

00:00:00	Music	Transition	Gentle, trilling music with a steady drumbeat plays under the dialogue.
00:00:01	Promo	Promo	<b>Speaker:</b> <i>Bullseye with Jesse Thorn</i> is a production of <a href="http://MaximumFun.org">MaximumFun.org</a> 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. Wendy Melvoin and Lisa Coleman were born in the ‘60s. They grew up here in Los Angeles, where we make <i>Bullseye</i> . Wendy’s father, Mike Melvoin, was a session musician, mainly on piano and organ. Lisa’s father, Gary, was also a session musician. He played percussion. They were members of the legendary Wrecking Crew. They played on everything. Wendy and Lisa went to each other’s birthday parties, played catch, that kind of thing.  In their early 20s, the two started dating. Also, around that time, Lisa started playing keys and singing with Prince.  <i>[Music fades in.]</i>  You can hear her work on Prince’s breakthrough album, <i>Dirty Minds</i> .
00:01:05	Music	Music	“When You Were Mine” from the album <i>Dirty Minds</i> by Prince.  <i>When you were mine I gave you all of my money Time after time You done me wrong</i>
00:01:19	Jesse	Host	<i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i> Not long after that, Wendy joined on guitar. Soon, they were integral members of Prince’s band, The Revolution. Together, they recorded stone cold classics.  <i>[Music fades in.]</i>
00:01:35	Music	Music	Like “Purple Rain”, “Raspberry Beret”, “Kiss”, “When Doves Cry”. “Anotherloverholenyohead” from the album <i>Parade</i> by Prince and The Revolution.  <i>I gave my love, I gave my life I gave my body and mind We were inseparable I guess I gave you all of my time</i>
00:01:50	Jesse	Host	<i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i> They left The Revolution in 1986. They released a few albums of their own under the name Wendy & Lisa. We’ll play a banger single from them in just a minute. And in the years since, Wendy and Lisa have kept collaborating, even after they broke up as a couple. These days, they do a lot of work composing scores for TV and

movies. They've written music for *Heroes*, *Dangerous Minds*, *Crossing Jordan*, and now *Cruel Summer*—the new teen thriller which just premiered on Freeform.

They won an Emmy for their theme on *Nurse Jackie*. Before we get into my interview with Wendy and Lisa, two things: first, they are an absolute delight, as you're about to hear, so we are dedicating all of this week's show to them. And second, let's hear a track from the two of them. This one is from their 1989 album *Fruit at the Bottom*. It's called "Are You My Baby".

00:02:42 Music Music

"Are You My Baby" from the album *Fruit at the Bottom* by Wendy & Lisa.

*Ooh, are you my baby?  
Ooh, you make me crazy  
Won't you be my man?*

*To my young and foolish heart  
Loving has no end  
Sometimes people...*

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

00:03:12 Jesse Host

Wendy and Lisa, welcome to *Bullseye*. I'm so happy to have you on the show.

00:03:14 Wendy Guest

Thanks, Jesse.

00:03:15 Lisa Guest

Thank you. Nice to be here.

00:03:17 Jesse Host

I wanna get into your lives and careers more broadly in a minute. But I wanted to start with composing, particularly, TV themes. I mean, you two are Emmy Award winners at this point. What do you get when someone is looking for a theme for a TV show? Like, do you get a call first that says, "We want Wendy & Lisa?" or do you submit a demo? Or—? How does it work?

00:03:46 Lisa Guest

Usually, it's been that we've been scoring the show and we get hired to score the show and then it seems like main titles are sort of a last-minute decision a lot of times.

*[Jesse chuckles.]*

00:04:01 Wendy Guest

'Cause they're not sure if they're gonna use—

00:04:03 Lisa Guest

It didn't used to be that way.

Yeah, it didn't used to be. It used to be a little more deliberate. And we've done a lot of really good themes when we get to work with the graphics company or whoever's doing the title design. And if we get a chance to go kind of back and forth sending music and picture back and forth to match cuts and to develop the whole thing—like, we did that on *Carnival* and it was really a great collaboration. And also, on *Nurse Jackie*. It—you know, it went through several different lives until it ended up what it was. And, um, yeah. I think it's really great when you get to collaborate with the title house.

00:04:47 Wendy Guest

Yeah. I'll add to that. You know, it's funny 'cause main title sequences aren't as revered as they used to be, back in the—let's say the '60s, '70s, and '80s. So, now adays, they really only have time for between 5 and 11 seconds for a main title card that kind of says it all about your show. A lot of the times, in just these streaming services—because people are binging and they don't

want any—they don't want a 30 second title sequence, you know, that goes between an opening act—the first act of a show.

So, we've had to—the past handful of years, even since *Nurse Jackie*—develop these sounds that will represent a show in 10 seconds. And it's a tall order. But we're—a lot of times—in the position now to ask the producers once we're hired, "Are you thinking about a main title sequence? We are Emmy Award winners for that very thing. And it might be nice to do something special for your show." So, we always push for that, but in the end, it doesn't normally end up that way, because they're looking for so much to happen in between 5 and 11 seconds. We're working on something right now where the opening act's first queue has to just tail over the cards. So, it's a completely different orientation, but when we do get offered or when we push and it's accepted to actually do a main title sequence, we really dig it, 'cause we love to work with the—like Lisa had mentioned—the title house. So, it's really great to work with them and then work with the showrunner on what they're trying to say in that opening title sequence. It's a lovely job.

And if you get, you know, network TV for instance, they're still doing—you know—big, main title sequences. But we haven't been on a network show since we did *Shades of Blue* for NBC. That was the Jennifer Lopez cop show with Ray Liotta. We—that was the last main title that we actually did for network. And since then, we haven't actually done an actual—well, I guess the CW would be considered one of the networks.

[Lisa affirms.]

00:07:26    Jesse            Host

So, we did do that. So, god, there's been—we've done so much. Um. Anyway, it's great to be able to do a main—a longer main title sequence. It's always fun for us to do, is to create kind of like the—what do they call it? A dack; the idea, the uber-narrative of the show in, you know, a 30 second title sequence is really lovely to do. I mean, TV title sequences are such an important part of television, because—especially in anything where you might get dropped into it not from the very beginning, the job of that title sequence is to basically tell you everything about the entire show.

[They agree.]

Like, if you think of—I don't know what the most iconic title sequences are, but you know—*Star Trek*, where there's both that soaring music and that sort of narrative that tells you what exactly is gonna happen.

[Wendy agrees.]

You know? You think of like great sitcoms where they introduce all the characters and the situation visually while music plays that is the—you know—whatever, "The Odd Couple Theme" or something like that.

[Lisa agrees.]

00:08:15	Wendy	Guest	Oh yeah, the Neal Hefti. “The Odd Couple Theme” is fantastic. Yeah.
00:08:15	Jesse	Host	Did you, by the way, know that that song has lyrics?
00:08:18	Wendy	Guest	Yes.
			<i>[Lisa and Jesse chuckle.]</i>
			Just like <i>M.A.S.H.</i> does. Just like the title sequence to <i>M.A.S.H.</i> , yeah.
00:08:28	Jesse	Host	I literally can’t hear it now, like, in a—I don’t know where you hear “The Odd Couple Theme” other than in your head without thinking of <i>[singing]</i> , “Everywhere they go, they are known as the cooouple.”
			<i>[Lisa chuckles.]</i>
00:08:40	Wendy	Guest	Oh, that’s fantastic. I love that!
			<i>[Wendy and Jesse laugh.]</i>
			That’s great!
00:08:46	Jesse	Host	But do you get like a brief? Sometimes you’ve been working on the show scoring it, so you’re pretty familiar with what the showrunner and directors and writers want. But when you’re not, do you get like a—do you get a breakdown of what kind of thing it should be?
00:09:05	Wendy	Guest	Not normally. That’s the joy of us working with the title house. If we’ve done—already done cues for a pilot, we have a pretty good idea of the sounds and themes that we need to incorporate. And when we’re initially doing something for a pilot, we literally think about themes and how that’s gonna translate into something like—you know—main title.
00:09:27	Jesse	Host	So, give me an example of a theme that you’re particularly proud of and how it developed, how those iterations and communications between the—you and the title house and the showrunners and so forth developed overtime.
00:09:45	Wendy	Guest	Well, <i>Nurse Jackie</i> —the one we won the Emmy for. I think I’m really proud of that, because it won an Emmy!
			<i>[They laugh.]</i>
			No, it’s much deeper—
00:09:55	Jesse	Host	So, where did it start?
00:09:57	Wendy	Guest	—much deeper than that.
			<i>[Music fades in.]</i>
			I mean, Lisa and I wanted to create a sound for Edie Falco’s character that was playful, that sounded slightly secretive and magical, that sounded slightly...
00:10:12	Lisa	Guest	A little bit tough.
00:10:13	Wendy	Guest	A little bit tough.
00:10:14	Music	Music	“Nurse Jackie Title Sequence” by Wendy & Lisa.
			<i>Na, na, na, na, na, na, na</i> <i>Na, na, na, na, na, na, na</i> <i>Na, na, na, na, na, na, na</i> <i>Hey, hey</i>

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

00:10:42 Wendy Guest We got these visuals, too, that—from the producers and the writers—where they had all of these little artifacts and little trinkets inside the title sequence cards, like her wedding band that she hides in her pocket, a stethoscope. But there were—there were—there were—

00:11:01 Lisa Guest Pills. *[Chuckles.]*

00:11:02 Wendy Guest Pills! Right? So, there's a—

00:11:04 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Lisa:** Lots of pills.

00:11:05 Wendy Guest **Wendy:** Lots of secrets. Her hiding things. And we wanted to incorporate as much of those sounds in our heads that we kind of put a narrative to and create this beautiful title sequence. And it worked really well, 'cause we also got to work with the title sequence. So, if you saw Jackie take her wedding band and put it in her pocket, we were able to actually score that movement so that when you watched the visual, you could see Jackie, that your eye—and the audience—could actually focus on that moment. So, it was really a really conscious effort to make those things pop out, musically. And then we—you know.

00:11:43 Lisa Guest We did some fun things to like—for our shakers, we used pill bottles—bottles of aspirin or something. Whatever it was. Advil. Or we've got—just because we're seeing pill bottles. She opens the medicine cabinet and there's a bunch of pills—pill bottles.

00:11:59 Wendy Guest That fall out.

00:12:00 Lisa Guest That fall out. So—and the shakers come in. So, we used pill bottles for the shakers and stuff like that. It's just—it's fun when you get a chance to work with the visual.

00:12:12 Jesse Host Do the two of you remember how old you were when you first met?

00:12:15 Wendy Guest I was two years old.

00:12:18 Lisa Guest Yeah, I was like five.

*[Wendy agrees.]*

00:12:22 Wendy Guest *[Murmuring softly.]* Five or six. I remember it perfectly. It was in the backyard of a valley house that my mother and father had. My sister and brother and me were in our backyard and the Coleman family came over and Lisa was in the backyard with me, and I was playing with a big, red ball. And I was bouncing it in the backyard, and I bounced it to her, and she said to me, "That ball's cockeyed."

*[Jesse and Lisa laugh.]*

00:13:05 Lisa Guest And I'd never heard that word before. Being two years old, I didn't have a lot of room to find out what that word—but it stuck with me because of—she connected the angle at which it dropped, and it would go—it went to the left instead of directly to her. So, she said, "That ball's cockeyed."

00:13:05 Lisa Guest Yeah, 'cause I was a good catch and, you know, for me to miss it was a big deal. So, that ball was cockeyed. *[Chuckles.]* I know, right?

00:13:12 Wendy Guest *[Jesse laughs.]* Anyway. I remember it well. And I was two.

00:13:16 Jesse Host Do you remember it, Lisa?  
00:13:18 Lisa Guest I do remember and I remember their house, particularly the living room, because Wendy's father was a piano player, and the living room was completely taken up by his grand piano and I remember crawling underneath it to get through the house. *[Chuckles.]* 'Cause it was—you know, it was pretty much—the living room was a piano. Yeah, he had a nine-foot Grotrian-Steinweg in the middle of the living room in this tiny little house in the valley.

*[Lisa agrees with a laugh.]*

00:13:46 Jesse Host So, it was like—it made no sense. *[Chuckles.]* But yeah. I like that the two of you were two and five years old and you were essentially playing in a giant metaphor.

*[Wendy agrees and Lisa laughs.]*

00:13:54 Wendy Guest Like, really. *[Laughs.]* No subtly there all. No. That's really good. Well spotted.

*[Lisa agrees.]*

00:14:02 Jesse Host Well spotted, my man. Well spotted. So, both of your fathers were session musicians in The Wrecking Crew—like, one of the most legendary groups of session musicians ever. Did that mean that you saw a lot of each other when you were kids?

*[They confirm.]*

00:14:17 Wendy Guest We had the—we went to the same schools, had the same doctors, our mothers were—you know—weekenders constantly. And the kids would go from one house to the other house. I mean, it was—

00:14:29 Lisa Guest Yeah, we were all—  
00:14:30 Wendy Guest We were—kind of grew up in the same...  
00:14:32 Lisa Guest A bunch of kittens.  
00:14:33 Wendy Guest Yeah. We were a bunch of kittens. Exactly.  
00:14:37 Jesse Host *[Laughs.]* Did you think it was cool that your fathers were musicians? Or did you think it was weird and annoying?

00:14:43 Wendy Guest Oh, no! I loved it. There was great people around us all the time. We were exposed to everything.

*[Lisa agrees.]*

00:14:51 Crosstalk Crosstalk You know?  
**Lisa:** We thought it was cool.

00:14:52 Wendy Guest **Wendy:** And you know, it's funny. You know, both Lisa and I had mothers that were huuuge music fans. Massive music fans. And loved everything and played everything and exposed us to everything and our fathers were like the studio guys. Right? But they didn't have the same—well, that's not true. Gary, Lisa's father who's like a groundbreaking percussionist and then, you know, probably that the first Oberheim and ARP 2600 in his little studio in the house, in 1970. They were all really—they explored everything. And our—but our mothers I think are the ones that kind of exposed us to what the emotion was

00:15:44	Lisa	Guest	<p>behind music more than the technique of music, which was more on our father's side, I think. I mean, that's how I experience it.</p> <p>Yeah, I mean, that's great. 'Cause we got such a... a whole world of appreciation for music from, you know, our fathers who worked and were professionals at it, and our mothers who were talented, but also forced into being mothers and raising kids. And they taught us how to love music. You know? My mother was a singer, a jazz singer, as a teenager. And she used to lie about her age and sing in clubs and stuff like that. But of course, when she got married, you know, she quit to raise a family and all that stuff. So—but she had this passion inside her for music and, you know, she would sit us kids down and play us a Mozart symphony or something crazy like that. And, you know, we would sit there as long as we could pay attention. <i>[Chuckles.]</i></p>
00:16:59	Wendy	Guest	<p>But, you know, we got it. We understood why she was doing that and, you know, how vast the world of music is and how we could always find a home there, somewhere. And, you know, in many—in lots of ways. You know, in different styles and things like that.</p> <p>I also remember my mother was the one that used to play the records. <i>[Chuckles.]</i> My father used to make the records and my mother was the one that was always putting a record on the turntable. So, that was a big influence for me.</p>
00:17:13	Jesse	Host	<p>I was listening to the two of you on our sister show, <i>Heat Rocks</i>, and you were talking about the Prince album, <i>Around the World in a Day</i>, and you just casually kind of dropped, "Oh yeah, like around our house, there was a lot of musique concrète and Stockhausen and stuff. <i>[Laughs.]</i></p>
00:17:32	Wendy	Guest	<p>Oh, big time.</p> <p><i>[Lisa confirms.]</i></p>
00:17:34	Jesse	Host	<p>Uh, yeah. Big time.</p> <p>And I was—I was trying to imagine being like a ten-year-old and <i>[laughs]</i>, you know, there's like—there's like modern classical music playing in your house.</p>
00:17:45	Wendy	Guest	<p>I mean, we used to—we used to have a kid band, the Melvoins and Colemans had a kid band and we used to pretend we would like write that kind of music, down in my father's studio. We'd all grab instruments and do our own version of Stockhausen. You know?</p>
00:18:00	Lisa	Guest	<p>Yeah, it was pretty funny.</p> <p><i>[Jesse laughs.]</i></p> <p>We'd play Stockhausen on Halloween when people would come—when trick-or-treaters would come. 'Cause it was so weird. You know?</p> <p><i>[They laugh.]</i></p>
00:18:19	Wendy	Guest	<p>It scared people more than, you know, haunted house sounds. They were like, "What the... what is that?"</p>
00:18:20	Lisa	Guest	<p>It's so true.</p> <p><i>[Singing softly]</i> That's my Stockhausen imitation.</p> <p><i>[Wendy and Jesse laugh.]</i></p>

00:18:27 Jesse Host You're Rich Little, but for 20<sup>th</sup> century classical music composers.

*[They laugh.]*

00:18:33 Lisa Guest Exactly.

00:18:35 Wendy Guest That's funny.

00:18:36 Lisa Guest Do Harry Partch next.

*[They laugh.]*

00:18:39 Jesse Host Was there enough of that going on in the house that you, as a kid or like as an adolescent—you know, as a 12-year-old or 13-year-old—thought that it was... enjoyable? Like something you liked? Or was it a weird thing that was around?

00:19:02 Lisa Guest I think it—I realized how unusual it was, not necessarily weird—although I—when I got into it, I think there's a personal tendency to control your own weirdness. But I realized how unusual it was when, you know, meeting other kids and other families that were so different. You know? That didn't have that. And when they'd come to my house and experience my life, it was mind-blowing to them. To me, it was just my life. You know. It's how I was growing up. It was pretty normal to me. So, you know, I took all the enjoyment I could out of it. But yeah, just having my best friend from school come over or something like that, you know, and we had a studio in our house and that was like, "What?!" *[Chuckles.]* You know.

And we were like, "Oh, you don't have a drum set and amps and a guitar and a keyboard?"

00:20:00 Wendy Guest And they were like, "Noooo? Who has that? Who does that?" Yeah. We had this—we had the same thing in our house, too. But you know, we also went to this school—we went to Highland Hall which was a Rudolf Steiner school. And that school's—back in the years we were there, which is a hundred million years ago when it was just full of like hippies and...

00:20:16 Lisa Guest Take it easy, *[whispering]* take it easy.

00:20:19 Wendy Guest *[Laughs.]* We—we were around a lot of kids that had families that were artists. We went to one of those art schools. You know? I did have certain friends that would come over to our house and they would be like, "Your family is so different than ours!" You know, the kids would be like, "This is so weird! We love you guys. You guys are the cool family!"

*[Lisa agrees with a chuckle.]*

Right? Because we were in music business and art. So, there was a lot of that that made me realize that we were different, but it's not like I wanted, you know, Richard Hodkinson's life down the street. You know? I was perfectly content with the life we were having at our house.

*[Wendy agrees several times as Jesse continues.]*

00:21:02 Jesse Host Were there things that the two of you wanted from those regular lives? Like, was there ever a time when you were like, "Gosh, I wish that I just like came home, did my homework, and then went into the pool in the backyard and then like my dad was having a cookout and we all drove a Buick."



00:21:24 Crosstalk Crosstalk *[Lisa and Wendy agree several times.]*  
**Lisa and Wendy:** (In unison.) Sure!

**Lisa:** Of course.

00:21:25 Lisa Guest  
**Wendy:** Yeah.  
 And especially when I was—when I had to practice and I was really young and my mom would call me into the house to practice, you know, piano. You know, it was horrible. I loved it and I knew I wanted to do it, but it was always like, “Oooh maaan. You know, why can’t I just play outside.” You know, I would be outside with my bare feet and in the dirt, playing silly games and—you know—you kinda wanna do that, but—you know, once I sat at the piano, it always had its own hypnotic effect. *[Voice echoing.]* And I was its slave.

00:22:03 Wendy Guest  
*[Jesse laughs.]*  
 I would have loved to have come home every day from school and had dinner on the table and maybe a—you know, the nuclear family at the table. But my father was always in a session. So, back in the day, you had single, doubles, or triples. And back then—‘cause our fathers were first-call guys—they were doing triples every day.

*[Lisa confirms.]*

00:22:26 Lisa Guest  
 00:22:27 Wendy Guest  
 00:22:28 Jesse Host  
 So, we’d never see them.  
 They were never home.  
 Never home. So, our mom—  
 So, what you mean by that, Wendy—I’m gather from context—is that they were at the top of the list for people to bring in to play on something when somebody just showed up at the studio and said, “I need a guitarist,” or “I need a percussionist,” or whatever. And so, they were doing—they were basically pulling triple shifts. *[Laughs.]*

*[They confirm.]*

00:22:48 Wendy Guest  
 In recording terms.  
 Yeah. Yes. Basically, yeah. They’d have a woman—your father, my father—I guess the studio guys had a woman service called Arlan’s.

00:22:57 Lisa Guest  
 00:23:00 Wendy Guest  
*[Chuckling.]* Oh yeah, Arlan’s. Answering service.  
 It was a—it was an answering service that would book your dates. And my father had his black book and Arlan’s would call and say, you know, be at the Phil Spector session, be at the Sinatra session, be at the—*[grumbling]* I don’t know, whatever.

00:23:13 Lisa Guest  
 00:23:15 Wendy Guest  
 Just whatever.  
 TV show, *Mannix*, you know. It—I don’t know, whatever it was. And they’d have Arlan’s book these dates and that’s what it was like. So, they were gone all the time. Gone.

00:23:28 Jesse Host  
 I talked to Kevin, my producer—I texted him like an hour ago and I said, “Hey, Kevin, can you find something that both Wendy and Lisa’s dad played on? And, you know, *[laughs]* both of your dads worked on 25 million records.

*[Lisa chuckles and Wendy agrees.]*

The one that—the one that he pulled was “That’s Life” by Frank Sinatra. I thought we’d listen to a little bit of it.

00:23:51	Music	Music	<p><i>[They agree.]</i> “That’s Life” from the album <i>That’s Life</i> by Frank Sinatra.</p> <p><i>That’s life (that’s life)</i> <i>That’s what all the people say</i> <i>You’re riding high in April, shot down in May</i> <i>But I know I’m gonna change that tune</i> <i>When I’m back on top, back on top in June</i></p> <p><i>I said that’s life (that’s life)</i> <i>And as funny as it may seem</i> <i>Some people get their kicks</i> <i>Stomping on a dream</i> <i>But I don’t let it, let it get me down</i> <i>‘Cause this fine old world...</i></p> <p><i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i></p>
00:24:45	Wendy	Guest	That’s my dad on the organ.
00:24:48	Jesse	Host	<i>[Laughs.]</i> That’s the best—that was the part—like, listening to it at like—obviously I’ve heard “That’s Life” 25,000 times at the grocery store. But I did not remember <i>[laughing]</i> that it opened with that organ!
00:24:59	Wendy	Guest	<i>[Lisa agrees.]</i> Well, get this! So, if you think about that organ tone on that Hammond, think about “Good Vibrations”. My father did the organ on that, as well. So, it sounds—it’s the exact same tone.
00:25:10	Jesse	Host	Yeah! I mean, that sound quality honestly reminded me of soul records more than it reminded me of Frank Sinatra.
00:25:25	Wendy	Guest	<i>[They agree repeatedly.]</i>  Did the two of you think that the records that your dads worked on were cool? Or were you like rolling your eyes? Lisa’s father got—I thought—I always thought Lisa’s father got the cooler gigs. Like he got to play on the Steely Dan records and all that stuff, and my father didn’t—wasn’t the call, the keyboard player, for those sessions. It was like either Boddicker or Michael Lang or—there’s a handful of other keyboard players that were called in for those gigs. My dad got a lot of the straighter, big band, TV—well, they both got tons of orchestra dates on TV and film, you know. All the Jerry Goldsmith sessions and the Elmer Bernstein sessions at the Newman Stage at, you know, Sony Studios.  And so—but I always thought that Gary got cooler gigs. But my father played on a million—I mean, he played with Tom Waits and Bette Midler and Streisand. I mean, just—it’s—the list is massive! My father came out of the kitchen one day—I went to go visit him. This is right before he passed away, and he was in his kitchen, and he goes—he used to call me Dolly. <i>[In a deep voice.]</i> “Oh, Dolly, I just—I got a printout of some of the stuff that I’ve played on in my

career.” And he drops this scroll—like, it’s a Warner Brothers cartoon?

*[Jesse and Lisa laugh.]*

00:26:38	Lisa	Guest	And it goes the length of the entire kitchen.
00:26:40	Wendy	Guest	Like a mile.
			And it’s all typed in like triple columns of all the artists he’s played with over the years. I wish I had that list. I don’t know where it went, but it was astonishing. It was astonishing.
00:26:55	Lisa	Guest	Yeah. No wonder they don’t remember—they’re like—I’ll ask my dad about—you know, “Do you remember that session?” And he has no idea. He doesn’t remember anything. <i>[Chuckling.]</i>

*[Jesse laughs.]*

			He’s like—he did so many things and, you know—I don’t know. Things were crazy back then, anyway.
00:27:14	Jesse	Host	So, the two of you grew up together and also ended up essentially—maybe literally? I’m not sure—married for a really long time. Did you help each other realize that you were gay when you were kids and adolescents?
00:27:29	Wendy	Guest	For me, yes. That’s Wendy speaking. Yeah, I was 16 years old and, you know, it was already very weird for Lisa and I, ‘cause we grew up together, but then we spent a couple years apart. I went back east to go finish a couple years of school and while I was gone, I didn’t see the Colemans, so Lisa and I grew into young women. And by that time, I was questioning my sexuality at that very young age, 13, 14, 15. And then I came back and saw Lisa one summer after she had done—had been away doing the <i>Dirty Mind</i> record with Prince. And it just was—you know, cheeseball as it is, we fell in love with each other. You know?
00:28:17	Lisa	Host	Yeah. It was kind of funny, ‘cause I’m older and <i>[chuckling]</i> I just didn’t expect that little Wendy Melvoin would be—you know. I’d suddenly look at her differently. ‘Cause I was more—like best friends with her brother, her older brother. ‘Cause we were similar in age and, you know, it was like the twins were a two-headed monster that, you know—it was like our little sisters. So, it was kind of funny when, after those few years we spent apart and she came back to LA and we were like, “Uh, hello!”

*[They laugh.]*

00:29:05	Wendy	Guest	And that lasted for, you know, 20 years. I mean, it’s still—still—Yeah! I mean, we were a couple for 20 years and realized that the couple part, romantically, wasn’t our thing. But we were able to, miraculously, hang onto the parts that do work so well. And that’s us partners in music and just—dare I be as dorky as to say, “This thing called life.” But we have partners, you know, independent of each other, romantically. And we have children by different people and—but we’ve, you know—this relationship has lasted, even workwise, 40 years.
00:29:45	Jesse	Host	Even more with Wendy and Lisa still to come. Stay with us. It’s <i>Bullseye</i> , from <a href="http://MaximumFun.org">MaximumFun.org</a> and NPR.
00:29:53	Music	Transition	Relaxed, full music.

00:29:55	Jesse	Promo	<p>This message comes from NPR sponsor Discover. Discover matches all the cashback you've earned 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 <a href="https://www.discover.com/match">Discover.com/match</a>. 2021 Nielsen Report. Limitations apply.</p>
00:30:27	Promo	Clip	<p><i>[Radio interference followed by laidback music with a snare drumbeat. A phone rings as the DJ speaks.]</i></p> <p><b>Radio DJ:</b> Welcome back to <i>Fireside Chat</i> on KMAX. With me in-studio to take your calls is the dopest duo on the West Coast, Oliver Wang and Morgan Rhodes.</p> <p><i>[Click.]</i></p> <p>Go ahead, caller.</p> <p><b>Caller:</b> Hey. Uh, I'm looking for a music podcast that's insightful and thoughtful, but like, also helps me discover artists and albums that I've never heard of.</p> <p><b>Morgan Rhodes:</b> Yeah, man. Sounds like you need to listen to <i>Heat Rocks</i>. Every week, myself—and I'm Morgan Rhodes—and my co-host here, Oliver Wang, talk to influential guests about a canonical album that has changed their lives.</p> <p><b>Oliver Wang:</b> Guests like Moby, Open Mike Eagle, talk about albums by Prince, Joni Mitchell, and so much more.</p> <p><b>Caller:</b> Yooo! What's that show called again?</p> <p><b>Morgan:</b> <i>Heat Rocks</i>. Deep dives into hot records.</p> <p><b>Oliver:</b> Every Thursday on Maximum Fun.</p>
00:31:14	Jesse	Host	<p><i>[Music suddenly gives way to static and a dial tone.]</i></p> <p>Welcome back to <i>Bullseye</i>, I'm Jesse Thorn. My guests are Wendy &amp; Lisa. They're a longtime musical duo who have been writing and performing together for almost 40 years. They were members of Prince's Revolution and helped Prince record some of his greatest hits. They've also written and recorded albums on their own, together, and they have an Emmy for their work in TV and film. Their latest project is a dramatic thriller called <i>Cruel Summer</i>. It just debuted on Freeform. Let's get back into our conversation.</p> <p>I wanna play a Prince song that neither of you played on. And I think when I play it—at least, Wendy—you will know why I chose this song to play. It's from his 1978 album, <i>For You</i>.</p> <p><i>[Music fades in.]</i></p>
00:32:04	Music	Music	<p>The debut record. And it's called "Soft and Wet". "Soft and Wet" from the album <i>For You</i> by Prince.</p>

*If this is lust, then I must confess  
I feel it every day  
If this is wrong, then I long  
To be as far from right as I may*

*Soft and wet  
Soft and wet  
Ooooooh!*

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

00:32:40 Jesse Host

*[They laugh.]*

I wish—I wish our listeners at home could see Lisa air drumming to that record. *[Laughing.]* Her playing that—playing that funky disco beat.

*[Lisa echoes him. Wendy imitates the drums.]*

00:32:58 Wendy Guest

Wendy, was that really the first Prince song that you ever heard? Yeah. That was the very first Prince song I ever heard! I was underage at a night club in LA called The Starwood, which is infamous in its own right. It had a rock and roll room and then it had a disco room. And this is 19—summer of '78. And I was underage. I was probably between—I think it was 13 or 14. And my sister and I went to this club, snuck out of the house—sorry Dad, sorry Mom. And I was on the disco floor, baby, and the DJ put that record on and I was completely—and mind you, I was always a funky kid. I loved everything that was funky. I loved everything that was soulful. My favorite records were all the deepest, darkest of all the funk records in the '70s. And then I wanted to be John McLaughlin from Mahavishnu.

So, I was a complicated listener.

*[Lisa agrees and Jesse laughs.]*

00:34:01 Jesse Host

Wait! What were the—what—what—were you like listening to like Mandrill or something? Like, who—?

00:34:06 Wendy Guest

Sure, I listened to Mandrill! Yeah! Of course! Sure, I did!

*[Jesse laughs.]*

00:34:10 Jesse Host

And I also listened to, you know—  
*[Interrupting.]* Like most 13-year-olds.

00:34:12 Wendy Guest

*[Lisa agrees and they chuckle.]*

Yeah, no. I was deep! I was deep. You can't—I mean, my friend Q-Tip and I sent records back to each other to see whether or not we can stump each other with that era and we—and he can't stump me. He can't stump me! He just can't.

00:34:26 Lisa Guest

No, you're good.

00:34:27 Wendy Guest

Yeah. So, by that time, I was on the dancefloor, and I was—I heard that record. I ran up to the DJ and I was like, "Oh my god! Who is that girl?" I thought it was a girl. I did!

And he said, “No, that’s not a girl. It’s this young kid named Prince.” And that started my love affair. I was completely obsessed with him. And then when I found out Lisa had gotten a gig on the *Dirty Mind* record and she really didn’t know who he was and I got wind of it back east, when I was going to school. And I was like, “Does she have any idea who she just got a gig with!?” And then I came back to LA one summer and went to the Coleman’s house and Lisa was back from Minnesota, just from her audition, and put on the cassette of *Dirty Mind* and I heard Lisa say, “I’m just a virgin and I’m on my way to wed,” and I lost my mind!

*[Jesse and Lisa laugh.]*

00:35:31 Lisa Guest I couldn’t believe it! I couldn’t believe it! I couldn’t believe it! Well, it was really funny too, because I didn’t know Prince. I didn’t know his music and I was really—you know... kind of a snob, I think. When I think about it, I was heavy into classical and, you know, was really focused on that and then all of the sudden I ended up in Prince’s band and it seemed like unreal.

00:35:54 Wendy Guest It was cognitive dissonance. You know?

*[Lisa agrees.]*

00:35:57 Lisa Guest It really was.  
It’s like, “What? What happened to Lisa?!”

00:35:58 Wendy Guest But she was perfect. It was—it was perfect!

*[They chuckle.]*

00:36:02 Lisa Guest Prince happened!

00:36:03 Wendy Guest Yeah! Totally. And Prince happened.

00:36:05 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Lisa:** It was good.

**Wendy:** That’s exactly right. And then that happened for both of us. Yup.

00:36:09 Wendy Guest **Lisa:** It was just right. And he adored her because—you know, he could kind of do everybody and everybody’s position in a band. He could outdo you. *[Laughs.]* You know what I mean? He couldn’t do Lisa. He tried for years and years to do—to be Lisa, to do—to channel her when he played piano and he could never do it. And so, he kind of in a way, I think coveted the fact that she was so singular and such a singular voice, musically. And I think it’s probably one of the more important musical relationships he’s ever had, because of that.

00:36:49 Lisa Guest *[Softly.]* Wow.

00:36:50 Jesse Host I mean, when I think of , which is maybe my favorite Prince record, certainly one of my favorite records of all time.

*[Wendy agrees.]*

Like, yeah, I mean—you know, when *[laughs]*—when you talk about like Prince just a couple years earlier, you think like, “This is a person capable of immense greatness.” And then you listen to *Dirty Mind* and you’re like, “Oh, wow. This—this does not let up the entire time. It is all perfect.” *[Laughs.]*

00:37:13	Wendy	Guest	<p>No! It does not! And it's only 32 minutes long. And it's so groundbreaking. Every time I talk to people about Prince and they're like—wanna know—wanna do a deep dive? I say, "You have—you have to listen to <i>Dirty Mind</i>." I mean, that's where he was the most sweaty, dirty, uncomfortable yet convicted, and dark and yet sexy, and playful, and manipulative, and smart. And what he was doing with sounds, by trying to take that new wave era and put it into a funk environment to try and outdo like the Rick James of the world and the Zapps of the world and all that kind of stuff. He was—it was everything. It was—and then he looked like this weird like transgender chick. He looked like a—you know, like he could have been in—you know—<i>Paris is Burning</i>. You know what I mean?</p> <p>Just... what—the only other person that had done <u>anything</u> like that was David Bowie, but he didn't—David wasn't even that person off the microphone. He became like a really kind of straight guy. Prince was that guy, on and off.</p>
00:38:37	Jesse	Host	<p>The sound of <i>Dirty Mind</i> is what I think of the most, and a lot of that sound is keyboards. So, where did all those sounds come from? When you first started with Prince and you're like walking in cold into this weird situation, like where did all that stuff come from?</p>
00:38:58	Lisa	Guest	<p>He was really specific with that stuff. He would most often already have a sound picked out and he would just point me to it and say, "Here, play this. Play this sound." You know. And he—it would—he was not afraid of presets, back then. And, you know, they were still new. You know? You'd get an ARP Omni or something. It had, you know, three buttons that you could choose—you know—synth or synth string or just string. You know. <i>[Chuckles.]</i> "Wow! This is the magic combination, like this!" You know. And Prince would just turn everything up, just like <i>[makes a crackling noise]</i>.</p>
00:39:38	Wendy	Guest	<p>His philosophy was, "Pin it."</p>
00:39:39	Lisa	Guest	<p>Pin the meters.</p> <p>Just pin it. Just anything in life. You know?</p> <p><i>[They chuckle.]</i></p>
00:39:57	Jesse	Host	<p>And he said, "Even if you're just walking, <i>[censored]</i> pin that <i>[censored]!</i>" You know. Um. So, it was just like that. Like, keyboard sounds are so like aggressive. You know?</p> <p>Wendy, would you say that you schemed your way in, or did you fall in accidentally?</p>
00:40:03	Wendy	Guest	<p>Um, you know, if I was to really pathologize it, I'm sure I schemed my way in. I wasn't aware of it at the time. I was just like, "Oh my god, I'm in love with my girlfriend and I get to be around the most important artist of all time, for me." So, that was the extent of it. But I think, in the court of law—if I was in front of a judge and a lawyer was grilling me, I'd have to say I was really hoping that he'd take notice of me and that I could jump onboard, for sure. But at the time I was just happy to be in his presence and soak it all in and be with my girlfriend. So. And then I just got lucky he heard me practicing my guitar in her hotel room. And then it just happened.</p>
00:40:49	Jesse	Host	<p>So, this is a question that I ask a lot of artists, but <i>[chuckles]</i> I think it's—it plays differently in the context of both of your fathers having been like workaholic professional session musicians. What did your</p>

parents think of your jobs as musicians in this very particular kind of band?

00:41:10 Wendy Guest Oh! My god, they loved it! My mother was such a fan! So was my father. They loved it. They loved every second of it. My father—you should see the clip of my father announcing us at the Grammys. You know. You know, he was the president of NARAS at the time and—you know, there's clips of him and you can see how proud was of us—

00:41:33 Lisa Guest *[Interrupting delightedly.]* “Oooh, my daughter, Wendy!”

00:41:34 Wendy Guest —that we were playing the Grammys and accepted all these awards for “Purple Rain”. I mean, he was like—and my mother was like—Prince loved my mother! She was such a groupie! It was just—yeah. No, it was never a problem.

*[Jesse and Lisa chuckle.]*

Never. And then, of course, Prince fell in love with my twin sister and hired my brother to play on a whole bunch of things. And both of our brothers were integral parts in *Around the World in a Day*. And, you know, it all became kind of like a—you know. Yeah.

00:42:03 Lisa Guest *[Singing softly.]* “Family affaaaaair.”

*[Wendy agrees.]*

00:42:07 Jesse Host Lisa, what about your—what about your parents?

00:42:10 Lisa Guest I think my mom was excited, too. And my dad had to check it out first. He was a little more protective and a little bit freaked out that I wasn't a concert pianist. You know, going that route. So—but I remember him coming to see us at Flippers, which was a skating rink *[chuckles]* in west Hollywood. So, we played at the skating rink and my dad came and it was a *Dirty Mind* show, so there was a lot of nasty bits. So, it was—I was a little nervous, 'cause my dad was standing right there. And I had to do the, “I am a virgin,” thing and—you know.

00:42:49 Wendy Guest Sing “Head”. You know.

00:42:50 Lisa Guest *[Laughing.]* Sing—basically sing about head! Right?!

00:42:52 Wendy Guest “Head” and “Sister”. Yeah. Right.

00:42:54 Lisa Guest And, uh, yeah. But he thought the music was really good and we were a tight band, and he was like, “Okay, I guess I get it now.” And as time went on and the band gained more success and, you know, we really did become quite an amazing band, he was really supportive and was like, “Wow, you guys are really good.”

00:43:16 Jesse Host It's funny to think that—of all the stories that I've heard over 20 years of doing this show—from people about—artists about their relationships with their parents and their parents' relationship with being artists—them being artists—like, the two of you had the clearest path to parental approval of any of them. Which was *[chuckling]* neither of your fathers could deny the band was tight. Like, *[laughs]*.

*[They agree.]*

That is—like, ultimately, like whether they like Prince records or not—

00:43:54 Wendy Guest That's right. They knew we were good! They knew we were really good. I remember my father—my father was more worried about me and Lisa as a couple, *[chuckling]* when he found—



00:44:04 Jesse Host Yeah! I was about to say, “Did your parents know that you were a couple?”

00:44:07 Wendy Guest *[Laughs.]* They were all really—you know, if you could imagine seeing a dog with its ears cocked and their head cocked.

*[Lisa makes a curious noise to match.]*

When they found out. Like, “What? Isn’t that incest? Isn’t that—”

*[Lisa laughs.]*

So, I remember my father trying to be so good with me and Lisa and he looked at me and he goes, “Well, just as long as you two are productive.”

*[They laugh.]*

00:44:33 Jesse Host Productive! *[Cackles.]*

00:44:37 Wendy Guest That was what he said! And I said, “Yeah, I think we got that covered.” And then I remember him saying something—

00:44:42 Jesse Host *[Barely holding it together.]* He’s like, “How—how many sessions are you doing a day?”

*[Lisa and Wendy confirm.]*

“You can make out as much as you want, as long as you’re doing 3-a-days.”

00:44:51 Wendy Guest Exactly! He said—he said something like, “Well.” Something—he made some reference to cruising? Which was a term that they used in the late ‘70s for gay men who go to clubs and cruise for—it’s like, Hinge. And so, he used that reference—like about me and Lisa. Like, *[gruffly]* “I hope there’s no cruise—” Like, I don’t know what he said.

00:45:12 Lisa Guest I know. He thought that we were part of some dark, deep, leather like—I don’t know. S&M kind of scene.

00:45:17 Wendy Guest Like, he was seeing Al Pacino in the movie *Cruising*. You know what I mean?

*[Lisa agrees with a laugh.]*

00:45:24 Lisa Guest Like, I was like, “No, Dad! Dad. Daaad.”

00:45:25 Wendy Guest No whips and chains going on or anything like that. No slaves. No. No, no. This is a one-on-one deal, man. *[Gruffly]*. “Just as long as you’re productive.”

00:45:33 Jesse Host We’ll finish up with Wendy and Lisa after a short break. We’ll be back in a minute. It’s *Bullseye*, from [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org) and NPR.

00:45:41 Promo Clip **Speaker:** This message comes from NPR sponsor Fidelity Wealth Management. VP Dylan Sanders shares why it’s important to understand clients’ values.

**Dylan Sanders:** People quantify dreams differently. So, it’s essential to be able to sit with a client and listen and ask questions and just begin to understand what it is in their life that they wanna pursue and help them create a roadmap to get there.

**Speaker:** To learn more, go to [Fidelity.com/wealth](http://Fidelity.com/wealth). Fidelity Brokerage Services LLC, member NYSESIPC.

00:46:16 Promo Clip **Music:** Guitar strums as singer counts out “One, two, one two three four.” Up-tempo guitar and harmonica music plays in the background.

**Justin McElroy:** Hi, everybody! My name is Justin McElroy.

**Dr. Sydnee McElroy:** I’m Sydnee McElroy!

**Justin:** We’re both doctors, and—

**Sydnee:** Nope. Just me.

**Justin:** Okay, well Sydnee’s a doctor and I’m a medical enthusiast.

**Sydnee:** Okay.

**Justin:** And we created *Sawbones*, a marital tour of misguided medicine!

**Sydnee:** Every week I dig through the annals of medical history to bring you the wildest, grossest—sometimes dumbest—tales of ways we’ve tried to treat people throughout history!

**Justin:** Eh, lately we do a lot of modern fake medicine. ‘Cause everything’s a disaster. But it’s slightly less of a disaster every Friday, right here on [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org), as we bring you *Sawbones: A Marital Tour of Misguided Medicine*. And remember:

**Sydnee:** Don’t drill a hole in your head.

00:46:57 Jesse Host *[Music ends.]*  
Welcome back to *Bullseye*. I’m Jesse Thorn. If you’re just joining us, my guests are Wendy and Lisa. They’re musicians that have been collaborating for nearly 40 years. The two played in Prince’s band, The Revolution, on the classic records *Purple Rain*, *Parade*, and *Around the World in a Day*. For the last 10 years or so, Wendy and Lisa have shifted their focus to film and television, composing scores and theme songs for a bunch of different projects. You can hear their latest music in *Cruel Summer*, which is airing now on Freeform. Let’s get back into our conversation.

Did you feel like Prince chose the members of The Revolution in a kind of Sly and the Family Stone way? To have a—you know, *[chuckling]* a representative of each great group of human beings?

00:47:43 Wendy Guest *[Lisa agrees.]*  
I think they were all each representatives of him! They were personalities of him or ones that he wanted to be. I think he really wanted to integrate all those sides of himself, and the band represented that ability to do that. And he did it well. I mean, Bobby Z was the one that used to say that once I joined the band, he finally got his Fleetwood Mac and Sly and the Family Stone. And Bobby said he used to talk to him about it all the time. He—you know, he—to me, it felt more like what I just explained a second ago, which was like an integration of who he was. By getting—you

00:48:29 Lisa Guest know, splitting himself off and getting these people and this band that were all parts of him.  
Well, that's really true. I mean, and that spreads out to even him creating The Time and Vanity 6 and all the—all the bands and things that he did were all different sides of himself, 'cause he was such a creative guy. You know? He had to pick one thing to really make it in the business. You know. You have to be very specific, and he was really good at doing that and being, you know—putting the point to your record. You know. And your personality and your fashion and, you know, everything.

00:49:05 Wendy Guest He knew how to be a star.

00:49:08 Jesse Host *[Lisa agrees.]*  
I, uh—*[chuckles]* one of my best friends from high school was your publicist for a little bit for an awards campaign. And she normally would represent people that would not be good fits for this show, so she never like pitched me anybody or anything. We've known each other since we were 16. So, when I heard that she was representing the two of you on this awards campaign, I said, "Woah! You're representing somebody that I definitely wanna have on the show! Like, can—*[chuckles]* can you get them to come and do *Bullseye*?" It might even have been called *The Sound of Young America*. This was 10, 12 years ago.

*[Laughing.]* And I remember she said, "I think I could get them to do it, but they cannot talk about Prince, because they're not allowed to. Because Lisa said Prince is a fancy lesbian."

00:50:05 Wendy Guest *[They laugh.]*  
Is that what she said?! That's hysterical. But that's true. He was! He was a very fancy lesbian.

00:50:12 Jesse Host *[Lisa agrees.]*  
*[Laughing.]* And so, I had never—I never actually got around to reading the interview where—and you truly did say that, Lisa.

*[Lisa confirms.]*

And in that bit, the question was, "Was Prince gay?" And the two of you were kind of laughing about it, but also being very sincere and saying that it was much less about his sexuality being, you know—that he was interested in guys, but rather that his gender expression was so kind of fluid and expansive that he gave what—you know—I mean, I guess Janelle Monáe is giving Prince vibes, but like, you know, Prince was giving what I would associate with Janelle Monáe vibes.

*[They agree.]*

00:51:19 Wendy Guest Like getting out there in a tuxedo where the hips are a lot bigger than the waist. You know what I mean? And I wonder what the two of you thought of all that when you were like around him working on a day-to-day basis. Like, he was—he was doing a lot.  
You know, I never—and I... I know my gay boys *[laughs]* and I know my closeted gay boys. Prince was not one of them. He just wasn't. He was very heterosexual. And this kind of nods to what we

were just talking about—that he preferred the beauty of women and representing that kind of beauty on his own body than trying to look like Steven Seagal, if that’s your form of macho. You know what I mean? He had no interest in dumbing his physicality down. He was extremely connected to the expression of his—but he was like a—he was like a ballet dancer. People used to think that, you know, Peter Martins was gay. Great ballet dancer from the ‘80s and ‘70s. Straight as an arrow, but on the stage, there was such feminine beauty—and masculine—about the way he moved. And a lot of dancers are like that.

Prince had that. He just—he just did. He just happened to feel like he looked much better with makeup on and smelled better with some female perfume on and have his clothes made and wear heels because he wanted to be taller. You know? I never, eever got a sense that he was a gay. I mean, that’s why it’s funny to call him a lesbian, because he loved women. You know what I mean? He’s a lesbian.

00:53:01 Lisa Guest  
00:53:03 Wendy Guest

And he loved being a woman.  
And he loved being a woman, yeah.

*[They chuckle.]*

00:53:06 Jesse Host

Exactly.  
Yeah, I mean, maybe my favorite Prince song of the entire oeuvre is “If I Was Your Girlfriend”, which is like a song that is kind of about—

00:53:20 Wendy Guest  
00:53:22 Jesse Host

This very thing we’re talking about.  
Yeah! And not just the physical part of it, but a kind of like jealousy of the intimacy of women that men often struggle to have with men.

*[Wendy agrees.]*

00:53:43 Wendy Guest  
00:53:44 Jesse Host  
00:53:46 Wendy Guest  
00:53:49 Jesse Host

And like that is such a—that is such a different thing from being gay. Like, that is—  
It’s a totally different thing.  
—not about sexuality. It’s about gender. Like...  
Yeah. Totally. Exactly right.  
Like, “If I Was Your Girlfriend” is not about him wishing he could be a girl and have girl sex with a girl. It’s about wishing that he could have a closeness of that kind.

00:54:05 Lisa Guest

*[They agree.]*  
Yeah, exactly. It was—you know, talking about picking out your clothes and things like that, where it’s like girls are like that. And he was like that with his girl friends. I mean, like with me. You know, he’d be like, “Oh, can you put this on?” Or—you know. He was interested. And he would—I think—he would get so excited about it. You know? *[Imitating Prince.]* “Sexy.” You know, *[chuckling]* he’d get all—put his voice on. And, you know, talk about “being sexy” and—

00:54:36 Wendy Guest

He used to joke about—with me and Lisa, because you know, we were lesbians *[laughing]* and really didn’t spend every day and every hour trying to look at our best. We were down to being musicians.

00:54:46 Lisa Guest

Or preening.

00:54:48 Wendy Guest And getting down and dirty as young girls, too. And he'd walk in *[censored]* done up. You'd see him, and he'd *[stammering]*—and you know, he's, "I'd kick all your *[censored]* if I was woman," he'd say! "I'd kick all your *[censored]* if I was woman!"

00:55:01 Lisa Guest *[They laugh.]*  
Yeah, yeah, you would!

00:55:02 Wendy Guest And you're right! You would. *[Chuckles.]* There's no question about it. You win! You win.

00:55:07 Jesse Host The two of you worked with Prince—I mean, there's no period in Prince's life and career where he wasn't recording, you know, *[laughing]* a song a day or whatever. But the two of you worked with him during a period where that was probably at its peak. Did you ever like—when you were in the middle of that life where you were like, "Oh, we're gonna rehearse for three hours and then we're gonna record for six hours and then we have a show tonight."—were you ever like, "Dude, can we just have a pool day, today?" Like, "Can we *[laughing]*—can we like ease off for the afternoon?"

00:55:46 Wendy Guest No, not really.

*[Lisa confirms.]*

00:55:49 Lisa Guest We knew it was important.  
Especially not to his face. *[Chuckles.]*

*[Jesse laughs.]*

I mean, sometimes he wouldn't—you know, he would have to travel and do something, and we would be left to rehearse on our own. And we would definitely rehearse, but we would—you know—take a nice long dinner break or, you know, we would talk about going out to the lake and hanging out. But no, we were pretty much as dedicated as he was at that time. You know? That was what we were doing.

00:56:19 Jesse Host Wendy, I'm—I was really struck that you just said that you knew it was important. 'Cause obviously it was important. But I mean, when you're in a river of that, it's interesting to me—impressive to me that you were able to have that kind of perspective on it.

00:56:36 Wendy Guest I did. I did. I mean, going into that situation, I knew what an important artist he was, and I knew what he was writing, and I knew what was coming out of him. So, going into that job, I knew this is no joke. This is—this is gonna be an artist that people will remember like the greatest musicians of all time. I know it. And so, just the energy off that and what we were all doing—and what I felt we were contributing at the time—which was like this freedom for him to explore all this stuff in him. I knew that what we were doing, recording constantly, performing constantly, playing live constantly, were all part of this uber thing. And I didn't *[censored]* and moan about any of it.

The only thing that I do, and I will admit to is that he—and I guess up until the very end of his life—is that, you know, he did it with us for years and years and years. You'd get these weird phone calls at the wee hours—the witching hour, which is like four in the morning. And he'd be like, "What are you doing? You've got a plane to catch and—you know, at 6AM they're getting your flight." Or, you know,

“Come down and cut right now.” And you’d be like—so, there were a few times where Lisa and I, at that time—where the phone would ring and we’d be like, *[softly]* “Don’t answer it. Don’t answer it!”

*[They laugh.]*

00:58:07	Lisa	Guest	Don’t answer it!
00:58:08	Wendy	Guest	It was instant anxiety. <i>[Softly.]</i> “Ooooh! Noooo!”
			Instant! You’re like, “Don’t answer it. We know what’s coming. We need a good night’s rest.” And then of course, it would be like, “We had a flight for you at 7AM from LA Minneapolis and you missed it, so you have to leave at 11.” So—but we got a few extra hours in there and, you know. But yeah, I would avoid really late phone calls, sometimes.
00:58:29	Jesse	Host	I wonder if each of you could pick some contribution that you made to one of those songs or one of those records that you are particularly proud of—whether it’s a, you know—something you did as a player or something you contributed even, you know, more holistically.
00:58:50	Wendy	Guest	God, there are so many songs. I think, if I was to think of it in terms of the iconic nature of one of the songs, I’d say that—you know—and it’s not—and it’s not my favorite track, but I would say that it couldn’t have happened without the input, and that would be “Purple Rain”. I just think that—no, we didn’t write it, but we helped create what it is. And I don’t know if it would’ve had the same popularity if it hadn’t had our interpretation of what it was that he was asking—musical interpretation.
00:59:36	Jesse	Host	Tell me what you mean by that? Like what were the specific choices?
00:59:41	Wendy	Guest	Well, he came in with this very simple country song, this idea, you know. And it was really only kind of the chords to—was it the verse or the chords to the chorus? I can’t remember what it—what he presented first. But it felt very simple. And—yeah.
01:00:03	Lisa	Guest	I think the verse.
01:00:06	Wendy	Guest	Probably the chorus. And it felt very simple, and it was... but we could—he came in and he just said, you know, “I have this idea and here are the chords. What do you guys got? What can you do?” And so, he taught every one of us—Matt and Lisa and me and, of course, Mark and Bobby kept the meat and potatoes of it going. But I felt like it needed to be more beautiful and complicated. So, I stretched the chords and made these different inversions and reharmmed the—you know, the second chord of the progression and came up with this sort of chord progression that was not there, that did not exist prior to the song.
01:00:59	Lisa	Guest	Well, it sounded more like—instead of just straight triads kind of chords, it sounded almost like she was playing in an open tuning. It was like these big sort of <i>[mimics a sliding scale]</i> . You know, like a harp or something. You know. And Prince just loved it and that’s why the guitar is—
			<i>[Music fades in.]</i>
01:01:18	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	<b>Wendy:</b> It opens the track.
			<b>Lisa:</b> —opens the song.
01:01:19	Wendy	Guest	And you know what the song is based on those opening chords.

01:01:24	Music	Music	<p><i>[Lisa agrees.]</i>  “Purple Rain” off the album <i>Purple Rain</i> by Prince.</p> <p><i>I never meant to cause you any sorrow  I never meant to cause you any pain  I only wanted one time to see you laughing  I only want to see you laughing in the purple rain</i></p> <p><i>Purple rain, purple rain  Purple rain, purple rain  Purple rain, purple rain</i></p> <p><i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i></p>
01:02:24	Jesse	Host	<p>That song was... recorded—like the record that we all knew, that—most of that record or all of that record is like one of the first times you played that song out. Right?</p> <p><i>[Lisa and Wendy confirm.]</i></p> <p>I mean, it’s hard to imagine <i>[chuckling]</i> a song like that is like—is like a board recording from—from a show that was like, “Hey guys, we got this new tune we just worked up.” <i>[Laughs.]</i></p>
01:02:50	Wendy	Guest	<p><i>[Lisa agrees.]</i>  Right! And it was that rehearsal—I remember we were at rehearsal, and we came up with it and then we played it at 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue to try it out, like a comedy act. You know? <i>[With an exaggerated New York accent.]</i> “Let’s go try our act out! Mreh.”</p> <p><i>[Lisa chuckles.]</i></p>
01:03:03	Lisa	Guest	<p>And there it was. “Purple Rain”. It’s crazy. Wasn’t that your first gig?</p> <p><i>[Wendy confirms.]</i></p>
01:03:08	Jesse	Host	<p>I think that was Wendy’s first gig, too. Kind of weird.  <i>[Chuckling.]</i> That must have been something, Wendy!</p> <p><i>[They laugh and agree.]</i></p> <p>That’s my question. That my follow-up question. That must have been something!</p>
01:03:15	Lisa	Guest	<p><i>[Wendy confirms with a laugh.]</i>  Talk about luck!</p>
01:03:16	Wendy	Guest	<p><i>[Laughing.]</i> It was. He came up to me and he goes, “Are you nervous?”</p>
01:03:24	Jesse	Host	<p>And I was like, “Eeeeh? No? Yeeeah?”  You played a lot of the songs that you worked on with Prince without Prince, as The Revolution, after he passed away. You went out on tour. And, you know, you’re well-paid, professional musicians who mostly work from home or like a studio you own and have kids and etc., etc. Why did you decide to... tour? Like, touring is hard.</p>

			And I'm sure that all of you had very complicated feelings about Prince and that time in your lives. So, why did you choose to take it on the road?
01:04:08	Lisa	Guest	We just, um... I mean, the short answer is cheesy. It's just because of love. Because we needed each other. We love each other, as a band and as people. And the loss of Prince was really shocking and really a devastating feeling. You know? It—we didn't just grieve him as a person, but we were grieving the loss of possibilities and things that we always kept—you know, we always kept that plate spinning, like something might happen and we would do little things here and there. You know? Just play with each other. And so... you know. Just playing all the gigs was a grieving process, a healing process, for us and—as it turned out—for a lot of the fans.
01:04:59	Wendy	Guest	Yeah, we tried to conjure the feeling... that we all had when we played together, for the audience, so they could sort of—as well as us—have a sense of that moment in time. And it was sort of a form of relief and a way to keep him alive in a really vibrant way, for a moment. And we chose songs that absolutely did not need like a real lead singer to kind of... do Prince. We didn't—we didn't wanna—we wanted—we chose songs in the repertoire that really the audience could only sing out loud to us and group vocals stuff.
01:05:48	Lisa	Guest	Group vocals.
01:05:49	Wendy	Guest	And maybe we had, you know, a guest vocalist come out and do, you know—lead the audience into "Kiss", but it wasn't like, "Okay! And here's the person that's gonna be replacing him." We didn't want any of that. It was just literally, "Let's all just see if we can conjure him in this room and have some sense of relief at this <u>crazy</u> loss. And that was really—there was no money in—there was nothing. It was so down and dirty. That tour was like put together with spit and spackle. It was incredibly uncomfortable and raw and awful and great. And is it gonna happen again? I don't think so. I don't—I don't think that that's in the cards. But it was a great time for us to do that together and to heal in some way and to get closer, as a band.
			But, you know, we're missing our master and commander and it just—it doesn't make much sense.
01:06:55	Jesse	Host	When you were doing that tour, were you able to feel... proud of what you, personally and you as a band, had accomplished with Prince?
01:07:10	Wendy	Guest	Yeah, the audience let us know that.
01:07:13	Lisa	Guest	Yeah, we didn't—it was a surprise, in a way, that—how important we were to people. You know? The fans that would come and we do meet and greets after the shows and there was a lot of tears, and it was always like—I don't know. A very deep experience. And—just to know that he... with us, he touched so many people and we did, gradually, feel more and more proud, like with each gig that we were—we kind of—the grief turned into more joy and pride and that sort of thing.
			But it was—it was difficult, especially at first. It took a—it took a while before we could come off the stage smiling. You know. We'd come off the stage feeling pretty bummed out.
01:08:08	Jesse	Host	I'm glad that you were able to, eventually. I mean, I think of all the—of all the smiles you've brought people, you know what I mean? Even smiling through tears.



01:08:18 Wendy Guest Yeah. It's pretty—it's pretty amazing.  
01:08:22 Lisa Guest Yeah, it was a process.  
01:08:24 Wendy Guest It's like I said: and then Prince happened.

*[Jesse and Lisa laugh.]*

01:08:32 Jesse Host That's what our life is like! And then Prince happened.  
Well, Wendy and Lisa, I'm so grateful to you for taking this time and even taking a little bit of extra time and it was such a pleasure and an honor to get to talk to you. I hope you'll come back again, and we can talk about more of this stuff we didn't have time for. I really appreciate it.

01:08:46 Wendy Guest Would love it! We'd love it.

*[Lisa agrees.]*

01:08:49 Jesse Host Thanks, Jesse!  
Wendy Melvoin and Lisa Coleman, everyone. Such a thrill to have them on the show. You can hear their music on *Cruel Summer*, which is airing now on TV network Freeform. You probably have already heard all the classic Prince records they worked on, but summer's a good time to revisit those. Also, Wendy and Lisa's solo records are really good! Let's go out on another single from them.

*[Music fades in.]*

01:09:18 Music Music This is from their 1987 self-titled debut, it's called "Waterfall".  
"Waterfall" from the album *Wendy and Lisa* by Wendy & Lisa.

*Move slow  
Now your time's at hand  
Take heed*

*[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue.]*

01:09:29 Jesse Host 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 I just moved, and I swear to God this is true, I cannot find my monitor. My computer monitor is somewhere, but I don't know where. So, I can't use my computer. It's a real mess.

The show is produced by speaking into microphones. Our senior producer is Kevin Ferguson. Our producer is Jesus Ambrosio. We get help from Casey O'Brien and Jordan Kauwling. 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, for sharing it. The Go! Team have a brand-new album, called *Get up Sequences Part One*. It comes out on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, that's this week! There's a single called "A Bee Without Its Sting" out now. The Go! Team are so awesome.

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

01:10:39 Music Music *[Volume increases.]*

*People may come, people may go*

01:10:42 Promo Promo

*[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue.]*

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

01:10:49 Music Music

*[Volume increases.]*

*... headed for the waterfall*

*Love lost*

*[Music fades out.]*