

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.
00:00:11	Jesse Thorn	Host	<i>[Music fades out.]</i> It's <i>Bullseye</i> . I'm Jesse Thorn. David Crosby died last month after a long illness. He was 81 years old. He was a music legend. His work paved the way for the folk rock movement. He was a founding member of The Byrds. He performed at Woodstock as a member of Crosby, Stills, Nash, & Young, and he was also an award-winning solo musician. He's been inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame twice. Through his whole career, Crosby worked. He released an album in 2021. He was the subject of a documentary in 2019. He put out a live record in December. He was also an outspoken advocate for causes in which he believed. He was tweeting about music and climate change a day or two before he passed away. <i>[Music fades in.]</i> I was lucky to get to sit down with David in 2016. Back then, he had just recorded another solo album, <i>Lighthouse</i> . Here's the opening track, "Things We Do For Love". "Things We Do For Love" from the album <i>Lighthouse</i> by David Crosby. <i>Was it something she said About a dream she had? One of those ones That faded so fast you knew it was bad She dreams That she's losing you I guess it's time There's only so much time To reach in through The fear That's holding her here These are the things These are the things we do</i> <i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i>
00:01:07	Music	Music	
00:02:11	Jesse	Host	David Crosby, welcome to <i>Bullseye</i> . It's great to have you on the show.
00:02:14	David Crosby	Guest	Thank you, man.
00:02:16	Jesse	Host	So, where did you learn to sing?
00:02:21	David	Guest	<i>[Laughs brightly.]</i> I didn't! I never learned a darn thing. I started singing—you know, my family sang folk songs and stuff. And so, we all sang together. I started singing harmony when I was about—hm, they tell me around six years old. And I started singing in clubs as a folk singer when I was about—oh, maybe—I don't know, 14, 15, something like that. And then, I started earning my living that way when I was probably about 17, 18.

00:02:55	Jesse	Host	Did you love folk music?
00:02:57	David	Guest	Very much, yeah.
00:02:58	Jesse	Host	Why?
00:02:59	David	Guest	When my family—when we got our first record player, we got—we had a 78 player. We used to play classical music in the big albums, you know, where you stack up 78s. We got one of the first LP players, 33RPM players, and we bought some of—the very first LPs were 10-inch. They weren't 12-inch. And we got Weavers. Big deal, Weavers. Pete Seeger. Great example. Josh White. Odetta. I learned a lot from Odetta. And a bunch of classical music. And more folk music after that.
00:03:42	Jesse	Host	Were you onboard with rock and roll music at the time?
00:03:44	David	Guest	No. No, Elvis didn't cut it for me. I just wasn't—that wasn't my thing. I mean, I knew about it, you know. And I knew about Bill Haley and the Comets. I knew about—a bunch about stuff. It didn't trigger me until I heard The Everly Brothers. The Everly Brothers just mowed me right down. I loved them.
00:04:06	Jesse	Host	What was it about them?
00:04:08	David	Guest	They could sing harmony! Really fantastically well! They wrote the book on singing harmony.
00:04:14	Jesse	Host	I'm Jesse Thorn. You're listening to <i>Bullseye</i> . My guest is David Crosby. He's a founding member of The Byrds, of Crosby, Stills, & Nash, and an award-winning solo performer.
00:04:26	David	Guest	Why did you leave The Byrds?
00:04:30	Jesse	Host	I didn't leave The Byrds. They threw me out.
00:04:31	David	Guest	<i>[Beat.]</i> Why did The Byrds throw you out? Because I was an <i>[censored]</i> .

[They laugh.]

00:05:05	Jesse	Host	I don't know. You know? We were young guys who had a whole lot of success really fast, before we were even—could even spell mature. And we had big egos. And I wanted a bigger piece of the pie. I wanted to be noticed more. I didn't wanna just be the harmony singer. I wanted to write songs and record them and I—you know. But I think there was a lot of egos and a lot of silliness. You know. Normal things for a band.
00:05:17	David	Guest	When you started with Crosby, Stills, & Nash, was it that same thing that drew you in? Just that feeling of singing harmony with people and feeling like these pieces fit together?
			Kind of. By that time, I knew a whole lot more. I knew that Stephen Stills was writing great songs. I knew that he was a major talent. And I knew that he was already writing songs that I wanted to sing. They were terrific. I'd been tossed out of The Byrds. I was hanging around LA. I was—you know, doing whatever. And I knew Stephen, and we liked each other. And so, I realized early on that the song is the key to the entire thing. If you have a good song that you can sit down and sing to somebody with a guitar or a piano and make them feel something, then you're in business. Then you are on the map. You are on course.

If you're trying to do it without having a real song, with just having "June, moon, spoon" or "ooh, baby"—well, then you're—you know, polishing a piece of stuff. You're—the central issue isn't there. So, I realized that pretty early on. And it happened—you know—because

I was listening to great writers. By that time, James Taylor was happening and was a very significant influence on me. And frankly, right after I got tossed out of The Byrds, I went to Florida and walked into a coffeehouse, and there was Joni Mitchell.

And Joni, when she started out, was an experience that yooou really had—it would be hard to describe to you. I walked in through the door. I stood there. She was singing one of those songs that she wrote early on. And I was just gob smacked. I didn't—I didn't know anybody could be that good.

00:06:59 Jesse Host
00:07:02 David Guest

You fell for Joni Mitchell romantically as well, right?
Yeah. It was kind of like falling into a cement mixer.

[They laugh.]

A very turbulent girl, and I love her still. But thank god I'm not with her.

00:07:16 Jesse Host

Was it scary to be in a relationship with somebody—a romantic relationship with somebody who you felt like was definitely better at the thing that you had dedicated your life to being?

00:07:27 David Guest

Of course! Of course. And I was producing her record—her first record—at the same time. And I would write something—you know, like “Guinevere”—and I was pretty proud of it. And she would come home and sing me three songs that were better. And I would shrivel up a little bit. *[Chuckles.]* It was—truthfully, it was a massive learning experience. I think in 100 years, they'll look back and they'll say, “Okay, who was the best singer-songwriter?” And it's either her or Bob. And she sings rings about Bob! Rings. She's a much better musician than Bob is. And I love Bob, and he's my friend. And I'm not trying to slag him. But it's Joni all the way. She's the best singer-songwriter we've had yet.

00:08:16 Jesse Host

More from the late David Crosby after a quick break. Stay with us. It's *Bullseye*, from MaximumFun.org and NPR.

00:08:25 Music Transition

Thumpy synth with light vocalizations.

00:08:29 Jesse Host

Welcome back to *Bullseye*. I'm Jesse Thorn. If you're just joining us, we are replaying my 2016 interview with the late David Crosby. The singer and songwriter was a founding member of The Byrds and Crosby, Stills, Nash, & Young.

[Music fades in.]

00:08:51 Music Music

He died last month at 81. Before we get back into our interview, let's hear a classic CSN song that Crosby wrote, “Wooden Ships”. “Wooden Ships” from the album *Crosby, Stills, & Nash* by Crosby, Stills, & Nash.

*Say, can I have some of your purple berries?
Yes, I've been eating them for six or seven weeks now
Haven't got sick once
Probably keep us both alive*

*Wooden ships on the water, very free and easy
Easy, you know the way it's supposed to be
Silver people on the shoreline, let us be
Talking 'bout very free and easy*

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

00:09:37	Jesse	Host	I'm sure that you were smoking pot and doing psychedelics from the—you know, from the moment they were broadly available. But when did you start using other, you know, whatever—harder drugs—cocaine and more?
00:09:54	David	Guest	Uuuuh. <i>[Sighs.]</i> Early times of Crosby, Stills, & Nash. We started fooling around with cocaine. And that was a deadly mistake. Didn't all get really terrible until Christine—who was one of the girls that the song was written about—Christine got killed in a car wreck. And I had no equipment to deal with that. Nobody had ever died on me before that I loved. And so, that's when I started down—going off the deep end with the cocaine and heroin, also.
00:10:36	Jesse	Host	Were you scared to do it?
00:10:40	David	Guest	Scared to do what?
00:10:42	Jesse	Host	Were you scared to do the cocaine or scared to use heroin?
00:10:45	David	Guest	Oh, hell no. No, no, no. They told us it wasn't even addictive. <i>[Laughs sharply.]</i> Funny. Most addictive substance on the planet.
00:10:53	Jesse	Host	Did you see other people around you hurting because of it?
00:10:57	David	Guest	Not then, not at the beginning, no. No, we didn't know. We had no idea. What it turned into was a plague. It killed a whole lot of us. I once started writing down the names of people who had died because of hard drugs, and I think it was close to the end of the second page of longform, yellow legal pad. You know, that kind. Single spaced second page. I was getting close to the end, and I said, "I can't do this. It's too depressing." And I stopped.
00:11:25	Jesse	Host	How did it change your life? I mean like, not in the grand scheme of things, but in the day-to-day of things?
00:11:30	David	Guest	It destroyed me completely. I became obsessed with it. My higher consciousness was pretty much canceled out. And you know, I just made mistake after mistake after mistake until I went to prison. And in prison, they don't have that stuff. And so, I kicked both drugs in prison, in a cell with nothing. Not even an aspirin.
00:11:55	Jesse	Host	When did you go to prison?
00:11:57	David	Guest	Mmm. '85? For a year, in Texas.
00:12:01	Jesse	Host	I mean, that's—that's a long time.
00:12:03	David	Guest	A year? Yeah. But—
00:12:05	Jesse	Host	No, I mean it's a long time to be using. I mean, 10 or 15 years, that's a big chunk of your life.
00:12:09	David	Guest	Long time. But we had a lot of money. So, it was easy to get in a mess. The point is though that when I went to prison, I did beat it. And it's a terrible way to beat it, but I went to prison and I came out, and then I did about 14 years in those 12-step programs. And I beat it! I beat it. I've never done it since.
00:12:35	Jesse	Host	It's <i>Bullseye</i> . I'm Jesse Thorn. My guest is singer-songwriter, guitarist David Crosby.
			What was it like for your relationships when you came back from prison clean and—you know—you had this 15 years of your life to deal with?
00:12:51	David	Guest	Well, you take things one at a time. The main thing was that I had, by that time, fallen in love with Jan Dance. And Jandy went to treatment when I went in the joint and waited for me. Now, no one—I mean, <u>no one</u> waits for their guy, their boyfriend who went to prison. They immediately go start another life. Jandy didn't. She loved me, and I loved her. And we waited. And she waited for me to

			get out. And then, we got back together and got married. We're now together 40 years.
00:13:30	Jesse	Host	What about the rest of it? I mean, you not only—I mean, the thing that—the thing that I think of must have been—
00:13:35	David	Guest	The rest of what?
00:13:36	Jesse	Host	The rest of your life. I mean, the rest of the consequences of this—you know, this chunk of 10 or 15 years.
00:13:42	David	Guest	Well, you know, what you do is you throw away the old phonebook—first thing. You notice who sticks around and who talks to you. You treasure the few friends you have left that you didn't blow it with. And you start over. And that's what I did. And the 12-step meetings helped a lot. What can I say? They helped everybody.
00:14:08	Jesse	Host	We're taking a break. We'll be back in just a second. It's <i>Bullseye</i> , from MaximumFun.org and NPR.
00:14:15	Promo	Clip	Music: Fun synth.

Dave Holmes: Oh my gosh, hi! I'm Dave Holmes, host of the pop culture trivia podcast, *Troubled Waters*. On *Troubled Waters*, we play games like Motivational Speeches. And it goes a little like this. Riley, give us an improvised motivational speech on why people should listen and subscribe to *Troubled Waters*.

Riley Silverman: I look around this ad, and I see a lot of potential to listen to comedians such as Jackie Johnson and Josh Gondelman, and they need you to get out there and listen to them attempt to figure out sound rebus clues or determine if something is a *Game of Thrones* character or a city in Wales!

Dave: I have chills. I'm gonna give you 15 points.

[Ding!]

00:14:59	Music	Transition	All that and so much more on <i>Troubled Waters</i> . Find it on MaximumFun.org or wherever you choose to listen to podcasts.
00:15:03	Jesse	Host	Thumpy rock music. It's <i>Bullseye</i> . I'm Jesse Thorn. We're listening back to my 2016 conversation with David Crosby. He died last month at 81.
00:15:19	David	Guest	How did you feel different in your relationship with music after you got clean? Well, I felt great! 'Cause I could do it better. I mean, you know that right? You don't—the people who think you have to be in turmoil or disturbed and high as a kite in order to make music are just wrong. They're totally wrong. You make much better music if you're straight, and you make even better music if you're happy and straight.
00:15:40	Jesse	Host	Is it easier or harder for you to write and to some extent to play now that you're a—what? 75, is that right?
00:15:48	David	Guest	Well, you know, yes. And it's kind of almost inexplicable. Most people kind of fade out on writing, which is the key thing—the writing—as they get older. Either they feel that they have said what they've got to say, or they keep trying to have another hit or they just get lazy.

00:16:15	Jesse	Host	I wanna play another beautiful song from your new album, <i>Lighthouse</i> . My guest is David Crosby. And this song's called "By the Light of Common Day".
00:16:23	Music	Music	"By the Light of Common Day" from the album <i>Lighthouse</i> by David Crosby.
			<p><i>By the light of common day Things look different Than they did in the starlit dark</i></p>
			<p><i>The dark was warm and clouded It was easy to deceive yourself</i></p>
			<p><i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i></p>
00:16:58	Jesse	Host	So, David, I wanna ask you about... you're on Twitter, and you're really fun on Twitter.
			<p><i>[He chuckles.]</i></p>
			<p>You really like actually talk to people and engage with people's questions and stuff. You know, I do too. It's a huge part of—a huge part of my career. But I've never—I've never gotten to the point—I'm better than I used to be, but I've never gotten to the point where the lousy part of it was just somebody just casually insults you in a really specific way while walking past your Twitter. Doesn't bother me. Is that gone for you at this point of your career? Like if somebody—if somebody has some weirdly specific and maybe even semi-accurate insult to you personally on Twitter, does that—does that roll off your back?</p>
00:17:52	David	Guest	<p>Pretty much. They're trolls. They're trolling. They're trying to get a reaction out of you. It's like TMZ got with—you know, they're trying to get you mad. They're trying to get a reaction. So, what do you do? You don't do anything. You ignore them. I never answer those people. I don't go, <i>[cartoonishly angry]</i> "Oh yeah?! Well, I'll tell you your mama's so ugly—!" You know. I don't do that. I don't—and you know, there are people who ask me every single day about CSN. "Do you think you could just, one more time, sing the hits for us, Dave?" I don't answer. I don't bother.</p>
			<p>But the trolls, no, you gotta ignore the trolls, man. It's part of the thing. You have to get comfortable with that. When somebody says, "Yeah, you couldn't write your way out of a paper bag!" You just go, "Okay, fine." Click. And go to the next one. I usually, if they're abusive, I usually just drop them. I block them right away. I don't engage. I just block them. What I like are intelligent questions. I like people who ask me something smart. And people do! People ask me sometimes brilliant things. A lot of times, they'll ask me—you know—which comes first, the word or the music? And sometimes it's dumb. You know, it's "What was it really like at Woodstock, Dave?! No, really! Tell us!"</p>
			<p>Well, it was muddy. I don't remember. <i>[Chuckles.]</i> Actually, here's the real truth, man. This is breaking news and you're the one who gets this breaking news. Nobody else knows this. Woodstock didn't happen.</p>

[Jesse laughs.]

00:19:43	Jesse	Host	They faked it. No, I'm telling you the truth. They faked it in the same stage that they faked the moon landing. It didn't happen.
00:19:44	David	Guest	Are you—?
00:19:49	Jesse	Host	Crazy? Yeah. <i>[Cackles.]</i> <i>[Laughs.]</i> Are you comfortable with the idea of Crosby, Stills, & Nash—this thing that has been part of who you are publicly and part of your artistic life for—whatever it is now, coming up on 50 years—being a thing that was rather than a thing that is or even a thing that will be?
00:20:11	David	Guest	Completely. I'm completely comfortable with it, man. What happens to bands is that when you start them, they're pretty exciting. And then, if they succeed, it's very exciting. And the audience loves you, and that is a joy. And you know—and we did it. And we did good work! I'm proud of CSN work and I'm very proud of the CSNY work. I'm proud of The Byrds. It's all good work. But bands devolve. From the point that they peak, they devolve. They—it heads for just doing it for the money, and pretty soon it's just turn on the smoke machine and play your hits. Well, that's not good enough! Not for me, anyway. It's not good enough. There's no excitement there. There's no joy. There's no forward motion! Zero. And that isn't acceptable to me.
00:21:04	Jesse	Host	Well, I'm absolutely thrilled—and this sounds insincere, because everything that comes out of my mouth sounds insincere, but it's really sincere. I'm absolutely thrilled that you have this much verve.
00:21:19	David	Guest	<i>[Cackles.]</i> Thank you, man.
00:21:21	Jesse	Host	And it's really nice to get to talk to you. I really appreciate you taking the time.
00:21:25	David	Guest	<i>[Music fades in.]</i> My pleasure, man. Totally.
00:21:27	Jesse	Host	David Crosby from 2016. Let's go out with one more classic. This is "Guinevere".
00:21:33	Music	Music	"Guinevere" from the album <i>Crosby, Stills, & Nash</i> , by Crosby, Stills, & Nash.
			<i>Guinevere had green eyes Like yours, milady, like yours She'd walk down through the garden In the morning after it rained</i>
00:22:03	Jesse	Host	<i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue.]</i> That's the end of another episode of <i>Bullseye</i> . <i>Bullseye</i> is created from the homes of me and the staff of Maximum Fun, in and around greater Los Angeles, California. Here in Los Angeles, my producer—Kevin Ferguson—was driving his car when the driver in front of him threw a banana peel out the window. Kevin drove over it and was very glad that <i>Mario Kart</i> is not real.

Our show is produced by speaking into microphones. Our senior producer is Kevin Ferguson. Our producers are Jesus Ambrosio and Richard Robey. Our production fellows at Maximum Fun are Tabatha Myers and Bryanna Paz. We get booking help from Mara Davis. Our interstitial music is composed and provided to us by

DJW, also known as Dan Wally. Our theme song is by The Go! Team. It's called "Huddle Formation". Our thanks to The Go! Team and to Memphis Industries, their label, for sharing it with us.

Bullseye is also on YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook. Find us there. Follow us. 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.

00:23:06 Music Music

[Volume increases.]

On the wall

00:23:13 Promo Promo

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue.]

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

00:23:20 Music Music

[Volume increases.]

She shall be free

[Song ends.]