

[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 and is distributed by NPR.

[00:00:15] **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.

[00:00:23] **Jesse Thorn:** It's *Bullseye*. I'm Jesse Thorn. Dale Earnhardt Sr. started racing stock cars in 1975. He was called the Intimidator, one of racing's greatest drivers and one of its most aggressive. In 2001, in the last lap of the Daytona 500, he crashed and was killed. My guest is the Intimidator's son, Dale Earnhardt Jr.

Jr. is also a legend of stock car racing. Last year he was inducted into the Hall of Fame. He's won more than two dozen races, including Daytona—twice. Dale Jr. is a champion, but he's not an Intimidator. Indeed, as you're about to hear, he's actually kind of a sweetheart. Smart, thoughtful, bordering on—and I say this with great affection—nerdy. So, it makes sense that he isn't just a driver; he's also a writer. He's written two kids' books about a race car named Buster. The new one, *Buster Gets Back on Track*, isn't about dominating the competition. It's about managing big feelings.

Our hero gets stressed, he gets overheated, and he bails on the big race. Before he can come back, he has to learn that it's okay to be upset, and it's also okay to take care of yourself. Anyway, I'm so thrilled to get to talk to Dale Earnhardt Jr. Let's get into it.

[00:01:49] **Transition:** Funky synth with rhythmic vocalizations.

[00:01:53] **Jesse Thorn:** Dale Earnhardt Jr., welcome to *Bullseye*. I'm so happy to have you on the show.

[00:01:56] **Dale Earnhardt Jr.:** Hey, I'm thankful to be here. I appreciate the opportunity to come on and talk to you today.

[00:02:01] **Jesse Thorn:** So, you had written a book. And you know, sometimes when you've written a book, the publisher calls—and you're a famous person—the publisher calls and says, “Hey, what about a kids' book?” Were you ready for that? Did you have any trepidation about it?

[00:02:15] **Dale Earnhardt Jr.:** I was really excited about it, to be honest with you. So, yeah, I've written a couple of books in various ways, some very involved in, some not so—you know, not so involved, some hands on, not so hands on. So, you know, those were big books about my rookie year or my winding down and retiring, my career, telling all of those stories. And then I became a father in the last five years. I've got two little girls, Nicole and Isla. Nicole is two and Isla is now five.

And so, you know, when we had our girls, when they were born—and then as we go through the milestones of birthdays and holidays and so forth—one of the more popular gifts, simple

gifts—and it's a good gift!—that you get from friends and relatives and you may give to them if they have children of their own, that's books. And so, very quickly we compiled this sort of small library, miniature little library of children's books. And oftentimes we even have multiple copies by the time it's all over. And I thought, you know, man, being a new dad, you're like I can't wait to read these books to them every night! I'm going to be that dad that reads to them every night. And the kids, man, they end up deciding which books you're going to read. And you know, they'll get stuck on the same book, and they want you to read that one every night. And you're like, man, again? Again? Night, after night, after night, the same book.

And I thought, you know, this sounds like a challenge. This sounds like something I'd love to try to accomplish. Writing a children's book, having read just a handful in my short time as being a dad, I thought, man, I need to try to write a book and see if my girls will like it. And it didn't seem like it's really this huge challenge to write a kids' book. I've read many, and they're all very different and goofy and fun in their own way. But yeah. So, they inspired me to try to do that. We had a relationship with a publisher, and the same group that we had written a previous project about my career would help us do this. So, you know, the lead character is Buster. And so, how do I make this matter to me? How do I make—you know, I'm gonna jump into this project, try to write a cool book for my girls to like or some kid to like, but it's gotta be something that I'm passionate about. And I gotta make it matter to me.

My dad's nickname as a little boy was Buster. I never thought I would ever use that in any way, but here we are. We're going to write a children's book. We need a lead character. This is the perfect name for the lead character. And so, I was able to then weave all of these personal connections into the book. One of the teammates to Buster is Jimmy Jam. That's my friend Jimmy Johnson, he inspired that character. And Coach Hogg is a connection to an older fellow that was sort of a mentor for me when I started driving. His name was Gary Hargett, and he was a hog farmer. And so, he was a coach, if you will. So, Coach Hogg. And that made the experience of bringing the book together fun for me, because we were able to create characters that I could then say to them, “Hey, you inspired this character. You inspired this person in this children's book.”

And anyways, we landed on this really great illustrator. The colors are just perfect. The drawing and the sort of look on the character's face and animation of the character's emotions and thoughts is really well done. So, you know, that was all a fun process.

[00:06:09] **Jesse Thorn:** I have to tell you, my kids—I have three kids, the youngest of whom is six. And so, just now kind of passing out of picture book territory. So, I had a lot of years of picture books. And some of them were so beautiful and inspirational to me. (*Chuckles.*) And some of them I just thought stunk, and I'd just get so mad that people had such low expectations for—I mean, look. I'm sure that there are—I know that there are many terrible books for adults too, but there was this part of me that felt like so many picture books don't honor the richness and intensity of the experience of children.

And one of the things that I liked about your book, which is about Buster—this race car essentially struggling to manage his feelings of frustration and anger—was that it honors the big feelings of kids and the intensity of feelings of kids.

[00:07:18] **Dale Earnhardt Jr.:** Yes! When I became a dad, you know, you think—there's a lot of thoughts, but one of the things that really caught me off-guard and was a real big challenge for me was managing or helping my child manage her emotions. And you get so much advice when you become a parent. But one of the things that nobody really ever told me about was like, hey, this—you know, your child is going to be developing emotions and thoughts. They're not going to know how to control them. They're not going to know what to do with them. They're not going to be able to communicate those to you. They're going to get frustrated. You're not going to know why. And you know, there will be a very broad period in that young toddler stage where, you know, they just have these emotions and frustrations or thoughts and things that they don't know how to express, and it can be this big explosion.

And so, that was fun to sort of incorporate that into the storyline. And that's kind of Buster's habit, you know, is like getting frustrated, getting help with his frustrations, learning how to manage some of those things. But it's so true to my experience as a father. And there's moments where you, you as a parent, feel so helpless to be able to not even—you know, you're limited in communicating how—you know, what's hurting? What's bothering you? What's got you mad? What's got you angry? How can I help you? You know, what is it that you would like to happen? But you can't have that conversation with a child. They just don't know how to express those feelings. And so, that can be the frustrating period in parenthood there before they get old enough to be able to really help you clue in on how to get through a moment that's frustrating.

You know, a great thing about Buster is he helps kids maybe understand that, hey, it's alright how you feel! You know, it's okay to be frustrated and, you know, stomping your feet and all of those things. But here's a guy who found some solution. And whether it was something that he did or helping someone else achieve something—you know, the first book in Buster, he doesn't win. He doesn't succeed in the end; he helps someone. And that was part of the message.

[00:09:47] **Jesse Thorn:** So much more to get into with Dale Earnhardt Jr.—stick around. It's *Bullseye* from MaximumFun.org and NPR.

[00:09:55] **Transition:** Thumpy synth with light vocalizations.

[00:09:59] **Jesse Thorn:** Welcome back to *Bullseye*. I'm Jesse Thorn. If you're just joining us, I'm talking with Dale Earnhardt Jr. He's a legend of stock car racing. His father, Dale Earnhardt Sr., was also a legend of stock car racing. His grandfather, Ralph Earnhardt, also a legend of stock car racing. Dale Jr. more or less retired from the track in 2017. He has a series of children's books about a race car named Buster. The latest of them is called *Buster Gets Back on Track*. It's available now.

When you were driving professionally, how did you feel emotionally when you were behind the wheel in a race?

[00:10:38] **Dale Earnhardt Jr.:** I think that for the most part, I feel like you—you know, you always seem to produce your best results when you were a bit angry, frustrated. Or some adversity may happen in the race that was a bit of a setback that would, you know, bring some frustration and maybe a little anger. Maybe something another driver did. Those were

emotions that would push you to this super high level that you really didn't attain otherwise. If I got in the car in a great mood, very relaxed, I would do well. But I always felt like when I got frustrated or angry or something was poking or prodding me to frustration, I found a new level, and I found this sort of extra gear in myself. And I was pushing harder to gain back whatever lost ground there was or prove to my team that I wasn't going to back down from a challenge. Somebody had gotten the best of me one lap, and I was going to do everything I could to prove that I was better than that driver and spend the rest of the race trying to make that point.

So, that's kind of the way I think it works for me and a lot of other drivers too. We always kind of see drivers when they find themselves in a situation that gets them frustrated. We're like, alright, gonna watch this driver now, because he's really going to be pushing hard. And that can result in something spectacular, good and bad.

[00:12:08] **Jesse Thorn:** That's interesting to me. Because, you know, your dad was also a legendary race driver whose nickname was the Intimidator. Like, that was his MO, you know, to the point of, you know, frustration and anger among other drivers that he was too aggressive. And that isn't your reputation, necessarily.

(Dale agrees.)

Was it something that didn't come naturally to you?

[00:12:38] **Dale Earnhardt Jr.:** Yeah. I mean, Dad was loved because of his intimidating presence. He changed the room when he walked into it. He was 10-foot tall and just menacing in a way and had this certain, you know, scowl on his face. But he could be funny. You know, he could pick and play, crack a joke and always had this unique smirk. But he was just—you know, Dad and Mom divorced in '78. I was four. And then I went and lived with my mother 'til '81. We were in this house. And our house catches fire, and Mama was not very wealthy at all. And so, she had to move home to her mother's. And she gave custody of me and my sister to our dad, who was just now starting to find his footing and finding some success as a race car driver. And so, we would go to live with him.

And I believe those early years with my mother shaped who I was. I was not the Intimidator's son. I was my mother's son and had a lot of—I have a lot of her physical traits, I believe. And I just tend to sort of lean into a lot of her personality traits as well. When I began racing, like I say, I was—I mean, as a child, I was very shy. You know, almost debilitating in some situations at school, had a very small group of friends, wasn't in really the popular crowd, so to speak, and just made it work, right? And very small in stature. I was really short. It took me a while before I hit my growth spurt. I think I was—on my driver's license at 16 years old, I was listed as 5'3.

And so, yeah, I didn't have—that did not allow me to create a menacing personality in my years as a youth and a teenager growing up. I wasn't—I didn't look intimidating, and I wasn't going to walk around assuming that I was an intimidating figure. And when I started racing, of course, I admired my dad, loved him to death, thought he was just incredible. And I loved his approach. I loved his aggressive approach. When he passed the car cleanly, I was disappointed. But when I got behind the wheel, I didn't have that, uh... When you drive a

race car, your personality is how you drive. You know? So, you know, I just drove with—I drove how I was as a person. I drove—I was very patient. Didn't like to ruffle feathers. Didn't like controversy. Didn't like conflict. Didn't want to argue or fight. I got—you know, I had my moments, and I certainly had my limits, but I wanted to have a smooth race and be very calculative and manage and be smart about how I raced. And I didn't like to push people around like my father was more accustomed to doing. I wasn't ever going to be that way.

[00:15:54] **Jesse Thorn:** What was your biggest challenge emotionally as a driver?

[00:15:59] **Dale Earnhardt Jr.:** (*Beat.*) Nerves, anxiety, fear of failure. For whatever reason, and this is just—I just raced this past weekend. I run like one race a year, just to sort of smell the smells and hear the sounds and be reminded why I love it to death. And I was more nervous trying to qualify for this race than I've ever been in my life. It was terrible. But as soon as the qualifying is over and I'm like locked into the race and I know the race—I'm going to be a part of the event, it's fine. I'm perfectly fine. And I was happy. But for whatever reason, there's a lot of nerves and anxiety in racing for me. And there's maybe—I think it's mostly fear of failure. I feel like I'm great. I feel like I'm good enough to go out there and run well. I expect to run at a certain level and compete to a certain level. And if I fall short, I have a hard time accepting that.

And so, I'm really driven by making sure that I go, oh man, I think I should run fifth today or better. You know, I set these sort of modest goals. I think I should run tenth or better. And if that doesn't happen, man, I am so disappointed. And so, I worry going into the event, you know, about that coming true—right?—about whether it's going to be the result I'm expecting. Now, once the race begins, none of that is there anymore. When the race starts, the fear of failure is gone. And it's a thrill. I mean, it's just an emotional elation of being behind the wheel of the car and doing what you love. And I could be running for first, or I can be racing for 30th and still be competing and still be enjoying it.

You know, then you get to the end of the event, and you go back to, you know, judging yourself, judging the end result, the result on paper. Am I happy with that? Or is everyone else happy with that? Did I fall short? Are they disappointed? Am I disappointed? You know, you go back to that.

[00:18:05] **Jesse Thorn:** Do you still feel that way? I mean, you're 48, and you've been mostly retired from racing for quite some time now.

[00:18:11] **Dale Earnhardt Jr.:** (*Chuckles.*) I still feel that way. I think the feeling is worse! (*Chuckles.*) It's not supposed to be, because—yeah, I was racing full time. I felt like I was under so much pressure from myself back in my career, I retired full time after 2017. So, I ran about 20 years. Now I run one race a year. And I swear the other day for qualifying, I don't remember a time where I was any more nervous. I don't know why I allow that to happen, or I don't know why I can't control that better. And so, you take this sort of personal risk with all the equity that you've built over the years when you go run one race. And so, I was super, super nervous. Like if I fail to qualify this—I mean, the odds of that happening aren't really big, but it's still, you know, a possibility. And I probably allow myself to get swept up in that a little bit too much.

[00:19:12] **Jesse Thorn:** You've had multiple concussions about which you've written, and I wonder if they affected your emotional life.

[00:19:24] **Dale Earnhardt Jr.:** Yeah, I don't know. You know, I think I feel pretty much—you know, I'll say this. Like, when I was going through my issues with concussions back around 2016, anxiety was a massive problem. I'd already grew up being a bit anxious and nervous and shy and all that. Racing and my wife and all of the things that becoming a husband and experiences I would have with her were helping me come out of my shell and not be such a homebody and an introvert. So, she refused to huddle up in the house. And we were going to go out to dinner. We were going to do things, you know, and that was really changing me, who I was.

But I still had some anxieties. And when I got the concussions, I would go to grocery stores, and I would go to busy, complex environments. And the anxiety was really bad. And my doctor's like, “Yep, that's your concussion talking to you. That's a process that you're going to have to work through.” And so, what we would do to—instead of sort of removing myself from those places—right?—the old history and the old idea of treatment for that would be to get in a dark room, shut the blinds, no TV, nothing stimulating at all, and rest. Well, that has now been replaced with the complete opposite, which is like an exposure therapy where you chase after environments that are complex, that are going to ramp up those feelings and those emotions and the symptoms. And you want to really push yourself in those moments to get those symptoms firing off. And then you back out, you let it calm down, and then you turn around and go right back in.

And you just keep doing that exposure over and over until the brain is sort of trained to manage—you know, the brain rewires itself and trains to manage those environments. And then they're not uncomfortable anymore. And you go to the grocery store and you don't worry about—you know, you go in there just the way you did for all of your life. You know, and you don't have any reaction. And I never really—outside of the anxiety, I've never really had emotional instability as part of my symptoms. I just feel like—I'll be honest, like becoming a dad and being a husband has sort of unlocked this new box of emotions that I never really had in the toolbox. It has unlocked all of these emotions that now come to the surface a lot easier.

You'll find yourself getting emotional about things or movies or something—right?—that you would probably be unbothered by in the first half of your life. But becoming a dad and—yeah, for some reason it's really kind of made me more aware of how I feel my emotions and what makes me tick, you know, and what gets me going, what riles me up, what upsets me, what's exciting.

You know, obviously I lost my dad a long time ago. I lost my mom in the last couple of years. The reality of how brief life is—I'm turning 49 this year. The understanding that I'm halfway through this ride. And that's a reality that's tough to face, you know? And trying to figure out how to turn that into a positive and make the most of every day going forward so that, you know, you're not sitting around for the second half of this ride wondering when it's going to end. There's just all those things happening to me today, you know, in this part of my life. There's all that going on. And I think that that's what makes me maybe more apt to be anxious, more apt to be emotional about things than I typically would have been, you know, in the first probably 35 years of my life.

[00:23:38] **Jesse Thorn:** My own wife and I have been together since we were 17 years old, and I'm in my early 40s now. And like I said, I got three kids. I think the biggest challenge for me of having kids was the amount of emotional presence that I had to generate and maintain with other people. (*Chuckles.*) Like, my every instinct in a challenging situation is to go to my room and read a book, and with kids you can't just leave, right?

(*Dale agrees.*)

And I would imagine for you as an introvert who—you know, you had a variety of family situations growing up, and you had a career as a dude who traveled the world and engaged it on his own terms as a—you know, as an athlete and performer, entertainer. You're not necessarily forced to sit with your feelings or to sit with other people's feelings. And when you have a kid who wants to play pretend, you kind of got to sit there with them. And that can be very hard.

[00:24:54] **Dale Earnhardt Jr.:** I agree. Yeah. I would say, you know, that's kind of the part of parenthood that maybe I didn't always get right. And I've realized—I think in the last probably six months, I've realized like I need to get better in spaces and parts of my dadding. One of them is the pretending. Isla, my oldest—she wants to pretend everything. And “Pretend I'm this, Dad. Pretend we're here, pretend you're this, Dad.”

And yeah, I mean it's—they want that to happen. They want you to be involved and be open to whatever their imagination is churning up, and that can be tough. Because either you've got things going on in your mind. You're working, you're—you know, it's middle of the afternoon, and you're in between roles professionally or whatever. You have to be really careful. There's been a couple of times where I've gotten up from the situation thinking, “Dang it, I didn't—that wasn't my best work. You know, that wasn't a good enough job right there as a parent.” You know, I just was dismissive of whatever my child wanted from me in that moment, or I didn't think I had time to do it, or I gave an excuse of where I needed to be.

And it's a tough balance between being there for your kids, even in those moments of creativity or when they're just wanting to play and be a kid. And I don't have this excuse, but when I was little, there wasn't—you know, my dad wasn't there to do those things. He wasn't a guy that was going to sit around and pretend and play. And for my child to say, “Dad, let's do XYZ. I want to play this game or read this book,” or whatever. You know, it's new. It's a new thing, and I think it's a work in progress, or I'm a work in progress as a parent.

[00:26:57] **Jesse Thorn:** We're going to take a quick break. When we come back, my guest Dale Earnhardt Jr. collects wrecked cars from races. Not the strangest hobby in the world but definitely on the spectrum. We'll talk about it. Stay with us. It's *Bullseye* for MaximumFun.org and NPR.

[00:27:16] **Promo:**

Music: Exciting rock music.

Jordan Crucchiola: I'm Jordan Crucchiola, host of *Feeling Seen*, where we start by asking our guests just one question: what movie character made you feel seen?

Speaker 1: I knew exactly what it was!

Speaker 2: Clementine from *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*.

Speaker 3: Joy Wang slash Jobu Tupaki.

Jordan: That one question launches amazing conversations about their lives, the movies they love, and about the past, present, and future of entertainment.

Speaker 4: Roy in *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*.

Speaker 5: I worry about what this might say about me, but I've brought Tracy Flick in the film *Election*.

Jordan: So, if you like movies, diverse perspectives, and great conversations, check us out!

Speaker 6: Oof, this is real.

Jordan: New episodes of *Feeling Seen* drop every week on MaximumFun.org.

(Music fades out.)

[00:28:01] **Transition:** Thumpy rock music.

[00:28:06] **Jesse Thorn:** It's *Bullseye*. I'm Jesse Thorn. I'm talking with Dale Earnhardt Jr.

One of the weird things about driving a car, for me at least, is like—the other day I was making a left turn, and I didn't have a stop sign or anything. I had it free and open, but the person perpendicular to me on my left did have a stop sign, but they just pulled into the intersection and hit my back wheel. And it was fine. Everybody was—I mean, I need to get a new wheel, but you know, I just said, “My back wheel.” It was obviously the back wheel of my car. *(Chuckles.)* And I wonder if when you are driving a car on a racetrack and you have to be aware of every little bit about how it's performing mechanically and what's going on with everything about it, whether you feel more or less identified with that car. Like, when somebody clips your back wheel, do you think to yourself, hey, he clipped my back wheel, or he clipped the back wheel of my car?

[00:29:16] **Dale Earnhardt Jr.:** Well, I will say that as the race is happening, you and the car become one thing. You almost feel like the car is like an arm or a leg. Whereas instead of the car touching the track, you're touching the racetrack. You're—you know, instead of the tire of the car on the surface of the track, you feel the track. And when it's really good, when things are working well and the car's working well, you know, the car becomes an extension, a part

of your body. And in a lot of cases, you know, the track even kind of does too. It all becomes one. And you get in these—when you've, you know, run around the racetrack and you go, okay, I've got it figured out; this is the best way to do it. I'm really entering the corner perfectly. I'm exiting the corner the way I want. Everything's feeling good about the car, and then now I just need to do this over and over and over.

Now, there are some dynamic things like tire wear, tire temperature, and the surface temperature of the track, and the weather, wind, all of those things will affect and force you to adjust. But really, when it comes down to it, it's about getting in the rhythm, a very comfortable rhythm and one that is void of mistakes. And so, that's how I would describe driving. So, when you bump into something, it's like you bumped my shoulder, you know, walking down the hall or rubbed elbows with somebody, you know. When your car's hit, it's like somebody stepped on your toe. It's kind of that sensation, if you will.

[00:31:01] **Jesse Thorn:** I know you're really passionate and excited about the history of racing, and you're a bit of a collector.

(Dale confirms.)

One of the things I read that you collect is the... I don't know what the technical term is. I'm going to call them the carcasses of wrecked cars.

(Dale laughs and confirms.)

On the one hand, if I was passionate about racing history and had been as financially successful as you, such that I had the money to have a plot of land to collect broken race cars on—makes perfect sense to me. On the other hand... you're a driver who's been behind the wheel of these cars for most of your life, and your father was killed on the track. And I wonder like how much of this is about “wouldn't it be fun to have these destroyed cars?”—which, I think destroyed cars is part of the fun of motorsports. *(Chuckles.)* But on the other hand, like this has been your life on the line, and your father lost his life this way. And I wonder if that's part of why you collect them.

[00:32:29] **Dale Earnhardt Jr.:** Well, there's probably some truth in both of those reasons. The other part of that was I own a race team. And you know, we build cars, and we put them out on the track to compete. And those cars, when you build them, you're spending hours trying to make it perfect and make it as good as it possibly can be. And a part of you goes along with that car out on the racetrack. There's a lot of pride and, you know, sweat and equity into it. So, when the car crashes beyond repair, you can't simply just take it to the recycling center or cast it aside in a junkyard somewhere. It's hard to let go of the piece of equipment. You've built it and it's yours.

And so, the collection began with our cars, the cars that we created, and we built. But I think that there's a fine line between like saying, “Wow, this crash is insane!” There was a flip at Daytona a couple of weeks ago with this driver. And everybody was just in awe of how that flip transpired, this car tumbling down the back straightaway at Daytona. And there's a fine line between that and then glorifying, you know, an accident. And people used to say—and they maybe still do. Like, they criticize fans that watch for the wrecks, but hey, I mean, I kind

of watched for the wrecks when I was a little boy. I mean, the wrecks were entertaining! You know, they were shocking. They were wild. The racing and the battle for the end was great too. But yes, when there was a crash, oh, we were glued to it.

And so, there's some fascination with that still. There are some complete, un-crashed, unbent race cars in the junkyard that just aged out. You know, they've become obsolete. But those are less exciting for me. (*Chuckles.*) It's the ones that have a story behind them and some damage.

[00:34:45] **Jesse Thorn:** Well, Dale, I sure appreciate your time. Thank you for talking to me. We'll be out here supporting you and your teams as we do all of the gentle nerds of professional athletics.

[00:34:57] **Dale Earnhardt Jr.:** (*Chuckles.*) I've enjoyed this conversation. I really have. And thanks for giving me an opportunity to talk about the next episode of Buster and his new book. This was a lot of fun.

[00:35:09] **Jesse Thorn:** Dale Earnhardt Jr. His new book came out earlier this fall. It's called *Buster Gets Back on Track*.

[00:35:17] **Transition:** Robust, brassy synth with a syncopated beat.

[00:35:20] **Jesse Thorn:** 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've been out on the road with my show *Judge John Hodgman*, and John and I were in Austin, Texas this past week, where Aaron Franklin invited us to eat at Franklin's Barbecue, his barbecue restaurant there in the capital city of Texas. And I ate so much and so many meats that I may still be sweating.

The show is produced by speaking into microphones. Our senior producer is Kevin Ferguson. I want to be clear, I'm happy that I did. Oh boy, was it good! Our producers are 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 by DJW, also known as Dan Wally. Our theme song is "Huddle Formation" by the band The Go! Team. Thanks to The Go! Team. Thanks to their label, Memphis Industries.

Bullseye is on Instagram. We are sharing interview highlights and behind the scenes looks and all kinds of other stuff. We're [@BullseyeWithJesseThorn](#). We're also on Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook. I think that's about it. Just remember, all great radio hosts have a signature signoff.

[00:36:34] **Promo:** *Bullseye with Jesse Thorn* is a production of [MaximumFun.org](#) and is distributed by NPR.

(*Music fades out.*)