

00:00:00	Jesse Thorn	Promo	This message comes from NPR's sponsor NerdWallet: a personal finance website and app that helps people make smarter money moves. Have new money goals this year? Whether you want to use credit card points to plan a family vacation abroad—once it's safe—or take advantage of low mortgage rates to refinance and save for your child's education, NerdWallet is the best place to shop financial products to help make your 2021 money goals happen. Discover and compare the smartest credit cards, mortgage lenders, and more at NerdWallet.com .
00:00:34	Music	Transition	Gentle, trilling music with a steady drumbeat plays under the dialogue.
00:00:35	Promo	Promo	Speaker: <i>Bullseye with Jesse Thorn</i> is a production of MaximumFun.org and is distributed by NPR.
00:00:47	Music	Transition	<i>[Music fades out.]</i> "Huddle Formation" from the album <i>Thunder, Lightning, Strike</i> by The Go! Team.
00:00:54	Jesse	Host	It's Bullseye. I'm Jesse Thorn. Time now for a segment we call "The Craziest <i>[censored]</i> Day of My Entire Career". I mean, I think explanation-wise, the name of the segment does a lot of the heavy lifting, but it's when we talk with people in the biz, as we like to call it, and get them to dish on the craziest <i>[censored]</i> day in their careers. Next up is Kate Willett. Kate is a standup comic, a very funny one. Her 2017 debut <i>Glass Gutter</i> was one of our favorite albums in the last few years, here at Max Fun. She's followed that album up with an Audible original series called <i>Dirtbag Anthropology</i> . It's a deeply personal and very funny show where Kate talks plainly about her life story: losing partners to divorce, to death, about what it's like to be a queer comic. It features interviews with folks like Margaret Cho, W. Kamau Bell, and her own father. And, like the rest of Kate's work, it is very, very funny. When we asked Kate Willett about the craziest day in her entire career, she came prepared with one that was absolutely bonkers. I'll let Kate take it from here.
00:02:02	Kate Willett	Guest	I'm Kate Willett and this is the craziest <i>[censored]</i> day of my entire career.
00:02:07	Music	Music	Relaxed, atmospheric acoustic guitar plays beneath the dialogue.
00:02:12	Kate	Guest	So, I need to start this story a little bit before it starts. And by "a little bit before it starts", I mean aaaaall the way back when I was three years old. I grew up in the Northridge area, which is right outside of LA in the San Fernando Valley and I went to a super tiny Christian preschool. And I had a best friend in preschool who I'm gonna call, for this segment, Nora. Nora was, like, the love of my preschool life. We were inseparable. And then her family moved to Florida. I was absolutely devastated, and this was like the first time in my life, as a small child, that I ever experienced, like, grief, loss. I was just—I was so sad that Nora was not going to be in my kindergarten class. Thoughtful, jazzy music.
00:03:10	Music	Music	Thoughtful, jazzy music.
00:03:15	Kate	Guest	You know, my parents were trying to reassure me, you know, that we could keep in touch with letters, and we did. Nora and I wrote back and forth like pen pals. You know, with our little three-year-old handwriting and her family sent newsletters and my family sent newsletters and we did this 'til we were about eight.

After a while, it just kind of felt like—you know—there wasn't really a friendship anymore, but I still really missed her, because there was just something about that connection, even though we were so, so tiny that it felt like we were sisters or something.

And my whole life, I wondered what happened to her. It was a thing that kind of continued to weigh on me for some weird reason, because I know these people who had, you know, their best friend since they were little kids and I felt like was the person that she was supposed to be for me.

[Music resolves on a peaceful chord.]

00:04:16 Music Music
00:04:18 Kate Guest

Thumpy drum-focused music.

Fast-forward like years and years later. I ended up leaving the LA area and I went up to college at UC Berkeley, stayed in the Bay Area after that and eventually, a couple years after graduation, I started trying standup comedy and for a while I was performing like every single day, multiple times per night in just the worst locations. Like, I used to perform comedy all the time at this laundromat. But there was this one place that was a really popular location to perform, in San Francisco, and it was kind of a cool bar. It had sort of like European vibes and I hosted a monthly show there with one of my friends.

[Music fades out.]

And I'm just doing this set and I talk about, in my set, being from the LA area.

00:05:12 Music Music
00:05:17 Kate Guest

Upbeat rock music.

And this woman comes up to me after the show and she's like, "Hey! You know, I noticed that your name is Kate Willett. Is there any chance you used to go by Katie Willett?"

I was like, "Yeah!"

And she looked familiar. There was something really familiar about her. And she was like, "I think that we might know each other."

And then all of the sudden, I knew who it was, and I was like, "Oh my god, are you Nora?!"

And she's like, "Yeah!"

And I was like, "Are you that Nora?"

And she was like, "Yeah!" And we both cried, and we hugged, and it was like—it was just—it was an amazing, amazing experience to see her.

We connected really well. It turned out that we had had really, really similar lives. We had both been in long-term relationships with women and then had gotten divorced from those women and then, you know, we were both kind of dating around San Francisco. We had a lot in common. We even both were teachers for a while, ASL teachers, and it was like—it was so crazy, 'cause it was like, oh my

god, was this my long-lost soulmate? Like, did I just meet somebody that—or did I just re-meet somebody that I was just born to know? There was something that I took to mean about that experience that I was like, “Wow! I’m on the right track in my life. I must be meant to be a comedian. You know, just like living my destiny because otherwise why would this weird synchronicity have happened?”

00:06:47 Music Music
00:06:50 Kate Guest

Heady guitar music.

And we started hanging out all the time. We were texting. We were talking. And it was—it was so great. It felt like we were picking up from where we left off when we were literally three years old. And she started coming to my comedy shows a lot and I had a really big crush on this one comedian. You know, I just really, really, really liked him and it was sort of reciprocated, but he also was—he had a lot of mixed feelings about dating another comic. Whatever. We talked about it. You know. It was like pretty clear that we were not gonna date.

I had completely accepted that. But I poured my heart out to Nora about this whole situation, because I was like—she wasn’t involved in the comedy world per se, so she felt like—okay, I can definitely talk to her about all this stuff. Then I found out, like *[laughing]* a couple months later, that she had been seeing this guy behind my back the whole time and, like, not telling me the truth about it. Which is a really weird friend thing to do and after that our friendship kind of like—it kind of faded. We talked again a few years later, but it was just—it was just really weird, ‘cause for a second it seemed like it was going to be this like beautiful reunion and then it turned out that it was like, “Oh my gosh, this is—this is one of the *[laughing]* worst friends I’ve had in a long time.”

00:08:23 Music Music
00:08:27 Kate Guest

[Music ends.]

Introspective music.

I think what happened, kind of looking back in retrospect, is we were just—maybe we were too similar to be compatible as friends. Like, the compatibility that we felt when we were little, tiny kids—that was real. We really did have a lot in common, which was like very exciting as a three-year-old, because it means that you both like to play with the same Barbie dolls and, you know, you’re really into *The Little Mermaid*. But when you’re an adult, having that kind of similarity to another person means that you wanna like hookup with the same people. *[Laughs.]* You know? Which creates, like, a lot of pain and, you know, like I felt like I had this feeling after that all happened like, “Oh man.” Like, “I don’t actually want someone who is this similar to me to be in my life. I wanna be the person that’s similar to me in my life.” I don’t—I don’t need anybody else creating the same kind of chaos that I create exactly. I’m here for another kind of chaos.

00:09:33 Jesse Host

Kate Willett. Her new Audible original series is called *Dirtbag Anthropology*. It’s equal parts memoir, exploration of masculinity, and comedy record. You can listen to that through Audible. Kate also co-hosts the political comedy podcast *Reply Guys*, which you can check out wherever you download podcasts.

00:09:53 Music Transition
00:09:56 Jesse Host

Bright, cheerful music.

That’s the end of another episode of *Bullseye*. *Bullseye* is created in the homes of me and the staff of Maximum Fun, in and around

greater Los Angeles, California—where my son, this week, figured out that do get his car to do the loop-the-loop, he's gotta make the track a little shorter.

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 very much to them and to their label, Memphis Industries, for sharing it with us.

You can also keep up with the show on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. We post all our interviews there. And I think that's about it. Just remember: all great radio host have a signature signoff.

00:10:44 Promo Promo

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

[Music fades out.]