

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.
00:00:28	Jesse Thorn	Host	It’s <i>Bullseye</i> . I’m Jesse Thorn. It’s time now for The Song That Changed My Life. Some of our favorite artists talking about the music that made them who they are. Up next is Billy Idol. Yes, that Billy Idol. “Rebel Yell”, “White Wedding”, “Dancing With Myself”.
00:00:44	Music	Music	“Dancing With Myself” from the album <i>Dancing With Myself</i> by Billy Idol. <i>On the floors of Tokyo Or down in London town to go, go With a record selection and a mirror's reflection I'm dancing with myself</i> <i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i>
00:01:05	Jesse	Host	Idol is a showman and a hardworking one. He tours all the time, all around the world. He’s also a prolific recording artist. Just this past September, he released a brand-new EP, called <i>Cage</i> .
00:01:18	Music	Music	“Cage” from the album <i>Cage</i> by Billy Idol. <i>Screaming in isolation Walking through desolation alley Boarded up our ambitions Flooded out all the engines I've been punching through the walls, I've been living on the edge I've been fighting with my demons so long they've become my friends The zombies at the window say it's finally the end So, I'm kicking down my door and never closing it again</i> <i>Hey!</i> <i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i>
00:01:50	Jesse	Host	When we asked Billy Idol about the song that changed his life, we didn’t really know what to expect. Maybe something by The Ramones or The Stooges or James Brown. Instead, Idol took us back to 1954: one of the first songs Elvis Presley ever recorded, “That’s All Right”. I’ll let Billy Idol take it from here.
00:02:11	Billy Idol	Guest	Hi, this is Billy Idol, and this is the song that changed my life.
00:02:15	Music	Music	“That’s All Right” by Elvis Presley. <i>Well, that's all right, mama That's all right for you That's all right, mama, just anyway you do Well, that's all right, that's all right That's all right</i>

00:02:31	Billy	Guest	<p><i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue.]</i></p> <p>The first time I heard Elvis's "That's All Right, Mama" was probably in the early '70s. I hadn't really heard a lot of the very, very early Elvis stuff that he recorded on the Sun label, 'cause it wasn't so easy to get a hold of. But I was never really a massive fan of Elvis, because like Elvis was kind of already old. You know, to me. Like you know, I saw one of his movies. It was <i>Tickle Me</i> or something.</p>
00:02:57	Clip	Clip	<p>Speaker (<i>Tickle Me</i>): Do you know that this is a ghost town with real ghosts? The old prospector said that on stormy nights, the ghosts of the old-timers come down from Boot Hill and really whoop it up in these old buildings until dawn!</p> <p>Lonnie: You've seen these ghosts, I presume?</p> <p>Speaker: Oh no! <i>[Laughs.]</i> That's only legends! But, well, lots of cities have legends. So, why not one for little old Silverado? Hey, did you know that Jenny Lind sang here?</p> <p>Lonnie: Jenny Lind? Swedish Nightingale?</p> <p>Speaker: Uh-huh!</p>
00:03:25	Billy	Guest	<p>I was really little, and you know, you look—well, I was into music. So, you're looking for songs and it was like Elvis was already old or something, even though he was probably only 26/27 or 28 or something. You know?</p>
00:03:37	Music	Music	<p>"Daydream Believer" from the album <i>The Birds, The Bees & The Monkees</i> by The Monkees.</p>
00:03:42	Billy	Guest	<p><i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue.]</i></p> <p>Well, my sister really loved Elvis. And she would listen to Elvis and Neil Diamond and The Monkees. So, I know all The Monkees' songs. I know all of Neil Diamond's songs. <i>[Laughs.]</i> I know—you know, "Daydream Believer" and stuff with The Monkees. So. <i>[Laughs.]</i> Anyway, that's how I know a lot of songs. I know that kind of stuff because of my sister. Yeah, it's funny. Then she probably knows some of the weird stuff I was listening to. You know. <i>[Laughs.]</i> Some of the prog rock stuff or some of the punk rock stuff I was listening to.</p>
00:04:12	Music	Music	<p><i>[Volume increases.]</i></p> <p><i>Cheer up, sleepy Jean Oh, what can it mean To a daydream believer</i></p>
00:04:22	Billy	Guest	<p><i>[Song fades out.]</i></p> <p>When she was 14, I was 18. I took her to an Elvis convention, because I just was trying to be a nice brother for once. Of course, when I walked in—it was in Croydon, in south London, Croydon. Really, there was just a load of kind of memorabilia and a load of pictures, really. It wasn't really anything that exciting. You know. But then, halfway through the afternoon, they started to show TV performances in chronological order, and started with "Baby Let's Play House". So, they're starting with this rockabilly stuff, which I'd never heard. I'd never heard Elvis's rockabilly stuff.</p>
00:04:59	Music	Music	<p>"Baby Let's Play House" from the album <i>A Date With Elvis</i> by Elvis Presley.</p>

Oh, baby, baby, baby, baby, baby
Baby, baby, baby, be-be-be-be-be baby, baby, baby
Baby baby, baby

00:05:08	Billy	Guest	<i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue.]</i> And of course, he was dressed—he looked like he was a gangster or something, because in black and white it looked like he had a black shirt with a white tie with a—you know, I think it was green. ‘Cause actually when you see color—when you see it in pictures of it, he’s actually wearing a green jacket with a green tie. But it looked black and white. But he looked like a gangster or something singing “Baby Let’s Play House”.
00:05:27	Music	Music	<i>[Volume increases.]</i>

Come back, baby, I want to play house with you

00:05:31	Billy	Guest	<i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i> <i>[Chuckles.]</i> And then, they went through in chronological order. It was “Baby Let’s Play House” and then “Shake, Rattle, and Roll” and then it’d start to be more like his hits, like—you know, I suppose “Heartbreak Hotel” and “Love Me Tender” and then, soon after that, I heard “That’s All Right, Mama”.
00:05:52	Music	Music	“That’s All Right” by Elvis Presley.

Well, that’s all right, mama
That’s all right for you
That’s all right, mama, just anyway you do
Well, that’s all right, that’s all right
That’s all right now, mama

00:06:08	Billy	Guest	<i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue.]</i> So, I went back and started to listen to his sung stuff. You know, this very early stuff. And then, this first recording—this is what “That’s All Right Now, Mama” is. It’s the first recording, and it was—they were just—they were looking for a style, really. Sam Phillips, the producer, was looking for a style. He didn’t—he knew—he was looking for some guy where he’d get to appropriate, really, Black culture. And he was looking for a White guy who could ape Black culture. Really take Black music into the mainstream by being White, really. That’s what he was looking for. And of course, in front of him, he had Elvis Presley, but he didn’t realize that Elvis didn’t need to copy Black music. He’d grown up alongside Black music. In fact, he’d grown up—he was poorer than the Black kids around him.
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They lived on some housing estate where there were poorer Black kids around him. And so, Elvis was growing up with the same culture, really. The same values, everything. So, Sam Phillips didn’t quite realize, but in front of him, he had the answer. They were looking for his style, what sort of style Elvis could be, and they were going through every kind of song in the world. I think they went through millions of songs and weren’t getting anywhere. And then, the producer was almost giving up. And I think they were just all horsing around in the studio, kind of in between on a break, really, when they were—I think Elvis just for—just to break the tension,

went into “That’s All Right Now, Mama”. And the other two guys—Bill Black and Scotty Moore, the guitar player, picked it up.

And the next minute, it was roaring along and Sam Phillips, in the control room, just went, “This is—this is it! This is what I’m looking for! This is the Black music by a White guy that’s kind of country. It’s kind of Black. It’s kind of country. It’s a bit of everything. This is it! This is what I’m looking for!” And he came into the studio, supposedly, and said, “Wow, what are you doing?”

And they went, “Oh, it’s the ‘That’s All Right, Mama’. It’s a blues song. Really, we’re jumping up. We sort of jumped up this blues song.”

And he said, *[excitedly]* “Well, whatever you’re doing, keep doing it.” And I think when we listen to this recording, that’s what you’re listening to. You’re listening to them at the beginning of recording, it’s kind of incredible. Because they kind of just slip into it.
[Volume increases.]

00:08:25 Music Music

*Well, that's all right, mama
That's all right for you
That's all right, mama*

00:08:31 Billy Guest

[Volume decreases.]
There’s no kind of counting. You don’t feel like someone’s going “one, two, three, four”. It’s like they just slip into the song. And it’s one of the most incredible beginnings in rock and roll ever, because there is no counting. Because there is no feeling of—it’s as if the song is never stopped, as if it’s always been playing somewhere. They’ve always been playing it, the three of them, forever somewhere. And we’ve just suddenly listened.

00:08:55 Music Music

[Volume increases.]
*But, that's all right, that's all right
That's all right now mama, anyway you do*

00:09:11 Billy Guest

[Volume decreases.]
After listening to tons and tons of rock and roll, and then you hear this—one of the very first rock and roll songs, and it starts off so organically and so—slides in like butter. It’s just—and then they’re in the groove.

00:09:27 Music Music

[Volume increases.]
*I'm leaving town, baby
I'm leaving town for sure
Well, then you won't be bothered with
Me hanging around your door
But that's all right, that's all right
That's all right*

00:09:43 Billy Guest

[Volume decreases.]
Yeah, somehow that slap echo, it kind of makes Elvis seem a bit otherworldly or something. Like, he’s just on top of the track, just like joyously. *[Chuckles.]*

00:09:55 Music Music

[Volume increases.]

Dee, dee, dee, dee
I need your loving
That's all right
That's all right now, mama, anyway you do

[Song ends.]

00:10:14 Billy Guest You can tell that they've found this thing they're looking for. And I can only imagine what Sam Phillips was doing. I just can only imagine. He must have been like absolutely going through the roof. Like, this is incredible! I've found it! It's the power of rock and roll. That's what you're kind of hearing, in a way—the power of people discovering rock and roll, and how freeing it is. There's a free element. There's something about—they sound free in this moment of them playing somehow. And it's all very simple, as well. I think that was the other thing about it. It's so simple, but it's saying so much in a way. It's saying things that aren't even in the lyrics. And that's the feeling you get. And that's the feeling you always got with rock and roll music—that there's more being said than are just in the lyrics. You know, somehow.

00:10:59 Music Music "Ready Steady Go" from the album *VH1 Storytellers* by Billy Idol.

Ready, steady, go
Ready, steady, go
Ready, steady, go!

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

00:11:17 Billy Guest Back in the '70s, when I was starting to be in the punk rock groups—you know, Elvis wasn't cool at all. Yeah, there wasn't—there was quite a lot of groups who weren't fashionable to punk rockers. I mean, you know, I did find myself at times defending certain aspects of some of the earlier groups—say Elvis or the Beatles or the Rolling Stones a little bit. Because I had listened to their early music, and I knew how great it was. And of course, there's a lot of other people really in punk were just as into the old music. You know? Really it's just one of those things. It was year one of a revolution, so we were gonna say what we were gonna say and gonna—*[laughs]* spit all over everything we could, really. That was part of it.

But at the same time, I don't think people lost sight of what was really good about things. But yeah, a lot of punk rock people hated Elvis. Yeah, that's just the way it was. You know.

00:12:14 Music Music "That's All Right" by Elvis Presley.

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue.]

00:12:20 Billy Guest How did it change my life as a musician, as a performer? Well, I think one of the things, it just fired you up. That was the thing. I think—you know, it was a bit of an epiphany seeing this music, realizing this early music he'd done that was so different from those rotten movies that I'd sort of been introduced to first. You know, it was just—that was so exciting. And it was just another sort of building block of rock and roll, really, that came down to what were we doing in punk but going back to that era, really? Going back to

the rockabilly era, in some ways. We were—we were going back to the simplistic time when you said a lot with the least.

And that was very much a punk rock thing. We're gonna bring it back to square one. We're trying to go back somehow to what was pure about the music in the first place. Just 'cause we were looking for initial inspiration and we—to go back beyond what had happened in the '60s, you really had to go back to the '50s. That early rockabilly scene, and kind of get the simplicity of it, yet the heart that's in it is huge. You know.

00:13:35 Music Music

[Volume increases.]

*But that's all right, that's all right
That's all right now mama, anyway you do*

*Ah da, da, dee, dee, dee, dee,
Dee, dee, dee, dee, dee, dee, dee, dee
I need your loving
That's all right
That's all right now, mama, anyway you do*

[Song ends.]

00:14:09 Jesse Host

Billy Idol on the song that changed his life: "That's All Right" by Elvis Presley. As I said before, Billy Idol tours constantly. He has a residency coming up at the Cosmopolitan, in Las Vegas. We'll have information about that on the *Bullseye* page at MaximumFun.org. Before we go, here's one more song from Billy Idol's newest EP, *Cage*, "Rebel Like You".

00:14:33 Music Music

"Rebel Like You" from the album *Cage* by Billy Idol.

*Saw you out there in the front-front row
Screaming back at me
Looking like somebody that I know
Guess we got history
Ain't nobody gonna love you more
Except your mommy and your daddy, maybe
Looking like you're on the go, go, go
Guess I've got company*

*Yeah it's alright, yeah it's alright, yeah it's alright
Now you're here*

*Well, I never thought I'd ever get to meet another rebel like you
Yeah I've been living like a devil so long
I thought that it couldn't be true
Call my name, I'll pick up the receiver
Baby, baby, make me a believer
I never thought I'd ever get to meet another rebel like you*

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

00:15:36 Jesse Host

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. At my house, I'm scrambling to save parking spaces out front, because it is my son's ninth birthday,

and there's a video game truck coming. And it turns out, it's really long.

Our show is produced by speaking into microphones. Our senior producer is Kevin Ferguson. Our producers are Jesus Ambrosio and Richard Robey. Our production fellow at Max Fun is Tabatha Myers. We get booking help from Mara Davis. Our interstitial music is by Dan Wally, AKA DJW. Our theme song is called "Huddle Formation". It was written and recorded by The Go! Team. Thanks to them and to their label, Memphis Industries. They have a brand-new single out, by the way. Go check it out.

Bullseye is also on YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook. Find us there, give us a follow, we'll share with you all of our interviews. And I think that's about it. Just remember: all great radio hosts have a signature signoff.

00:16:35 Music Music

[Volume increases.]

*I never thought I'd ever get to meet another rebel like you
Like me, like you, like me, like you
Rebel like you
Rebel like you*

00:16:47 Promo Promo

[Volume decreases.]

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

[Music fades out.]