

00:00:00	Music	Transition	Gentle, trilling music with a steady drumbeat plays under the dialogue.
00:00:01	Promo	Promo	Speaker: <i>Bullseye with Jesse Thorn</i> is a production of MaximumFun.org and is distributed by NPR.
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.
00:00:21	Jesse Thorn	Host	It’s <i>Bullseye</i> . I’m Jesse Thorn. Every now and then, we like to ask some of our favorite creators about the things they wish they’d created. We call it I Wish I Made That. We’re literalists here at <i>Bullseye with Jesse Thorn</i> . Or perhaps just not very creative. Anyway. This time, our guest is Guy Branum. Guy is a wonderful comedian. He has appeared on <i>Last Comic Standing</i> . He hosted the TV show <i>Talk Show the Game Show</i> . He wrote and produced for <i>The Mindy Project</i> among many other credits. Most recently, he was featured in the very funny rom com, <i>Bros</i> , which he also helped produce.
			If you haven’t heard of it, it’s a romantic comedy which was cowritten by Billy Eichner and Nick Stoller—Guy actually also contributed some writing as well—about a same sex relationship. It’s one of the first such films to come from a major studio. It was the first major studio picture of any kind to feature an all-LGBTQ principal cast. <i>Bros</i> centers around Bobby, a bookish museum curator played by Eichner, and his relationship with Aaron, who is—well, Aaron is a bro. He plays pickup games in the park. He has a banging bod. Just the whole thing. Guy plays Bobby’s best friend, Henry. It’s a really funny film. It’s available to rent or buy now. If you didn’t catch it in theaters, you should watch it. I really enjoyed it. A ton of laughs in there. Guy gets some of the best ones.
			When we asked Guy Branum about the thing he wishes he’d made, he picked a movie. A relatively recent one. <i>Lady Bird</i> , from 2017. We’ll let Guy take it from here.
00:02:08	Guy Branum	Guest	I’m Guy Branum, and the thing I wish I had made is <i>Lady Bird</i> .
00:02:13	Clip	Clip	Speaker (<i>Lady Bird</i>): Okay, Christine.
			Lady Bird: Lady Bird.
			Speaker: Is that your given name?
			Lady Bird: Yeah.
			Speaker: Why is it in quotes?
			Lady Bird: Well, I gave it to myself. It’s given to me by me.
			Speaker: Okay. Take it away, Lady Bird.
			Music: “Everybody Says Don’t” from the musical <i>Side by Side</i> by Stephen Sondheim played on the piano.

Lady Bird: *[Singing.] Everybody says don't, everybody says don't, everybody says don't. It isn't right. Don't, it isn't right—*

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]

00:02:31 Guy Guest

In case you've never seen it or heard of it, *Lady Bird* is a 2017 feature film directed by and written by Greta Gerwig, about a teenage girl growing up in Sacramento in 2002, who desperately wants to get out of the place that she's from. And then, after a lot of fighting with her mother, gets out of the place where she's from and then has to figure out what's next. It's also really funny, which is not something you see in a respectable Oscars film all the time. It is a beautiful, exciting story about how dumb 18-year-olds are and how powerful they are.

00:03:12 Clip Clip

Lady Bird: I wish I could live through something.

Marion: Aren't you?

Lady Bird: Nope. The only exciting thing about 2002 is that it's a palindrome.

Marion: Okay, fine. Well, yours is the worst life of all, so you win.

Lady Bird: Oh, so now you're mad?

[They speak over each other.]

Marion: No, it's just you're being ridiculous.

Lady Bird: Because I wanted to listen to music?

Marion: Because you have a great life.

Lady Bird: I'm sorry I'm not perfect!

Marion: No one's asking you to be perfect, just considerate would do.

Lady Bird: I don't even wanna go to school in this state anyway. I hate California. I wanna go to the east coast.

Marion: Your dad and I will barely be able to afford in-state tuition.

Lady Bird: There are loans, scholarships.

Marion: Your brother, your very smart brother? He can't even find a job.

Lady Bird: He and Shelly work! They have jobs!

Marion: They bag at the grocery store! That is not a career. And they went to Berkley!

00:03:51 Guy Guest

The first time I saw *Lady Bird*, I was shocked and struck that it was about Sacramento. I'm from about an hour north of Sacramento. I'm from a little farm town called Yuba City that is the prune capital of the world. And when I told people from out of state that I was from

00:04:44	Music	Transition	California, they assumed either—you know, Hollywood and surf boards or wineries and queer activism. And the strange little farm town I was from didn't really make any sense. And when I saw <i>Lady Bird</i> , it was about Sacramento. And it was about Sacramento in so many ways, both in just the physical texture of there are beautiful images of taking overpasses over too many rivers and bypasses. Relaxed acoustic guitar.
00:04:53	Guy	Guest	Growing up, television and film was never a thing that looked like the place that I was from. And just seeing that beauty and the romance that Gerwig brings to the waterfowl and the physical texture of—you know. I'm talking to you about a city about a movie, and I'm talking about rice fields and waterfowl. And that's what's ridiculous about Sacramento. But there's also the way that Gerwig captured a sensibility that suffused my upbringing, but I had never been able to understand or talk about until I read Joan Didion. And of course, <i>Lady Bird</i> opens up with an ice cold, ice pick of a one-liner from Joan Didion. "Anyone who talks of California hedonism has never experienced Christmas in Sacramento."
			<i>[Music ends.]</i>
00:06:11	Clip	Clip	<p>It's a line that's hard to forget, because I've experienced Christmas in Sacramento. This movie doesn't tell you about the cultural space it is in. It shows you the cultural space that it's in. And it uses these tiny, little winks and nods to let you know it understands exactly how emotionally sparse this space can be.</p> <p>Marion: Suspended?! How does this happen? Everything we do is for you. Everything. Do you think I like driving that car around?</p> <p>Lady Bird: No.</p> <p>Marion: Do you?</p> <p>Lady Bird: No.</p> <p>Marion: Do you think I like working double shifts at the psych hospital?</p> <p>Lady Bird: No.</p> <p>Marion: You needed to go to the Catholic school because your brother saw somebody knifed in front of him at the public school. Is that what you want? Larry, what are you doing on the computer?</p> <p>Larry: Nothing.</p> <p>Marion: You think your dad and I don't know how ashamed that you are of us? Your dad knows. Your dad knows why you ask him to drop you off a block away from school every day.</p> <p>Lady Bird: Dad, I didn't mean to—</p> <p>Marion: You make him feel horrible! <u>Horrible!</u> You know that?!</p> <p>Lady Bird: I'm sorry.</p>

Larry: Marion, you didn't have to bring that up.

00:06:54 Guy Guest

Marion: No, Larry, you can't just be the nice guy—she has to know! She has to know how you feel, otherwise she's just gonna think she can say anything at all, and nobody ever gets hurt.

Laurie Metcalf's performance in *Lady Bird* is one of the most beautiful things I've ever experienced. The backstory of the character is laid in very delicately. Her mom was an alcoholic. She is a psychiatric nurse. And she's somebody who fears she doesn't have much to give, who fears that she does not have enough, and is trying to protect her daughter, but only with reproaches and criticisms. How beautifully Gerwig draws two characters with such similar fundamental forces, one of whom is 17 years old and is so flexible, but also directionless, but powerful.

00:07:49 Clip Clip

[The scene is underpinned by the sound of clothes hangers scraping along a metal rack as they browse.]

Marion: You're not going to a funeral.

Lady Bird: Well, I don't know. What says, "Rich people Thanksgiving"?

Marion: I just think it's such a shame that you're spending your last Thanksgiving with a family you've never met instead of us. But I don't know. I guess you want it that way. Are you tired?

Lady Bird: No.

Marion: 'Cause if you're tired, we can sit down.

Lady Bird: I'm not tired.

Marion: Oh, okay, I just couldn't tell, because you were dragging your feet. Well, I just couldn't tell!

Lady Bird: Why didn't you just say, "Pick up your feet."

Marion: I didn't know if you were tired!

Lady Bird: You were being passive aggressive.

Marion: No, I wasn't.

Lady Bird: You are so infuriating.

Marion: Please stop yelling.

Lady Bird: I'm not yelling. *[Suddenly shifting into excitement.]* Oh, it's perfect!

00:08:25 Guy Guest

Marion: *[Also excited.]* Honey? Do you love it?

The way she makes *Lady Bird* so flimsy and powerful at the same time is one of the most beautiful representations of teenage womanhood I've ever seen. And then, she gives you a character who is just as intelligent and just as powerful, but who is so confined by the constraints of the life that she lives in that she

00:09:14	Clip	Clip	<p>cannot imagine thinking outside of it without endangering herself and the people around her. You know. She's a person who thinks the rut she is in is the only way she's surviving. And who am I to tell her she's wrong? It is a titanic battle.</p> <p>Marion: We didn't think we'd be in this house for 25 years. We thought we would've moved someplace better. Whatever we give you, it's never enough. It's <u>never</u> enough!</p> <p>Lady Bird: It is enough!</p> <p>Marion: Do you have any idea what it cost to raise you and how much you're just throwing away every day?!</p> <p>Lady Bird: <i>[With calm fury.]</i> Give me a number.</p> <p>Marion: I don't understand.</p> <p>Lady Bird: You give a number for how much it cost to raise me and I'm gonna get older and make a lot of money and write you a check for what I owe you so that I never have to speak to you again.</p>
00:09:47	Guy	Guest	<p>Marion: <i>[Coldly.]</i> Well, I highly doubt that you will be able to get a job good enough to do that.</p> <p>The first line of the movie is Lady Bird saying, "Do I look like I'm from Sacramento?" And her mom, played by Laurie Metcalf, saying, "You are from Sacramento." And this confluence of dreaming, hoping, and aspiration with a very Sacramento lower middle-class sensibility that aspiration is dangerous, that hope is dangerous, that dreams are dangerous and will destroy you was something that I had felt my entire life but never seen represented. So, I was in San Francisco with my mom and my niece, because of course one of the things about Sacramento is that a movie like <i>Lady Bird</i> doesn't play in Sacramento. It plays for two weeks at the Tower Theater, and no one goes to the Tower Theater except for like college professors and fancy people.</p> <p>But I was in San Francisco for the holidays, and I was supposed to go see whatever the Pixar movie was that year with my mom and my niece. But it was sold out. And I said to my mom, who is a cafeteria lady who always feared my aspirations, and my niece, who was being raised by mom and who was a high school girl full of hope and dreams and fits of irresponsible fancy. And I said, "Can we go see this movie? I want you to see this movie so bad."</p>
00:11:49	Clip	Clip	<p>And we went, and we watched that movie. And both of them loved it from entirely different perspectives than mine. And it helped my family understand each other. And it helped all of us see the world we lived in be reflected in media, and beautifully.</p> <p>Lady Bird: I just... I wish that you liked me.</p> <p>Marion: Of course, I love you.</p> <p>Lady Bird: But do you like me?</p> <p>Marion: <i>[Beat.]</i> I want you to be the very best version of yourself that you can be.</p>

00:12:14	Guy	Guest	<p>Lady Bird: What if this is the best version? So frequently, when people talk to gay guys about movies that they love, they'll assume that they love the movie because there is a supporting character who is gay. This and the <i>Party Girl</i>, it's come up frequently. And I cannot emphasize enough how much I do not identify with Lucas Hedges' wealthy California republican, Irish catholic, kisses-a-boy-in-high-school life or perspective.</p>
00:12:43	Clip	Clip	<p>Danny: Your mom is crazy. I'm scared of her.</p> <p>Lady Bird: She's not crazy, she's just—you know, she has a big heart. She's very warm.</p> <p>Danny: I don't find your mother warm.</p> <p>Lady Bird: You don't?</p> <p>Danny: No. Well, no. She's warm, yeah, but she's also kind of scary.</p> <p>Lady Bird: Well, you can't be scary and warm.</p> <p>Danny: I think you can. Your mom is.</p> <p>Lady Bird: You're gay!</p> <p>Danny: <i>[Beat.]</i> Can you not tell anyone please? I'm so sorry about everything. I'm <u>so</u> ashamed of all of it. It's just—it's going to be bad, and I just need a little bit of time to figure out how I'm going to tell my mom and dad and—<i>[crying]</i>.</p>
00:13:19	Guy	Guest	<p>Lady Bird: <i>[Gently.]</i> Don't worry. I won't tell. That isn't my life. I didn't kiss a boy until I was in law school. In high school, I wasn't a closeted gay boy using drama to try to, you know, find people like me. No, I was Lady Bird. <i>[Chuckles.]</i> My deepest desire wasn't to kiss a boy. It was to get out, because I couldn't imagine a world where kissing a boy could happen in my little, conservative farm town. And that's why Lady Bird's unrelenting focus and just how dumb it is. I mean, that's one of the most beautiful things about this film is that it loves Lady Bird so much, but it finds such comedy and truth in what an idiot she is, in the wrong choices that she makes, that she goes from yelling at Lucas Hedges for cheating on her with a boy to embracing him and assuring him that she will take care of him at a moment's notice.</p> <p>It is such a beautiful tribute to what it means to be a teenager, and there are ways I didn't get to be a teenager the way other people do. I didn't get to have crushes. I didn't get to be rebellious, because I knew any of those things could get in the way of me being able to escape to a place where my skills and my interests might be respected. So, seeing this flamboyant, charming version of something that feels like my life is a wonderful form of wish fulfillment at the same time.</p>
00:14:59	Clip	Clip	<p>Advisor: So, I understand you're not interested in any catholic colleges.</p>

Lady Bird: No way. Sorry, but yes. No way.

Advisor: Then you'll be applying to UCs and state schools.

Lady Bird: Yeah, but also those east coast liberal arts schools. Like Yale, but not Yale because I probably couldn't get in.

Advisor: *[Laughs.]* You definitely couldn't get in. Part of my job is to help you be realistic.

00:15:28 Music Transition
00:15:32 Guy Guest

Lady Bird: Yeah. It seems like everyone's job.

Bright acoustic guitar.

In my opinion, as a respected writer in Los Angeles, the climax of *Lady Bird* is a moment in the car with Timothée Chalamet when he says that they're not gonna go to prom, they're just gonna go to Mike's house and that he doesn't like Dave Matthews Band. And *Lady Bird*, this bendy creature who has been recreating herself in 1000 different ways to try to figure out who she is, who has been recreating herself in the image and imagination of other people, she finds her strength. And she turns to him, and she says that she likes Dave Matthews Band and that she wants to go to prom. And it is such a tiny thing, but in such tiny things are lives forged and are powerful people forged.

00:16:33 Clip Clip

Kyle: Hey, do you guys wanna ditch prom and just go to Mike's instead?

Speaker 1: Yeah, I hate dances.

Speaker 2: Yes.

Lady Bird: Yeah, okay. No prom.

Music: "Crash Into Me" by the Dave Matthews Band.

Kyle: *[Censored]*, I hate this song.

Lady Bird: I love it.

Kyle: Psh.

Lady Bird: I actually wanna go to prom.

Kyle: Okay, yeah. I mean, I don't really wanna do that.

Lady Bird: Can you—can you take me to my friend Julie's house, please?

Kyle: Sure.

Speaker 1: Who's Julie?

Lady Bird: She's my best friend.

Music:

Close to me

And you come

00:17:33	Guy	Guest	<p><i>Crash into me</i></p> <p>When you go into a meeting in Los Angeles, they say, “What’s your story?” And I would tell my story, and then people would tell me that the story of [<i>chuckles</i>] a bald, fat, too cerebral gay guy is not marketable or interesting. And then, go on to something else—usually a story about a sassy lady in the city and say, “Could you write this for us?” And because I needed to pay my rent, and because I wanted to do something as frivolous as entertainment, I’ve done that for most of my life. But I have not often imagined that my world or my life or my story could be the center of something, the center of something that people would care about. And it’s why I am emboldened by things like <i>Bros</i>, the movie that I’m in right now, where Billy Eichner wrote a movie based on his experience and his life. You know, <i>Fire Island</i> is Joel Kim Booster taking his friends and his story and putting them at the center.</p> <p>And Greta Gerwig took the world that I am from, and she showed it to everybody else and herself and to me. And I wish I had been brave enough to do that. I wish I had imagined that it was possible for me to do that. I wish I were capable of melding laugh out loud comedy with truly human emotion to the extent that she is in this film. But more than anything, I’m jealous that she thought she got to do it. You know? I’m jealous of her Lady Bird hubris.</p> <p><i>[Music fades in.]</i></p> <p>Greta Gerwig is yet another Ramona whose Bravery shocks and excites me and challenges me to be braver myself.</p>
00:19:29	Music	Transition	<p>“Crash Into Me” from the album <i>Crash</i> by the Dave Matthews Band.</p> <p><i>For you, for me, come crash Into me Baby, come crash into me</i></p>
00:19:36	Jesse	Host	<p><i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i></p> <p>Guy Branum on the thing he wishes he’d made: Greta Gerwig’s <i>Lady Bird</i>. You can see Guy alongside Billy Eichner in the great new comedy <i>Bros</i>. It’s available to rent or watch pretty much anywhere and is definitely worth the rental. Guy has also recently become the official-unofficial ambassador of California prunes. This is his true passion project! [<i>Laughing.</i>] Is convincing people that prunes aren’t for keeping old people regular; they’re actually an indulgent and sophisticated treat. So, if you go to Guy Branum’s Twitter, you can—among other things—see his arguments on behalf of prunes and a video of him preparing and offering a recipe for a French dessert called a Far Breton.</p>
00:20:27	Music	Transition	<p>Guy Branum, that guy’s a legend! Bright, hopeful music with light vocalizations.</p>
00:20:29	Jesse	Host	<p>That’s the end of another episode of <i>Bullseye</i>. <i>Bullseye</i> is created from the homes of me and the staff of Maximum Fun, in and around greater Los Angeles, California. This week, here at my house, I planted three trees out front. And man, that was a lot of digging—not least when we found a <u>gargantuan</u> rock about six inches under the ground where one of the trees was going. And me and my</p>

neighbor, Ruben—who I found out is about to turn 80, had to get two of his enormous crowbars. I mean, I'm talking about like five-foot long crowbars to jack this thing out of the hole! Woof! It was rough, but we got that tree in there.

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 DJW, also known as Dan Wally. Our theme song is "Huddle Formation", written and recorded by The Go! Team. Thanks to them and their label, Memphis Industries, for letting us use it. If you're in the UK and you happen to be listening to this, The Go! Team are about to hit the road there in the UK. And it's a killer show, so you should go see it.

Bullseye is also on YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook. Find us there. Follow us. We'll share with you all our interviews. And I think that's about it. Just remember: all great radio hosts have a signature signoff.

00:22:01 Promo Promo

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

[Music fades out.]