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Transition: Gentle, trilling music with a steady drumbeat plays under the dialogue.

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

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.

Jesse Thorn: It's *Bullseye*. I'm Jesse Thorn. Hollywood, California. Tinseltown. Where dreams are made, dreams are broken, and nearly every day something completely (*cancel beep*) crazy happens to someone. On *Bullseye*, we chronicle such stories in a little segment we call The Craziest (*cancel beep*) Day of My Entire Career.

On deck this week, Lisa Ann Walter. She stars on *Abbott Elementary*, the hit sitcom about a Philadelphia public school. Walter plays teacher Melissa Schimenti. Ms. Schimenti is great with kids, loves her coworkers, and is pure Philly to the bone.

Transition: A whooshing sound.

Clip:

Kid: This guy does not look like an Eagle.

Ms. Schimenti: Hey, pipe down. He could be a punter if he wanted to. Go ahead.

Transition: A whooshing sound.

Jesse Thorn: Lisa Ann Walter has been in the business for a long time. She's seen a lot. And when we asked her about the craziest day of her career, she took us back to 2010 and the set of the Ashton Kutcher action-comedy *Killers*. A quick warning before we play the segment, there is some talk of gun violence. Nothing too graphic, wanted to let you know though.

Alright, here we go. Lisa Ann Walter on the craziest (*cancel beep*) day of her entire career.

Lisa Ann Walter: Hi, I'm Lisa Ann Walter, and this is the craziest (*cancel beep*) day of my entire career.

Music: High octane rock music.

Lisa Ann Walter: The craziest of all of them. The one that I finally came to is—yeah, that's the day that I became a stunt person, having never done stunts before in my life. Stunt driving? Never in a million years. Never. Shooting a firearm? I'd never done! So, in the movie *Killers*, you know, the premise is that Ashton Kutcher had been an international spy, and he has fallen in love with Katherine Heigl, and they've moved to this little suburb.

Clip:

Spencer: Let's just say that I worked for the blah-blah-blah, and they gave me a license to blah.

Jen: (*Hyperventilating.*) I need air! I need air, right now! Oh my god. Oh my god.

Spencer: Honey, it was never my primary directive.

Jen: Are we even married?!

Spencer: Yes, we're married!

Jen: (*Shouting over him.*) I mean legally married, not like married in your heart!

Spencer: I got out in France.

Lisa Ann Walter: He figures out that people are trying to kill him. And then he's like, oh my God, who is it? My character is a cougar that comes on to him at his birthday party.

Clip:

Olivia: I need to get a fill up.

Spencer: Uh-uh.

Olivia: You got something there you think I might like?

Jen: I'll see you guys in a minute.

Olivia: Or something you might like. It's your party. You get to have whatever you want.

Spencer: Uuuh, wine?

Jen: Having fun?

Olivia: I like wine.

Spencer: I'll go open it.

Olivia: I'll be here with a birthday kiss when you get back.

Lisa Ann Walter: Literally, until I walked in for the wardrobe fitting, I thought I was the nosy neighbor wearing a tracksuit. I got the job offer. It said, “playing Olivia”. And before that, it was like Mrs. somebody. And I was like, oh, you know, I guess they changed the name of my character. I saw the wardrobe, and the wardrobe was seven-inch platform shoes, miniskirts, you know, pushup bras. And I went, oh my god, I'm the cougar assassin. So, I had never read any of the things that she was doing. I found out when I got to Atlanta to shoot this movie that I was going to be stunt driving a Mustang and shooting a Glock.

Music: Classic percussion-heavy spy thriller music.

Lisa Ann Walter: I'd never in my career done anything that really had any level of danger. You know, at that stage I was maybe 44 or 45. I just didn't think it was in the cards for me. Like, that part of my career—the opportunity to play a role like that, like what am I going to be a Bond girl?

(Music swells with loud, bright brass.)

Like, that's done. It's over. And all of a sudden, here it is in my lap. And I didn't even—I think maybe if they'd given me the audition, I might have talked myself out of it. Like, I'm not the girl that they hired to do this role. Those are—that's other types of girls that do this. I mean, I read the description, so I ostensibly knew what was happening, but I didn't realize I was going to be the one doing it. For some reason, I read it and I thought, oh, they'll get someone that looks like me. Because there was a double.

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They'll get someone that looks like me to do this driving stunt, which involved me getting behind the wheel of the Mustang—which I had already done one little scene in—flooring it, like trying to run over Ashton, doing a loop around like this little—you know, like it was a little parking lot in front of this building, driving again at him full speed, pedal to the metal, and getting t-boned. And the way they do that is they put the car on a chain, and they yank it.

(Car crash sounds.)

I was terrified. Never—I mean, I've never been—knock wood, I've never been in a—you know, anything but a fender-bender. I didn't know what was going to happen. You know, am I going to get whiplash? Am I going to—am I not going to put a brake on and like hit a wall? Am I going to run over and kill America's sweetheart, Ashton Kutcher? We had a stunt coordinator, Doug Coleman, who's just top of the game, best in the business. And he was really—once I found out that it was me, and I literally was standing there like waiting for the stunt person to get in, and all of the crew was looking at me. And they go, “Okay. Buckle up.”

I'm like, “What? Oh, it's me?! I do it?!” So, I got in the car, and I tentatively drove forward.

They were like, “No, you have to jam it.”

You know, you would have thought that there would have been a trial run, like a “here's a light version of it”. Yyyeah, no.

Music: High energy rock music.

Lisa Ann Walter: They wanted spitting tires, spitting gravel, smoke coming out of the back of this car.

(Tires squealing.)

I got a heavy foot in real life. I drive a Challenger. I'm a fan of muscle cars. I like speed. But I've never done it aiming it at a famous actor and a wall. But I did it about the fourth time, hit the gas, went flat out, and the chain yanked the car. We went flying sideways. I did not get whiplash. And I popped out of the car and said, “Let's go again!”

(Crashing sound followed by an engine revving.)

And the crew died laughing, because they were—everybody—I had these big burly men clapping me on the back. And they said, “That's the answer that we love to hear. That's the response.” He goes, “About half the time that happens.” That was great. Yeah. Day's not over though.

Music: High energy rock music.

Lisa Ann Walter: So, we have a quick lunch, go back on set. They tell me about the next sequence that's gonna happen, an action sequence. I go after Ashton again and hit the pedal. You know, I go full out aiming towards him, he jumps into a trailer. And I pull out a gun and start shooting a Glock at him, and then I blow up. Did I neglect to mention that part?

(Explosion.)

They do pyrotechnics. Right where you are, they light stuff on fire. Quickly. It kind of explodes. And it's hot. It's hot. There's a level of trust involved with thinking, “I'm not gonna—” I had a lot of hairspray on too. *(Chuckles.)* So, any spark or flame, I would've gone up. But they do it like a bit of an explosion, and then they add in posts like a bigger explosion.

(Explosion.)

People who know guns, when they see an actor who's holding it wrong, it's the first thing they do is start getting mad. Doug Coleman taught me on that set, A) how to hold it so I look like I knew what I was doing. That was very important. Because, you know, I'm a professional. I'm an assassin. The very next thing he taught me was how to check the gun to make sure it was cold, which he did. And I said, “I don't know what I'm checking for.”

And he said, “I'm going to show you, and I don't care who on this set hands you this gun. You don't take it from anybody but me. You don't pick it up from anywhere. You don't take it from anyone. I'm the only one who will hand you this firearm, and I will tell you that it's cold. You also, after I hand it to you, you check it.”

I'm like, “Okay, but I'm going to check it in front of you, because I don't know what I'm checking for.”

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And so, he said he agreed to do that. And I said to him, “I don't want to have anything to do with shooting something that I'm not assured is safe.” So, he assured me that it was and handed it to me. And basically what I did was to say, “I don't want to be responsible for this. Somebody else make sure, like babysit me.” And in that case, they did. Because I wasn't trying to be cocky. I mean, I'm also a girl. Wearing cha-cha heels. Like, I'm not trying to look like a rootin' tootin' cowboy. Like, I don't know what I'm doing.

Music: Thumpy jazz.

Lisa Ann Walter: You know, here's the thing. Honest to God, I was a little almost teary eyed at the fact that I had never played anything like that in my career. I didn't know that this was something that an everyday walking around actress could do. So, I just figured it would be a stunt person. So, when it was me, I was surprised. But I'll tell you, we went out that night, after doing all this work, with the stunt people that were on and the coordinator, Doug Coleman, and the other—there was a woman that was one of the stunt people that was working with me really closely to, you know, teach me how to do a lot of this stuff that's really well respected in the stunt world. And I felt like one of them, which when you're an actor, it's a real brotherhood, the whole stunt folk. And they have a respect for each other, because they're doing stuff that nobody else wants to do. So, the fact that I was like accepted among them made me feel really—it made me feel like a true badass.

Jesse Thorn: Lisa Ann Walter on the craziest (*beep*) day of her entire career: the time that she played a cougar assassin in an Ashton Kutcher movie. You can catch Lisa on *Abbott Elementary*. That very funny show is wrapping up its third season right now on ABC.]

(*Music fades out.*)

Transition: Chiming synth.

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. Here at my house, I'm still working on my office shed, but it was my birthday, and the staff of Maximum Fun were nice enough to get me a little tiny needle point that says, “Shed, Sweet Shed”.

Our show is produced by speaking into microphones. Our senior producer, Kevin Ferguson. Our producers, Jesus Ambrosio and Richard Robey. Our production fellow at Maximum Fun

is Daniel Huecias. We get booking help from Mara Davis. Our interstitial music is by DJW, also known as Dan Wally. Our theme song is called “Huddle Formation”. It was written and recorded by the band The Go! Team. Thanks to The Go! Team. Thanks to their label, Memphis Industries.

Bullseye is on Instagram. We have pictures from behind the scenes and videos and more. Follow us there, [@BullseyeWithJesseThorn](#). I am also on Instagram. I just started my own Instagram account here in 2024! I had one for my menswear blog before, but this one's for radio stuff and podcast stuff. It's [@JesseThornVeryFamous](#). So, please follow me, [@JesseThornVeryFamous](#) on Instagram, and you'll see pictures of me and our guests and also my dog. I guess that's about it! Just remember, all great radio hosts have a signature signoff.

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(Music fades out.)