

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. My first guest this week is indie rock legend Kim Deal. Born and raised in Dayton, Ohio, she started in music by playing guitar with her sister, Kelly. But unlike a lot of kids with guitars that age, she never really had a real band. They never played shows, never toured. In the mid-‘80s, she got married. She moved to Boston.
00:00:52	Music	Music	<i>[Music fades in.]</i> And after she got settled in, she replied to a classified ad looking for a bassist. Before long, she was in the band the Pixies. “Where is My Mind” from the album <i>Surfer Rosa</i> by the Pixies.
00:01:00	Jesse	Host	<i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i> Later, when the band was on hiatus, Kim started to record her own music again. She formed The Breeders in 1989 and the band put out <i>Pod</i> , their first record, in 1990.
00:01:11	Music	Music	“Fortunately Gone” from the album <i>Pod</i> by The Breeders. <i>I wait for you in heaven On this perfect string of love</i>
00:01:19	Jesse	Host	<i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i> In the 28 years that have passed since, The Breeders have broken up and reformed a handful of times. They tour sporadically. Through it all, Kim’s had a knack for writing honest, sincere rock songs. When we talked in 2018, The Breeders had just released their first new record in a decade: <i>All Nerve</i> . Here’s a song from that record. It’s called “Wait in the Car”.
00:01:41	Music	Music	“Wait in the Car” from the album <i>All Nerve</i> by The Breeders. <i>Good morning Consider I Always struggle with the right word Meow, meow, meow, meow, meow</i>
00:02:09	Jesse	Host	<i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i> Kim Deal, welcome to <i>Bullseye</i> . It’s so great to have you on the show.
00:02:13	Kim Deal	Guest	Thanks for having me.
00:02:14	Jesse	Host	Kim, you grew up in—and still live in—Dayton, Ohio. Or at least the suburbs of Dayton, Ohio. Did you like it when you were a kid?

00:02:25 Kim Guest Did I like Dayton, Ohio, when I was kid? Yes, I did! Yeah. It would flood. I lived—I was born—I grew up in Huber Heights and there was a lot of kids around. It was the '60s. There was a lot of neighborhoods. It was a new—there were new houses, new suburb buildings. It wasn't super fancy, super middle class. And when it rained, the bottom of the streets would flood, and we'd all get out there and walk around in the water—the sewer water.

[Jesse laughs.]

00:03:06 Jesse Host Which seemed like a great, fun thing to do and now I just go, "Gross." But I enjoyed it. Yeah.
You survived cholera, though. So that's good.

[Kim agrees.]

00:03:27 Kim Guest Did you—did you still feel that way when you were like a teenager or an adolescent? Or were you scheming on how to do something, you know—how to make it in show business or whatever?
00:03:35 Jesse Host Let's see. Uuum. There—where are you from, anyway?
00:03:36 Kim Guest San Francisco.
Oh! Were you born and raised in San Fran?

[Jesse confirms.]

See, it's hard to describe to somebody who wasn't—who was born in a city. Okay, when you're in the city, there is an—um. There's a visualization of people who are in all sorts of industries. And—whether the family knows anybody in the industry or not, it's there and it's around. Like, you know, there might be a casting call for a movie or a shoot—you know, a film set being shot down the street. So, it's always in the area and the—you know, so, in Huber Heights, the ideal of showbiz, I think, would be—I think for most people would be high school musicals. I mean, I wouldn't—I remember going to Boston when, you know—checking out the clubs there and realizing that people... you could play—you were expected to play originals. Where, in Dayton, Ohio, there's an expectation in the small bars there to play three sets, at least—maybe four sets—and it would be mostly covers, because that's what—people wanted to hear what was on the radio. And if your band did do an original, everybody knew it was probably the worst song in the set.

00:05:13 Jesse Host I mean, I wasn't in any of those bands, but that's just because I wasn't in a band in Ohio. But there wouldn't even be an idea of a band doing an all-original set.
But you were playing with your sister. Like, you were aspiring to make music and even doing it professionally when you were a teenager, right?

00:05:21 Kim Guest I guess, you know, we were doing it professionally. What is "professionally"? *[Laughs.]*

00:05:26 Jesse Host I think that's where you get paid. *[Laughs.]* I don't think you guys were supporting yourself making music, but you—but you were, like, playing out with a band at some point. Right?

00:05:38 Kim Guest No. Not—no. Never played out with a band, in Dayton. Never! Good lord, nooo. We would play—I would play acoustic and me and Kelly, we would—started out, you know, just playing acoustic and singing

together and loving music. And then, you know—you know, our—you know, our... parents' friends, you know, were getting remarried and they asked us to play at the wedding. And back in the day, the songs to learn at the wedding—you know, we were—you know, not even—we were still in high school. We would be doing "Annie", a song by John Denver. And there's a song called "The Wedding Song". And "The Rose". We would do that song.

And so, there was always a little... fistful of songs you could—you would do at the wedding. And we did quite a few weddings. And then there were the Ground Rounds. Do you remember Ground Round? Where you could eat the peanuts and you throw them on the floor?

00:06:45	Jesse	Host	I don't, but that sounds great.
00:06:47	Kim	Guest	And then you do four sets. And we would do some—we would do some original songs and people would come up and say, "What's that song?" And that would be very—they would like that song. And that was good.
00:06:57	Jesse	Host	When did you get the idea that there was—you know, another kind of rock music in addition to that? And how did you figure that out?
00:07:06	Kim	Guest	It was hard, because in Huber Heights—you know, it's not like now with the internet, when we're lucky enough to have it. It's different. Because there's no—there was no fan zine. And there was no college stations. You know, the college stations thing started in the early '80s, that I know of. And I only found out about the college stations when I moved to Boston. I didn't even know about it in Dayton. My sister knew somebody who was going to school on the coast. And he would bring back these mixtapes of James Blood Ulmer. You know. The Undertones. Costello. And so, that's how I found out about some of those bands. And then I went to Ohio State University for, like, a semester. And I saw The Talking Heads. So, probably college, I guess. Finally getting out or knowing somebody who wasn't—when we get to that college age, which is a great reason to go to college right there, just to... if you're from a small town, especially. You know?
00:08:11	Jesse	Host	You know, one of the things that I am struck by about you and your career is that as much as, like—for lack of a better word—rocking out was tied up in these, you know, cultural ideas about sort of absurd masculinity. You know. Whether it's Led Zeppelin or Van Halen in tights. You know. Whatever it is. And when new wave came in and was another option, it was often very beautiful or electronic. And you chose to, like, continue to rock out. Like, the fact that the—the fact that that horizon opened before you, when you saw The Talking Heads, didn't mean that you abandoned, like, the ideal of wailing on a guitar. You know?
00:09:07	Kim	Guest	Right. I did like Led Zeppelin a lot. And Black Sabbath a lot.
00:09:11	Jesse	Host	I like Led Zeppelin and Black Sabbath, too. They're great.
			<i>[They chuckle.]</i>
00:09:16	Kim	Guest	They're awesome. Right. Yeah, I just like guitars maybe 'cause I grew up with the guitars being, you know, so prevalent. And I still like guitars. I also—there's a lot of, you know—being from Southern Ohio and my parents are from West Virginia, so there's a lot of the Appalachian culture that I'm—that was around, like—and there's a lot of guitar

playing in that. And there's a lot of women guitar playing in Appalachian culture. So, it never got—there was never, in my mind, an idea that, "Oh! Women playing guitar? That's odd." It's like of course a woman is playing guitar, because that's what—you know—bluegrass and being in—the hillbillies that my mom and dad grew up, they were from The Hollars, in West Virginia. So that's what—I mean, families played music. It was—so the idea of a female playing a guitar would just be—wouldn't even be looked at as weird.

00:10:09 Jesse Host Well, I wanna play a Pixies song, but I want you to tell me, first, how you ended up in the band.

00:10:19 Kim Guest Um, I had married somebody who was visiting—who was working as a trans—he was a transplant from Boston.

00:10:28 Jesse Host He was like a contract worker at the air force base who had—who was working a limited time where you were living.

00:10:34 Kim Guest Exactly. And they call them something I forgot. It begins with a T. Anyway. Yeah. And my brother introduced us. We got married. It was time for him to go back to Boston and I went with him. And I was just there for, like—we were—we were married for, like, less than a year before we moved back there. And then I was in Boston for, like, a week. And I did what I've done before. When I was in LA, I did this too. Some people might not know, back in the day you could—you could kind of go to the back of these city weekly papers and you can look at the personal ads, you know? A lot of them are, you know, "Hey, starting a band." You know. "Musician wanted." And they were kind of fun to read, because they were ridiculous. You know? "Musician wanted. Pro attitude only. Must have van." You know. "Serious. We're gonna—we're here to do it for real." Something like that. You know. "Every night available." Just a lot of real serious, no sense of humor people wanting music.

I saw one in LA that was for "a certain 22- to 24-year-old singer for a heavy metal rocking music for originals. Must have blond hair. Must be between shoulder length and middle of back."

[Jesse laughs.]

I was just like, "Wow! This is so crazy." And then the one I read in *The Phoenix* was something about, "Looking for somebody to play with, to do songs a la Peter, Paul, and Mary and Husker Du. No chops."

[Jesse laughs.]

It's like I didn't really think—I mean, it wasn't a band. They weren't a band. But it was a couple of people and it's like, you know, I would like to—you know, it's like one of those things where you think, "Well, what a relief. That seems cool to me, anyway." And it was the only ad I've ever answered, and I was the only person who answered their ad. So, I called them up and then I went to their house and we hung out. And then we just started hanging out constantly.

00:12:38 Jesse Host Let's listen to "Gigantic" by the Pixies with my guest, Kim Deal, singing lead vocals.

[Music fades in.]

00:12:45	Music	Music	<p>And it's a song that she wrote, as well. "Gigantic" from the album Surfer Rosa by the Pixies.</p> <p><i>And this I know his teeth as white as snow What a gas it was to see him Walk her everyday into a shady place With her lips she said</i></p> <p><i>She said, "Hey Paul, hey Paul, hey Paul Let's have a ball Hey Paul, hey Paul, hey Paul Let's have a ball Hey Paul, hey Paul, hey Paul Let's have a ball"</i></p> <p><i>Gigantic, gigantic, gigantic A big, big love</i></p> <p><i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i></p>
00:13:23	Jesse	Host	Did you have a feeling like, "Yesss! We're revolutionizing rock music!" Or were you not aware of it at the time?
00:13:31	Kim	Guest	Um. Yeah. No.
			<i>[Jesse laughs.]</i>
			<p>I remember doing that and I remember, after the first take—me—I came back in and listened to it and I was singing completely out of tune. 'Cause you gotta get used to the fact that when you're on a mic and you're wearing headphones and you're listening to pitch your vocal onto the top of music, it's a totally different thing than singing out loud in a room. So, you have to figure out, like, "Oh, do I—where's my pitch at? Is it off of one headphone? Is it off of two? How do I find it?" And then when I—but it was funny, when I came into the room it always reminded me of this—you know the <i>Partridge Family</i> episode where David Cassidy thinks a girl is—Keith? Partridge? Thinks a girl is cute and she goes up onstage and she sings out of tune? And the people are clapping so loud that nobody knows that she's singing out of tune? Anyway, when I came back in after singing "Gigantic" out of tune, Steve Albini was just, "Yeah! It sounds good."</p> <p>And I listen it and it's like, "Oh, holy crap! I have to do it again." I don't think he noticed—notices when things are out of tune, though.</p> <p><i>[Jesse laughs.]</i></p> <p>It just reminds me of that for some reason. And I—we thought it was funny that Steve was getting these snippets of tape and putting them in between our songs. You know? Skit-like, almost. You know? And I hadn't heard a lot of people do that before.</p>
00:14:56	Jesse	Host	I've read him basically be embarrassed about having done that, he felt like he—
00:15:01	Kim	Guest	He is, isn't he?

00:15:02	Jesse	Host	That he—that he, like, you know—that he was trying to—he was doing something that wasn't—that didn't belong to the band and wasn't his place to do.
00:15:12	Kim	Guest	When he was playing it, we were—we loved it. I don't know why he thinks that right now. Maybe he just is—maybe he has rethought his philosophy of how invisible his production skills he wants to be. Maybe, you know, he's rethought that and it's—it lands on a different side, now. But at the time, we were—it was—we thought it was cool and we thought we sounded cool, and we thought we were funny. Maybe he thinks it was a step too far.
00:15:41	Jesse	Host	My conversation with Kim Deal continues after a short break. We'll talk about The Breeders' smash hit "Cannonball" and—well, what it was like having a smash hit! It's <i>Bullseye</i> , from MaximumFun.org and NPR.
00:15:56	Music	Transition	Cheerful music.
00:15:57	Jesse	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 .
00:16:32	Promo	Clip	<i>[Music fades out.]</i> Music: Soft, upbeat music. Linda Holmes: On NPR's <i>Pop Culture Happy Hour</i> podcast, we talk about what we're watching, listening to, or just trying to figure out. Like what concert films you should watch if you miss live music. And great books to read alone or in your book club. All of that in around 20 minutes every weekday. Listen now to the <i>Pop Culture Happy Hour</i> podcast from NPR.
00:16:54	Promo	Clip	<i>[Music fades out.]</i> Music: Cheerful banjo music plays in the background. Biz Ellis: Hi, I'm Biz. Theresa Thorn: And I'm Theresa. Biz: And we're the hosts of <i>One Bad Mother</i> , a podcast about parenting. Parenting is hard and we have no advice! But we do see you doing it. <i>[Trying not to laugh.]</i> Honk if you like to do it! <i>[Giggling.]</i> What was—? Didn't we have a bumper sticker a while back that was like, "Honk if you did it." That's what it was. Theresa: Yeah. I think it was, "Honk if you're doing it." <i>[Chuckles.]</i> Biz: <i>[Cackles.]</i> Why did we not ever make this?! Those were a delight. Theresa: We did make them! Biz: REALLY!?

Theresa: I think they're still in the Max Fun Store!

Biz: Honk, honk. You're doing it!

Theresa: Thanks, Biz! So are you! Each week, we'll be here to remind you that you're doing a good job.

Biz: You can find us on MaximumFun.org. Honk, honk.

Theresa: Toot, toot!

[Music fades out.]

00:17:40 Jesse Host

Welcome back to *Bullseye*. I'm Jesse Thorn. My guest is Kim Deal. She was a founding member of the legendary rock band the Pixies and she's frontwoman of the band The Breeders. When we talked in 2018, her band had just released their first new record in a decade: *All Nerve*. Let's get back into it.

Were you surprised, Kim, when your project started on a touring break from the Pixies—The Breeders—became a smash hit band? I mean, in a way that the Pixies even had never been, as much as they were—you were a successful working band. When I was 13, I watched you on MTV. You know? Was that surprising to you at the time?

00:18:28 Kim Guest

Um. I think surprising—I don't know if that's the word so much as it is unintended.

[Jesse hums in understanding.]

I mean, the break from the Pixies, then, was—it was kind of—you could tell, like, that we probably weren't gonna get back together. That's what I was thinking, anyway. And then—it does go slowly. Like, the song that got on the radio, "Cannonball", you know—I'm using my brother's Harmonica microphone. 'Cause that's, like, the Fogelberg, *[inaudible]* in there and of course my brother has a Harmonica microphone. Of course, as a sister, you wanna plug it into the Marshall and you wanna start going, *[muffled]* "Check. Check. One, two, *[mimicking microphone feedback]*." You know. 'Cause that's fun. That's what you do to your brother's Harmonica microphone. So—I mean, and starting out with the feedback and squeals and stuff, you know, but certainly nothing that one thinks, "Okay. Now we got the top of the song ready for a smash radio hit." You know, or something.

So, it is an—it was certainly unintended that—I mean, I really liked it. Why—I mean, nobody thinks it's gonna be on the radio or anything.

[Music fades in.]

00:19:35 Jesse Host
00:19:37 Music Music

That would be weird.

Let's hear a little bit of it.

"Cannonball" from the album *Last Splash* by The Breeders.

Want you coccoo cannonball

*Want you coccoo cannonball
In the shade, in the shade
In the shade, in the shade*

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

00:20:03 Jesse Host That's like one of those songs that, when I got my first CD player—it was one of my first CDs and it was—you know, you could like—the magic power of a CD player to somebody who had listened only to cassettes is that you could put a song on repeat.

[Kim laughs.]

00:20:29 Kim Guest I think I probably listened to that song, you know, 20 times in a row often, sitting in my basement room at my dad's house. And it, like—
00:20:32 Jesse Host Yeah. That's cool.

00:20:32 Jesse Host It was really cool. And you were, and are, very cool. But like that must have transformed your life in a lot of unintended ways, to be in a hit-making rock band, rather than a taste-making rock band.

00:20:51 Kim Guest You know, it was—it was cool. I'll tell you one thing that was different about it. I was in a bar and—a regular bar. Then—this had never happened with the Pixies—and there was a dance floor in the bar and the DJ—there was a DJ and the DJ played "Cannonball" and people rushed to the floor. And it was the first time that I had ever been in a band where people actually danced to the song—any song that the band had ever done.

[Jesse chuckles.]

00:21:31 Jesse Host It was like, "Oh my god! People are dancing to this! It's crazy!" It was really exciting. I rushed out there just so I could stand there while people were dancing to the song.

00:21:31 Jesse Host What was it like to get the band back together for The Breeders, more recently?

00:21:36 Kim Guest We were sitting on the couch—Kelly's couch, in like '02. It was the spring/summer and Kelly said, "Do you know next year is 2013?" She said, "Do you know that's 20 years for *Last Splash*? We should call Jim and Josephine and see if they wanna do some shows." And I thought maybe Jim MacPherson was mad at me, 'cause we had played with The Amps and he had left my house in a huff and I hadn't spoken to him since. So, I said, "I'll text Josephine. You text Jim MacPherson." *[Laughs.]*

And so, I texted Josephine and she said, "I'd love to!" And Jim said, "I'd love to." And then we started getting together and we started—we told—you know, 4AD found out about 4AD was like, "You know, what about a boxset?" And it's like—you know, we have all these singles that people—whenever they released a single back in the day, they would put like three songs on it, and it was quite a nice release. And a lot of those are import only, so we put all of those in the boxset. And so, there was that. And so, it lasted—we really enjoyed doing it. It was the same sort of thing. People couldn't wait. They knew what song's coming next, and I loved the album. So, it—you know, it—and it was fun. And it's great playing with Jim and Josephine.

00:22:50 Jesse Host You were a really serious drinker through much of the early years of The Breeders. Was part of the experience of doing it, now more recently, the difference between doing it when you were—I mean, I read you describing drinking so much that you would black out in the middle of sets and sort of come back a song later. Was part of the experience the difference of, you know, playing to a packed club clear eyed?

00:23:21 Kim Guest Well, not—what you're saying isn't exactly true.

[Jesse concedes.]

Um, I—I don't mind you saying it at all, but it's not exactly true. I never played drunk and stoned; I just couldn't do it. You can't play drunk, and you can't play stoned. So, through all the Pixies and through all The Breeders, never did it. Then, The Amps started. That's a whole other band. And then I started drinking. And there was only a couple of shows. One was in Austin. There was only one that I remember. It was in Austin. And I was drinking a lot, then. But that—it wasn't a lot of—I didn't spend my life doing that. I don't typically—that doesn't—it wasn't something I did, you know, typically. Otherwise, I would say it. But I was drinking. But, you know, afterwards and stuff. You know? So. And what—sorry, what was the question?

00:24:12 Jesse Host Well, how's the experience different—irrespective of the drinking or the pot smoking?

00:24:18 Kim Guest From playing—?

00:24:20 Jesse Host 20 years ago. 25 years ago.

00:24:23 Kim Guest Hm. Ummm... the PAs are really good, nowadays.

[Jesse bursts into laughter.]

The PAs—they've done fantastic technology. It's really amazing. And there's a lot of difference in sound—the musical styles, so there's these—there is some trouble with bass-bends, I think. The sub-bends. I mean, people really love to open those up. And, you know, there's just—there is no subwoofer in Beatles. There's no subwoofer in most, like, regular—there's no subwoofer in Pixies and stuff like that. So, sometimes the PA guy is gonna wanna do the DJ where they're opening up big, huge subwoofer and going *[imitates booming sound]* and the band—and the song is *[humming lightly]* do-do-dodo-boo-boo-dododo into *[long, feedback booming sound]*. So, it just doesn't work. So, that's kind of a challenge. It can be if you don't have a good front of house. But we have a good front of house.

00:25:14 Jesse Host Kim, it sounds like you are fully ready to go solder some cables right now.

[They laugh.]

00:25:22 Kim Guest That is a big, huge difference, though. The PAs are fantastic. And there's not a lot of blowback anymore, so the whole sound system sounds a little different. It's like, "Wow! You—I need to actually hear this!"

[Music fades in.]

You used to have so much blowback it's like—so, that's a big deal.

00:25:37	Jesse	Host	Well, Kim Deal, thank you so much for taking all this time to come on <i>Bullseye</i> , and talking to me. I really appreciate it.
00:25:43	Kim	Guest	Thank you for talking to me. I appreciate it, too.
00:25:46	Jesse	Host	Kim Deal, from 2018. The most recent Breeders album, <i>All Nerve</i> , is really great. It also looks like The Breeders are back in the studio. They just recorded a new song called the “Dirt Eaters”—a cover of the band His Name is Alive. Here’s a bit of it.
00:26:03	Music	Music	“Dirt Eaters” by The Breeders.

*Going to a place that's rotten
 Feast on what's on the way
 Going to a place that's rotten
 Feast on what's on the way*

*Going to an open, to a clearing
 The soil is sour and unforgiving
 We buried our guilt
 I think I left...*

00:26:38	Music	Transition	<i>[Song fades out to be replaced by the transition music.]</i>
00:26:41	Jesse	Host	Twangy, upbeat music. 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 there is an endless parade of giant trucks filing down my narrow street, each stopping to be filled with dirt, then continuing on their merry way.

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, who both started this week. They are on the line with me right now for the first time. Welcome aboard, Richard and Valerie!

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 their label, Memphis Industries, for sharing it. The Go! Team have a brand new single, by the way! It’s called “World Remember Me Now” and, like The Go! Team in general, it totally rules.

00:27:55	Promo	Promo	You can also keep up with the show on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. We post all our interviews in those venues. And I think that’s about it! Just remember: all great radio hosts have a signature signoff.
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Speaker: *Bullseye with Jesse Thorn* is a production of MaximumFun.org and is distributed by NPR.

[Music fades out.]