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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.

Jesse Thorn: I'm Jesse Thorn. Ask anyone who's ever taken the leap into being a professional artist. It's scary. Will anyone actually like what you do? Will you make enough to pay rent? Will your family get behind you? Kelsey Grammer, when he decided to become a professional actor, went through all of that stuff. In fact, one member of his family in particular had very serious reservations about the whole thing.

Kelsey Grammer: My grandmother was a little bit iffy about it. She wanted me to be a football player and, you know, thought that the whole thing was a little ridiculous.

Jesse Thorn: From MaximumFun.org and NPR, it's *Bullseye*.

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: This week, Kelsey Grammer. Not a football player! We'll talk to him about acting, about his harrowing upbringing, and about that sound that he makes every time Sideshow Bob steps on a rake.

Clip: (*A sharp thwap, followed by a rumbling groan.*)

Jesse Thorn: That's all coming up on *Bullseye*.

It's *Bullseye*. I'm Jesse Thorn. Kelsey Grammer is my guest this week. He is, of course, best known for his role as Dr. Frasier Crane—first on *Cheers*, then on the smash hit spinoff *Frasier*, and more recently on *Frasier's* contemporary reboot. He's played the character on and off for 40 years. Grammer was also Beast in many of the *X-Men* movies, the voice of Sideshow Bob on *The Simpsons*. He went to Juilliard. He performed Shakespeare on Broadway.

Before all that though, Kelsey Grammer led a life that was defined by tragedy. He lost his grandfather, who was raising him, to cancer; his father and sister to separate murders—all before he was old enough to drink. Then, just a few years later, he lost two half-brothers in an accident. When Grammer was at the height of his fame, the peak of *Cheers* and *Frasier*, he was frequently beset by substance abuse issues. Multiple times, police arrested Kelsey

Grammer for cocaine possession and drunk driving. He's an incredibly talented actor and a fascinating, complicated person.

He's been working more in film lately. He was recently featured in the movie *Wish You Were Here*, directed by Julia Stiles—the actor who previously starred in *10 Things I Hate About You*, among many others. *Wish You Were Here* centers around Charlotte. She's young and searching for some excitement and meaning in her life. She works at a small restaurant with a boss who's kind of a jerk. She lives in a tiny apartment. She hasn't had much luck dating. Then she meets Adam. The two hit it off; all seems great, until Charlotte discovers Adam is terminally ill. So, she commits to helping him live his last days to the fullest.

Grammer plays Charlotte's dad in the film. In this clip, Charlotte's parents have invited her and her roommate Helen over for a meal. They've just sat down to eat, and Charlotte's dad has some questions about her career path.

Transition: A whooshing sound.

Clip:

Dad (*Wish You Were Here*): I hope you girls aren't eating the food at that place—if you can even call it that.

Mom: Honey!

Dad: I'm serious. If you're going to be a waitress your whole life, the least you can do is get a job at a real restaurant so I can eat there.

Mom: I like the Caesar and the flags.

Dad: I'm just saying. You're going to have to figure this thing out pretty soon, kiddo. 'Cause your college fund is almost gone, and I can't keep bailing you out.

Charlotte: I have a career path, Dad.

Dad and Mom: You do?

Jesse Thorn: Kelsey Grammer, welcome to *Bullseye*. I'm really happy to have you on the show. It's nice to see you.

Kelsey Grammer: Thank you. Likewise. Thank you.

Jesse Thorn: You have a really excellent singing-about-pizza-dough introduction in this film. (*Laughs.*)

Kelsey Grammer: Yes! Yes, this was the crux of actually getting the job. I mean Julia and I did a movie together about five years ago, called *The God Committee*, which was a very sort of sad look into harvesting organs grown in pigs for a human heart replacement, stuff like that. And this guy who's sort of on the cutting edge of it, who's pretty much researching his own lifesaving technique, hopefully. And he doesn't quite make it, and it's a very sad movie. And they have a child. It's quite extraordinarily sad.

It was shot at a time when it was sad for everyone. We were doing lockdown at the time. But during our filming, I would go around singing, the songs from *Man of La Mancha*, because I was about to go and do that in London. And Julia said, "Ohhhh." She logged something away, and then called me when she put this thing together finally and said, "I want you to come just play the father. And I want you to sing like you did on the set."

So, that's where it all came from.

Jesse Thorn: (*Chuckles.*) She's like, "I know you're capable of doing embarrassing yourself. I've seen it."

Kelsey Grammer: "Of doing this, and you can do it full-hog, right?"

(*They chuckle.*)

So—and I actually prepared Italian art songs, (*singing*) "Nascoso É il mio sol", you know. Stuff like that.

And then she said, "I'm afraid that the licensing will cost us too much money." And of course, it's 400 years old!

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But anyway, I just did some gibberish Italian nonsense.

Jesse Thorn: And you ended up—yeah. You ended up basically singing like, (*singing*) "Me make-a the pizza."

Kelsey Grammer: "Make-a the pizza." Yeah, anyway.

(*They laugh.*)

Pretty awful. But I thought she did it very well. She handled it—she helmed it very well. She wrote the script. I mean, it—obviously, it was a book. As I understand, it was a very successful novel. And I wish it well, you know.

Jesse Thorn: Do you sing in your day-to-day life? Casually?

Kelsey Grammer: I do. I do. I pretty much sing all the time. Yeah. It's a pastime for me. I mean, I really do love singing. I just— And I don't focus on it like I should. When I was a young man, I started— When I was 14, a guy came into our eighth grade class and said, "I want every boy in here to come and audition for me. We're going to start a choir." His name was Richard Mitton.

And we all said, (*chuckling sardonically*) "Yeah, right."

And yet, somehow we all showed up there that afternoon. And that's when I began singing. And he said, "You're a bass baritone." And fortunately, I had played the trombone when I was younger, so I knew how to read the bass clef. So, I became a fixture in the choir. I could, you know, be a good foundational voice for him.

Jesse Thorn: I mean, not to put too fine a point on it, but in a choir of 14-year-olds, a bass baritone is a valuable—yeah. (*Laughs.*)

Kelsey Grammer: Bass baritone was a standout. (*Chuckles.*) So, I had a voice teacher who said she—

Jesse Thorn: You don't have to hit much to be a catch.

Kelsey Grammer: Exactly, right. Exactly, yeah. So, I had a voice teacher who wanted me to go into opera. And I thought it's just—I don't have the discipline. And I'm fairly disciplined, but I don't have the discipline for that. So, I thought acting would be a better idea. I think I was probably right.

Jesse Thorn: Were you embarrassed about singing? I mean, I feel like—

Kelsey Grammer: No. No, it was okay.

Jesse Thorn: It's an easy thing to be embarrassed about.

Kelsey Grammer: It could have been. Yeah. I mean, my 12-year-old daughter now was a little bit shy, when she sang a Christmas song for our party this year. (*Chuckles.*) But I think she'll grow out of it. But no, it was a good group of kids growing up. I was a pretty fortunate guy, and we all sang. I mean, he had built like ten different choirs that went on the road all the time and did all sorts of stuff. It was very productive. So.

Jesse Thorn: Is it different, acting for an actor? Your director in this film is a wonderful actor.

Kelsey Grammer: Oh! Yeah. You know, I always value direction that comes from someone who's also acted. Yeah. I mean, it seems to be more specific and helpful. You know, film is obviously a director's medium. You get the final say. You know, on the stage, the actor basically has the final say. Because in that moment, the organic execution of the role is with

them. You know, so it's live. In film, of course, the director gets to do whatever they want to with your performance.

And she's very good. She gave some nice notes, and she said, "Don't sing that Italian art song."

(They laugh.)

Jesse Thorn: Are you the kind of actor who feels comfortable being an aesthetic pawn for a director? I mean, like there are directors for whom— You know, it's very important to compose the shot for a director, right?

(Kelsey agrees.)

And that can involve really technical specifics, in terms of how you move your body, where you move your body, and so on and so forth. Is that something that—?

Kelsey Grammer: That's a reasonable question. Yeah, I'm fine pretty much— As long as I understand what the director wants, I can accomplish pretty much anything that's needed. Mostly I find though that—and this is something I've found in auditioning people as well— when you walk into a room with an idea about a character, and you're the actor, the people on the other side of the table are actually looking for you to solve their problem. Which is they don't know what to do with the role. So, they're hoping you're going to show them.

And when you find that actor who walks in and says, "I got a way to play this guy," that's usually what you sort of cling to and are drawn to. So, very few guys have a very specific way they want things to sound or a very specific way they want things to look.

The most specific part I ever had to do was actually in a play. Which was interesting, because of the lighting design. The lighting design was so specific. Like, there were about 18 pin spots. And if you missed your mark, you weren't in the light. So, it was a very, very fascinating opening on the Heath. It was a *Hamlet* production. I was playing Laertes. But if you didn't hit the light, you were done. You weren't seen.

Jesse Thorn: Were there literal marks?

Kelsey Grammer: Absolutely, yeah. Highlighted. And they would like, you know—

Jesse Thorn: So, you didn't have to intuit it.

Kelsey Grammer: No, they're like reflective tape, you know. Which they shine light on before you start the show. But you could easily miss them. There was like five or six people running around on the Heath, you know. So. *(Chuckles.)*

Jesse Thorn: I want to ask you a little bit about your childhood.

[00:10:00]

You lived in a few different places as a kid. You were born in the Virgin Islands, started living in the Virgin Islands, lived in New Jersey. Right?

(Kelsey confirms.)

And then spent your teenage years in Fort Lauderdale. Fort Lauderdale isn't the number one place where show business careers start.

Kelsey Grammer: Interesting. *(Laughs.)*

Jesse Thorn: It's a place where a lot of surfing careers start. Bartending careers.

Kelsey Grammer: Surfing careers, water stuff—you know, restaurant, bartending. Yeah, there is a lot of drinking that goes on there. It's tropical. I mean, it's like you don't want to wear clothing, basically. Everybody is sun kissed. Everybody looks fantastic.

Jesse Thorn: You were a surfer, right?

Kelsey Grammer: I was a surfer. And when I finally got a—well, I was invited to act in a play by a fellow that showed up in the 11th grade. And I thought, “This is okay. This I could do.” And I actually thought, “This is like surfing. This is just like surfing. You're on a big wave. You gotta ride it. You gotta ride it good. You gotta make sure you don't fall off. You gotta keep up.”

There's a kind of an energy about it, and there's a kind of spontaneity about it that's in the moment. The language is always different, especially with a live audience. No matter what's going on, the performance you're giving this night is not the same one you gave the night before, even though you have a kind of structure that you'll honor. But it's an organic, living, breathing thing, just like riding a wave. And so, that to me was the hook.

Jesse Thorn: You must have been like, in school, the reader-aloud-in-class guy?

Kelsey Grammer: Oh yeah! Where I really was, was in Sunday school. When I was a little boy, we went to the Plainfield First Church of Christ Scientist. I was raised as a Christian Scientist. And when it came time to read aloud from the Bible, St. James Version—King James Version, rather—I was over the moon about it. I discovered my love of language from that Bible. And it just always turned me on. Language just excited me. The words as they were. Of course, you know, a lot of it was archaic, but there was a majesty to the language, the pictures they would summon up. And I thought, “This is something I really, really respond to.” So, I always read aloud.

Jesse Thorn: It's also exciting to be good at it.

Kelsey Grammer: Yeah, well, you discover a thing, right? You discover that—that thing that you realize, “Oh my goodness, that turn of a phrase or that diphthong or that set of consonants, that makes that thing pop.” And that was joyful for me. Yeah.

Jesse Thorn: I'm excited to hear about the surfing piece of it and the connection that you made as a kid between acting and surfing. Because I think that the thing that could be missing from a teenager's approach to acting who is the good-talking person—and it's possible that I went to an acting high school, and I know this from, uh, experience as the good-talking person—

(Kelsey laughs.)

—is that when you're the good-talking person, it can be very hard to also be the super present, in-the-moment person that acting requires.

Kelsey Grammer: Right. Got it. Very interesting. That's a very interesting thing. It's a good question. Thoughtful question. My name is Grammer, so I took a lot of heat about, you know, proper English usage when I was a boy. So, I was accustomed to being the kid that needed to speak well. And so, it was sort of an automatic pilot thing for me once I was in high school. I think some people were a little bit surprised by it, because I was also a surfer. I mean, that is really what I did.

And so, I kind of was a visitor at high school until I started doing the play thing. *(Chuckles.)* And then sort of things just blossomed a little bit. I will say this parenthetically; the high school I went to in Fort Lauderdale, Florida—it's called Pinecrest Preparatory School. Someone else, who's very famous now, went there: Ariana Grande. So, I guess maybe Fort Lauderdale has a few things going for it. *(Laughs.)*

Jesse Thorn: Sure, no—look, I've been to Fort Lauderdale. It's very nice! I'm not here to put down Fort Lauderdale.

Kelsey Grammer: But it was, it was—

Jesse Thorn: I'm just saying you didn't go to Hollywood High.

Kelsey Grammer: No, no, I sure didn't. Yeah, no. And it never entered my mind to be an actor until that play. And that's when I discovered it. I just thought, “Oh, this is for me.”

Jesse Thorn: But you truly discovered it. I mean, you—when it was time to apply to college, you applied to Juilliard.

Kelsey Grammer: Juilliard, Carnegie Mellon. That was it. Yeah. Yeah, it's— Yeah, I decided this is worth pursuing at that time, and of course then they threw me out of Juilliard. It's okay.

Jesse Thorn: Your mom had been a dancer at some point.

Kelsey Grammer: Singer, musician. You know, she was a showgirl.

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I mean, she did, you know, summer stock. I have pictures of her still breaking down the tent with a group of young, you know, plucky actors. It's very cute.

Jesse Thorn: So, did she think it was cool that you were doing this?

Kelsey Grammer: Oh, she thought it was very cool. Yeah. I'm—let me think what year it was. Was it '80? 1980, maybe 1981? I was in the Philip Anglim production of *Macbeth*. Halfway through the second performance, Philip decided he didn't wanna do it anymore, and I was understudying him. So, I went on; my mom flew up the next day and came to the next performance of it. (*Chuckles.*) And she was so proud. It was really wonderful.

Jesse Thorn: What did your grandparents think of it? Your mom's parents.

Kelsey Grammer: My grandmother was a little bit iffy about it. She wanted me to be a football player and, you know, thought that the whole thing was a little ridiculous. But—

Jesse Thorn: She wanted you to be a football player?!

Kelsey Grammer: Well, I mean, I was—you know, I was okay.

Jesse Thorn: You're pretty big.

Kelsey Grammer: I was pretty big, but I wasn't—yeah, not as big as they are today. I mean, the kids playing football today, I think, “Oh, good lord.” (*Laughs.*)

Jesse Thorn: But it's all—like, all I gotta say is, when you said, “My grandma wanted me to be a—” I thought you were gonna say lawyer.

(*Kelsey laughs.*)

Or like accountant.

Kelsey Grammer: No, no, all she ever really got to was football. She figured I'd find a way to make a living. But my grandmother's presence was most, you know, obvious during my early teens—you know, from like 10 to 18. Once I got into Juilliard, she was kind of thrilled with that, but she didn't think I'd ever make a living. (*Laughs.*) So. And she was basically right for a few years.

But then I called her one day, I guess it was 1980... No, earlier. That was 1976. Yeah, I called her in '76, and I said, “Gam, I got some news.”

She said, “You got an acting job.”

I said, “Yes, I did.”

And she said, “Well, it's about time!” (*Chuckles.*)

So, she was an irascible character, but she was full of love for her family and for her grandchildren. And she was an amazing woman that way.

Jesse Thorn: How old were you when you lost your grandfather?

Kelsey Grammer: 12. Yeah, we moved to Florida, and then he died. He died a week later. It really threw us all off. I mean, the whole family was, you know, just shocked by it. Whether he knew it or not, we still don't really have a real understanding of that, but he died of cancer a week after we arrived. And so, it was quite mind-numbing for the next year or so to just kind of put one foot in front of the other.

But we all did it, you know. Made it. And Gam was pretty strong through it. But you know, she missed her guy. You know, they were close. And I missed him. He was my whole life. But we got through it.

Jesse Thorn: I mean, sometimes I talk to like an actor whose parents were in the military; they're a military brat, and they've lived in lots of different places. It's a really common thing that I hear from performers and especially actors, that they lived in different places. I think it teaches you how to present yourself, basically. And it also is lonely.

Kelsey Grammer: Yeah. And life experience, you know— And you become a watcher of life, I think, a little bit more when you're a bit at odds with your location—where you think you belong or don't belong. You're looking for that place. And if you find acting, it's like, “Well, I belong there. I belong to that.” 'Cause that's everything. That's human experience. I can parrot human experience; I can absorb it and then release it through a performance. It's a real therapeutic way to live a life, especially if you feel a bit like an orphan.

Jesse Thorn: And I mean, that's like a series of dislocations in your life that—you, know, you started in the Virgin Islands with your father around. You moved with your mother to New Jersey, where you were largely raised by your grandparents. Then the three of you moved to Florida, and your grandfather immediately died. Like, those are dislocations that I can barely wrap my head around.

Kelsey Grammer: It was very challenging. But you don't—you know, it's like you do what's given unto you, you know. You just—you gotta get up. You gotta get up in the morning and get on with it.

Jesse Thorn: Did you feel like you were supported through this?

Kelsey Grammer: Absolutely. Oh, yeah. No, no. My grandmother was tough. You know, she said, “Well, cut it out. Play football!” You know, my mom was pretty understanding, but I became— You know, and my sister was there too, but I became the kind of titular head of the family in a strange way. Way underqualified, but for want of a better reason, I was the only guy there. So, that's where they gravitated; there's an energy about it. And they needed me. I needed them.

And we forged a path. We forged a weird kind of family dynamic out of that, and it turned out to be pretty successful in a weird way. But you know, things have a way of falling apart.

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You know, tragedies visit us through life. And how you deal with them is, I guess, the mark of your character. I mean, I've had a very serious problem for a long time, kind of cursing myself for surviving, and I got through it. But I did definitely—I definitely toyed with the edge for a while.

Jesse Thorn: I mean, it's a big deal to be asked, even through necessity, to have adult capacities when you're—

Kelsey Grammer: Yeah. Yeah. So, you fake it. (*Chuckles.*) You just put it on. It was okay. I mean, it's funny. I've said to somebody just recently. I said, “You know, I never really said the word ‘dad’ until I was one.” Which was fascinating. I mean, I always called my grandfather Gordon, but he was clearly my dad during that time in my life. So, to lose him was hard. And then to try to step into his shoes, I didn't quite have—you know, I didn't quite have the model yet, because I was still just a little too young. But you know, we did okay.

Jesse Thorn: We have to go to a quick break. When we return, we will talk to Kelsey Grammer about his time working on *Cheers*, his struggles with substance abuse, and what he would do differently. It's *Bullseye*, from MaximumFun.org and NPR.

Promo:

Music: Exciting synth.

Mallory O'Meara: Hey, there! Do you like books about various shades of gray?

Brea Grant: Maybe 50 of 'em? Or books about winged men searching for soulmates?

Mallory: Is your e-reader full of stories that would pair well with Barry White in the background?

Brea: We're Brea and Mallory of *Reading Glasses*, and we have a brand-new show for people who crave reads with just a dash of sriracha sauce.

Mallory: That's right! Every other Friday we dive into books that can be measured on the Scoville scale and talk about reading to the people who love them.

Brea: You can find our new show by visiting MaximumFun.org/spicy. That's MaximumFun.org/spicy.

(Music ends.)

Transition: Thumpy synth with a syncopated beat.

Jesse Thorn: Welcome back to *Bullseye*, I'm Jesse Thorn. My guest is Kelsey Grammer. He's an Emmy award-winning actor. You've seen him on *Cheers*, where he played Dr. Frasier Crane.

Transition: A whooshing sound.

Clip:

Speaker: *Frasier*, sometimes people do thoughtless things. They don't mean any harm, they just don't know any better. They're insensitive.

Frasier: Well, good lord, Diane! You sound like the psychologist I had when I was eight. What are you trying to say?

(Audience laughter.)

Transition: A whooshing sound.

Jesse Thorn: And on the spinoff, *Frasier*, of course.

Music: "Frasier (*Tossed Salad and Scrambled Eggs*)" by Kelsey Grammer.

Hey baby, I hear the blues a-callin'

Tossed salads and scrambled eggs

Oh my

And maybe...

(Music fades out.)

Jesse Thorn: You can see him in the new movie, *Wish You Were Here*, which is available on demand now.

Let's get back to our conversation.

Jesse Thorn: I was thinking you've done a lot of work with veterans in the last few years, and supporting sort of mental health rehabilitation for veterans. And you know, I was thinking of—my own father was a veteran who struggled with post-traumatic stress disorder. And I think of the people that he connected with really well—in vets' groups, in AA, and these different places. And it was other people who, you know, really understood trauma.

And I thought, well, it makes sense that your sympathies would go there. Because you know, we mentioned these moves. Your father was also murdered when you were a very young man. Then not very long afterwards, your sister was murdered.

(Kelsey confirms.)

And not long after that, your two half-brothers died in an accident. And like, that kind of trauma is something that— *(Chuckles.)* You know, you say we all have tragedy in our life, which is very much true, but also some of us have more difficult times.

Kelsey Grammer: Yeah, it was a little sort of, uh, front-loaded. *(Chuckles.)* Yeah, we— It's funny, I did this thing a while ago, just a year ago—last November—called Operation Restored Warrior. And it's a— They host this thing called a drop zone, where you have you and maybe six or seven other guys who are actually real kinetic warriors who are having a problem adjusting and stuff like that. And they do a lot of Bible study, which is fascinating—and of course, that was right up my alley.

[00:25:00]

I was invited only because a friend who helps fund them said, “You know what? They'd like you to come.”

And I found it to be extraordinary work about how to kind of rehabilitate the warrior mind into an understanding of what it is to be a warrior and to forgive yourself about it. And that was extraordinary. It was an extraordinary thing to participate, feeling as though I was on the outside of that. And then to realize that, oh, my story—you know—bears some attention. And that was a remarkable event for me.

We spent, you know, six days together. It's morning, noon, and night, three meals a day. Somebody's there cooking, and you are isolated with these men who are finding faith again and a purpose for living. And so, it's a really fascinating thing.

Jesse Thorn: Did you get support from church when you were a teenager?

Kelsey Grammer: I had a very interesting relationship with church at the time, because the same guy that walked in and said, "Sing," —after he realized I actually could sing pretty well, he started to pay me to go to be a soloist at different churches where he was a choir director as well on Sundays. So, I'd get 50 bucks a Sunday. Which was pretty remarkable. And I'd go to two services a day, but different churches. And that was fascinating to me, because I— So, I had my sort of like, you know, on-the-job training about what a Methodist was, or an Episcopalian, or a more fundamentalist church. There were several of them we went to. And I'd sing.

It was so— It was a marvelous way to sort of spend my time, because I got a great sense of what faith was to these people. I didn't necessarily join in to that part of it, but the spectacle of it, and the respect I earned for the people, the sincerity in these people, and the true love of it. I mean, that Jesus thing is pretty interesting, you know. That "I come to heal the brokenhearted" is fascinating. And to put it in context a couple thousand of years later, when you look back and realize that in a time of warfare and infanticide and horrible, horrible executions, The King of Kings was born into that, and came to save the world—to save the brokenhearted—as a baby. (*Chuckles.*) That's a pretty powerful thing.

So, I understood it in a way that I didn't really connect with until I did this, the warrior program thing.

Jesse Thorn: I mean, I'll tell you, I read an interview earlier today where you said, "I've always wanted to be a person who lived life to the fullest."

And when I read that, I thought, "Dollars-to-donuts, what he is feeling is, 'I have always been a person who is constantly staring at death.'"

Kelsey Grammer: Yeah. That is true. That is true. Yeah. What is it, the poem? It's "Ever I hear Time's winged chariot at my back."

Jesse Thorn: When did you start drinking? How old were you when you started drinking?

Kelsey Grammer: Well, you know, when I grew up, grabbing a beer for the road was not a big thing. That was—you know, my grandma would even say, "Oh, grab a beer for the road, Kelsey," on the way out the door. (*Chuckles.*) So, I was 16/17. I'd have a beer or two. The heavy drinking didn't really start until after I was on *Cheers*. That was— I mean, you know, I'd party once in a while or have a night with a pal from high school or whatever who came up to visit New York.

But you know, I was making good money. Cocaine had come into the equation, and drinking just seemed like the easiest thing in the world to do. And it did push away the feelings that

maybe I didn't deserve to be there. Yeah. That's really what I was wrestling with. And then a great old alcoholic named Ted years ago said—he said—oh god, now I'm forgetting what he said, but— Oh, yeah, he said, “Alcoholism and addiction is basically the result of unresolved grief.”

You know, that fits it for me. So, I've had a real blessing of being able to resolve a lot of it. And that's been a good thing. And to forgive myself.

Jesse Thorn: I'll tell you about *Cheers*. I've watched *Cheers* a lot lately, and you're so spectacularly good on it, and I really mean that. I read this (*chuckles*) like oral history of *Cheers* that was maybe in *The Ringer* or something like that.

[00:30:00]

And there was near unanimity among cast and crew interviewed for this piece on—and I'm paraphrasing here, but basically, especially later on in *Cheers*, you would be on set; you would appear to be too drunk, high, or both to work, to the point where they were worried if you were safe. Then literally they would say, the camera would—when the camera was on you, not even when the scene was running, but when you were on camera in the scene, you would deliver perfectly. The camera would be off, and you would literally like collapse in a—like, slide down into a pool of your own illness. You know what I mean?

Kelsey Grammer: Yeah, that's true. You know, I was—

Jesse Thorn: What was wild is like everybody agreed on this.

Kelsey Grammer: Yeah, I pretty much was on when I was on.

Jesse Thorn: Their awe at how good you were at it—yeah.

Kelsey Grammer: Yeah, right, yeah. Funny. It was a good time for me in a lot of ways. It was important to go that far down to get back up.

Jesse Thorn: Do you ever feel that way?

Kelsey Grammer: Yeah, I look back on it all with great gratitude at this point in my life.

Jesse Thorn: You wouldn't do it a different way?

Kelsey Grammer: Didn't occur to me. You know, to go back in any kind of shame or regret about it would be counterproductive anyway. I was always good.

Jesse Thorn: Onscreen, for sure.

Kelsey Grammer: That's all I had to—that's all I had. That's what I stuck with. That was my strength. That was— I mean, I always showed up for work. I was a workaholic. You know,

even if I was loaded or looked like I'd, you know, been out having a great night the night before—which was probably true—yeah, my obligation was to show up and do it anyway.

Jesse Thorn: Did you know at the time how messed up you were?

Kelsey Grammer: No, I— You know what? I'd like to look back on it and say— Because, you know, I'm a Christian scientist, so I always like to say that I was in the midst of a powerful healing. And that's where I place my perspective on it. There was a time where I was probably trying to kill myself without really wanting to, but that I just thought, "How far can I go?" And I went pretty far, and I came back.

So, you know, it's like I don't want to over—what's the word? I don't know if lionize is the right word to use.

Jesse Thorn: Mythologize, or—?

Kelsey Grammer: Yeah, it just was—that was the course I was on. And I once again put one foot in front of the other day-to-day, one step at a time, and I never stopped stepping. And that's how it was.

Jesse Thorn: I mean, when I read about this—and I admired your performances so much. Like, one thing I was struck by is the apparent length that you would go to or commitment that you had to work—right?—to your responsibilities to the other performers and the other creative people on this television show. Which, as an actor, is like everything. Can you trust the other performers to do what they're supposed to do? To hold up their end of the tent? You know?

But I also thought, "Was that just at the expense of all of the rest of his life?" Right? Because I imagine you were imagining yourself to be like a solo pillar without responsibilities to others, because you were responsible to yourself.

Kelsey Grammer: Right. Okay, yeah.

Jesse Thorn: When you weren't on stage.

Kelsey Grammer: Well, I had a daughter. I had my daughter, Spencer. And I had her every other weekend. And I was pretty clean during those times. Sometimes I still drank in the evening, but during those times we'd go take a trip, or we went to Africa together. And I didn't party during the trip to Africa. I did some jobs in the summertime with Robert Howey, Hallmark Entertainment. Those were great. A lot of travel there. I usually took my daughter then. So, there was a kind of a mixture of sober, creative parenting and the wild man who was, you know, seething underneath.

I don't look on these times as being bad times for me. There were indulgences to me that actually were powerful opportunities for learning about myself and my own capabilities and how far I could go with certain things. I was pretty fearless.

[00:35:00]

I would try almost anything. Physically, you know.

Jesse Thorn: What did you try?

Kelsey Grammer: Well, no, just in terms of, you know, being in a situation where if something happened, like if— Let's say for instance, there was a girl who stepped out of a bar in New York on one of these occasions. And a guy punched her. And I went up, and I started fighting with the guy. (*Laughs.*) So, you know, there's just things like that I thought were the right thing to do. There was another time I was walking down the street, and a young lady leaped out of a Cadillac. And this guy jumped out to the other side, and she was running away, and he stopped her. And he said, "Come with me right now, or else."

And he started to smack her, and I said, "Excuse me. Touch her again, I'm gonna come over, and I'm gonna kill you." And I was wearing a pair of (*laughs*) sort of clam digger pants that had sea anemones on them. So, I looked like a real cartoon, but I meant it. And he sensed that, and he just got in the car and said, "Ah, you're not worth it anyway," to the girl.

I took her and bought her a cup of coffee. And she ended up being sort of a friend for a while, you know, that just said, "Thank you for that. You know"

And I said, "Well, you didn't have to get in a position where this guy was going to pull that on you." I mean. So, you know, I was trying to do the world some good anyway.

Jesse Thorn: I can see those things very well, because—not to armchair analyze—but I'm sure you bore a lot of weight about your sister being murdered.

(*Kelsey confirms.*)

And here is a way to both reenact that danger with you as the hero and also be self-destructive. (*Laughs.*)

Kelsey Grammer: Yeah, right, in the process. Yeah, right. Have no personal regard, yeah, for my own safety, yeah. But something was watching over me. And I finally said, "Okay, (*chuckles.*) I hear you." So, that's been good.

Jesse Thorn: *Frasier* wasn't originally going to be *Frasier*. You had planned, you know, a show starring you with some of the writers from *Cheers*. But it wasn't originally going to be a *Frasier* show. Did you think initially that it shouldn't be a *Frasier* show? Because it was— You know, you'd been *Frasier* for a decade or whatever?

Kelsey Grammer: I thought it was time to let *Frasier* go. Yeah. I thought it was time to let him go.

Jesse Thorn: And I mean, to be honest, Kelsey? It probably was. It somehow worked, but even now—looking back, I'm not sure how. You know what I mean?

Kelsey Grammer: I should have done something else, right? Yeah. (*Laughs.*)

Jesse Thorn: Like, this is probably a bad idea.

Kelsey Grammer: Yeah. He was a very interesting character to take into another world. And what was fascinating, though, is we went down the road of another script and of another character—a character who was a guy who rode a motorcycle, who was a little bit crazy, who ran an investment firm that was wildly successful, but had had a motorcycle accident. So, the pilot, we meet that character in a bed where he has to stay for the first season of the show! And he's surrounded by three or four people who help him, who like—his gal, Friday, or whatever, or guy, Friday. It wouldn't have mattered. Somebody who helps run the industry while he's bedridden. And his nurse, and a couple of—and maybe staff.

And they wrote a script that I thought was pretty funny. And we gave that to John Pike, who was the then president of Paramount Television. And he called me up and said, “I read the script. Um. Let's go to dinner.” So, we went to dinner at one of those famous places out in Brantwood—the red leather booths and stuff. And sat down, ordered a drink. We sat and talked a little bit.

And he said, “Kelsey, I think a sitcom should be funny.”

And that's when I said, (*laughing*) “Well, alright.”

So, he didn't think much of the script. He said, “Honestly, I want you to play Frasier.”

So, I said, “Well, it's possible. He just can't be married anymore, and he can't have a kid.” And I said, “And he has a kid. So, we have to at least make sure he's an honorable dad, but he's got to be some distance from the child.”

Because if you've got a sitcom—and this was something I'd always observed. If you've got a sitcom with a child on it, the child is the most interesting thing on the show—the most interesting thing—because they grow up on the show. I mean, a six-year-old three years later is a nine-year-old. A nine-year-old three years after that, if it's a successful show, is fully in the full-bloom of a boy or young woman of puberty. And they are the most interesting thing in the room. They just are. That's just the way things go.

And I said, “I'm not gonna do that.”

Jesse Thorn: You're also beholden to— You know, a talented acting six-year-old is different from a talented acting ten-year-old or a talented acting teen-year-old.

Kelsey Grammer: Yeah, it certainly is, yeah. Things just change, and you have—and I just said, “So, we're not gonna do that,” and he said okay.

[00:40:00]

Jesse Thorn: So, you decided to get an unspeakably adorable dog instead? (*Laughs.*)

Kelsey Grammer: Well, yeah, that was the thing we had to deal with.

(*They laugh.*)

That was a curse from the writers, I guess. I don't know.

Transition: A whooshing sound.

Clip:

Frederick: Down, Eddie, down.

(*Laughter.*)

I said down. Good boy, Eddie. Just get down. Good, good—good, good—(*getting frustrated*) Eddie, get down. GET DOWN!

(*Laughter.*)

Dad! Dad! I can't read my paper! Eddie's staring at me!

Frasier: Well, you do make quite a picture in the morning. Just ignore him.

Frederick: I'm trying to!

Frasier: I'm talking to the dog!

(*Laughter.*)

Transition: A whooshing sound.

Jesse Thorn: To my mind, one of the defining characteristics of *Frasier* as a character is loneliness. That he is—for a character who is introduced to *Cheers* as a love interest, you know what I mean? For a character who was the center of a family on a TV show for 10 years, he's so separate from everything around him and desperately wants to be in it.

Kelsey Grammer: Right. Okay. I don't think it's—I don't think so. I think you're wrong, but my defining characteristic for him is love. That he loves so deeply that it almost harpoons

him half the time, because he won't accept less. He's a perfectionist in that context and has longed for something that may be unachievable, but he's still trying. He doesn't quit. He never did quit. He doesn't feel like he's on the outside of anything. He's just looking for the right one. And I love that about him, because when I first read the sides for Frasier, the original— When I first joined the show and was in love with Diane, I said to my buddy Stan, I said, “Stan, you know what the key to this guy is? He's in love for the first time in his life with this woman. Completely, deeply. Completely, irretrievably in love.”

And that, to me, defined him for the rest of his life. I mean, the life of Frasier has always been about achieving love. You can look at it as longing for something that he'll never get. But it's not that. He's an optimist. He gets up in the morning. Still dresses. Still puts his best face out there, because he loves being alive. And that's kind of my story. (*Chuckles.*)

Transition: A whooshing sound.

Clip:

Hostess: Hi. Welcome to the Timber Mill.

Frasier: You don't have a table for three, do you?

Hostess: Sure. Right this way. Is this your first visit to the Timber Mill?

Frasier: Yes.

Hostess: Well, we've got a dress code.

Frederick: Well, couldn't you make an exception in this case? I mean, his suit was at the cleaner's.

Hostess: Not him, you.

(Snipping sounds.)

TIMBER!

(Clanking dishes and audience laughter.)

Frederick: My tie! She cut off my tie!

Frasier: Isn't that great?!

Frederick: But why did she cut off my tie?

Frasier: Oh, they've been doing it for years. They like to keep the place casual.

Frederick: Dad, you could have mentioned that to us.

Frasier: What, and spoil the fun?! (*Cackles.*) Ah, cheer up. You get a free dessert!

Frederick: Oh boy.

Transition: A whooshing sound.

Jesse Thorn: Do you like being funny?

Kelsey Grammer: Yeah. Yeah, I liked being funny when I was a boy. I used to make my mom laugh. That's where I first learned to do it. Because you know, there wasn't a lot to laugh at back then. But I used to be able to get a good laugh out of her. And that's where I sort of honed it, I suppose. A sort of—a laconic approach to life. A little bit over-seasoned, a little bit wise, and a little bit wisecracker. So. (*Chuckles.*)

Jesse Thorn: Did you think that would be part of your acting career?

Kelsey Grammer: No! No.

Jesse Thorn: It's not something that's encouraged in acting school.

Kelsey Grammer: No, certainly not, no. (*Laughing.*) Yeah, glibness. They don't really care for that. But it just ended up being who I am. So, you know. And the more you trust who you are as part of what will be interesting to watch, the more it comes out. You know, so *Frasier* became a little bit of a campy, funny, self-effacing mystery. (*Laughs.*)

Jesse Thorn: We'll wrap up with Kelsey Grammer after a quick break. When we return: I know we've been talking about serious and deep stuff, but Kelsey also plays Sideshow Bob on *The Simpsons*. And if you've ever seen Sideshow Bob step on a rake, you know that when he does so, he makes a very specific noise. We are going to talk about that noise on *Bullseye* from MaximumFun.org and NPR.

[00:45:00]

Promo:

Music: Sophisticated electronic harpsichord.

Travis McElroy: Hello, Internet. I'm your husband host, Travis McElroy.

Teresa McElroy: And I'm your wife host, Teresa McElroy. And this is a promo for *Schmanners*. It's extraordinary etiquette—

Travis: —for ordinary occasions. Every week, we're going to tell you about a bit of culture, a bit of history, how etiquette still applies in the modern day. All that stuff!

Teresa: We also love to do biographies and histories of, and—you know, general procedurals: how to do etiquette in today's society.

Travis: So, come check it out every Friday on MaximumFun.org or wherever you find your podcasts.

Teresa: Manners, shmanners, get it?

(Music ends.)

Transition: Thumpy synth with light vocalizations.

Jesse Thorn: Welcome back to *Bullseye*. I'm Jesse Thorn. My guest is Kelsey Grammer. He is, of course, Frasier from *Cheers*, Frasier from *Frasier*, and Frasier from the new *Frasier* series on Paramount+. He also voices Sideshow Bob on *The Simpsons*. On the big screen, he's performed in the *X-Men* movies and *The Expendables* and *Down Periscope*. His latest movie, *Wish You Were Here*, is a drama directed by actor Julia Stiles.

Oh, and by the way, you want to see this interview? Have a pal who watches their audio on YouTube? Well, good news, find us at *Bullseye with Jesse Thorn* there on the tube, and you can watch this and just about every other interview we do on video. Go check it out, share it, tell a friend. Somebody you know loves *The Simpsons*, right? They want to watch this great interview with Kelsey Grammer. It'll be a hoot. Anyway, let's get back into our conversation.

I think that—it is incredible to say this, but *Frasier* might not be your most universally beloved character. I think that's probably Sideshow Bob.

Kelsey Grammer: It probably is, yeah. *(Laughs.)*

Transition: A whooshing sound.

Clip:

Music: A menacing, dramatic background score.

Sideshow Bob: Any last requests?

Bart: Well, there is one, but... nah.

Sideshow Bob: No, go on!

Bart: Well, you have such a beautiful voice.

Sideshow Bob: (*Preening.*) Guilty as charged.

Bart: Uh-huh. Anyway, I was wondering if you could sing the entire score of the *HMS Pinafore*.

Sideshow Bob: Very well, Bart. I shall send you to heaven before I send you to hell. And two and three and—(*singing*) “We sail the ocean blue and our saucy ship’s a beauty. We are sober men and true and attentive to our duty.”

Transition: A whooshing sound.

Jesse Thorn: Sideshow Bob does capture what's terrifying about you.

Kelsey Grammer: (*Laughs.*) Yeah. Die, Bart, die.

Jesse Thorn: I watched on YouTube a compilation of Sideshow Bob stepping on rakes. Sideshow Bob makes a very particular sound when he steps on a rake.

Kelsey Grammer: Ah yes, the famous rumble. The muegh.

Jesse Thorn: Is that a sound—? I found myself wondering, is that a sound that you do each time you go in? Or is there like a piece of archival tape?

Kelsey Grammer: I'm not sure. I mean, I usually always record it if we do it again. But they may be opting for the original. I don't really know. ‘Cause I mean, it's funny to just have it be exactly the same, honestly. And so, if it were I editing it, I'd probably just go with the original. (*Chuckles.*) But it's a wonderful character.

And I've told this story before, but when I was doing some pickup work for an actor named Ellis Rabb—who had started a theater company called APA, and they'd had great success—and then it went away, and then they started it up again, that was when I came into the scene. And I was painting Ellis's apartment.

So, Ellis Rabb would come home from a day at work, and say, “Oh, Kelsey. Ohhh, this and that.” I thought, wow, this guy is some character. So, I started to just kind of record him in my head. He was being, you know, socked away, put in the bank.

And he said he had been married to Rosemary Harris. And he was kind of beyond any working definition of gay. It was just one of those things that they thought this was going to be a marvelous adventure for the two of them. They both knew what they were, sexually, and tried it for a while. And Rosemary finally just said, “I gotta go do something else.”

And so, she married a Senator and had a baby. (*Laughs.*) And it just so happened— I was working when Rosemary had this baby, with Ellis. And Ellis would invite me and say, “Kelsey, why don't you sit and join me for a drink?” And so, I would do that. And he would start on this thing, and it was almost without exception—and it was repeated every afternoon for about three weeks when I worked with him. And he'd say, “Oh, Kelsey, that baby should have been mine.”

And I thought, that's it. This is the guy. This is—when Sam Simon called me and said, “We have this character who's never spoken on the Krusty the Clown Show. He's Sideshow Bob.” And I first read the script, and he liked Cole Porter.

And I said, “Oh, this is Ellis Rabb. This is the guy.”

[00:50:00]

Recently, my wife showed me— Someone had taken a recording of Ellis doing, I think, *The Seagull*. Dr. Dorn, I think—and found this archival video of him, and mentioned, “Kelsey Grammer says he was ripping off Ellis Rabb.”

And he said, “I think it's true.” And of course, there was Ellis doing, “Ohhh, dear, oh my.” You know, and it is so wonderful that I had that opportunity to know him.

I'll tell you another quick story about the first Sideshow Bob appearance. A buddy of mine was a teacher in Illinois. And he called me the day after—the day after!—Sideshow Bob made his first appearance on *The Simpsons*. And he sent me a picture a couple of days later of one of the fraternity dorms, fraternity houses. It was all red brick, but on it was painted a 40-foot-tall picture of Sideshow Bob. And on it was written, “Free Sideshow Bob.” (*Chuckles.*)

So, he caught the imagination of the country almost immediately and has stuck through it. I mean, he casts a long shadow through the universe.

Jesse Thorn: Do you remember the direction you received or the note in the script that described that sound?

Kelsey Grammer: Nope! Nope. It just said, “He steps on a rake and reacts.”

Clip: (*Multiple thwack noises followed by defeated groans.*)

Jesse Thorn: Who knew! Who knew that you, the man behind one of the most iconic characters in sitcomery, would best be known for going, “Eughhh.”

Kelsey Grammer: I know, it is wild, isn't it? And then, even funnier—in addition to that story, we were auditioning my daughter for *Boss*—the girl that played my daughter. Now she didn't end up getting it, but she was close. But this girl at the end of her audition looked at me and said, “By the way, I'm that baby.” (*Laughs.*) She was Rosemary Harris's daughter. It was a wonderful sort of full-circle thing.

Jesse Thorn: New *Frasier* had several episodes directed by James Burrows, who's like almost certainly the greatest sitcom director of all time.

(*Kelsey agrees.*)

And I interviewed James Burrows one time, and I remember trying to get him to be boastful about something.

Kelsey Grammer: Ah yeah, that's not his thing, yeah.

Jesse Thorn: Or at least acknowledge that maybe he was good at his job.

(*Kelsey laughs.*)

And he finally—I remember very vividly, he finally said, “Well, I think I'm pretty good at coming up with little stuff for people to do.” (*Laughs.*)

Kelsey Grammer: Yeah, yeah, he is! That is true. He's got—I mean, we were very fortunate. He and I developed a kind of a shorthand that paid off for years. But the most specific example is we were doing this show called “Dinner at Eight-ish”. I think it was with—Bebe Neuwirth and I had invited Sam and Diane over. This is on *Cheers*. And he said, “Kels, this scene.” He said, “Gotcha.” (*Laughs.*)

Jesse Thorn: He just gave you a hand gesture like underneath kind of—?

Kelsey Grammer: It's a little thing like that. Yeah, it was just fantastic. And it did sort of guide me toward the line reading I did. This woman was a (inaudible). (*Laughing.*) So, it's silly, but it was—we've always been that way. And then of course, when I get to work with Jim, it's fantastic. He's probably the most important person in my life, career-wise, since the beginning.

Jesse Thorn: Are you aware of the move that *Frasier* does when he's really feeling himself?

Kelsey Grammer: I actually am not. (*Laughs.*)

Jesse Thorn: It's like an upper body. Like, a lengthening. Like a—

Kelsey Grammer: I'm imagining it's girding his loins. I imagine that's kind of what I'm doing. You know, sort of puffing myself up a little bit. Yeah. Well, yeah, you know. I think when he would go head-to-head with somebody who was challenging him or his son. I think there was evidence of that for sure.

Like, when there was the spelling bee with Frederick, I think when he was pretty young. I seem to remember getting pretty puffed up there.

Jesse Thorn: I mean, the thing about Frasier is you have to know innately in some way—maybe it's also intellectual, but innately in some way—the balance of him taking it in the jewels and winning.

(Kelsey agrees with a laugh.)

Because on paper, this is an insufferable man that sitcom audiences would not want to root for.

Kelsey Grammer: Yeah. He's a—I can't—*(sighs)* maybe this is how the character evolved through whatever I brought to it. You know, that he became lovable because of like—I think because of the thing that he loves so deeply, and is searching for that.

[00:55:00]

And he is self-aware to the point where he realizes when he's being a bit of a fool and does it anyway. You know, there's this— This comes from an old experience, on stage when I discovered what I call the wink. You have to give the audience a wink that says you're aware of what you're doing as an actor that invites them in, and invites them in to say, “Oh, he's being funny.”

So, they need to feel safe enough to be included and be funny. And this is Jimmy Burrows, sort of, related. His dad, Abe Burrows, did *A Funny Thing Happened On the Way to the Forum*. Nobody was laughing. They're doing previews. They're opening out of town. They're afraid they're going to close out of town. And somebody said, “We got to tell them that it's funny.”

So, they wrote the song “Comedy Tonight”, which opens the show. *(Singing.)* “Comedy tonight!”

(They hum along together.)

Yep, exactly. And that's the necessity of the wink. It's an invitation.

Jesse Thorn: There was a time when the only thing on the entire internet was a video of you falling off the edge of a stage.

Kelsey Grammer: Oh lord, I remember that. Yeah, that was—yeah. I remember that there was such celebration of it.

Jesse Thorn: Well, it's an extraordinary moment.

(Kelsey agrees.)

It must have—I imagine that— Well, for one thing, I imagine there was physical pain for you. *(Laughs.)*

Kelsey Grammer: Oh, it was extraordinary, yeah. But I think I said, “Oh, dear lord.” Something like that.

Jesse Thorn: Well, and I think you also like apologize to the person you fall on, if I remember right?

Kelsey Grammer: Yeah, well I didn't fall on anybody. I apologized, because I had to finish the show. I said, “I'm so sorry.” I don't remember the specifics of it. But yeah, I still have a bump, up near my right buttock, I guess you would say, that was basically muscle that went from my kneecap up to that place. It's still a little outta shape, outta whack.

But the EMT guy that looked at me after I finished the show? They were waiting for me. I went out there. He said it looked worse than most motorcycle accidents. It was a very unpleasant thing that happened. But what had happened was—the reason it happened was— And I did learn this. I walked the stage for rehearsal with house lights on, so I could see the stage. When we did the show, it was the first time I saw a spotlight, I couldn't see anything but the fact that I was sort of floating in a dark room, and there was a silhouette of audience members out there.

But the stage itself was built—the thrust was built in a circumference sort of radius that went out to the middle of the stage and then went into star points along the way. It was the Aladdin stage, I think. And I fell on one of the—I stepped off of the stage and onto one of those points, and that's what cut me. So, I said, “Oh, dear lord,” because I didn't want to say, “Oh, F.” Because there were kids in the audience.

But I did remember thinking— The thing that kind of killed my grandmother was when she broke her hip. And I thought, “Oh boy, I might've broken my hip.” I didn't.

Jesse Thorn: I mean, I'll say this, Kelsey Grammer. On the one hand, this is a video of a famous beloved sitcom actor falling. Which is, in and of itself, somewhat appealing.

Kelsey Grammer: I know, I get it. *(Laughs.)*

Jesse Thorn: However, I do not think that video is anything without the part where you say—where your reaction to it is so sweet!

(They laugh.)

I remember seeing it and thinking like, “AW! Kelsey Grammer! Take care of yourself, buddy!”

Kelsey Grammer: I was—yeah, I was just trying to make sure I didn't say something awful. (Laughs.)

Jesse Thorn: Well, Kelsey Grammer, I really appreciate your time. Thank you so much for getting to talk to me and thanks for your extraordinary work over so many years. It's really added a lot to my life.

Kelsey Grammer: It's been an honor. Thank you.

Jesse Thorn: Kelsey Grammer, everybody! His latest movie is *Wish You Were Here*. It's on demand. He also has a book coming out later this year. It's a memoir about his late sister called *Karen*.

Transition: Cheerful, upbeat synth.

Jesse Thorn: That's the end of another episode of *Bullseye*. *Bullseye* is created in the homes of me and the staff of Maximum Fun—as well as at Maximum Fun HQ, overlooking beautiful MacArthur Park in Los Angeles, California. Looking out our window, we noticed a big old mess of pigeon feathers on the ledge. Seems like a hawk was really—let's say really doing its thing.

Our 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 Hannah Moroz. Our video producer is Daniel Speers. We get booking help from Mara Davis.

[01:00:00]

Our interstitial music comes from our pal Dan Wally, also known as DJW. You can find his music at DJWsounds.bandcamp.com. Our theme music is by The Go! Team. It's called “Huddle Formation”. Thanks to their label, Memphis Industries, and thanks to The Go! Team.

You can follow *Bullseye* on YouTube, where you will find video from just about all our interviews, including the ones you heard this week. 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.)