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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.

Josh Gad. You know him from the *Book of Mormon*. He was in the original Broadway cast. You know him from *Avenue 5* on HBO or as the voice of Olaf—the doofy, death-obsessed Snowman from the *Frozen* movies. But all of those are only part of Gad's extraordinary life story. He was born and raised in Hollywood—Hollywood, Florida. His parents split up at five, and then shortly afterwards, Josh's dad sprung some big news on him. Josh had a half-brother he'd never met before who lived in South America with a secret family. Then Josh's dad made him promise never to tell anyone. That's a tough road to hoe for a kid.

He wasn't exactly set up to win, right? And he struggled, struggled with anger issues growing up, depression, says his mom went to heroic lengths to keep him on the straight and narrow. And guess what? It worked. It all makes Gad's path to success even more unique. He wrote about it in his new memoir, which is called *In Gad We Trust: A Tell-Some*. I'm so thrilled to talk with Josh about his new book. Let's get right into it.

Transition: Bright, playful synth.

Jesse Thorn: Josh Gad, welcome to *Bullseye*. I am so happy to have you on the program.

Josh Gad: I am so honored. I'm offended that you had Andrew like seven years before me.

Jesse Thorn: This is Andrew Rannells, your costar in several Broadway productions.

Josh Gad: Yes. In every Broadway production.

(*They chuckle.*)

That pisses me off. But otherwise, I'm thrilled to be here.

Jesse Thorn: Right. It's only because we like him better. And think he's a better person.

Josh Gad: I know. (*Laughs.*) No, I—by the way, I get that a lot too. Even from my kids.

(*They laugh.*)

Jesse Thorn: It's a joy to have you here on the program. What gave you the temerity to think that you should write an autobiography at the age of 43?

Josh Gad: The French have a word called “ego” that I think really captures the mood going into this enterprise.

(Jesse laughs.)

To be fair, I never actually sat down and said, “You know what the world's missing right now? The Josh Gad memoir.”

That would be the devil's work of my agent, Anthony Matero, who sat down with me one day and said, “You know, you just write a kid's book. Have you ever thought about like writing like a book of essays or like a book about you?”

I’m like, “Anthony, nobody needs to hear from me about my life or anything.”

And he goes, “Well, I think that you actually have stories to tell that aren't just like, you know, stories about success—but also stories about like your struggles with issues like anxiety, struggles with issues like body image.” I’m very open about having imposter syndrome. And he's like, “I think that could be really additive for social conversation.”

And I sort of thought about it. And as an exercise, I wrote a chapter about being a dad and really enjoyed that and was like, “If someone's crazy enough to pay me to do this, then I guess I'll do it.” And someone called my bluff.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah. Famous last words! I mean—

Josh Gad: Famous last words.

Jesse Thorn: I know a lot of comedy people who, at some point their life, someone said to them, “Have you ever thought about pitching a book?”

(Josh giggles.)

Universally, it's led only to pain.

Josh Gad: Yes! And my process was no different, but through that pain, a result of 230+ pages came out of it. And I describe it as therapy in front of a mirror. Because you know, my editor, Natasha, was very honest and could smell the bull(*censor beep*) whenever I submitted something. And she's like, “I feel like you're not telling me everything there is to say.”

And I said, “Well, it's called a tell-some, not a tell-all for that reason.”

And she goes, “Yeah, but if I feel it, your readers will feel it.” And she pushed me to rip the Band-Aid off and confront my demons.

Jesse Thorn: What's an example of that?

Josh Gad: Well, I mean, I think a prime example of it is I open the book with my sort of superhero origin moment, which was my father leaving us—being kicked out of the house by my mother when I was six years old.

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And I have this vivid image of my dad standing there laughing as my mom was throwing his luggage at him and telling him to get the hell outta the house. And about like a couple of weeks later—I didn't understand what was going on, and a couple weeks later, my dad was like, “I have a surprise for you.” And I'm like, oh, great! And I'm thinking I'm gonna get a dog or something. And instead I have a half-brother that I didn't know about. And apparently, I found out at six that like my parents got a divorce because my father had another family while he was married to my mom.

And that's a very vulnerable thing that in any other form would never come up. If I'm doing a press junket for *Frozen*, (*chuckling*) I'm not gonna be like, “Hey, I really appreciate your question about Arendelle, but there's something else you need to know, which is my dad left me when I was six.”

So, it's an exercise in vulnerability. It's an exercise in honesty. And that was tough, but it was also the assignment, and at a certain point it became cathartic.

Jesse Thorn: What about that did you not want to share initially?

Josh Gad: Well, there's vulnerability that comes out of A) sharing stories about yourself, obviously, but B) sharing stories about other people who may not want those stories told. If people who read the book comment on the fact that my mother is the hero of the story—and she really is—but in order to become a hero, you have to go through great pain. And sharing my mom's journey was something that I was very concerned about, because she's a private person. And you know, it's one thing for me to talk about myself and my experiences; it's another to lay out things that as a—you know—somebody who's not in the public eye. It can be painful; it can be equally vulnerable. But unlike me, she's not signing on for that.

So, those were the kind of landmines that I had to gently walk through and get permission for and make sure that like everybody understood that my story is also their story.

Jesse Thorn: Did you have to talk to your parents?

Josh Gad: Yeah. Well, my mom, I spoke ad nauseum too. My dad and I—and this is in the book, but— So, my father left when I was six, and there were a lot of tearful nights when I would wait by the window for him to come and visit. And he would say he was coming, and then something would inevitably come up. And that caused enormous pain. And by the time I got into college, I sort of was like— It's like, you know, “the cats in the cradle and the silver spoon, little boy blue and the man on the moon. When are you coming home, dad? I don't know when, but we'll get together then, son”—the Harry Chapin song.

And the son ultimately delivers the same message to the dad. "I'm too busy now." That became my trajectory around college, and there was a period from 2002 until 2024 where I didn't see my father. And then I was doing *Gutenberg* with your favorite *Gutenberg* star, Andrew Rannells.

Jesse Thorn: He's really great.

Josh Gad: I know. And I got a call from my father saying, "I'm in New Jersey. I would like to come see your show." And that was really strange.

Jesse Thorn: Did you see him before the show?

Josh Gad: No, I saw him after. And it was Halloween. And Andrew and I (*chuckles*) came out dressed as Faye Dunaway and her daughter from *Mommy Dearest*. And my dad was very confused. My dad's a foreigner. He doesn't speak English well. And he was just looking at us like, "What's happening?"

And afterwards I said to him, "You know what?" He was gonna go back to Jersey. And I'm like, "Why don't you stay with me for the night?"

Jesse Thorn: It must have been weird to be in the same room as him in that very odd situation where you are doing something really intense and complicated, like being in a two-hander musical. (*Laughs.*)

Josh Gad: Yes. Yeah. Yes. No, it was.

Jesse Thorn: It's like a demonstration of mastery. Like, you had to rehearse the crap out of this and do it a bunch of times. So, you're like in your element in a way.

Josh Gad: Well, it's a great question, and the reason it's a great question is I think what a lot of people don't realize is how much focus is necessary to do that job of being on stage or doing comedy or doing musical comedy.

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And it is a precision sport. And anytime you're distracted, it's not great for that focus. And that was a night in which I was incredibly distracted by his presence. And when you have something pulling at your brain, you're not present. And the first rule of theatre is be present.

Jesse Thorn: Did you know that he was gonna spend the night at your house, or was that an improvisation?

Josh Gad: I had thought about it. I was like, "If this goes well, then I think I'd like the opportunity to catch up with him."

Jesse Thorn: Was your family with your apartment?

Josh Gad: No. No, we were alone. I don't think I would've done it had my family—I know I wouldn't have. It was just—it would be unfair to them and also unfair to him to just be like, “Hey. 20 years later, meet the gang.” And I don't know that my kids were ready for that. You know, they know—their grandfather is my stepdad, and I want them to have that. And it's just complicated. Layered with, you know, complications.

Jesse Thorn: And unpredictable. You don't know what it's going to be.

Josh Gad: No, and it's unpredictable. And you know, I think I sort of needed my own form of closure before I dealt with like, “Oh, am I gonna welcome into like my children's lives?”

Jesse Thorn: A lot more to get into with Josh Gad. In just a minute we'll talk about why he went into musical theatre and what it was like starring in one of the biggest stage musicals of all time: *The Book of Mormon*. It's *Bullseye* for MaximumFun.org and NPR.

Promo:

Music: Playful, thumpy string music.

Jesse Thorn: Hi, is this Kelly?

Kelly: Yes, this is Kelly.

Jesse Thorn: Hi, Kelly. This is Jesse Thorn, co-host of *Jordan, Jesse, Go!*.

Kelly: Hi, Jesse.

Jesse Thorn: I'm calling because you were just named MaxFun Fun's member of the month for April.

Kelly: Oh wow! (*Laughs.*) This is so surreal.

Jesse Thorn: How long have you been a *Jordan, Jesse, Go!* listener?

Kelly: Probably eight years. I actually saw you guys at the Bellhouse in Brooklyn in 2019.

Jesse Thorn: Was seeing us the reason that you started listening to the show?

Kelly: (*Laughs.*) No, I had been listening for a while.

Jesse Thorn: Why did you end up becoming a member?

Kelly: It's really just been such a dependable source of laughter and joy and comfort. I just appreciated that, and I didn't wanna take it for granted. So, I want to contribute and show my support, because I don't want it to ever end.

Jesse Thorn: Kelly, thank you so much for talking with me, and thank you so much for being a member of MaxFun.

Kelly: Absolutely. It's my pleasure. It's totally worth it.

Speaker: If you're a MaxFun member, you can become the next MaxFun member of the month. Support us at MaximumFun.org/join.

(Music ends.)

Transition: Thumpy synth with light vocalizations.

Jesse Thorn: Welcome back to *Bullseye*. I'm Jesse Thorn. My guest this week is Josh Gad. He was in the original Broadway production of *The Book of Mormon*. You have also seen him onscreen in shows like *Avenue 5*, *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, *In Central Park*. And of course, he is the voice of Olaf from *Frozen*. He's got a new memoir out called *In Gad We Trust: A Tell-Some*. And hey! If you're enjoying this interview, you wanna watch it. All of our interviews are on YouTube. Hey, if you wanna keep listening to this one but go watch a different one afterwards, just search for *Bullseye with Jesse Thorn* on YouTube. Let's get back into our interview with Josh Gad.

One of the things that really took my breath away in reading about your experience with your dad after he got kicked outta the house was not that he introduced you to your half-sibling you didn't know about, but that you weren't supposed to tell anyone you had met your half-sibling.

Josh Gad: Yeah. Yeah, he swore me to secrecy, and I spiraled. I started just getting catastrophic grades at school. I was doing things—I remember there was a day where like I took—I don't even write about this in the book, but I was being destructive. I remember, you know, those like lighters in the car that you used to push down to light like a cigarette or something. And my mom had one of those lighters in the back, and I pushed it down, and I remember burning the leather on her car seat. And she was like, “What the hell are you doing?!” And I didn't even know why I was behaving that way. And she, being the amazing mother that she was, was like—took me to a therapist.

And I confessed to him what was happening, and he's like, “This is not something you should have to burden yourself with and have to put on your shoulders! It's not okay.” And I just remember like sobbing and releasing myself of that guilt and finally being able to share it with my mom and then finally like getting on a path of success for my own life.

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And it was—it's sort of like one of two things could have happened, and I'm very happy that like what happened was that, at a susceptible and still early age, I was able to take the right path.

Jesse Thorn: At the same time, if you have a parent who is depressed, that can be your superhero origin story moment of becoming a comedy guy.

Josh Gad: And it was!

Jesse Thorn: But the greatest comedy kid in the world still does not actually have control over their parents' depression.

Josh Gad: That's right. In my case, immediately when my mom fell into her darkest moments early on—after, you know, throwing my dad out and waking up to the realization that, in 1986, she was a single mother with three boys in a very inhospitable world for divorcees. And yet, she put on her big girl pants and she— You know, she had been in the jewelry business, and she decided to teach herself real estate, and she became this bad(*censor beep*) realtor and started just to kill it. And I felt like during this period, my job was, “I'm going to make you laugh. When I can break through that wall of pain, it's a superpower.”

And I felt like I was seeing in real-time that I was bringing her out of this dark spiral she was in, even for just brief moments at a time. And I realized one day, if I could do this for my mom, is there a path for me to do this writ large? Can I actually give this gift to other people? The gift of laughter and joy, the gift of escapism? And slowly but surely that became my path. And part of that was my mom, once again, giving me a set of tools with which to refine my craft. And one of those tools was this small children's theatre. I grew up in South Florida, in Hollywood. And there was a small children's theatre called The Hollywood Playhouse for the Performing Arts Children's Theatre.

And she signed me up. And I met a young Randy Rainbow and my best friend, Seth Gabel, and we started making magic as kids.

Jesse Thorn: South Florida is a very unusual place.

Josh Gad: It's freaking weird. First of all, it's unnatural, right? It's like every city and state that I've been to in these 50 states, you meet real life natives of that place: people who like come from multiple generations, whether it's Bostonites or New Yorkers—or you know—Ohioans, or Chicagoans. Whatever it is, there's (*chuckles*) legacy.

Florida is just a grab bag—South Florida in particular—of disparate cultures and like people who have like fled the cold or dictatorships or—(*laughs*) like, it's just got—you know, you got your Cubans, your Jews, your—

Jesse Thorn: I realized there was a lot of kosher labeling in the acai bowl restaurant I was in. And I said, “I think I may be in South Florida.”

Josh Gad: Yes! (*Laughs.*) Yes, that's right. That is a very astute observation.

So, growing up there and being like one of the few native Floridians—right? My parents weren't; my brothers weren't. My brothers were both born in New York. Like, it's sort of strange when I tell people like, “Oh yeah, I'm a native Floridian.”

Jesse Thorn: But you also belong to a subcultural group of non-native Floridians, right?

Josh Gad: Yes. New Yorkers.

Jesse Thorn: Yeah. New Yorkers. Specifically New York Jews.

Josh Gad: Yeah. New York Jews. I make a lot of fun of Florida, because Florida constantly seems to make fun of itself in the choices that it makes. But the truth is, I have such fondness for being a Floridian.

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I would not trade my history in South Florida and my journey in South Florida for anything. I feel like growing up there was invaluable to me, and I really enjoy coming back and like being a part of the community—whether it's through sports or culture, whatever it is. Like, as a Floridian, I just get that we're weird, but I embrace it. And in many ways it defined me.

Jesse Thorn: It also has an odd physical/geographic quality that feels like it is in defiance of God's will. Like, there is just weird patches of swamp in different places that remind you this is not a human place.

Josh Gad: No, it's primordial. It's—

Jesse Thorn: But also like you're like, “This is pretty great.” Like, there's a reason people go to this tropical paradise. (*Laughs.*)

Josh Gad: Yeah, but like it's the only place in North America that has both gators and crocodiles. And that is just such a great metaphor for South Florida's place in the larger scale of things. I think it's the only place maybe in the world that has that, actually.

Jesse Thorn: I went to college in Santa Cruz. Which I was pretty mixed about when I was in college. But now that I'm in middle age, I can imagine myself just switching to a full Santa Cruz lifestyle and living out my days at the bulk food store.

Josh Gad: Yeah! (*Laughs.*)

Jesse Thorn: Have you ever thought “I could be a 70-year-old at the early bird dinner at the Applebee's” in Hollywood, Florida?

Josh Gad: Oh, I could see... I could see myself doing that. My wife would never move to Florida. But I could see myself getting there. I also just—there's so many places that I love that I would be like—I could see myself in Wyoming. I could see myself in Montana. I could

see myself, you know, abroad. Like, there's—because I've had the experience— I like new experiences. I sort of don't like to look backwards. I like to look forwards. It's why I loved going to school in Pittsburgh. It's why I loved moving to New York. It's why I loved moving to LA. And I become restless after a while, and then I'm like, “You know, what's next?” So, Florida's probably not gonna end up being it.

Jesse Thorn: You went to a great acting conservatory, but you wanted to be in the musical theatre department and weren't.

Josh Gad: Correct.

Jesse Thorn: There are only—whatever—four musical theatre conservatories in the country or something. Musical theatre conservatory's a real specialized field. Did you have an idea of what a tall mountain you were trying to climb?

Josh Gad: Oof! I did when I heard my classmates sing. You know, I had a crazy class at Carnegie Mellon. The MTs, as they were called, were people like Leslie Odom Jr., who would go on to win a Tony for *Hamilton*. Rory O'Malley, who would go on to be nominated for a Tony for *Book of Mormon*. And Josh Groban, who would go on to become Josh Groban.

So, like (*chuckling*) I had a pretty good sense that like one of these things was not like the others. So, I respected the decision to put me in the acting department, which is—it was the same as musical theatre, just you didn't get the musical theatre additional training. But you know, I was always aware of and cognizant of the fact that like musicals were gonna have some sort of place in my life. I had done them in high school. I did *Fiddler*, I did *Guys & Dolls*. I felt very alive when I was doing musical theatre.

Jesse Thorn: It's really fun.

Josh Gad: It's really fun. And frankly, it was my education. Like, my mom would take me to shows at the Broward Center for the Performing Arts in Florida. And inevitably, all of those shows were musicals, whether it was *Damn Yankees* with Jerry Lewis, or it was *Grease* with Sally Struthers, or it was *Peter Pan* with Cathy Rigby. So, I got a really incredible education early on into musical theatre, and so I wanted and knew I needed to be a part of musicals in some way.

Jesse Thorn: Were you ever embarrassed by the inherent thirstiness of musical theatre performance?

Josh Gad: (*Laughs.*) Sure? I think I would be that if I had been welcome in that community. Like, formally. But because I wasn't, I am an observer, and so I'm not embarrassed; I just think it's really funny. But I'm also grateful that I didn't develop that attribute, because I was not really one of them for so long.

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Jesse Thorn: I think when you're a guy doing musical theatre, at least my experience is: people on the outside think that you are going to be worried about being seen as gay, which you're not. You're just enjoying the fact that there's all these straight women around. And you're the only straight guy.

(Josh laughs.)

You're like, "This is amazing."

But the part that can be hard to deal with about musical theatre is the extent to which you have to put yourself out there, especially when you are putting yourself out there in the service of something that, in the larger cultural conversation, is maybe more of a lowercase 'a' art than a capital 'A' Art. Like, you have to justify—you're like, "But Sondheim!" You know what I mean?

Josh Gad: Mm-hm. I think that's very fair.

Jesse Thorn: Like, you have to put yourself out a lot to be "iceman cometh", but nobody is looking sideways when you do that.

Josh Gad: Yeah. Yes, I think that musicals do not get—they do not get the same artistic acceptance that they deserve. Because frankly, I've never done anything harder than a live musical. And it requires all of those skill sets that you would have doing a traditional play, plus a bunch of others. But I do think that it is enough of a thing that—you know, part of the reason I was so drawn to *Book of Mormon* was it felt like an opportunity to bring a whole different group of people into the world of musical theatre that would otherwise never formally engage. And when something like that comes along, which is a rarity—and I hear it 15 years later still, again and again from people saying like, "I took my boyfriend! I took my dad! And it was their first time seeing a musical! They never wanted to see one, and now they love musicals."

I just think that like sometimes we're a little provincial when we think about like what is typically a musical, that when we can break those norms and try different things that like open up to a broader audience, it's really useful. Because then you bring in—think about how many people *Hamilton* has brought into musical theatre fandom. So, I think it's just about like breaking down those taboos.

Jesse Thorn: We'll wrap up with Josh Gad on the other side of a break. We still haven't talked about what might be his greatest achievement: winning three national titles in Teen Oratory competitions. It's *Bullseye* from MaximumFun.org and NPR.

Promo:

Music: Playful, retro rock music.

Narrator: This season on *The Adventure Zone*, *Abnimals*! Get ready for a brand-new crime fighting trio, here to protect the anthropomorphic, muscular animal citizens of River City. Featuring Justin McElroy as Ax-o-Lyle, the firefighting axolotl. Clint McElroy as Roger Moore, the debonair cow of mystery. Griffin McElroy as Navy Seal, the raw seal that has never served in the Armed Forces. And Travis McElroy as every other swole critter in River City. This swear-free, Saturday morning cartoon inspired story airs every Thursday on MaximumFun.org or wherever you get your podcasts.

(Music fades out.)

Transition: Thumpy synth with light vocalizations.

Jesse Thorn: *Bullseye*. I'm Jesse Thorn. My guest is Josh Gad of *Frozen*, the *Book of Mormon*, and more.

I wanna ask you about Olaf, the snowman from *Frozen*. It's pretty intense that his whole character is about his relationship with death. Right?! *(Laughs.)*

Josh Gad: Yeah. It's a pretty existentially driven character.

Transition: A whooshing sound.

Clip:

Olaf (*Frozen*): Elsa's dead. Olaf's dead. Anna cries! *(In an oddly cheerful rush.)* And then a bunch of important things happen that I forgot, but all that matters is I was right, and water has memory, and **THUS!** *(Gasps dramatically.)* I live! And so do you.

Transition: A whooshing sound.

Josh Gad: The thing that I was always at a very young age attracted to about the comic relief sidekick in Disney animated movies is that there was a very funny misbehavior that made them stand out. So, it wasn't that they were just saying funny lines, which doesn't—in my opinion—create a timelessness for a character. It's really about attitudinal comedy, right? What makes the Genie in *Aladdin* so brilliant is obviously Robin's performance, which is one for the ages, but it's the pathos.

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It's the fact that he is enslaved by this lamp, and all he wants is his freedom, but he's fairly certain he is never gonna get it. And then when he is unexpectedly released from the shackles of this prison and he gets that freedom, it's an emotional euphoria that makes you tear up.

And for me, that was the same gift I got with Olaf. Olaf is a byproduct of this undying love that two sisters have for each other. And because of that love and because one of these girls has this gift for magic, he springs to life. And while he is a snowman, and while he is naïve and goofy and innocent and scatological at times, what he also is—at the end of the day—is a representation of the purest theme of *Frozen*, which is the bond of family. And that, to me, makes him go from a funny side character to a character that continues to come up in discussions.

Jesse Thorn: I know a guy who was in the cast of *Yo Gabba Gabba!*, a children's television show. And I heard that sometimes a friend will convince him to call their child and do the voice of his robot character from *Yo Gabba Gabba!*. And often, the child will cry. (*Laughs.*)

Josh Gad: So, I don't call kids as Olaf. I actually have a really, really, really strong opinion on that. Instead, what I do is I record messages. Because the problem with a real-time real—you know, live phone call, or even worse, FaceTime—is you can't predict the unexpected questions, and you can't predict the thing that like will unravel the magic for the child. And they cry because it's confusing. But if you have this magical sort of like voice thing that you can come back to and keep playing, it is a gift that keeps on giving. So, I am always like—I learned that very early on with Olaf that I was like, “No, this does not work. This is—”

When people are like, “Can you call my kid?”, I'm like, “You don't want that. Trust me. You don't want that.”

Jesse Thorn: As your children enter adolescence, are they embarrassed that their father is in *Frozen*?

Josh Gad: No, they're not embarrassed. They just are sort of like blasé about it. Like, I don't—you know, I think secretly— Like, I recently caught them watching *Frozen* again, and I don't think they saw me, and it made me very emotional and very happy. But like a whole generation of kids, that's a movie they grew up with. Right? And I think that like, you know, this franchise now, what I think it's going to do quite well—that *Toy Story*'s done, that *Inside Out* has done—is it respects that a group of people are at a different point in their lives when these new movies come out and wants to meet them on that part of their journey while also being accessible to newer, younger audiences.

Jesse Thorn: I think it would be hard to overstate the impact on a generation of that movie. You and I are the same age and have kids about the same age, and it was a phenomenon like nothing I can remember from my own childhood. You know what I mean? Like, totally awe inspiring. And it's great! So, that's good, but a little overwhelming, I imagine, for you. (*Chuckles.*)

Josh Gad: Well, it's shocking. I mean, I think more than anything it's just surprising. And I say that because I think with time it's sort of gotten lost, but like we hadn't really experienced a cultural phenomenon Disney animated movie in quite a long time. At that point. You know,

the closest was *Tangled* when it came out before *Frozen*. And it was like you could see that it was like something was happening, that like they were getting their footing back.

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And you know, *Princess and the Frog* too was like this movie—even though it didn't like blow up the box office, it was still—

Jesse Thorn: You could tell that it was having real impact on kids.

Josh Gad: It was quality. It was quality again, and it was having an impact. So, you saw something bubbling. But I think the expectation with *Frozen* is, “Oh yeah, this movie will like, at the best, will make like \$350-400,000,000 worldwide and be a giant hit. And then that'll be the end of it. And that's great. And hopefully like the songs will connect.” (*Chuckling.*) And that's not what happened. It just—it exploded outta the gate.

Jesse Thorn: I have one last question for you. Are you still, do you think, the most decorated teen orator in American history?

Josh Gad: No, I know this for a fact to not be the case anymore.

Jesse Thorn: Oh, okay!

Josh Gad: So, somebody finally caught up to my three titles. Okay. Just recently. So, we're tied.

Jesse Thorn: You were—two were in OO. What's OO?

Josh Gad: Original Oratory. And one was in Humorous Interpretation. And this brilliant young orator, she just won oratory three years in a row.

Jesse Thorn: Wow.

Josh Gad: So, she went as a sophomore, as a junior, and as a senior. I didn't do that. I won—back in my day, you could compete in two different categories, which you no longer can. So, I had an advantage, and I took fourth as a sophomore in dramatic interpretation. But no, I'm tied now.

Jesse Thorn: Do you have your trophies?

Josh Gad: I have one of my trophies. I donated all of the others to my high school.

Jesse Thorn: That's very sweet of you.

(*Josh laughs.*)

Do you think my high school would be interested in my academic decathlon medals?
(Laughs.)

Josh Gad: I think they would. I think you'd be surprised. You're a local star, and you should think about giving it back.

Jesse Thorn: Well, Josh Gad, thank you so much for taking the time to talk to me.

Josh Gad: Hey, thank you for—seven years after you did Andrew—calling me up and being like, “You know what? There's a place for you here.”

Jesse Thorn: Josh Gad! His new book is *In Gad We Trust: A Tell-Some*.

Transition: Bright, chiming 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. Tonight, I'm headed to the Elysian Theatre to see the Hike Bros improv show with past *Bullseye* guests Nick Kroll and Owen Burke. Jason Mantzoukas. I think Mantzoukas has been on *Bullseye* at some point—and Seth Morris. All absolute improv legends.

Our show is produced by speaking into microphones. Our senior producer is Kevin Ferguson. Our producers, Jesus Ambrosio and Richard Robey. Our production fellow at Maximum Fun is Hannah Moroz. Our video producer, Daniel Speer. Hey, watch those videos on YouTube and elsewhere. Just search for *Bullseye with Jesse Thorn*. 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](https://djwsounds.bandcamp.com). Our theme music was written and recorded by The Go! Team. It's 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 you heard this week. 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.)