

[00:00:00] <music>

**Annie:** Hi friends! Welcome to a very special episode of That Sounds Fun. I'm your host Annie F. Downs. I am so happy to be here with you today.

Before we dive into today's conversation, I want to tell you about one of our incredible sponsors. This show is sponsored by [BetterHelp](#). I know asking what you're thankful for this month can almost become cliché, but it actually matters. Take some time to stop and think about it. What are you grateful for this year? Who are you grateful for this year? Who's helped you or had a big impact in your life? It might be your therapist. That's someone I'm really thankful for in my life. Or what have you grown in this last year that you're thankful for?

If you're still on the fence about therapy, now would be a great time to give BetterHelp a try, especially in the midst of the holidays. It's done entirely online, so it's super convenient and flexible to your schedule. And getting started is so easy. You just fill out a quick questionnaire — y'all know we love a quiz — and you'll be matched with a licensed therapist. Plus you can switch therapists anytime at no extra cost so you make sure to find the right match for you.

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**Intro:** Today on the show, y'all, this is a fun one. Y'all know we love talking Christmas movies. We got a couple of episodes coming for you this holiday season but today we start with some of the cast of Great American Families, *A Little Women's Christmas*. You are in for a treat.

Yes, *A Little Women's Christmas* is exactly what you hope it'll be. It's a contemporary retelling of the beloved classic novel, and it follows the lives and loves of the March sisters in a small Tennessee town at Christmas. It was filmed right here in Franklin, Tennessee. And yes, your girl, AFD, got myself a little cameo. Listen, when you watch the movie, you have to show up on time because I am in the first eight seconds of the movie. I cannot wait for you to see it.

Today we're sitting down with three of the cast members that you already know and love from movies you watched, Laura Osnes, who plays Beth March, Julia Reilly, who plays Amy March, and Jesse Hutch, who plays John.

The movie premieres this Saturday, so two days from now, November 23rd, at 8 p.m. Eastern, 7 p.m. Central, on Great American Family and PureFlix, [pureflix.com](https://pureflix.com). So you're going to want to check your local listings to see if you get Great American Family, or head to [pureflix.com](https://pureflix.com) and start their seven-day free trial

so you're ready to watch on Saturday. Let's all watch together, okay? Invite your friends, put on your comfy clothes, and let's watch this adorable movie together. Again, right when it starts, right when it starts, if you want to see me in it.

So here is my conversation y'all are going to love. It is a really special conversation about this movie, and about art, and about what God is doing right now. Here are my friends from Great American Family's *A Little Women's Christmas*, Laura Osnes, Julia Reilly, and Jesse Hutch.

[00:03:10] <music>

**Annie:** We'll start this episode now by saying, you don't believe in Santa, Jesse?

**Jesse:** Yeah.

**Annie:** Is that how we're going to start this Great American Family Christmas movie episode?

**Jesse:** Let's start there.

**Laura:** How dare you?

**Julia:** How dare you?

**Jesse:** Every parent has to decide at some point how much they're going to lie to their children.

**Annie:** For all the kids listening, we apologize in advance. You guys, welcome to That Sounds Fun.

**Laura:** Hey, thank you.

**Julia:** Thank you.

**Jesse:** Hoo.

**Annie:** This is so fun. Laura, welcome back.

**Laura:** Thank you.

**Annie:** Your second episode. You're getting closer and closer to the Hall of Fun.

**Laura:** Oh.

**Annie:** Five episodes and you're in the Hall of Fun.

**Jesse:** Oh, there's a hall?

**Laura:** Is that it? Great. That is my life goal.

**Annie:** Please. Please.

**Jesse:** How does that work, sorry?

**Annie:** When you're on five times. So you're one down. Four to go.

**Jesse:** She's three?

**Laura:** I've been once already. This is my second.

**Jesse:** This is two.

**Annie:** Yes.

**Jesse:** Okay, one?

**Laura:** One.

**Jesse:** Okay, we're one.

**Julia:** There you go.

**Annie:** It's coming though. I believe in you.

**Julia:** Gotta start somewhere.

**Jesse:** Thank you.

**Laura:** Thank you, Annie.

**Annie:** Okay, for people listening voices, besides me and Jesse, they'll probably sort us out, but will y'all introduce yourselves and say what your role — and we'll let you do that as well, Jesse — what your role is in *Little Women's Christmas*.

**Julia:** Okay, Laura, just point it to me. I'll go. Hi, everyone. My name is Julia Reilly, and I play Amy March in *Little Women's Christmas*.

**Laura:** And my name is Laura Osnes, and I play Beth March, who is alive. She's miraculously alive.

**Annie:** We are absolutely talking about this.

**Laura:** Great.

**Annie:** And you, sir?

**Jesse:** Jesse Hutch, and I play John. Of course, he does have a last name, Brooks. He's married to one of the little women who are adults. So they're grown little.

**Annie:** Yes. John has a lot of challenging acting because he's on an iPad. That's right. Maybe for the whole movie.

**Jesse:** We filmed everything in like two hours.

**Annie:** Did you? You knocked out. Next line, next line, next line.

**Jesse:** Just keep going. Don't cut.

**Annie:** Here's my question about *Little Women's Christmas*. By the way, I watched it yesterday. I loved it. As we know, I also have a very important role.

**Jesse:** Yeah, you do.

**Annie:** I am the receptionist. I am in the first scene. I was like, "I'm the second person after DJ Bob." And then I'm out of the movie forever. Y'all are not. I would love to know, how are things a yes for you? How does this happen? How does the script come to you? So will you each kind of tell me, how did the script come to you and why was this a yes? You start first, Laura.

**Laura:** I will start because I actually was a part of a conversation the beginning of this year, back in like January.

**Annie:** Really?

**Annie:** Is that when y'all start talking about Christmas movies? Like as soon as the last one plays, you're going on the next?

**Laura:** This one was a little...

**Jesse:** Even before.

**Laura:** Even before sometimes. Sometimes it's like a month in advance. And sometimes it is years. Sometimes you know the scriptwriter and you're a part of the process of trying to get the thing pitched and made or part of it from the career side a little bit.

I had one of our producers, Jacks, kind of put my-

**Annie:** Oh, I love Jax. Everyone knows Jacks.

**Laura:** Yes.

**Annie:** She's a friend of the show from Bubbly Sesh Days.

**Laura:** Exactly. Bubbly Sesh, some of you may know. Kind of put my name in the hat and introduced me to Brandon. This was potentially going to be made in February of this year. Then it kind of got delayed to March and then the whole thing got delayed till June. And by then a lot of the cast had changed, but I kind of got to stick along with it. I still was available. So I'm very grateful.

But the script went through many iterations and renditions to finally become what it was, the thing you saw yesterday and the thing that America will get to see in a few days. It takes place in Franklin and I live in Franklin. And so there was kind of that hometown connection for me too. I was very, very grateful to get to sleep in my own bed and get to make a movie.

**Annie:** It feels like such a sweet... we'll link back to your first episode, but it feels like you getting to do movies in Franklin feels like such a sweet circle of God going like, "I see you, girl. I'll bring you all your dreams right to your door."

**Laura:** That was my "that sounds fun" early on was like to make movies with my friends. We got to do that this summer. Thank you for reminding me of that. That's actually pretty cool.

**Annie:** It's really sweet. So Julia, why was this a yes for you when you saw...? Did they email you a script? How does this work?

**Julia:** Okay, so I got connected to Brandon Clark and his team. The team at GAF introduced me to them and told them about me-

**Annie:** Because you're already on another GAF show.

**Julia:** Yes. I work with GAF on County Rescue. So season one came out earlier this year. We just wrapped season two, super excited about it. So they introduced me to Brandon and he reached out to me. Brandon didn't know me. I hadn't worked with him before. He was like, "Hey, can you send me a self-tape for the role?"

**Annie:** And he's the director.

**Julia:** He's the director. Yes. So I'm at the beach in Florida for 4th of July, but I'm like, "Okay, let's do this tape."

**Annie:** This 4th of July?

**Julia:** This past 4th of July.

**Annie:** And they were filming in August and you were doing the audition in July?

**Julia:** So I did this self-tape and then I think they finalized everything maybe on the 4th of July or the night before and then I was in Franklin on July 6th to start the movie.

**Annie:** Oh, my gosh.

**Laura:** Days before.

**Julia:** It was so quick. That's one of the things I love about this industry at the same time. You never know what the next day is going to hold.

**Annie:** I mean, freaking Amy March two days before the movie starts. That's incredible. Okay, Jesse, tell us about your getting involved in this movie because you have a whole different role a little bit here, right?

**Jesse:** Yeah, there was a lot of different involvement. I was a partner at Third Coast Film. I already knew Brandon from just friends and business relationships. We also work out at the same gym. So we had conversations about this movie actually when it was possibly going to be somewhere else at a totally different budget level and it had a different kind of vision. Then interestingly enough, that started to change.

I had a Christmas film actually that I wrote. We were talking about that with GAF and then ultimately that had a space and we agreed that that wasn't the film for that particular space at this time. So we took it out of the space and then we were like, "Here's seven more scripts to fill the space." But then this script popped up and we heard that GAF was having a book club about *Little Women* and we were like, Hey, we have a script that we don't own it, but Brandon Clark and his team have it. What do you think?" And they basically very quickly were like, "Yes, let's do that."

So that whole conversation changed. There was a possibility of me always playing John, but also I was on another show called *Homestead* and was possibly not even going to be available. This movie got pushed. Eventually, it worked out.

On top of that, my daughter auditioned twice. Because I told her, I said, "Sweetheart, do you want to audition to play my daughter? I think it'd be a great opportunity if you're interested." She said, "Yeah." She went and learned her lines. She did it. Brandon was like, "I have some notes." I was like, "Great." I gave her the notes. Literally was like, "Here's the notes. I wrote them down for her off of a text that Brandon sent me. And I said, "Here you go. Why don't you go do your work?" So she left for like an hour and she came back. She goes, "Okay, I'm ready." And I was like, "All right." So we retaped it and she did great.

**Annie:** She did great.

**Julia:** She's adorable.

**Jesse:** So just because I was one of the producers, I was like, "Look, sweetie, I don't want you to just... you're not getting this role just because of me. You got to work for it. There's other little girls auditioning and you got to crush it." So-

**Annie:** She did.

**Jesse:** "You may get it. You may not." And thankfully it worked out. I mean, it also helps. She looks like me. I thought, "Well, that's just good casting."

**Annie:** Yeah, that's right.

**Jesse:** At some point, I think one of the emails I saw, because no one really put it all together yet, and they were like, "Well, she does look like Jesse. So maybe that would be a good casting choice." And I remember literally responding, going, "She is my daughter."

**Annie:** She is literally 50% me. So that is mathematically true. This is wild to hear how the process goes. And it's so different because in all of our own ways, all of our friends listening have things going on in their lives, and all the moments have to happen perfectly for the thing to work out. And you just think like, Oh, a movie gets written and then, and then... You think it's a straight line. And y'all are all saying nothing is a straight line in this industry.

**Laura:** Ever.

**Jesse:** And none of it is one person. Like even what I just shared, very small window. Like it still took everybody, you know, Brandon and Brian Byrd and Brian Williams and all the Third Coast team and Alltrue brand, and then GAF, everybody over there. There's so many cooks in the kitchen, as they say.

If anybody ever in this industry goes, it was because of me, you should immediately be like, "I'm skeptical because Lord didn't make it to work like that. If you get to the top and you're the only one there, you didn't do it right.

**Annie:** When I was as a receptionist typing on a computer, they just had a laptop there for me. So I was just pretending, right? Afterwards Brandon's like, "Do you know whose computer you were holding? Brian Bird's." Everything from *When Calls the Heart* is on that movie. And I was like, "What? I was like, a) You should not have trusted me with that. b) Give me the password. I want to see what's in this computer. All of *When Calls the Heart*.

Laura, I do want you to talk about Beth for a minute because everyone thinks Beth dies because she does.

**Laura:** Right.

**Annie:** So for starters, when a movie is written off of a book like this, it doesn't have to be just the same. It's okay to switch it up a little bit?

**Laura:** I think there's some creative license obviously that's taken. I think the entity is so beloved and well-known that they wanted to be able to embrace the four sisters, the family, and faith values of this family. I guess Dion, our script writer, didn't... I think because it's a Christmas movie, they were like, "Well, she's just around again," even though it's a contemporary retelling of the beloved tale.

But essentially in my mind, it kind of takes place like 5 to 10 years after where the book leaves us.

**Annie:** Yeah, certainly.

**Laura:** So we just pretend that Beth never died because it's Christmas and we love this family.

**Annie:** She will eventually die, but she did not in this film.

**Laura:** That's it. Her story was left untold and we got to tell it.



**Annie:** That's right. Jesse, speaking of Laura said it, this movie is very faith forward. I mean, the first 36 minutes, there are four mentions of something Christian between the parents, where the parents are and the pastor comes in the coffee shop. We talk a little bit about like, why is that? Why is this so faith-forward?

**Jesse:** Well, I think the people involved are very faith-forward, to be honest. So if you go back to Dion, the writer, you go to the team, you go to a lot of the people that were hired, you go to GAF, you start looking... I mean, even if you're a data person, you want to start looking at data. I mean, movies that have faith in them are starting to do very well.

**Annie:** Really well.

**Jesse:** I think you can't always say the data is right, but you can't always say it's wrong either. But I think that people ultimately want hope. And I think in this genre and space too, people also... I think everybody wants hope. Everybody wants to find a way through whatever they're living, whatever they're dealing with, you know, whether you're on the hilltop or the valley.

So I think it's just a side effect of everyone involved in it. It's got to start somewhere. But when someone starts writing, they'll put it in. And then all of a sudden you get a director that cares about faith. Well, they start putting, you get actors that come to the table that have faith, they start putting something in. So eventually we're all kind of moving down this river that turns out a lot of us really appreciate faith in God.

We love trying to bring hope to the table and you have your little piece that you want to fight for. You know what I mean? Like when these ladies are hired, they're hired to come in and specifically care about their character to the point where they're going to... maybe they push back, maybe they agree, maybe they want to inject something into it. You know, there's a reason that everybody's there from the director to the DP, to the AD, everybody has. And I just found on our team it was very faith-driven. And of course, Great American Family is leaning into that. They really want more of that.

I just had a discussion with some of their team last night and was like, "What do you guys think you want next year?" And they were very much like, "Faith is A-okay by us. Push into it." And it doesn't have to be the typical story anymore.

**Annie:** It's really amazing.

**Laura:** I think they've created a whole community, both an audience and of actors and crew that value that and want to put content out into the world that provides hope and brings joy and emphasizes family values.

**Annie:** Yeah. Besides your early Santa Claus comment, this is very faith-friendly and family-friendly. So you're not leaving the kids out. There was a huge cast in this movie. Will y'all talk about the difference of how this... I mean, we'll start with you, Jesse. Your other Christmas movie that just came out is you and a female. That's how most of these go. There are 97 of y'all in this one. And so all the storylines are actually really easy to follow. It's very surprising. As I watched it, I thought, wait, I get where everybody is.

Tell me about the difference it feels like being in a cast this size versus your normal Christmas movie size.

**Jesse:** Yeah, that changes a lot of logistics, especially on the filmmaking and things. I mean, when you think, Hey... You get into the logistics of, All right, we have one female lead. We bring her in an hour and a half early so we can get her hair done and get everything finished. And now you're thinking four? Now there's four. Okay. Is that four hours early? How many staff do we need? Okay. I mean, that's just a little glimpse of what it's like.

But then also, I think for ADs having to chase around actors-

**Annie:** What is an AD?

**Jesse:** An assistant director. So there's someone on set whose job literally is to watch the clock, make sure we're on schedule, keep us on time. There's another AD that literally just goes and brings everyone to set. That's probably one of the hardest jobs because actors are like cats. They're off to crafty. They're off to go to the restroom. They're off to talk over here.

**Annie:** They're not ready yet or whatever.

**Jesse:** Oh my goodness. So I noticed that on our set. It was like, everybody's everywhere. Can we just bring everybody in, please? And you can see Brandon is like, Oh my goodness, I have 18 people in this scene. Just sit out.

**Laura:** We're all at crafty looking for gummies. Completely.

**Julia:** We loved gummy and sour candy on that set.

**Jesse:** And yet that being said, it's also very... it's like a beautiful thing because it builds such a community immediately. It changes the scene dynamics 100% because now it's not just two people playing ping pong. Now this is like an entire sports team. Everybody's got to ping pong now and find their marks and catch their light and not step on anybody's lines. So it's fun.

I mean, I like it as a performer. I think it's cool. It ups the ante. And it's fun because you get to see so many friends every day. So I don't know. That's my two cents on it.

**Annie:** Julia, you came in two days after you auditioned to this massive cast. And you are one of the youngest people in the cast. What was your experience stepping into this and in an abnormal Christmas movie vibe where you have three sisters?

**Julia:** Sure. I was so excited to be a part of this movie. I mean, I've known the story of little women for forever. I mean, these guys have been doing this for forever and they're such pros and so amazing. I felt like they really just took me in and let me feel like part of the family immediately. I'm so grateful for that.

And coming off of County Rescue is also an ensemble cast. So I've been very heavily in the ensemble cast space right now. But I love it because you show up and you see your family of friends every day at work and it doesn't feel like work. It's been the best experience.

**Annie:** So you're the one here at the table who doesn't live here full time.

**Julia:** I don't. I live in Atlanta.

**Annie:** Yes. Go Dawgs.

**Julia:** Go Dawgs!

**Annie:** We bonded over this. Before y'all got here, we went deep in Athens. It was great.

**Julia:** It was amazing.

**Annie:** So give us some behind-the-scenes movie magic. Where do you stay? Do you stay at a hotel the whole time you're here?

**Julia:** Yeah.

**Annie:** Oh, great.

**Julia:** Yeah. I loved it. It was great.

**Annie:** Were y'all at the Harpeth the whole time?

**Julia:** Mm-hmm.

**Annie:** Oh, well, that ain't bad.

**Julia:** It was so awesome.

**Annie:** "I had a good life".

**Julia:** Yeah. And so Jillian and Jen and I and I think several others were at the Harpeth. When we were all called at the same time, we rode to set together, rode back. So it was really special and bonding. Yeah, I loved it.

**Laura:** I actually feel like I missed out on some of the bonding because I lived here and I drove my own car and I'm going to go home.

**Julia:** Yeah, exactly.

**Jesse:** I know. Well, were in the Harpeth? I never stayed in the Harpeth.

**Julia:** I know.

**Annie:** "I could have stayed in the Harpeth."

**Julia:** Exactly. I would walk down in the lobby and Jesse would like always be at the Harpeth. I'm like, "Jesse."

**Annie:** You didn't want to miss the hang, Jesse.

**Jesse:** A lot of the production meetings were there. Then we would just be in town all the time and you just show up. A lot of people like to meet at the Harpeth. So I would have a meeting totally not related to the film and then you just end up around everybody anyway. Like, "Oh, everybody is there."

**Julia:** Well, I would walk down and there would be meetings going on in the lobby. I'm like, "Hey, guys." They're like, "Hey." I'm like, "What's going on?" They're like, "Oh, we're in a meeting." And I'm like, "Oh, wait, I'm so sorry."

**Laura:** Exactly.

Episode 939: A Little Women's Christmas Roundtable with stars Laura Osnes, Julia Reilly, & Jesse Hutch  
That Sounds Fun with Annie F. Downs

- Annie:** How far do you live? You live in town, though, right?
- Jesse:** Yeah. At that time, I lived... we're almost neighbors with Laura. We're kind of out in the same community.
- Laura:** Yeah, it's fun.
- Jesse:** Now, on a personal note, we're actually in Gallatin now. We're renting a farmhouse and kind of just enjoying 30 acres out in the middle of nowhere right now. You know, just testing it out, seeing how it feels.
- Annie:** I mean, Laura, a huge character in this movie is Franklin.
- Laura:** For sure.
- Annie:** I mean, it is just like over and over it. Even going to our friend Nancy.
- Laura:** Yes, at Philanthropy.
- Annie:** At Philanthropy. And like the little chapel in Philanthropy is in the movie.
- Jesse:** Oh, so good.
- Laura:** Exactly.
- Annie:** It's so good. And it's you. It's such a sweet scene, right? Aren't you the one in there?
- Laura:** No. No, it's Joe with Lori.
- Annie:** Sorry, sorry.
- Julia:** But it's so cute. I didn't see all these scenes before the movie.
- Laura:** I know, because we weren't in it.
- Julia:** Franklin is the cutest town.
- Laura:** It is so charming. Any Tennessean in Franklinites will be just so delighted to see the Franklin Theater in the background. We filmed at Onyx and Alabaster. We're outside at the circle. You see the tree and the tree lighting. Footage that Brandon actually got the Christmas before in anticipation of the movie.

**Annie:** He told me all this and that blew my mind. He showed me, he was like, "Oh, once it snowed, I sent a drone in hopes of getting to do this movie." I thought, what a brilliant dude.

**Jesse:** It was massively helpful, actually, because we were getting notes that, well, it's not going to feel Christmassy enough. So they were able to put together some footage and send it. And people were like, "Oh, okay, yeah, go ahead."

**Annie:** Yeah, exactly.

**Jesse:** So nice move.

[00:21:20] <music>

**Sponsor:** Hey friends, just interrupting this conversation to tell you about one of our incredible partners, [Ritual](#). Okay, crazy fact. Did you know women were excluded from clinical research policy by federal law until 1993? What? We belong in scientific research. We're essential, right?

Ritual knows. And they conducted a university-led human clinical trial for their Essential for Women 18+ multivitamin to assess how effective it is. The results, it increased vitamin D levels by 43% and omega three DHA levels by 41% in just 12 weeks. Y'all know I love data and these stats back up why I love the multivitamin so much.

Their Essential for Women 18+ multivitamin also has high quality traceable key ingredients and clean bioavailable form so you know you're getting exactly what's listed on the bottle. You just take two capsules a day, which have nine key nutrients. The capsules feature a delayed release designed to dissolve later, which helps make it gentle on an empty stomach. I love the minty taste. No one likes taking vitamins with a bad aftertaste, but the minty essence in every bottle keeps things fresh and helps make taking your vitamins every day actually enjoyable.

Plus, Ritual multivitamins are vegan, non-GMO, gluten, and major allergen-free. And they're a female-founded B Corp, meaning they are holding themselves accountable to not just their company's financial health, but also the health of people and our planet. No more shady business. Ritual is Essential for Women 18+ is a multivitamin you can actually trust.

Get 25% off your first month at [Ritual.com/ThatSoundsFun](https://Ritual.com/ThatSoundsFun). Start Ritual or add essentials for women. 18 plus your subscription today. That's [Ritual.com/ThatSoundsFun](https://Ritual.com/ThatSoundsFun) for 25% off.

And remember that link and pretty much every other link you could ever hope for are in the show notes below, or we'll send them to you every Friday in the AFD Week in Review email. We hope it's the best email your week. You can sign up to get that below as well.

**Sponsor:** And I have another incredible partner I get to tell you about, [Our Place](#). As you're getting everything ready for your Thanksgiving meals, consider what you're using to cook with. It was a long time before I realized that so much of the cookware out there has forever chemicals in them. And I don't want the Thanksgiving turkey to include a side of forever chemicals. No, thank you. I prefer a side of cranberry sauce and squash.

This is why we love Our Place around here. They have non-toxic cookware and appliances that give us some peace of mind about what we're cooking with. Our Place's products are made without Teflon. So, you know those forever chemicals aren't making it into your food.

Plus, if you've never seen their products, I need you to go look right now because they're so cute and come in so many fun colors to choose from. This would make a great Christmas present. If you know someone who needs some new cookware. Go to [FromOurPlace.com](#) and enter our code TSF, like That Sounds Fun, at checkout to get 10% off site-wide. That's fromourplace.com and the code is TSF. Our Place also offers a 100-day trial with free shipping and returns.

**Sponsor:** Hi friends, this holiday season, join the fun and step into the world of *Scrooge: A Christmas Carol*, the award-winning audio drama podcast from Hope Media Group and Compassion International. Back for its 2024 season, this iconic story of redemption, forgiveness, and festive cheer is reimagined like never before.

Whether you're hanging out with your family, enjoying some cozy alone time, or just looking for the perfect soundtrack to your hot chocolate or your puzzle pudding togetherness, Scrooge is here to remind you that the true spirit of Christmas is all about transformation, joy, and a little bit of holiday cheer.

Start listening to this classic Christmas tale wherever you listen to podcasts by searching "Scrooge by Hope Media Group" or visit [scroogepodcast.com](#). This year let the heartwarming story of Scrooge fill your holiday season with laughter, love, and the magic of Christmas. Stay tuned for the official trailer.

**[00:25:38] <Scrooge trailer plays>**

**Annie:** Okay, now back to our conversation with Laura, Jesse, and Julia.

[00:25:56] <music>

**Annie:** What does that do for a town? Tell me what happens for a town like Franklin when they get to be the center of a Christmas movie?

**Laura:** Well, you think of all the movies filmed in New York and people go and they're like, "Oh, I saw that in a movie. I've been there. I've seen that." And to be like, our little town is featured in a movie. I mean, a few movies have been shot in Franklin. But I think it's... hopefully it brings... I don't know if it will bring people here necessarily, but I think putting Franklin on the map in that way and then people when they walk down Main Street, can be like, "Oh, I saw Franklin Theater in the movie," or "I'm going to go to Stable Reserve because it's mentioned in *Little Women's Christmas*." I mean, if that can help our small towns and our businesses and our locals, like, I'm all for it.

**Annie:** And it really did show what Franklin looks like at Christmas.

**Laura:** For sure.

**Annie:** Which is like, why would you not hurry here to see Franklin at Christmas?

**Laura:** I mean, when I moved here, I was like, "This is a hallmark town. Like everything needs to film here."

**Julia:** And I need to visit at Christmas after seeing the movie.

**Laura:** Everyone talks about the tree lighting.

**Julia:** That is so awesome.

**Annie:** It is.

**Laura:** It is magical.

**Annie:** It is. And the Dickens weekend-

**Jesse:** Sure.

**Annie:** The Dickens Christmas weekend is so cute.

**Jesse:** Which it's all very close. When's the tree lighting? Isn't that-

**Laura:** Usually the first weekend of December?



**Jesse:** Yeah, that's soon.

**Laura:** Yeah.

**Annie:** So after they watch the movie, everybody can just drive on over.

**Laura:** Yes, come visit Franklin.

**Annie:** Come on to Franklin. Jesse, you mentioned that the people were worried that the movie wouldn't look Christmassy enough because y'all filmed in August. Everyone is wearing long sleeves and coats. Were y'all just about to pass out?

**Jesse:** Yeah. God bless you all. Like I said, my scenes were, you know, filmed in a matter of hours in one office space on an iPad.

**Annie:** Yes, because you were at war. You were at war.

**Jesse:** I was, at my character, serving overseas. He's on a Zoom call. But yes, these ladies just say, "Hey, can you put that layer on and add this coat and add this scarf"

**Annie:** Were y'all just sweating the whole time?

**Jesse:** Yeah.

**Laura:** You know, somehow they have fans for us and you somehow kind of just your body temperature just lifts and raises and you kind of get used to just feeling generally hot and warm. Because even inside they have to turn off the air conditioning for sound usually. But there are various rooms where you can usually go away and find respite. Fortunately, I was only outside one of the days.

**Julia:** Yeah, me too.

**Laura:** And it was very hot that day.

**Julia:** For sisters shopping scene.

**Laura:** Exactly.

**Julia:** But then watching it back, I mean, Jillian and Trevor were out there a lot.

**Laura:** I think they had the brunt of the-

- Annie:** They had a lot of walking outside with coats. I was like, "God, love them." They are burning up.
- Laura:** Because Tennessee is hot in the summer.
- Annie:** Yeah. Tennessee is August in the daytime. Jillian told me a story because we had our makeup done at the same time about how they were overnight... They were doing shoots overnight, like all night long and she was still in coats and still hot. Did you have to do the overnight stuff too? All night long?
- Julia:** Only once.
- Jesse:** That was the church stuff.
- Laura:** Yeah. The Christmas Eve service was a night shoot overnight.
- Jesse:** Yeah, it went a while.
- Annie:** That is insane.
- Jesse:** People sleeping in pews.
- Laura:** Oh, yeah, Jen
- Annie:** Even the extras have to be there overnight?
- Jesse:** Yeah, everybody.
- Laura:** I think they were released at 4 a.m.
- Annie:** Oh, my gosh.
- Julia:** I think they might have had a couple of different rotations. Like some of them were there for this chunk of time and then some of them came in a later chunk of time. But yeah.
- Annie:** And y'all just all have to be there. This sounds like a dumb question, but I just don't know very much. So, therefore, dumbness. You have to do that because you need all the darkness? You have to use all the darkness when you get the darkness? That's why you have to shoot all night long?
- Jesse:** Yeah. That was just the scheduling for that particular scene. We had that church for one day that had to be done. So you shoot your daylight scenes, and then we had to

move into the night. The way Brandon especially had it set up was, well, we'll film this way and get all the musical acts done and then we flip the camera. So, yeah, that's why we rotated background. We had a lot of people show up and just really... Speaking of Franklin community, we had so many friends and families that just brought out their kids. They came out and supported, wanted to be a part of it. So that was pretty cool too. I mean, we had so many people just show up and hang out all night.

**Annie:** And it's Gladys Knight.

**Laura:** It's Gladys Knight.

**Annie:** It's a lot of [inaudible 00:28:34] singing. I mean, were y'all sitting in the pews being like, are we seriously watching this?

**Laura:** Yeah, it was really cool. She wrote that original song. She also helped write it and perform it. It was pretty wonderful.

**Julia:** I was so teary-eyed. I had someone help me sneak in during one of the shots of her because I wanted to watch her eye. This is funny. But I grew up going to her restaurant in Atlanta. She used to have a chicken and waffles restaurant.

**Annie:** Yes, she did. Right downtown.

**Julia:** And so that was always a special treat.

**Annie:** Totally know.

**Julia:** As a kid my dad would take my brother and I downtown and we would go there and it was-

**Annie:** Like on the way to a Falcons game or something or just for...?

**Julia:** No, that would be the event.

**Annie:** That was the event, chicken and waffles.

**Julia:** So that was such a core memory of mine. So I told people, I'm like, "This is insane. Like Gladys Knight. And they're like, "But you know her music too, right?" I'm like, "Yes, but I really... at my core, it's the chicken and waffles restaurant." No, but she's so talented. That was so surreal to watch that.

**Annie:** So were y'all really sitting in the room when she was performing?

**Laura:** Personally I wasn't because the camera's facing them. So it's all their footage. So they had some extras, but we weren't required to be there. I worked my way in. I was like, "I'll come stand in the back because I want to even get an Instagram video of her recording this."

**Annie:** I want to see Gladys Knight in the same movie as us. Wow. I mean, props to Brandon and the team, because when you're watching it, you're like, "Oh, wow, they're all getting to sit in there and hear this. I kept thinking last night, how many times did they film this that they got to sit there and watch?"

**Laura:** There was a time they did flip the camera on us and they still had them there, but they weren't obviously living as much, but we did get, I think, a couple, two takes of getting to kind of watch them do the stuff where the camera was on us.

**Annie:** Tell me about the scenes with the sisters. Because the sister relationship is like... I know it's really... for four women who are not related, y'all did a very nice job making us believe that you really liked each other.

**Julia:** Because we do.

**Laura:** We really do.

**Annie:** Tell me what was going on outside of the moment y'all were shooting that led to us believing and seeing what a genuine friendship between the four of you.

**Laura:** I think it was such a blessing to have these incredible women. And as we alluded to earlier, each of them leading ladies in their own right. So I think it was just a humbling to come in and be like, "Hey, we get to do this all together." And it was just a really beautiful thing to know that all of our hearts wanted that.

We started a text thread almost immediately and we're just messaging. We still message all the time.

**Julia:** All the time.

**Laura:** All the time. It just was really such a beautiful collaborative effort. All of us are so different too, and bring uniquely different things that it was never a competition. It was always a collaboration. We would laugh with each other, cry with each other, vent to each other, celebrate with each other.

And it was very immediate. The first scene we filmed was when Joe walks in the front door and all the sisters get to come and hug her and welcome her. That was scene one.

**Annie:** Home from New York?

**Laura:** Yes. So we really kind of got to meet each other on set as Joe was returning home. It was an immediate bond for sure.

**Julia:** Absolutely. There's something so special and unique about working on set with people because you're spending basically all your hours together for however many weeks you're shooting. And then for all of us to instantly connect and click like we did was such a blessing. I love them so much. They're the sweetest.

**Annie:** How long were you here? How long does it take to film a movie?

**Laura:** Three weeks.

**Julia:** Three weeks?

**Laura:** It's usually like 14 days. Did we do 14 days? 15 days.

**Jesse:** Yeah.

**Laura:** I think I had nine days on set of the 15 days.

**Annie:** Oh, wow.

**Laura:** And you were four or five. How many days? I mean, you were there every day because you're producing. And Charlize was there.

**Jesse:** My acting portion was easy and easy to handle. But yeah, being there as a support for everybody else.

**Annie:** How many hours do you need a producer and a director? Sorry, I don't know that. If you're a producer and you were there every day.

**Jesse:** Yeah. I mean, director's main vision is literally what you see on screen. From the wardrobe.

**Annie:** Brandon makes the movie.

**Jesse:** From the wardrobe to the... I mean, there's an entire team behind you, of course, as a director. And you have to really lean on each other and put people in place, all your heads, your keys. I mean, Brandon's dad is our DP. He's been around forever. He's, you know, just old-school awesome. Knows what he's doing. How do you move the camera? How do you talk to your actors? How do you dress them? How do you light the thing? What's the final edit? What's the flow, the feel, the tone? So, yeah, director oversees that.

There's a lot of different producers. I mean, you got producers who just handle the money and they're not even here. You got producers who literally just do paperwork. I did a lot of paperwork behind the scenes. It's really fun.

**Annie:** I'm writing your skill set. I'm not that bad at writing. That is impressive.

**Jesse:** Not one of my skill sets. I'm learning. And then you'd have Brian on set who's just sitting, listening, watching, overseeing sort of the writing and the flow of it and the feel of it. There's a lot of different angles to everybody's job. It takes an entire brigade and family.

**Annie:** It blew my mind how many people were in the little coffee shop upstairs. I mean, there was maybe, for the one scene I was there for, 15 extras and then 40 people. And I was like, Oh my gosh, a) amazing, all these people get jobs. This is their job.

**Laura:** I know.

**Annie:** And they have the job for three weeks and then-

**Laura:** Yeah. Well, you think about the credits of a movie, you think of the hundreds, sometimes thousands of names. Think of like a Marvel movie and someone would... You know, like all of the people, the special effects and the wardrobe and the everybody stand-ins and doubles and stunt people and designers. It's a miracle that any movie ever gets made. So to get to be a part of even one and now you've gotten to say that you've done that. Like it's a miracle. It's really cool to be a part of something like that.

**Annie:** The process is just... The fact y'all been talking about this movie before, like you saw multiple rounds of the script since last January. And now we'll all get to watch it this weekend, like finished, like all the way done.

**Laura:** Yes.

**Annie:** That is wild.

**Jesse:** Which is fast. These movies are generally fast.

**Annie:** Christmas movies?

**Jesse:** Yeah. There was a time when it was like... I mean, as an actor too, you're like, can I get footage from that? You'd have to wait a year just for it to even reach a screen.

**Jesse:** Now, I mean, you get a call two days before, you get a call the night before and now you're doing a movie. They turn it around and the edits done and it's on the screens three months later. I mean, two months later.

**Laura:** A little bit more of that immediate gratification.

**Jesse:** I mean, I'll also say being local, we love to work where we live. I think there's a lot of us here that are, you know... Laura can test this as well. Her husband, Nate's also into this. We're all having conversations with a lot of people about doing projects here. And one of the biggest things, of course... you know, I don't want to go too far down the rabbit trail, but if there's anybody listening to this that can help make a difference on sort of a government level and have real conversations about tax credits and incentives and how to really be a community that yes, protects values, but can really take responsibility and leadership for what we export. Because I think there's a lot of fantastic people here that want to export films that have great messages.

We're all advocates for our community and the people that live here, and of course, let's bring in others, but we need help on all the different levels to achieve that. And I know people way smarter than I am that are having these conversations. They're in the room, they're having meetings. But I would love to just say, hey, if anybody has some inkling in your heart where you're like, "I might know how to do that," I think Nashville can really kick butt in the film industry.

We've already been doing it in music. I think we can do it further into other aspects of media, such as film. And I would just love to encourage people to all help each other do this because we can be making more movies here. And like I said, let's look at it as an export, not so much of a protection of what we already have.

**Annie:** That's really good.

**Jesse:** Because what we have is beautiful and it's special and it's important. But let's export it to the rest of the world so that they can be changed by it as well. And a big help would be on the business side.

**Laura:** Preach.

**Annie:** I mean, that's the third coast idea, right? Is that LA, New York, Nashville, can we be this other exporting place?

**Jesse:** Yeah. That's why people use that name. It's like, let's rock it.

**Annie:** Yeah, that's right. Laura and I have talked about this in real life a couple of times because what we saw about 10 years ago was authors move here. And he started being like, Huh, we were only music and now we're a bunch of people writing books. So it's exporters. It's people who export culture and art. And so not only is it people who are very good at their craft, it's very often faith people who have found a community and now we're exporting in ways that LA and New York are not. It is like I'm watching. I'm fascinated by it.

**Laura:** Me too.

**Jesse:** Well, what's interesting, right, is why God led me here. I'm not going to lie.

**Laura:** Same.

**Annie:** Same.

**Jesse:** My wife and I literally put our three kids in the truck and drove for two months and two weeks not knowing where we were going to live and praying and driving. And we drove from Vancouver, BC, Canada, all the way to Florida. And when we drove through Franklin, God literally, on both of us, just peace, like stop. Our stuff's still in Canada in a storage locker. It's been over three years. I don't have it yet. Why are we here? I'm still learning that. But I believe a part of it is these people I've met and the community we're building and the movies we're starting to make.

But God's bringing a lot of people here that make film and television. So I'm like, all right, let's figure that out. Why are we here? And I think we didn't move here because we're like, Oh, hey, there's other actors moving there. We should move there because we're going to... I think we all moved here because we're like, well, where do we want to live? If we want to have kids one day or we already have kids, or maybe we want to get married or whatever your situation is, people are thinking about where they want to live. And for whatever reason people... There's an awesome community here. People want to hear your heart. And they don't always want to trample it and they don't always want to just push you down to get to the top. There's so many people here that are literally like, you've got to meet so-and-so.

**Annie:** All the time.



**Laura:** All the time.

**Jesse:** And you're like, why did you just introduce me to that person and expect nothing in return? Like, you're going to hit me? I don't understand. And they don't. And they just smile and wave and let you be introduced. And you're like, whoa, this is really cool.

**Laura:** And I think that's how we impact culture, is getting the people who are creating the things, not who are making it, but actually the creators of the content, of the stories that are being told, of the movies or the books or the songs that are being made have a heart behind it that is special to this area and this state. We do. We need to share that with the world.

**Annie:** It's really exciting. The thing that we keep hearing that you and I have said before is when you say, why did you move here, people go, I don't know. And you're like, Okay, God brought you. Okay, good. We'll just wait and see because God brought you here. And it just keeps happening. I would have never guessed a decade ago that we would be an exporter of film.

**Laura:** Nope.

**Annie:** That's just so outside. Atlanta, though. I mean, there's so much going on in Atlanta.

**Julia:** Yeah. I mean, yes, there is. But there's something so special and unique about the community here. And the majority of the work I've done in the past year and a half has all brought me to Tennessee.

**Annie:** Hey, attention, girl. You better pay attention, girl.

**Laura:** I don't think that's an accident.

**Jesse:** Is somebody moving? I'm not saying.

**Annie:** We're not the Lord, but you should listen.

**Julia:** Wherever He leads me, believe me.

**Annie:** That's it.

**Julia:** But every time I meet someone on set, too, we have a mutual friend from Nashville or the Franklin area and everyone knows someone. And it's so unique. Because Atlanta is obviously not as big as New York and L.A., but I think you can still at

times feel like there's so many people you don't know anyone. But there's something so unique here. The family aspect and the love and support that the community of people here has is so rare and so, so special.

**Annie:** Lauren knows this, but I've watched her from when she moved here, build her community here. And it has just been like watching miracle after miracle. And it feels like this is a community of artists who are like, we don't have to see each other every week, but we're one call. It's a one call. Oh, yeah, I just need to call them and they'll get involved. How does that help you make better art to be in a community like this?

**Laura:** Honestly, it's incredible. It makes all the difference. We've talked so much about like, you know, just waiting to have someone give you a job and be a part of the system, as opposed to feeling like we're creating a system with our fellow avengers and soldiers who are called to do the same thing. And I'm like, there's something really rewarding about that. It's not easy. It's not going to be built in a day.

But I wake up every morning excited that it's bubbling and like we get to be at the ground floor of what Nashville and entertainment and potentially film here will be with our friends who have a similar mind and heart.

**Annie:** Jesse, as I've seen on your socials, you like writing a movie, I'm assuming movie, and then you have people in your house to read it.

**Jesse:** Yeah. Well, I mean, Laura and Nate actually literally just had me to their house on Sunday.

**Laura:** Literally two days ago.

**Jesse:** I didn't know anybody there, except for them and met all these new great people. We used to be neighbors. But it's funny because we actually run into each other around town so often that it's almost flipped. Like there was a time when you had to invite your neighbor over to be neighbors. But now with the community here, it's almost reverse. Like, we almost don't need to invite each other over for dinner, because we're literally running into each other-

**Annie:** You're just like, Do your life, and there you are.

**Jesse:** ...every second day. Like, I'm gonna have a coffee over here. I see Laura in the coffee shop. You know, I've run into Nate at a men's Bible study. I mean, you live in Georgia, and I've seen you-

**Laura:** Over the last two weeks.

**Jesse:** And I'm gonna see you in New York. It's like-

**Julia:** I've seen y'all more than my friends in Georgia.

**Jesse:** I mean, you can't really explain it, you just start a part of it. And then you realize that you have to rejig your mindset, I think. Because I moved from the West Coast and it's just a different... there's a different vibe, a different mentality and approach to things. I had to learn how to slow down a bit here. You know, I had to learn how to just be like, Okay, don't rush it. Don't push it. Don't even bring it up. Just go to the barbecue and enjoy it and hang out and see what happens from there. That's how people connect here.

**Laura:** It does feel like it's relationship first-

**Annie:** Relationship first.

**Laura:** ...art and project and work second.

**Annie:** "Wouldn't it be fun to work together" is the thing versus "I want to know you."

**Laura:** That sounds fun.

**Annie:** That's exactly right. I mean, friendship comes first and then you go, I bet we'll figure out a way to get to work together. And that tends to be true.

[00:43:15] <music>

**Sponsor:** Hey friends, just interrupting this conversation one more time to tell you about one of our incredible partners and one of my favorite, [Storyworth](#). This is one of my favorite gift ideas for your parents. So listen up. Do you know about Storyworth? Our family has done it and it is such a gift.

Here's how it works. Every week Storyworth emails your loved one, a thought-provoking question that you can help pick, if you want to. Things like what's the bravest thing you've ever done, or what's the farthest you've ever traveled, or how did you use to get to school every day? All your loved ones need to do is respond to that email with a story, long or short, it doesn't matter. And after the year Storyworth compiles their stories, and then you can add photos and it becomes this beautiful keepsake hardcover book that you'll be able to share and revisit for generations to come. It is so cool.

So I gave this to my parents last Christmas, and it has been so meaningful to now work through the book, adding pictures, getting ready to print it out, and gift it at Christmas to all my cousins. I hope they aren't listening. But we have all these great stories documented for my family for years to come. With Storyworth you're giving your family a thoughtful, super personal gift and preserving their memories and stories forever.

Go to [Storyworth.com/ThatSoundsFun](https://Storyworth.com/ThatSoundsFun) and you'll save \$10 on your first purchase. That's Storyworth.com/ThatSoundsFun to save \$10 on your first purchase.

**Sponsor:** And another incredible partner I get to tell you about, [Hiya Health](https://HiyaHealth.com). Listen, parents, I know it's close to impossible to get kids to take their vitamins. I've seen your struggle when I FaceTime with my sister and my nephew. But our friends at Hiya Health are here to help.

Hiya Health has created the pediatrician-approved chewable vitamin that is made with zero sugar and zero gummy junk. A lot of my MiniBFFs love them. Hiya is designed for kids two and up sent straight to your door so you have one less thing to worry about. The glass bottles that come in are super cute, but even better, they are reusable and your kids get to decorate them with stickers. Currently, their bottles are also available in Barbie pink, and comes with a limited edition Barbie unboxing experience that includes a Barbie bottle and Barbie stickers.

We worked out a special deal with Hiya for their bestselling children's vitamin. Get 50% off your first order. To claim this deal that is just for my friends you must go to [HiyaHealth.com/ThatSoundsFun](https://HiyaHealth.com/ThatSoundsFun). Again, that's HiyaHealth.com/ThatSoundsFun and get your kids the full body nourishment that they need to grow into healthy adults.

And now back to finish up our conversation with Laura, Jesse, and Julia.

[00:47:21] <music>

**Annie:** Speaking of New York, we are all going to New York. After everybody hears this, it'll be next weekend, Thanksgiving weekend. Laura, tell me what's going on in New York. Why are we all going?

**Laura:** Oh my goodness. Okay.

**Annie:** Tell all the details.

**Jesse:** What's the exact schedule?

**Annie:** The itinerary is TBD. But there's the Great American Family Christmas Festival, which is a multi-weekend experience.

**Annie:** It's wild. It is so much.

**Laura:** People can fly in, locals can come. Buy tickets. I think tickets are only \$15. They start at \$15. So it's very accessible to get to come and experience Christmas and the joys of Christmas and traditions. I think there's going to be crafting and ice skating and Santa will be there. And then they're screening our movie as well. So the four sisters and Jesse will be there. And you. And you will be there.

**Annie:** That's right. I'll be there.

**Jesse:** And my daughter, because my family comes with me anyway.

**Annie:** We'll get her up there. Will she let us interview her?

**Jesse:** Yeah. The GF has asked that she come and hang out for that weekend.

**Annie:** Okay, good.

**Laura:** Great.

**Annie:** I think it'll be really fun. I mean, I love the other weekends. I wish them well. But our particular weekend, because it is literally... I'm sure they'll be fine. Our particular weekend is like just about this movie. So we get to like lean in on *Little Women's Christmas* all weekend. It's going to be so fun.

**Julia:** And we'll all have each other. I think it's fun to mix and mingle with fans and people and get to just celebrate together.

**Jesse:** Yeah. No lines have to be memorized. Except for Julia. She has a monologue. We're going to give it to her the night before.

**Annie:** That's right. We'll give her a full 24 hours.

**Jesse:** And now the monologue special.

**Laura:** Julia's up. Show us how you got this role. Is there a teleprompter?

**Annie:** I would love for each of you to tell me, as our friends listening get to watch this movie this weekend, they've got their bingo board, they're ready to party, what do

you hope they feel? What do you hope they experience when they watch *Little Women's Christmas*? We'll start with you, Laura, and go around the horn.

**Laura:** I think there's the first thing that comes to my mind is that I hope that especially women who are watching will see themselves in one of these sisters. And I hope that it speaks to particularly women and that no matter who you are, if you're gentle-natured and quiet and compassionate, that that's beautiful. If you're driven and comedic, that's great. If you're a mom, that's wonderful. If you're still trying to figure out what's going on in your life, that's beautiful. I think there's just so many stories that we get to tell within these four women, particularly, and I hope that women resonate with that.

**Julia:** Yeah, that was so beautifully said, I agree with that 100%.

**Annie:** And you barely looked at the teleprompter. That was so good.

**Julia:** I'm looking right at the fake teleprompter right now. I agree with that 100%. I think women will get to see that there's a place for each of us, regardless of your personality, regardless of your goals, regardless of where you're at in life. And then you can all come together and have a really beautiful bond.

Also, it's a great family, feel-good movie. You can watch it with anyone of any age. I hope people just enjoy kind of slowing down for the holiday season and enjoying their family traditions and spending time with one another.

**Annie:** We haven't even talked about Kupecky being-

**Julia:** Kyle! Oh.

**Annie:** I love that guy.

**Laura:** I know.

**Julia:** He's the sweetest ever.

**Annie:** There's a lot of great cast.

**Laura:** And I met his wife at the premiere and she's so beautiful.

**Annie:** Oh, she's so lovely.

**Laura:** They're so lovely.

**Annie:** They're really sweet. Did you make that connect?

**Laura:** You know, no. But we go to Karen's Bible study and I think... so Kyle's mom is Karen... Well, no, Kyle's... it's Kelsey. His wife's mom is Karen Kingsbury, renowned novelist. I think they were looking for someone local for that role. Well, you might even know. I think they were looking and trying to find somebody local that could play that role. And Kyle's just a shoo-in. I mean, he is the local Lori. He does all the commercials and all the local things. And he's just so dashing and charming and was sweet to have on set. Really cool.

**Annie:** Okay, Jesse, what do you hope? Put your producer hat on.

**Jesse:** Just to back that up too, though. It's pretty cool that Jillian's husband also, Dean, stepped in. So there's really this whole community connection, which is kind of far out. So I can use that term, the older term, but it's far out.

**Annie:** Her and Trevor were so good in their roles. Her and Trevor were just great. I just love them. I thought they were so great.

**Laura:** I agree.

**Jesse:** Well, for me being a father and then having Charlize play my daughter, I mean, she's, you know, way higher on the call sheet. She had way more work than I did and it was a blessing to just watch her during the day and then debrief with her at night. So, for me, I think what I hope people get out of this is that knowing behind the scenes, there was, I think, a lot of connection individually that I both would know and also not even have a clue of the little personal conversations and connections that everybody's had. How that does come to screen and whatever viewers feel in their heart, I believe is somehow connected to some of the stuff that you don't see behind the curtain. You know what I mean? It'll come out in the performances and the nuances that the performers bring to the screen and the camera movements and the music.

So I really hope that for me, what people would really feel is again, yeah, just connect with whoever you're connecting with in life. Just chill out. You don't have to get it all done today. You don't have to defeat that list right now. You don't have to pay off your debt this second. Yes, you have goals, I'm sure, as a human being, but it's okay to check out for an hour and a half to two hours and just allow yourself to go on a journey with other people. Because sometimes you need to step out of your life.

And I think that's what's great about movies is you get to just fall into it. Don't try to figure it out and judge it. Just enjoy it. Just watch all these women hang out and

live their lives in this movie and then figure yourself out after. You know what I mean? Because I think you can actually find some inspiration in that. I do.

When I go watch... like Laura's a musician. She's into music. When I go watch someone sing and you hear them perform and you feel it and it resonates with you, I go home completely changed and rejuvenated. And none of that has to do with me paying a bill or whatever's going on in my life that day that I'm stressing out about. But it's connected. Your heart, wherever you go, there you are. So watch this movie with an open heart and just have fun.

**Annie:** It's a beautiful film. Y'all did an awesome job.

**Laura:** You too.

**Annie:** Thank you. Thank you so much. Don't be late, you guys. I'm in the first eight seconds. If you want to see your friend Annie, you got to show up on time to your own television. That is the only way.

Okay, the last question we always ask, because the show is called That Sounds Fun, I want you to tell me something you do for fun. Okay, so I'll let you think. Laura, you were prepared a little more than the others. Oh, something you do for fun or something that would sound fun?

**Annie:** Either. We don't judge fun around here, so whatever it is, however you want to answer that. Because the show is called That Sounds Fun, tell me what sounds fun to you.

**Laura:** You know, one of the first things that came to my mind and that I was kind of hoping to say today is my dad just celebrated his 70th birthday, which is amazing.

**Annie:** Oh, wow.

**Laura:** But to celebrate that, we are all going to Italy next summer.

**Annie:** You are?

**Laura:** And my stepmom's getting a villa, two villas for two weeks.

**Annie:** Great.

**Julia:** That sounds fun.

**Annie:** I agree.



- Laura:** And we're planning to go, and hopefully no movie scum that would take me away just during those two weeks. I really want to work around that, just like not those two weeks.
- Annie:** It's that thing you say to your agent, like, "I'm not available those two weeks unless"? I'm not, but unless.
- Laura:** You know they always say, if you want to book a job, book a vacation. A villa in Italy sounds really fun right now.
- Annie:** I agree with you. All right, Julia, what sounds fun to you?
- Julia:** Okay, well, staying in the Christmas spirit right now, I just moved apartments and I'm furniture shopping, but I decided to go ahead and buy some Christmas decorations before real furniture. But I just bought matching stockings for me and my dog. Thank you. Thank you, Target. I'm excited to buy him little treats. I bought us matching Christmas pajamas.
- Laura:** Photos need to be forthcoming.
- Annie:** Yeah, we need to see those.
- Julia:** I will take some photos. I'm going to do a little Christmas with me and my dog, and I can't wait.
- Laura:** Please tag That Sounds Fun.
- Annie:** Yeah, that's right. We would really like to see this.
- Julia:** Yeah, I'm just going to start collecting stuff, and then I'll give him his treats, and he'll be so happy.
- Annie:** For sure. You'll get it whenever. Christmas, you have a timeline.
- Julia:** That's it.
- Annie:** You have to. Couches and stuff, January.
- Julia:** Yeah, that can wait.
- Annie:** Yeah, it can all wait. I'm with you. I like how you live. All right, Jesse, what sounds fun to you?

**Jesse:** Well, it's actually work-related.

**Annie:** Great.

**Jesse:** We started homeschooling the kids again this year, so that we could continue to be a family unit.

**Annie:** How old are they?

**Jesse:** We got a birthday this month, but right now we're at 11, 12, 13.

**Annie:** Okay. 11, 12, 13. Just stack them up, line them up, and knock them down. Well done.

**Jesse:** We had three kids under the age of three when my daughter was born. Went for four. Didn't pan out that way, but God had a plan, and three's enough. Anyway, that being said, it's a unique time in my career with *Homestead* having a theatrical release and being able to be a part of something like that, which does not come along every day, at least in my career. So I'm really thankful to have this opportunity to just do press for that, plus going to New York for all these Christmas movies. I have three Christmas movies that are coming out this year. One of them is-

**Laura:** Mr. Christmas.

**Annie:** Do you know all the titles? Can you tell us the titles? Do you know them?

**Jesse:** Well, one of them, the Great American Family just purchased. It's called *Let It Snow*.

**Annie:** Oh, great.

**Jesse:** They created it back when everybody was at Hallmark.

**Annie:** Oh, wait. Yeah, I know *Let It Snow*. Like the old-school *Let It Snow*?

**Jesse:** Yeah, the old school.

**Annie:** Jesse, you know you've been a favorite of everyone's for a long time. That *Let It Snow* is a strong ... You and Candace.

**Jesse:** Yeah, yeah. So that premieres on Great American Family also in December.

**Annie:** We are writing that down. *Let It Snow*. That is a good one. We are about to record our ... We have a movie-watching episode coming with my two friends, and *Let It Snow* has been a classic we've brought up a few years in a row, so bring it back around. Okay, great.

**Jesse:** Well, hey, I'm not going to get on that wall unless we have a lot of opportunity to talk about stuff.

**Laura:** All the Christmas movies. That's right.

**Annie:** And what's *Homestead's* theatrical release? When does that come out?

**Jesse:** December 20th.

**Annie:** Okay, so we need to see that in theaters.

**Jesse:** And then it turns into an immediate television series.

**Annie:** Yeah, that's great. So, anyway, that all being said is to bring my family to a lot of these things. And we're trying to plan these events and bring everyone because we've never wanted my kids to just be like, well, who's dad when he's not home, which sometimes can be a lot. Instead, they come and they see who dad is no matter what we're doing and no matter where we are.

**Annie:** Y'all need like an RV. Do you have an RV or do you just drive in cars?

**Jesse:** We just drive in our truck.

**Annie:** It feels like an RV would be helpful in your family.

**Jesse:** Yeah, we could use an RV. Any sponsors out there?

**Annie:** Yeah, that's right. We need a semi from the government. We need an RV dealership. Those are two people Jesse needs to call.

**Laura:** I actually thought you were going to say, do you need a reality show? I was like, just cameras following you.

**Julia:** That would be awesome.

**Annie:** I'll call Brandon. Does he do reality as well? I could do a reality show. That would be great. So will they all be with you in New York?

**Jesse:** Yeah, for the *Little Women Christmas*. Yeah.

**Annie:** Oh, good.

**Jesse:** So that does sound fun to me. It actually sounds fun that we get to go and just be a part of all these events that we don't really fully... I don't fully know what everybody's planning for all these events from Homestead to *Little Women Christmas* to Joe Wagner's having an event on her farm. We're going to go to that. It's just all this cool, fun, crazy stuff that I have no idea what's really happening. But I said yes, and... I just want to be a yes guy and just say, "Yeah, I'm showing up. Let's do it." So it sounds fun.

**Annie:** That's great. Thank you for being a yes guy. It helps us to enjoy a lot of art and a lot of movies that are really beautiful and fun. *Let It Snow* is coming to town. That is such breaking news. That is such breaking news. I have texts to send. I have people to prepare.

**Jesse:** I literally have people message me and go, "Could you chop wood again in another project?"

**Annie:** They're like, listen.

**Jesse:** Funny enough, *Homestead* I just chopped wood. I just had a wood-chopping scene. There was supposed to be a whole bunch of people as part of the community, and it literally turned into just me chopping wood as the sun comes up.

**Annie:** I'm sure the ladies and gentlemen will be thrilled. Yes, there it is.

**Jesse:** Instagram blocked it actually.

**Annie:** Did they?

**Jesse:** Yeah, because I was holding an axe. So they wouldn't allow me to post it. I got shadow-banned and shut down for like six days.

**Annie:** For chopping wood. Oh boy. Yeah.

**Jesse:** Thanks for... Can't chop wood, ladies and gentlemen.

**Annie:** It's tough to hear, but we'll bring it back to you. Let us know. That's great news. Thank you guys for making time for this.

**Jesse:** Thank you for having me.

**Julia:** Thank you.

**Laura:** Love you. Thanks.

[01:00:26] <music>

**Annie:** Oh, you guys, aren't they the best? Oh, that was so fun. As Jesse was leaving the studio, he said, what is that button? And I said, I can't believe I didn't use it when you told me that *Let It Snow* was coming back to GAF. It's on December 8th. Wowie zowie. *Let It Snow* is coming back. We have got so many great Christmas movies to watch on GAF.

Remember, *A Little Women's Christmas*, starring all four of us, most barely me, premieres this Saturday, November 23rd at 8 p.m. Eastern, seven o'clock central on Great American Family. And you can stream all of their Christmas movies this season on the PureFlix app, which you can try for seven days for free. So head over to PureFlix.com right now, so you don't miss the premiere of *A Little Women's Christmas*. You know I'm going to be watching. So make sure you've got your bingo board. It's not just for this movie, it's for lots of movies, but grab your bingo board — we've linked it in the show notes below — and let's watch *A Little Women's Christmas* together on Saturday night.

If you enjoyed this episode, make sure you go back and listen to our other episode with Laura Osnes. It's Episode 856. I referenced it in the show because I think you'll really love hearing this like full circle moment based on what she said to us then versus this experience. This movie, it's really beautiful.

And don't forget, *Let It Snow* on December 8th. [Wowie Zowie] Let's go. That is a good one. If you have any questions from this episode, drop them in the Q&A box on your Spotify app if you're a Spotify listener like me, or send them to us on Instagram @ThatSoundsFunPodcast. We'd love to answer them there.

Also, as usual, Jen and Jamie are coming back and we are going to talk about the best GAF movies of the season. So you got to get your watch going. You got to start watching them so that when you listen to the three of us in just a couple of weeks, you're going to have some knowledge about some movies. And listen, DM us @ThatSoundsFunPodcast. Tell us your thoughts as you're listening in any of the GAF movies that you have loved that we need to make sure we see.

All right. If you need anything else from me, you know I'm embarrassingly easy to find. Annie F. Downs on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and TikTok. Anywhere you need me, that's how you can find me.

I think that's it for me today, friends. Go out or stay home, do something that sounds fun to you and I will do the same. Today what sounds fun to me is Saturday. Saturday for a thousand reasons. Saturday because *A Little Women's Christmas* debuts on GAF, but also Saturday is the actual 10th anniversary of That Sounds Fun. So I'll see you back here on Saturday.

We have a special episode coming for you on Saturday. Some of my thoughts about podcasting and this podcast in general. Our buddy Eddie is joining us for this episode. We're going to recap the Ryman event back in August and just some thoughts about the last 10 years and where we are going next. I think you're going to like it. This is a special one. It's coming on Saturday for you. So I'll see you then.