

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.
00:00:22	Jesse Thorn	Host	It’s <i>Bullseye</i> . I’m Jesse Thorn. Adam Scott’s my first guest this week. He played the calzone obsessed accountant turned political consultant, Ben Wyatt, on <i>Parks and Recreation</i> . On <i>Party Down</i> , he played the failed actor turned cater waiter, Henry. On <i>Big Little Lies</i> , he played Ed Mackenzie. And in <i>Step Brothers</i> , the ridiculously evil brother, Derek. And if you’re one of the many people watching the sci-fi dramedy <i>Severance</i> , you also know him as that show’s protagonist, Mark. It’s a great show. Adam’s great in it.
			Here’s the premise if you haven’t seen it. <i>Severance</i> is set mostly at a company called Lumon Industries in a department where many of the workers have undergone a procedure called severance. Once they’ve entered Lumon, workers have no memory of their lives outside the office. And when they leave for the day, they don’t remember anything about what happened on the inside. I know what you’re thinking. What could possibly go wrong?
			When the show starts, Adam’s character, Mark, has been working at Lumon for some time. In fact, he just got a promotion. In this scene, he’s training his first ever new recruit, Helly R. Helly is—as you might imagine—a little disoriented.
00:01:39	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:01:40	Clip	Clip	<b>Helly (<i>Severance</i>):</b> So, I’ll never leave here.
			<b>Mark:</b> I mean, you’ll leave at five. Well, actually, they stagger our exits. So, 5:15. But it won’t feel like it, not to this version of you, anyway.
			<b>Helly:</b> Do I have a family?
			<b>Mark:</b> You’ll never know.
			<b>Helly:</b> I have no choice.
			<b>Mark:</b> Well, every time you find yourself here, it’s because you chose to come back.
00:02:07	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:02:08	Jesse	Host	Adam Scott, welcome back to <i>Bullseye</i> . It’s nice to see you.
00:02:10	Adam Scott	Guest	Thank you. Thanks, Jesse. Good to see you, too.
00:02:12	Jesse	Host	It’s been—how’s the last decade been for you? <i>[Chuckles.]</i>
00:02:15	Adam	Guest	It’s been terrific! It’s really gone by fast. It feels like we were <u>just</u> here together.
00:02:22	Jesse	Host	<i>[Laughs.]</i> Congratulations on <i>Severance</i> . It’s a really great show.
00:02:25	Adam	Guest	Thanks, man.

00:02:26 Jesse Host You know, you started your career with plenty of straight drama, but you have spent the last five or ten years doing a lot of comedy—serio-comic things, certainly, but a lot of comedy. Were you concerned at all at how not funny this part is?

*[Adam laughs.]*

And it's not to say it's entirely not funny. There's funny things in the show.

*[Adam agrees.]*

00:03:01 Adam Guest But how deeply, non-jokily you would have to play everything. You know, I was kind of—after *Parks and Rec* ended, I was consciously seeking out something a little different and maybe less in a comedy space. I just wanted to try it again, 'cause that's what I always sort of *[chuckles]* thought of myself as like a dramatic actor's kind of what I always envisioned myself as when I was a little kid, is that I would be like Harrison Ford or Robert De Niro or something like—those were my guys. You know? And—but on the side, I was also deep into *Monty Python* and *Saturday Night Live* and stuff. It's just, for me, I thought I was gonna be like—that was the direction I always saw for myself. But then, you know—and I did, you know, mostly do like guest spots on hour long dramas and I did a lot of background work when I started out on all kinds of things.

But then I kind of did that and then I did this really dramatic HBO show and it just—you know, I could never find footing until—or really nothing really stuck, career-wise, for me. I wasn't getting the momentum that I was looking for. Now, looking back on it, I wasn't getting that at the time—you know—in order to keep yourself afloat in entertainment, I think you always have to be convincing yourself that everything's going great. But now, looking back, I was a little bit—you know, I was hopping from lily pad to lily pad job-wise and just sort of trying to paste something together. And it wasn't until I found comedy that something started to coalesce, career-wise, and something really started coming together, and it was *Step Brothers*. It was just a fluke I got that role.

00:04:49 Sound Effect Transition

Music swells and fades.

00:04:50 Clip Clip

**Dale (*Step Brothers*):** Uh, what?

**Robert:** Dale, don't interrupt the man when he's telling a story.

**Derek:** No, no, no. It's fine, Robert. Um.

**Dale:** I was asking about the story! Fine.

**Tommy:** What's this guy's deal?

**Derek:** *[Sighs.]* I don't know, son. It's okay. *[Sighs.]* I'm sorry, now I forget where my story was going.

**Robert:** Goddamn it, Dale!

**Derek:** Listen, gang. Don't be mad at Dale for ruining the story and possibly the evening. It's totally fine. I have a lot more stories.

**Nancy:** Derek, that you do. That you do!

*[They laugh.]*

00:05:16	Sound Effect	Transition	<b>Derek:</b> I know. Guilty as charged, with the story! Music swells and fades.
00:05:17	Adam	Guest	That sort of kicked in this different direction for me. And like '07 is when that happened. So, then when <i>Parks</i> ended, I was looking to maybe something a little more serious just to kind of get back to it a little bit. And it wasn't easy to do that, because—you know, by that point, you know, I think I was thought of if anything as more of a comedic actor.
00:05:40	Jesse	Host	Yeah, you were adorkable.
00:05:43	Adam	Guest	Adorkable. There you go. Thank you. That's the word that's always on the tip of my tongue. <i>[Inaudible]</i> .

*[Jesse agrees.]*

And so, I auditioned for *Big Little Lies* and got that role, and it was—it was a really—Jean-Marc Vallée directed the first season of that. And that was a great way to kind of get back into more dramatic stuff, 'cause he's a really intense, incredible director. Sadly, passed away just recently. It's awful. But what a terrific—I mean, just a brilliant director and lovely person. Anyway, that was sort of a foray back into more dramatic stuff. And then, yeah, *Severance* was that plus it was sort of a role that I had always wanted to play. It was like when I read it, I thought if I'm able to actually land this, at least for me, it's going to be what I've been earning all of this time, these 20 some odd years in this town—is getting to the point where I get to actually play a role like this.

00:06:53	Jesse	Host	Watching <i>Severance</i> —you know, it has a really intense aesthetic and tone that is—you know, by design, kind of and alienating. And I couldn't help but think about you performing on this show when covid was new and—you know—you were away from home. Like, the idea that you would leave this intense, alienating world—and I'm sure you <i>[chuckles]</i> had, you know, donuts in between takes and everything, but like even just looking at the walls must have been a little intense. And then, come home and instead of like coming home to your family, come home to not being able to leave an apartment or a hotel room or something.
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00:07:51	Adam	Guest	Yeah. That was a big part of it, was the sort of strangeness of the world around us and the atmosphere we brought in with us. It was—we started shooting the day after the presidential election of 2020, and so we were right smack in the middle of pre-vaccine pandemic in New York. And my family's in LA. And so, yeah. I was by myself—I was either by myself in an apartment in a van on the way to the Bronx where we shot the show or on the set. Which, as you said, is a vast <i>[chuckles]</i> kind of alienating atmosphere of its own. And then between takes—you know, the crew all have masks on, and between takes we have to get our masks and our shields back on and either sit there or go to a dressing room where you have to, you know, close the door and then you can take your—so
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you're either by yourself or on camera with the other actors. Other than that, you are all suited up with stuff all over your face.

Just six months before I left for New York, my mom had passed away right before lockdown started. So, it was this sort of intense time for my family and for me. She passed away and we immediately went into lockdown. So, the blow of that happening was really cushioned by my family. You know, like everyone, we went through lockdown together and had family dinners and movie nights and tried to just keep ourselves as busy as possible, and all the positive things that went with that—all the time you get to actually spend with your family, with two kids and my wife. All that stuff was great. But once I landed in New York and like closed the door to that apartment, I was like, "Oh... okay. I haven't really figured this out, yet." I realized in that moment that I hadn't properly grieved yet. I had all this love in my life at home that really helped cushion the blow, like I said. And I guess it was the time I was gonna have to really confront these feelings.

And so, yeah. I was in the apartment or on set, and that's where I ended up doing a lot my grieving and confronting that grief and how to sort of move on and carry on.

00:10:39 Jesse Host  
00:10:41 Adam Guest

Did you get to have a funeral for your mom?  
We did just this past December, finally. You know. We had a few false starts, you know. A lot of our friends and a lot of members of our family are older, and so we wanted to make sure it was safe. And this past December, it was right before omicron really had landed. And I think if we did it a week later, we would've had to cancel. So, we did right at the right time. And as far as I know, we didn't have any infections or anything spread at the gathering. It was outside. It was great. And it was great to finally do it a year and a half—a little more than a year and a half after she passed away. Getting to finally do that. And like a lot of people are going through that, trying to figure out when to—when to have that moment where you can all come together. I think it's—I think it's really important. And it ended up being incredibly important for all of us.

00:11:34 Jesse Host

Yeah, I lost a very beloved aunt right before the pandemic, and what—you know, her service was supposed to be like the week of lockdown, week after, something like that. And you know, we postponed it. And it was like—it was a big thing. She had like asked me to pick all the music for her. And—

00:11:54 Adam Guest  
00:11:55 Jesse Host

Awww. I'm sorry.  
And you know, we just never—we just never did it. And it doesn't occur to you how important it is.

*[Adam agrees.]*

00:12:20 Adam Guest

Or, for that matter, how hard it is to get back up that head of steam to like—the goal of that funeral in a way is to, you know, have an anchor for engaging with the fact that you lost someone. That's right. And to—yeah, like you said, have an anchor, but also to have an anchor together that you can all grab onto and pay tribute together. And I think it's never too late. I found doing it a year and half later ended up being this sort of mixed blessing in that here we are a year and a half later and we're able to all pay tribute to this great person. Whereas if we did it two weeks after she had passed,

here we are a year and a half later, we would've all—it just kind of elongated her time here in a way. Which sounds a little silly, and I'm not maybe properly articulating it, but there was something kind of great about it where we were tipping our hat—kind of makes you realize for those dearly departed in our lives, maybe it's something we should do every year is get together and talk about how great this person is and how much you miss them, because we all have these busy lives and you—you know.

00:13:26 Jesse Host

So, how did it feel to be in that hotel room or, you know, furnished apartment that somebody rented for you and like just your connection to the outside world is, you know, video conferences and food deliveries and a guy who comes with a van to take you to set every day?

00:13:46 Adam Guest

It was weird and it was—you know, and we, you know, like any set in those times, we had a few different shutdowns and I got covid in February of '21 before vaccines and I got hit pretty hard with it and had to stay in the apartment for two weeks or whatever. But we also had some scares onset, so you'd have to lockdown and had to scrap plans for my family to come out for Thanksgiving and—so, there were a couple three-month chunks where I didn't see them in person, and that was—that was hard. But I think I had it a lot easier than a lot of people did during that time, obviously. And it all kind of felt of one with the show, looking back. It was weirdly appropriate for what we were shooting.

00:14:40 Jesse Host

It must have been weird too that like, you know, here you are in showbusiness where you—I mean, this is always true as an actor, but it was certainly true over the last couple of years that like you're working and thank goodness. You know, there's plenty of people who weren't working, especially people who had to do showbusiness things that weren't happening. But like you're working in the most weird, awkward, and difficult circumstances—you know, for an actor that's shooting onset, anyway—that you could possibly be. And you must have just been there like, "Well, here I am in my dream part, and it means that I have to sit alone in this apartment, not see my family for months at a time, and like live with the death of my mother and these creepy blank walls.

00:15:37 Adam Guest

Yeah. Yeah. That's what I kind of kept in mind all along. 'Cause this is literally what I've always wanted. It's the kind of show I would run to as an audience member. It's exactly the kind of thing I've loved watching since I was a kid. It's—and I love doing it. It was so fun. Once we were there on set, it was so exciting and fun. And Ben is the best person to work with, 'cause I—you know, from the time I first—I went straight there from the airport, just 'cause I wanted to see these sets and person that Ben had just been texting me photos of for months. And I'm walking in there and seeing these incredible, beautiful sets that our production designer, Jeremy, designed.

I kind of—right then and there—realized like I'm just going to surrender. Because I've always—I always have this sort of third eye on my performances that's—you know, depending on the director, I always kind of try and keep track of what I'm doing and try and self-edit or keep track of what I've done and what I want to do—just kind of take-wise, like what did I do three takes ago? What did I do—? Try and cover the board and make sure I'm running the gamut here or holding back and not doing this. If I'm worried the director will use

something that I think wouldn't work, trying to resist—there's all sorts of things that you can kind of keep track of in your head that ultimately can injure your performance, particularly if you're somewhat self-conscious or trying to keep an eye on your performance.

And once I walked onto that set and saw how grand and meticulous this all was going to need to be in order to work, and the shots they had in mind—Jessica Lee Gagné, the cinematographer, is really brilliant. I just decided then and there that like there's no one I trust more than Ben and his taste and his work. So, I'm just going to get rid of that third eye or that—whatever you wanna call it and just trust him completely, and just dive in headfirst and not look back. And I'm so glad I did, 'cause he's someone you can trust. And it was a completely different experience just focusing 100% on the task at hand and not trying to self-edit or keep a director's eye on myself and just focusing on one scene at a time, chipping away at the big mountain in front of us.

00:18:37 Jesse Host We'll talk more with Adam Scott after the break. It's *Bullseye*, from [MaximumFun.org](https://www.maximumfun.org) and NPR.

00:18:43 Music Transition Thumpy synth with light vocalizations.

00:18:48 Jesse Host Welcome back to *Bullseye*. I'm Jesse Thorn. If you're just joining us, I'm talking with actor Adam Scott. You've seen him on *Parks and Recreation*, *Big Little Lies*, *Party Down*. He just wrapped up the first season of *Severance*, the brand-new show on Apple TV+. It is a brilliant, dark, sort of science fiction show. It's set in a workplace where many employees have had their memories surgically divided between work and home. My guest, Adam Scott, plays Mark—the protagonist of the show. You can stream *Severance* now on Apple TV+. Let's get back into our conversation.

I watched a clip of you on the television program *Boy Meets World*. And I don't know how old you were in this. Maybe 23 or something.

[Adam affirms.]

00:19:39 Adam Guest And the hair on your—you looked so pretty!  
00:19:42 Jesse Host Did I have a lot of hair? A lot of hair-action?  
00:19:47 Adam Guest I mean, you still have a lot of hair-action at all times. You—you—  
00:19:48 Jesse Host Reams. [Chuckles.]  
You were like—your character was like in the high school in like a—in fact—  
00:19:54 Adam Guest Cool guy!  
00:19:55 Jesse Host Yeah. Well, cool guy, but like the one that I was—like gangster guy. He was—it was a gangster plot where you were running some kind of extortion ring.

[Adam confirms.]

00:20:09 Adam Guest And in fact, I'm gonna play—because I'm talking about it, I'm gonna play a clip from it.  
00:20:10 Jesse Host Oh boy.  
Your character's name was Griff, and was a cool guy bully type. And in this episode, you and another character named Frankie have gotten some contraband. We'll hear about the contraband for Eric Matthews.

00:20:25	Adam	Guest	Was it cocaine? Were we dealing cocaine at the school on <i>Boy Meets World</i> ?
00:20:29	Jesse	Host	No! Mushrooms.
00:20:30	Adam	Guest	Oh, okay. Right. No, that makes sense. I'm sorry.
00:20:32	Jesse	Host	<i>[Chuckling.]</i> Come on. You wouldn't—your character wouldn't do that!
			<i>[Adam agrees.]</i>
			Not on network television! <i>[Chuckles.]</i>
00:20:39	Adam	Guest	It was all shrooms and crank back then. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:20:41	Jesse	Host	Let's take a listen—let's take a listen.
00:20:43	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:20:44	Clip	Clip	<b>Griff (<i>Boy Meets World</i>):</b> Matthews! You looking like college material.
			<b>Eric:</b> Yeah, here's your money.
			<b>Griff:</b> Let's see.
			<b>Frankie:</b> Can I pat him down?
			<b>Griff:</b> Maybe later, Frankie.
			<b>Frankie:</b> <i>[Dejectedly.]</i> Okay.
			<i>[The audience laughs.]</i>
			<b>Griff:</b> I believe you'll find it flawless.
			<b>Eric:</b> Ah, Feeny's stationary.
			<b>Griff:</b> White as snow! Ready for any college recommendation you care to write yourself.
			<b>Frankie:</b> Now can I pat him down?
			<i>[The audience laughs.]</i>
			<b>Griff:</b> Frankie, I'm doing business here.
			<b>Frankie:</b> Fiiine.
00:21:14	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:21:15	Adam	Guest	You can see why people were laughing so much. Those are really good jokes.
00:21:18	Jesse	Host	Those gags are good. There was a good joke at the end of that scene—I don't remember what it was, but I remember thinking, "Oh, that's a good joke! Good job, <i>Boy Meets World</i> ."
00:21:24	Adam	Guest	A couple things. Frankie there is played by Ethan Suplee, the great Ethan Suplee. And Frankie, now, is the name of my daughter. I wonder if that's where that came from. Do you think?
00:21:35	Jesse	Host	I have a child named Frankie!
00:21:37	Adam	Guest	Oh, you do!?
00:21:38	Jesse	Host	Yeah. Named after that character from the show.

00:21:41	Adam	Guest	Is she—that's—it's—if I had a penny for every person who named their child after Ethan Suplee's character in <i>Boy Meets World</i> .
00:21:48	Jesse	Host	<i>[Laughing.]</i> Sure! Anyway, as I was watching that, I was thinking maybe the reason that Adam Scott worked at poverty levels for the first ten years of his career was because he had to age from a nine and a half to an eight and a half, because he was too pretty to be funny at the beginning. <i>[Chuckles.]</i> And so, you had to get into comedy handsome territory.
00:22:13	Adam	Guest	Interesting!
00:22:14	Jesse	Host	That was my theory. Before you could fly—
00:22:15	Adam	Guest	That's certainly a flattering a theory.
00:22:19	Jesse	Host	<i>[Chuckles.]</i> Yeah, well, you're a lot more handsome than I am!
00:22:23	Adam	Guest	I think that—that's not true. I think that—I remember Griffin—'cause it was Griff Hawkins was the name of the character. And I'm pretty sure it's because Ethan Hawke was such a big deal. 'Cause it was right around <i>Reality Bites</i> . That's where Hawkins comes from. Anyway. Um, yeah, I think it was more due to me being terrible at auditioning and super nervous on sets. Which is why it took me many, many years to get any traction whatsoever.
00:22:55	Jesse	Host	Can I play a clip of you in <i>Star Trek: First Contact</i> ?
			<i>[Adam confirms.]</i>
			Did you like get a call from your agent that said, "Do you wanna audition for <i>Star Trek: First Contact</i> ?"
00:23:06	Adam	Guest	Yes. And I did audition for <i>Star Trek: First Contact</i> a much larger role. And I forget what role it was in that movie, but I—
00:23:15	Jesse	Host	Picard.
00:23:16	Adam	Guest	It was— <i>[laughing]</i> it was for Jean-Luc Picard. I didn't get it, so they offered me this, which was like—I remember being done before noon one day, and Jonathan Frakes was directing—who is just a lovely, really fun guy. And I didn't understand anything that I was saying or doing, but it was—it was what it is.
00:23:39	Jesse	Host	Well, in this scene, Worf—the Klingon who's friends with Jean-Luc Picard—he's the captain of a ship called the USS Defiant—a spaceship.
			<i>[Adam confirms.]</i>
			And you're on the bridge there with him. And they're fighting the Borgs.
00:23:57	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:23:58	Clip	Clip	<i>[A cacophony of beeping alerts, sci-fi sound effects, and collision noises.]</i>

**Music:** Dramatic, orchestral music.

**Worf (*Star Trek: First Contact*):** Report!

**Helm Officer:** Main power's offline! We've lost shields and our weapons are gone!

*[A bang. The music swells.]*



**Worf:** Perhaps today is a good day to die! PREPARE FOR RAMMING SPEED!

**Helm Officer:** Sir, there's another starship coming in! It's the Enterprise!

00:24:25	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:24:26	Jesse	Host	I feel like this is why, to me, if I was an actor this would be like my like "this is why I became an actor" moment. And it's not 'cause I love <i>Star Trek</i> . I'm fine with <i>Star Trek</i> , but I'm not a big <i>Star Trek</i> person. But like, it just would be so fun to be like, <i>[yelling]</i> "The shields are at fourrr! Beh! Bah! Ahh!" <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:24:46	Adam	Guest	Yeah, it was. And people are like right off camera like shaking the set and there's smoke and stuff falling, and I had like a cut on my forehead or something. It was pretty cool. And all this like fake sweat on me. I don't—I never understood though, are we fighting the Enterprise? We wouldn't be, right?
00:25:06	Jesse	Host	No! The Enterprise is coming to help you!
00:25:07	Adam	Guest	To save us.
00:25:08	Jesse	Host	I haven't seen <i>Star Trek: First Contact</i> .
00:25:11	Adam	Guest	You never saw it?
00:25:12	Jesse	Host	If this was about <i>Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home</i> , I could give you an exegesis here. But—
00:25:16	Adam	Guest	That's the one William Shatner directed.
00:25:19	Jesse	Host	Uh, I believe—no, I believe that Leonard Nimoy directed it.
00:25:24	Adam	Guest	Leonard Nimoy directed <i>Search for Spock</i> . I think <i>Voyage Home</i> was the Jesus-y one that William Shatner did.
00:25:29	Jesse	Host	No, that's five or six.
00:25:31	Adam	Guest	Oh, it is? Okay.
00:25:32	Jesse	Host	<i>Voyage Home</i> is the one with the whales. It's the San Francisco one.
00:25:35	Adam	Guest	Oh! It is! That's right! That was a huuuge hit.
			<i>[Jesse agrees.]</i>
			I remember that being a big—that was a—yeah, that was right in the middle of like, "Let's save the whales. Let's do this." And it was like right on brand mid-'80s.
00:25:47	Jesse	Host	Sulu goes, "San Francisco. I was born here."
00:25:50	Adam	Guest	He does?
00:25:51	Jesse	Host	Yeah. Tingles up and down my—this San Francisco native spine at age seven, watching that.
00:25:58	Adam	Guest	Santa Cruz right here! So.
00:25:59	Jesse	Host	What a dream.
00:26:00	Adam	Guest	I've gotta see that one again.
00:26:01	Jesse	Host	You're like, "The Monterey Bay Aquarium!?! I live in the Monterey Bay area!"
00:26:06	Adam	Guest	My dad is a marine biologist in Santa Cruz. So, we got to go to the Monterey Bay Aquarium before it opened and like walk around and check it out.
			<i>[Jesse whistles.]</i>
			It was a big deal.
00:26:19	Jesse	Host	Hold hands with an otter.
00:26:21	Adam	Guest	Y-you can't touch the otters, Jesse.

00:26:22 Jesse Host You can't touch the—even if your dad is a marine biologist?  
00:26:24 Adam Guest No, no, no, no, no. You'd contaminate their environment. You can't do that.

00:26:30 Jesse Host Did you know they have favorite rocks?  
00:26:32 Adam Guest Really? Otters?  
00:26:33 Jesse Host Yeah. Otters have favorite rocks to use to open up their clams that they eat.  
00:26:38 Adam Guest Oooh, like ones they carry with them for years?

*[Jesse confirms.]*

00:26:43 Jesse Host That's pretty adorable.  
I don't know about years. I don't wanna get letters from marine biologists like your dad. *[Chuckles.]* Your dad's listening.  
00:26:49 Adam Guest I'll get a call immediately after listening to this interview.  
00:26:53 Jesse Host Listening right now on KUSP.  
00:26:54 Adam Guest That's right, KUSP.  
00:26:56 Jesse Host Writing an angry letter.

*[Adam agrees and they chuckle.]*

00:27:02 Adam Guest All I wanna do, Adam—and this what happened ten years ago—  
00:27:04 Jesse Host *[Interrupting.]* Is have some fun?  
And I have a feeling I'm not the only one. All I wanna do with you on this show is just talk about Santa Cruz stuff, but I am gonna ask you—because you grew up in Santa Cruz, California, south of San Francisco.

*[Adam confirms.]*

00:27:19 Adam Guest And I have great fondness for Santa Cruz, where I went to college and where I—  
00:27:20 Jesse Host Oh, you went to UCSC.  
00:27:22 Adam Guest —started this program.  
00:27:23 Jesse Host Cool.  
Moderately! And, uh—*[chuckles]* but I did hear that you worked at the Santa Cruz beach boardwalk.

*[Adam confirms.]*

00:27:33 Adam Guest What was your job at the Santa Cruz beach boardwalk?  
I worked at Marini's, which is the candy store that's been there since—I don't know—the 1940s, I guess?  
00:27:43 Jesse Host Is it the one that has the taffy pulling machine in the front window?  
00:27:46 Adam Guest I was a—what they call a candy boy.

*[Jesse laughs with delight.]*

00:27:52 Jesse Host I was there and my—  
00:27:54 Adam Guest I'm sorry, who's "they" here?  
00:27:56 Jesse Host You know. The collective.  
00:27:57 Adam Guest Passer's by?  
00:27:59 Jesse Host No, the Marini's uh—  
00:28:00 Adam Guest *[Laughing.]* The city council?  
Illiterati called them the candy boys. And that's what you sort of aspired to be, if you're male and you start working at Marini's in

1986 or whenever I started working there. And I—so, I had to work my way up to candy boy. I started washing dishes. And then—I think I started working there when I was like 12 or 13? And worked there 'til I was like 16. And I did. I made taffy from scratch. Just like, 50 pounds of sugar and corn syrup and then whatever flavoring. And I couldn't eat or smell artificial watermelon flavoring—like watermelon candy or gum—I couldn't—after working there, I couldn't come near it for years.

00:28:46 Jesse Host

You had—look. The literature about Adam Scott's youth in Santa Cruz is limited.

*[Adam chuckles and confirms several times as Jesse continues.]*

However, I identified two top categories of Santa Cruz teen in that literature. One was that you had a Grateful Dead period. And one was that it—I wanna say it was water polo, that you played water polo. Is that the sport? So, these are the two—these are two of the Santa Cruz-iest activities you could have. You have a full-on, bro'd out water sport, and then you have—

00:29:24 Adam Guest

A full-on bro'd out music obsession?

00:29:28 Jesse Host

Yeah, wearing whatever the predecessor to polar fleece is, in both contexts.

00:29:34 Adam Guest

*[Chuckles.]* That's right. You can—you can bring your polar fleece to either activity.

*[Jesse agrees with a laugh.]*

It works equally well. Uh, you know, I believe there was quite a bit of overlap there. I was able to keep both of those balls in the air, so to speak. I was a Dead-head by day and water polo player by other day.

00:29:55 Jesse Host

Yeah. Mid-afternoon.

00:29:57 Adam Guest

Mid-afternoon. Yeah. I was never a very good water polo player. It's really hard. It's really brutal. But to this day, I can—if you put me in a pool, I can paddle with my arms up out of the water for as long as you need me to, 'cause I know the kind of eggbeater trick that they use in water polo. That's about all I took away from it.

00:30:20 Jesse Host

We did a lot of timeline processing when you came into the studio trying to figure out how long ago it was that you had last been on the show. And we were pretty sure that it was to promote *Party Down*, a show that ran a few years on Starz, many years ago, and was critically acclaimed to the extent it was critically noticed. And we were discussing what a great source of guests it was for this show, simply because I don't think anyone else was calling Starz. No one else had found the phone number. So, thank you to Starz in 2010 or whenever that was.

*[Adam agrees.]*

But Adam, you recently filmed a new season of the show alongside almost all of the cast. Where did that fit into your pandemic timeline? Like, when did you fly away to visit ten years previous?

*[Chuckles.]*

00:31:17 Adam Guest

Wait, what?

00:31:18 Jesse Host

Like, when in the last couple of years did you go and shoot this thing like to go like—?

00:31:24	Adam	Guest	Oh! Like time machine back to—yeah. It really was time machine-like for all of us. It was really weird and terrific. We did it January through March this past year, right in the heart of omicron. So, it was tough. We had some starts and stops and almost had to stop altogether, because there were some positive cases here and there and it was just becoming so expensive to start and stop again. And you know, <i>Party Down</i> 's not like this giant show. So, luckily we were able to finish and it's—it was so much fun. And the cast is all there pretty much. And we—Jennifer Garner is a cast member this season. Tyrel Jackson Williams and Zoë Chao are also onboard. It's a really great season. I can't wait for people to see it.
00:32:21	Jesse	Host	Did the lot of you have to like have a big meeting to decide to do this? Because there's a lot of—it's a big cast. Lizzy Caplan is the only main person who didn't return. She's got a lot of other TV commitments.
			<i>[Adam confirms.]</i>
00:32:48	Adam	Guest	Those contracts can be restrictive. But like, <i>[chuckles]</i> you know. Jane Lynch doesn't need this job. And she was on the biggest sitcom in America for five years. She's made in the shade. Yeah, it was really difficult to find a time when everyone could do it. That's why, when Lizzy wasn't available, we ended up going forward, because we weren't sure we were gonna get who we could ever again. 'Cause it was just—just happened to work for this one six-week block. And so, yeah. It was hard. This is a very busy group of people. But yeah, we're really lucky we got everyone for as long as we did. I think we'd all been wanting to do something over the years. I remember early on, there was almost a movie. Like, around 2010, '11. Something like that. Like pretty soon after the show ended.
00:34:12	Jesse	Host	We were actually getting in the realm of getting that going and then it sort of fell apart. And I think in retrospect, that may have been maybe a good thing. I just feel like part of the brilliance of just the idea of <i>Party Down</i> that Rob and Dan and John and Paul came up with in the first place was the one party per episode conceit. And with a movie, you sort of lose that and you have to build—you know—a three act structure and are we gonna go home with the caterers? And that sort of punctures the idea of the show where we're just at a party every episode. So, it's sort of—
00:34:15	Adam	Guest	The show is about a group of cater waiters. Sure. That kind of down on their luck, Hollywood aspirants. Is that a—?
			<i>[Jesse confirms.]</i>
00:34:25	Jesse	Host	Is that a medication? Or is that—yeah. You're absolutely correct.
00:34:28	Adam	Guest	And yeah. So, we're cater waiters. And you go from party to party with us.
00:34:32	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:34:34	Clip	Clip	<i>[The mumble of a crowd in the background.]</i>

**Speaker:** So, do you act?

**Henry:** Do I look familiar?

**Speaker:** You do.

**Henry:** Mm-hm.

**Speaker:** And you smoke parliaments.

**Henry:** Mm. I dabbled. Are you a...?

**Speaker:** A professional waiter? I'm not. No. No. I'm a comedian.

**Henry:** Oh.

**Speaker:** Yeah, I figured that my natural hilariousness would've tipped you off by now.

**Henry:** [*Chuckles weakly.*] Right. Right. Right.

**Speaker:** Wait a—were you the—were you that guy...?

**Henry:** [*Beat.*] Yes, I was.

**Speaker:** You were! You were totally that guy! That is bananas! I remember that!

**Henry:** Yeah.

**Speaker:** I remember you!

**Henry:** Yeeeah!

**Speaker:** What are you doing working here?

**Henry:** Well, do you remember me from anything else?  
Music swells and fades.

So, a movie would've kind of altered that. So, it's great that we ended up just doing another season of the show. I think it serves the show much better than a movie would have.

I have never stopped thinking about this time that Kerri Kenny-Silver, of *The State* and many other wonderful things, was on the show and I was talking to her about when she was on *The State*, which was a wonderful MTV sketch comedy show. And she was like, "Yeah, while *The State* was on—" There were so many of them—there were like 11 members of *The State*, I think, or 12. And MTV paid so poorly that they all had to have jobs while they were making the show.

[*Adam "wow"s several times.*]

And she was a cater waiter. And while *The State* was on TV, she got a job [*chuckling*] catering a Viacom party.

Oh my god.

And she like served canapés to like the head of MTV.

Her bosses.

00:34:49 Clip Clip

00:35:14 Sound Effect Transition

00:35:15 Adam Guest

00:35:29 Jesse Host

00:36:13 Adam Guest

00:36:14 Jesse Host

00:36:18 Adam Guest

00:36:19 Jesse Host And the chairperson of Viacom. And just like, “God, I hope they don’t recognize me as the star of one of their shows.” *[Laughs.]*

00:36:30 Adam Guest I remember I really needed an acting job really, really bad. And I got an audition for something and drove over and got to the waiting room and hadn’t even really focused in on what it was, just kind of worked on the sides—the script pages they had given me. And while in the waiting room, I looked at the title and it was called like *Hellfire* or something. And I—or *Inferno* or something like that. And I realized while I was there that it was—or no, I realized before I went to the audition that it was a *Hellraiser* movie that I would be auditioning for. And so, I went there and sat in the waiting room hoping they wouldn’t recognize me from being in a previous *Hellraiser* movie.

*[Jesse laughs.]*

00:37:31 Jesse Host Just hoping they would hire me without putting it together. I did not get that job.

00:37:31 Jesse Host There’s like that guy that’s in charge of keeping all the *Star Wars* stuff straight.

*[Adam agrees.]*

00:37:38 Adam Guest But for the *Hellraiser* universe.

00:37:38 Adam Guest There’s no one. So. I was hoping there wouldn’t be anyone. Maybe there is.

00:37:43 Jesse Host *[Laughs.]* There’s a guy in the room. He’s like, “Sorry. No.”

00:37:45 Adam Guest “We can’t use you again.”

00:37:47 Jesse Host “You’re right here in the show bible.”

00:37:48 Adam Guest “You were Jacque in *Hellraiser: Bloodline*. We clearly can’t.”

*[They laugh.]*

00:37:56 Jesse Host After a quick break, we’ll wrap up. When we return, will actor Adam Scott let me hold hands with an otter at the Monterey Bay Aquarium? He should. I’ll tell him why. It’s *Bullseye*, from [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org) and NPR.

00:38:11 Promo Clip **Music:** Bouncy, cheerful synth.

**Jesse Thorn:** Hi, I’m Jesse Thorn, America’s radio sweetheart.

**Jordan Morris:** And I’m Jordan Morris, boy detective.

**Jesse:** Our comedy podcast, *Jordan, Jesse, Go!* just celebrated its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

**Jordan:** It was a couple months ago, but we forgot.

**Jesse:** Uuh, yeah. Completely. Our silly show is 15 years old. That makes it old enough to get its learner’s permit!

**Jordan:** And almost old enough to get the talk!

**Jesse:** Wow, I hope you got the talk before then. A lot of things have changed in 15 years. Our show’s not one of them.

**Jordan:** We’re never changing, and you can’t make us!

**Jesse:** *Jordan, Jesse, Go!*, the same forever! At [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org) or wherever you get your podcasts.

00:38:56	Music	Transition	<i>[Music fades out.]</i>
00:39:00	Jesse	Host	Thumpy synth with light vocalizations. It's <i>Bullseye</i> . I'm Jesse Thorn. I'm talking with Adam Scott. He's the star of <i>Severance</i> , <i>Parks and Recreation</i> , and <i>Party Down</i> . Let's get back into our conversation.  Are we gonna get back to you playing pinch-faced jerks? Because that's one of my favorite Adam Scott lanes. This was more an early career lane. <i>Step Brothers</i> I think enabled it.  <i>[Adam agrees several times as Jesse continues.]</i>  I would say probably <i>Torque</i> is its top, which was a kind of <i>Fast and the Furious</i> homage/parody.  00:39:34 Adam Guest Satire? Yeah. 00:39:35 Jesse Host Yeah. <i>[Laughing.]</i> Slash—yeah, it really lives in an uncanny valley between satire and celebration.  00:39:42 Adam Guest There really is no movie quite like <i>Torque</i> , is there? 00:39:45 Jesse Host <i>Torque</i> is really something. And like, it's a motorcycle movie in the spirit of the <i>Fast and the Furious</i> , but a little crazier.  <i>[Adam agrees.]</i>  You know, the <i>Fast and the Furious</i> movies have come to really embrace their craziness over the past decade or so. But pretty bonkers—I remember there was a tortoise that's really important. Like, a tortoise-eye view shot at one point. I might be— 00:40:10 Adam Guest Oh! I think the motorcycles go by in the desert and the tortoise like watches them go by or something? Yeah. 00:40:17 Jesse Host Yeah, that sounds right to me. And you're like—what are you, an FBI agent? Is that right?  <i>[Adam confirms.]</i>  You're great in that movie.  <i>[Adam thanks him.]</i>  <i>[Laughing.]</i> I'm not gonna lie! As much as everybody loves to talk about how great Adam Scott is in <i>Step Brothers</i> —and it's true— <i>Torque</i> , that the under— 00:40:32 Adam Guest You're a <i>Torque</i> guy. 00:40:34 Jesse Host I'm a <i>Torque</i> man all the way. I noticed that my producer pulled a clip from <i>Torque</i> . I did not ask for this, but I'm gonna play it. So, there's a big highway chase with like a stock car—like a NASCAR car and like a Porsche and all the motorcycles, all the different motorcycles. And like any FBI agent, you don't get access to those vehicles. You drive the classic FBI vehicle, which is a hummer.  <i>[Adam agrees.]</i>  You're driving a FBI-issued hummer.

00:41:03	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:41:04	Clip	Clip	<b>Music:</b> High octane, exciting music.  <b>Heather:</b> This is crazy! We can call backup!  <b>McPherson:</b> If you don't like my driving, Heather—  <i>[A loud crash.]</i>  <b>McPherson:</b> Then freaking get out and hitch!  <i>[A motor revs and they both let out blood curdling screams, getting further and further away before a horrible, shattering, crunching, crash.]</i>  <b>McPherson:</b> <i>[Flatly.]</i> Thank god for air bags.
00:41:22	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:41:23	Jesse	Host	Heyyy!
00:41:24	Adam	Guest	Oh, goodness gracious.
00:41:27	Jesse	Host	I kind of think, Adam, you got something you can use in the future. "Don't like my driving? Freaking—"
00:41:33	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	<b>Jesse &amp; Adam:</b> "Get out and hitch."
00:41:35	Adam	Guest	I think, if I'm not mistaken, the "thank god for air bags" was added in ADR because I survived that, and they wanted to justify me surviving that crash.
00:41:48	Jesse	Host	It wasn't—it didn't come from a punch up session? That wasn't like something <i>[inaudible]</i> or Patton Oswalt suggested?
00:41:54	Adam	Guest	Oh man, I don't know.
00:41:57	Jesse	Host	"He should say—but what if he said 'thank god for airbags'? That would be—"
00:42:01	Adam	Guest	"It might be funny if he just said 'thank god for airbags'." Oh boy.
00:42:06	Jesse	Host	"Where do I get my check?" <i>[Laughing.]</i> You say. "Just from the woman at the front—or?"  <i>[They laugh.]</i>  "Cause I did the 'thank god for airbags thing', so my work here is done."  "That's worth something, isn't it?"
00:42:15	Adam	Guest	
00:42:20	Jesse	Host	<i>[Laughs.]</i> But I do think that antagonists—you've been too sweet for too long.  <i>[Adam agrees.]</i>  Even on <i>Severance</i> , where your character outside of the world of the company is pretty dissolute, I think just straight up evil is—a return to straight up evil is something you should be ready for.
00:42:42	Adam	Guest	It's super fun. And I don't know where it comes from. I remember Mike Schur really loved it, and so he wrote this character in <i>The Good Place</i> that's just a demon for me to play. And that was super fun, too. I think I've just always liked—like, I remember—you know, as a kid, <i>Ghostbusters</i> was like my favorite movie for a while. And I just loved William Atherton in that movie. I just thought he was sooo—such a <i>[censored]</i> and <u>so</u> awesome. I don't know, I've just



always thought *[censored]*holes are really, really entertaining and funny.

00:43:24 Jesse Host You get back to Santa Cruz sometimes?

00:43:26 Adam Guest Yeah! I try and get up a couple times a year, at least.

00:43:30 Jesse Host I feel like you gotta be one of the top Santa Cruzians at this point. You and Glenallen Hill.

*[Adam echoes the name.]*

00:43:40 Adam Guest Used to play outfield for the Cubs, and then John Orr. There are—I think there are a few over the—I think Neil Young used to live in the Santa Cruz mountains. That certainly eclipses me by a mile.

00:43:47 Jesse Host What are we talking about? Felton? Ben Lomond?

00:43:50 Adam Guest Yeah, something—he had a—he has a ranch somewhere out there. We'd play at The Catalyst sometimes.

*[Jesse affirms excitedly.]*

00:43:59 Jesse Host Yeah, The Catalyst. That's the dream, right? Get up on that too tall stage?

00:44:02 Adam Guest It is quite tall. I remember seeing Henry Rollins there, and it was like looking—

00:44:05 Jesse Host Very uncomfortable.

00:44:07 Adam Guest I remember one night there were the all-ages shows we would to in high school. And one night, Dinosaur Jr. was playing there, and Nirvana was opening, and that was the one night I was like, "You know what? I'm gonna pass. I'm just gonna stay."

*[Jesse laughs.]*

00:44:24 Jesse Host So, that was my chance. Did you wanna get out of Santa Cruz?

00:44:26 Adam Guest By the time I was 18, yeah.

00:44:29 Jesse Host It's so nice!

00:44:30 Adam Guest It is. It's beautiful. And now, going back, I'm always—I always just never wanna leave when we—when we go back. And my daughter loves it too. And it would be great to spend more time up there. Yeah, it's a beautiful—it's the perfect little town. I love it so much.

00:44:47 Jesse Host But here you are in show business.

00:44:48 Adam Guest I know. In Los Angeles. Which I also really—I love Los Angeles. But—and Santa Cruz is not that far away, but it's far enough where I can't just go up there every—when my mom was sick, I was going up a couple times a week. But with family and everything, because it's—yeah, I think it would be great to go up and, you know, stay for a few weeks at a time. But it's just not practical.

00:45:13 Jesse Host I don't know if your dad's still kicking around.

00:45:15 Adam Guest He is. Yeah. Yeah.

00:45:17 Jesse Host Do you think he could get us into the Monterey Bay Aquarium early?

00:45:20 Adam Guest I bet he could pull some strings.

00:45:21 Jesse Host *[Softly.]* That'd be awesome.

00:45:22 Adam Guest Get us some backstage passes.

00:45:24 Jesse Host Can I—

00:45:25 Adam Guest Just don't touch the otters.

00:45:26 Jesse Host Can I hold hands with an otter?

00:45:27 Adam Guest Jesse, don't touch the otters.  
 00:45:29 Jesse Host They have a little—they got little hands that they use to open their clams with rocks.  
 00:45:33 Adam Guest Yeah, they have opposable thumbs.  
 00:45:35 Jesse Guest You know, they got favorite rocks. So, I'd love to hold hands with an otter.  
 00:45:37 Adam Guest Yeah, I know. I've heard about the rocks. Everyone knows about the rocks. You can't touch them.  
 00:45:43 Jesse Host They're not river otters.  
 00:45:45 Adam Guest No, they're not river—this is Monterey Bay Aquarium, so they're ocean otters. OOs. The double Os.

00:45:56 Jesse Host *[They laugh.]*  
 00:45:58 Adam Guest *[Laughing.]* The legendary double O.  
 00:46:04 Jesse Host The legendary double O.  
 00:46:08 Adam Guest Adam Scott, I sure am grateful to you for coming back and being on *Bullseye*. It's really nice to see you.  
 00:46:11 Jesse Host Likewise. Thanks, Jesse. Thanks for having me.  
 Adam Scott. What a joy he is! The entire first season of *Severance* is streaming right now on Apple TV+. You can watch it there. There's also a new season of *Party Down* on the horizon. We ought to see that later this year.

00:46:25 Music Transition Bright, airy synth with light vocalizations.  
 00:46:28 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—where, today at the metal shop across the street from my house, they were banging on something. We had to wait a little while to start recording. I do not know what they were banging on. You know, they're just doing their jobs.

Our show is produced by speaking into microphones. Our senior producer is Kevin Ferguson. Our producers are Jesus Ambrosio, and Richard Robey. Our production fellow at Maximum Fun is Tabatha Myers. We get booking help from Mara Davis. Our interstitial music is by Dan Wally, also known as DJW. Our theme music by The Go! Team. It's called "Huddle Formation". Thanks to The Go! Team for sharing it with us, along with their label, Memphis Industries.

*Bullseye* is also on YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook. Find us there, follows us. 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.

00:47:27 Promo Promo **Speaker:** *Bullseye with Jesse Thorn* is a production of [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org) and is distributed by NPR.

*[Music fades out.]*