

00:00:00	Music	Music	Gentle, trilling music with a steady drumbeat plays under the dialogue.
00:00:01	Promo	Promo	Speaker: <i>Bullseye with Jesse Thorn</i> is a production of MaximumFun.org and is distributed by NPR.
			<i>[Music fades out.]</i>
00:00:13	Jesse Thorn	Host	I'm Jesse Thorn. It's <i>Bullseye</i> .
00:00:15	Music	Music	"Huddle Formation" from the album <i>Thunder, Lightning, Strike</i> by The Go! Team. A fast, upbeat, peppy song. Music plays as Jesse speaks, then fades out.
00:00:23	Jesse	Host	Tanya Tucker recorded her first single in 1972, when she was 13 years old. It was called "Delta Dawn". She cut it with Billy Sherrill, the veteran country music producer who had collaborated with George Jones and Tammy Wynette. "Delta Dawn" is a sad story song about a woman who was abandoned decades ago, by her lover. It's not really a song for kids.
			<i>[Music fades out.]</i>
			And Tanya Tucker doesn't really sound like a kid on the record. We're gonna play it in a bit. You'll hear what I mean. It was a country smash. There are dozens of versions of the song, from a copycat recording by the Australian country singer, Helen Reddy—which hit even bigger than Tucker's version—to a cabaret rendition by Bette Midler.
			Waylon Jennings, Loretta Lynn, and Kitty Wells all cut it, too. The song launched Tucker's career: a girl who sang far beyond her years. She's released about two dozen records, since then. Her latest is <i>While I'm Livin'</i> . It's her first record of original material in over 15 years. It's produced by Brandi Carlile and Shooter Jennings. It's a record informed by pain. Since her last album, Tanya lost both her parents and dealt with some health issues of her own. It's also beautiful. The lead single from the record, "Bring My Flowers Now", is nominated for Song of the Year at this year's Grammy awards.
			<i>[Music fades in.]</i>
00:01:49	Music	Music	Let's take a listen. "Bring My Flowers Now" by Tanya Tucker plays. Slow, emotional country.
			<i>Bring my flowers now, while I'm livin' I won't need your love when I'm gone Don't spend time, tears, or money on my old, breathless body If your heart is in them flowers Bring 'em on</i>
			<i>All the miles cast a long shadow I'd take a couple back, if I could I'd've learned to play guitar told my daddy more I loved him But I believe, for the most part</i>

I done good

[Music fades out as Jesse speaks]

00:02:51	Jesse	Host	Tanya Tucker, welcome to <i>Bullseye</i> . I'm so happy to have you on the show.
00:02:53	Tanya Tucker	Guest	Hey, thanks Jesse. Good to—good to talk to you.
00:02:56	Jesse	Host	Can you tell me about where that song that we just heard came from?
00:03:00	Tanya	Guest	Yeah. I mean, I've had it in my back pocket for quite a few years, but just couldn't get it past the chorus. And I walked—Brandi yesterday, coming to finish it on the last day of the sessions, when we were in California and making this new record and went in the piano room and—I don't know—in maybe 35, 40 minutes we finished it. And, you know, we just went right to the vocal booth and recorded it.
00:03:33	Jesse	Host	So, what you hear on this record is just like it came out <i>[laughs]</i> of my mouth. There was no fixing anything. How did you feel working in that context? Where you were singing more or less as live?
00:03:41	Tanya	Guest	Well, I mean it took me back to the days when I first started out, with Billy Sherrill. You know. The first records I made were—we made pretty much like that, with—live. Everybody is in the studio, you push the record button, and it's all on the same deal. And the only thing they did differently, probably, was the background vocals we did after I got done singing. But with Billy, back—you know—doing "Delta Dawn" and all the way up to "Would You Lay with Me in a Field of Stone"—all those songs were recorded with the vocals and the background vocals at the same time.
00:04:14	Music	Music	"Delta Dawn" by Tanya Tucker fades in and plays underneath the dialogue. Melodic, crooning country.
00:04:16	Jesse	Host	<i>... take you to his mansion in the sky?</i>
00:04:20	Music	Music	Let's hear a little bit of Delta Dawn, which was your first hit. <i>She's 41 and her daddy still calls her "baby"</i> <i>All the folks around Brownsville say she's crazy</i> <i>'Cause she walks downtown with a suitcase in her hand,</i> <i>Looking for a mysterious dark-haired man</i> <i>In her younger days they called her Delta Dawn</i> <i>Prettiest woman you ever laid eyes on</i> <i>Then a man of low degree stood by her side</i>
00:05:01	Jesse	Host	<i>[Music fades out as Jesse speaks]</i> I mean, you're like 13 or 14 years <i>[laughing]</i> old— <i>[Tanya agrees.]</i> —when you cut that record. I heard that when you were in the studio, not only were you singing it with the band and the backup singers as though it was live, you were just singing it with monitors in front of you. Like, not even—not even wearing headphones.
00:05:19	Tanya	Guest	Right, no. Billy never would let me have any headphones. <i>[Jesse laughs.]</i>

			So, it was a little—I’ve never seen them, since. They were two monitors, one on each side of my head. And kind of like about two or three inches thick and very, like, maybe a foot and half tall, square. And on each side of my head, at the microphone. I haven’t done it like that since. And at least this time <i>[laughing]</i> I had some—I had a set of headphones. So, we go—we come up in the world. I mean, that was my experience of hearing “Delta Dawn”, which is one of my absolute favorite songs. Is—
00:05:49	Jesse	Host	
00:05:55	Tanya	Guest	Thank you.
00:05:56	Jesse	Host	I had the album and, you know, I’d bought it at a used record store, or something like that. And, you know, you look young on the cover of the record, but I wouldn’t have guessed that you—you know—enough time had passed and hairstyles had cycled enough that—and makeup styles had changed enough that, like, you could just as well have been 19 as 13 or 14 on the cover of the record. And it absolutely blew my mind when I learned how young you were when you cut it. But I had that experience again watching Bette Midler sing this song.
00:06:33	Music	Music	“Delta Dawn” by Bette Midler fades in. <i>In her younger days, they called her Delta Dawn. Prettiest woman you ever laid your eyes upon. But a man of a low degree...</i>
			<i>[Music fades out.]</i>
00:06:48	Jesse	Host	It was in her act—I saw her see sing it on <i>The Bette Midler Show</i> , on YouTube, and I was like, “This is a—it’s—” I mean, it’s <u>literally</u> the same song. But <i>[laughs]</i> substantively, in every way, completely—and I like Bette Midler, but I was like, “ <u>Woah!</u> ”
			So, did you—did you hear something in that song that made you think that that would be a special song for you, personally, in a way that was very different from the way it was on the demo or in the record that had been out?
00:07:21	Tanya	Guest	Well I think, you know, being a kid at that time—I didn’t really place any preconceived thoughts or even really think about it that much. You know? I just—I didn’t know why I liked it. I just knew that I did. And that carried on, later, when I saw that so many young people were attracted to this song and not even knowing what it was about. Something about the melody, the haunting melody, the—but the words. I mean why would a youngster be so attracted to those mature words? I have no answer for that. I just think it was something that struck a chord with me and I didn’t really think about it too much, at that time. You know. The song has something special about it. And I’m not sure you can really put words to what it is.
00:08:03	Jesse	Host	I wanna play another one of your early hits, that ended up on your second album. And I think that it’s another one of my favorite songs <u>ever</u> . And... it’s another song that is—that has a real intense, spooky edge to it that is made all the more unusual, ‘cause you were—I guess—14 or 15 years old when you were singing it.
			It’s called—yeah, “Blood Red Going Down”.

[Music fades in.]

00:08:33	Music	Music	<p>Let's take a listen. "Blood Red Going Down" from the album <i>What's Your Mama's Name</i> by Tanya Tucker. Up-tempo country with playful piano.</p> <p><i>We searched in every barroom And honky-tonk as well And finally, Daddy found them, And Lord, you know, the rest is hard to tell</i></p> <p><i>He sent me out to wait, but scared, I looked back through the door And Daddy left them both Soaking up the sawdust on the floor.</i></p> <p><i>That Georgia sun was blood red and going down That Georgia sun was blood red and going down That Georgia sun was blood red and going down</i></p>
00:09:16	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	<p><i>[Music fades out.]</i> Jesse: It's an intense song <i>[laughing]</i> for a teenager to be singing.</p>
00:09:20	Tanya	Guest	<p>Tanya: Yes! Curly Putman wrote that song, who also wrote "He Stopped Loving Her Today" and many, you know, "Green, Green Grass from Home". But, to me, on that song—Jerry Kerrigan playing drums. There's a drum lick—riff on there that I've never been able to get anybody to copy it. It's just, like, certain kind of drum thing that I've never heard on any other record that he did. And it was just, you know, like I say—I've heard these songs for, what? 48 years, you know. I guess for "Delta Dawn" and it'd be, you know, 47 for this one.</p>
			<p>But I loved the song. And it was very intense. And maybe, you know, that was part of the mystery of it is because I was so young. And my dad told me. I mean, when I was a kid, he said, "You got two problems." He said, "One, you're a girl. And the other one's, you're a nine-year-old girl." So, he said, "You're gonna have to sing these songs that you're singing with twice the feeling, because no one's gonna believe it. It's not believable coming from a nine-year-old kid."</p>
00:10:41	Jesse	Host	<p>So, you know, he worked with me on that to try to emote what the song was and, sort of, a bit of an acting job. But singing, instead of acting. And then acting it out in my vocal performance. But... you know, I didn't think too much about all of that, at that time. I just sang it the best I knew how to sing it and I guess it was convincing, you know.</p>
00:10:41			<p>How is it different for you to sing those songs that you had recorded as a child, as a—you know, when you were 30, 15 years later? Or when you were 45?</p>
00:10:56	Tanya	Guest	<p>I might sing them better, now, as far as vocal ability and quality. But... I don't think... necessarily that they're better, you know? I might have—I might be singing them, you know, better technically. But as far as a feel? There was no—there was no better way to do those songs. And that they couldn't—I've done them live, since.</p>

There's no way to redo—recapture what those tracks and those songs, those records, were in that time.

00:11:36 Jesse Host It was just a once in a lifetime thing. And I've had a lot of those, so I'm very lucky.
It's *Bullseye*. I'm Jesse Thorn. My guest is the singer Tanya Tucker.

[“High Ridin’ Heroes” by Tanya Tucker fades in.]

00:11:50 Music Music Her new record, *While I’m Livin’*, is her first collection of original music in over 15 years. Here’s another song from it. It’s called “High Ridin’ Heroes”.
“High Ridin’ Heroes” from the album *While I’m Livin’* by Tanya Tucker. Slow, ardent country.

*Daylight or midnight
Red eyes and that old hat
Whiskey-bent and busted flat
She’s a credit to her flaws
She’s a bad risk, but a good friend—
Small change and loose ends
She only regrets that she might’ve been
A little faster on the draw*

*Those old high ridin’ heroes,
They’re anywhere the wind blows
She’s been to hell and Texas,
And she knows how it feels
To be ridin’ that hot streak
And drunk on some back street—
Falling off the wagon
And under the wheels*

00:12:47 Jesse Host *[Music fades out as Jesse speaks]*
When you were a kid and a young teenager, before you started recording for record labels, your dad *[laughs]* won money in Keno game to pay for you to make a demo, spent two days *[laughing]* playing Keno straight, to do it.

00:13:03 Tanya Guest

Yeah.

00:13:04 Jesse Host

Did you know that was weird, at the time?

00:13:06 Tanya Guest

You know, I didn’t even know it, really. I didn’t even know he was doing it. He just came in, about midnight, and when my mother and myself were at our little old trailer we lived in, in St. George, Utah. And said, “Mother, Tanya, get up. We gotta go. We’re gonna make some demo tapes. I just won some money.” So, we got in the car and went right to Las Vegas. And he’d set it up where a guy named Cotton Harp was here, and I don’t know how he met him.

But he was a bass player and he had a family, so we stayed with the—with him and his family while we were, you know—just stayed here a couple days. Went in and did six songs in about three hours. Yeah. That wasn’t normal. Looking back on it, it wasn’t normal, but nothing was normal, in my early days. It don’t seem to be very normal now, either.

[Jesse laughs.]

			I mean, I've just had a very abnormal life that is not a life that everyone could've—would have been good for everyone. Or anyone else, really. It was just singularly mine. <i>[Chuckles.]</i>
00:14:08	Jesse	Host	What else was not normal about your early days?
00:14:12	Tanya	Guest	Just all kinds of things that, you know, wouldn't've—Jimmy Durante was playing the Arizona State Fair. He—we went up there from Wilcox, up in Phoenix, and I saw him at the Colosseum getting a hotdog, in the afternoon, and my dad said, "There. Go get him."
			So, I went over and said, to introduce myself, and said, "Mr. Durante, I'm Tanya Tucker and I'm 11 years old and I really, really would like to get started as a singer and we would like your advice on that."
			And he said, "Well come back after the show! Let me hear you sing!"
			So, we were watching the show, and it—Rex Allen was about to introduce him, and he said, "Ladies and gentlemen, we're sorry. We've had an accident. Mr. Durante was coming onstage tonight, and he fell, and he's had to be—he's had—they plan to run him to the hospital emergency room."
			So, my dad doesn't stop there. I found myself in the hospital room.
			<i>[Jesse chuckles.]</i>
			At the hospital, with Jimmy Durante in bed, talking to his agent with—had about 92 stitches across his face. He fell and cut his face open. And they'd stitched his face up and he was talking to his agent and said, <i>[imitating him emphatically]</i> "I can't believe we didn't do the show!" You know. "The show must go on!"
00:15:22	Tanya	Guest	And then he looks up and sees me and my dad there, in the hospital room, and hangs up the phone and—of course, you know—my dad said, <i>[Mumbling]</i> "Hey, we're here. <i>[Laughs.]</i> We're here to let you hear my daughter sing."
			<i>[Jesse laughs.]</i>
			So, I did. I sang to him. You know, he loved it, but—I guess he did. He was very nice. Very kind. And—but those things aren't normal. You know. And my dad was not a normal human being.
00:15:45	Jesse	Host	Did you folks travel with you, when you were on the road as a teenager?
00:15:50	Tanya	Guest	Oh yeah. They were with me all the time. And then, later on, my brother and my sister. We were all on the same bus and it was kind of a family affair. With the band. And so, we all rode on the bus. And it was tight, but I'd drive—relief drive, sometimes, even though I was—didn't have my driver's license.
			<i>[Jesse laughs.]</i>
			I would drive and, you know, we did what we had to do to get through it and get to the next show.
00:16:15	Jesse	Host	What'd your brother and sister think of it?

00:16:17 Tanya Guest My brother drove. All day. *[Lets out a puff of air.]* That was normal to them. It was—you know, they'd already been through that. My brother, especially. We all learned to drive, very young age. I was—think I was about four or five.

00:16:27 Jesse Host Tanya! I'm not talking about what'd your brother and sister think about driving the bus! I'm talking about what'd your brother and sister think about *[laughing]* being on the road! With a band!

00:16:37 Tanya Guest Ooh! Well, you know, it was just kind of a normal thing, you know? It's just like, we're all in this family together. We're gonna get through all this and we're gonna prevail and be—have success, and we'll all be successful together.

00:16:49 Jesse Host Did you have a part of your life where that wasn't what you wanted?

00:16:54 Tanya Guest Oh, all the time. *[Laughs.]*

[Jesse chuckles.]

Every other day. No, I'd say, "I'm quitting" every other day. I, you know—I just get—you know, I get frustrated, just like anybody does about their work or their job or their life. And then I really remember—the next day I remember how fortunate I am and, you know, count my blessings and when I start counting, I—there's not a number big enough. So, I just try to keep my head up and get through it, because it doesn't get any easier. You just learn how to handle it a little better, I think.

I think. I'm not sure, sometimes, if I handle it really at all. But I—every day's a challenge and every audience is a challenge and... every interview! *[Laughs.]* No. No.

[Jesse laughs.]

00:17:43 Jesse Host It's *Bullseye*. I'm Jesse Thorn. I'm talking with country singer Tanya Tucker.

You know, I worked with my dad, briefly, when I was in my, like, early, mid-20s. Early 20s.

[Tanya hums an acknowledgement.]

00:17:58 Tanya Guest And I love—
That can be complicated. *[Chuckles.]*

00:17:59 Jesse Host *[Laughing.]* Yeah! I was gonna say, Tanya—I—look, I love my dad. He's a—he's a great man and he was a good dad. And god bless him for finding a way to get me some part-time work, when that was what was standing between me and eating. But, Tanya, it was a disaster.

[Laughing.] It was a disaster!

00:18:18 Tanya Guest Yeah, I would think so. Especially for a guy. You know.

00:18:21 Jesse Host You were—you worked—you worked with your dad, and as—you know, and as well as your mom. But especially your dad, who was your manager his entire life. All the time, for decades...

00:18:38 Tanya Guest Well, there were struggles, for sure. Believe me. I know it and I see those struggles, too—of my brother and my dad. That was a difficult situation. And, of course, my dad ended up really disowning him. And didn't even consider him to be a son. And then went through a lot of problems. I can't imagine being a son, comparing himself to

my dad, you know? That had to be hard. It was a lot easier being a girl.

But I didn't—it didn't mean I had it easier. It was—in some ways, I guess it would have been, but, you know, I had my struggles too, with him. I mean, he was very... you know, "Let's do it my way, or that's it." You know. "The highway." So, the—and then I did the highway. So, you know, there were times when I didn't listen to him and I should have and I—if I have any regrets, that's probably the one—of the biggest ones, that I didn't listen to him at the right time. And I would have been more successful, sooner, if I had've listened to him.

And—but now, I'm—I mean, he's been gone since '06, and I think I'd listen to him now, more than ever. Even though it's a little late. But maybe not too late.

00:19:45 Jesse Host What do you think of when you think of him? Like, if you—I don't know if you do this, but I know my mom is always telling me that she's—that she talks to her mom, who's been gone a long time. So, when you talk to your dad, who's been gone for more than a decade, what do you think about him telling you?

00:20:06 Tanya Guest Well, it might sound strange, but sometimes I hold—I have a wallet that he had. Still has 75 bucks in it. And I can kind of get—hold that wallet and I can ask any question I want and get an answer. I think, somehow, he is guiding me from above. I really do. I have no doubt, actually. So—but there were times when there was no guiding me. And I'm not sure—now that I have three kids, I really understand *[laughs]* where he was coming from. And I apologize to him all the time, saying, "Oh my god, now I know why you—what you were doing and what you were trying to say."

'Cause I talk to my—one of my daughters or my son—mostly my daughters—and they just don't get it. You know? And I have the frustration that my dad had. And I see it so clearly. But I could not see it, at that time. I see it, now.

00:21:02 Jesse Host Even more with Tanya Tucker still to come. After a quick break, she'll tell us about the time she met and rebuffed the advances of one Elvis Presley. Stay with us. It's *Bullseye* from MaximumFun.org and NPR.

00:21:16 Promo Promo **Music:** Bouncy, percussive music plays quietly in the background.

Meghan Keane: NPR's *Life Kit* wants to help you make changes that actually stick, this new year. From how to do dry January to how to start a creative habit. We've got new episodes all month to help you start the year off right. New episodes every Tuesday and Thursday. Listen and subscribe to *Life Kit*.

[Music fades out.]

00:21:35 Promo Promo **Music:** "War" by Norman Whitfield and Barrett Strong with lead vocals by Edwin Starr plays in the background.

John Roderick: *Friendly Fire* is a podcast about war movies, but it's so much more than that.

Adam Pranica: It's history!

Speaker 1 (Film clip): Was just supposed to be another assignment.

Ben Harrison: It's comedy.

Speaker 2 (Film clip): Under no circumstances are you to engage the enemy.

Adam: It's... cinema studies.

Murdock (*Rambo: First Blood Part II*): That's a hell of a combination.

John: So, subscribe and download *Friendly Fire* on your podcatcher of choice.

Ben: Or at MaximumFun.org.

Adam: And also, come see us at San Francisco Sketchfest on January 16th.

Ben: You can get tickets at SFsketchfest.com.

Speaker 3 (Film clip): *[A strained whisper]* Mission... accomplished.

00:22:09	Jesse	Host	<p><i>[Music fades out.]</i></p> <p>Welcome back to <i>Bullseye</i>. I'm Jesse Thorn. I'm talking with Tanya Tucker. She's a veteran country singer. She had her first hit single in 1972, when she was 13-years-old. She's got a new record. It's called <i>While I'm Livin'</i>. It's her first collection of original music in over 15 years.</p> <p><i>[Music fades in.]</i></p> <p>Here's another song from the album. This one is called "The Day My Heart Goes Still".</p>
00:22:29	Music	Music	<p>"The Day My Heart Goes Still" from the album <i>While I'm Livin'</i> by Tanya Tucker. Up-tempo, cheerful country.</p> <p><i>Yes, I know Well, I know I will, I will Love you 'til the day my heart goes still Until they put me in the ground up on some hill I don't think I'll ever get my fill I'm gonna love you 'til the day my heart goes still</i></p> <p><i>When I was younger—</i></p>
00:23:06	Jesse	Host	<p><i>[Music fades out as Jesse speaks]</i></p> <p>There were two things that I imagined... and, like I said, I haven't—I really don't know, 'cause I wasn't there, but I'm gonna tell them to you in case they make sense to you or don't make sense to you. Either way.</p>
00:23:18	Tanya	Guest	<p>Okay.</p>

00:23:19	Jesse	Host	<p><i>[Tanya agrees several times as Jesse continues.]</i> One of them was—I was thinking, what an unusual situation it must be, to be a teenager in a world of adults... where you are—and I’m, you know, I’m talking about basically everybody in your life besides your siblings, when you were a teenager.</p> <p>And, like, constantly having to... demonstrate that you belong there. When you <i>[stammers]</i>—I mean, goodness knows you had the talent to belong there. I don’t think that’s a question <i>[laughs]</i>, right? And you had the skills, as a performer, to belong there. I mean, you were an incredible singer, when you were 13 years old.</p> <p>But... you didn’t have other equipment <i>[laughing]</i> to belong there, I’m sure. You know what I mean? Like, you’re still a 16-year-old or an 18-year-old or whatever.</p>
00:24:12	Tanya	Guest	<p>I really wanted just to be one of the boys, and in fact that’s one of the songs I wrote for this album that I’ve been holding onto for <i>[laughing]</i> about ten years, that I’ve been working. It’s called “One of the Boys”. It’s not hard for a girl like me to be one of the boys. And I really just wanted to be one of the boys. I mean, wanted to be Elvis’s buddy, you know?</p> <p>I had no visions of me going into his bedroom or anything closer than that, I just wanted to be a friend that—maybe, I thought maybe he might need. And—but it was hard to get through, especially to men, that I was a—not a girl. <i>[Laughs.]</i> I mean, I was just a girl, is all I was saying. And get past that to be friends. And, you know, sometimes I still have that little struggle, but it’s not as big as it used to be.</p> <p>But that was one of the things. But, also, just talking to musicians that were older than me that were much more experienced and much more knowledgeable about music than I was—it was difficult for me to tell them what to do and it—not that I could tell them how to do it right, I just knew they weren’t doing it right. And that was a difficult problem, for me. Very, very difficult.</p>
00:25:24	Jesse	Host	<p><i>[Tanya agrees several times as Jesse speaks.]</i> You know, I heard—in you talking about Elvis, just now—something that I, probably ‘cause I’m a guy, had not thought about. So, tell me if I’m misreading the situation, but I am guessing that one of the biggest problems, when you were a young woman, was in finding belonging, or seeking belonging—was not just that you were much younger than the people around you—you know, that you were a 13 year old or a 17 year old. And you were around 25-year-olds or 35-year-olds—but that you were a woman in a situation where most of the people around, whether it was in the industry or your fellow artists, were men.</p> <p>You know, your band was probably almost all men. And, you know, so on and so forth. And so, you know, when you are seeking regular friendship belonging, a lot of those men might have been seeking... uh, something else.</p>
00:26:27	Tanya	Guest	<p>I mean, very true. I mean, that was—I mean, that was a—not a <u>problem</u>. I mean, it was definitely... a hiccup, every now and then, you know? But, you know, I just learned how to get through that.</p>

And it's hard to, kind of, work through that and figure out how to handle those kinds of situations. My dad was very good about helping me with that. He gave me a lot of advice. You know, when I *[laughs]*—when I walked out that night to meet Elvis Presley or to do—to see his show, because I could never afford to go, and then even if I did, I wanted to meet him when he knew who I was. Not just some random girl, you know? I wanted him to know me.

And so, I waited and then I got invited to see his show, in Las Vegas, and me and my sister went. And on the way outside the door, my dad opened the door of the trailer house that I live in, in Henderson, and he said, "Listen here." He said, "That boy can have any girl he wants in the world." He said, "Just let him know he can't have you."

And I never forgot about that. And so, later, when—you know—Elvis asked me to come backstage and I went back and... all of his cronies were—they were—they were, kind of, getting a little nervous, because he hadn't come out to say hello to me, yet. And, you know—I know the whole score now, 'cause that—you know, I've been there, done that. And they—you know—they couldn't give me a drink. I was underage, you know? I remember, looking back, it was like, *[in an exaggerated, nasally southern accent]* "You want some peanuts? You want some M&Ms? How about some cashews?" You know. They were just—"How about a Coca Cola?" You know.

And I just said—I looked at my sister, and I said, "Five minutes and we're out of here. I'm not waiting for him." And they got—and I think someone must have went back and told him, because it wasn't five minutes and he popped out and talked to me. And then, of course, at the end—after we talked a little while—he went to kiss me. And he went to kiss me on the lips. And so, I gave him the old side-cheek, you know? And I think that I saw the biggest smile I'd ever seen on his face. He got it. You know. He got it. And he thought it was pretty amazing, I think—at that age, that I could act like that. You know. And last thing I wanted him to think of, is I wanted him—for any other reason, you know—than to just be a buddy.

00:28:43 Jesse Host

What was it like for you, as a life-long... picker of hit songs, a person who—one of your great, you know, one of your great skills that I know you were very proud of was choosing the right material for yourself, recording great songs, and you've recorded so many great... you know, country story songs.

[Tanya agrees.]

And, you know, songs that were not represent—direct representations of yourself and your story.

00:29:09 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Tanya: Yeah. Well, I think I—

Jesse: To have—

Tanya: Go ahead.

00:29:21 Tanya Guest **Jesse:** To have two producers on this record come in and say, “Hey, we’ve written some songs. They’re kind of about you. *[Laughs.]* And you don’t get to pick them, necessarily.” Yeah. Yeah. Well, ultimately, I had the decision whether to do them or not. And I had decided not to do them. I mean, several times they tell me.

[Jesse laughs.]

00:29:33 Crosstalk Crosstalk But I talk to them—
Jesse: You don’t—you don’t remember, Tanya?!
Tanya: Nooo. They said I...
Jesse: I did *[laughing]*—I did read a quote about you—
Tanya: I cancelled it four times, but I don’t remember that.

00:29:41 Tanya Guest **Jesse:** *[Laughing.]* Yeah!
I just really, really had that innate ability to pick great songs. And not just for me, but for other people. I have a really—kind of a... I don’t know if it’s a talent or what, but to be able to put a song with the right singer. And I’ve done it so many times that I know that I’m good at it. And this time, I really didn’t think these songs were gonna be... good enough. And I’ve never been prouder to be wrong, but I was wrong about that.

And people have really been attracted to this new album, and through all the kicking and screaming and digging my feet in and having me—drag me to LA, it’s just—I’m just glad I did it, you know? It’s like *[makes a sighing, relieved “phew” sound. ^]*, I’m glad I worked out for three hours, you know. I feel much better. Kind of like smoking, you know? You quit smoking and you think—you’re always proud—so proud of yourself, but what it took to get there, is—it’s really difficult. And I went through a lot of... you know, doubts. Doubts. Doubts. That’s all I had, was doubts.

You know, I always have a few doubts about anything, but this was overwhelming. But I’m glad I did it, you know? It just shows me that maybe I’m not an old dog. I’m learning new tricks, you know?
[Laughs.]

00:31:06 Jesse Host Well, Tanya, thank you. Thank you so much for coming on Bullseye. It was a—it was a real dream to have you on the show. I really appreciate you taking this time.

00:31:13 Tanya Guest Thanks, Jesse. I’m—it was great talking to you. You’re—I’d talk to you any day. It’s easy. I mean, you make me think. So, I wouldn’t say it’s easy, but uh...

[Jesse laughs.]

00:31:25 Jesse Host Definitely make me think. *[Laughs.]*
[Laughing.] Well, I’ll take what I can get.

[Music fades in.]

Thanks again.

00:31:27	Tanya	Guest	Alright! Thank you a lot.
00:31:30	Jesse	Host	Tanya Tucker. Her new album is called <i>While I'm Livin'</i> . Let's listen to one more song from it. It's called "Hard Luck".
00:31:37	Music	Music	"Hard Luck" from the album <i>While I'm Livin'</i> by Tanya Tucker. Up-tempo, playful country.

*I still remember the night I was born
My shoes were ragged, and my jeans were torn
No time to worry about none of these things
My mouth was wide open. I just had to sing*

*Hard luck, keep trucking
I was born to a hard luck world
Hard luck, keep trucking
Lord knows, I'm a hard luck girl
Yeah!*

*My daddy told me when I was young,
Girl, don't you do what old Hank Williams done
Now look at my life and all the trouble I've had,
Shows what you get when you got to be bad*

*Hard luck, I keep trucking
Born to a hard luck world*

[Music fades out.]

00:32:37	Music	Music	Upbeat transition music.
00:32:43	Jesse	Host	That's the end of another episode of <i>Bullseye</i> . <i>Bullseye</i> is produced at MaximumFun.org world headquarters, overlooking MacArthur Park in beautiful Los Angeles, California—where, just before the holidays, there was another park concert! Now, usually we get those park concerts during the summer concert series. This time, it was a holiday show: a group of dads playing Christmas music and also one White Stripes cover.

Our show is produced by speaking into microphones. Our producer is Kevin Ferguson. Jesus Ambrosio is our associate producer. We get help from Casey O'Brien. Our production fellows are Jordan Kauwling and Melisa Dueñas. Our interstitial music is by Dan Wally, also known as DJW. Our theme song is by The Go! Team. Our thanks to them and their label, Memphis Industries, for letting us use it.

And we have decades of interviews that you can listen to from past episodes of *Bullseye*. They're all at our website, MaximumFun.org. You can also find them in other channels, like YouTube, your favorite podcast app. So on and so forth. For example, you like country music? You like Tanya Tucker, on this week's show? Why not listen to my interview with Dolly Parton, from a couple years ago? That was a great one! Dolly Parton is exactly who you wish Dolly Parton would be! *[Laughs.]* She totally delivers full Dolly Parton. She's—man. She's just the greatest.

And I think that's about it. Just remember: all great radio hosts have a signature sign off.

00:34:09 Promo

Promo

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

[Music fades out.]