

[00:00:00]

**Jesse Thorn:** Hey gang, it's Jesse. Before we get into this next *Bullseye* interview, I wanted to give you a heads up on something really exciting. We are ringing in 25 years of *Bullseye* all through this fall. 25 years! I started this show in my dorm room when I was 19!

What does that mean? Well, we will have a whole month of special shows, new and old, this Autumn. And for another, on October 9th, I am going to be interviewing 25 people in a row live and streaming. So, you can watch that on the *Bullseye* YouTube channel. We're also going on the road, bringing you three very special anniversary live shows.

Thursday, October 16th, we'll be at LAist in Pasadena, California. I'll be joined by Roy Wood Jr. and Jason Mantzoukas. We will have music from Rebecca Sugar, the creator of *Stephen Universe*. And! Comedy from the great Aparna Nancherla. Saturday, November 1st will be at the Kuumbwa Jazz Center in Santa Cruz, California. I will be talking with Adam Scott, Boots Riley, and Glenn Washington. We will have comedy from Scott Simpson. Finally, on Saturday, November 15th, we'll head to the Pit in New York City, the Pit Theater. My guests: Jad Abumrad from *Radio Lab*, H Jon Benjamin from *Archer* and *Bob's Burgers*, comedy from Josh Gondelman, music from songwriters Kristin Anderson-Lopez and Bobby Lopez—the latter of whom is an actual EGOT. It is going to be an extravaganza in all three cities.

I hope you will celebrate with us. Go to [MaximumFun.org/events](https://MaximumFun.org/events) for info on all of it. That's [MaximumFun.org/events](https://MaximumFun.org/events). And thanks.

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

**Promo:** *Bullseye with Jesse Thorn* is a production of [MaximumFun.org](https://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 is Gwendoline Christie. She's a British actress. You probably know her for her part as Brienne of Tarth, the knight on *Game of Thrones* who—in a show full of strong, intimidating people—was possibly the strongest and most intimidating.

**Transition:** A whooshing sound.

**Clip:**

**Music:** Ominous orchestral music.

**Speaker (*Game of Thrones*):** You don't know that by now, you're the wrong one to watch over her.

**Brienne:** And that's what you are doing? Watching over her?

**Speaker:** Aye, that's what I'm doing.

*(The scrape of a sword being unsheathed followed by a slash and a thump.)*

**Transition:** A whooshing sound.

**Jesse Thorn:** Brienne seemed at first glance like a sort of classic fantasy character. A knight, brave and true, who was also the biggest, strongest person on screen at any given time. Just like, you know, a knight with a gigantic sword. But Christie made the character much more than just a fantasy archetype. She was courageous, vulnerable, tough, and beautiful.

*Game of Thrones* launched Gwendoline Christie's career. Before the show wrapped, she was cast in two *Star Wars* movies. She's had recurring roles on the Netflix shows *Sandman* and *Wednesday*. And if you watched *Severance*, you probably remember her as the lady who—I mean, I guess you would describe her as the lady who was in charge of all the goats? If you haven't seen the show, sorry about how strange that sounds. It is a very weird show. You should go see it. I'm so excited to talk with Gwendoline Christie. Let's get right into it.

**Transition:** Thumpy synth with a syncopated beat.

**Jesse Thorn:** Gwendoline Christie, welcome to *Bullseye*. It's so nice to have you here.

**Gwendoline Christie:** Thank you so much for having me.

**Jesse Thorn:** I'm thrilled. I want you to know ahead of time—just like right off top, cards on the table—I mostly want to talk about goats.

**Gwendoline Christie:** *(Genuinely excited.)* Oh, brilliant! Good! I'm thrilled! Yes, great!

**Jesse Thorn:** *(Laughs.)* I love goats!

**Gwendoline Christie:** Do you? I do.

**Jesse Thorn:** Okay. So, did you love goats before you were a celebrity goat wrangler?

**Gwendoline Christie:** Oh wow. First of all, nobody's ever given me that title. It feels like a sort of official recognition. Secondly, um—

**Jesse Thorn:** On behalf of the Goat Council.

**Gwendoline Christie:** Yeah. Well, I am honored. Thank you very much.

**Jesse Thorn:** You're welcome.

**Gwendoline Christie:** The answer genuinely is no. I've been an animal fan all my life. But you know, I never had any particular predilection for goats until I started to study them, and livestock, animals out to pasture... that I'm a fan of. *(Laughs.)*

**Jesse Thorn:** Oh, so what is it we're talking about? Sheeps?

**Gwendoline Christie:** Well, yeah! I mean, yes. I mean, I spent a—I did spend a long time in fields with sheep and with cows.

[00:05:00]

I mean, for months. Months and months. Over a year, to develop a sense of ease about being around animals like that. And there weren't goats readily available, but there were plenty of sheep readily available. And I have a couple of friends that are sheep farmers. So, cows are a totally different kettle of fish. In particular, the Friesians are really frisky. They're like juvenile delinquents. So, you can't enter a field without them possibly intimidating you.

I once had quite a dangerous situation where I went—it was a public footpath. I went into a field, and the cows—and I approached slowly, which I'm not sure is the right thing to do. The cows all started to gather, gang-like.

**Jesse Thorn:** *(Giggling delightedly.)* Yes! Uh-huh.

**Gwendoline Christie:** And I slowed down. I was very intimidated by them. And then more and more gathered at that sort of lumbering pace from all corners of the field. And they absolutely sensed that they were intimidating me. And I tried to summon the confidence and the sort of—not bravado, but basic confidence and boldness to navigate them. But as I started moving down the field, they moved down, and they— And the cows bullied me!

*(Jesse giggles.)*

And the cows bullied me back out of the field, because they were starting to get quite frisky. And I could sense there was a possible impending violence. The sheep, however— I've never been bullied by sheep. *(Laughs.)* And I'm grateful for that. But observing goats was delightful.

**Jesse Thorn:** Oh wait, though. Let's go back to the cows. We'll get back to goats.

*(Gwendoline “wow”s with a laugh.)*

What is a Friesian cow?

**Gwendoline Christie:** Black and white cow.

**Jesse Thorn:** Oh, that's just a classic cow-cow?

**Gwendoline Christie:** Yeah, I suppose. I mean, don't ask me. I'm no kind of—

**Jesse Thorn:** Like, cow spots.

**Gwendoline Christie:** I'm not a cow aficionado. But from my basic, layman understanding, it's a specific breed. And they are the black and white cows, the Friesians. And they're particularly frisky.

**Jesse Thorn:** So, did you not meet goats until you were on set with goats?

**Gwendoline Christie:** Oh, I did. Yes. I found goats. And actually, I was brought up drinking goat's milk. So, maybe something in that, after all these years, has manifested itself in this role.

**Jesse Thorn:** Was that just because someone in your family was lactose intolerant or—?

**Gwendoline Christie:** It's because— I mean, if you want to know, it's because I was lactose intolerant at that stage.

So, the goats gave me life. And here they are giving me life again. *(Laughs.)*

**Jesse Thorn:** My whole thing with this show is just to try and, you know, break into those celebrity gossip pieces, like get in the *Sun* with just a little tidbit of something that's breaking news. I think this lactose intolerance thing is gonna be our ticket to success.

**Gwendoline Christie:** I believe you have kicked down the gate.

**Jesse Thorn:** Unless you already told like Jonathan Ross about that or something.

**Gwendoline Christie:** *(With faux sincerity.)* I've been waiting to tell the world about this, and I decided that you were the chosen one.

**Jesse Thorn:** Thank you. The goats were in the show before you were on the show, right?

*(Gwendoline confirms.)*

They preceded you.

**Gwendoline Christie:** The goats take precedence.

**Transition:** A whooshing sound.

**Clip:**

*(Goats bleating.)*

**Mark (*Severance*):** Her name's Ms. Casey. She's our former wellness director.

**Lorne:** *(Solemnly.)* Wellness. *(Beat.)*

*(Eerie music fades in.)*

We don't abide such fripperies here.

**Transition:** A whooshing sound.

**Jesse Thorn:** And I know you had been a fan of the show and kind of— I don't wanna say talked your way onto the show, 'cause I don't think you asked to be on the show.

**Gwendoline Christie:** Oh god, what kind of thing is that to say? *(Laughs.)*

**Jesse Thorn:** But manifested yourself onto the show.

**Gwendoline Christie:** That sounds horribly— *(Giggles.)*

**Jesse Thorn:** You describe for me how you would characterize... I don't mean that you like used-car-salesman'ed your way on.

**Gwendoline Christie:** I feel like you are saying that I... brutalized—

**Jesse Thorn:** They were excited that you—!

**Gwendoline Christie:** I brutalized people to get onto the show that I liked.

**Jesse Thorn:** *(Chuckling.)* Nice show you have here. It'd be awful if something happened to it.

**Gwendoline Christie:** I brutalized.

**Jesse Thorn:** No!

(Gwendoline cackles.)

What I'm saying is you ran into Ben Stiller one day.

(She confirms.)

Or one evening?

**Gwendoline Christie:** Yeah. Well, it was genuinely bizarre.

[00:10:00]

I'd watched *Escape at Dannemora*, and I thought it was a really brilliant piece of work. I was incredibly surprised it was directed by Ben Stiller, because it was out of genre from what we've known of him. And I thought it was really dazzling. I really loved the characters and the performances. You know, it'd been a long time since we'd seen that sort of character work on television. I really adore Benicio del Toro and Patricia Arquette; they're just two of my favorite actors. So, I was fascinated by that. And I thought, oh, it feels like a new portal's opening here.

But of course, you're never gonna have a meeting with Ben Stiller. You know, you're never gonna meet Ben Stiller. And I had been incredibly lucky to be nominated for an Emmy. And I was at the award show with my partner. And I said, quite uncharacteristically, "Let's take a photograph of us." And I took it, and I looked at it, and I saw Ben Stiller in the corner of the photo. And I sort of gasped. I said, "Oh god! It's Ben Stiller!" And then I thought, "No! What if he thinks I took the photo on purpose? He's going to think I'm weird!"

And then I honestly felt a tap on the shoulder and looked up, and it was Ben Stiller. And I thought, "Oh, he's gonna have a—like, he's gonna have a go at me." He was so nice about my performance in *Game of Thrones*. And it was very surreal, 'cause I did not expect that whole thing to happen. And then, you know, I'm learning to act on these moments, these strange things that happen. And I said to my manager, "I really want to meet Ben Stiller, because I loved *Escape at Dannemora*, and we had a sort of weird exchange."

I never, ever thought it would result in actually sitting down with him. Well, it did. And he told me about *Severance* in 2019. So, I wondered what he might do with this series he was describing. And he told me that there was no part for me in the show. (Laughs.)

I was hugely disappointed. (Laughs.) There was no part for me. (Playfully.) As usual.

But then commenced a global pandemic, and everybody was manacled to their screens watching things. And so, when I learned that *Severance* was gonna be on television, I was interested to watch it. And I was— From the opening shot, I gasped, because it was just so in tune with what I wanted to see. And I was truly captivated by it and fascinated by it. And also, because the camera work on that show is unlike what you normally see. You know, often camera work on television shows can feel prescriptive and adhering to a standard

format. But there was great imagination and artistry, real artistry, in how it was shot. And you saw a someone's vision.

And it felt really refreshing. Because it felt, in this television landscape, someone was putting themselves out there and saying, “This is what I see.” It's uncompromising. And in that is a real singularity and freshness.

**Jesse Thorn:** So much more with Gwendoline Christie still to come. Stay tuned. It's *Bullseye* from [MaximumFun.org](https://MaximumFun.org) and NPR.

**Transition:** Thumpy synth with a syncopated beat.

**Jesse Thorn:** Welcome back to *Bullseye*. I'm Jesse Thorn. My guest is Gwendoline Christie. She's an English actor, probably best known for her role as the knight Brienne of Tarth in *Game of Thrones*. You can catch Gwendoline these days on *Wednesday*, the *Addams Family* series produced by and often directed by Tim Burton. And on *Severance*, which is the show that won... every award at the Emmy's recently. Let's get back into it.

One of the things about the way TV is made, usually—at least in the United States—is often a heavyweight director will direct a pilot of a show. Their job is to set a template for the rest of the show. And if it's like *CSI: Chicago* or whatever, you know, it'll be Spike Lee or David Fincher or something will come in and direct the pilot. And get like backend points, 'cause they're so important on establishing the thing. But mostly, it's their job in that pilot to just set the rules for the whole rest of the show.

[00:15:00]

And so, every other television director that comes after them—on most shows—is essentially a craftsperson who's following that template. It's very unusual for a television show to have—it's common for a television show to have like writerly authorial voice, but it's relatively unusual for a television show to have a director's authorial voice throughout. Which definitely *Severance* does.

**Gwendoline Christie:** Yes. Yes! I mean, you know, television is still something that's evolving for me. My first passion is film, so that's— I'm always interested in and drawn to films in a television format. That's what I like to work on. It feels like there's more creativity that way. And actually, as someone that was trained in— I was trained in theatre. So, the way that they trained us in a sense was old fashioned because— But they remarked on this constantly, that we were being trained to do regional theatre. So, we were being trained to be able to go into theatre productions and possibly do two or maybe even three productions at the same time that were revolving. And you'd do eight shows a week, and you would tour around the country, and that's how you made your money. And that you— That's how you made a living. I mean, not your money; how you make a living. (*Chuckles.*)

And that if you were lucky, you would get bits of television. But that view, that sort of prehistoric view, was that television was an inferior art form. And that an equal—

**Jesse Thorn:** *(With faux shock.)* You're telling me that in theatre school they were telling you that theatre was better than television?!

**Gwendoline Christie:** Of course!

**Jesse Thorn:** Yeah.

*(Gwendoline laughs.)*

What else is new?

**Gwendoline Christie:** But they were aware that the landscape of acting was changing. But it was an acting school. It wasn't a—certainly, it wasn't a theatre school. It was primarily an acting school, because it was a classical training with a method approach. So, what that meant was that idealistically—and rather unrealistically—they were training us to be artists.

**Jesse Thorn:** I was reading old interviews you'd given. And there was one where you were talking about Tilda Swinton in Orlando. And the word that you used to describe her onscreen was “otherworldly”. Which is—I mean, anybody who's seen Tilda Swinton in anything can tell you—for sure will agree. And I thought that must have been exciting for someone who, on camera, reads as other worldly, often. Because you don't look like other television actors. You know what I mean? Like, sincerely, you don't.

*(Gwendoline fights to contain laughter.)*

Like, TV specifically. Theatre is sort of another game. But like, TV is—like, a huge part of it is: what do you look like when the camera looks at you once, briefly.

**Gwendoline Christie:** Okay. Is that what it is?

**Jesse Thorn:** I mean, it's not all of it, but it's a significant portion of it. Much more so than theatre, I would say.

*(Gwendoline affirms noncommittally.)*

Well, because I literally don't think there is anyone in film and television that presents onscreen the way that you do. So, if it's not a sui generis part—like, if it's not— You're not there against a bunch of other like... yours.

**Gwendoline Christie:** Okay. I suppose so. I mean, what a blessing and a curse. *(Laughs.)*

*(Jesse agrees.)*

I mean, yeah, I suppose— I mean, for a long time—and still sometimes I am told—you know, there's no parts for you. They have to create parts for you. But I don't think I'm that different from other human beings, really. Not really.



**Jesse Thorn:** Not in real life.

**Gwendoline Christie:** No. But you think something happens? That's nice.

**Jesse Thorn:** I think that—

**Gwendoline Christie:** Go on. Please say that.

**Jesse Thorn:** —the screen is different.

*(Gwendoline cackles delightedly.)*

I think the screen is different!

I mean, like—so, Brienne of Tarth, right? Brienne of Tarth is defined in part by this extraordinary physicality. So, they have to find somebody that can embody that physicality while also performing a very complex internal life.

*(She confirms.)*

Like, otherwise it doesn't work.

**Gwendoline Christie:** Well, that part was a kind of revelation, you know? I didn't think that part would ever exist.

[00:20:00]

It was a different stage of my life, you know? And the world was in such a different place. When we think about 2010, radically different! You know, we didn't have streaming services really. I mean, we did, but they weren't as prolific as they are now. And HBO was very much, you know, the sort of zenith of a television experience, much closer in film; more of a sort of extended film experience. But you know, at drama school they told me, "If you're very—" Not me, all of us. "If you're very, very lucky, one day you may find a part that speaks to you. And in its speaking to you, in a sense it does the work for you."

I didn't think I'd ever quite find that. In part, I suppose it was because I was really struggling with myself, if I'm honest. You know, like I understand what you're trying to say. Society still does sometimes, but on the whole then, found me difficult to digest.

*(Jesse chuckles.)*

I've never been a conventional choice, but that part was like a bolt from the blue. When I— Because the reason I was called up for it was that the casting director had seen me in my first ever job, which was the Royal Shakespeare Company. And I was really— That's what I always wanted. I always wanted my first job to be at Royal Shakespeare Company. And I

was working with a brilliant director there called Declan Donovan. It was a great experience. He'd seen me there five years prior.

So, when he got the breakdown of what was required from the part, he communicated to my agent, "If she takes it seriously, I think that she could be really right for this." But also, nobody thought I would get it, because I'd just been told consistently, "You'll never work on screen, because you're too tall, and you're too unconventional looking, and you're too large overall. And you're too much taller than most men."

And I just thought, "Gosh, how limited." (*Laughs.*) I really did! I thought, "Well, that isn't very interesting. Like, how does that reflect the human experience that I'm having out just on the street? Or at night? Or in the park? Or going to the shops? Or being in the supermarket? I mean, I feel like I'm— Maybe it's because I was living in London. I feel like I was having a very different experience all of the time, with lots of different people showing different facets.

Thank goodness I always had a strong sense, somehow how from nowhere—alongside the, you know, crippling lack of self-confidence—a real resilience! (*Chuckles.*) Like, an extraordinary resilience. And I think it's because I always worked with artists. You know, a lot of people found it deeply confusing that I had a dedicated interest to the arts and passionate interest in fashion. And they felt that somehow that made me non-serious about the craft of acting.

But actually, what I found was that it was enriching my sense of acting. I wanted to come from another place. I wanted to have another experience. I wanted to bring something more than just carving dialogue.

**Transition:** A whooshing sound.

**Clip:**

*(Sounds of a rainstorm.)*

**Speaker (*Game of Thrones*):** Those were Stark men.

**Brienne:** I didn't serve the Starks. I serve Lady Catelyn. I told you I'd take you to King's Landing, and that's what I'm going to do. (*Beat.*) Stay.

*(A shout and a heavy thump.)*

**Transition:** A whooshing sound.

**Jesse Thorn:** I mean, one of the things I like about that character—and maybe my favorite character on that show, and I love the show—is I think in that kind of story, often when things are taking on mythic proportions, like... the conflicts of the character and the complications of the character are often kind of baked in and static. And like, that can still be really cool. Like, that's what *Spider-Man* is like. And I like *Spider-Man*. You know what I mean? Spider-Man doesn't grow.

And even when characters like that do grow, it can be a pretty sort of linear, sort of Joseph Campbell-y, they in the way that we expect them to grow. Right?

*(She agrees.)*

And she is actually a really rich character. Like, she is a human character in a way that, a woman who's as big as the dudes who swings the sword around would not be on any other television program.

**Gwendoline Christie:** No. *(Giggles.)* No. And not at that time either.

[00:25:00]

But the books provided all of the history of the character. I mean, there's so much in there. It fires the imagination unlike anything else. I mean, you know, the descriptive quality is vast, and the detail is minuscule. So, you've got that for nothing. You've got the tomes there. You've got the guidebooks there. Also—and I'd never seen onscreen an experience like mine, which was—you know, I do hope at some point I'll transcend, you know, “the tall woman that's managed to be an actor; isn't it so great that she's managed to overcome this terrible tragedy and just be a human being?”

But! That's the world! It was Brienne's story.

**Transition:** A whooshing sound.

**Clip:**

*(Horse hooves in dirt.)*

**Brienne:** Walk.

**Speaker:** Childhood must have been awful for you. Were you a foot taller than all the boys? They laughed at you, called you names?

**Transition:** A whooshing sound.

**Gwendoline Christie:** I knew it. I knew the pain of it. I knew what it was like to receive that aggression or negativity from society, sometimes. In a very, very real way. It changed my life. It also forced me to confront all the things about myself that I was really terrified about, and I wanted to ignore: my height, my size. My superhuman strength. *(Cackles.)*

**Jesse Thorn:** Uh-huh. *(Chuckles.)* I mean, you had to like train, I'm sure. Right?

*(She confirms.)*

Like, for real.

**Gwendoline Christie:** Oh, yeah. But I— You know, I've been fascinated by the idea of a method acting process ever since I can remember. I mean, Brando in *On the Waterfront* was a revelation to me. The moment with the glove. I mean, just—*(sighs)* it was a moment of reality. It took my breath away. And so, you know, studying Strasberg, I wanted to transform so fully. So, I had to look at the similarities and differences between me and the character. And I knew that I was in for a slog. *(Chuckles.)* You know, not only would I have to examine and bring on-show to the world my own androgyny, the inconsistencies in my face and appearance, the, um... you know, the unconventional nature of myself. I'd had to work really hard working out. I'd had to really take a look at my body.

It was never about aesthetics, because it wouldn't have been at that time. It would never have been about having a six pack. It was about having the stamina and the strength. And I changed my diet. I initially lost weight for the role, and then I put it all back on a muscle. I worked with a weight trainer. I was completely dedicated to it. I started kickboxing. I did six weeks of preparation before the audition, very intensively.

**Jesse Thorn:** In just a minute, we'll wrap up with Gwendoline Christie. She's a very serious fan of couture clothing and high fashion and has worn some stunning ensembles to award shows. We'll talk about how her best and most extraordinary fits are on display in *Wednesday*. For real! That's after the break on *Bullseye* for [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org) and NPR.

**Promo:**

*(Sci-fi beeping.)*

**Music:** Playful string music.

**Adam Prianca:** Now everybody knows that the greatest generation has always been MaxFun's go-to podcast for old *Star Trek* recaps. But what my theory presupposes is: what if it isn't?

*(Aggressive record scratch.)*

**Music:** High-energy techno.

**Adam:** In a shocking turn of events, *Greatest Trek*—the comedy podcast covering new *Trek*—has gone through a temporal wormhole back to the very beginning.

**Ben Harrison:** Because we are now reviewing *Star Trek: The Original Series*. That means when you subscribe now, you'll get episode-by-episode recaps of all the 1960s-style action and intrigue, along with all the jokes and fun that make *Greatest Gen* and *Greatest Trek* the number one *Star Trek* podcasts out there. Subscribe now to *Greatest Trek* on [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org)!

*(Music ends.)*

*(Sci-fi beep.)*

**Transition:** Chiming synth with a syncopated beat.

**Jesse Thorn:** It's *Bullseye*. I'm Jesse Thorn. My guest is actor Gwendoline Christie. You can catch her on the Tim Burton created show *Wednesday* or on the second season of Apple TV's *Severance*.

I have an outfit question for you.

**Gwendoline Christie:** Oh gosh.

**Jesse Thorn:** Which is— And it's not about the time that you dressed in a fashion show like the world's most extravagant paper carnation.

**Gwendoline Christie:** *(Puffs a surprised laugh.)* I don't know which one that was.

**Jesse Thorn:** It's a Japanese designer. I mean, it was incredible. It was like a Rose Parade float, but just frills everywhere. All the way around. Lots of colors, big train.

**Gwendoline Christie:** OHHH! Tomo Koizumi! Yeah!

**Jesse Thorn:** There you go. Okay That's not what I'm asking you about, though.

[00:30:00]

And I'm not asking you about the time that you were dressed as a terrifying doll.

*(She chuckles.)*

I'm asking you instead about your clothes on *Wednesday*, which is a show where looking extraordinary is absolutely essential to success on that program.

(Gwendoline cackles.)

Everybody on that show looks extraordinary. You know? Like, all I want to do is look at Luis Guzmán. You know what I mean? All day long.

**Gwendoline Christie:** Yes! Me too! Yes!

**Jesse Thorn:** Every day of my life, I would be happy to look Luis Guzmán.

**Gwendoline Christie:** Yes, me too!

**Jesse Thorn:** But it is— You look a very different kind of extraordinary on that show than you do on *Severance* or than you did on *Game of Thrones*. And you wear these gorgeous suits. You're fitted on that program. You look like a million, billion dollars on that show.

**Gwendoline Christie:** You are very kind.

**Jesse Thorn:** But it's a very specific—like, it's a very specific aesthetic. And knowing how keen you are on fashion, and also knowing that you've probably had to make specific choices about your clothes even on sets, simply because you probably don't wear off the rack sizes no matter what, that you must have had some involvement in the way that character looks.

**Gwendoline Christie:** Yes, I did. I mean, it was truly the opportunity of a lifetime to work with Tim Burton. I've wanted to work with him my whole life. I never thought that would happen. I really didn't. When *Pee-wee's* came out, I must have seen it— I was about eight years old, and I thought— I've said it so many times; I'll say it again. I thought, “Who is that directed by? Tim Burton. Who is this Tim Burton?” And then I went to the cinema to watch every single thing that he did. Being tall, the age rating was irrelevant. (*Laughs.*) But I just adored every single thing he did.

And it was a big surprise when he spoke to me about being involved in this project, about the *Addams Family*. I think I even saw some of the casting being announced, and I thought, “Why aren't I in that? Ah, they'll never have me in that. I'm so disappointed and furious.” (*Laughs.*) So disappointed by life! And then I got that call and spoke to Tim. And he was so kind and sweet and charismatic, and very generously offered me the opportunity to be creatively involved. And this was my chance to step forward. And it took a lot for me to do it, because it's Tim Burton! (*Chuckles.*)

But I had my instinct. Weirdly, it was something that I'd wanted to inhabit since I was a child. I always loved Hitchcock films. You know, when I just sort of played truant from school, I'd watch movies. And I loved watching Hitchcock movies always. I was fascinated by this idea of the Hitchcock woman, that archetype. All of that strange mystery. But I didn't want her to be a victim. And I carried that with me. One of the things I sort of muse on sometimes—

imagine playing a part like that. Imagine being able to bring that alive, but to change it and develop it.

And so, it felt like this was the time. And I thought, no, that's a good idea; you might wanna keep that for something else. And I thought, just try it, and see what he says. Weirdly, he and Colleen Atwood had the same idea as me, of Tippi Hedren in *The Birds*.

**Jesse Thorn:** And she's the costume designer on the show.

**Gwendoline Christie:** The incredible Colleen Atwood. And I was delighted to be working with her. And very nervous, 'cause she's truly legendary in her skill. I mean—

**Jesse Thorn:** 'Cause the clothes are like architectural.

**Gwendoline Christie:** Yes. Well, they have to be. I think it's— Tim's vision is so precise and varied and detailed.

**Jesse Thorn:** Given your success in three of television's most popular and artistically successful shows for people who are extraordinary looking, which they—

**Gwendoline Christie:** (*Laughing.*) I really got lucky. I really did get lucky.

**Jesse Thorn:** All three of them are. Yeah. I mean, for real! You know, you could just have to be on a, you know, *Stargate* or something.

**Gwendoline Christie:** I wouldn't do that.

**Jesse Thorn:** I would, *Stargate*, if you're listening—if there's a new *Stargate*, I'm castable, SAG eligible, Jesse Thorn. CAA.

**Gwendoline Christie:** And imagine what he'll bring to it too! Imagine!

(*Jesse agrees with playful hyper-confidence.*)

The extraordinary humor, richness, and spontaneity!

**Jesse Thorn:** Thank you. I've been telling the *Stargate* people this for years. (*Laughs.*)

**Gwendoline Christie:** It's coming. After this podcast, they're going to call you.

[00:35:00]

**Jesse Thorn:** But given that you've had those experiences, you're playing—

**Gwendoline Christie:** (*Laughing.*) You could just be on a *Stargate*.

**Jesse Thorn:** Right? I mean, there's things that aren't good where it's important for the actors to look extraordinary! You know what I mean? Not that *Stargate* is bad.

*(Gwendoline confirms.)*

It's fine.

Do you think that like your next goal is to do that thing that you imagined? Which is just like be the best friend in a romantic comedy, or be somewhere where being normal and plain is essential to the character? *(Beat.)* Or do you think your next move is something even more extraordinary looking?

**Gwendoline Christie:** I never think about it from the outside, ever. I think...

**Jesse Thorn:** I can tell that you think about the aesthetics of the things though.

**Gwendoline Christie:** Yeah. Well, that's to be worked on, but that's about storytelling. That's from my drama school, which is about creating the character; that's absolutely about being precise. That was really drilled into us, about being precise in every aspect. And I try to be precise in every aspect other than the clothes. *(Chuckles.)* It's interesting. I'm interested in design, but I'm more interested in the communication of the character and also what that gives me. Because what you put on your body changes you. You know, it's quite interesting. Some things can actually change the pitch of your voice. You might—it might be good to go with that, or it might be that you work against it.

But for me, it's always a storytelling device. I am happy these days to only think about how it makes me feel. And you know, that's both liberating and... perhaps unhelpful that I feel that I have to work with like-minded souls. And I want to work with people I feel I can truly create something with. I really don't know what it is. It just—I see it, and it speaks to me.

**Jesse Thorn:** Do you think you'll be able to be satisfied by work in the future that doesn't involve livestock?

**Gwendoline Christie:** No.

**Jesse Thorn:** You'll always like be missing a little something, right?

**Gwendoline Christie:** Maybe it has to be exclusively livestock work.

**Jesse Thorn:** Don't be afraid of it, you know? Put that out into the world. People are listening.

**Gwendoline Christie:** I'm gonna go there. I'm gonna go there. Apparently the hours I keep filming are comparable to a dairy farmer, so I might end up with those frisky Friesians. *(Laughs.)*



**Jesse Thorn:** I mean, maybe if you're lucky, they got that *All Creatures Great and Small* show going right now. Maybe you can do a little lambing season.

**Gwendoline Christie:** Well, I've always loved— Are you joking? So—

**Jesse Thorn:** Not in the slightest!

**Gwendoline Christie:** Someone very close to me commented very early on that I have great similarity to Tricki Woo.

*(Jesse laughs.)*

And you know who that is, don't you? Do you know who that is?!

**Jesse Thorn:** Tricki Woo is the dog! *(Laughs.)*

**Gwendoline Christie:** Yeah! Yes! The—now, it's the end of a long day. But what kind of dog is it? It is a— It is a— It's not a shih tzu.

**Jesse Thorn:** A pekingese or something?

**Gwendoline Christie:** It's a pekingese. Yes. I'm very Tricki Woo. Tricki Woo?

*(Jesse confirms the name.)*

Yes. Yeah. Tricki Woo.

**Jesse Thorn:** Tricki Woo is like the pampered dog of the rich lady in *All Creatures Great and Small*.

*(Gwendoline gives a spirited little purse-dog yap.)*

*(They laugh.)*

Well, I sure appreciate your time. Thank you so much for talking to me.

**Gwendoline Christie:** Thank you for talking to me! And for being so incredibly thoughtful with your questions. Thank you for being gentle with me.

**Jesse Thorn:** Gwendoline Christie. Catch her on *Wednesday*, which is streaming on Netflix. It's a show on which she is great. Or on *Severance*, which is streaming on Apple TV+, a show on which she is great and surrounded by goats. You can't lose here, folks!

**Transition:** Relaxed, jazzy synth.

**Jesse Thorn:** That's the end of another episode of *Bullseye*. *Bullseye*, created from the homes of me and the staff of Maximum Fun—as well as at Maximum Fun world headquarters, overlooking beautiful MacArthur Park in Los Angeles, California. We're gonna be leaving MaxFun World headquarters and moving to MaxFun World Headquarters 2 in downtown Los Angeles. So, we'll miss you MacArthur Park.

Our show is produced by speaking into microphones. Our senior producer is Kevin Ferguson.

[00:40:00]

Our producers are Jesus Ambrosio and Richard Robey. Our production fellow at Maximum Fun is Hannah Moroz. Our video producer is Daniel Speer. We get booking help on *Bullseye* 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](http://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.

Follow *Bullseye* on Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, where you'll find video from our interviews—including of the interviews that you heard this week. Great way to share an episode of *Bullseye*. If you liked one of our interviews, go type it into YouTube and forward it to a friend. 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](http://MaximumFun.org) and is distributed by NPR.

*(Music fades out.)*