and then these creatures come in as adding perspective for the kids. Our show, *Human Resources* now, really told from the perspective of the creatures and the humans are supporting the stories of whatever the creatures are going through. And so, in this first episode you have Emmy, who's a Lovebug voice by Aidy Bryant, and Emmy is being promoted. So, it's like what's—it's really a story about someone who's got a job, who's going—basically transitioning from an assistant to a non-assistant role and it's about her learning how to be better at her job.

And then we use this story of a woman giving birth and what's it like for a Lovebug to try to convince this person you need to love this child right away.

00:09:42 Jesse Host The question, Nick, was do you actually talk to other—

[Nick cackles.]

Did you actually talk to other people about the horrors of adolescence before it was your job?

00:09:51	Nick	Guest	Thank you for keeping me on-message. Um, I did. I talked to a lot of people. We talked about it in the room, obviously, with other writers. We've talked about it with kids. We would—we had—we've had a number of, at the time—now it feels weird saying "Skypes", now that we live in a post-Skype, Zoom world, but we would Skype with this woman—a sex education expert, Shafia Zaloom, up in the Bay Area, and her students. And we would talk to them about stuff around puberty and adolescence, as opposed to just like nostalgically looking back like you and I or with other writers. We were definitely—it was important—
00:10:32	Jesse	Host	<i>[Chuckling.]</i> I have a lot of fond nostalgia for wondering why there were lumps in my breasts? <i>[Nick agrees with amusement.]</i>
00:10:41	Nick	Guest	That happened to me. I was—what?!
00:10:42	Jesse	Host	In your nipples or in your breasts?
00:10:44	Nick	Guest	Like, in my nipples. Yeah. What the—?! I was—I had my eyes out—my mom told me that was a secondary sex characteristic, and I was a late bloomer. And so, I was looking for the boys with nip—engorged nipples. 'Cause I was like, "They're going through puberty."
			<i>[Jesse laughs.]</i>
00:11:01	Jesse	Host	And I was like waiting for my nipples to be knotted. <i>[Laughs helplessly.]</i> That's horrible! <i>[Nick agrees.]</i>
00:11:12	Nick	Guest	I said, "Do I have cancer?!" I thought to myself. And I had full "your body's changing" education, just never mentioned that one.
00:11:15	Jesse	Host	No, it's a weird one they don't really throw out there to you. So much more to get into with Nick Kroll. Stay with us. It's <i>Bullseye</i> , from MaximumFun.org and NPR.
00:11:22	Music	Transition	Thumpy synth with light vocalizations.
00:11:27	Jesse	Host	Welcome back to <i>Bullseye</i> . I'm Jesse Thorn. I'm talking with Nick Kroll. Nick is an actor and comedian, created the sketch comedy series <i>Kroll Show</i> , on Comedy Central. He and his friend, John Mulaney, created the Broadway show <i>Oh, Hello</i> . Lately, Kroll has been doing a lot of animation work. He co-created the show <i>Big Mouth</i> on Netflix, which is a show about puberty and the literalized monsters who cause it. His newest show just premiered. It's a spinoff of that show, called <i>Human Resources</i> . It's out now on Netflix. Let's get back into our conversation.
00:12:05	Nick	Guest	So, the first time I interviewed you was 20 years ago, apparently. <i>[Laughing.]</i> That's just—yeah. 2005, I think, we put the book out. Something like that.
00:12:08	Jesse	Host	Yeah. And in that time, I had seen the kinds of—the kinds of comedy that you have done change a lot. You know. You rose to prominence doing like big, broad characters with silly voices that were often like a guy you saw on the subway who—and heard him

say a sentence and thought like, “Well, what if I talked in that funny voice?”

[Nick agrees repeatedly as Jesse continues.]

They were very far from you. They were not always dudes. They were—you were often performing trans-racially. Like, it was the biggest, furthest things from you you could get a hold of and making them insane. And you know, *Big Mouth* is a change from that, but it’s still very retrospective. And in *Human Resources*, you actually maybe have to engage with the person that you are.

[Nick chuckles and agrees.]

00:13:11 Nick Guest

Is that a little scary?

Um, I’ve had a lot of practice now working on *Big Mouth* and then now doing a lot more standup. I’ve been—I’ve been really inspired by the more autobiographical elements of *Big Mouth* and to learn to be more personally vulnerable and personally self-revealing, that standup—my standup has started to reflect that more than when you started interviewing me and I was much more comfortable onstage. I mean, I think I had access to being onstage more than I then had access to being—making videos and then making like *Kroll Show* broad characters, which I loved playing. And I don’t know—I wanna say that it was more—it’s a personal evolution versus, uh, the realities of culture shifting where there are many characters that I would do ten years ago that I would never do today that are—I’m like—that I think, you know, for many reasons, um—

And I think as culture evolves and where we are with comedy right now—and I think—but I think more of that has been like—as you were saying, it’s more been a reflection of me being like—it was scary to reveal myself for many years. And it’s more—it was fun to do these characters, but over time it’s been like, “No, I think ultimately I gotta start talking about myself and my experience and try to find what’s interesting about that. And it happens to have coincided with a thing where it’s been—it’s more complicated for me, as like a straight, cis, hetero, White male to play characters that are very far away from what my experience has been.

Animation has been a beautiful transitional place for me to do that, because I—you know, *Big Mouth* has been—is loosely autobiographical and then the characters that I play around that are characters that I can sort of jump into and that aren’t—that are not myself, but some extension of myself in some way. And so, that’s been a wonderful way to do that. You know? Um. I think it’s a personal evolution. I don’t know how many comedians work this way or not, but I definitely think it’s been very rewarding and valuable for me, personally, just in my own—let’s call it artistic journey to *[chuckles]*—to be like, “Oh! I guess I should explore my *[chuckling]*—myself! And not just—” And hopefully not in a narcissistic way, but in like a way that’s like, “Oh, if I’m gonna be able to play this character that’s completely different than me, I should be able to talk and make fun of myself in the same way.”

00:15:57 Jesse Host Do you think you were worried about how people would receive you-you, when you started?

00:16:06 Nick Guest No, I think it's a little—at least for me, it was always safer to be like, this person that I have a broad sketch of that I saw on the subway or that I listened to on the radio or that I like dealt with at a—you know, in a publicity like junket, it was easier to be like, oh! Oh, well this—like, you know. Like, what was “PubLIZity” Liz then becomes Lola. It's like, oh! This woman who like sips her smoothies out of a big sippy cup and like—you know, has a partner that—whatever. It's like, I can draw a very quick and broad sketch about that person and have a quick beat on what I think their perspective on the world is. When it came to myself, it was like well, I don't know what my perspective on the world is! 'Cause I know every single element to my own personality to make it harder to boil that personality down to a digestible like thumbnail or soundbite like it is when you're playing a broad character.

And then there's also just the feeling of like the fear of—of revealing your vulnerabilities. And like, what is that—you know? It's a—at least for me—I think everyone's different. I think every—but there are plenty of standups who are like, “No, I have my perspective on the world. That's what I wanna share with the world.” For me, I was like, “I don't think I know if I care about my perspective. I don't know if people will care about my perspective. Or I wanted to keep that private. I wanted to keep myself separate. I wanted to keep like a distance between Nick Kroll the human being and Nick Kroll the artist, and I don't wanna let the public—an audience into my personal—that's—it's protection. It's protective.

00:17:45 Jesse Host I mean, I think that—I think especially in standup, which you've done tons of, both including and not including character work. There is this thing that you—you know, if you're gonna play clubs especially, you have to kind of identify who you are and what kind of thing you are going to be presenting within ten seconds of getting onstage. The classic, “I know what you're thinking, so-and-so and such-and-such had a baby,” opening line. Right?

[Nick agrees.]

You need to give the audience a context for them to receive you. And I think when your identity categories include straight, White dude. You're Jewish, but you know, Judaism—a category of Whiteness in the United States. So, straight, White dude, affluent background. Like, you're walking onstage with something that is indistinctive, unless you're gonna do rich guy jokes—indistinctive to the audience and also like completely—you know. Completely hegemonic. So like, something that people are—if anything—going to resent a little. *[Chuckles.]*

[Nick agrees.]

You know what I mean? And I think a lot of people who are in that position get really good at doing something that is either universal or something that is abstract, because it's hard for them to figure out how to put over their own specifics, 'cause maybe they don't

even—because they're not so different, they don't think of their own difference. Because they're not so different from power. They don't think of their own difference.

00:19:27 Nick Guest

Yeah, I mean I don't think I was thinking—for sure was not thinking about that when I started. And I think it's only in the last few years that like the indistinguishableness of like White, straight, male vibes—like, no straight, White men were thinking about that in comedy five—even five years ago, of being like, “Wait, my—I am indistinguishable and that is a—that is not a win for me.” Like, I just don't think we—nobody was thinking about that. It was—you know. I think I was protecting a little bit of like—coming from privilege, for sure I was not like, “Let me focus on this.” Except, you know, on *Kroll Show* it was like, there was—one of the main tentpoles was like, “Rich [censored].” You know what I mean? I was like, “I'm not hiding—[stammering]. Watch one interview; I'll tell you where I came from.” You know what I mean?

But I also was like, “I don't think that's terribly relatable.” So, my standup now has become—my standup has now become more of like, “Here's—” You know, I'm like interested in birth order. Like, where do you fall in your birth order? I think that's—I had that experience. Everyone has that experience, whether you're straight or trans or Mexican or Jewish or—you know, Persian. It doesn't matter. Everybody has birth order. Everybody's dealing with that. Here's my—here's my way into that. I hope you can join me in that journey. I had a child. What's—here's my way into that. Like, you were a child. [Chuckles.] You had—you're having a child, you're dating someone. Like, I had my heart broken. Like, all that stuff.

Like, I think that's the key, as artists, is like how do we find our way into—that is specifically our experience, but hopefully in our specificity, that I'm finding some universality for people to attach their experience to, to connect to what I'm saying.

00:21:23 Jesse Host

Yeah. I was thinking of John Mulaney, with whom you've worked for decades. And when I—the first time I saw Mulaney was in New York, at a club called Comix. Doesn't exist anymore.

00:21:34 Nick Guest

Sure. With an 'x'?

00:21:36 Jesse Host

With an 'x'.

00:21:37 Nick Guest

Funny.

00:21:38 Jesse Host

In the meatpacking district, which booked a lot of great comics for being a club called Comix with an 'x' in the meatpacking district.

[Nick affirms.]

And um, maybe why they're not open anymore. But I saw Mulaney do a headlining set, and it was some of the best jokes I had ever seen in my life, and he was 24 years old or 25 years old. Some of the best jokes I'd ever seen in my life and perhaps the most abstract standup comedy set I'd ever seen.

[Nick makes an interested sound.]

Like, truly just doing jokes. Not like in the sense of, you know—not like a Steven Wright; not like jokes in that form, but like here's some

big, diffuse ideas with some really perfect specifics and really like not about him, particularly at all.

[Nick agrees several times.]

00:22:45	Nick	Guest	And you know, if you watch a special that he put out three, four years ago, it is the same, perfect jokes, but it's very much about him. And you know, very much about his—who he is in the world, which—you know, takes some time to—takes some time to get to. Yeah. Some people are great at it right off the bat. Some people—and I don't know if everyone ends up there, but I think people are—and I don't know if it's a function of how culture works now of—you know, with podcasts, with—there's so many forms of personal revelation for people, but I think audiences are—do crave that intimacy. And I think artists are trying to figure out how to like bring intimacy and relevance to what they're saying. And I think that oftentimes comes with very personalized material in a way that—you know. And I don't know if that's like the natural evolution of a standup or an artist, comedian, or if it's just like—or if that's just like where we are going generally, culturally, or not. I don't know.
00:23:44	Jesse	Host	Do you think that the fact that you grew up with a dad who—you know—founded a private intelligence firm that became a huge, huge thing that eventually sold for one point something billion dollars or something made you hyperaware of the relationship between the like public narrative of your life and the private narrative of your life and the artistic narrative of your life?
00:24:14	Nick	Guest	Yeah, I mean I think I grew up—I think because my dad did something very specific that wasn't like he's a lawyer or he's in finance or like—or a doctor. I grew up in a—you know, affluent, upper middleclass area. But even from the beginning, my dad always did something that was interesting and different and was like—you know, I would say like, "My dad is a private investigator. He doesn't wear a trench coat. He doesn't carry a gun." Like what everyone thought of as a PI. It was—
00:24:45	Jesse	Host	He's more of an <i>Encyclopedia Brown</i> type.
00:24:48	Nick	Guest	[Laughs.] Yeah. And so, I was slightly aware he was known in certain circles. And so, I understood that there was—like it wasn't famous like someone who's like—you know, like Kate Hudson being like—you know, Goldie Hawn being her mother. It wasn't like that at all. But there was—it wasn't just like, "Oh, he's a standard upper middleclass businessman." Nor did that—when he sold—you know, I was an adult when he sold the company. I think I was very conscious of—I was conscious of like being from—of, you know, having a parent—or both of my parents were like, in our community, well-known. So, I was aware of that, and I was aware of that like there's things that are public and things that are private, that you can be known in the community and then you also have your—the way your family works and the way that things that are discussed in the house that aren't discussed out in the world.

And we all have that on various levels. Maybe not because of some specificity to like your parent's occupation. So, I was aware of that. And I think early on, there was a lot of me being protective of myself and where I came from because I was either trying to not be caught

up in like the narrative of who my family was or who my dad was or is. And also—and I still have that. You know what I mean? It's like—you know. And wanting to be like, "Well, I made this on my own." You know what I mean? Of course, I—of course I benefit from the privilege of my family and the benefits that I had of being like, "I'm gonna do comedy and if it doesn't work, I'll be okay." That's a massive benefit which I'm well aware of. But I also think like, you know, that doesn't mean that I was then like—if like—if I couldn't make a group of people in a room laugh, then I wasn't gonna be a comedian. You know?

But I found myself protective of—whether protective of it 'cause I felt my family and my background felt private to me, or 'cause I was like, "This is completely unrelatable to 99% of the people of my audience." Like, this is not gonna be relatable for me to talk about my experience.

00:27:06	Jesse	Host	What was something that your—that happened in your family that was like a private narrative and not a public narrative?
00:27:14	Nick	Guest	That you want me to now share publicly? <i>[Chuckles.]</i>
00:27:15	Jesse	Host	If there's—I was about add if there's something that you would feel comfortable sharing with the benefit of time.
00:27:20	Nick	Guest	Oh. <i>[Sighs.]</i> I mean... I mean, the truth is, I just didn't—we didn't—there was very limited amount talked about of what my father did, professionally, because it was built around—
00:27:35	Jesse	Host	Discretion and... yeah.
00:27:36	Nick	Guest	Discretion. So, it was like he was hired to investigate—the Kuwaiti government hired him to investigate where Saddam Hussein was hiding his money during the first Gulf War. I was like 13. <i>[Beat.]</i> I don't know; I was 13. So, what do you know about anything that your parents are doing at 13? But it was like that's what we knew and there was like a cop stationed outside of our house for a while during that period of time. There was not much more discussion beyond that. I wasn't like, "So, Dad, let's talk about the Swiss bank accounts where Saddam's shell company is hiding X, Y, and Z." Or—like, you know, "So, you're flying to Kuwait right now?" You know, like there just wasn't a ton of discussion around that. You know? And—for everyone's sake. You know?

But I think it also led me to be someone who's like I think for the most part if you tell me something in confidence, like—yeah. Nobody else is gonna hear about it. You know? 'Cause it's like you told me that in confidence.

00:28:42	Jesse	Host	Did you ever tag along like Veronica Mars and her dad?
00:28:45	Nick	Guest	<i>[Laughs.]</i> No. I would go on a business trip with him every once in a while. I mean, I remember—but like, it was like to go to Dallas and, you know. It was not very exciting.
00:28:56	Jesse	Host	That's every boy's dream, to go to Dallas.
00:28:57	Nick	Guest	<i>[Chuckles.]</i> Yeah. I was a Cowboys fan, so it was—that was fun. Boy, was I crushed when I found out Fort Worth wasn't Dallas.
00:29:07	Jesse	Host	<i>[Laughs.]</i>

We'll wrap up with Nick Kroll after a quick break. We'll be back in a minute. It's *Bullseye*, from MaximumFun.org and NPR.

00:29:18 Promo Clip

Music: “Oh No, Ross and Carrie! Theme Music” by Brian Keith Dalton. A jaunty, upbeat instrumental.

Carrie Poppy: I’m a psychic. My name is Psychic Carrie. Yes.

Ross Blocher: I’m Ross.

Carrie: Oooh, what a pleasure to meet you! Of course, I knew your name was Ross, ‘cause I am a psychic. But please, take a seat.

Ross: Yeah, well I was hoping we could talk about—

Carrie: *[Speaking along with him, but with a noticeable delay.]* You were hoping that, uh, we could talk about... my...

Ross: My podcast.

Carrie: Your podcast. Yes, I know.

Ross: It’s called *Oh No, Ross and Carrie!*

Carrie: *[Pretending to say the title along with him.]* Oh nuh—yeah, nyeh-nyeh? Yes.

Ross: We investigate fringe science, spirituality, and claims of the paranormal.

00:29:41 Promo Clip

Carrie: Spirituality... bleh-bleh paranormal!

Ross: *[Excited.]* You took the words right out of my mouth!

Carrie: Yes. This whole podcast, it sounds like it’s been a real challenge for you, lately.

Ross: No, actually it’s a lot of fun.

Carrie: Yes, exactly! Because it’s so fuuuun!

Ross: I don’t know how you do it.

Carrie: This will be \$75.

Ross: Okay, that seems fair.

Carrie: *Oh No, Ross and Carrie!*

Ross: At MaximumFun.org.

Carrie: *[Interrupting.]* Dot org.

Ross: You knew it was a dot org!

Carrie: *[Knowingly.]* I have a gift.

[Music ends.]

00:30:01	Music	Transition	Relaxed synth with a steady beat.
00:30:06	Jesse	Host	It's <i>Bullseye</i> . I'm Jesse Thorn. My guest is Nick Kroll.
			When you started like having your own television show and stuff, which is—you know, at this point, 10ish years ago. Something like that.
00:30:19	Nick	Guest	Yeah. Literally almost 10 years ago.
00:30:22	Jesse	Host	Did you think about what it would mean for you to be a celebrity?
00:30:28	Nick	Guest	Um. You know, I've been—I've had such a—
00:30:31	Jesse	Host	And Nick, I don't wanna suggest that you were like, "Ah! I'm Jennifer Aniston, now!"
			<i>[Nick affirms.]</i>
			"I'm gonna be—my celebrity narrative is going to be the top of one the world."
			<i>[Nick affirms.]</i>
			But just that you were not going to be somebody that people like recognized because they saw you at Rififi in New York.
00:30:50	Nick	Guest	Right, right, right. My trajectory as a comedian and—
00:30:56	Jesse	Host	They also love the '90s.
00:30:59	Nick	Guest	They— <i>[laughs]</i> yeah, oh my god. I mean, that's the thing is like—you know, my New Year's resolution—I mean, almost to the day right now, my New Years resolution going into 2002 was to do an open mic. I got the—I got the cojones to get up and do it I think at the end of January, beginning of February. So, this is like—I did my first open mic about 20 years ago to the day. And then I, within like a year or two, was like on awesomely bad '70s songs on VH1 and then I booked commercials and then I got on—you know— <i>Best Week Ever</i> by 2004/2005. And then I was, you know, popping up in other things and probably was in my first movie in 2006 or 7 and then was on <i>Cavemen</i> .
			You know. So, it's like—it's been such a gradual—my sort of trajectory as a public person has been so incremental and gradual. I hit a point when I was like doing <i>Kroll Show</i> and was on <i>The League</i> and was dating someone who was like a public personality where I was like, "Oh, this is weird." Oh, I now understand the other side of this, where you're like oh, this is—like this thing that I had been... 'cause you've interviewed a lot of well-known people. Every—any of them who say like, "I got into this 'cause I just wanted to do comedy. I didn't wanna be famous." They're <i>[censored]</i> lying to you. A little bit. Maybe 5% of the famous people that you have talked to didn't realize that they were gonna be famous, that that wasn't part of the goal. I might be weirdly going out on a limb, here, but they're lying to you.
00:32:52	Jesse	Host	But I mean, at the very least, they're aware that fame is the currency they can gain that will allow them to make the things that they wanna make.
00:33:01	Nick	Guest	Yeah! And I believe many of them, by the time you talk to them, don't wanna be famous anymore. They got in—they wanted to do—but like, part of the motivating factor of being a performer—

musician, an actor, comedian, a writer, a podcaster—is for other people to be like, “I know you and I like what you do!” There are the occasional people who are like, “I’m a true artist who has no sense of my audience. I just wanna create things,” and then they become like massively successful and they’re like, “Boy, I had no idea that this was gonna be the end goal of it.” But almost to a person, I guarantee somewhere in them wants to be recognized for their work. Then it happens—

00:33:41 Jesse Host
00:33:42 Nick Guest

Or to affect others. I mean, yeah.

Yes! Yes. And I—and I—I mean, I’m saying it in the most cynical version of it, but once you get that, you realize there are incredibly tricky elements to all of that. You know? And it’s not a—it’s not all fun and games, but it also is! It’s wonderful. But it is—I hit a point around then, when I was finishing *Kroll Show*. I was on two shows, and it was like—I was like, “Oh, this is—this is not everything it was cracked up to be.” Which then—like, I put everything to bed. I was physically, emotionally exhausted, creatively exhausted. Put everything to bed. And me and John started doing *Oh, Hello* to get towards eventually doing the Broadway show.

And that’s when *Big Mouth* came around and it was animation and it was like, “Oh, I’m more than happy to not be on camera shooting a show like nine or ten months of the year.” And not be—not have my face on TV much of the time. I definitely was more than happy to take that.

00:34:51 Jesse Host

You have a kid who’s about a year old.

[Nick confirms.]

00:35:00 Nick Guest

How has the experience been different than you expected?
[Sighs thoughtfully.] Hm. I grew up—I have three siblings. They all have four kids; so, I have 12 nieces and nephews. I’m in my 40s and almost—so many of my friends are—so, I’ve witnessed and been very close to people who have kids. So, I was aware of everything that was gonna happen, for the most part. Um. I think it’s that what you can’t quite explain or experience until you have your own children is the familiarity—what used to be only internal familiarity, to see that familiarity externalized where you see another creature—another human being—say something or—not say, I mean, he’s still one. When you see another creature like smile in a way that you’ve only understood internally before, to see that external is a real trip. Which I guess might be somewhat narcissistic to say. *[Chuckles.]* Be like, “I saw someone else do something just like me!”

Which is not my point. I think it’s... it’s a different kind of love, truthfully. Is like, you don’t—you know it’s gonna be that. You know it’s gonna be that. You’re gonna experience a new kind of love. And then you have the child and you’re like, “Yeah! Yup.” I’ve never—it confirms what I thought, but then I’ve never felt this way before, which is like you love something, so... uh, different than like when you choose your partner who you love ‘cause you’re like, “Oh, I found my wife, my boyfriend, my girlfriend, whatever.” There’s

00:36:53	Jesse	Host	something about having a child where it's just like this, uh—this—it's like a primordial love that I have not experienced before.
00:36:57	Nick	Guest	Well, Nick, I sure appreciate you taking the time to be on <i>Bullseye</i> . It's always great to get to talk to you.
00:36:59	Jesse	Host	Always a pleasure talking to you, Jesse.
00:37:05	Music	Transition	Nick Kroll. His animated show, <i>Human Resources</i> , just premiered on Netflix. Go check it out there.
00:37:12	Jesse	Host	Bright, triumphant synth.
			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. It's been another one of those weird windstorms, here in Los Angeles. Common occurrence here in Los Angeles. And this giant eucalyptus tree right outside my office window lost a few more giant branches. Terrifying! This tree's gonna fall over and crush my house. Better knock on wood.
			Our show is produced by speaking into microphones. Our senior producer is Kevin Ferguson. Our producers are Jesus Ambrosio, Valerie Moffat and Richard Robey. Did I just speak that tree thing into existence? I hope not. We get booking help from Mara Davis. Our interstitial music is by Dan Wally, also known as DJW. Our theme song is "Huddle Formation" by The Go! Team. Thanks to The Go! Team and to their label, Memphis Industries.
			<i>Bullseye</i> is on YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook. You can find us there, follow us there. We will share with you our interviews. And I think that's about it. Just remember: all great radio hosts have a signature signoff.
00:38:17	Promo	Promo	Speaker: <i>Bullseye with Jesse Thorn</i> is a production of MaximumFun.org and is distributed by NPR.
			<i>[Music fades out.]</i>