

00:00:00	Jesse	Promo	This message comes from NPR sponsor Womply. Womply is committed to helping self-employed workers and small businesses get their PPP loan. They've helped over 100,000 small businesses. Even if you're a freelancer or gig worker, you may qualify. Womply makes the process easy. Start your application at Womply.com/NPR . They'll route it to an approved lender. Apply for free today at Womply.com/NPR and see if you qualify.
00:00:35	Music	Transition	Gentle, trilling music with a steady drumbeat plays under the dialogue.
00:00:36	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. A fast, upbeat, peppy song. Music plays as Jesse speaks, then fades out.
00:00:54	Jesse Thorn	Host	It's <i>Bullseye</i> . I'm Jesse Thorn. Time now for The Song that Changed My Life, where we invite musicians to tell us the story behind the song that—well, changed their life. This week's guest is Doc Severinsen. Doc is a trumpet player and a band leader. He led <i>The Tonight Show</i> band for 30 years, nearly the entire time Johnny Carson hosted.
00:01:16	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:01:17	Clip	Clip	Music: Brassy, high energy music plays. Speaker (<i>The Tonight Show</i>): And from the San Diego zoo, Joan Embery. And now, ladies and gentlemen heeeeere's Johnny!
00:01:32	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[The audience cheers and the music swells.]</i> Music swells and fades.
00:01:33	Jesse	Host	He was known for his playing and known as a raconteur. He was also known for his truly outrageous costuming. I think that man kept the fringed epaulet industry in business for about 15 or 20 years, there. Doc is, believe it or not, still playing at 93 years old. He tours when it's safe to tour and he's the subject of a new documentary, <i>Never Too Late: The Doc Severinsen Story</i> . It's part of the PBS American Masters series. It chronicles Doc's days as a trumpet playing prodigy from Oregon, his time on <i>The Tonight Show</i> and his legendary verve—the verve you are about to hear. This man has personality for days. When we asked him about the song that changed his life, he took us back to 1942 and a concert in Portland, Oregon. The song was "Well Git It" by Tommy Dorsey. Here's Doc Severinsen.
00:02:31	Doc Severinsen	Guest	Hi, I'm Doc Severinsen and we're gonna have a little chat about a song that changed my life. And it really did! I was 14 years old and lived in a small town in eastern Oregon.
00:02:47	Music	Music	Cheerful, 1940s style jazz music fades in.
00:02:48	Doc	Guest	People around the state had heard of me as up and coming musician that played the trumpet and I'd won, you know, state contests that included all of the northwestern states and Tommy Dorsey, he needed a trumpet. The war had just started, the second World War and guys were getting drafted immediately out of the

band. You know? So, he was talking to some musicians down in Portland, Oregon—which was about 150 miles away from where I lived. And they said, “Well, listen. We know a young guy up in eastern Oregon, and this cat—he can play the trumpet alright.”

So, the next thing I know, I’m wearing a homemade suit that my mother made for me. I’m on the Greyhound bus, headed for Portland, Oregon, where Tommy and his band were appearing at the Paramount Theater. I certainly knew who Tommy Dorsey was. I mean, you know, he was huge! Well, just to set the stage for you, Tommy Dorsey stood out because this was before the age of rock and roll. Big band jazz music, that was hip!

00:04:11 Music Music
00:04:17 Doc Guest

Music swells.
I walk up and I go in his dressing room and I’m carrying my cornet case, which I still have in the other room. They had neglected to tell him, “He’s only 14 years old.” He was expecting a grown man!

Said, “Tommy, this is Doc Severinsen. He’s here to play for you.”

And he laughed a little bit and he said, “Whatcha got in the case there, son?”

I said, “I got my cornet, Mr. Dorsey!”

And he says, “Let me see that thing.” And I hand him the case. He opens the case, takes the cornet out. Now, this is the world’s number one trombone player. And he picked up that trumpet and he put it up to his lips and he played a very famous cornet solo that was extremely difficult. *[Thumping rhythmically on the table.]* And he played the whole thing from top to bottom and never missed a note. He chuckled a little bit and handed the horn back to me and I’m kind of like, “Woah! Wow!” And we talked a bit and he said, “Well, you know, I’m—I can see now that you’re quite a bit younger than I’d been told you were. You know, we can’t hire you. You’re just too young to go on the road like that.”

[Music fades out.]

So, he didn’t ask me to play and handed my horn back and he said, “Guys, we gotta do a show in a couple of minutes. You’re—do me a favor, will you? Go out and get a great seat for Doc up the balcony where he can get everything.”

And I’m sitting there thinking, “Boy, this is really something!” And it’s a great theater, the Paramount Theater. So, all of the sudden all the lights in the theater came down at once, zoom! Into total darkness, except the exit signs over the doors. They had to leave those on.

[Music fades in.]

And I hear *[Doc sings and the trumpet plays along with him]* da-da-da-daaa-da-de-dedede-de-de. Da-da-daaa-dada-daaa-da, dadaaaa-daaaa-dum. That was his theme song, “Getting Sentimental Over You”.

00:06:42 Music Music
00:06:54 Doc Guest

“I’m Getting Sentimental Over You” by Tommy Dorsey.
And now, all of the sudden, all the lights come on. BAM!

00:06:59 00:07:05	Music Doc	Music Guest	<p>“Well Git It” by Tommy Dorsey.</p> <p>At the exact moment that all those lights came on, the band’s playing this brand-new recording that Tommy had of “Well Git It”! It was Sy Oliver’s interpretation of “Bugle Call Rag” and it featured two trumpet players. The opening of it, instead of playing the regular bugle call, <i>[singing]</i> daga-daga-da, daga-daga-diga-da, da-diga-dat-da-da-da!</p> <p>They’d replaced that with, <i>[singing]</i> ba-da-de-dop, ba-de-do-badop, bade-badeep-badeep-bwe-deep-badoo-beep-do-do.</p> <p>I can’t put it in words! I think you can understand clearly what the impact was, what—the loudest trumpet player in the history of the world, Ziggy Elman. When those lights came up and I heard that <i>[singing]</i> ba-dum-ba-dee, ba-dum-ba-dee-do, da-ba-bee-do-dop, ba-dee-do, ba-dee-do, ba-det-ba-dum-ba-dum-ba-dat-dat-ba.</p>
00:08:20 00:08:24	Music Doc	Music Guest	<p>I said <i>[smacks table]</i>, “I know what I wanna do with the rest of my life.” It was a wish stated by a 14-year-old kid, but I lived it. It happened.</p> <p>Music continues, upbeat and brassy. Don Lotus on the tenor sax!</p> <p><i>[Beat.]</i></p> <p><i>[Yelling.]</i> Look out! Those trumpets are coming atcha! <i>[Beat.]</i> Not yet!</p> <p><i>[Beat.]</i></p>
00:08:55 00:09:08	Music Doc	Music Guest	<p>They’re coming! Here we come! The trumpets roar onto the scene. <i>[Hums along with the trumpets.]</i></p> <p>Seven or eight years later, I was with the Charlie Barnet band and that ain’t—you know, that’s pretty darn big stuff right there. Tommy needed two trumpets and he hired myself and Ray Wessel to come out of the Charlie Barnet band and we flew down to Houston, Texas where they were playing at the Shamrock Hotel.</p> <p><i>[Music fades out.]</i></p> <p>When I heard that thing played at the Paramount Theater, <i>[Doc sings and the trumpet plays along with him]</i> ba-dum-ba-de-do-dup, ba-de-do-dup—I knew that’s what I wanted to be for the rest of my life, but I didn’t know it would be with Tommy Dorsey’s band! I thought maybe some nice little band in Portland, Oregon or something like that. And all of the sudden, there I am, sitting—I’m living my life’s number one dream. And just talking about it now, I get chills.</p>
00:10:11 00:10:18	Music Jesse	Music Host	<p>“Well Git It” continues over the dialogue as Jesse speaks. Trumpeter Doc Severinsen on the song that changed his life, “Well Git it” by Tommy Dorsey. You can watch the American Masters Series about doc on your local PBS station and on the PBS website. We’ll have a link to it on the <i>Bullseye</i> page at MaximumFun.org.</p>

00:10:36	Music	Transition	<i>[Music fades out.]</i>
00:10:39	Jesse	Host	<p>Relaxed music.</p> <p>That's the end of another episode of <i>Bullseye</i>. <i>Bullseye</i> is created out of the homes of me and the staff of Maximum Fun, in and around greater Los Angeles, California—where I had to deal with a pigeon that my son said was probably still alive, but upon further inspection was definitely not. RIP, pigeon.</p> <p>The 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. Production fellows at Maximum Fun are Richard Robey and Valerie Moffat. Our interstitial music is by Dan Wally, also known as DJW. Our theme song is by The Go! Team. Thanks to them and to their label, Memphis Industries.</p> <p>You can also keep up with the show on social media. We're on Twitter @Bullseye, we're on Facebook at Facebook.com/bullseyewithjessethorn, and we are on YouTube. You can search on any of those platforms and find our interviews there. You should smash that subscribe button on YouTube. Feels gross even saying that phrase. I apologize.</p> <p>And I guess that's about it. Just remember: all great radio hosts have a signature signoff.</p>
00:11:51	Promo	Promo	<p>Speaker: <i>Bullseye with Jesse Thorn</i> is a production of MaximumFun.org and is distributed by NPR.</p>
			<i>[Music fades out.]</i>