

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.
00:00:13	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.
00:00:20	Jesse Thorn	Host	It's <i>Bullseye</i> . I'm Jesse Thorn. Heads up about this next segment, there is some talk about suicide. Nothing graphic, just an acknowledgement of it. Anyway, time now for The Song That Changed My Life, a chance for some of our favorite artists to talk about the music that made them who they are. On deck, Aimee Mann. Aimee is a singer-songwriter whose career dates back to the '80s when she sang in the new wave band Til Tuesday.
00:00:49	Music	Music	"Voices Carry" from <i>The Spit, Boston, March 1, 1984 [Live FM Radio Broadcast Concert in Superb Fidelity]</i> by Til Tuesday. <i>Hush, hush, keep it down, now</i> <i>Voices carry</i> <i>Hush, hush, keep it down now</i> <i>Voices carry</i> <i>Ah-ah</i> <i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i>
00:01:06	Jesse	Host	But you probably know Aimee for her solo career. She earned an Academy Award nomination for her work on Paul Thomas Anderson's <i>Magnolia</i> .
00:01:14	Music	Music	"Save Me" from the album <i>Live at St. Ann's Warehouse</i> by Aimee Mann. <i>You look like perfect fit</i> <i>A girl in need of a tourniquet</i> <i>But can you save me?</i> <i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i>
00:01:49	Jesse	Host	She's earned two Grammy Awards, including one for Best Folk Album, for her 2018 record, <i>Mental Illness</i> .
00:01:57	Music	Music	"Patient Zero" from the album <i>Mental Illness</i> by Aimee Mann. <i>They served you champaign like a hero</i> <i>When you landed, someone carried your bag</i> <i>From here on out, you're patient zero</i> <i>Smelling ether as they hand you the rag</i> <i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i>
00:02:14	Jesse	Host	In fact, NPR's Robin Hilton called her the eighth greatest living songwriter. Aimee has recently followed up <i>Mental Illness</i> with a very different record: <i>Queens of the Summer Hotel</i> . The songs on the record started when Aimee was working on a stage version of

			the book <i>Girl, Interrupted</i> . The stage show hasn't happened, but the record is out. It's delicate and beautiful.
00:02:39	Music	Music	"I See You" from the album <i>Queens of the Summer Hotel</i> by Aimee Mann.
			<i>Hoping the pain covers the dread Keeps the secrets in I see you</i>
			<i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i>
00:02:49	Jesse	Host	When we asked Aimee about the song that changed her life, she took us back to 1972: the first time she ever listened—really listened—to the lyrics in a pop song. I'll let Aimee take it from here.
00:03:03	Aimee Mann	Guest	Hi. This is Aimee Mann, and this is the song that changed my life.
00:03:08	Music	Music	"Alone Again (Naturally)" from the album <i>Himself</i> by Gilbert O'Sullivan.
			<i>In a little while from now If I'm not feeling any less sour I promise myself to treat myself And visit a nearby tower</i>
			<i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i>
00:03:31	Aimee	Guest	The first time I heard "Alone Again (Naturally)" by Gilbert O'Sullivan, I was probably 12 years old. I'm sure I heard it on the radio, because—you know, I didn't really—every now and then, you know, maybe my brother would bring in a Beatles record or, you know, "Sgt. Pepper". You know, that kind of stuff was super, super exciting. I loved that.
00:03:55	Music	Music	"Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" from the album <i>Yellow Submarine</i> by The Beatles.
			<i>A crowd of people stood and stared They'd seen his face before</i>
			<i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i>
00:04:03	Aimee	Guest	I remember going over to a friend's house and they had the soundtrack to <i>Jesus Christ Superstar</i> . That was super exciting. Really loved that. So, you know, it was just like these bits and pieces here and there that would come into my life and—you know, on the radio, I remember Badfinger was a big favorite. Really loved that.
00:04:21	Music	Music	"Day After Day" from the album <i>Straight Up</i> by Badfinger.
			<i>Looking out from my lonely room Day after day</i>
			<i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i>
00:04:31	Aimee	Guest	But you know, just in general kind of listening to—there was like a—it was like a certain kind of '70s pop song writing. And I did like that even though a lot of it was disposable.

00:04:44	Music	Music	<p>“Alone Again (Naturally)” from the album <i>Himself</i> by Gilbert O’Sullivan.</p> <p><i>What do we do?</i> <i>What do we do?</i></p>
00:04:53	Aimee	Guest	<p><i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue.]</i> Gilbert O’Sullivan was a pop singer-songwriter probably of the early ‘70s, maybe—possibly late ‘60s. He had a couple of albums that did really, really well and a handful of hits. And I think he’s still—you know, he’s still writing songs, he’s still out there doing it. You know, but this was the one that really propelled him into—you know, into the top 40. There was a couple of things that I really liked about this song. I thought, you know, his vocal was really sort of odd. It was a really—you know, ostensibly kind of bouncy, cheerful song. But then there would be moments where it got kind of melancholy. And the aspect that really kind of turned a certain kind of world on its axis for me—I was with a friend of mine and, you know, another 12-year-old or 11-year-old, however—however old we were.</p>
00:06:17	Music	Music	<p>And we were listening to the song, and I was saying how much I liked the song and she said, “Well, you know what this song is about, don’t you?” And I said no, not really. I mean, you know, sort of a general idea <i>[chuckling]</i> this guy kept finding himself alone. And she said, “It’s about suicide.” Because in the first verse, he talks about going to a tower and wanting to throw himself off the tower.</p> <p><i>[Volume increases.]</i></p> <p><i>I n a little while from now</i> <i>If I'm not feeling any less sour</i> <i>I promise myself to treat myself</i> <i>And visit a nearby tower</i> <i>And climbing to the top</i> <i>Will throw myself off</i> <i>In an effort to</i> <i>Make it clear to whoever</i> <i>Wants to know what it's like when you're shattered</i></p>
00:06:40	Aimee	Guest	<p><i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue.]</i> So, I really started paying attention to the lyrics, after that. And it kind of was the first time that I really listened closely to what lyrics were in a song. Before that, you know, lyrics would just kind of wash over me and maybe like a phrase or two would stand out. But once I had this pointed out to me, I started really listening to lyrics. And that really made a big difference, because it felt like that you could have almost a secret message but that was hiding in plain sight. You know, this idea, this like very sad story about a guy who was like jilted at the altar and then contemplating suicide and then in the subsequent verses, he talks about the death of his parents.</p> <p>You know, so it’s like a lot of very heavy stuff, but musically—you know—it’s a very bouncy kind of production. You know, like a really typical production of the era. It was very—you know, kind of mild pop music. But I thought it was like really fascinating that you could have this, you know, actual text in there that was so dark. And you know, if people weren’t really paying attention, they wouldn’t get it.</p>

But for people who were paying attention, it really—I don't know. It was like this special, secret way that you could connect with an artist.

[The instrumental break plays.]

I love how this song is in no hurry. You know? It just goes around the entire verse with this little nylon string guitar solo, plays the whole thing. And he's—but he's still got another verse.

00:08:41 Music Music

[Volume increases.]

*Alone again, naturally
Looking back over the years
And whatever else that appears
I remember I cried when my father died
Never wishing to hide the tears*

00:08:59 Aimee Guest

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue.]

Now he talks about his father dying and his mother being heartbroken.

00:09:04 Music Music

[Volume increases.]

*Couldn't understand why the only man
She had ever loved had been taken
Leaving her to start
With a heart...*

00:09:13 Aimee Guest

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue.]

Also, these beautiful woodwinds, this beautiful arrangement.

00:09:18 Music Music

[Volume increases.]

*No words were ever spoken
And when she passed away
I cried and cried all day*

00:09:25 Aimee Guest

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue.]

Okay, now his mother dies. Like, it's—*[chuckling]* it's kind of insane. There's like this barrage of terrible things happening to this guy.

00:09:31 Music Music

[Volume increases.]

Alone again, naturally

00:09:37 Aimee Guest

[Song ends.]

He's alone! Naturally!

One of the things I like about it, it's like this litany of terrible things but he's saying in this really detached kind of voice. And there's something that's very appealing to me. Like, to me, that is more heartbreaking than if somebody is really, you know, really selling it, having this very dramatic vocal. Because then that's more like telling you how to feel, where he tells you the story and then the music sets up this mood and tone.

[Music fades in.]

			<p>And you know, you're sort of allowed to have your own feelings about it. And his vocal is very removed. You know, he's not like really selling the idea that he's heartbroken. He's telling the story. I mean, honestly, it's almost easy listening. <i>["Alone Again (Naturally)" fades back in.]</i></p>
00:10:27	Music	Music	<p><i>Leaving me to doubt Talk about, God in His mercy Oh, if he really does exist Why did he desert me In my hour of need</i></p>
00:10:39	Aimee	Guest	<p><i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue.]</i> And yet, he's talking about like doubting the existence of God and talking about the death of his mother and like how brokenhearted she was when his father died. Like, you know—and he how he wants to kill himself because his girlfriend jilted him. Like, it's like a crazy amount of really angsty information.</p>
00:10:58	Music	Music	<p><i>[Volume increases.]</i></p> <p><i>What do we do? What do we do?</i></p>
00:11:07	Aimee	Guest	<p><i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue.]</i> I think another thing that's interesting about this song is that it's kind of like a real barrage of words. Like, he... you know, they just keep coming at you. So, you really do have to kind of slow down and pay attention to really hear what's going on. There's an aspect to the ostensibly jaunty or cheerful piece of music that then starts to subtly turn melancholy, but with a more—like a much heavier lyric on top. That juxtaposition, I think that I—from that moment on—like found really fascinating and I like to do that. I like to have contrast between the music and the lyric. And sometimes—you know sometimes the other way. Like the music could be more melancholy and the lyric could be a little funnier, but—you know, takes on kind of a gallows humor flavor because of the music that's under it.</p>
00:12:18	Music	Music	<p>You know, those two things work together in a way that makes them both bigger—greater than the sum of their parts. There's a magic and an alchemy to that that is really interesting to me. <i>[Volume increases.]</i></p> <p><i>Despite encouragement from me No words were ever spoken And when she passed away...</i></p>
00:12:27	Aimee	Guest	<p><i>[Volume decreases.]</i> I think most people in general still listen to music and just like let the lyrics wash over them. They don't really pay attention. So, that really impressed itself on me later, as a writer. The idea that you could have lyrics that were very meaningful and maybe very even specific but because of the nature of how most people would listen, it would pass over most people. But the people who paid attention, they would get it. And those are the people that you want to get it: the ones that really—you know, that want to know what's going on.</p>
00:13:00	Music	Music	<p><i>[Volume increases.]</i></p>

*...what it's like when you're shattered
Left standing in the lurch at a church
Where people saying, "My God, that's tough
She stood him up
No point in us remaining
We may as well go home."
As I did on my own*

00:13:19 Jesse Host *[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue.]*
Aimee Mann on the song that changed her life: "Alone Again (Naturally)" by Gilbert O'Sullivan. Aimee's newest album is called *Queens of the Summer Hotel*. You can stream it pretty much anywhere or buy it at your local record store.

[Music fades out.]

Thanks to Aimee for recording herself and for sharing that story. Aimee is a really special performer; we're always grateful to have her here. Her only fault as a human being is her opposition to the song "Come On, Eileen".

[Music fades in.]

00:13:54 Music Music She's very wrong about that. Anyway, let's go out on one more song from her new album. This one's called "Burn It Out". "Burn It Out" from the album *Queens of the Summer Hotel* by Aimee Mann.

Can you just burn it out?

*Can you just burn it out?
So thoroughly
You'll never see
A trace of yourself in the spark
Can you just burn it out
'Til it's dark?*

Ghostly intruders who storm the moat

00:14:26 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, this week, I took a walk over to the Lummis Home! The home of Charles Lummis, one of the most important early Angelinos. He popularized southwestern aesthetics—one of the first aesthetic movements truly native to the United States. Fascinating guy, Charles Lummis. You should go visit his house if you're in northeast Los Angeles, sometime.

The show is produced by speaking into microphones. Our senior producer is Kevin Ferguson. Our producer is Jesus Ambrosio. Production fellows at Maximum Fun are Richard Robey and Valerie Moffat. We also get help from Casey O'Brien. Our interstitial music is by Dan Wally, also known as DJW. Thanks to him for loaning us

his Serato controllers. We needed to borrow someone's Serato controllers. He was nice enough to lend us his.

Our theme song is called "Huddle Formation", recorded by the group The Go! Team. Thanks to them and to their label, Memphis Industries, for sharing it. They've got a brand-new record in stores that is great.

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.

00:15:41 Promo Promo

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

00:15:48 Music Music

[Volume increases.]

Can you just burn it out of your soul?

00:16:01 Promo Clip

[Music ends.]

[A restless crowd chatters indistinctly.]

Music: Upbeat rock music.

Jordan Crucchiola: You're in the theatre. The lights go down. You're about to get swept up by the characters and all their little details and interpersonal dramas. You look at them and think, "That person is so obviously in love with their best friend. Wait, am I in love with my best friend?! That character's mom is so overbearing. Why doesn't she stand up to her? Oh, good god, do I need to stand up to my own mother?!" We never know when we'll see ourselves in a movie, but that search for recognition is exactly what we're going to talk about on the podcast *Feeling Seen*, with me! Jordan Crucchiola. Each episode, we'll bring in a guest to talk about the films that they see themselves in and also the ways that movies have fallen short. So, join me every Thursday for the *Feeling Seen* podcast, here on Maximum Fun or wherever you find your podcasts!

[Music fades out.]