

00:00:00	Music	Transition	Upbeat, jazzy music.
00:00:01	Jesse Thorn	Promo	This message comes from NPR sponsor Discover. Discover matches all the cashback you earn on your credit card at the end of your first year, automatically. With no limit on how much you can earn. It's amazing because of all the places where Discover is accepted. 99% of places in the US that take credit cards. So, when it comes to Discover, get used to hearing "yes" more often. Learn more at Discover.com/match . 2021 Neilson Report. Limitations apply.
00:00:33	Music	Transition	<i>[Music fades out.]</i> 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. A fast, upbeat, peppy song. Music plays as Jesse speaks, then fades out.
00:00:53	Jesse	Host	It's <i>Bullseye</i> . I'm Jesse Thorn. Time now, for <i>The Song That Changed My Life</i> . It's a segment we do where musicians reach back—sometimes way, way back to tell us about the music that made them who they are today.
			<i>[Music fades in.]</i>
00:01:09	Music	Music	This week, our guest is Buddy Guy. "Damn Right, I've Got the Blues" from the album <i>Damn Right, I've Got the Blues</i> by Buddy Guy. <i>You're damn right, I've got the blues From my head down to my shoes You're damn right, I've got the blues From my head down to my shoes</i>
00:01:25	Jesse	Host	<i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i> You probably know this already, but Buddy is one of the greatest blues guitarists alive today. He's won eight Grammy awards. He's been in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame for more than 15 years.
			<i>[Music fades in.]</i>
00:01:42	Music	Music	He's performed for presidents, shared stages with BB King, Howlin' Wolf, even Muddy Waters. "Messin' With the Kid" by Buddy Guy. <i>We'll take the kid's car and drive around town</i>
00:01:56	Jesse	Host	<i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i> Recently, Buddy was the subject of an episode of PBS's <i>American Masters</i> , where he talked about his creative process and career. We decided that would be a great chance to talk with a literal living legend about the song that changed his life.

00:02:23	Buddy Guy	Guest	<p>From his home studio in Chicago, Buddy took us back to his childhood in Louisiana. His song? John Lee Hooker's "Boogie Chillen". Here's Buddy.</p> <p>Hi. I'm Buddy Guy and this is one of the songs that changed my life. The first time I heard "Boogie Chillen", I must have been about 14 or 15 years old. It took a while for my dad to get a radio. And they had a radio station coming out of Tennessee—WLAC.</p>
			<i>[Music fades in.]</i>
00:02:51	Music	Music	<p>And I'm pretty sure "Boogie Chillen" was probably the first electric guitar that I ever heard.</p> <p>"Boogie Chillen" from the album <i>John Lee Hooker: Boogie Chillen</i> by John Lee Hooker.</p>
			<p><i>Well, my mama, she didn't allow me Just to stay out all night long Oh Lord</i></p>
00:03:14	Buddy	Guest	<p><i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue.]</i></p> <p>I had never seen an electric car before. The first electric guitar I'd ever seen, there was a guy—blues guy named Lightning Slim. And he came out in Lettsworth, Louisiana, and plugged that thing up on the storefront store. And I thought it was a joke. When he plugged it in, and that little amplifier started coming through. And I said, "Now, I don't know what this is, but whatever this is, I would love to have a piece of that or learn something about that." And I got a chance to meet him before he died! And learn a few things from him. We didn't have electricity, so we didn't have records. The only music we had was a lot of gospel. And what we would do, we'd work all day from sunup to sundown. We didn't have air conditioning. It was so hot. And the only fun we had, we'd go out there with mosquitos and things and just hum and sing gospel stuff.</p> <p>And I wasn't the only one doing it, but I was the only one that kept it after I got a chance to get my hands on a guitar.</p> <p>That beat there was like something new. And I'm like saying to myself, "What the hell is this, now? Whatever this is, I want a—I want a piece of it."</p>
00:04:40	Music	Music	<p><i>[Volume increases.]</i></p> <p><i>I didn't care what she didn't allow I would boogie-woogie anyhow</i></p>
00:04:58	Buddy	Guest	<p><i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue, then fades out.]</i></p> <p>I got my first guitar when I was about 13 or 14. What went through my mind, if I could learn how to do that? I would be the only guy—'cause you couldn't look up and say, "If I learn how to do that, I'm gonna make a good living at it." Because John Lee and all those guys in the early days, they wasn't making a hell of a lot of money. No Black guy was making money. They were playing for the love of music and the love of a drink. And if you could play good enough, you got you a good-looking woman. <i>[Chuckles.]</i></p>

So, that's what all you had to look at, back then. And I said, "If I could learn how to play that, I'm gonna be like a sore thumb among the other kids around me. I'm gonna be able to do something nobody else—none of these other kids gonna be able to do." There wasn't no school for to teach me how to play the guitar, so I got to learn this myself. But there was one guy they would go get every Christmas. And his name was Henry Smiths but called him Coot. And he could play the Lionel Johnson stuff.

[Upbeat keyboard music plays in the background.]

And on Christmas morning, if we was able to get a toy—I used to have to make my toys, 'cause we was just that poor. And they would get a case of beer and a gallon of wine, and they'd go from house to house, Christmas Eve night to Christmas night—house to house in the country and drinking and loving it. Every time the guitar player would get real high and go to sleep, I would go get the guitar and try to figure out what the hell he was doing. Yeah, it took me quite a while to learn how to play "Boogie Chillen". I can't tell you whether it was a month or two months or six months.

00:06:35 Music Music

"Boogie Chillen" by John Lee Hooker.

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

00:06:54 Buddy Guest

And when I finally locked my fingers in on "Boogie Chillen", I didn't move 'cause you didn't have to move your fingers. You stayed at one spot and just rapped it. And I learned it and I would—by myself and didn't nobody—couldn't nobody else hear it. So, I just got up and I'd walk, and I'd say, "I want somebody to hear this in case I can't find this anymore." And I didn't know if I was gonna be able to find it again. So, I walked about five miles to my first cousin—one of my first cousins said, "Boy, you got it!"

And I said, "But I'm afraid to quit 'cause I ain't gonna be able to find it no more!" But I found it again. I had it and I didn't ever lose that again. That "Boogie Chillen" carried me 'til today and I can still play it today.

00:07:39 Music Music

[Volume increases.]

*I was walking down Hasting's Street
I heard everybody talking about the Henry Swing Club
I decided I'd drop in there that night*

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue.]

00:07:55 Buddy Guest

And see, that amplifier he's playing through now—you can't get that tone no more because they made them bigger and better looking, but that tone he got there now is hard to get. I don't even know if you can find that anymore on an amplifier.

00:08:10 Music Music

[Volume increases.]

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue.]

00:08:20 Buddy Guest

A lot of Black people in those days were dancing called the boogie-woogie. They did the boogie on stuff like that, and he hit it right on time when he said, "Boogie chillen."

00:08:30 Music Music

[Volume increases.]

Boogie chillen

00:08:38 Buddy Guest *[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue.]*
We'd be in one of those old juke joints. Everybody in there was boogieing, man. Down to the floor, man. Swinging them gals from one end of the club to the other.

00:09:04 Music Music
You know, I got a chance to meet him and play with him before he passed away. And this is one of the highlights of my career.
[Volume increases.]

00:09:13 Buddy Guest
*One night I was laying down
I heard Mama and Papa talking*
[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]
You might not know this, but John Lee Hooker had a stutter and his whole life, when he was speaking. When he was singing, he did not have it. But there was a town in Germany called Baden-Baden, Germany. It's still there. So, I got a tour to go there with Horst Lippmann. They were a folk blues festival. They had a television show, and everybody was drinking pretty heavily, including John Lee Hooker, Big Mama Thornton, and people like that. And the guide, the promoter, looked at me and said, "I want you to do me a favor. I'm gonna give you \$50 a week to make sure everybody's up and ready to catch the bus." And they was down in the lobby of the hotel this particular morning. So, I knew John Lee Hooker and Big Mama was there and I never did meet them here, in the United States.

So, I said, "I just can't wait to see John Lee Hooker!" And I didn't know he stuttered. So, when I got downstairs that morning, I heard a lot of noise and there was talking and having fun and so I just picked up the acoustic guitar and went to sit in the corner and started hitting "Boogie Chillen".

["Boogie Chillen" plays in the background.]

And this guy came over and punched me on the shoulder and started laughing. Said, "D-d-d-d-you—you—you're playing Johnny!"

I said, "Yeah." And I'm like saying *[laughs]*, "I don't wanna talk to you. I just wanna get attention to John Lee Hooker, wherever he is!" You know? And finally, Big Mama came over and she was laughing and crying out of one eye. Said, "That's John Lee!"

But I said, "John Lee?! This is not John Lee sounding like this!" And he started laughing and crying.

He said, "I'm Johnny."

I said, "I was looking for John Lee." And that's when they fell out laughing and said, "This is John Lee Hooker." And we were friends until he passed away.

00:11:02	Music	Music	<i>[Volume increases.]</i> <i>Boogie chillen</i>
00:11:22	Buddy	Guest	<i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue.]</i> I tried to get all the info I could from him and other people, how he made “Boogie Chillen”. Because back then, I don’t think you had too many producers trying to tell him how to play. Matter of fact, <i>[chuckles]</i> I don’t think he would let you tell him how to play! ‘Cause he just said—“I’m playing John Lee! I don’t care if you like it or not!”
00:11:47	Music	Music	<i>[Volume increases.]</i> <i>I heard Papa tell Mama to let that boy boogie-woogie ‘Cause it’s in him and it got to come out Well, I felt so good And I went on boogie-woogieing just the same Yeah</i>
00:12:07	Buddy	Guest	<i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue.]</i> When I first saw John Lee Hooker play it live, for me that was a dream come true that I never dreamed of. And I didn’t ever think the guitar could bring me from there to here, talking to you today. Then you would hear some of the people who was really falling in love with it like me say, “Play that again, man!” You know. “That sounds so nice, you need to play it twice!”
00:12:41	Music	Music	<i>[Volume increases.]</i> <i>Yes, I know Boogie chillen</i>
00:12:51	Buddy	Guest	<i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue.]</i> Never be another one like that one. Every time I hear that, that takes me back to 12, 13, or 14 years old and, Buddy, you must have spent a lot of to try to be—sound similar to him or learned something—learned something from him by listening to him. And I was blessed to meet him before he died. And I was blessed to meet most of the guys that I learned everything from. I didn’t learn nothing from a book. I learned it from listening and watching those guys, the way that they used their fingers and the way they—ain’t no way in the world that I could sing like him, because they—when you hear him sing, man, that’s a natural voice. When you hear Howlin’ Wolf, that was natural. When you hear BB King and Bobby Bland, that was natural! When you hear Buddy Guy, it might be a little fake thing going on, because I’ll be trying to copy them all. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:13:53	Music	Music	<i>[“Boogie Chillen” ends.]</i> “First Time I Met the Blues” from the album <i>I Was Walking Through the Woods</i> by Buddy Guy. <i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i>
00:13:55	Jesse	Host	Buddy Guy on the song that changed his life, “Boogie Chillen”, by John Lee Hooker. The <i>American Masters</i> documentary on him is

called *Buddy Guy: The Blues Chase the Blues Away*. You can catch that on your local PBS station or at [PBS.org](https://www.pbs.org).

Let's go out with one more song from the great Buddy Guy: a classic from 1970s, *I Was Walking Through the Woods*. This is "First Time I Met the Blues".

00:14:23 Music Music

[Volume increases.]

*You know you're with me every morning, blues
And I begin to wonder what in the world do you want, man?
I can't sleep at night, and I can't nap through the day
I can't hold on much longer, blues*

00:14:48 Jesse Host

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue.]

That's the end of another episode of *Bullseye*. *Bullseye* is created from the homes of me and the staff of Maximum Fun, in and around greater Los Angeles, California—where, today, temperatures finally dropped, if briefly, below 80. And I immediately donned blue jeans.

The show is produced by speaking into microphones. Our senior producer is Kevin Ferguson. Our producer, Jesus Ambrosio. Production fellows at Maximum Fun are Richard Robey and Valerie Moffat. We get help from Casey O'Brien. Thanks to Max Fun producer Christian Dueñas for cutting together that Buddy Guy segment on this week's show. And to Jack Allen for recording Dan and Jessica in London. 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, for sharing it with us. Always very grateful to them for that kindness.

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 hosts have a signature signoff.

00:15:54 Promo Promo

Speaker: *Bullseye with Jesse Thorn* is a production of [MaximumFun.org](https://www.maximumfun.org) and is distributed by NPR.

00:16:15 Promo Clip

[The sound of pages turning.]

Music: Mellow synth plays in the background.

Mallory O'Meara: Brea, what's your reader wheelhouse?

Brea Grant: Uh, woman on a journey, space, post-apocalyptic roads, and magical food. Mallory, what's your reader wheelhouse?

Mallory: Werewolves, haunted houses, weird fiction, and uhh, books set in Florida—for some reason.

Brea: We're *Reading Glasses* and we wanna know what your reader wheelhouse is.

Mallory: We can use it to help you find more books that you love.

Brea: Aaand avoid books that you don't! So, whatever you like to read about and however you like to read it—

Mallory: —we wanna help you read better.

Brea: *Reading Glasses.* Every Thursday on Maximum Fun.

[Music fades out.]