

[00:00:00] **Music:** Gentle, trilling music with a steady drumbeat plays under the dialogue.

[00:00:01] **Promo:** *Bullseye with Jesse Thorn* is a production of [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org) and is distributed by NPR.

[00:00:14] **Music:** “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.

[00:00:32] **Jesse Thorn:** It's *Bullseye*. I'm Jesse Thorn. Jon Hamm can do serious, and he can do funny. He was hilarious in *Bridesmaids*.

[00:00:40] **Sound Effect:** Music swells then fades.

[00:00:41] **Clip:**

**Ted (*Bridesmaids*):** You call for some roadside assistance? Thanks, officer. I can handle it from here on out.

**Annie: (*Frantic.*)** I didn't have anyone else to call! I didn't know you were gonna show up!

**Rhodes: (*Angrily.*)** That's the problem with cops, Annie! We're just never there when you need us!

**Ted:** The cop talks weird.

[00:00:57] **Sound Effect:** Music swells then fades.

[00:00:58] **Jesse Thorn:** And breathtaking in *Mad Men*.

[00:01:00] **Sound Effect:** Music swells then fades.

[00:01:02] **Clip:**

**Don Draper (*Mad Men*):** Advertising is based on one thing: happiness. And you know what happiness is? Happiness is the smell of a new car. It's freedom from fear. It's a billboard on the side of the road that screams with reassurance that whatever you're doing, it's okay.

[00:01:24] **Sound Effect:** Music swells then fades.

[00:01:26] **Jesse Thorn:** His new movie has a bit of both. It's called *Maggie Moore(s)*. That's spelled Moore and then a parenthetical S. Why the weird title? Well, Hamm plays a small-town police chief who's investigating the murders of two women, and they're both named

Maggie Moore. He's on the case with his partner, KB, who is played by the delightful Nick Mohammed.

And in this scene they're trying to puzzle out a connection between a somewhat pathetic sub shop franchisee named Jay and his wife, who's one of the Maggie Moores. She was found in the desert, killed in a car fire.

[00:02:08] **Sound Effect:** Music swells then fades.

[00:02:09] **Clip:**

**Jordan** (*Maggie Moore(s)*): Well, Jay Moore's into something.

**KB:** 'Cause he's selling (*cancel beep*) no name chips.

**Jordan:** It's a breach of the franchise agreement. He has to buy Castle Subs' product. If he buys from Liberty Bell Foods or wherever else, he stiff's corporate out of their money.

**KB:** Either way, what's it got to do with his murdered wife?

**Jordan:** I do not know.

**KB:** 'Cause you seem really worked up over this.

**Jordan:** Well, we have a victim who is unable to yield any clues due to her...

**KB:** Crispiness?

**Jordan:** KB, will you—?

**KB:** Sorry. Just happens.

**Jordan:** Don't do it anymore.

[00:02:39] **Sound Effect:** Music swells then fades.

[00:02:41] **Jesse Thorn:** (*Chuckles.*) Jon Hamm, welcome to *Bullseye*. I'm happy to have you on the show.

[00:02:44] **Jon Hamm:** Good to be here. Good to be here.

[00:02:45] **Jesse Thorn:** I love the idea of you playing slightly grumpy detectives, who are a little but not entirely flummoxed for the rest of your career. I'm sure that you would love to

have a broader career, and I wish you luck with that. But you and Nick Mohammed in this film are so charming and funny together. I could just watch it all day.

[00:03:13] **Jon Hamm:** Thanks. You know, Nick obviously brings such an affability to everything he does because that's his lot in life, is to be affable. And we found—kind of found that when we were shooting. We knew that there was gonna have to be kind of a rapport between these two characters, but we didn't really know what it was gonna be.

And we were very happy when it sort of settled into this sort of lighthearted, jocular kind of banter, given some of the heaviness of some of the themes of the film. But the characters actually are, you know—they're very much friends, and they take each other in and are concerned with one another's, you know, kind of mental health and awareness at all times. And it's a very nice, real, well-written relationship.

[00:04:01] **Jesse Thorn:** It seems like a friend's film all around. Did John Slattery, the director, call you to be in it?

[00:04:08] **Jon Hamm:** John did. He said he had a project he was thinking of doing and would I be interested. Obviously, with the caveat that, you know, there's no demand to do this; you could choose to or not. And I read the script and was like I actually kind of like this story. I think it's well crafted. And I think John—knowing John's work as a director, and not only from working with him on *Mad Men*, but seeing what he did with his first film, *God's Pocket*, and how he made—how he stretched a dollar very far on that film, I knew he had the capacity to make this something interesting and he has.

[00:04:46] **Jesse Thorn:** What's it like to have your friend your boss?

[00:04:50] **Jon Hamm:** It's nice, you know? It's a nice working environment. You know, not only did we have each other there to kind of bounce ideas off and work together on making everything better. But we also had, you know, Tina Fey, who's a pretty serious producer and creator herself. And so, she was able to come in, and we're all very comfortable with one another. So, it was—it took a lot of the—a lot of the prep work out of it, 'cause it was just already understood.

[00:05:21] **Jesse Thorn:** What was an example of an idea that was bounced for the film? What did the two of you—you and John Slattery, the director—share?

[00:05:30] **Jon Hamm:** Well, here's a good—here's a—here's a great example. You know, Nick Mohammed had come in and he was gonna—he was gonna—he had worked on this American accent that he really was gonna play as an American guy. And we kind of were going back and forth on it, and we were like, “You know, it just adds a layer of artifice to this that we don't know if we necessarily want. What if you tried it?” And we rehearsed it both ways. “What if you tried it with your—with your natural accent? How would that sound?” And he started doing it in his accent, and then his comedic rhythm started kicking in. And that was something that we actually found on the day. And then we were able to sort of like—we were just like, “Well, just don't even worry about the accent. It's just—it's funnier and it's more believable and more real if it's just you.”

It was—and I used this example to try to convince both John and Nick to do this. I was like, “In *Bridesmaids*, we had, um, Chris O’Dowd playing, for some reason, a completely Irish person in the middle of Wisconsin. And it wasn’t really addressed, except for by my character when I lit—I say the line “that cop talks weird”. It doesn’t—it doesn’t necessarily matter. It’s a—it’s a person who is from another place who sounds this way. And as long as you inhabit the character believably and they exist in that—in that firmament, then it does—it works. And it worked for Nick and for the—for the character and for the relationship between the two characters.

[00:06:55] **Jesse Thorn:** I think that I’m obsessed with the prospect of you as a detective because I loved *Confess*, *Fletch* so much.

(*Jon chuckles.*)

I mean, I truly—one of my favorite comedies of the last five years. And I know that it was, you know—it was one of those things that was threatened for literal decades by the time you and Greg Mottola got to make it. Had you read those *Fletch* books? There’s like a dozen of them.

[00:07:30] **Jon Hamm:** Yeah. I, like every 14-year-old in 1985, was obsessed with two things: *Top Gun* and *Fletch*. And then, short shortly after that, *Beverly Hills Cop*. But *Fletch* was a big thing. I just loved the—I loved the wryness. I loved the sense of humor. I loved the wiseass Chevy Chase of it all. It was just perfect for 1985.

And then that got me down, in a pre-internet era—significantly pre-internet era where you had to go to the bookstores and libraries to find books. I went to the local bookstore, and found, “Oh my god, not only is there more stories, there’s like—” As you said, like a dozen more stories. He goes to Rio. He goes to this one and that one. And he’s solving crimes and he’s getting into hijinks all over the place.

And I’ve read every single one of them. And I was like, “Why aren’t they making more of these?” And then they made the unfortunate sequel, which kind of didn’t really work and is awfully problematic now when you watch it. But we knew that there was a way in to more of these stories. And obviously he didn’t—nobody wanted to bite Chevy’s style, because he’s so uniquely him and in a lot of ways those first two movies are more Chevy Chase movies than they are *Fletch* movies.

And we really wanted to—and Greg was really smart, and we really wanted to get back to that energy of the novel and make it more sophisticated and less kind of jokey with wigs and teeth and all the goofy things. Obviously, there’s still some of that in there, but it’s less of a kind of a set piece. And we just wanted to tell a fun “who done it”, and we happened to stumble into a time where those are considered kind of a fun genre, now. We’re back into—you know, with the—with the success of *Knives Out* and things like that, we’ve gotten—as a society, the culture has decided those are worthwhile stories to tell again. So, fortunately we have the rights to the rest of them, and hopefully we’re gonna get to make some more.

[00:09:44] **Jesse Thorn:** We’ll be back in just a second. It’s *Bullseye* from [MaximumFun.org](https://www.maximumfun.org) and NPR.

[00:09:50] **Music:** Thumpy rock music with a syncopated beat.

[00:09:55] **Jesse Thorn:** Welcome back to *Bullseye*. I'm Jesse Thorn. If you're just joining us, I am talking with Jon Hamm. So, Jon Hamm had a lot of choices coming out of *Mad Men*. I mean, it was—I don't know, one of the five or ten greatest television acting performances of all time. But he hasn't always taken the paths that you might expect. Jon Hamm's latest film is a comic noir called *Maggie Moore(s)*. It was directed by his *Mad Men* pal, John Slattery. You can watch it in theaters and on demand now.

You're from St. Louis, and you grew up mostly with your mom when you were young in elementary school age. Your parents divorced when you were a toddler. What do you remember about their relationship?

[00:10:46] **Jon Hamm:** Very little. I don't really remember. I think I was two when my mom and dad got divorced. So, I don't really remember them being a couple. Anything I remember of them being a couple is probably from pictures. You know, you have those weird things where you're like, I remember that! And you're like, no, you don't. You just saw the picture.

Um, yeah, I have really no, you know, recollection. And then having lost my mom when I was 10 and my father when I was 20, I didn't really get a lot of chances to kind of have those adult conversations with your parents. Like, what was it like? What did you—where did you meet? How did you meet? It was all kind of secondhand through either other family members or family friends. So, it was a strange process of kind of learning about my parents as I got older, through this sort of remembered history from other people.

[00:11:39] **Jesse Thorn:** When they were both alive, what was their relationship like when you were a kid?

[00:11:43] **Jon Hamm:** You know, my mom was a single mom, and she was a working mom. So, she went to work every day, and I was a latchkey kid. I had my little keys on a—literally, a thing that clipped to my belt buckle.

[00:11:56] **Jesse Thorn:** Like a night watchman or something? The kind that it like extends and—?

[00:12:00] **Jon Hamm:** No, it wasn't that. It was a—it was a—it was a very cool—I think it was called like a jean ring or something. Bu it was like a little bent piece of metal that looked like—a little bit like a pretzel and you could—you could latch it onto your belt loop. But I would come home every day. I'd have either cub scouts or bowling or some sort of afterschool activity and come home after that and call my mom at work and check in. "I'm home. Everything's cool." And then I would just—it was like I was a free-range kid. I just ran around, and we found the kids in the neighborhood, and we played whatever sport was that season. If it was fall, it was football. If it was spring, it was baseball. And you know—and then there was frisbee and snowball fights and everything else. And that was kind of my—those were my days. And then every other weekend I would go to my dad's. And that was just kind of a different—you know, we'd—he would have stuff to do.

We would go to the zoo, or we would go to something—a game or something. And I don't know! You know, not having anything else really to compare it to, it just felt totally fine. That was just what it was. I enjoyed spending time with both of them. You know, it was fun.

[00:13:13] **Jesse Thorn:** But we're not talking about you being a latchkey kid at 13 or 14 or something. We're talking about like eight or nine.

[00:13:19] **Jon Hamm:** Oh yeah. Yeah. I was in, you know, grade school. It was second, third and fourth grade. My mom died when I was in fourth grade.

[00:13:28] **Jesse Thorn:** Did you have other kid's families that you spent time with?

[00:13:32] **Jon Hamm:** Oh yeah, for sure. And in fact, as I got older, several of my close friends became de facto parents. My friend, John Simmons, who I grew up with, who's the best man at my wedding. And, you know, he's like my best friend since we were 12 years old. Um, his mom and dad, and then my friend, Jim Wilson, his mom and dad.

You know, my friend, Preston Clark, his mom and dad. My friend, Bob Lawson. You know, it's—I've stayed in a lot of couches and basements (*chuckles*) and was taken care of very kindly by the community that I grew up in. And I don't take that for granted, and I'm very grateful for that as well. I understand that that could have—that could have split a very different way. And I was very fortunate to have good people around me and—that were able to sort of gently nudge me down the right path.

[00:14:35] **Jesse Thorn:** You obviously ended up living with your father and the rest of his family after your mother passed away, but you know, there can be this feeling—and it's a feeling I'm describing from my own life, so you can tell me if it wasn't one that you had—of being a visitor in your own home. And I don't mean neglectful or not loved or whatever. What I really mean by that is that you have these multiple experiences of home, and so there is always kind of—for ill and for good—a feeling of having half a foot out the door or a little bit of not quite belonging.

[00:15:28] **Jon Hamm:** For sure, and it was—it was kind of amplified with my experience too, because moving into my—when my mom died in that sort of seismic occurrence in my life, it was—obviously, there was a lot to be managed. But also, I had to move in with my dad, who at that time in his life was living in the house that he grew up in with his mother. So, I was—we were three generations under one roof. It was—I was living in a—you know, a home that I had really identified with my grandmother much more than my dad. I was living in a room that didn't feel like a kid's room. You know, it was just—there was a lot to it that needed to be managed. (*Chuckles.*) And in a lot of ways, it was awesome. You know, it was this kind of old, stately house that had a lot of stuff in it. You know, we had a wall of *National Geographic*s that I could go look at, you know, from the '40s to the '80s. Like it was just very cool. And a bunch of old, you know, antique stuff that I—god I wish I had now, but it all went to the—dissipated to the four winds after everybody died.

But it was very much a kind of a musty, old home. And it—and you're right, it did—it felt like being a visitor in a lot of ways. And that again, that's just what it was. You know? Part of me was—found my community in the school I went to and my friends and sports and all of

the activities that I participated in, and ultimately theatre and what I ended up doing for a living.

[00:17:12] **Jesse Thorn:** What sports were you playing when you were in your—in your teen years?

[00:17:17] **Jon Hamm:** I played baseball and football, and I swam. Those are my three varsity sports.

[00:17:23] **Jesse Thorn:** Did you like hitting people in football?

[00:17:25] **Jon Hamm:** You know, I will say that that was a very good thing for me.

*(They chuckle.)*

From an energy standpoint, from a release standpoint, from a organizational standpoint. Like football provided me—and I was very fortunate. I didn't get injured; I didn't have any concussions. I didn't blow up my knee or anything. Nothing bad happened to me, which obviously there's a lot of caveats to all of that now. But for me it was just a tremendous way to really get rid of a lot of the energy that I accumulated as a—you know—young boy growing up.

[00:18:11] **Jesse Thorn:** You also started acting as a teenager, and I wonder if you got a different thing out of acting than sports.

[00:18:23] **Jon Hamm:** *(Sighs.)* It was a similar thing. The similar thing was the community. You know. *(Chuckles.)* And I would—I would—I would say that, you know, most people that end up in the theatre department are a little bit broken too, sometimes. It's the Island of Misfit Toys in some way. And I always—I always used to joke, it's like the reason everybody goes to the theatre department is 'cause there's no math requirement.

*(They laugh.)*

But it is a—it's a very welcoming community. It's a very inclusive community, obviously, and it's—it takes everybody. You know, come on. We'll, you know—put on some paint and let's enjoy the show. And it's also very much a cooperative effort too. So, you know, you help break down the set, and you help do the thing, and you help in any way you can.

And along the way, you learn. And you learn how to be dependable. You learn how—you learn a skill set. And it's entertaining. And that's—you know, if you have that itch, it's tremendously satisfying. And it's—that's, for me, at a certain point I pretty much understood, okay, I'm a good enough athlete, but I'm not good enough to make a living out of this.

And I knew enough athletes and professional athletes and people that were on their way, like, oh, you're a quantum leap ahead of me on my best day. So, it was about trying to figure out what I could do. And I kept kind of coming back to the theatre, and I kept doing plays and

performances and things, and I got good feedback. People were saying, “Hey, I liked you in this. You're watchable, you're entertaining. This is good. You're good at this.” And I enjoyed it.

So, after, you know, five or six years of that, I decided, well, maybe I've got a shot at this. And I—and I did, and it—and it stuck.

[00:20:23] **Jesse Thorn:** Was it weird that you were a handsome jock?

[00:20:27] **Jon Hamm:** (*Chuckles.*) Um, I don't know. I mean, you know, it's—there's plenty—

[00:20:30] **Jesse Thorn:** I'm here, Jon. I'm gonna stipulate that you're handsome and a jock, so that you don't have to claim either of those things.

(*Jon laughs.*)

But let's presume that others also thought that you were a handsome jock, at least in part. Was it weird?

[00:20:43] **Jon Hamm:** I think there's—you know, there's plenty of room under the tent for all of us. And the fun thing about my kind of theatre education, at least at the beginning in high school, was that everybody was invited. It wasn't just the theatre kids. It wasn't just the nerds. It wasn't just the—you know, whatever. We were all asked to participate. It wasn't a demand, but it was like, “Look, this is fun. You guys might enjoy this.” So, the football players got to do it too. And some were better than others and some liked it more than others, but it was—it was an open invitation, and that's what I really appreciated about my school in general was you were encouraged to try everything. And if you didn't like it, eh, you don't have to do it anymore, you know? But you had to try everything. And that was singing and dancing and public speaking and improv and painting and sculpting and... along with, you know, the sort of stem classes as well. But it was—that was, to me, what an educational experience should be. Try.

[00:21:53] **Jesse Thorn:** Did you really think that you could become a professional actor?

[00:21:59] **Jon Hamm:** (*Sighs.*) I mean, I wouldn't have moved to LA and tried if I didn't think I could have. I did have the, um... stupidity maybe is the right word, ignorance, whatever belief that I had a shot. I thought, “Alright, I'm confident enough to know that if I get in the room, in the right room, in front of the right people, I got a shot.”

And that was—and I had a lot of shots before I got, you know, before one stuck. And it was a lesson, you know. You learn, wow, this is—I'm not the only guy that has this confidence and thinks he's got a shot. There's a—you know, walking into a casting office, especially back in the '90s when it was a little more analog, was an experience of like walking into a room of ten guys that look just like me, and nine of them have more credits and, you know, have done it longer.



So you go, okay, let's see what happens. You know, let's see what this is all about.

[00:23:11] **Jesse Thorn:** It also wasn't really—by the time you became a professional actor—a golden age for handsomeness. It was more of a golden age for—I mean, for masculine handsomeness. It was more of a golden age for masculine prettiness, especially for young men like you were. Like, you had this extraordinary gift that you'd been handed besides your skill and talent, and it was like not the most useful one. Like, George Clooney had gray hair before he got famous. You know what I mean?

[00:23:43] **Jon Hamm:** Yeah. I definitely was on that track much more than the other one. Um, I remember going into so many auditions in that era—which, again, you're correct in identifying it was sort of the like CW world of 25-year-olds that are playing teenagers. And I didn't look like a teenager when I was a teenager, really.

It was like I just—I had a heavy beard and bags under my eyes and whatever. I just didn't have the gray hair. But the experience of growing into my (*chuckles*)—my looks and my attitude was certainly something that took a minute. And then, when—you know—when the right—when the right role came along, which it did with Don Draper, it sat on me and it felt—it felt very natural, and it resonated very clearly.

[00:24:35] **Jesse Thorn:** We've got so much more with the great Jon Hamm. Stay with us. It's *Bullseye* from [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org) and NPR.

[00:24:44] **Promo:**

*(School bell rings.)*

**Music:** Playful synth fades in.

**Tom Lum:** Alright, class. Tomorrow's exam will cover the extinction and de-extinction of the Dodo, PowerPoint as an art form, and the history of Eurovision. Any questions? Uh, yes. You in the back?

**Student:** Uh, what is this?

**Ella Hubber:** It's the podcast *Let's Learn Everything!* Where we learn about science and a bit of everything else.

**Tom:** My name's Tom. I studied cognitive and computer science, but I'll also be your teacher for intermediate emojis.

**Caroline Roper:** My name's Caroline, and I did my masters in biodiversity conservation, and I'll be teaching you intro to things the British Museum stole.

**Ella:** My name's Ella. I did a PhD in stem cell biology. So, obviously I'll be teaching you the history of fanfiction!

**Tom:** Class meets every other Thursday, on Maximum Fun.

*(Music ends.)*

**Student:** So, do I still get credit for this?

*(They laugh.)*

**Tom, Caroline, & Ella:** *(In unison.)* No!

**Ella:** Obviously not.

**Caroline:** No.

**Tom:** It's a podcast.

*(They laugh.)*

[00:25:29] **Music:** Thumpy rock music with a syncopated beat.

[00:25:33] **Jesse Thorn:** This is *Bullseye*. I'm Jesse Thorn. I'm talking with Jon Hamm. He's starring in the new movie, *Maggie Moore(s)*.

You did 65-ish episodes of a Lifetime show before *Don Draper*, but that was 65-ish episodes over something like—I was trying to like do the math. It was like two and a half years or something.

*(Jon confirms.)*

They must have been really pumping 'em out. And before that, you know, you had—you worked sometimes, but I can't imagine that your working was your main job. So, did you—

[00:26:12] **Jon Hamm:** My main job was waiting tables. That was my main job, for sure.

[00:26:15] **Jesse Thorn:** Did you have an idea of how long you were willing to do that and work a couple times a year as an actor?

[00:26:22] **Jon Hamm:** I had given myself—I moved out to LA when I—24, turning 25. And I thought, okay, if I'm not making a living doing what I'm stating that I want to do professionally by the time I turn 30, then the market has spoken. And we can go find something else to do.

So, I ended up—the show you mentioned was called *The Division*, on Lifetime. I got that part in 2001. It was—I think I was going—it was right after 9/11, in fact. So, I was going back to start that job right after 9/11. But I had turned 30 on a movie, and it was a movie called *We*

*Were Soldiers*. It was Mel Gibson and Sam Elliott and a bunch of amazing actors. And it was a great movie and a great experience. And so, that was when I basically was able to quit my job. And I was—I was making—I got in right under the wire, but I was making—I was making good money doing what I wanted to do. And—

I take it back. That was one... I did *The Division* before I did *We Were Soldiers*, I think. I can't remember. But anyways, it was—I got in under the—under the five-year wire. I was auditioning in LA for three solid years with zero results, which is not to say that I didn't have any callbacks or almost. That was all that. It was—I got so close to a million different things that, had any one of them hit, my life would've looked very different. But they didn't, for whatever reason. And then all of a sudden they did. And in fact, I worked—when I worked on *The Division*, I worked opposite a phenomenal actress, named Tracey Needham, whose husband is a guy named Tommy Hinkley—another great actor. And his best friend is George Clooney. (*Chuckles.*) So, Tracey used to say to me all the time, she's like, “You're just like George. You're—when your, you know, look catches up to what they want you for—”

[00:28:51] **Jesse Thorn:** Once you hit 33.

[00:28:52] **Jon Hamm:** “It's all—” 35, she said to me. And I was like, god, your lips to God's ears. And I got *Mad Men* at 35.

[00:29:00] **Jesse Thorn:** If you were—when you were 29 and you hadn't gotten—I'm making up the timeline here, 'cause I'm not prepared to do the math, but when you were 29 and you hadn't gotten *The Division* yet, you were just working in something every once in a while and you were, you know, waiting tables or at one point I think shucking oysters, were you serious about that deadline? Like I'm sure you were serious about it at 24, when you moved to LA.

[00:29:30] **Jon Hamm:** I think I was. I mean, you know, I think—you know, I had worked in the industry long enough and seen enough examples of the 40-year-old quote/unquote “actor” who does two jobs a year and is, you know—has five lines on *Moesha* or whatever. And it's—it was not a life that I wanted. If I was pushing myself forward in that timeline, I could definitely tell that that's not—that was not for me.

So, you know, how that would've represented—would I have moved back to St. Louis? Would I have gotten another job in LA somewhere? I don't know how that would've presented itself, but I was pretty sure that had I not had the success—at least the tangible kind of success that feels like, “Okay, we're on—we're on the treadmill and we're moving. If that hadn't presented itself, I think I definitely would've said like, “Okay, it's time to reevaluate.”

[00:30:35] **Jesse Thorn:** You went in a bunch of times for *Mad Men*. In part, because I'm sure that there were producers on the show who would like their lead to be a famous person. Did you believe that you could or would get the part?

[00:30:56] **Jon Hamm:** Yeah, I did believe it. But I was enough—I had been around long enough to know that there were a hundred million other reasons why they would say no. And so, my job was to just be undeniable and not let them say no. And I was able to do that. You know, I came in over-prepared, hyper-ready. I'll do it five different ways. I knew the material cold. I knew I looked the part. And I knew that Matt Weiner, the creator of the show, really

wanted me. And I knew also that, unlike most of these pilots where having a star at the center of them is value added, the mystery of casting somebody that wasn't recognizable was helpful in the narrative of the story. This guy, as we come to find out, is not who he says he is. And so that was—it was helpful to have that person being played by somebody who you kind of knew. Maybe you'd seen him before in something, but not really. Instead of it being Rob Lowe, you know, and it—“Oh, it's a Rob Lowe project.”

And I just use that as a person that people know. Nothing against Rob. He's a phenomenal actor.

[00:32:16] **Jesse Thorn:** Good in everything.

[00:32:17] **Jon Hamm:** But yeah, I think that eventually the powers that be understood that, and they were able to say, “Oh, maybe it would be cool if we got this guy who's a little bit unknown.”

[00:32:29] **Jesse Thorn:** Do you have an ideal shape for your career? Like you have spent a lot of time doing silly, dilettante-ish comedy stuff. You know, you've like shown up in a lot of comedy buddy's things to do some goofing around a little bit. You have *Fletch* that I would be thrilled to have as our—as *Colombo*. Like I would be delighted if you just did a *Fletch* every 18 months and it ran on CBS and I got to watch it, until you were 90 years old.

(*Jon chuckles.*)

Or you know, you could do a new prestige television program, or you could be military dudes in movies, or presidents in movies. You know, they—movies always need that.

[00:33:16] **Jon Hamm:** I—you know, just having worked with my dear friend, Mr. Slattery, on this particular film. Part of—if there's any design to this—of what we get to do, because we're fortunate enough to have some say in the matter, is picking things that I enjoy in some way, shape, or form—whether they make me laugh or cry or interest me in some way, or I think I have an angle on them. And I think John Slattery feels the same way.

You know, the reason he picked this story to direct—and directing a movie, it's a three-year process. It's a year of prep, it's a year of shooting, it's a year of editing. Then, you have to promote the thing and take it to festivals. And if it's not a—you know, a Universal picture that's got a Roman numeral at the end of it and Vin Diesel involved, it's hard to make movies.

So, you do it because it's something that you really like. And this story and the fact that I got to work with people that I really liked, was the reason I chose to do it. And I'm very—you know, like I said, I'm very grateful I get the opportunity to choose, but I'm also very understanding that I'm trying—we're trying to entertain people, you know. We want it to be entertaining, so we want people to come along for the ride. And part of that is hopefully what I can bring to the table and bringing everybody along.

[00:34:47] **Jesse Thorn:** Well, Jon Hamm, I'm grateful for your time. I hope you'll come back again sometime. And I'm grateful that there is someone as talented and hardworking as

you who made the choice that I would've made, which is to use whatever cultural capital one had accumulated in one's career to weasel your way onto *30 Rock*.

[00:35:13] **Jon Hamm:** (*Chuckles.*) Exactly. Between *30 Rock* and *SNL*, I'm good. If I never did anything else, I'm pretty good there.

[00:35:21] **Jesse Thorn:** Well, thank you, Jon. I really appreciate it.

[00:35:23] **Jon Hamm:** Thanks, man. Nice talking with you.

[00:35:25] **Jesse Thorn:** The great Jon Hamm. You can catch him in the new movie, *Maggie Moore(s)*. That's in theaters and streaming on demand now. And hey, look, I know that (*chuckles*)—I know that I dedicated like a third of this interview to *Confess, Fletch*, which is a movie that came out last year, but I cannot tell you how great *Confess, Fletch* is. Please go watch *Confess, Fletch* so that they'll make like eight more of those.

[00:35:54] **Music:** Bright, brassy music.

[00:35:56] **Jesse Thorn:** That's the end of another episode of *Bullseye*. *Bullseye*, created from the homes of me and the staff of Maximum Fun in and around greater Los Angeles, California, where—here on my block—a giant branch from a eucalyptus tree fell from, you know, the sidewalk, the curb, into my neighbor's yard, yesterday. It was blocking the whole walkway, and somehow it was pointed the wrong way—like the broken off part was pointing towards his house and the not-broken-off part was pointing the opposite way, towards the curb and the street. And I don't know how that's possible. It was a huge branch. Like what turned it around? Did it pirouette in the sky like a high diver? Our world is full of mysteries.

Our show is produced by speaking into microphones. Senior producer is Kevin Ferguson. Our producer is Jesus Ambrosio and Richard Robey. Our production fellow at Maximum Fun is 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 is called “Huddle Formation”. Thanks to them and to their label, Memphis Industries.

*Bullseye* is also on YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook. Find us in those places. Follow us. We will share with you all of our interviews. I think that's it. Just remember all great radio hosts have a signature signoff.

[00:37:23] **Promo:** *Bullseye with Jesse Thorn* is a production of [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org) and is distributed by NPR.

(*Music fades out.*)