

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.
00:00:12	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.
00:00:19	Jesse Thorn	Host	It’s <i>Bullseye</i> . I’m Jesse Thorn. First up this week, we’re welcoming Elijah Wood back to the show. Elijah is, of course, the star of the <i>Lord of the Rings</i> series, a former child actor who appeared in <i>Back to the Future Part 2</i> , <i>The Ice Storm</i> , and <i>Deep Impact</i> . He’s also a record collector, a former indie rock label owner, a TV show host, horror movie producer, and—at least in my experience—a very nice guy. Lately, you can catch him on <i>Yellowjackets</i> . That’s in the heart of its second season right now, on Showtime.
			<p>If you haven’t watched <i>Yellowjackets</i>, it’s a funny and at times harrowing show. It follows two timelines. The first is in the 1990s, when a high school girls’ soccer team crashes in the wilderness. Those who made it out of the crash still alive aren’t out of the woods yet, though—so to speak. They encounter all the challenges you’d expect them to find in that kind of situation, plus also cannibalism and maybe ghosts? The other timeline is set in the present day. It follows the rescued survivors of the crash decades later. That includes characters played by stars like Juliette Lewis, Melanie Lynskey, and Christina Ricci. The <i>Yellowjackets</i>, as they are called, have returned to a more or less ordinary life, but they’re still haunted by the events around the crash. Sometimes literally. Again, ghosts?</p> <p>My guest, Elijah Wood, plays Walter—a new character this season. Walter is, frankly, a weirdo. He’s obsessed with crime. He spends a lot of time on true crime message boards, where he argues about who was behind the latest murder du jour. Sometimes, he takes things a little further than that. Or a lot further than that. That’s how Walter meets Misty, played by Christina Ricci. Misty survived the crash and, like Walter, considers herself a citizen detective who will do just about anything to get to the bottom of a mystery. If you think Misty and Walter sound like a match made in heaven, well, Walter might agree. Misty, eh, not so much.</p> <p>In this scene from <i>Yellowjackets</i>, Walter and Misty are investigating the disappearance of another character, and they have a long drive ahead. So, Walter tries to break the ice with a game.</p>
00:02:47	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:02:48	Clip	Clip	Walter (<i>Yellowjackets</i>): Two truths and a lie? It could be a good way for us to get to know each other better. <i>[Beat.]</i> Alright! Uh, I’ll go first. I once owned a small business where we sold artisanal, small-batch goat cheese. And by “we”, I mean myself and a goat, named Billie. Two, there’s a non-zero chance that Barry Manilow was my biological father. And three, I have \$175,000 worth of stock in Taco Bell, and I have never been to a single one. Beans upset my stomach. <i>[Beat.]</i> I can tell you’re thinking hard!

Misty: I'm not.

00:03:31	Sound Effect	Transition	Walter: Okay. Alright. I guess you'll just never know, then. Music swells and fades.
00:03:32	Jesse	Host	<i>[They chuckle.]</i>
00:03:34	Elijah Wood	Guest	Elijah Wood, welcome to <i>Bullseye!</i> Thanks!
00:03:35	Jesse	Host	It's nice to get to talk to you.
00:03:36	Elijah	Guest	Nice to get to talk to you as well.
00:03:38	Jesse	Host	Christina Ricci was on the show last year or something. I didn't do the interview; my colleague, who's a <i>Yellowjackets</i> nut did. And all the talk of all the non-her people was like, "What kind of lady is Christina Ricci? We've known her so long on screen, but like truly don't know who she is as a human being." She came in here, and everybody was like, "Oh! We're all in love with Christina Ricci now! She's the greatest lady ever."
00:04:08	Elijah	Guest	<i>[Cackles with delight.]</i> She's awesome.
00:04:10	Jesse	Host	Had you ever met her or worked with her before?
00:04:12	Elijah	Guest	We worked together when I was 15? Yeah. 15 or 16. A movie called <i>The Ice Storm</i> . I think she's just—
00:04:21	Jesse	Host	Oh, of course! Yeah!
00:04:22	Elijah	Guest	Just a year older than me or just shy of a year older than me. And so, we were—yeah, we were in that film. There was a scene with us at the bottom of a pool, making out.
00:04:33	Jesse	Host	I have a question. So, when you are—in this case, you're an adolescent or supposed adolescent actor, what is your relationship with people your age who are working in the same thing? Because it feels like it would be weirdly concentrated by the fact that you were in a sea of adults. Or alienated!
00:04:53	Elijah	Guest	I'd say it's very—that's a very good question. I think, in terms of is there—was there a sense of community amongst fellow actors that are my age?
00:05:01	Jesse	Host	Yeah! Or like what is it—I mean, what about when you're in—you know, when you're in a movie with three kids and an adult cast or two kids and an adult cast or two 13-year-olds and an adult cast, and the two of you are like homeschooled or—you know—go to actor high school and—
			<i>[Elijah giggles.]</i>
00:05:25	Elijah	Guest	There's an actor high school in Los Angeles, right? I think there is. I did a correspondent school through Ojai that was sort of like that. Yeah.
00:05:30	Jesse	Host	And then, everyone else is a grownup, and also you don't necessarily have a big social group that's waiting for you outside the set. You know what I mean?
00:05:40	Elijah	Guest	Yeah. There would be a lot of bonding on set amongst, you know, people of the same age. And that happened a lot, where I would be one of a couple or one of many, depending on the film, of young people. And you do kind of—yeah, you stick together 'cause you're amongst your peers. And for me, you know, I didn't—I wasn't then going—I was away from home a lot. So, those environments, and

the adults included, became my peer group. They were my friends and my sort of social life was largely on film sets. And that would either be with, you know, other actors my age—which happened a lot when I was young up until about my mid-teens.

And then, it was also the adults as well, because—you know—I was working as an adult, so there would be some degree of comradery and connection amongst that sort of familial experience for whatever—however many months at a time you're together.

00:06:39 Jesse Host I mean, one of the weird things to me about it is I think acting in any context is a weirdly intimate bond. Like, when you're in a cast with somebody or I'm sure working on a film or television production but especially like a film production where the shoot is relatively short, like it is an immediate and intense bond, 'cause everybody's working so hard. Everybody's gotta work together, and everybody's showing their feelings, and everybody's a drama kid.

[They laugh.]

00:07:09 Elijah Guest And everyone's away from home, typically. Unless you're shooting—you know, if everyone lives in LA and you're making a movie in LA, which is rarer and rarer now, you by and large are away from your home. So, that's also a binding element. You know? You are—your only sense of community is the crew and the cast. So, it's this—it's a series of bubbles that you kind of jump into, and it's this microcosm of life. And you are your support system. You know, yes, there's vulnerability shared as a result of the work that is just a nature of doing it. And it connects you to people in a way that is so profound, but also so finite and for such a short amount of time. *[Chuckles.]*

You know? Something like *Lord of the Rings* is an outlier because it's—it was over the course of four years, which is so not normal. So, those bonds, those connections are sort of long-lasting and for life in a way that kind of is imbedded in our DNA that can't be replicated by anything else. Which isn't to say that those other film and TV experiences aren't hyper-connective and intense, equally. It's just they tend to be for shorter periods of time.

00:08:24 Jesse Host I was—I had a show at San Francisco Sketch Fest in January, and—

00:08:28 Elijah Guest Oh, cool!

00:08:29 Jesse Host My freshman year college roommate lives in the Bay Area, and he came and took some pictures at the show, 'cause he's a photographer. And I probably hadn't seen him in ten years. I guess? And it was like a moment. Like, it was—there was no turning it on. I was just—gave him a hug and was so happy to be there with him.

00:08:50 Elijah Guest And you were back. Yeah.

00:08:51 Jesse Host Yeah. For sure. And like, you had that weird college experience in New Zealand, making the three biggest movies of all time! *[Chuckles.]* Three of the top 25 or whatever.

[Elijah agrees.]

Point remains the same. *[Laughs.]*

00:09:05 Elijah Guest Yeah. Yeah, it's wild! And I completely relate to that feeling too, of years can go by and I won't have seen Ian McKellen or Vigo or any number of crew and cast.

00:09:17	Jesse	Host	Gollum.
00:09:19	Elijah	Guest	<i>[Laughs.]</i> Or yeah—or Andy Serkis, and it'll be—it's instant. It's like muscle memory. We're right back where we left it off, which is such an extraordinary thing that we have that and share that. I mean, that's—to your point, it's deep bonds and friendship that are kind of a—they become a part of your DNA that you can spend, you know, ten years of your life away from your college roommate, see that person, and it's—you're right back to where you were. Which is such a lovely thing.
00:09:46	Jesse	Host	Christina Ricci, who you kind of run parallel with or together with in <i>Yellowjackets</i> —so great on the show. Like, one of the interesting things about the show is that there is the meta text that this show is about adults reckoning with the traumas and intense, weird bonding experiences of their childhood and reckoning with the public's relationship with those things. And like, <i>[chuckles]</i> you signed up to join her in that. You know? Fellow child star turned successful adult actor. Like, the two of you signed up for the project of “let's excavate”.
00:10:25	Elijah	Guest	That's <u>so</u> funny! I hadn't even thought of it that way, but you're absolutely right.
00:10:29	Jesse	Host	Well, how about this? Did you—have you ever though about the meta text of you signing up for this show and your first part was in the Paula Abdul video where you played a baby executive? That's also playing with a lot of the same themes!
			<i>[Elijah laughs.]</i>
00:10:48	Elijah	Guest	That's a lot of the same themes! Working there with David Fincher, I believe. Yes, it was with David Fincher, yeah. Before he was making films, yeah.
			<i>[They laugh.]</i>
00:10:56	Jesse	Host	I just keep—I keep repeating myself, basically. Had it really not occurred to you that that show is really about like people who were public figures as kids dealing with the consequences of it as adults? I mean, obviously it's a really—you know—juicy show.
			<i>[Elijah agrees.]</i>
00:11:15	Elijah	Guest	Absurdly juicy, like packed full. But like— Unbelievably so, yeah.
00:11:16	Jesse	Host	It's not like a super straight, dry drama. But like—but it really hadn't occurred to you that those themes were going on?
00:11:25	Elijah	Guest	It hadn't. I mean, the idea that it's adults unpacking the traumas of the past—of their youth, that was present, but that idea is really interesting. But yeah, I mean, it's there! It totally is.
00:11:37	Jesse	Host	I mean, it's important—it's so consequential that those things were public. Right? Like, it's not just that they went through this horrible, traumatic experience together, but that they have experienced it their whole lives as part of who everyone sees when they look at them.
00:11:52	Elijah	Guest	That's right. That's really interesting.
00:11:55	Jesse	Host	What do you think of it now?

[Elijah wheezes into laughter.]

00:11:58 Elijah Guest

Now that it's—I've offered it to you. It's more meta than I'd given it credit for, clearly. Especially—I mean, you know, there is something of Christina and I working together too, in that context to your point, where we have shared history. We also have a similar past, in regards to work in this industry. Both started—I think she may have been younger than I was when she started. I was eight. So, yeah, I mean for us to sort of work together again in our early 40s on a show that is sort of about the adults reflecting on the choices they made in the past is really interesting! *[Laughs.]* And it just hadn't occurred to me. The obvious sort of like connective tissue of the two of us and our lives, that was not lost to me, of course.

But it's also just—it's really incredible, 'cause I'm not used to working with former—not former, uh—someone who had come up as a child. And Christina is the first that I've worked with in quite a while. And it's really evident that she has had that experience, partially because—and I've used this sort of verbiage to describe what it's like working with her, but it's like working with someone who has like a finely tuned instrument. She is so good at what she does, and it is clearly through years of experience that she really knows who her character is and how best to achieve what she needs to achieve, more than anybody else does. And it's thrilling to watch, and it's really fun to work opposite. It makes the work easy and fun.

And that goes back to, I think, her experience of having done this since she was a child. It's like it's old pro stuff. You know? She just has been doing this for so long that her ability to access all of the tools in her toolbelt to be able to perform and bring a character to life in a way that is thrilling and true and all the things you want it to be. It's just there. It's so present for her.

00:14:12 Jesse Host

We've got more from my conversation with Elijah Wood still to come. Stay with us. It's *Bullseye*, from MaximumFun.org and NPR.

Welcome back to *Bullseye*. I'm Jesse Thorn. If you're just joining us, I'm talking with Elijah Wood. He's the star of movies like *Lord of the Rings*, *The Ice Storm*, and *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*. These days, you can catch him on the hit Showtime series *Yellowjackets*. He plays a true crime nut, called Walter. Let's get back into our conversation.

In my memory, before I listened to an old interview that we did 10 or 12 years ago, I had again—in my mind—kind of corrected your age when you started doing the *Lord of the Rings* to being like 24, which is sort of what it seemed like to me.

[Elijah laughs and agrees.]

00:15:04 Elijah Guest

And I couldn't believe, again, that you were 18 at the time and like how perfectly it mirrored your—

00:15:05 Jesse Host

Isn't it wild?
—kind of college years' experience.

[Elijah agrees.]

00:15:36 Elijah Guest It's totally bananas. After you did that, what did you like want? Had you decided at that point what you wanted? 'Cause you'd been in showbusiness a long time by then. And you had been the star of a movie that was one of the most successful movies. I don't think anyone was expecting you to be George Clooney, but like you had more agency than most actors do. So, like what did you decide? Well, right after *Lord of the Rings*—and I think just specifically because I was so exhausted from having made those movies over the course of 16 months. I knew that I wanted to work on something, but something really small and really different. And then, after that I truly didn't—there was no strategy. I just wanted to continue to work. The careers that I love are those that an actor is known more for the quality of their work and the fact that they're just—and their longevity, rather than it being great, big successes along the way. I don't know if that makes sense, but I think just I kind of wanted to quietly keep working and be allowed to continue to work.

00:16:59 Jesse Host That was the goal. And it wasn't any grander than that. And I wanted the flexibility to be able to work on all kinds of things. And the hope was that there would be—I would be able to express different aspects of who I am overtime that would carve out enough of a wide path for me to do that. And I think—I can articulate that better now than I would've then, but that was it I think. Another thing that you and Christina Ricci share—and forgive me for the impudence of this—but is like big, beautiful, anime eyes.

[Elijah giggles.]

00:17:13 Elijah Guest And that was like—that was something that I definitely remembered from 12 years ago. I was like, "I remember—" She has—she's got anime eyes.
00:17:15 Jesse Host "I remember getting lost in Elijah Wood's beautiful eyes."

[Elijah "aw"s and they laugh.]

But like, when you're a screen actor especially, like your appearance defines the work you can do 30% at least. Right?

[Elijah agrees.]

00:18:10 Elijah Guest And one of the things that I thought—that I have long thought is neat about your career is your big, beautiful eyes make you uniquely suited to play dreamers who are gazing in wonder or psychopaths and who are gazing with a psychopathic gaze. And I'm like, "I don't know how he feels about dreamers who are gazing in wonder. He seems like an earnest guy. He probably enjoys that." But like, psychopaths—I'm like, "As far as I can tell, he thinks that kind of stuff is cool and like he produces those kind of movies where there are psychopaths in them. And like probably he thinks that's pretty fun that he gets to do that." Is that true? Yeah! Yeeeah! Absolutely! Playing characters that are extremely different from yourself—look, I'm also a genre and horror fan. So.

00:18:19	Jesse	Host	So, you're not actually a psychopath.
00:18:20	Elijah	Guest	I'm not a psychopath, no.
00:18:21	Jesse	Host	Okay. Confirmed!
00:18:22	Elijah	Guest	I've never taken the psychopath test, but I suspect I would fail. Fail meaning that I would not be a psychopath.
00:18:28	Jesse	Host	To be fair, that's what a psychopath would say.
00:18:29	Elijah	Guest	That's—huh, fair enough. That's true. But no, look, I'm attracted to genre. I'm a big genre fan. Those are movies that I love. I certainly engage in producing some of those films. But yeah, you know, characters that are psychopathic or are just—have dark tendencies are just interesting to play, because it is just so far away from who you are that it's fun to embody that. So, yeah, it's enjoyable, I guess.
00:18:58	Jesse	Host	Is an intense horror movie a type of movie that you have always liked? Like was that something that you discovered when you were 12, like many people who are into that?
00:19:08	Elijah	Guest	I discovered it when I was— <i>[laughs]</i> I discovered it when I was five or six. My brother is seven years older than me, so he was already renting horror films with his friends when we were living in Iowa, before we moved to California. And he would—you know—rent these movies and he let me watch them if I just promised I wouldn't tell our parents. And so—
00:19:37	Jesse	Host	Were you—? So, I've learned from my own kids there are kids who are terrified of anything. One of my kids is scared of movies that have sad parts or just loud parts. One of my kids loves horror movies and is not scared by them at all, just think they're cool and fun and interesting.
			<i>[Elijah "wow"s.]</i>
			Which is—my wife and I are terrified of horror movies, so we've really had to like—we gotta kind of be there. You know? <i>[Chuckles.]</i> Just to make sure everything's cool.
00:20:11	Elijah	Guest	<i>[Chuckling.]</i> Yeah, of course!
00:20:12	Jesse	Host	So, what kind of relationship did you have with them?
00:20:16	Elijah	Guest	I loved them immediately. You know. I have memories of—really specific memories of having seen <i>Gremlins</i> and being worried that there were gremlins under my bed. Really vivid memory. Or when they rebroadcast—not the actual premier of Michael Jackson's "Thriller", but when they rebroadcast it later in the '80s, 'cause I think the premier was '85 or earlier and I was too young for that. But they rebroadcast it on MTV, and I ran to the basement 'cause I was too afraid of that.
00:20:48	Jesse	Host	<i>Return to Oz</i> would be a common, I think.
00:20:51	Elijah	Guest	Oh, <i>Return to Oz</i> ! Sure. I thought that was cool but also creepy.
00:20:54	Jesse	Host	I had so many nightmares about <i>Return to Oz</i> .
00:20:56	Elijah	Guest	I can see that. I can see that. But no, I—a film that I saw with my brother that was a direct to VHS horror movie that he rented and watched with his friends, called <i>Truth or Dare: A Critical Madness</i> , remains a favorite film of mine. So, like it didn't scar me. I loved it. It never crossed into my psyche into a way that gave me nightmares or made me uncomfortable. If anything, there was a sort of rush associated with it. I mean, obviously the initial feeling was like this is taboo; I'm not supposed to watch these things, so I <u>need</u> —this is <u>amazing</u> ! And feeling so excited about being able to watch something that you're not supposed to.

And then, that gives way to—over the course of many years—watching more and more of them and recognizing, oh! There's an art here. There's more to this than just gore and fun. There's real expression and filmmaking present within the context of the genre. And then, I became a real horror fan. You know.

00:21:54 Jesse Host

Do you love most, uh, fancy horror movies? Or—?

00:22:00 Elijah Guest

[Wheezing a laugh.] Fancy horror! What is fancy horror?

00:22:03 Jesse Host

I mean, we're talking—

00:22:06 Elijah Guest

Are you talking about the latest sort of renaissance of horror films?

00:22:09 Jesse Host

Yeah, I'm talking about like a horror movie that like A24 puts out or whatever. You know what I mean?

[Elijah confirms.]

Where there's a lot of quiet parts and maybe a grand metaphor, etc., maybe a—like a—either a famous actor or like a really compelling cult actor or something. Or do you like a VHS tape from the truck stop.

00:22:35 Elijah Guest

I love them all. I love them all. I think my favorite tend to be—my favorite kinds of horror movies tend to be where they take their subject matter seriously, are not resting simply on their exploitable elements. I love those movies too. They're fun. They're rides and they're messy and gory and they're a blast. But my favorite movies—you know, I think a lot of what we're experiencing now and certainly over the last probably ten years, 'cause this has really been kind of growing over the course of ten years—is really more like a return to the '70s than it is anything novel. It's taking the subject matter seriously. Great actors are playing these characters, which isn't also by the way a slight on anyone who has been working in the genre for ages, because they're all great and it's hard to work in horror. And I think it takes certain skills to pull that off.

But we are in this phase where actors who are notable for not being in horror being cast in horror. But that was true in the 1970s as well. You know, *Rosemary's Baby*, *The Thing*, um, *The Exorcist*. Those were all—those were all made by major filmmakers who cast notable actors not known for doing genre movies in their films. And they're notable for having taken the subject matter seriously and not just simply resting on the exploitable elements, but rather—and I think in all cases—you could remove the genre elements and still have a compelling story underneath it all. 'Cause they're about something. You know? That's where we are now, which feels exciting. I think, look, any time that anybody takes genre seriously is a good thing, 'cause more often than not, it tends to get relegated to this kind of B place when there's really exciting, interesting art being made. You know?

00:24:32 Jesse Host

As a producer of a lot of genre movies, and especially like horror movies and, as an actor who's acted in a lot of horror movies and—you know—slasher movies, you have—you have a lot of responsibility to engage with the problematic aspects of those movies. How, you know—what the relationship of the audience is to a serial killer in one of those movies, whether—you know, how female characters are portrayed and—you know—to what extent their perspective is represented in those movies.

00:25:46	Elijah	Guest	<p>It occurred to me that those are not that wildly dissimilar to the stuff that <i>Yellowjackets</i> plays with about the sort of relationship between the salaciousness of a juicy story, of violence, and what its real effects are and what it actually means to us, the people who aren't directly involved in it.</p> <p>Right. And ultimately, the consequences for that violence in a real way. It is the element of genre and of horror and action too, where there is this sort of love of exploitation for exploitation's sake, but the consequences of that—both to the characters involved, specifically women—tends to be pretty unsavory. And what is it really saying? What's lovely, I think, about what they're doing with <i>Yellowjackets</i>, why I really responded to the first season too is that it does give you the tastiness—right?—of playing with those genre tropes. The kind of cult-esque adjacent ideas, supernatural adjacent ideas that are sort of gauzy and like you're not quite sure what is actually happening. But it's also about choices that these young people are making, in some cases violent choices. But it's also about the repercussions of what those choices are later in a really real-world context that—to your point, it's not—there is like—it's able to sort of enjoy the juiciness of the genre whilst also having the consequences present for everybody involved.</p> <p>And the show—the show is about dealing with the past and dealing with kind of hyperviolence, both having been inflicted on them but also afflicting it onto others and how that carries on and how that manifests. And that's explored even more in season two, the kind of percolations of like what lies underneath these characters as adults that came from their past from what they all experienced together and how that's starting to percolate up and bubble out of the kind of confines of rigidity that they've tried to give themselves and to fit in. You know? They're all sort of trying to fit into life, some better than others. <i>[Laughs.]</i> You know, Melanie Lynskey's character and her family are such a great example of—like, it's a nuclear family. It's like a—you know, a wife and a husband and their daughter, and everything's fine and like came from trauma, but it's cool. We got this. But like they don't! At all! And it's kind of—you know, coming apart at the seams even more in this season, and I love that.</p> <p>But all of them are reflections of the past in different ways. You know? But I think there's also a kind of core mystery to this show too, which is what really did happen? You know? A lot of what was expressed in season one is like you get a sense of what they went through, but they talk about it more than you actually see. There's so much that's not revealed to you about the past. What really did they do? Because, man, it has had such a profound impact on who they are and where they're going, and this season tends to unpack that a little bit more and gets into the sort of juiciness of that even more. But again, the consequences are just as intense for what is expressed.</p>
00:28:57	Jesse	Host	<p>We've got more to get into with Elijah Wood. Before he became a grownup actor, he was a child actor. He moved out to LA from Iowa with his mom and his brother. But what if he hadn't done that? Would he still be acting? We'll talk about that after the break. It's <i>Bullseye</i>, from MaximumFun.org and NPR.</p>
00:29:17	Promo	Clip	<p><i>[Sci-fi beeping.]</i></p>

Music: Dramatic, warbling synth.

Ben Harrison: I'm sure you've noticed how giant corporations are controlling more and more about what we consume, whether it's our food, our news, or even the shows we enjoy.

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[Record scratch. Music shifts to an upbeat tone.]

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[Sci-fi beeping. Music ends.]

00:30:02 Jesse Host

It's *Bullseye*. I'm Jesse Thorn. My guest is Elijah Wood. He's starring on the new season of the TV show *Yellowjackets*.

So, both horror and true crime have significantly female-tending audiences. They're two of like the—two of the genres of entertainment that have the most women relative to men enjoying them.

00:30:25 Elijah Guest

And a lot of women producing the content, too. And certainly, with podcasts.

00:30:29 Jesse Host

Yeah, for sure! Absolutely.

00:30:30 Elijah Guest

Yeah. I'm a big *Criminal* fan. Sophie Judge is awesome.

00:30:33 Jesse Host

Oh, they're really—they're really cool. I met them before from public radio stuff.

00:30:36 Elijah Guest

[Thrilled.] No way?!

00:30:37 Jesse Host

They're so cool.

00:30:38 Elijah Guest

Aw, that's cool. I'm a fan.

00:30:40 Jesse Host

But anyway, *[chuckles]* like they—and you really see the tension between the fact that these genres have many deeply misogynistic elements that have—you know, they're often seen through a fascination with a murderer who's almost always a man and what explains him? Why is he so alluring? You know? Those kinds of things. At the same time, there are so few representations in our culture of the kinds of traumas that women go through for being women, for the crime of being women that are near-universal that like just being able to see those kinds of traumas onscreen, I think—this is from talking to friends who are women who are into this stuff—in a context that is relatively safe; it's within the bounds

			of the screen. Just seeing that representation is something that some people just really want and crave.
00:31:38	Elijah	Guest	Interesting. As a means of catharsis.
00:31:40	Jesse	Host	Well, just—or for whatever. For whatever reason. For means of, you know, representation. Not that everybody has been murdered, but like I think many to most women have been through traumas of that kind, of one sort or another. I can see that. On the other hand, it all creeps me out a lot.
			<i>[They laugh.]</i>
00:32:01	Elijah	Guest	Yeah. Look, I think what you're talking about to—look, it's baked into genre. It's baked into horror. I feel like those movies are being made less and less.
00:32:13	Jesse	Host	And <i>Yellowjackets</i> I think is a direct engagement with those ideas. Like, <i>Yellowjackets</i> is a show that is about the women. You know, it is that kind of juicy, but it's about the women and it's not just about the women's moral failings meaning that they should die or whatever. It's a much richer text than that. And you're a dude in there, and you just get to be a doof.
00:32:38	Elijah	Guest	<i>[Laughs.]</i> Pretty much! So far, yeah! Pretty much. I get to—I mean, the journey that my character's on is kind of—you know.
00:32:47	Jesse	Host	Is that a spoiler that at some point—is this gonna be on <i>Yellowjackets</i> fan websites? "Wood Admits Character Eventually Not Doof".
00:32:58	Elijah	Guest	<i>[Laughs.]</i> I don't know! He's clever. He's smart. But he's also—yeah, he's—he is kind of a... he's goobery, but he's also awkward and I think he's hyperintelligent. I don't know that we know everything about him. But the thing that's fun that I got to do on the show, which does deal with so many complexities and so much darkness, is I got to—I got to run a track that was essentially comic relief. <i>[Chuckles.]</i> And it was lovely!
00:33:31	Jesse	Host	I was so happy, because—
00:33:32	Elijah	Guest	It was so lovely! <i>[Chuckles.]</i>
00:33:33	Jesse	Host	As I said, this kind of thing sometimes overwhelms me and upsets me. And—even just the drama. Even just the juiciness I find a little overwhelming often. Like, my wife likes a juicy show, and I'm like I just—I just wanna watch a boring show or a show of jokes. Those are the—I just wanna watch <i>Antiques Roadshow</i> .
00:33:51	Elijah	Guest	Amazing. It's good.
00:33:55	Jesse	Host	But like, uh, <i>[chuckles]</i> I was very relieved to get to see you do with Christina Ricci, who's such a funny actress. Wow.
00:34:03	Elijah	Guest	Oh, she's so funny.
00:34:04	Jesse	Host	You get to do the thing that I like watching you do the most, which is be like a light, silly goofus.
00:34:10	Elijah	Guest	Aw, thanks. It's fun. It was really fun. I mean, I—you know, I got to go to work everyday with her, playing a relatively light sort of arc that we were on. You know, playing an investigator, being a little awkward with another awkward character, both of them sort of like kind of mirrors of each other in a way, which is sort of great and perfect why they sort of come together and they're easy to be with each other. So, it was fun. I didn't have to bear the burden of so much of the narrative stress and darkness of the storytelling. So, it was a joy.
00:34:52	Jesse	Host	Do you think that you would have pursued an artistic career—or specifically, an acting career—if you hadn't moved with your brother and your mom to Los Angeles when you were seven and been

good at it? Which you were. I mean, I've seen a lot of things that you were in when you were a kid. You were really good at it!

[Elijah thanks him.]

As you are now. Do you think that you would be an insurance adjuster?

00:35:21 Elijah Guest I don't know! I feel like—I feel like all of us... probably because we were our mother's kids, you know, in a profound way, I feel like we would've had a fire to break the confines of our life in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. No offense to Cedar Rapids. It's great. But you know, I think we would have traveled. I think we would've gotten out to experience the rest of the world. What that would've looked like practically, I don't know. I feel like I would've pursued something creative. I think I'm drawn to people. And I'm drawn to—I was then, and I certainly am now, and it defines a lot of what I love about what I do and about just making movies is it's a community of people working towards a common goal with—that's in a creative process. And I love that. That's what I love about it. The acting is just a part of that. You know?

But that is communicating with a group of people, fitting into the context of all of these people working together towards a common goal.

00:36:32 Jesse Host Like, the coolest part of that in the times that I've done that kind of work is just how good everyone is at their job.

[Elijah agrees.]

Like, I just have never been anywhere else. I mean, I bet it's like that if you're in the Navy or something like that. But I've just never been anywhere else where you get to like ride this river of competency where like if you—you know that if somebody says, "I'll do this," they're gonna do it and do a good job 100%—it's bananas. Yep. It's great. It really is great, and it's thrilling and exciting and it still—I still get a great deal of satisfaction, and it drives enthusiasm to me. I got to—for instance, Boots Riley has a TV show that's about to come out, called *I'm a Virgo*. And he asked me to come and just do a day. I just did one little character in a burger shop. Love *Sorry to Bother You*. Boots I've gotten to know. He's incredible.

00:37:06 Elijah Guest

00:37:37 Jesse Host
00:37:38 Elijah Guest

A real genius.

And just being on that set for a day was just so thrilling to be in the mix of such creativity and so many ideas being thrown around. And to your point, everyone being so good at what they do to be able to facilitate those ideas. And at its best, that's what it's about. That's what it's about. So, would I have found that path? I'd like to believe that I would. It's hard. It's a hypothetical. You know? I don't—I have no idea what I—what would've driven me. I think I would've been attracted to music. It's part of me in such a profound way. I love it. I love photography. I feel like I would've fallen in love with movies anyway. I think all those things would've been truths. So, I would've—I probably would've pursued something that would have given me those feelings. *[Chuckles.]* Probably.

00:38:28 Jesse Host

Elijah Wood, thank you for joining us on *Bullseye*. It was so nice to get to see you and talk to you again.

00:38:33 00:38:35	Elijah Jesse	Guest Host	<p>Thank you. It's been a pleasure.</p> <p>Elijah Wood, folks. Lovely man. His performance in <i>Yellowjackets</i> is weird, funny, and disturbing. The second season of the show is airing right now on Showtime. Also, if you are listening to this and are a fan of <i>Yellowjackets</i>, make sure to listen to our interview from last year with Christina Ricci, who plays Misty on the show. That one was conducted by our friend Jordan Crucchiola of Max Fun's <i>Feeling Seen</i> podcast. We'll have a link to it on the <i>Bullseye</i> page at MaximumFun.org.</p>
00:39:11 00:39:13	Music Jesse	Transition Host	<p>Seriously, though, it was a winner. Really great. She's really cool. Upbeat, jazzy music.</p> <p>That's the end of another episode of <i>Bullseye</i>. <i>Bullseye</i>, created from the homes of me and the staff of Maximum Fun, in and around greater Los Angeles, California. Outside my house, the black asphalt has gone light grey because the great city of Los Angeles has painted it with some kind of heat reflective material, so it doesn't operate as a heat sink. It's gonna cool down my street this summer. I'm very excited about it. Thank you, city of Los Angeles.</p> <p>Our 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 booking help 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, their label, for sharing it with us.</p>
00:40:26	Promo	Promo	<p>You can find <i>Bullseye</i> on all your social media platforms: YouTube, Twitter, Facebook. Follow us in those places. We will share with you our interviews. Hopefully, you can share them with others. I think that's about it. Just remember: all great radio hosts have a signature signoff.</p> <p>Speaker: <i>Bullseye with Jesse Thorn</i> is a production of MaximumFun.org and is distributed by NPR.</p> <p><i>[Music fades out.]</i></p>