

00:00:00	Music	Transition	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.
00:00:12	Music	Transition	<i>[Music fades out.]</i> “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.
00:00:19	Jesse Thorn	Host	It’s <i>Bullseye</i> . I’m Jesse Thorn. Our guest is musician Frank Turner. He was interviewed by Jordan Morris, co-host of <i>Jordan, Jesse, Go!</i> with me, here at Maximum Fun. The British singer Frank Turner got his start playing in punk bands in his teenage years. In the early aughts, he fronted the hardcore band Million Dead.
00:00:39	Music	Music	“Breaking the Back” by Million Dead. <i>...normative playground theory on social interaction positive enough to show them all, but alas— Working the tills...</i>
00:00:52	Jesse	Host	<i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i> The band lasted about five years, put out two albums, and after they broke up Frank decided he wanted to do something different. Instead of “Black Flag” and “The Rights of Spring”, he started writing music that sounded more like the Clash or Bob Dylan. Or maybe even Bruce Springsteen.
00:01:09	Music	Music	“Recovery” by Frank Turner. <i>A long road out to recovery from here A long way to makin' it right And I've been wakin' in the morning...</i>
00:01:21	Jesse	Host	<i>[Volume decreases and music continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i> I guess you can call it folk or maybe folk rock. Frank Turner’s talent is crafting music that’s personal, catchy, and playful. But in the lyrics and delivery, you hear the same ethos and passion he’s always had. Frank has been performing solo since 2004. He keeps track of every gig he’s played on his website. As of this recording, Frank Turner has played 2,502 live solo shows. That’s about one performance every two days since he started, if you wanna do the math. Of course, he hasn’t been able to hit the road lately like he used to, but he’s got a new record out. It’s a split with the punk band NOFX.
00:02:18	Music	Music	On <i>West Coast vs. Wessex</i> , Frank Turner covers five NOFX and NOFX cover five of Frank Turner’s songs. Before we get into the conversation between Jordan Morris and Frank Turner, let’s hear a track from the new album. Here’s Frank Turner’s cover of NOFX’s classic, “Eat the Meek”. “Eat the Meek” from the album <i>West Coast vs. Wessex</i> by Frank Turner and NOFX. <i>Because there's never gonna be enough space So, eat the meek, enjoy the waste</i>

*It's always gonna be a delicacy
So, lick your chops and eat the meek
Why must we stay where we don't belong?*

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]

- 00:02:59 Jordan Morris Host Frank Turner! Welcome to *Bullseye!*
- 00:03:01 Frank Turner Guest Thank you for having me! Very nice to be here!
- 00:03:03 Jordan Host So, your new split album's called *West Coast vs. Wessex*. Wessex is your hometown. What's it like, for someone who's never been?
- 00:03:11 Frank Guest Well, actually, technically speaking Wessex is an area of England rather than a town. It's borderline mythic. It was a—it was a kingdom of England in the pre-Norman conquest era. But it was also where Thomas Hardy set his novels. But it's generally the kind of south and the southwest of England. Which is where I'm from. I grew up in—just outside the city of Winchester. It's a very beautiful town, but it's the kind of place where, when you're a kid—particularly a kid who's into punk rock records—you're kind of desperate to escape, because there is no such thing as punk rock in Winchester or Wessex, generally.
- 00:03:52 Jordan Host So, I—you know, I—my eyes drifted to the big city of London. But, of course, now that I'm a bit older, if I go back there—which I do from time to time—I go, "Wow! This place is lovely!" So, I do kind of get my parents' motivation now.
- 00:03:58 Frank Guest What was the London like in your head, when you were in Wessex dreaming about getting out?
- 00:04:34 Jordan Host Well, my dad's family are all from London, so from a very early age I used to kind of spend weekends up in London and my mum says that even as a toddler, I would get out the car at my grandmother's house and just sort of like—you know, roll my shoulders a bit and grin and be like, "Mm! I've arrived!" And London, I—the Clash have the song "London Calling" and it's a very prescient song, because I think anybody who grew up outside of the capital, in the UK, understands that feeling, that pull, that draw that London exerts. And it's about culture and it's about night life and it's about possibility and all these kinds of things. And all of that has featured quite heavily in my life.
- 00:04:43 Frank Guest I'm curious about some of your early musical memories. What kind of music was playing, you know, around your house and around your neighborhood when you were growing up?
- 00:04:43 Frank Guest As a very young kid—my parents are musical in the sense that my mum taught music at the local primary school where I went. My mum plays the piano and the flute and stuff like this. My dad spent most of our childhood—we had a piano in the house, which I actually now have downstairs in my house—and my dad spent my childhood kind of badly butchering psalms and singing along with them. And in a way that you sort of couldn't quite script, if you know what I mean. But you know, my parents are both quite religious and they listen to classical music and both of them didn't really believe in music with drumkits, shall we say. Or sort of electrified music.

You know, I do remember that as a kid we had a copy of *Sgt. Pepper* in the car, which I think was my parents' concession to

modernity and trying to sort of expose their children to modern music—bearing in mind, this is the mid to late 1980s, that’s quite a statement. But it’s true. But there—and then there was a bunch of kind of old musical recordings we used to listen to. Stuff like Flanders and Swann, who were kind of like the British Tom Lehrer, let’s say. It’s that kind of territory of music.

So yeah. So, there was all of that kind of stuff floating around in the air, but there wasn’t much in the way of rock and roll and naught in the way of punk rock at all or anything like that. And then when I was about ten years old, I stumbled across the music of Iron Maiden, first and foremost. And it was really life changing for me. You mentioned having religious parents. Was there anything that was, like, off limits? Anything that you had to like—you know, hide in your sock drawer from them?

00:05:57 Jordan Host

00:06:06 Frank Guest

Not initially, because it’s not—I’m not even sure that my parents were sort of aware of how—*[laughs]* kind of challenging music could get. But so, I got into kind of metal and Iron Maiden stuff, and I remember when I was about—maybe 11 years old, I went and bought my first issue of *Kerrang! Magazine* and I vividly remember that it had a feature on the inside with photographs of the band Cannibal Corpse. And my mother—it had never really occurred to my mother there could be a band called Cannibal Corpse. And she kind of inspected the magazine when I brought it home and immediately banned me from ever buying it again.

I was told that I wasn’t allowed to go to shows for quite a long time. I mean, I did, in that I had kind of friends and friends’ parents would help me out with that. And they did kind of relax after a while, but there was definitely a period of time where when my friends were sneaking into newsagents to steal pornographic magazines, I was stealing issues of *Kerrang! Magazine* and *Raw Magazine* and stuff like that to read about metal bands.

00:07:00 Jordan Host

Yeah. When did you go from, you know, being a music fan who read music magazines to being someone who thought, “Hey, maybe I should do this for myself”?

00:07:11 Frank Guest

Pretty much straight away. I mean, I think that my character, my outlook on the world—for whatever reason—are quite participatory, shall we say? So, like, the minute that I got into rock and roll bands or metal bands or however you wanna put it, pretty much the first thing I thought was like, “Well, okay cool, how do I do this too?” For my 11th birthday, I got—there’s a—there’s a catalogue store over here called Argos. I guess it’s—I’m not quite sure what the American equivalent is, but essentially they have a huge catalogue and nothing in the store and you just order stuff and it gets sent to you. And they do an electric guitar starter kit, where for about 80 bucks, you get a black and white Strat copy and a 30-watt amp and a strap and a lead.

You know, I got stuck in straight away. It’s worth noting that I couldn’t play any of the music that I liked for quite a long time and that’s one of the reasons why Nirvana loomed so large in my music taste and my music history, is that when Nirvana—when I encountered Nirvana, I should say, was the first time that it was a band that I loved where I could play those chords. You know. And I

could make a noise that sounded a bit like Nirvana. And that was hugely revelatory for me.

00:08:12 Jordan Host Talk about how your band, Millions Dead, got started. By the way, just, chef's kiss, great punk rock name—Millions Dead.

00:08:21 Frank Guest *[Laugh.]* Well, it's Million. Million singular. But yes, Million Dead.

00:08:24 Jordan Host Oh! Excuse me.

00:08:25 Frank Guest No, no. No worries. No worries. It's interesting that you say that, because I've always thought that that wasn't the greatest band name ever, but I'm glad that you appreciate it. *[Chuckles.]*

00:08:33 Jordan Host *[Laughs.]* Yeah, it's awesome. It's dramatic.

00:08:34 Frank Guest It was the classic example of us having our first gig booked and no band name and the argument had been going on for months and we finally all just compromised on something that nobody actively hated. I was in a couple of bands before that. I mean, I was in a bedroom band with some friends of mine when I was very young. Like, 12, 13 years old. And then when I was at school, I was in a band called Kneejerk, who were a band whose ambitions outran our capabilities quite severely. We made a couple of records and self-released them. We were very into the DIY punk scene. I did my first two—well, two or three tours with that band when I was 16, 17 years old.

I don't think we were very good, but we sort of definitely had—as I said, like—ambitions. You know. Our—the second album that we made was a sort of concept record based around James Joyce and the Quran. And you know, it was all very, very highbrow sort of in the way that only 17-year olds can really be. That band sort of came to an end and then the drummer from that band got involved in a new project called Million Dead and there was this day—quite a—quite a big day in my life. What happened was Ben, the said drummer, said to me, “You know, my new band's having a rehearsal. Do you wanna just come and hang out?” Because by this point I was living in London. I was sort of 19 years old and unemployed.

And I thought that they were a fully formed band. And I went down to the rehearsal and it turned out they had a drummer and a guitarist and a bassist and no singer, no vocalist. And there was a microphone on a stand in the middle of the room. And it turned out the whole thing was a setup and I hadn't realized this. So, I started kind of joining in and sort of screeching and yelping along in the way that punk singers do and got the—got the gig. And that was the birth of Million Dead.

00:10:08 Jordan Host So yeah. So, after Million Dead broke up, you started recording as Frank Turner. And your solo music is very different than the kind of music that Million Dead was playing. Did you explicitly say to yourself, “I want to explore a new sound,” or did it happen more organically than that?

00:10:29 Frank Guest Well, there were a number of things going on. One of them was that I'd been playing in and touring in hardcore punk bands for quite a long time, by that period of time, and was starting to find that kind of paradigm slightly limiting. And indeed, you know, when you're on tour—on a van tour—in a hardcore band with lots of other hardcore bands playing on hardcore bills and all the rest of it, you can't then get in the van and start listening to hardcore records. Or at least I

couldn't. I'd lose my mind. So, I'd started kind of getting into a lot of music that was kind of news to me.

Stuff like Bob Dylan and Bruce Springsteen and Neil Young and Townes Van Zandt and stuff like that. You know. This was kind of new territory for me in my mid—early to mid-20s. So, that was part of it. You know. My taste had changed. A functional part of it was the fact that, at the time, I felt like the end of Million Dead had involved me—I felt quite let down by what had happened. I'm now old enough to look back and realize I'm probably just as much to blame as anybody else. But the important thing, given what we're talking about now, is that at the time I felt like I'd been sort of—betrayed is a strong word, but that was certainly in my vocabulary at the time.

And the idea of going out on my own with just me and a guitar was quite attractive, 'cause it meant I didn't have to depend on anybody else. You know. Nobody else could back out of the gig. And I was entirely under my own steam and under my own flag and I didn't have to kind of look to anybody else to progress, both in my art and in my career—if you like—in touring and gigs. And then the final thing was just that I had another kind of sideline taste as a kid, which I didn't consider that important until around this time—which was my older sister was into stuff like Counting Crows and Soul Asylum and Weezer and a band called the Levelers—a British folk punk band called the Levelers. And I'd always sort of enjoyed that stuff with my sister and I sort of—I learned how to play quite a lot of those songs on an acoustic guitar through me and my sister and my sister's friends to kind of have holiday beach singalongs and that kind of thing.

And it had never struck me as a particular important string to my bow until I started this thing of experimenting with playing shows on my own with a guitar. And it was like, "Wow, maybe I can kind of try and recreate that vibe of kids sat around the campfire on a beach holiday, at a show." Specifically, the kind of—this gets a bit ideological here, but specifically the idea that like—I wasn't playing guitar in order to get everybody to shut up and listen to what I was doing. It wasn't like a performance that was a one-way transfer of information. It was more like I'd learned the chords to songs that everybody knew in order to facilitate a communal activity, which was everybody singing together.

[Music fades in.]

And I think that runs quite strongly through the core of what I do, now.

00:13:01 Music Music

"Be More Kind" by Frank Turner.

*History's been leaning on me lately
I can feel the future breathing down my neck
And all the things I thought were true
When I was young, and you were too
Turned out to be broken
And I don't know what comes next*

*In a world that has decided
That it's going to lose its mind
Be more kind, my friends, try to be more kind*

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue and then fades out.]

00:13:45 Jordan Host

So, Frank Turner songs have a lot of different sounds and instruments in them. You know. You have a lot of songs that are just you an acoustic guitar, but then others have a string section and a brass section and electric beats. I mean, there's just so much different stuff in a Frank Turner record.

[Frank thanks him with a chuckle.]

00:14:14 Frank Guest

Yes! Uh, yeah! A compliment for sure! How do you approach deciding the right elements for a particular song?

Well, I think this goes to a philosophical point that I regard as quite important and will bring us back around to talking about the NOFX bit, should we wish to do that. To me, there are—there are separate stages to the process of making a record. Quite distinct, you know. Songwriting is one thing. An arrangement is quite another. You know. I sort of subscribe to that idea that there is a kind of a blueprint for a song. A platonic ideal of a song. Which involves, you know, a root chord structure, a stop line melody, and a set of words. And that's your absolutely basic ingredients. And the easiest way of fleshing that out, of course, is just to play it on a guitar and sing. Which is what I do a lot of the time.

But it's entirely possible to take that basic structure and built it into something completely different, whether you want to bring in a drum machine or a full orchestra or a punk band or a soul band or whatever it might be. And you know, you can come at the same song, the same basic set of instructions in a very—in very different ways. So, both in terms of as a writer and as a—as a record maker, that's something I spent a lot of time thinking about. And as I say, the two phases are quite distinct. I'll quite often write a piece and then think to myself, "Well, should this be a punk song? Should this be a soul song? Should this be a folk song or a drum and bass piece?" Or whatever.

I mean, obviously sometimes when I'm writing, that kind of stuff is calling out to me. But then even so, like, one of the things I often do is, like, if I finish a song in a certain stylistic approach in terms of the arrangement, I will park that and then quite specifically go out and try and almost—it's almost like covering your own material, you know. It's like, "Cool, how could I now play this song in a completely different stylistic approach? And would that be better? And would that be more interesting?" And indeed, even after a record is made and record—song is released and an audience gets to know it, I still do a fair amount of that to my own material. I put out a live record earlier this year called *Live in Newcastle* that finished an entire set of me taking different arrangement approaches to existing songs.

And then, you know, when it comes to covers and that kind of thing as well, it's a—it's a good string to the bow. A good skill to have in the drawer. You know. To be able to take a song and recognize

what's fundamental and what's arrangement. And then to play around with those and try and come up with a different approach to a song.

00:16:22 Jordan Host I wanna talk about the song "Sister Rosetta" from your 2019 album, *No Man's Land*.

[Music fades in.]

00:16:30 Music Music I think we have a little clip of that, if we wanna play it. "Sister Rosetta" from the album *No Man's Land* by Frank Turner.

*Sister Rosetta
Godmother of rock and roll
The original sister of soul
All our music was in her
She brought rhythm
From the darkness into the light
She brought the good word to the night
To save all our sinners*

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]

00:16:59 Jordan Host "Sister Rosetta" uses a songwriting device that pops up in several Frank Turner songs that I was curious about. You use a lot of religious language to describe kind of secular people and places. Yeah. What is it about this technique that you find interesting?

00:17:19 Frank Guest Well, I mean it's a number of things. I mean, first and foremost I'd say it's probably because I received what you could probably describe as a classical education. I was educated on a scholarship at a boarding school and, you know, that meant that I know my Bible and I know my King James authorized version and all that kind of thing reasonably well.

[Jordan chuckles.]

I mean, in fairness, you know, I think it's a thing that—using that language is very tempting as a songwriter, because it's so powerful and so resonant, both in and of itself and because of the place it occupies in western culture, historically. And I think that Dylan does an awful lot of that and indeed Springsteen and other people as well. Leonard Cohen. Nick Cave, you know. These are all people who engaged with that idiom because it's kind of—it's enormously rich and complex, but it's there for everybody to use. So, that's a big part of it, I think. And as I mentioned, I was raised in a religious household as well, which contributes. I'm an atheist, myself. Not that that's hugely important. But you know, it's a—it's a rich literary scene to play with.

More philosophically than that, I would say that—and I don't think any of this is a particularly original insight from me, I should add—but you know, there is a religious impulse in humans. You know. We—or a collectivist impulse. That idea that—that desire to lose yourself in something greater than yourself. And historically, you know, the most common way that people have done that has been religion. And I understand that. But, you know, when you see people like Alain de Botton talking about, you know, "Oh, maybe we

need to create an atheist church to give that religious sense to people who don't believe in God," I think to myself, "This is a man who's never been to a good gig or a football match."

[Jordan laughs.]

You know. There are many other ways that human beings do this, and a football crowd's a good example. Or any sports crowd, really. Or indeed a gig and a singalong. And there is something, you know—I think that—I mean, to a degree, I feel like human beings have a religious impulse and it's—that's—can't really do anything about that. And what we need to do is find safe and constructive and healthy ways to channel that, because one of the other ways it gets channeled is in dubious political movements, of course. So, first of all, I find rock and roll to be redemptive in the sense that I'm discussing here. But also, you know, I think it's a better thing for society when kids are getting their rocks off at rock and roll shows and a singalong than they are in kind of brown shirted uniforms or whatever else they might be interested in.

00:19:28 Jesse Host

We'll wrap it up with Frank Turner in a minute. Stay with us. What was it like for him hearing super famous punk band, NOFX, cover his songs? The answer after the break. It's *Bullseye*, from MaximumFun.org and NPR.

00:19:42 Promo Clip

Music: Laid back guitar.

Chris Haxel: Activist Aaron Dorr tells his flock of pro-gun followers on Facebook that he's tirelessly fighting for their second amendment rights. But if that's true, why do so many pro-gun republicans hate him so much?

Speaker: Aaron Dorr is a scam artist, a liar, and he is doing lowans no services and no favors.

Chris: Find out on the No Compromise podcast, from NPR.

[Music fades out.]

00:20:09 Promo Clip

Music: Intense sci-fi music.

Narrator: Fairhaven's a city in a bubble. An actual bubble. It keeps the monsters out. Most of them, anyway.

[Sounds of a crowd panicked and shouting in the background.]

Justin McElroy: I never liked the look of movies on Blu-ray! For my money, Betamax is the superior format!

Travis McElroy: I'm thinking of deleting Facebook and going back to MySpace!

Griffin McElroy: As far as beverages go, I'm just kind of over water!

Narrator: Though, I guess at any given party, you're gonna meet some dudes like that, even if you're not in the middle of a nightmarish wasteland. *Bubble*. The sci-fi comedy from

MaximumFun.org. Just open your podcast app and search for *Bubble*.

[Music finishes.]

00:20:57 Jesse Host It's *Bullseye*. I'm Jesse Thorn. Our guest is Frank Turner. He's a UK based singer/songwriter. He's being interviewed by my friend, Jordan Morris. Let's get back into it.

00:21:07 Jordan Host So, Frank—your new album is a split album with the hardcore punk band NOFX where you cover each other's songs. How did the idea to collaborate like this come about?

00:21:19 Frank Guest Well, so the mutual cover split was a feature of the hardcore punk scene in the '80s and the '90s. On the underground, on the DIY scene there was a big rash of mutual cover split records. And then that process kind of reached its apogee with NOFX and Rancid did a split in 2002. It was really good, but it was also, like, two of the biggest bands on the scene doing it and it kind of—it almost, like, killed the vehicle by—through its own level of success and no one's really done one since. Mike from NOFX is an old friend. It's a weird thing, because I grew up listening to his music and I still—there is a small part—small adolescent part of me that is slightly kind of giggling whenever we hang out.

[Jordan chuckles.]

Because it's like, "Holy *[censored]!*" But, you know, we're genuinely friends and last summer we did a festival together, in Italy. We crossed paths on the festival circuit as bands are wont to do and Mike turned around said, you know, "Would you be interested in doing a cover split?" And I managed to hide my excitement, I think, and play it—play it cool, initially. But you know, I—it's—I think it's a cool medium for creative expression. It goes back to everything I was saying earlier about arrangement and trying to find different approaches to songs and different character in songs. And it's one of my favorite bands.

And so, for me, doing my side of the split was awesome because it was like, "Cool, how can I, like... you know, find a new way into songs that I know and love and demonstrate it as well?" But also, you know, to hear NOFX playing my songs was—is a trip, man.

[Laughs.] Let me tell you. So, yeah. The whole thing has been awesome.

00:22:46 Jordan Host We started off the interview by listening to your version of the NOFX song "Eat the Meek" and your version definitely has sounds in it that sound like they're inspired by the Cure and Depeche Mode and other kinds of post-punk music. I wanna know how you decided to cover this particular song and why you thought that particular style was right for it?

00:23:07 Frank Guest So, I mean—that was—that song was quite high on my list of NOFX tunes that I wanted to tackle. My choice of songs was dictated by a number of things, one of which was my taste but another one of which was trying to find songs where I could bring something to the table that wasn't there originally. You know. There's no point in doing a straight punk cover of a NOFX song, because guess what? It's already a straight punk song, for the most part. You know, it was finding songs that I loved that I could find a way into. When we were working on "Eat the Meek", me and my band, it was interesting

because we tried a couple of different things and kept slipping back into the original arrangement. Which I think is a vote of confidence in that original arrangement, you know. The song is meant to be that way, or at least sounds great that way. And we'd sort of start somewhere and gradually slide back into the original kind of dubby, reggae kind of version.

At which point, I'm not interested. Because if you're gonna do it the same as the original, then the listener might as well just listen to the original. So, I was on the verge of giving up on the song and then we tried one more thing, which was—the guys in my band and I have very disparate music tastes, but one of the few bands that we all agree on is Fugazi. And I turned to my drummer and my base player and I said, "Why don't you try playing it like Brendan Canty and Joe Lally?" and they immediately locked into that groove that starts the song on the record. And straight away it was like, "We got it. We found it. This is how this is gonna be." 'Cause it was so radically different, but it had a really distinctive character to it.

And then from there, you know, building other layers on top of it, quite—something quite, sort of, ambient and Enoesque over the top and counterpoint to the aggression of the rhythm section. But it's probably the song I'm proudest of on my side of the split.

00:24:35 Jordan Host

Frank, I wanna know about your experience hearing the NOFX versions of your songs. Is there anything that surprised you? Were they able to bring out something in the song that you maybe didn't know or had forgotten about?

00:24:49 Frank Guest

Uh, very much so! I mean the first thing is, is that when we agreed to do the split a wonderful thing happened. And this wasn't overtly discussed at any point, but it was just kind of understood between me and Mike that neither of us would have any input into the other person's creative approach to the record at all. So, the first time I heard any music from NOFX, including knowing even what songs they were doing, was when I heard the finished mixes. And there was something really cool about that. First of all, it demonstrates a large degree of trust between the two of us as writers and as arrangers—which is cool and, I mean, that's kind of why we agreed to do it with each other specifically. But also, it meant that I got to listen to their side of the split almost as a kind of objective listener. You know?

I put on as if it was a record that I had just bought. Obviously, I then hear songs and words and chords that I wrote coming out the speakers, but through the medium of NOFX's very distinct tonality.

[Music fades in.]

And that was an amazing moment for me, because I'm such a huge fan. And to hear, you know, a song like "Substitute" come out the speakers like that was just awesome.

00:25:49 Music Music

"Substitute" from the album *West Coast vs. Wessex* by NOFX and Frank Turner.

*And if love is really all that we need
Then even all my whining is never gonna save me
Music, it's my substitute for love*

*Well, I've had many different dimes inside my head
But only one or two inside my bed
These days I cuddle up...*

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]

00:26:23 Frank Guest

There were a couple of things that came out of it that were interesting and unexpected to me. I was pleasantly surprised by how comfortably my own kind of melodic sensibility fit into the stylistic cache of NOFX; you know?

["Substitute" by NOFX fades out to be replaced by "Substitute" by Frank Turner.]

00:26:44 Music Music

And I think that's partly because I'm influenced by them as a songwriter. But it's still—the original "Substitute" is a very a stripped back country song.

"Substitute" by Frank Turner.

*I wish that she had cared for me
But in the end her ideologies
Occupied the fortress of her heart
I wrote her 15 songs, but still we had to part*

*And if music was the food of love
Then I'd be a fat romantic slob
Well music, it's my substitute for love*

00:27:18 Frank Guest

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue.]

And they played it as a furious, fast, punk rock song. And it really works. And that was quite nice to hear. Mike did some lyric changes to deal with his own issues to do with—um, I think the term I'm looking for is BDSM?

[They laugh.]

00:27:34 Jordan Host

As Mike often does.

Yes, that's the—that is the, uh—that is the NPR friendly way to describe that, yes.

00:27:38 Frank Guest

I—I mean, I'm honestly too innocent to really know what the actual other terms might be, but let's go with that one. But you know, he went down that road with it, which I really enjoyed, and it made me chuckle. He really—he really went at the song in a way that's kind of beautiful to me and changed it around.

[Music fades in.]

00:27:58 Music Music

His—their version of "Glory Hallelujah" was absolutely staggering to me.

"Glory Hallelujah" from the album *West Coast vs. Wessex* by NOFX and Frank Turner.

*No cowering in the dark before these overbearing priests,
Not waiting until we die until we retribute the meek,
No blaming all our failings on imaginary beasts,*

Because there never was no God.

*No fighting over land your distant fathers told you of,
Not spilling blood for those who have never spread a drop of love*

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue and then fades out.]

- 00:28:20 Frank Guest They used to cover that song in their set live, in a traditional NOFX punk rock kind of way. So, when I saw it on the track listing, I assumed that that's what they would have done for the record. But instead, they went down this whole other route with it. It kind of sounds a bit like the Beach Boys or the Kinks or something. It's got a real kind of sunny, like, '60s pop sensibility to it. Which I was not expected at all. And which I think, again, really, really works with the song. So, you know. It was—it was a—it was a wonderful thing, hearing those tracks back.
- 00:28:48 Jordan Host So, Frank, before you go—you know, this is maybe something that'll be on the cutting room floor, but as a big NOFX fan, I was curious—did you ever consider covering "The Decline", their 18 minute *[chuckles]* punk rock song?
- 00:29:02 Frank Guest I knew you were gonna ask that. And the honest answer is yes! There was a moment in time where it struck me that the most kind of *[censored]* out, screw you thing that we could do as a band when asked to do a cover split with NOFX, would be to cover "The Decline". And in all honesty, I started looking at it and then just was like, "This is just way too much hassle."

[They laugh.]

Like, it—I mean, I should say, I adore that song. And actually, funnily enough, one of the things that happened for me during the making of this split was I realized how much of an influence NOFX have been on me as a writer, in the past. So, one example of that is there's a B-Side of theirs called "I'm Definitely Going to Hell for This One" and it turns out, in the actual song, he doesn't use that expression. And I—when I heard it, I said to myself, "You idiots! Like—why—that's a brilliant lyric! Why haven't you used that?"

[Jordan laughs.]

So, I kind of borrowed and put it into a song of mine called "The Ballad of Me and My Friends", which is one of the more popular songs in my canon. And it's one of the ones that NOFX chose to cover, so there was a weird kind of full circle there where hearing them actually then sing that back, it was like, "Good work! You kind of wrote this, so well done." But the other thing was that I distinctly remember, in the sleeve for "The Decline" in the liner notes, there was one line that just said, "Don't try this at home."

[Jordan chuckles.]

And whilst I get it and it's—it's a typically NOFX thing to do and it's quite funny and, indeed, I'm glad that the punk scene was not then inundated with lots of bands trying to write 18 minute long songs, at the same time I—shortly after that, I wrote a song called "Try This at Home", which is on my third record. And that was very specifically a

nod to that line in that—and just kind of saying, “Well, actually.” You know, to my mind, punk rock is about trying it at home. That’s almost the definition of punk rock to me. Is, like, here’s something you like, have a go. Do it yourself. So, you know, there were lots of kind of little moments in the making of the record where I realized the continuities between what I do now and how NOFX have influenced me in the past. But we didn’t get around to recording our version of “The Decline”. I sort of mentioned it to the others and everybody rolled their eyes. So, that was the end of that.

00:30:55 Jordan Host

Well, Frank Turner, thanks so much for joining us on *Bullseye*.

[Music fades in.]

00:30:59 Frank Guest

Thanks for having me. I feel like we’ve had an excellent and in-depth chat, today. So, thank you for that.

00:31:04 Music Music

“Falling in Love” by Frank Turner.

Don’t be afraid, hold onto me

We’re going down, but not our love

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue.]

00:31:28 Jesse Host

Frank Turner. His new record, *West Coast vs. Wessex*, is out now. You can buy it or stream it. When Jordan’s not moonlighting as a journalist, he’s a comedy writer. The latest news for Jordan Morris: a comic book adaptation of his smash hit, sci-fi comedy podcast, *Bubble*, is due soon from First Second Books. It’s available for pre-order now. And the podcast is available to listen to with your favorite podcast app.

00:31:57 Music Music

[Volume increases and then fades out.]

00:32:08 Music Transition

Upbeat, thumpy music with light vocalizations and soft chimes.

00:32:11 Jesse Host

That’s the end of another episode of *Bullseye*. *Bullseye*, produced from the homes of me and the staff of Maximum Fun, in and around greater Los Angeles, California—where I am giving away a bed. I bought a new bed at the thrift store the other day and I’m trying to give away my old bed. It’s a nice bed. I bought it at a popular Swedish furniture store. And hopefully somebody’ll come get it from me, ‘cause it’s taking up a lot of room in my backyard.

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

You can keep up with the show on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Just search for *Bullseye with Jesse Thorn*. And I think that’s about it. Just remember: all great radio hosts have a signature sign-off.

00:33:08 Promo Promo

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

[Music fades out.]