

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.
00:00:20	Jesse Thorn	Host	It’s <i>Bullseye</i> . I’m Jesse Thorn. Next up, another comedy legend: Paul Feig. Paul created the TV show <i>Freaks and Geeks</i> . He directed <i>Bridesmaids</i> and <i>Spy</i> . He’s directed episodes of <i>30 Rock</i> , <i>The Office</i> , <i>Arrested Development</i> , and <i>Mad Men</i> . He is a legend, and I haven’t even gotten into his acting role on <i>Sabrina the Teenage Witch</i> . This is, I think, his fourth time on the show? Maybe more than that. Frankly, I am losing count. <i>[Chuckles.]</i> I think the first time he was on the show, I was still in college!
			When Paul isn’t appearing on <i>Bullseye</i> , he keeps plenty busy. He helped produce the new HBO show, <i>Minx</i> , which is a period comedy about the first women’s erotic magazine. He also helped make the new Fox sitcom <i>Welcome to Flatch</i> . <i>Welcome to Flatch</i> is a mocumentary show based on the British comedy <i>This Country</i> . <i>Flatch</i> is set in the town of Flatch, Ohio. And it explores the lives of that town’s various residents.
			In this clip from the show’s first episode, two locals talk about how they’re gearing up for the town’s annual scarecrow festival.
00:01:32	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:01:33	Clip	Clip	<b>Speaker 1 (<i>Welcome to Flatch</i>):</b> Scarecrow Festival is pretty much like the biggest and best day of the year.
			<b>Speaker 2:</b> People make scarecrows. They put them up all over town, and everyone votes for which one’s best.
			<b>Speaker 1:</b> And you’re looking at the winner. Like, I have a <u>killer</u> design and a prime location this year, right on the green. Like, the guy with that spot last year won the whole thing, and his was pretty much like some fricking used clothes and twine.
			<b>Speaker 2:</b> Winner gets a hot air balloon ride.
			<b>Speaker 1:</b> Yeah, and you’re on the front page of <i>The Flatch Patriot</i> .
			<b>Speaker 2:</b> It’s so dumb.
			<b>Speaker 1:</b> Oh. <i>[Chuckles.]</i> And you throwing a frying pan in the air isn’t?
			<b>Speaker 2:</b> A) The skillet toss takes real skill. B) There’s a trophy.
			<b>Speaker 1:</b> Fine, I will take my Nana on the balloon. I don’t care.
			<b>Speaker 2:</b> She doesn’t even like heights, and you know that.

**Speaker 1:** About to be in the mile high club with my Grandma while you're on the ground crying like a little baby.

**Speaker 2:** I haven't cried since last year and you know that!  
Music swells and fades.

00:02:18 Sound Effect Transition

00:02:19 Jesse Host *[Chuckling.]* Paul Feig, welcome back to *Bullseye*. It's nice to see you.

00:02:23 Paul Feig Guest Oh, Jesse, it's so good to see you too, my friend.

00:02:26 Jesse Host I'm a big supporter of hot air balloon rides.

*[Paul laughs.]*

I don't think I would be comfortable going on a hot air balloon ride, but I like the idea of a hot air balloon ride.

00:02:34 Paul Guest Yeah, my problem with the hot air balloon ride is I always think, "What if you just keep going up and up and up? And then you end up in outer space." You know?

*[Jesse laughs.]*

It doesn't make sense to come down.

00:02:44 Jesse Host It's the classic balloonsmen dilemma.

00:02:48 Paul Guest *[Laughing.]* What goes up, uh, apparently must come down.

00:02:52 Jesse Host Congratulations on all these films and television shows that you've made since the last time you were on the show.

00:02:58 Paul Guest Thank you, sir.

00:03:00 Jesse Host Why don't we start talking about *Welcome to Flatch*?

*[Paul agrees.]*

I watched the British show on which this is based. And I watched one episode a year or two ago. And, um, I found it to be emotionally devastating.

*[Paul laughs and agrees.]*

Uh, *[laughing]* because of the intensity of the comedy I think would be a way to say it.

00:03:27 Paul Guest It's very—it's thick with laughs, let's just say that. And pathos, and can be very, very sad sometimes—which is why I just loved it.

00:03:36 Jesse Host Yeah, so what made you see that and think, "This should be a network television sitcom."

00:03:45 Paul Guest Well, it got sent to me. I've got a deal at Lionsgate, a television deal, and they have a deal with the BBC. And so, they had this show, which is called *This Country*, in the UK and sent it to me because—I think 'cause of my work on *The Office*. And you know, and I think they knew it was gonna be my sense of humor. And I absolutely fell in love with it because of all the things you mentioned and that I said. You know, it's a very lowkey but hilarious story about underdogs in a small town. And it's about this small town. You know, and it's—like, from the very beginning, people were like, "Oh, you're not gonna make fun of small towns."

Like, no, I am from a small town. So, no. And I just love the idea of small towns. There's a lot of comedy in them, because it's like high school. *[Chuckles.]* You know? You're only around these people because you are geographically there. You know. And so, everybody has to kind of get along, and you have all these different personalities, and—you know, weirdos and normal people. And it's a big kind of just stew of potential comedy. And it also feels very real; it's that—you know, the fake documentary style. Which I love, having worked on *The Office* and having done *Arrested Development*. It's sort of the best way to do comedy and television, because it's all in the moment. You've got two cameras, and these are usually like people from reality TV, these camera people. So, they know how to cover a scene.

So, I put—you know, two cameras at opposite sides of the room, and each time we do a take, we've shot the entire scene. So, you have such an ability to be loose with it and throw things at the actors and try this. And they can surprise you, and we always hire actors that—you know—are good at improv or at least have that ability to roll with it. And so, when you finish a scene, you've got so many different potential versions of a scene that it's just very fruitful for laughs and for just great entertainment.

00:05:41 Jesse Host

You did writing on the show. You also directed the first few episodes. From what I understand, the show started as a sizzle reel or a pitch reel that was all shot in one day.

*[Paul confirms.]*

00:05:58 Paul Guest

What was that day like?

Well, we didn't know it was gonna be that. You know. It was—we were shooting in North Carolina, and we were doing all this prep and everything, but as we were doing all the prep—you know, *[chuckles]* here comes covid, and shows are shutting down and the town's shutting—and not necessarily in North Carolina. Everywhere else was kinda—but North Carolina felt a little like a bubble, a little bit. So, we're kind of like, "Well, let's just keep going." And we were taking our safety precautions as much as we knew, back then. So, then we started that morning, and shot for half a day. It was all outside, and it was going great. And then we heard that the only other show in North Carolina had just shut down. And we were like, oh boy.

But you know, nobody was kind of saying "shut down", but then we did this scene that's kind of halfway through the pilot, where two of our characters are in a small room playing video games. And like, six of us were packed in there, and I suddenly like went, "Okay, we can't do this. Everybody out!" And said, "I gotta shut it down. I can't be the—" We're the last show shooting in all of showbiz. And I was like, "I will not be the guy, you know, that puts these people in danger just so he can shoot something." But what we did was like Jenny Bicks—you know, who show runs the show—and I, we basically said, "Let's get everybody, take them to a park *[chuckles]*, outside where it's safe, and let's just shoot a bunch of scenes."

'Cause a lot of the show takes place outside anyway. So, literally, we got everybody over there, said, "Okay, we're gonna do this

scene over here. Let's grab this prop, put it over here." We have the latrine—the infamous latrine that's famous for Colonel Flatch, that—the art department like, "Get that latrine over to the park!" So, we got that there. You know. And we just shot for the rest of the day a bunch of scenes, and what we were able to do then is go back—you know, back to LA, and quarantine, and cut basically I think it was like a 15-minute sizzle reel out of this that sold the show, that got the show picked up to series.

00:07:50 Jesse Host  
00:07:52 Paul Guest

What small town did you grow up in?

I grew up in Mount Clemens, Michigan—which is about 20 minutes outside of Detroit. But then, I also—my mom had property in Canada, on Lake Erie in this town called Colchester, which was very, very small. It's out in like a corner, basically. And then, the big town next to it was called Harrow, which was one main street. We spent so much time there that I think I got even more small town feel out of that than I did Mount Clemens. Which, Mount Clemens is a small town, but as far as small towns go, it's kind of a big small town. But you know, that's where—you know, I mean, you grow up in the Midwest. You know, if you're not in a major city, that small town feel is there, 'cause you're just around the same people all the time.

00:08:36 Jesse Host

I mean, you built a significant portion of your early career by—you know, getting a stack of three-by-five index cards and writing every horrible indignity that happened to you in your childhood and adolescence on them.

*[Paul confirms with laughter.]*

00:08:55 Paul Guest

And then turning them into books and television shows.

Yes! That's what I love about this show, though, is I go like, "Oh!" I've had a lot more terrible stories from my childhood that I can now put on Kelly and Shrub, who are these sort of *Arrested Development*—you know—youths in this town. So, actually the two episodes that I wrote for this first season, one's based on a dance school that I started with my neighbors when we were probably like—I don't know, 12 or 13. And it was just terrible. I literally came up with one dance. It was just this weird thing where you kind of kick your feet out to the side and then turn around and do the same thing. And we charged all the kids in the neighborhood \$1. And then like an hour later, all their big brothers showed up and demanded the money back. *[Laughs.]*

00:09:44 Jesse Host

And then the other one based on my career as being a magician in a small town. You know, I was the magician who performed in all the nursing homes. That was my—that was my circuit, Jesse.

*[Chuckles.]* This is not a place for you to brag, Paul.

*[Paul laughs.]*

00:09:49 Paul Guest  
00:09:51 Jesse Host

This is an NPR interview.

I'm very proud.

So, let's talk about this dance. You gave a brief characterization of what happened in this dance. It involves kicking your feet out to the side? Give me a more specific description of what happened in the Feig dance. Was it called the Feig?

00:10:05 Paul Guest No, it was—I don't know what it was called, honestly. *[Chuckles.]* Even I knew it was so bad, I didn't want my name on it. It was just like that. Yeah, it was kind of like—so, you're walking in a straight line. It was kind of disco inspired, because discos used to have that kind of everybody do like the same thing in unison. You know. You'd walk forward and put your leg out. So, it was literally like step forward. Touch your toe out to the side. Come back. Step forward. Touch your opposite toe out to the side. Come back. Step forward, and repeat, and repeat until you get to the—where you have to turn around. And then you come back, and you do the exact same thing. And that's the dance that I taught all these kids, and they wanted their money back.

00:10:40 Jesse Host *[Laughs.]* How did you sell this dance? How did you convince anyone to give you a dollar? Were you known to be trustworthy with a dollar, with regard to dance instruction?

00:10:52 Paul Guest Well, we were always scheming something, and we came up with a lot of haunted houses. But a haunted house felt like you only could charge like a quarter to come into that. And we actually threw pretty scary haunted houses, because we did that weird midwestern thing where it's haunted houses where you make people touch stuff. *[Laughs.]* You know? So, it was like, "We'll peel grapes and that's—put your hand in here, it's eyeballs!" You know? And put spaghetti, "Oh, these are worms!" And all that. Which, my least favorite way to go to a haunted house, but if you're doing it then you don't feel so bad. You know, I don't wanna do that. *[Chuckles.]*

But no, so we were kind of known for doing all of this kind of thing. Actually, in the same dance school episode, there's a whole thing with Shrub's character makes these fake treasure maps and sells them to the kids. And I did that exact same thing. I made fake treasure maps for our neighborhood. The only thing, I just made it go—like, in X marks the spot, I didn't think, "Oh, I should go bury something where X marks the spot." I was just like, "Well, they're just like these treasure maps." *[Laughs.]* So, these kids were going all over our neighborhood digging up other people's yards, looking for the treasure that didn't exist. And that brought the big brothers back, once again, to beat my *[censored]*.

00:12:02 Jesse Host *[Laughs.]* Do you think you had a reputation?

00:12:05 Paul Guest Well, I had a weird reputation. I was either—I was known kind of as the funny guy, because I—you know—was trying to be a standup, and I would perform at all the talent shows and was just always trying to make people laugh so I wouldn't get beaten up. But I was also tall—kind of tall and skinny, and taller than most of the bullies in the school. So, I became the target of the bullies, because they knew I wouldn't fight back. And so, all my bullies were short guys who were really mean and really like aggressive. But it was kind of like, "Come on, man." Like, you're—you know. *[Chuckles.]* It'd be one thing if I was like really, you know, goliath and I'm gonna take you down. But since I would just go, "Uh," you know and freeze up.

You know, the locker room was just absolute hell for me, because that's—you know. First, you had to take off your clothes and you're gonna get bullied while you're taking off your clothes. Like, what's worse than that? And then they force you to take a shower, which—you know, that's a whole—I don't even know if they do that in school anymore. I hope to god they don't, because that was the

			most traumatic—those were the most traumatic experiences, I should say, of my entire high school career.
00:13:08	Jesse	Host	I went to arts high school, and it was in a converted special needs elementary school.
00:13:14	Paul	Guest	Nice.
00:13:15	Jesse	Host	So, you know, there were no facilities for being nude in front of each other.
00:13:20	Paul	Guest	Oh, you're so lucky. You're so lucky.
00:13:22	Jesse	Host	And I can't—I can't thank my lucky stars enough that I never had to—but then, later you join the YMCA and you're like, "Wow, I gotta learn how to do this." <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:13:32	Paul	Guest	I know. Well, but you know what? You never learn how to do it. I—although, some guys I mean literally just walk around naked like, "Hey! What's going on?" And they'll put their leg up on the bench and talk to you. It's like, I can't even deal with what's hanging in front of me right now. You know? But, I just have never been comfortable with it. Although, when I was in theatre, I could drop trou in a moments notice to get changed—you know—into my costumes, backstage. That meant nothing. But it's something about if you're around—if—I don't know. Something about if you're not there for the arts, you know, then it's—then I gotta keep my clothes on.
			<i>[They laugh.]</i>
00:14:03	Jesse	Host	Even more with Paul Feig after the break. We'll be back in a minute. It's <i>Bullseye</i> , from <a href="http://MaximumFun.org">MaximumFun.org</a> and NPR.
00:14:11	Music	Transition	Thumpy synth with light vocalizations.
00:14:15	Jesse	Host	Welcome back to <i>Bullseye</i> . I'm Jesse Thorn. I'm talking with Paul Feig. He's the creator of <i>Freaks and Geeks</i> , the filmmaker behind movies including but not limited to <i>Bridesmaids</i> , <i>Ghostbusters</i> , <i>The Heat</i> , and <i>Spy</i> , among many others. Lately, he has been working more in television. He helped produce the new HBO series <i>Minx</i> . He helped develop and direct <i>Welcome to Flatch</i> , a documentary sitcom airing now on Fox. Let's get back into our conversation.
			Were you present for the photographing of the many, many penises in <i>Minx</i> ?
00:14:53	Paul	Guest	<i>[Laughs.]</i> No, I was not around on that day, I have to say. That was actually—when they did that, they actually cleared the whole cast and everybody out. So, they shot all the stuff with the cast watching, but the guys weren't there. And then they cleared everything out and then they just had these guys come in and got these—you know—shots. And god bless these guys. I mean, they were really—you know, they volunteered to do this, and then they really went for it. I mean, there's some people that just really have a good time on camera. You can see them in the thing. The one guy's doing like, you know, martial arts moves. He's fantastic. Another guy's doing a helicopter, which I now know that term. <i>[Chuckles.]</i> So, there you go. Look it up if you'd like to.
00:15:32	Jesse	Host	Did you have to have producorial meetings on <i>Minx</i> to decide what kind of and the extent of nudity you were going to have in a show about a pornographic magazine with pictures of naked dudes?
00:15:49	Paul	Guest	Yeah, it's all very, very—you know—looked over, looked after. And you know, there's people around who do that. And you know, look, if you watch my movies, there's never a sex scene. If there is a sex scene, it's the most chaste thing you've ever seen in your life, and

it's just one shot and it zooms in on somebody's face, and then it's over. Because I'm just like, "Get me out of this. I don't wanna do this." So, you know, but that's what I love about the show is even though there's a lot of nudity, it's not lurid. It's really—you know, the first time you go to Bottom Dollar with Joyce, played by the great Ophelia Lovibond—you know, it's immediately a workplace. It's not sexy at all. It's like naked people are standing around smoking cigarettes like waiting for their picture to be taken. You know.

And that's what I loved about it. It's like never trying to be titillating. You know? And so, we really just wanted to carry that into it, of like, here comes this woman coming into this—you know, who's kind of a little uptight, and she's being thrown to the wolves, but then quickly kind of just realizes how workmanlike it is. You know? And how it's just a commodity, really. And that's what's kind of great about it. And you know, Jake Johnson playing Doug is just so great, 'cause he's so matter of fact about it, too. And he's not gross. You know? I mean, he's like a businessman who's got this thing he wants to do, but he really is—you know—good to his people. Music swells and fades.

00:17:02 Sound Effect  
00:17:03 Clip

Transition  
Clip

**Joyce (Minx):** I, uh, assume you've seen *Cosmo*?

**Doug:** The whooole country's seen *Cosmo*.

**Joyce:** *[Beat.]* It was a cheat. He was barely even naked, and women went crazy for it just like you said they would.

**Doug:** Yup.

**Joyce:** And it made me think that maybe we should give this magazine another shot. I know that male erotica is in the zeitgeist now, but we're still ahead of the curve. We could be on the newsstands before anyone else.

**Doug:** Yeeeah. You know, Joyce? Here's the thing. I go to any one of my magazines and, well, people are dying to hear what I have to say. But you act like I'm some sort of a *[censored]* clown until some fancy Manhattan editor throws ol' Burt Reynolds on a bearskin rug. And then, I get your stamp of approval, huh?

00:17:50 Sound Effect  
00:17:51 Paul

Transition  
Guest

Music swells and fades.

You know, and it's also not a porno mag. You know. That's the thing. It's a—you know, it's a nudie mag. That's what they do. So, I don't know. I'm justifying a lot, maybe, but it's—you know.

*[They chuckle.]*

It is—it's the '70s, and it's just very funny. That's why I just—I'm very, very proud of this show. And Ellen Rapoport, who—you know—created this, is just genius.

00:18:09 Jesse

Host

Why do you think you're still uncomfortable with sexy stuff in movies? I mean, your last movie was a romantic comedy! They often have sexy stuff in them.

00:18:18 Paul

Guest

Well! But that's all flirting, you know? And kissing and all that stuff. Like, that—even the kissing, I'm always like, "Okay, we're gonna do

the kissing scene.” No, I never liked watching sex scenes in movies. You know? Like, especially like in the ’80s. You know, it was always those *Top Gun*—it would always be some, you know, extended scene with beautiful lighting and people—and I go like, “But what am I watching?” Why am I watching this? Am I getting anything from the character? Are we learning like, oh! He really likes that! Or she really likes that! It’s like, no, I’m just watching—you know, maybe you’ll see somebody naked or whatever, but—and so I’m just kind of like, “I don’t—I don’t wanna watch this.”

I’m all for like, they fall into the bed, and we pan up to the window, and there’s the moon. *[Chuckles.]* You know? Or we cut outside, and a train goes into a tunnel and that’s—you know, that’s your metaphor if you want it. But uh, yeah. I just don’t—I don’t know. It doesn’t feel necessary to me. Unless it’s funny. I mean, that’s—you know, when we did *Bridesmaids*—you know, we said, “We’re gonna have a sex scene up front. Let’s make it a hilarious sex scene.” Which is just, you know, the most athletic, weird, some dude’s got a million things he wants and this poor woman’s trying to keep up. You know. That was funny, to me. You know.

But we literally shot that like it was a fight scene. I mean, that was literally like shooting a martial arts scene.

00:19:27 Jesse Host

What about the horny comedies of the 1980s? There’s a lot of both...

00:19:35 Paul Guest

*[Chuckles.]* Choose your words wisely.

00:19:36 Jesse Host

There’s *[chuckles]*—yeah, I mean, some of the—I think there are a lot of the horny comedies of the 1980s that are—you know. I was—I was young when those movies were new, but watching some of those movies now, they really range from amoral to immoral.

*[Paul agrees.]*

00:20:09 Paul Guest

But how did you feel about, you know, the presence of boobs in comedy that was—that really ran from like 1977 to 1989, inclusive? Yeah, well, I mean it was interesting. I—you know, I—overall, I didn’t like horny comedies, because what I hated about them was it was always a nerdy guy and his best friend who was like a total womanizer. And so, it was always like, “Come on, man! We gotta get laid!” Blah, blah, blah. And I was like, “I am a nerdy guy. I don’t have any friends like that. Like, I don’t—they’re like my kryptonite, so I why would I hang around with them?” So, I didn’t like that. But then like I thought, you know, at the time *Animal House* was one of the—you know, I went to the opening night. I was 13, and my cousin took me when we were in Canada, in Windsor. And we went to this movie theater; it was completely sold out, all of college students, and I’d never heard an audience rock with laughter like that.

You know? But it was a lot of—it was like, you know, off-color, naked, or whatever. You know. And you’re just like, “Oh my god!” But I don’t know, for some reason that seemed really funny to me, because it was more kind of fight the system. And then they were doing, you know, also—you know, doing sexy stuff, too. “Sexy stuff”, if you will. And then also, I thought the movie *Kentucky Fried Movie* was really funny. You know. Just because of that, but there’s

a couple of things. Like, they have these fake movie trailers with a lot of naked women and—but it was more kind of like, “Oh my gosh!” You know, as a 13-year-old—even then, I think I was probably even younger than that when I came up. And you’re just like, “Oh my god, I’m seeing—you know, naked people.” *[Laughs.]*

So—but I find nothing’s less interesting to me than the quest for sex. I don’t find that fun. What I think is great is the quest for food! That’s why *The Three Stooges* are funny to me, because it’s always like trying to get a free meal. *[Chuckles.]* And that, I think, is hilarious.

00:21:37 Jesse Host That’s why your current—you just recently optioned the comic strip *Blondie*. *[Chuckling.]* You know.

00:21:41 Paul Guest Exactly! That’s right. *Andy Capp*.

00:21:43 Jesse Host You’re like, “Finally! Giant sandwiches will have their moment!”

00:21:47 Paul Guest My Dagwood moment, exactly.

*[They laugh.]*

00:21:51 Jesse Host I mean, one of the funniest parts of your *Ghostbusters* movie—which was full of funny parts—

*[Paul thanks him.]*

Such a funny movie—was Chris Hemsworth as a sexy airhead.

*[Paul laughs.]*

Like, he was such a great—he was such a—like, to me, I don’t think there is anything funnier to me than a handsome, dumb guy. Handsome, dumb guy: I could laugh at that, you know, from now until—for—like a confident, handsome, dumb guy is the funniest thing in the world to me.

00:22:24 Paul Guest I think it’s hilarious, too! It’s funny, though, because actually the part wasn’t supposed to be that. It was supposed to be a guy who’s like really just a bad employee who’s kind of bored with his job. And it was like, “Kevin, can you please do this.” “Yeah, yeah, yeah.” But when Chris came in the first day of shooting, he just kind of fell into this thing. You know. The first scene we shot with him, where he arrives—he’s just there and he’s handsome. You know. And just—and nice. But then we did this job interview scene that we—you know—did for hours and hours, crush shooting it. And that’s where Chris started coming alive with these like jokes he was doing that were all kind of like, “I really don’t understand this, or I don’t—” You know, “My cat—” You know.

He came up with this thing about my cat. You know, like, “Oh, do you have a dog?” “Yeah.” “And what’s his name?” “My Cat.” Or—I don’t—I haven’t seen it in a while, but he came up with this whole thing, and I remember the—you know, the ladies were looking at me like did you write this? I go, “No, Chris is doing this!” *[Chuckles.]* And so, he started going on this whole thing, and then we had—you know, he had glasses that were reflective. And so, I said, “We gotta just—let’s just take the lenses out.” And so, in the middle of a take, he just like put his hand through the—you know, the glasses, and scratched his eye.

*[Jesse laughs.]*

And you know, and then Melissa and Kristen kind of jumped on that, and then he started playing it up and we just started—then we just started writing all of these jokes, and it was just so fertile. But you know, a lot of people who don't like the movie accuse me of like, *[angrily]* "Oh, you're just trying to get back at men." It's like, no, Chris really wanted to do this! And he was too funny doing it. Why am I gonna stop that? So, I got to write the line for him, "You know an aquarium is just a submarine for fish." So, that's one of my favorites—favorite jokes that I've ever written. So, there you go. Cheers.

00:24:01 Jesse Host *[Laughs.]* I mean, you have—in *Welcome to Flatch*, you have Seann William Scott, and his character in the show is not especially dumb, but he's one of the great, handsome-dumb-guy comedy actors. I mean, you know. Him, Patrick Warburton is another person I would watch do anything.

*[Paul agrees with a chuckle.]*

Just truly anything, as long as he like stares into the camera with that look that handsome people—handsome men, specifically, can have. And then they're dumb. Like, I just—*[laughs]*.

00:24:30 Paul Guest

It's the greatest!

00:24:31 Jesse Host

What a gift!

00:24:32 Paul Guest

No, I mean when Jon Hamm, on *30 Rock*, it's just—it's like catnip to me. If a handsome guy is cool and secure enough to be dumb, then hats off.

00:24:42 Jesse Host So, Rian Johnson has been a guest on this show a few times. One of the all-time nice guys, a brilliant filmmaker, and he made—he made, I think, the best *Star Wars* movie. And he got so much mess for it and—from mooks and mouth breathers.

*[Paul chuckles.]*

And I talked to him about it one time. I can't remember if it was on the air or not. And he said, "Well, you know, I really love *Star Wars*. I got to make a *Star Wars* movie that I'm so proud of. And different people are gonna have different thoughts about it, but you wouldn't expect anything different." And I think I believed him, that he didn't feel bad about it, 'cause I felt bad about the people hating on his movies. I thought it was so great. He's such a nice man. I was like what are you—these people are horrible! I just feel horrible about this!

I felt the same way about *Ghostbusters*, when people were being awful about *Ghostbusters*, because I loved *Ghostbusters*. I thought it was so funny, and I knew—

*[Paul thanks him.]*

I knew you and knew what a nice man you were and are still, I think.

00:25:50 Paul Guest

Thank you. Yes, I'm a monster—I'm a monster now, Jesse. Look at me.

00:25:56 Jesse Host *[They laugh.]*  
But I feel like I could tell that it was—you know, you're a sensitive dude, and it was just like—it was hard in a nonprofessional context to bear all that weight of these people being awful about this movie that you made that was just a fun movie.

00:26:11 Paul Guest  
Yeah, it was more of a surprise, I think. 'Cause I'd had such a great relationship with the internet up until then, 'cause of *Freaks and Geeks* and *Bridesmaids*. You know, even *The Heat* and *Spy* people really liked. So, I was just unprepared, and that was the biggest thing is—you know. So, when the onslaught kind of started, when we first got announced, it was more like, "Oh—" Like, I reverted to being 13 years old in the locker room. And you're like—and it has the added thing, these days, of it comes right to your phone. It like is going right into your head. *[Chuckles.]* You know?

And you know, I'd be at like breakfast with my wife, and suddenly like somebody would get my email and send me like this—you know—threatening email. And it's just like, "Oh man! Like, you might as well be sitting at the table with me and, you know, stabbing a fork into my leg right now." So, it was more that. So, I had to—I had to kind of grow up, you know, at the tender age of mid-50s. You know, just to kind of go, "Oh, this stuff is still around." You know, but you also—look, I completely understand people being passionate about stuff. And, you know, fandom is very passionate, as we all know. And I'm passionate about stuff, too. You know. So, it just—we're so lucky to get to do what we do that you go, "It can't all be just lovely." Like, there's gotta be a downside to it. *[Chuckles.]*

You know. And it's that kind of thing. But you know, you can't please everybody, and all you can do is try to make something that you're proud of that you think other people are gonna like. And trust me, we test screen these things within an inch of their lives as we're putting them together. And we don't put out something and go, "Well, nobody liked it, but we like it. So, we're gonna lock picture." You know? Like, by the time we lock picture, we were get—scoring in the 90s and, you know, getting all these really high scores and just getting big laughs. So, you know. That's all you can do, Jesse. You can just make the stuff and it belongs to the world.

00:27:54 Jesse Host  
One time, my therapist said to me—years ago, my old therapist, she goes, "Jesse, do these people know you?"

*[Paul chuckles and agrees.]*

00:28:08 Paul Guest  
He was one of those "only asks questions" therapists. Yeah, exactly. Exactly. You wait for the answer and, uh—*[chuckles]*. Well, who—you know, actually it was—I heard somebody in an interview saying that Pitbull gave them advice that I—to this day, I go like, it's so great! They said why they weren't on social media, and he's like, "Why do you want all that negativity coming into your phone and into your life?" And it's like, you know what? You're right. Sadly, if you're in the business, you kind of can't get off social media because—you know, you just need it for promotion and just—you know, to keep up with all the majority of nice people that are out there. But you just have to go like, alright, like, you know, just talk to the nice people, gloss past the people who aren't being nice, and get on with your life.

'Cause I turn 60 this year, Jesse. And sometimes I go like, "Really?! I'm getting tortured by people I don't know, are probably half my age or less?" And it's like, alright, let's just—you know, let's move on.

00:28:58 Jesse Host

I think there are artists who make work where perhaps it's as a defense against people, you know, not liking them or whatever. But where—you know, it is inherent in the work and they're comfortable with the idea that they are going to alienate people. You know? There are—there are artists who are like, "Well, some people will get it and some people won't. And the ones who don't can go suck a lemon."

*[Paul laughs and agrees.]*

00:29:29 Paul Guest  
00:29:32 Jesse Host

That's exactly how they put it, by the way.

Yes, exactly, very polite.

But you're not that kind of artist. Like, you certainly—you know, the thing that made your career as a writer and director, *Freaks and Geeks*, was something that was—you know, that found a very passionate and—for a network TV show, narrow audience. But like when you make movies, I really get the impression that you are trying to make movies that make everyone happy.

00:29:59 Paul Guest

Oh, totally! I mean, I'm a people pleaser. I'm the very—if you look it up in the dictionary, there's my picture. You know, I—that's all I wanna do, and I wanna please everybody. I know I can't, but it doesn't mean I don't think all the time like, "Oh! Maybe this one everybody will like." You know. But it's also the thing of if you wanna make commercial movies, the movies have to make money. You know? And so, you know, early in my career I'd go, "You know, I'm gonna do this." And like right after *Freaks and Geeks*, I did a movie called *I Am David* which—you know, I was very proud of. But I think in my heart of hearts, I knew it was completely not commercial. And it was proven to be very much not commercial.

You know. But that was kind of in this moment of like, "Oh! If I do this, I'll win awards." Which now I like—all I do is tell people, you know, when I lecture to film students or anything, like, "Don't try to win awards. Don't do anything you think only because you go like this will be critically praised or this'll be cool, or I'll win awards." Because then you're not pleasing anybody. You know? Then you're only in service of something that doesn't exist. You know. I mean, the greatest moment of my career was when *Bridesmaids* got nominate for two Oscars. I mean, trust me, none of us went into *Bridesmaids* going like, "Hey! I bet we might get nominated for some Oscars when Melissa goes to the bathroom in the sink!"

*[Laughing.]* You know? It was like that's Oscar bait! You know, but it happens that you go like, "If we do it right and people really like it." But also, it's like who cares about awards? Because, you know, movies that we lost to—they're really good movies, but immodestly, I will say I don't think some of those movies—people don't come up to people and go like, "I've watched your movie 50 times." You know? And, "Whenever I'm sad, I watch your movie." You know. And to me, that's like the greatest thing. You go like I wanna be that thing that just makes you happy. You know? And you know, I like to

do movies that can get a little dark. You know, like *A Simple Favor* and all that. But I always make sure—I always want them to be good natured at their base, and I want them to be—you know, people win in the end. You know? Whether it's a small victory, like on *Freaks and Geeks* or whether it's a big victory, you know, in some of these other movies.

That's the message I wanna put out into the world. You know? I can't be the—you know, the old European filmmaker who's like, "Uuugh, the world is terrible and then everyone dies!" *[Laughing.]* You know? It's like, I'm glad those movies exist, 'cause they're fun to watch. Well, not fun, but you know. They, uh, sober you up. But um, no, I just wanna make people laugh. That's the—you know. When you get into comedy, you better not be, "Eeh! Who cares what they think?" 'Cause then you're gonna be out of comedy really fast.

00:32:25 Jesse Host We'll finish up with Paul Feig after a quick break. In just a minute, he has his own gin! I think this is our first ever *[chuckles]* signature gin guest on the program. He'll tell me about picking the flavors to make gin. Stay with us. It's *Bullseye*, from [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org) and NPR.

00:32:46 Music Transition Relaxed synth with a steady beat.

00:32:50 Jesse Host It's *Bullseye*. I'm Jesse Thorn. I'm talking with writer and director Paul Feig. He directed films like *Bridesmaids* and *Spy*. His latest project is a TV show, called *Welcome to Flatch*. Let's get back into our conversation.

Do you ever feel like there's a part of you that's like, "You know what? I gotta get edgy."

*[Paul laughs.]*

00:33:12 Paul Guest "I gotta do something edgy."  
No, you know, I don't! Because you know, again, when I—I learned so much from doing that movie, *I Am David*. Because, you know, *Freaks and Geeks* was a critical success. It was a—you know, financial, not. And then I got sent a lot of high school stuff to direct. And I was like, "Well, I just did it." And also, that was the whole reason I did it, is that I wanted to tell my own personal story about it and show it in the way that I'd never seen it done before. So, I didn't quite know what to do, and I was—I couldn't sell another show. Everybody wanted my voice, but then nobody really wanted what I would bring to them. *[Chuckles.]* So, this thing came along, and it was this book that apparently all the school kids for a long time, here in Europe, would read. And it hit me, because my mom had died right at the end of *Freaks and Geeks*, and it was about a kid trying to find his mom.

And so, I took it on, but I did take it on. I remember talking to my agent and he's like, "You'll be like Steve Zaillian if you make a movie like this!" I was like yeah! Oh my gosh! So, I got into this kind of like, "I'll do more of a drama and it'll be arty and all this." And you know, three years from conception to getting it out and everything, and it bombed. And just going like, "What did I do?" Like, all that time I spent, and I'm proud of it. And like, again, you're always proud of the movies you make. But you know how I knew this movie

was gonna be a bomb, Jesse? Um, *[chuckles]* I—you know, ‘cause you got—I always say, “Nobody sets out to make a bad movie.” So, I was kind of like, okay, this’ll be great. People will love it. So, we did a test screening at Irvine.

And it went great! I mean, like we got a big score, big applause at the end, people loved it. And it’s like oh my god! I did it! Like, I made the greatest movie of all time! And we’re out with my producers and we’re celebrating in the lobby, and I look, and people are coming out of the theater. And these ushers have these big stacks of like white envelopes, and they’re handing a white envelope to each person. I go, “What’s that?”

And they said, “Well, when we were trying to recruit an audience and we—you know, and they read the description of the movie, nobody wanted to come. So, we had to tell them we’d give them \$5 each if they showed up.” *[Laughs.]* It’s like, well, that movie’s gonna bomb! And it did. So. But no, but I have no illusions to try to be Mr. Cool Guy. You know. Look, would I like to win an Oscar? That would be great! But am I going to? No. *[Chuckles.]* Maybe one of those lifetime achievement awards where they go like, “Oh, that poor guy. He tried really hard.”

00:35:30	Jesse	Host	Speaking of thirsty Feig projects that I support wholeheartedly, I really enjoyed your transformation from man to lifestyle brand in the last decade or so.
00:35:40	Paul	Guest	<i>[Chuckling.]</i> That’s me. Thank you.
00:35:43	Jesse	Host	From a guy who was just waiting to have enough grey in his hair to always wear a suit on set to giving yourself the gift of carrying a cane.
00:35:52	Paul	Guest	Mm-hm. Walking stick, sir. Walking stick. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:35:54	Jesse	Host	Okay. Thank you. To now <i>[chuckles]</i> cocktail impresario.
00:35:59	Paul	Guest	There you go. There you go. You know, my whole career’s been driven by cocktails, I’ll just tell you that right now.
00:36:07	Jesse	Host	I’ve always said that you were the Walton Goggins of your generation.
00:36:10	Paul	Guest	That’s a huge compliment. <i>[Chuckles.]</i>
00:36:13	Jesse	Host	Yeah, I mean, you know. Certainly, would some say you’re the Cabo Wabo Cantina of your generation? Yeah, sure.
00:36:20	Paul	Guest	<i>[Laughing.]</i> Sure, why not. I’ll take it. It’s still successful.
00:36:21	Jesse	Host	But he’s doing alright for himself.

*[Paul agrees.]*

00:36:28	Paul	Guest	Yeah. So, you have a gin, now. Do you have a favorite gin drink? A martini. A martini is the world’s greatest drink. And a real martini is a gin martini. When a bartender says—when you say oh, I want a martini, and they say, “Vodka or gin?” You go, “A real martini is gin. Please don’t ask me for vodka.” And then they’ll throw you out of the bar for being insufferable. Like I am.
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*[They laugh.]*

00:36:51	Jesse	Host	Jesse, my one superpower is I make the world’s best martini. So, there you go. Paul, I don’t drink, but I—when beverages are described to me—you know, I’ll occasionally taste my wife’s fancy cocktail if we’re
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somewhere that serves fancy cocktails. I always enjoy that. But when liquors are described to me, I have to say gin sounds horrible.

*[Paul agrees.]*

00:37:18 Paul Guest I mean, it really sounds like the worst. When people say the things that it tastes like, I think, "Well, those aren't things I want to eat."  
*[Laughing.]* Exactly! You don't want that anywhere near your mouth. Exactly. Well, I mean, but here's the thing! This is why I created a gin is because I think we've all had really bad experiences with gin in younger days. You know. For me, it was like at 12 years old, we were down in some kid's—you know—parent's basement who had a bar. And it's like, "Gin! I know what that is!" And you're like, "UGH!" And it smells like pine sol and you're just like, "This is terrible!" But when I—you know—was getting into cocktail culture in my 20s and found out that a real martini is a gin martini, I had to like go, "I gotta train myself to like gin." And kind a got used to it, but then I just went on this kind of worldwide search for 20 years to find one that I thought was smoother and didn't have that thing.

00:38:05 Jesse Host And I found ones that I were close, but I was like, "If I can make my own, I know how to do it." And so, that's where my gin came from. And we've won tons of awards with it!  
00:38:08 Paul Guest What are the notes, Paul? Tell me about the notes.

00:38:27 Jesse Host The notes are there's a very light citrus-ness to it, but a little bit of a floral in there, mixed into it. But then it's got a very peppery—you know—aftertaste or whatever. You know, afterburn I guess you would call it. It's very smooth and it's just—I'm more proud of this than I am of *[chuckling]* movies I've made.

Your face immediately lit up, and I don't think it was because you—like, it didn't light up with dollar signs in your eyes.

*[Paul confirms.]*

00:38:38 Paul Guest It lit up with excitement for gin talk.  
*[Chuckles.]* Bring it on, man! 'Cause also, this is not something I put my name on, because Paul Feig putting his name on something doesn't mean anything. You know, this was not a vanity project. This was like five years in the making with Minhas Distillery out of Canada, and they're amazing. And yeah, we just—we designed the bottle, everything. This was like a labor of love. I built this like a movie.

00:38:58 Jesse Host *[Laughs.]* Well, Paul, I'm always so happy to get to talk to you. It's nice to see you, and thanks for all this wonderful work. I'm always happy when one of your movies is out and I get to go see it or I get to see your work on the TV screen. It's always a joy.

00:39:11 Paul Guest Well, thank you, Jesse. You're the best, and I miss—oh, I miss—I miss hanging out! You, me, and Elvis and all that kind of stuff. We gotta do it again, when we're all back in the same city.

00:39:21 Jesse Host Paul Feig, everyone! His two newest TV projects are *Minx* and *Welcome to Flatch*. You can catch them on HBO and Hulu, respectively. Both of them are very charming and funny. If you imbibe and you wanna give Paul's gin a shot, I'm not a drinker, but I bet—because I know Paul—that it is great. It's called Artingstall's Brilliant London Dry Gin.

00:39:49 Music Transition Bright synth with light vocalizations.

00:39:52 Jesse Host That's the end of another episode of *Bullseye*. *Bullseye* is created from the homes me and the staff of Maximum Fun, in and around greater Los Angeles, California. You know, I was driving my son to school in Altadena, just northeast of Los Angeles. Eight o'clock in the morning, driving down one of the main drags in this little town. Guess what I saw? A coyote walking around like it owned the darn street! Southern California, for you.

Our show is produced by speaking into microphones. Our senior producer is Kevin Ferguson. Our producers are Jesus Ambrosio, Valerie Moffat and Richard Robey. I'll tell you what, me and Richard went to see Son of Kemet the other day, at the LodgeRoom, here in Los Angeles. Sons of Kemet, past guests on *Bullseye*. Uh, WOW! That was a great show. If you get a chance to see Sons of Kemet, whoo boy! That was—that was a heater. We get booking help from Mara Davis. Our interstitial music is by Dan Wally, also known as DJW. Our theme song is called "Huddle Formation", written and recorded by The Go! Team. Our thanks to The Go! Team and thanks to their label, Memphis Industries.

*Bullseye* is on YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook. You can find us in any those places. Follow us there; we'll share with you our interviews. I think that's about it. Just remember: all great radio hosts have a signature signoff.

00:41:19 Promo Promo **Speaker:** *Bullseye with Jesse Thorn* is a production of [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org) and is distributed by NPR.

*[Music fades out.]*