00:00:00	Music	Transition	Gentle, trilling music with a steady drumbeat plays under the dialogue.
00:00:01	Promo	Promo	**Speaker**: *Bullseye with Jesse Thorn* is a production of MaximumFun.org and is distributed by NPR. *[Music fades out.]*
00:00:13	Music	Transition	"Huddle Formation" from the album *Thunder, Lightning, Strike* 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 *Bullseye*. I'm Jesse Thorn. Kate Beaton is a comics artist. She was last on our show—I mean, something like 15 years ago. At the time, she had this great webcomic, called Hark a Vagrant. I could tell you what it was about if it was about something in particular, but it wasn't exactly. There were a lot of historical figures, like Napoleon or George Washington. And there were jokes about 19th century literature. And there was a lot of Kate in it, personally. In fact, I would say if there was a unifying theme to Hark a Vagrant, it was her voice: light and expressive and very, very funny. Last year, she published something very different: a graphic memoir called *Ducks*. *Ducks* follows Kate's life just after college. She'd graduated with student debt and got a chance to pay it off early. All she had to do was work for a little while in eastern Alberta, mining oil. The oil sands are a world unlike any other. Towns and cities created from scratch to suck resources from the earth. People worked there because they needed a job, bad. For all kinds of reasons. Kate's coworkers, mostly men, were separated from their families, their hometowns, and the normal rules of human behavior. In this dangerous and desperate world, she witnessed sexual harassment and sexual violence and experienced them firsthand. And I will mention here that we are going to talk about that topic some in our conversation. *Ducks* is, indeed, about violence against both people and land. But it's also about real human beings in a lonely, liminal place just trying to find a way through the world. *[Music fades in.]* I think it's a really special book. Let's get into it.
00:02:18	Music	Transition	Looping synth with a steady beat.
00:02:23	Jesse	Host	Kate Beaton, I was about to say welcome back to *Bullseye*, but actually we have looked deep in our memory, and we think that the last time we spoke was when the show was called *The Sound of Young America*. So, welcome to *Bullseye*. It's nice to talk to you again.
00:02:37	Kate Beaton	Guest	Thank you. I'm happy to be on this new show, brand new show of yours.
00:02:43	Jesse	Host	*[Laughs.]* It's the same. Same program I've been doing every week since I was 19.
00:02:49	Kate	Guest	Yeah. *[Chuckling.]* Yes. That's the one.
00:02:54	Jesse	Host	Well, Kate, I'm grateful to have you take the time. I remembered very vividly from our conversation a decade or so ago this origin story scene that is in your book. And I don't think I was expecting to see it in your book, which is largely the story of time that you spent working in the oil sands of Alberta. But it's this moment where

			someone in a museum you're working at notices your drawing—not an art museum—notices your drawing and says, "Oh, that's nice. You should put that on LiveJournal.
00:03:32	Kate	Guest	That's right. That was Emily Horne. She did an online comic with Joe Comeau for a long time, called *A Softer World*. And so, they were well-established. And she saw me drawing and she was like, "You know, this is, uh, this is something you might be interested in." And I was like I don't know how to make a website, *[laughing]* but I'll try!
00:03:51	Jesse	Host	I mean, the two things that I think about when I think about that—and I—it's one of those moments from the show that I do actually think about every once in a while—are one, her sort of explaining to you about internet culture stuff, like being on LiveJournal, which was—you know—the Tumblr and TikTok of its time. *[Kate agrees.]* But also, you telling me basically like, "Yeah, growing up we didn't really have the internet."
00:04:28	Kate	Guest	No! Oh my god, no. *[They laugh.]* Did you?!
00:04:33	Jesse	Host	Yeah! Absolutely! And I'm older than you. I've had it since sixth grade.
00:04:38	Kate	Guest	Oops. Uh. *[Laughs.]* No, we didn't have it. No, we got—we got dialup internet by the time I was in university, I guess. Which is—for all the little babies listening, it's when you could either use the phone or the internet. And by the phone, I mean the landline. But you couldn't use both at the same time. So, either your connection in the house was hooked up to the phone or it was hooked up to the internet, which meant that you couldn't stay on either for too long, 'cause somebody else—like one of your siblings would come up and be like, "Get off of that! I need it." And you only had one computer in the house, and that was it. But it didn't come along until I was in university. So, I was old.
00:05:23	Jesse	Host	The thing that made me think of it, besides that one brief scene in the book, is the extent to which you grew up in a world that was a world unto itself. I mean, like a literal island before internet came into your house.
00:05:42	Kate	Guest	Oh yeah. When you look on the map, Cape Breton is well off to the east and is as far flung and sort of isolated in a lot of ways as it appears. *[Chuckles.]* Because we're very far from like the big, urban centers. And because, at that time—you know, when people like you were getting the internet, we were the last on the list. Nobody was—nobody was rolling up to my house with it. *[Laughs.]* So, it did feel very—it felt very apart in a way that I didn't really appreciate so much at the time, because when you grow up, you just grow up. You don't know—you don't really know yourself in relation to the rest of the world. But I just always assumed that like the kids in the cities had everything and that we were just kicking rocks around where we were. *[Laughs.]* Maybe that was right.
00:06:36	Jesse	Host	One of the things that's funny in the book is that you are out in Alberta, and it's like being an American expat in Paris, and you're going to Shakespeare and Company or whatever. Like, you—

			[chuckles] you can clock anybody by their surname or a certain word they use or don't use.
00:07:02	Kate	Guest	Oh, definitely. Some names would come up and you'd be like, "That person's definitely from Newfoundland." 'Cause I would get like the roster of employees wherever I worked. At the Tool Crib where I worked—which to anyone who doesn't know, the Tool Cribs are places where you are—you're handing out tools and equipment to the tradesmen on the site to keep the work going. So, whatever they need, whatever they anticipate to need, they're ordering it from you. You know, that's part of the job is coming up or whatever. And so, you're keeping the tradesmen equipped. So, I always had sort of a manifest of workers. And you would be looking at the names, and there were some like—I remember seeing one like Wesley Dentey. And I was like, "That person's from Newfoundland or I'll eat my hat." *[Laughs.]* He 100% was. And you know, if you saw like a Mac-somebody, you could pretty much guarantee that they were from Nova Scotia. That kind of thing. And same with the Acadian names. And it was—there was something almost cozy about it, because in a place where you're so far away from community, your own community, you would see these names lumped together and you knew that people were working with members of their own community, largely. Or in groups that were familiar to them, because that's how you get a job. You get a job through somebody that you know. And even though you're out there in this place that is so far from home and so unlike where you're from, if you're from Atlantic Canada. You knew that people were building their own sense of community there in a way. And so, it was always nice to see those names together.
00:08:45	Jesse	Host	You live in Cape Breton now. Did you imagine yourself staying home when you were a teenager?
00:08:52	Kate	Guest	Oh no. That was absolutely not a choice for us. In my teenage years and throughout my youth, we were always surrounded by the message that if you're gonna make a living, it's not gonna be here. You have to leave. You have to go for work somewhere else. You know, there's the door. And it wasn't said with anything but "this is the way that it is". You know? We, in Atlantic Canada and in Cape Breton especially, we have been exporting labor for many generations now, because of the economic conditions here. And so, this has been a part of our cultural fabric for a really long time.
00:09:40	Jesse	Host	I thought it was lovely the way you portrayed your parents' relationship to your education and your educational debt, which was—you know, there's a lot of stories about parents who aren't supportive of their kids or parents who want their kids to become doctors or parents who think their kids should just follow them into the mines. You know. One of those kind of straight-forward patterns. And what I got from your depiction of your parents was that they were supportive of you and they just—they just didn't understand how it worked for you and just weren't really able to be that helpful other than being supportive. *[Chuckles.]* Like—
00:10:28	Kate	Guest	It was a different world from theirs. To them, it seemed like you go, and you get the education and then these things sort of fall into place for you. Like a good job—and they really wanted security, because to get like the medical plan and the pension plan and things like that, like those jobs are so coveted in a place where

			security is scarce. And they're like any parents. They're looking at their kids and being like, "I want the best for them." So, they'd be like, "Oh! Teaching's a good job." *[Chuckles.]* Like, yeah, teaching's a great job if you wanna do it. But when I wanted to do art, they were always extremely supportive. They just, uh—there was no clear path. So, how could they understand what I was about to do? I didn't even know. There's still no—if you wanna make it as an artist, there's no road.
00:11:25	Jesse	Host	You say when people ask you how to make it in comics, you can—you could tell them how to make it in 2008. What do you think you would say to yourself in 2005, when you were—I'm picking that year, I might be wrong about the year, but—*[chuckles]* at the point in your life where your parents were saying, "Aw geez, I don't know. Teaching is a good job." You went to college, and you were thinking, "I gotta get a job. One example of a job is moving to Alberta to work in oil sands." What do you think you would tell yourself with the benefit of experience?
00:12:15	Kate	Guest	That's a hard question to answer. I think it relates to when people ask me if I regret going there. And the answer to that is I can't regret it, because it's been my life. And I haven't lived any other one. And I wouldn't be talking to you today if I didn't go out to the oil sands to pay off that debt, because it did give me the freedom to try something that I wouldn't have been able to try if I had been saddled with debt and also the fear. You know, the economic fear of not being able to make rent and to—this like fear that you're not making the right choice. I would've picked a safer road for myself. I know myself well enough to know that. So, I don't know if I would be able to say anything useful to myself in 2005. It was where I went, and it was where everybody was going. And I mean, sometimes people read the book and they say that like the lure of money is what brought her out there and other people, or like the need to pay off student loans and everything. But I'm also part of this culture, this entire work culture, where we go where the work is. I was going, but everybody in my town was going.
00:13:41	Jesse	Host	We're gonna take a quick break. When we return, more with Kate Beaton. Stay with us. It's *Bullseye*, from MaximumFun.org and NPR.
00:13:50	Music	Transition	Thumpy rock music.
00:13:55	Jesse	Host	Welcome back to *Bullseye*. I'm Jesse Thorn. If you're just joining us, I'm talking with Kate Beaton. She's the author of the award-winning comic series Hark a Vagrant. Her newest effort is a graphic memoir. It's called *Ducks: Two Years in the Oil Sands*. It's about Beaton's time working in oil mining in eastern Alberta, Canada, and about the people she met there. Let's get back into our conversation. What did you think an oil boomtown in Alberta would be like?
00:14:25	Kate	Guest	I had no idea. *[Laughs.]* I honestly had no idea. The only thing that I knew was that when I went there, I wasn't gonna like it. Nobody talked in glowing terms about their work in the oil sands. They talked about it like a necessity. You know, we have to go there. And these are people who are either flying back and forth working shifts like 14 days on, 7 days off, 21 days on, 8 days off. That kind of thing. And they're doing it to provide. And other people, like younger

			people, going out and just sort of disappearing out there, into the west.
00:15:06	Jesse	Host	Did you think about what it would be like to be in a place where there were dozens, maybe 40 or 50 men for every woman?
00:15:16	Kate	Guest	No. And honestly, nobody laid it out for me in those terms. You think it would be obvious. You think it would be sort of an obvious thing. I'd never lived anywhere with that kind of gender disparity before. And so, I went out there, and I was like, "I'm gonna work on site and I'm gonna work. I'm gonna do whatever I gotta do." And then you land onsite, and like there is a massive difference between how many men and women are there. And it was naïve. I know that it was naïve, but I thought—you know, these are my people. These are people like me. They're from out east, and even if they're not from out east, then they're here for the same reason that I am. They're here to make money that they can't make at home. They're here to pay off something, maybe. And I felt like I should be the same. We should be the same. Because when I went to university, the people that I felt different from were the kids with money. You know? The—that's who I felt a world apart from. And going to Fort McMurray to work like everybody else was, I felt like I would just be among people I knew. And then you get there, and you get a real dose of reality.
00:16:31	Jesse	Host	I mean, the premise of your suppositions was partly right, that like these were people that you knew. They were largely there for the same reasons you were. You did share a lot of things with them. But one of the things that is so clear in your book, right away, is that even leaving aside the question of you being a woman and almost all of your—not just coworkers, but once you moved to the camp, almost all of the people with whom you lived and interacted were men. Like, leaving that aside, it's so clear how lonely everyone is and how lonely everyone is in their own way.
00:17:25	Kate	Guest	Yeah. And it's—it being a very kind of hidden place, these camps—this camp life—it happens off the grid. And of course, it affects people. It affects them deeply. And when I was there, there was zero discussion of mental health. And you saw the ramifications of that everywhere. I understand that it's getting a bit better. I couldn't tell you what it was like exactly, now, 'cause I haven't—you know, I don't know. But for anybody out there who is bored and lonely and—or something had gone on in their life back home that was not good. You know, they called it the divorce capital, right? 'Cause that life is hard on people.
00:18:19	Jesse	Host	Were you aware of or understanding of the ways that it affected you, right away?
00:18:29	Kate	Guest	Not right away, no. I think that when you're in the middle of it, you don't register. And for me, being the focus of so much sort of negative attention, that's what your main getting-through-the-day is, at first. But later on, of course, you look at your life and you look at how you've handled things since and how it has sort of like seeped into other facets of your life, and you realize, "Oh, yes, this has had a big effect on me."
00:19:08	Jesse	Host	When you say negative attention, you're talking about harassment—both sexual and sort of I guess standard.
00:19:19	Kate	Guest	*[Laughs.]* Standard. Yeah, the usual. Yeah. Yeah. It—and it wasn't—it was just sort of everywhere because you stuck out so much. And it didn't have to be aggressive. It didn't have to be overt.

			It could be a shade of any color. By that I mean, you know, something very small to something very large. Because people still think that like sexual harassment is like someone like slapping your *[censored]* or something like that. *[Chuckles.]* Like, something extremely like no-no. But just the way that people talked to you, the way they looked at you, the way that they came into your space, the way that they made you scared. And even well-meaning people, the stories that I put in the book—they're all there very purposefully to show, I hope, what it was like. Especially for somebody who's never been that vulnerable person in an environment like that, to be inundated with this kind of thing every day—it wasn't even personal. It was just people acting out their boredom and their isolation and their loneliness, their frustration on you, because you were there. And that's something that you get used to, to the point where you can be inured to the danger around you, as I was, anyway. You know, because what are you gonna do? You're not going to rail against every person that makes you uneasy. And the companies say that they have a zero tolerance policy when it comes to things like sexual harassment, but of course they don't. That's complete garbage. They would have to fire so many people. *[Laughs.]* And you don't want to be the one complaining, because then everyone will know that you're the one that complained, that got somebody fired. And you're just trying to make it through the day like everyone else. You're just trying to work. You don't wanna cause upset. And when I did complain—there was one point in the book where I did complain. I went to my boss and I was like—I was very uncomfortable in this place that I worked at. He immediately was like, "This is a man's world. And you knew that when you came here. And I don't wanna be giving special treatment to anybody." And I wanted to die. I sunk back and I was like I'm so sorry, no I didn't—I'll go back there tomorrow; I will never complain again. I just wasn't ready for it. And you know, I couldn't—I couldn't appease enough. 'Cause I—the idea that like you're looking for special treatment in a place like that is just—it's so beyond humiliating.
00:22:02	Jesse	Host	What I saw really vividly in the book is the extent to which everyone was trapped in this world, and this—the poisonous part of it was so endemic that there was no escape for anyone involved. And because you were and are a woman, you were a locus of the poison. But everyone was poisoned.
00:22:38	Kate	Guest	Everybody was carrying their version of the oil sands around with them, like around their neck, in whatever way. Except for the few people that like got along fine and would listen to this and be like, "This is complete bull*[censored]*." But uh, *[laughs]* like a lot of people, we're not fine. And they were carrying things. And I worked in the tool crib—again, you had a lot of like—because you didn't need a trade there, I worked with a lot of men who were older than me and had lost their jobs in these industries that had collapsed out east. And you saw the weights that they were carrying, and it was hard. You know, they had to leave their families to work. And sometimes the marriages didn't last—this kind of separation. And the stress of all of that.

			And eventually, my college education got me out of the tool crib and into the office. And—because I worked in the office in the second half of the book for the department—the tool department. So, I got to—you know, when it was like minus 50 outside, I was inside—you know—with my little computer. And that was seen as very cushy. And I don't blame any of them for being annoyed by me, because they were twice my age and they had worked all of their lives for what? To go out there—you know. And if they were short with me, if they yelled at me, I don't—I don't harbor a grudge. That kind of thing. Because you could see where they're coming from. It was a difficult place to be.
00:24:27	Jesse	Host	We'll finish up with Kate Beaton after a quick break. She's the author of the beautiful graphic memoir *Ducks*. It's *Bullseye*, from MaximumFun.org and NPR.
00:24:38	Promo	Clip	**Music**: Bright piano. **Speaker 1**: Dear *Reading Glasses*. It's been years since I've been able to read. I missed it so much, but I had no idea where to start. I felt so overwhelmed. But thanks to your show, now I'm back to enjoying books again and feeling like a reader. Love, Sarah. **Speaker 2**: Yeah, that's an email we actually answered. Okay, maybe not that email specifically, but one just like it, because most of our listeners are named Sarah. **Speaker 1**: *[Laughs.]* We're *Reading Glasses* and we're here to solve all your reader problems. We give advice, help you find books you love, and discuss reading without making you feel pressured. **Speaker 2**: No matter what you read or how you read it, we'll help you do it better. *Reading Glasses*, every week on Maximum Fun.
00:25:20	Music	Transition	Thumpy synth with light vocalizations.
00:25:25	Jesse	Host	It's *Bullseye*. I'm Jesse Thorn. My guest is Kate Beaton. She's the author of the new graphic memoir, *Ducks*. I'm gonna bring up sexual assault—for people who are listening and might be sensitive to that. And Kate, you know, if there's anything you don't wanna talk about, let me know. But when you were thinking about writing this book, which is a very different book from your previous work—you know, you're very acclaimed for your very funny comic strip, and you had written two very delightful and silly picture books for children. When you thought about writing this book, how and when did you decide to include in the narrative the times that you were sexually assaulted while you lived there?
00:26:20	Kate	Guest	That was early on. I had the choice to either put it in or not put it in. But if I didn't put it in, then it would be a lie. And it would be missing this extremely damaging part of myself that I've had to carry around from being there. And you know, you don't see a lot of discussion about sexual violence in those places, either. Even though it's not surprising to hear that there is higher instances of it when you have such an imbalance, when you have like a lot of men and very, very few women. And even more to the point, a lot of these—not just in Fort McMurray, but everywhere, a lot of these man camps, they're

			situated next to usually indigenous communities, if they're like mining sites. And we know that indigenous women and girls are far more likely to be the victims of sexual assault in places like that. So, I—you know, I could've saved myself the privacy, I guess. But in order to have an honest account, it had to be there. And a—hopefully a useful one.
00:27:54	Jesse	Host	In a way, it felt—for me, as a reader—like you were drawing not just a record of a thing that had happened, but a drawing of the experience of trauma.
00:28:12	Kate	Guest	Yeah. Yeah. Because it's not really dealt with right away. Right? It happens, and then you go back to work the next day. I mean, everybody's different. Everybody's story's different. But I mean I just—I made the book as an account of those two years, and I did it chronologically, and I just sort of—I laid it out as I remembered it. And that is how I remembered it. I mean, that's part of the story. So, it's in there.
00:28:42	Jesse	Host	The characters in the book that you lived with in the camps are all kinds of dudes and some women, and they have—they have all kinds of behavior. There's a lot of people being awful, but there's by no means exclusively people being awful. And you know, it's probably—
00:29:07	Kate	Guest	Thank you for bringing that up, because some people—they really like to dwell, like completely on the negative things. And I really worked hard to paint a fair picture here. And by fair, I mean honest. And the reality is that you're never gonna have all good or all bad people in one place that has that many people. It's just not the way humanity is. Not there, not anywhere.
00:29:32	Jesse	Host	I mean, it's like—it's probably the warmest book I can imagine about a long series of traumas in a miserable, nightmare world. *[Laughs.]* Um.
00:29:43	Kate	Guest	Well, you know what? I was actually on the phone yesterday with—I called him John Wesley in the book. He's one of the characters. And I had this long chat with him on the phone yesterday, and it was—you know, we were laughing and maybe crying a little bit over some things. It was just like—it was an old friend. And that's the reality of living with people side-by-side for that long. It's—you know. You're going to have a lot of times where you're laughing. You're gonna experience the same kind of hardships, and nobody understands what you've seen up there like somebody else who has been through it, who has been there. And you want people—you know, you don't like the oil industry. You want people in it to all be—like maybe in your mind kind of like *[censored]*. You hear of things like the mental health problems I'm talking about and the sexual violence and stuff like that, and you think, "Oh my god. What a terrible place." And yet, if you've worked there, you've seen all the shades of grey. And that's why the book is so long, 'cause I tried to fit as much as I could in. And we had to cut out so much. There's no one anecdote that sums up working in the oil sands for me. It's complex, and it keeps going. I mean, I'm limited there by 2005 to 2008, when I worked there. But it has kept informing my life since. You know, I have family members who stayed working on there. You know. I keep up with things in the news. I always watch with interest and with concern about the communities surrounding Fort McMurray—

			the indigenous communities, Fort McKay, Fort Chipewyan. They have—as I said in the book or as I show in the book at one point—higher incidences of cancer than other places. And right now, like the government of Alberta and the companies themselves, they're trying really hard to *[chuckles]* deny this.
00:32:00	Jesse	Host	You mention in your Afterward that your sister, Becky—who's a character in the book—died of cancer.
00:32:06	Kate	Guest	She did. If you're asking if I think it was related—is that where you were going?
00:32:13	Jesse	Host	No. In fact, I was gonna say that one of the horrible things about cancer is that—you know—someone could be a lifelong smoker and not get lung cancer, and someone could get lung cancer and die from being a lifelong smoker and you still can only connect them epidemiologically. You know? Like, it's so complicated and so impossible to know.
00:32:39	Kate	Guest	Yes. In my sister's case, it was cervical cancer. And the way that it spread throughout her body so quickly and so—I'll never know if her time in the oil sands effected that or not. There's no answer. There's never gonna be an answer to that. She worked there for longer than I did. She worked there for several years. She was working there until she got diagnosed. And of course, you have to wonder. Right? But I don't know. But, um… I know, anecdotally, that other workers from the oil fields—from the oil sands—have gotten sick with things, and they wonder too. 'Cause you start looking at numbers and things, and you—this is industrial violence. It's different than the kind that we were talking about before. And it's so easy for people to say—especially for a government or a corporation to say that like there's just not enough evidence. And I'm not—I'm not a doctor or a scientist. I'm a cartoonist. But when you have people who were healthy—relatively healthy before, and then a giant oil industry gets dropped on your doorstep and is dumping things into your water. And then, people are getting rare cancers they never had before, I can put two and two together. Can you?
00:34:22	Jesse	Host	I read a piece that you wrote about your sister's illness, and something that felt directly related to the subject of your book to me—and also something that I found very deeply relatable—was how much of the pain and trauma of her illness, both for her and for you, was her being disbelieved and not taken seriously by doctors. And like, I have migraine—very chronic migraine, which is a disease or a condition that effects women much more commonly than men and is often attributed to the same kinds of causes, because it's not—it's not a missing leg. You can't look at it. And it struck me as the same kind of—the same kind of feeling of invalidation as a person comes from you or someone that close to you experiencing that suffering and being told that it's nothing—as the kind of systemic pain of what you dealt with, either the harassment and assault that you dealt with and that—you know, those broader, human tolls of mental illness and such.
00:36:04	Kate	Guest	Yeah. And all that's true. But I also—you know, I grew up with this. I grew up with these narratives. I was in high school when they were starting to clean up the tar ponds and the contaminated water started getting into people's houses and making them sick. And eventually, the government moved people out of those houses in

Whitney Pier. That was the neighborhood. But they never admitted that the reason they were sick was because of the arsenic in their houses that was coming in from the soil, from the steel plant ponds—*[inaudible]* ponds. And that is so disgusting that that happened.

I bring these things up a lot, because they feel so formative for me, but I was also very young when the Westray mine exploded, in Nova Scotia. And it was due to massive corporate and government negligence of people's safety that it happened, and 26 miners died. And it was like the largest mining accident in Canada in—since like the '50s or something. And nobody ever went to jail. The owner of the mine just refused to come and testify. He lived in Ontario, and he just refused to come to the court in Nova Scotia, and he didn't have to. And the premier of the province blamed the workers on the stand for their own deaths. And you're watching these things, and you become very well aware of how this system works against workers and against lives when on the other end is money or political clout. That kind of thing.

'Cause who's gonna shut down something that has so many jobs attached to it? And who's gonna regulate something that has the potential to shut something like that down when so many people's livelihoods depend on it? Who's gonna commit that kind of political suicide? But on the receiving end of all of this stuff is always—you know—the working-class indigenous people. Just the ones who don't have the power to change anything. And even in—when you were talking about like the sexual violence and stuff within the camps and all of that and the mental health crisis that was there, it was in the company's power to do something about it. But they didn't.

00:38:52 Jesse Host A lot of this story is about your attempts to try and represent as much of the full humanity of other people as you can and your attempt to kind of make a record, put on paper your own first-person experience in a way that maybe you couldn't have in another context. You know. It's like having been in a war. Like, you can't really describe it to somebody who hasn't. You know? My dad used to go to rap groups, which was just like vets getting together to just be there with other people who had experienced that experience.

[Kate affirms.]

And like, you wrote this beautiful book that is in the most important publisher of this kind of book and is a notable success, critically and I hope commercially. And so, in some ways—you know, you won the war of telling your own story, but you also like—I can only imagine that every time somebody says to you, "Well, I'm so grateful to have learned about your perspective," or whatever, there's also the other side which is like, "Really? I had to write a 300-page, beautiful graphic novel that took all of my creative efforts over the course of five or seven years or whatever in order for you to like just believe that something important was happening there?

00:40:28 Kate Guest No! No, I don't think that way at all, really. How are people gonna know what they don't know? That they have no access to? Even if you went and you were an investigative journalist and you went to

			Fort McMurray and you were like, “I’m gonna write the—like the biggest exposé on this as I can find.” You’ll never get onsite. You need to pass security to do it. You’re not allowed to take photos. You know? You get fired if you take photos at work. So, it’s not like people have access to this kind of information. And the main problem when I started talking to people, as you are experiencing right now, is that I don’t stop. Because there’s so much that encompasses it. I never—I never feel like I can leave an issue alone, because there’s so many other things that I have to say.
00:41:20	Jesse	Host	Kate, I appreciate you taking this time to talk to me. The book is so beautiful, and I’m so grateful. I’ll tell you, my wife bought the book before a review copy showed up at our office. And I looked over, and I saw she was reading it. And I said, “Aw, Kate Beaton! I know her!” *[They laugh.]*
00:41:41	Kate	Guest	Oh, I love to be hit with the—with the *[inaudible]*. *[Laughs.]*
00:41:48	Jesse	Host	It’s such a beautiful book, and I’m so grateful that it passed through my hands. So, thank you, and thanks for taking all this time with us.
00:41:57	Kate	Guest	Oh my god, thank you so much for having me and for hearing me out.
00:42:01	Jesse	Host	Kate Beaton. Her graphic memoir is called *Ducks*. It was chosen for Barack Obama’s year-end reading list and one *Publishers Weekly*’s 2022 Graphic Novel Critic’s Poll. It’s really something else.
00:42:16	Music	Transition	Relaxed piano.
00:42:20	Jesse	Host	That’s the end of another episode of *Bullseye*. *Bullseye* is created from the homes of me and the staff of Maximum Fun, in and around greater Los Angeles, California. I have been compulsively collecting Victorian doorknobs. And I finally have enough to replace all the doorknobs in my house. Took a lot of flea marketing, folks. But I did it. The show is produced by speaking into microphones. Our senior producer is Kevin Ferguson. Our producers are Jesus Ambrosio and Richard Robey. Our production fellows at Maximum Fun are Tabatha Myers and Bryanna Paz. We get help booking from Mara Davis. Our interstitial music is composed and provided to us by DJW, also known as Dan Wally. Our theme song is by The Go! Team. It’s called “Huddle Formation”. Thanks to them and Memphis Industries, who are their label. *Bullseye* is on social media. On YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook. Find us in any of those places. Follow us. We will share with you our interviews. And I think that’s about it. Just remember: all great radio hosts have a signature signoff.
00:43:23	Promo	Promo	**Speaker**: *Bullseye with Jesse Thorn* is a production of MaximumFun.org and is distributed by NPR. *[Music fades out.]*