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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. My first guest this week—and indeed, my first guest this year!—is Jude Law. I don't really need to say that much more than that, right? This man's 52 years old; he's been acting since he was a teenager. *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, *The Grand Budapest Hotel*, *The Young Pope*. Those wild green eyes, that voice, tussled little tuft of hair. Mm! Jude Law.

He's starting off 2025 strong. He is starring in a brand-new *Star Wars* show called *Skeleton Crew*. He plays a roguish, force-using spaceman who works in cahoots with four children who have discovered an ancient spaceship on their home planet. It is a ton of fun. And he's also featured opposite Nicholas Holt in *The Order*. It's a crime drama based on a true story. Law plays Terry Husk, a veteran FBI agent who has traveled to the Pacific Northwest to take on a new case. He's following a string of robberies that he believes have ties to a neo-Nazi terrorist group. Terry is on the case with fellow FBI agent Joanne, played by Jurnee Smollett, and a local cop named Jamie, who's played by Tye Sheridan.

In this clip, the three regroup after a sting operation. Terry's blown up the mission. Joanne lets him have it.

Transition: A whooshing sound.

Clip:

Joanne: You're not in lead anymore, Terry. You don't get to run off on your own without (*censor beep*)ing telling me first.

Terry: It wasn't time. I was with Jamie.

Joanne: (*Furiously.*) It wasn't time?! Bull(*censor beep*). You were with Jamie?! Well, how'd that (*censor beep*)ing work out for you, huh? Considering you mother(*censor beep*) let the target get away.

Terry: Did you find the cars—?

Joanne: Now they dumped the cars in a lot. There's no prints. They wiped them down. Because they had plenty of (*cursor beep*)ing time to do it.

Terry: They had a shot on me, and they didn't take it. They had a shot. They didn't take it. Why not?

Joanne: Well, where were you? They don't want to kill a fed.

Terry: That's right. They're not dumb. They have a plan.

Transition: A whooshing sound.

Jesse Thorn: Jude Law, welcome to *Bullseye*. I'm so happy to have you on the show.

Jude Law: Thanks for having me.

Jesse Thorn: First of all, I really enjoy the movie, and I'm really glad to watch this kind of movie. The main kind of movie that I want to watch, other than a super, super funny comedy, is basically like a 1970s people running around and shooting each other movie.

Jude Law: (*Chuckles.*) With a message.

Jesse Thorn: That's also like a pretty serious—yeah, like a real movie. Not just—you know, not just *Death Wish* necessarily. All the best to *Death Wish*, but the *French Connection*. You know what I mean?

Jude Law: Well, that's what presented itself to us in this script, or at least the potential for that. And you know, they don't come along very often, and then they don't seem to be made all that often anymore. But they were the real tentpole kind of crowd-drawers of cinema when I grew up, and there were films that I aspired to be in. And I know that was certainly what Justin Kurzel, our director, was trying to emulate. And it was interesting that, you know, here's a piece set in the '80s. It lent itself to that style of filmmaking, and it also emulated films of that style, you know.

Jesse Thorn: You play a pretty broken human being in the film. You were a producer on the film. Was there a discussion about what would be broken about you?

Jude Law: Absolutely. That was the beginning of the discussion, really. The piece—the true crime element, the historical element, the genre was all there in the first cold read. What wasn't as clear was the character of Husk. Zach Baylin, our writer, had made a smart choice to amalgamate certain attributes of various special agents who had been on the case. But we didn't want to actually just base him on any one of them.

So, we were offered the opportunity to really embellish, detail this character in a way that best suited the story. And I was always taken with this idea that this guy was a kind of broken soldier, that he'd had this extraordinary career. The career had come at a cost. This devotion and obsession with his tasks had crushed him kind of physically and spiritually. And he was hoping to have a sort of early retirement, go fishing, hopefully patch his life back together, get his family back under his wings.

And of course, what you see is that the biggest case of his life is in front of him. And to me, it was important—to take your words—to absolutely—to break him, but in a way that felt plausible and realistic, you know. And we leant a lot on some of the histories of the agents.

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I just mentioned the real agents, you know, going undercover to crack KKK gangs and Cosa Nostra, but a lot of the other stuff we built in ourselves.

Jesse Thorn: I mean, he gets nosebleeds. And a nosebleed is such a vivid sense-memory. Because it's so—on the one hand, it's almost meaningless in that like it's not like having one leg shorter than the other, and you have to limp.

Jude Law: It's not as bad—if you bled from the eyes, you'd be really worried.

(They laugh.)

Jesse Thorn: Yes, this is true! But like—

Jude Law: There's also something vulnerable about a nosebleed.

Jesse Thorn: Right, it's the powerlessness.

Jude Law: It's like, “Oh, put your head back, put your head back.” You know, even the biggest tough guy with a nosebleed suddenly, “Oh, oh. *(Sniffles.)*” It's a bit sniffy and a little bit frail. But that was the idea.

So, I can't remember what came first. It was such a wonderfully collaborative process with Zach, our writer, Justin, the director, and me. And we really all sort of piled in or peeled away this poor guy's—until he was a husk, basically. We took from the name. The idea that he had a stent put in—there's a shot where you see a scar on his chest. And then I think it was Justin who said that his uncle had taken blood thinners, because he had a stent in the same period. And this drug had caused nosebleeds if he got emotional. And we just thought that what a wonderful—as you said—kind of colorful physical trait to put in there.

Jesse Thorn: Did you have to decide what about this character is an awful physical disaster—which he is, right? Like, he's been through—he's been to heck and back; he's lost his family; he's constantly smoking and bleeding from the nose. *(Chuckles.)* Like, he's really destroyed. But—

You know, I read something where the director just passingly mentioned, “We did like want him to wear pants where he could be proud of his butt.”

Jude Law: I know! Justin did say that, because it's been repeated to me a few times.
(Laughs.)

To be more specific, the physicality of Husk came about mostly from the work of layering in a past and really trying to embody all that we've discussed. The cost—physical and spiritual cost of that kind of work and devotion to law enforcement, but also spending your time with bad people. You know, trying to catch toxicity and understand it. And what does that do to you? You know, how do you shed that?

He's not doing an awful lot of meditation and yoga, this guy. He's soaking all that badness up, and it's like it's kind of killing him. But to go back to the physicality, it was literally—or the effects of the boots and the pants and a belt with a gun—I mean, it's funny how that has an effect on you. You wear them day in, day out. You carry yourself in a certain way.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah, those are big things. Like, the heels on a pair of western boots and the weight of a big, heavy belt are really big physical elements to carry around. Like, I've put on cowboy boots before and been like, “Whoa, this is really different!” (Chuckles.)

Jude Law: It has an effect on your gait. And the belt does too. It took me by surprise, actually, the effect of a belt with a weapon on it and being used to wearing one and comfortable. And if you wear one for any long period of time—you know, how you sit and being aware of where it is and what it does to the way you sit and therefore what the way you get up is very interesting.

Jesse Thorn: You worked on stage before you worked on screen extensively. And working on stage is not not about your face. Like, certainly your face is very important. But you know, you're working on conveying a lot of things to people who are sitting 350 feet away from you. And so, it's a very different thing.

Whereas, on film—like, your face is 85% of what's—like, there's so much of film that is on your face. Did you have to like reckon with what your face meant to people? Like, how people read your face?

Jude Law: Absolutely. I'm trying to remember now the sort of stages... I mean, I remember early on as a stage actor and hoping to be a film actor and loving film and studying great performances by actors I admired and knowing that that was the case. But I never went to school for it. And so, also learning ultimately on the job when the opportunity arose and learning by mistakes, really building a sense of confidence in when doing very little works a great amount.

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And funnily enough, it ties back to what we were talking about with this character, Husk—that an awful lot of the physicality, an awful lot of the work was done in just understanding

his past and being able to sit on that in the moment and hopefully conveying it, literally, through eyes.

And I remember people talking to me as a stage actor and talking about—I mean, I'm sure this is a quote by some great thespian. (*Laughing.*) I can't remember who it was, so I'll just quote it anyway. But it's something about if acting on stage is surgery with a scalpel, then acting on film is surgery with a laser. And it's like really bringing everything right down.

But interestingly, it's all about the same—it's all about sourcing the same place, which is truth and being honest. I'm not a massive fan of theatrical performances, unless that's the style of the piece. I prefer a sort of honesty on stage. And you can always tell, you know, when someone's—I think—(*chuckles*) overdoing it.

Jesse Thorn: But I mean, when you're a screen actor, one of the things that you have to deal with is just what people think of you in the very moment that they see you. Like, before you've even done anything. Like, I think a lot about—I've probably brought this up on the show before—about standup comics, right? Standups have to walk on stage—and the reason it's a cliché that a stand up would walk on stage and say, “I know what you're thinking. It's like so-and-so had a kid with so-and-so,” or whatever is because they need to engage immediately with what the audience thinks of them when they see them.

Like, when you go out to audition for parts as an actor, or you have reactions to work on screen in particular as an actor, like you just have to engage with the way that people react to how you look in a way that—if that isn't your job—you do not.

Jude Law: No, you are absolutely right. It's an awareness of that impact. But it's also the opportunity to play with that impact. Like, I've found that recently, since—you know, in the last five or so years, turning 50 and knowing that there's a perception of me through my work that goes back 20 something years. And what I like is the opportunity now of knowing that's there and playing against it.

So, I just played Henry VIII, for example. Now, Henry VIII had a chapter in his life where he was viewed as being this good-looking young guy who was a catch and all of that. And then of course, crossed the Rubicon and became this sort of monster. So, being able to lean on my past when I was being cast as being like the good-looking young guy and take him therefore into another area—this persona—was really thrilling. Because it felt like, well, okay, the audience will come with me on that, because I know they have that relationship with me already.

Jesse Thorn: We're going to take a quick break. When we return, even more with Jude Law. Stay with us. It's *Bullseye* from MaximumFun.org and NPR.

Transition: Thumpy rock music.

Jesse Thorn: Welcome back to *Bullseye*. I'm Jesse Thorn. My guest is Jude Law. He's the star of *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, *Cold Mountain*, and many others. And he's off to a busy start this year. You can see him on the TV show *Star Wars: Skeleton Crew*, which is streaming

now on Disney+ and is a hoot. You can also see him opposite Nicholas Holt in the crime thriller *The Order*, which is in theaters and on demand. (*Beat.*) I wouldn't call that one a hoot, but it's also good. Let's get back into our conversation.

Did you, as a 50-year-old—as you became 50—take the opportunity to take any stock?

Jude Law: Sure, it's been going on—50's an—you know, it's a marker, isn't it? And I certainly didn't stop to take stock, (*chuckling*) but I've been taking stock since I passed that threshold. Because I guess it's just a time to do so. And I've been asked to look back a little more than ever before in situations like this, which has forced me to take stock. I guess so, yeah. Yeah.

Jesse Thorn: What did that mean?

Jude Law: It gave me a clarity of where I've been and where I want to go, to be honest. It was a sense, suddenly, of... confidence, perhaps, in knowing what I know, and also a sense of purpose to continue to achieve stuff and set out goals and aims for what's to come. (*Chuckles.*) I sound like I'm being really cagey. I'm not. (*Laughing.*) I'm just trying to be eloquent.

Jesse Thorn: It's okay! I mean, I was just thinking about it. Like, here you are—I mean, A) you're turning 50. B) You and your wife have two very young children. And you have—I mean, you have children who are grown now.

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Jude Law: Are grownups too, yeah.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah. So, it is like—

Jude Law: I always love that contradiction, grown up children. (*Laughs.*) I always keep saying to them, “What do I call you? Kids? No, you're my kids! But you're adults.” My adults.

Jesse Thorn: Right! But you're like—you know. You're, in a lot of ways, starting your life again, right? There's a starting your life again that just comes with middle age, right?

(*Jude agrees.*)

You hit 50; you're like, “Well, in best case scenario, I only get that many more of these.”

Jude Law: True. I'll tell you what I do like, what I've realized. I love challenge. I love change. I love—you know, healthily. I don't mean like, “You know, right, drop it all and move on.” I like the idea of keeping things alive.

There was a moment about ten years ago when my wife and I first met, and I was living—I had this lovely home, but it was very clear that a new chapter was starting. And actually moving on from that and starting again with everyone in tow, but—it just felt it refreshing, and it scared the life out of me sometimes.

I was talking about this with my dad the other day, actually—about how we moved home quite a few times as a family when I was a kid. Only because my parents loved an adventure, and they would say, “Right. Well, we've done this home. Let's go find another one.” And they'd rebuild it and renovate. And it's a sense of adventure, I think, that I think keeps you alert, keeps you fresh. And I certainly get stimulated by that.

And it's the same with work in the sense of what haven't I done? What's a challenge? What's ahead that scares the hell out of me?

Jesse Thorn: So, what was an example of that you—?

Jude Law: I think both the last—taking on *Henry VIII*, taking on Husk, and even stepping into the *Star Wars* universe. Because they were so contrasting and challenging in can I pull each of those off? They all presented moments where I doubted myself or the process, but I'm proud of all of them.

Jesse Thorn: Another sort of middle-aged marker that you went through as a performer was doing *Hamlet*, both in the West End and on Broadway. And you did that at the point where one does *Hamlet*, which is basically as you pass into middle age. You know what I mean?

Jude Law: Yeah. 30s.

Jesse Thorn: You know what I mean? Like, it's a play about coming to terms with your adult self, sort of. (*Chuckles.*) You know what I mean?

Jude Law: Absolutely. Well, there are references in it to him being this eternal student and him realizing, in many ways, you've got to step up now. And of course, there's also the line that he has to cross, where he wants to be king, or he wants to claim his throne on behalf of his murdered father. But of course, he's still looked at as a boy. And that, in itself, also folds into the assumed madness, and that if he can't be king, then he'll be the fool.

And the fool, you could think of, represents also youth and clumsiness. You know.

Transition: A whooshing sound.

Clip:

Hamlet (*Hamlet*): (*Heartbrokenly.*) I knew him, Horatio. A fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy. He hath borne me on his back a thousand times, and now... how abhorred in my imagination it is. My gorge rises at it.

Here hung those lips, which I have kissed I know not how oft.

(*A crow caws distantly.*)

Where be your jibes now? Your gambols, your songs, your flashes of merriment that will want to set the table on a roar? Not one now, to mock your own grinning.

Transition: A whooshing sound.

Jesse Thorn: Was that a goal that you had always had? Or was that something that you fell into?

Jude Law: Uh, a little bit of both. It always made me laugh, the line in that wonderful film *Withnail and I*, where the uncle—Uncle Monty—says to them, “There’s a day in every actor’s life where they realize they will not play the Dane.”

(*Jesse chuckles.*)

And he looks back on it as this, because he’s this sort of, you know, old drunk who’s actually probably had a very unsuccessful career as an actor.

And so, that always sort of amused me. But it wasn’t like I had some great aim; “I must play Hamlet.” It was then—it was presented to me by a terrific director, and it felt right. And going back to what I said before, it scared the pants off me.

I’d actually never done a piece of Shakespeare before. So, I sort of thought, “Gosh, well, if I’m going to get in the water, I might as well dive into this one!” (*Laughs.*)

Jesse Thorn: I mean, Shakespeare is really difficult to perform on stage, A) because it’s very good. I don’t know if you knew that about Shakespeare.

Jude Law: He is pretty good, yeah!

Jesse Thorn: Yeah. But also because, you know, you have an intrinsic and extrinsic goal.

[00:20:00]

You have the goal of portraying this character, but you also—to do it in, you know, the 21st century, you have to at the very least trust the director, but—to some extent—do work

yourself to communicate clearly, simply. Just because old timey words in funny patterns could get in the way. Right? And like that is a challenge that would be terrifying to me.

Jude Law: You have a lot on your side, though. I was fortunate in that I had a director who didn't overly enforce a concept onto the production. I went on to do *Henry V* with him too, and he did the same there. He really gets the—he gets out of the way of the text. And the thing that you really have on your side is this amazing text. Which you're right, is daunting in that if you approach it as oldie-worldie and period, but actually is also some of the most beautiful, poetic writing. And insightful.

And if you just study it and trust it, it does a huge amount of the work for you. Both emotionally, it takes you with it, but also—you know, you are able to express the feelings through this incredible song.

Jesse Thorn: Are you scared to get too intellectual about these things? I mean, like you played Henry VIII; there's a lot of books about Henry VIII. I know you've read a bunch of them. (*Chuckles.*) Right? Is there a point where it is no longer helpful to you to intellectualize, and you have to put that aside and engage with whatever it is?

Jude Law: Oh yeah, absolutely. And I'm not one of these actors who has a kind of—a process that is sort of, the same every time. But there's always a certain amount of work that I think you should do just to know your subject.

You know, when I played a pope, I went down a terrible rabbit hole for a period, reading up, thinking I should know everything about the Vatican and the church. And I was reading up on popes, and it just left me cold. I didn't know what to do. And I went to the director saying, “You know, I'm lost. I've gotten up to sort of St. Peter. And blah, blah, blah.” (*Chuckles.*)

And he was like, “What are you doing?” He was like, “That's a waste of time. Just play the character. Like, this is a man. Just be the man.” (*Chuckling.*) And it was kind of a good lesson at that time, not to worry necessarily abooout all the backstory.

But with Henry, there were so many clues there that actually—and once I'd read a couple of the books, I was obsessed with finding out whether there were more facts. And what really intrigued me about it was, in fact, out of like 20 books or so I read with all these different historians with all their different perspectives, but the facts were very few and all the same. And eeverything else was their perception of it.

And that freed me up, because then I suddenly thought, “Well, I can make my own leap here. And I can interpret him in my own way.”

Jesse Thorn: In the new *Star Wars* show that you're in, which is called *Skeleton Crew*, you're working with a bunch of kids mostly. Which is a really—like the stars of the show are kids. And that is a really different experience that is, I would imagine, very difficult to intellectualize. Because you know, as intellectually gifted as kids may be, ultimately they are cast as child actors because of, at least in part, qualities that they possess in and of—like, in and of themselves.

Jude Law: Yeah, yeah. And similar to the character. I know John said that early on, that he had spoken to Richard Donner about it, and Donner had said, “You know, you need to find kids who are very close to the characters, or let the character of the child direct the character on the page.”

I loved the idea—you know, I found—I discovered *Star Wars* as a kid, so my relationship with it is sort of still as a 10-year-old, 11-year-old, or however old I was. Probably a bit younger even. You know, that universe—to me—is seen through those eyes. And so, to make the protagonists children I thought was wonderful, and it was a way into that universe that made sense to me. I didn't want to necessarily go into it with a sort of worthiness and a too-adult an approach.

And I was alarmed actually at just how seasoned and professional these kids were. They arrived really ready to work and really ready to be challenged and were very, very accomplished. And then they were also children, so they brought a wonderful sense of goofiness and play and sticking things on their face when they were off camera and running around and being very excited. Which also was very important! And at that point, I also chose—the character had this room to be this kind of grumpy...

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He didn't really understand children. He's kind of never had a childhood, this fella, Jod. And so he's also the kind of big brother who's just like, “What are you doing? Why are you crying for mummy? Who's—what are you—? Pull yourself together and fly the spaceship. Shut up.”

You know, and that dynamic was interesting to me and fun and meant that—as a little group, we could really play off each other. And they were very—they were encouraged to be themselves. They were encouraged to have fun and be kids, but they also were very professional.

Jesse Thorn: Did working with kids make you think of your own acting when you were a child? Or a teen?

Jude Law: Not really.

Jesse Thorn: Should you have? I mean, your parents were teachers. But then they ended up having their own theater company, right?

(Jude confirms.)

So, I don't know where that happened in the timeline of your childhood. I know that you were in the National Youth Musical Theatre.

Jude Law: Yeah, the theatre. I joined a youth theatre company when I was about, uhhh, 12? And we were doing sort of workshops and theatre, improvised and productions outside of school. And then my mum and dad's theatre company.

Jesse Thorn: Improvised?

Jude Law: Yeah, we would do workshops—

Jesse Thorn: Which kind of—? Like, story theatre improvised? Like, making Mike Leigh plays? What were you—?

Jude Law: Yes, kind of! And you know, working on themes and putting scenes together and improvising them. And then, you know, they would be scripted and written down, and we'd build plays that we'd then take to the Edinburg Festival. And we went on an international tour once.

They were a very talented company, the National Youth Music Theatre. And it was really, looking back, a great kind of—that was my training in many ways. 'Cause I was a kid. We were all kids, but they took it very seriously and put a lot of responsibility on us. And my mum and dad— But it was a very—you know, my family were very creative. My mum and dad both loved the theatre, loved film, loved art. My sister's a painter. It was quite a bohemian upbringing.

Jesse Thorn: We'll finish up my conversation with Jude Law after a quick break. When we return, I—a substantially bald man—will ask Jude Law, a man with a hypnotically beautiful receding hairline, how he feels about that hairline. It's *Bullseye* for MaximumFun.org and NPR.

Promo:

Brenda Snell: Have you been looking for a new podcast all about nerdy pop culture? Well, I have just the thing for you!

(Voice echoing.) Secret Histories of Nerd Mysteries!

Music: Upbeat rock music.

Austin Taylor: *Secret Histories of Nerd Mysteries* in a weekly pop culture history podcast, hosted by me: Host Austin.

Brenda: And me! Host Brenda. We've already tackled mysteries such as: What happened to the puppets from *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*? Is Snoopy Mexican? And why do people hate Barney so much?

Austin: From theme parks to cartoons; to '80s, '90s, and 2000s nostalgia, we tackle it all!

Brenda: Check us out every Tuesday on MaximumFun.org and wherever you get podcasts.

(Music fades out.)

Transition: Thumpy synth with light vocalizations.

Jesse Thorn: It's *Bullseye*. I'm Jesse Thorn. My guest is Jude Law. He's starring in the new crime thriller, *The Order*.

When was the first time that you played an American?

Jude Law: Mm. Good question. I think it might have been—on film, I think it was *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* with—Clint Eastwood's film. I'm pretty—I may be wrong, but I think that's when. Yeah.

Jesse Thorn: If you had been a guy that went to RADA and did four years of dialect training or whatever, I'd say, “Yeah, well, it's a technical job. You get your printed out international phonetic alphabet, and you just go to town that way.”

But what did you have to do as a guy who didn't do that?

Jude Law: You ask advice. And I was led very fortuitously straight to the door of Timothy Monarch, Tim Monich. Tim Monich is the godfather of dialect instruction. And he makes it incredibly straightforward and easy, even though you—again, you got to do your homework. Because you—

Jesse Thorn: Had you been cast already?

Jude Law: Yeah, I'd done a half-hearted sort of Savannah Georgian accent in the audition and got it, and then had to get to work and really make it authentic. And I've worked with Tim pretty much ever since. And if not Tim, then someone he's associated with.

Jesse Thorn: What do you have to do?

Jude Law: You basically are training your muscles in your mouth to work in a different way. And so, some of it is—it depends on your ear. Like, I've got a decent ear, so I can hear and mimic, but then you really have to get into the muscular technicality of how a sound is made.

[00:30:00]

And then also, little details like how vowels may trip into other vowels. And it's also forcing you to be specific.

So, for example, with Terry Husk—who we fabricated, we created—it's no good saying, “Oh, he's from New York, or he's an East Coast.” You got to know what street he's on. Like, what does his mum sound like? What does his dad sound like? What's he listening—what's he hearing on the radio? And you get into that, and you start really building up a soundscape of what you want this person to sound like.

Jesse Thorn: Because there is a real... there's a real danger any time a British person is playing an American that they're just going to be like—

Jude Law: And vice versa, by the way. (*Chuckles.*)

Jesse Thorn: Well, sure. It doesn't come up as much. One time Dick Van Dyke told me that nobody told him he was doing a bad job, and he wished they had mentioned it.

(*They laugh.*)

Jude Law: Did he really tell you that?

Jesse Thorn: Yeah, he did tell me that. It was really great. Dick Van Dyke's a joy.

Jude Law: Yeah, that's a pitfall. It's there. (*Chuckling.*) I mean, look, I'm not commenting much because I—you know. I think I've had varying successes at pulling it off. Some are easier than others. Some are harder. It's interesting also what directors want. Like, sometimes I'm amazed that I kind of go in and go, “So, let's talk about the accent,” and they're like, “What do you mean?”

I'm like, “Well, he's an American. I'm an Englishman. We've got to be specific here.” (*Laughs.*)

“Oh! Yeah, you're right! I hadn't thought of that. Well, just do an American accent.”

You're like, “(*Chuckling.*) Yeah, mm, no, no. It's set in Charleston. You know, we got to—”

It's so interesting that sometimes they don't even see it or hear it, and they—or they'll get worried that there's a dialect coach, and “They're not going to tell you how to act, are they?”

I'm like, “No, no, no. It's sound. It's just—he's just interested in my diphthong.” (*Laughing.*) You know what I mean?

Jesse Thorn: What's a phoneme? I think I'm using that word correctly. What's a phoneme you had to work really hard on for this movie?

Jude Law: A pho-name?

Jesse Thorn: A phoneme. Isn't that with a—?

Jude Law: Oh, a sound!

(Jesse confirms.)

I don't want to say where Terry's from, because—*(laughing)* just in case I did get the accent wrong. I'm just happy people go, “Oh, it sounded really plausible!” I'll take that, and I'm not going to open myself up to, “Well, you didn't sound like you were from there.” But there's a certain, uh, *(emphasizing a rhodic R)* arrr, arr. There's a kind of *(briefly dipping into a southern sounding dialect)* A-R sound which was really specific and just didn't come naturally.

Jesse Thorn: But arr?

Jude Law: Yeah, it was a—it's a kind of dull ayyy-ar. An A sound. It was really the A sound, but an A sound—an A vowel sound on certain words. Yeah.

Jesse Thorn: Because there's a sort of flatness to Western speech that's—like, if you're going to be from Savannah, Georgia, you can be forgiven a little bit of Foghorn Leghoring. You can just enjoy a few vowels, like Daniel Craig in *Knives Out* or something.

(Jude agrees.)

But there's a flatness to Western speech that is very subtle. And you know, there are specifics about it that even I, as an American, would have trouble parsing.

Jude Law: There's also where it's placed. Because certainly as a young man—and I've noticed this. If you listen to—*(airily)* a lot of English people talk up there like that. You know? And they'll talk up out of their nose or out of their forehead.

But if you start doing that in an American accent, you sound very odd. Americans tend, or certainly East Coasters tend, to *(dropping into a low monotone)* talk much more down there. And so, placing your voice naturally down there and still feeling like you've got some kind of range and personality is quite unnatural.

But it's a really interesting challenge. And so, placing him, placing Husk's voice in the—finding that placement was key.

Jesse Thorn: This gift is called the gift of Costner.

Jude Law: Bless him.

Jesse Thorn: *(Chuckling.)* If you're able to bring your voice down there and still be an actor.

Jude Law: *(In a low Kevin Costner-esque inflection.)* That's right. Yep. Just mumble your way through.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah. He's wonderful at it.

I have a stupid question to ask you. I'm bald, and you've always had this very handsome hair area in the front of your hair.

Jude Law: (*Giggling.*) I know! My peak. My island, my kids call it.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah, and it's all— Are you prepared to defend that area as necessary, as you—?

Jude Law: With my life. (*Laughing.*) Oh, you mean fake—? What do you mean?

Jesse Thorn: As you age.

Jude Law: Sow some seeds in there. (*Laughs.*)

Jesse Thorn: Well, look, technological. There's far more than just surgical interventions these days. How important is defending this front to you?

Jude Law: It's so vital to who I am. However, I've shorn it off several times for certain roles, and I've no issue with a pate. My father is bald, and...

That's a very good question! I think it's one that I'll have to answer when the day comes!

Jesse Thorn: You're welcome, here with us.

Jude Law: (*Chuckling.*) Thank you!

Jesse Thorn: We're glad to accept you.

[00:35:00]

Jude Law: I mean, I was always—one of the things I—many things I love about Jack Nicholson is obviously his performances, his persona, his energy. But it was always the receding hairline. It, to me, made him unbelievably attractive and charismatic. So, I'm a big—

(*Jesse agrees.*)

Right?! I'm a big fan of it.

Jesse Thorn: I know exactly what you're talking about. I agree with you completely. And I think you have that going on.

(*Jude thanks him.*)

Like, your front hair is really distinctive and a big part of how unspeakably handsome you are.

(They chuckle.)

Jude Law: Thank you so much. And I will defend it to the last! My island.

Jesse Thorn: But I'm just saying, if it goes, it goes. And you can come hang out with me in the bald part of town.

(Jude thanks him again.)

Well, Jude Law, I sure appreciate your time. It was really nice to get to talk to you.

Jude Law: It was my pleasure. And you. Thanks, mate!

Jesse Thorn: Jude Law. His latest movie, *The Order*, is in theaters. You can also rent or buy it if you feel like watching it at home. It's an excellent film. And we didn't get to talk about it much, but Jude Law is great in this new *Star Wars* show, which is called *Skeleton Crew*. He is really funny, and it's just all the things that he's great at. And it's a really fun show besides. You can catch that on Disney+.

Transition: Bright, chiming synth with a syncopated beat.

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, as well as at Maximum Fun Headquarters—overlooking beautiful MacArthur Park in Los Angeles, California. That was the primary distribution point for my holiday gifts for the staff this year. All non-vegetarians received country ham and smoke-cured bacon from Father's Country Hams. If you ever need country ham—this is not a paid endorsement, but man. Father's Country Hams. What a great place.

The show is produced by speaking into microphones. Our senior producer is Kevin Ferguson. Our producers are Jesus Ambrosio and Richard Robey. Our production fellow at Maximum Fun is Daniel Huecias. Our video producer, Daniel Speer. We get booking help from Mara Davis. Our interstitial music comes from our friend, Dan Wally, also known as DJW. You can find his music at DJWSounds.bandcamp.com, where you can download music from this show. Our theme music was written and recorded by The Go! Team. It is called “Huddle Formation”. Thanks to The Go! Team; thanks to their label, Memphis Industries.

You can follow *Bullseye* on Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, where you will find video from just about all our interviews—including the ones that you heard this week. Yes, that's right. If you want to share our interview with Jude Law with a friend, they won't have to suffer through not gazing at his beautiful face.

And I think that's about it. Just remember, all great radio hosts have a signature signoff.

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

(Music fades out.)