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(ADVERTISEMENT)

**Transition:** Gentle, trilling music with a steady drumbeat plays under the dialogue.

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

**Music:** “Huddle Formation” from the album *Thunder, Lightning, Strike* by The Go! Team—a fast, upbeat, peppy song. Music plays as Jesse speaks, then fades out.

**Jesse Thorn:** It's *Bullseye*. I'm Jesse Thorn. In early 1993, Nirvana started working on their third album, a follow up to *Nevermind*. It would eventually end up being their last album, *In Utero*.

So, how do you follow up one of the biggest rock records in history? Where do you even start? For Kurt Cobain, it started with a letter to Steve Albini. “Will you record our next album?” Albini was a Chicago producer who had recorded with the Pixies, the Breeders, P.J. Harvey, and the Jesus Lizard—all important bands like Nirvana, but bands that weren't nearly as famous and scrutinized. This is, of course, all rock and roll legend at this point, so forgive me if you have heard this before. But Albini wrote back with a letter of his own. He said he would do it with a few conditions. First, he didn't want the label to mess up the recording, so the band should pay for everything. Second, he didn't want it to take forever. “If a record takes more than a week to make, somebody's (*sensor beep*) ing up,” he wrote. Third, he wanted to be paid a flat fee. “Like a plumber,” he wrote. How much? Whatever the band thought was fair. No percentages or points or anything like that. He didn't want to feel like he was robbing the band.

Compared to *Nevermind*, *In Utero* sounded different—more aggressive and immediate and alive.

**Music:** “Serve the Servants” from the album *In Utero* by Nirvana.

*Teenage angst has paid off well*

*Now I'm bored and old*

(*Music fades out.*)

**Jesse Thorn:** *In Utero* was received as an instant classic. It cemented a legacy for Nirvana that would endure long after Cobain's death by suicide that following year. Steve Albini, for his part, would go on to produce hundreds of other records, thousands—some chart toppers, mostly underground bands.

*In Utero* cemented Albini's reputation. He was a brilliant, uncompromising producer, a guy who would do just about anything to capture and protect the magic that happens when a handful of buddies get together to make music. Albini was a guy with a lot of interests. He recorded about a dozen records of his own, at first with his band Big Black, then later Shellac. He got really good at poker. He started a cooking blog for his wife. And you probably know about this next part. He died last month, suddenly. He was 61.

I was lucky enough to get to talk with him a long time ago, 17 years ago. It was a live show at the Second City in Chicago. When I brought him up onto the stage, it was just after we'd had some live stand up.

**Transition:** Bright, chiming synth with light vocalizations.

*(Audience applause.)*

**Steve Albini:** I was out there. I didn't want to miss any of the comedy. So, that's why I was out there.

**Jesse Thorn:** You don't sound very excited or enthusiastic. Is that just the—?

**Steve Albini:** Oh no, I couldn't think of the right word. I couldn't think of the right word. You know, because like a comedian would be offended if you called him a clown. So—and then an actor would be offended if you called him a comic. But generally.

**Jesse Thorn:** So, what you're saying is that your initial instinct was thank me for the clowns that I brought up.

*(Laughter.)*

**Steve Albini:** I just want—I went through a little checklist. I just wanted to make sure that I wasn't using—wasn't thanking somebody for something that would offend them. It's a kind of a thing that happens to me. I find myself sticking my foot in my mouth a lot.

**Jesse Thorn:** Okay, good. Well, we'll see if we can get to that.

*(Laughter.)*

You were raised in the rock and roll hotbed of Missoula, Montana.

*(Laughter.)*

**Steve Albini:** Yes, home to the bassist of Pearl Jam and the bassist of—

**Jesse Thorn:** A lot of wide-open spaces?

**Steve Albini:** Yeah. (*Chuckles.*) No, I mean there is actually kind of a—there's a little bit of an indigenous rock and roll scene in Montana.

**Jesse Thorn:** How do you think growing up in a place like that—and it's a beautiful place! I've been to Missoula; it's spectacularly beautiful, but how do you think that affected your tastes growing up?

**Steve Albini:** Well, Montana in general has a kind of an open attitude about experience.

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It's a big empty place. And so, everybody's sort of expected to like fumble around out in the woods and figure out how things work. Like, it's not a particularly controlled environment. And I think anybody that's comfortable in Montana is comfortable with a certain degree of uncertainty about what's going to happen and what's permissible, you know. So, Missoula, the town I grew up in, was a college town. And college towns tend to sort of aggregate people from all over. And as a result, there's a kind of an eclecticism to the personalities there, and there's a—you know... it sounds silly to say it, but there's a kind of a progressive mindset.

**Jesse Thorn:** What kind of music did you listen to like as a teenager?

**Steve Albini:** Well, when I first was sort of aware of music was my brother and sister would be playing records. And my parents—my folks had a collection of like hillbilly records and folk music and that kind of stuff. And then my brother and sister both had some records. My sister was really into Gordon Lightfoot.

(*Laughter.*)

Which was kind of hard on me, because I'm not Canadian.

(*Laughter.*)

And my brother was into some of the like sort of classic hard rock stuff, like The Who and Alice Cooper. And I kind of credit him for exposing me to cool music as opposed to just like being battered by what was on the radio.

**Jesse Thorn:** How did you—was there a point when you decided to become interested in “alternative”, quote/unquote, or—?

**Steve Albini:** I didn't really have—music wasn't really that important to me until I heard the Ramones. And I heard the Ramones kind of accidentally on a school field trip. Somebody else had a cassette of the Ramones that he was playing, and a little portable cassette player. And as has happened with so many things that later became really important to me, I was initially sort of baffled by the Ramones. I couldn't tell if they were terrible or not.

(*Laughter.*)

And it started this sort of a... in the way that you can have like a—you can have—like if you have an uncomfortable collar on your shirt, like all day you're adjusting your collar, and then like sort of generally you become obsessed with the collars of your shirt, and you start tearing all the tags out to make sure. Like, I sort of—because I was kind of confused by the Ramones, I became sort of obsessed with the Ramones. And I tracked down their records, and I sort of listened to them obsessively. And I eventually satisfied myself that not only were they not terrible, they were in fact awesome. And then I kind of—I didn't really pattern my life after the Ramones, but they became a—that was sort of the thing that got me thinking about music as something other than just a diversion.

**Jesse Thorn:** How old were you when that took place?

**Steve Albini:** 14 or 15, something like that. I and some of my dork friends decided that we were going to start a band and learn to play music. And so—

**Jesse Thorn:** What kind of band did you start?

**Steve Albini:** It was a kind of a punk rock band, I guess. Not—it wasn't really. Because I don't know that I could have really talked anybody else into punk rock at the time. And I wasn't really even necessarily that convinced of it myself.

**Jesse Thorn:** Did you identify with like the angry, anti-authoritarian part of punk rock?

**Steve Albini:** What appealed to me instantly about punk rock was that it wasn't trying to be... appreciated in the sort of conventional show business norms. It was sort of—all my friends were dorks with odd obsessions, you know. And it was sort of like trying to elevate your personal worldview into something that was credible and like a solid artistic foundation. And I kind of felt like—like, songs about sniffing glue and like... (*Beat.*) That kind of stuff.

(*Laughter.*)

It was like, okay, it's not—you know, it's not trying to tell the universal love story. Or, you know, chronicle the human experience or anything. It's like taking something that's small and comprehensible and, you know, blowing it up into something worth celebrating. I think that's what I liked about it.

**Jesse Thorn:** We're going to take a quick break. When we return, we will hear even more from my conversation with the late Steve Albini. Stay with us. It's *Bullseye* from [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org) and NPR.

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[00:10:00]

**Transition:** Thumpy synth with a steady beat.

**Jesse Thorn:** Welcome back to *Bullseye*, I'm Jesse Thorn. We're remembering the life and work of Steve Albini, the record producer who worked with Nirvana, The Pixies, The Stooges, Joanna Newsom, and many, many, many more—literally thousands more. Albini died last month. He was 61. I was lucky enough to get to talk to Albini live on stage at the Second City in Chicago way back in 2007 when my show was called *The Sound of Young America*. Albini passed just a few days before his band, Shellac, released their final album, *To All Trains*. Let's hear a bit from it before we get back into my conversation with Steve. This is “Girl From Outside”.

**Music:** “Girl From Outside” from the album *To All Trains* by Shellac.

*Mailman*

*Sing us a song*

*You carry a tune in that bag?*

*Mailman delivers*

*You're not a mailman*

*(Music fades out.)*

**Jesse Thorn:** You went to school out here in Chicago. Was going to college one of those things where you're like, “Oh man, now I'm in the big city, now there's all these artsy people around, now the nerd/jock dynamic is completely different”? Like, did you have that kind of classic—?

**Steve Albini:** Yeah, it was pretty eye opening. Like, to be in the company of not just like other like college students, but to be like surrounded by freaks and dope fiends and, you know—there was something about it that was really—

**Jesse Thorn:** Fellow model rocketeers.

*(Laughter.)*

**Steve Albini:** Right. There was something about it that was like—like, I imagined that there was a whole lot more human experience. And then coming to Chicago and just sort of being overwhelmed by it—it was gratifying that I wasn't wrong, you know? Like, if I had come out here and it was a whole bunch of—and it was more Mormons and 4H people, then I probably would have been disappointed in the trip, you know?

**Jesse Thorn:** I asked a friend of a friend who is a big fan of your work what he thought I should talk to you about, and he told me, “Oh, you've got to ask him about an art project he did in college where people threw things at him.” So, I don't have a lot more information than that, but—

*(Laughter.)*

**Steve Albini:** There isn't much more to it.

*(Laughter.)*

I was in an art class that had—you were supposed to do a sort of a conceptual or process sculpture, where—and what I did was I sort of—I printed up invitations, and I brought them around. At the time I was kind of, I was very small scale notorious amongst the fraternity crowd, because I made a sort of a sport out of torturing them in some—in whatever ways I could, you know. So, I printed up invitations, and I brought them around to the different, members of the Greek world and invited them—the concept was to get 100 people who liked me and 100 people who didn't like me to come and throw things at me.

*(Laughter.)*

And to sort of chart what kinds of things your friends would want to throw at you and what kinds of things people that legitimately didn't like you and might want to hurt you would throw at you.

*(Laughter.)*

And there was a little—there was a plexiglass screen that I'd constructed, and I stood behind that. And I'm thinking, alright, if somebody really wants to go to great effort to get through the plexiglass screen—like, somebody wants to, you know, bring a shotput or something—you know, give them a shot. You know, like let them.

So, the first person to throw anything at me was my best friend at the time, John Bonin. And he brought a bowling pin, and he threw it directly at me. And went right through the Plexiglas screen.

*(Laughter.)*

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So, I was basically denuded of the little bit of protection that I had made for myself.

And then there was a whole catalogue of things—spoiled yogurt. I got hit with a little bit of the spoiled yogurt.

**Jesse Thorn:** Was part of the rules that you were allowed to duck it?

**Steve Albini:** Oh, I'm not stupid.

*(Laughter.)*

**Jesse Thorn:** I mean, I don't mean to quibble with your self-definition there, but you are the one who invited 200 people to throw things at you.

*(Laughter.)*

**Steve Albini:** It seemed like it would be interesting regardless of what happened, and it was kind of interesting.

**Jesse Thorn:** Was there a point where you decided that music was going to be the thing that you did like for real, like for your life?

**Steve Albini:** I was—while I was in college, I was in bands. And gradually the bands that I was in became sort of more serious and, you know, I ended up having to sort of accommodate the band with my work schedules and stuff. And... which is kind of an art. I think that's really underappreciated. Like, if you're in a band and you have to hold down a job, I think there's a degree of creativity in making your excuses with your employer that really is underappreciated.

*(Laughter.)*

Like, I invented a wedding that I had to go to for one job. Like, yeah, I'm sorry, I'm gonna have to go to a wedding from the 9th through the 17th. You know?

*(Laughter.)*

You know, stuff like that. Or I would—you would get a job, and it was—I found out that it was pretty difficult to get a job if you tell the guy, you know, “This job means nothing to me, and I'm gonna disappear from it pretty regularly to go do stuff with the band, which means a lot to me.” You know. So, what I would do is I would just lie like kind of, uh... completely.

*(Laughter.)*

I would say—I found it easier to get a career than a job. Like, I would go and apply for an entry level position someplace where they would expect that they would be grooming me over the course of the next year or so to be like a valuable member of the team, right? Those kind of jobs—those jobs are dead easy to get. You just convince them that you really, really want to be in direct mail marketing. Or I worked for a company that was a musical instrument manufacturer, and I told them, you know, I really want to be in wholesaling. Like, that's my job. That's my dream job is to be wholesaling. And so, then those jobs are great! ‘Cause like they don't expect you to do very much in the beginning, during your—while you're training, right? And then like you can invent—you know, you can get sick for a couple of days and not get in too much trouble.

And then, you know, when you have to quit, you just tell them, you know, “I've decided I'm gonna go back to school.”

*(Laughter.)*

And they buy that! Like, they buy it every time.

**Jesse Thorn:** I did that once.

**Steve Albini:** “Okay, well, come see us when you graduate, because we really think that you could be a great addition to the firm.” You know, but just getting a job like—you know, getting a job being a roofer or something like that, that would have to actually be hard! You'd have to do work and, you know, you'd have to prove yourself like on the first day 'cause they'd fire you in a shot, you know?

*(Laughter.)*

Whereas like administrative type people, like they don't care if you do anything or not.

**Jesse Thorn:** Was there a time that you got caught that was particularly egregious and/or embarrassing?

**Steve Albini:** Uuuuh, let's see.

**Jesse Thorn:** Or of which you are particularly proud?

**Steve Albini:** Oh, I'm not proud of any of it. I think it's actually kind of grotesque. And I'm, you know—but I did it, and I sort of have to acknowledge that I did it. And I'm not proud of it. I felt kind of crappy when I would quit a job that somebody thought he'd hired me for, you know? *(Beat.)* But I didn't feel that bad.

*(Laughter.)*

But anyway, so the—I took a job that actually sort of looked like it was developing into a fairly serious job for me. I worked as a photographic retouch artist for a company that did artwork for ad agencies. And I lied my way into the job. You know. I was asked in the interview if I had ever done any Ektachrome or other E6 transparency retouching or chemical reduction. And I think I said—

**Jesse Thorn:** I think we've all run into that one, huh?

*(Laughter.)*

**Steve Albini:** And I said, “Uh, you know, I'm a little rusty.” And I had no idea what he was talking about. I had—and I somehow or another talked my way into this job, learned how to do it, and I got pretty good at it. And I was making pretty good money. The whole time my band was still doing stuff, and I was like sort of making excuses to get out and do stuff with the band. And then I started working in the studio with other bands and doing more recording work for other bands. And I got to a point where I realized that if I committed to it—



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—I probably had enough work to keep me solvent for the next like six months or so. So, I was going to bite the bullet and quit my job. So, I quit my job, my band went on tour, came back from tour, and I had enough work to sort of keep me busy. And then every time it looked like I was going to run out of work, something else would turn up, and I could extend my hiatus from getting a job for another couple of weeks. And it just—eventually, it became a routine.

**Jesse Thorn:** Did your interest in the technical side of music creation and production grow out of the creative side or were they sort of parallel?

**Steve Albini:** Sort of. Yeah, I mean it's—if you've ever—if you're in a band, and your band wants to record a demo of itself for whatever reason, somebody has to take the initiative and learn how to do it. And in the bands that I was in, it just happened to be me. And once you're in a band and you've recorded your own band, then you know where to rent the equipment from, and you know how long it'll take, and all that sort of stuff. So, you end up doing that sort of as a service for all of your friends' bands. Because if you're in a band, all your friends are in bands, you know. And after you do that for your friends, and you do it for yourself—your own band, you do it for your friends' bands, and then your friends will eventually like start recommending you to other people.

Now it's a kind of a golden age for self-recording bands, because there's—recording software and recording equipment are ubiquitous, you know. Whereas when I started doing it in the late '70s early '80s, there might be one guy in town that had a tape machine, and you'd have to go and like bribe it out of him and rig something up in the practice room or whatever. And now you can, you know, Google it. (*Chuckles.*) Do it on your iPod, you know.

**Jesse Thorn:** You've, at this point, produced or recorded like literally thousands of records.

**Steve Albini:** I think so, yeah.

**Jesse Thorn:** Why did you choose to do it that way? I mean, you have your own studio, you basically charge a day rate, and you have the prestige as a producer and engineer that you could, you know—

**Steve Albini:** (*Chuckling.*) That makes me feel really good.

**Jesse Thorn:** Of course.

(*Laughter.*)

You have—you're a very well-known engineer and producer, and you could charge huge amounts of money and just go do, you know—you could live in a big mansion with a lot of Buddhas in it and just record the Red Hot Chili Peppers and Jay-Z every so often.

**Steve Albini:** I think my girlfriend is listening, and I don't—I would prefer it if you would like dial it back a little.

**Jesse Thorn:** Dial down the mansion talk?

*(Laughter.)*

**Steve Albini:** Like, maybe I could have my own trailer somewhere.

**Jesse Thorn:** At some point you could buy a home.

**Steve Albini:** There are sort of two career paths. If you work in the recording business, there are sort of two career paths. Alright. There's the one where you try to do as little work as possible, and for each gig you try to squeeze the last penny out of that gig and try to get as much as you possibly can for every single gig you do, so that you can survive by doing like two records a year, or something like that. And then you accumulate royalties on everything you've ever done, and you'll only end up ever having to do a couple of records. And that's the career, done. And then you can sort of retire on that. In order to do that, you have to set your sights on working with people who are superstar famous, or you have to luck into a couple of records that are enormous, huge smashes. And you have to have a mindset where that's like a goal for you is to not do anything, right?

The other career path is if you actually enjoy the work, you don't mind doing it all the time. So, you can make a lot of records for a modest amount of money, but keep working all the time. And that way you're always working. You've always got your skills up to par, and you sort of stay in the continuum. And that—I actually like my job. I like what I do. So, I hope to be doing it for a very long time. So, it seems like doing it that way, which is the way I'm doing it—which is where I make myself available to just about anybody, and I try not to price myself out of where the interesting music is.

I mean, because if you think about like records that are made over a span of months for superstars, like—I mean, those are horrible records, you know?

*(Laughter and scattered applause.)*

And I'm not trying to be a contrarian here. I think everybody would agree that like the big blockbuster records that are the super-produced records that are a year in the works, like those are all pretty awful, you know? Whereas records that you knock out in a weekend, like a lot of those are pretty good records.

[00:25:00]

And more importantly, if you work on 50 or 100 records a year, you have a much better likelihood of a couple of them being really great experiences than if you work on two records a year. Like, if you work on two records a year and they both suck, then—you know, you've blown a year. *(Laughs.)*

**Jesse Thorn:** We'll finish up with the late Steve Albini after a quick break. Stay with us. It's *Bullseye* from [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org) and NPR.

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**Promo:**

**Music:** Fast-paced synth.

**Yucky Jessica:** (*Rachel McElroy doing a rasping, whiny voice.*) I am Yucky Jessica.

**Chuck Crudsworth:** (*Griffin McElroy doing a gravelly, nasal voice.*) I'm Chuck Crudsworth.

**Yucky Jessica:** And this is—

**Jessica & Chuck:** *Terrible!*

**Chuck Crudsworth:** A podcast where we talk about things we hate that are awful!

**Yucky Jessica:** Today, we're discussing *Wonderful!*, a podcast on the Maximum Fun network?

**Chuck Crudsworth:** Hosts Rachel and Griffin McElroy, a real-life married couple—

**Yucky Jessica:** Yuuuck!

**Chuck Crudsworth:** —discuss a wide range of topics: music, video games, poetry, snacks!

**Yucky Jessica:** But I hate all that stuff!

**Chuck Crudsworth:** I know you do, Yucky Jessica!

**Yucky Jessica:** It comes out every Wednesday, the worst day of the week, wherever you download your podcasts.

**Chuck Crudsworth:** For our next topic, we're talking Fiona, the baby hippo from the Cincinnati Zoo.

(*Music ends.*)

**Yucky Jessica:** I hate this little hippo!

**Transition:** Thumpy synth with a steady beat.

**Jesse Thorn:** It's *Bullseye*. I'm Jesse Thorn. We're replaying my conversation with the late Steve Albini. It was recorded in front of a live audience in 2007.

I feel like, in the interest of timeliness, you're well known for a piece that you wrote quite some time ago now about the economics of signing with a major record label. Those economics have, you know—maybe the contracts are now starting to change some. I think people are signing deals that give away their touring money as well. But how do you think that the huge changes in the music marketplace and what people are selling to people have affected the prospects for new bands?

**Steve Albini:** Well, now is probably the heyday for bands to be able to take control of their own careers. Like, now is probably the best time in history. If you want to start a band, now's the time. And I'm—

**Jesse Thorn:** Let's do it. Let's go.

**Steve Albini:** Okay.

*(Laughter and applause.)*

Must have van and PA. No time wasters.

**Jesse Thorn:** Did you hear my theme music? Yeah, that's me on the, uh—what's that thing that shakes with the little bell things on it? The one—it's not a maraca, but it's a, um—

**Steve Albini:** Tambourine.

**Jesse Thorn:** Tambourine. That's me on the tambourine.

*(Laughter.)*

**Steve Albini:** Alrighty.

*(Huge laughter.)*

My perspective on the current climate is that the big institutional record labels and pretty much the whole infrastructure of the professional mainstream music business is collapsing. And it's collapsing all the way around. That's disappearing. The retail sales of physical CDs are declining, right? Music is proliferating in a million different sort of free-exposure markets. And it's becoming easier and easier for bands to access those audiences on their own with no administrative interference from anybody. Like, all it takes is a MySpace page and a cell phone, and you can have—literally have an international exposure right now. And that's an unbelievable leg up for bands to be able to have such complete control over their exposure, you know.

So, I think it's actually a terrific development that the music industry is collapsing. It's all of the inefficient, parasitic parts of the music industry are all dying off. Whereas the part that matters, the fundamental relationship between the bands and their audience, that's becoming more direct and more convenient.

**Jesse Thorn:** Where do you see the money—where do you see the money coming from?

**Steve Albini:** You know, I don't really know that there's that much money to be made out of being—you know, I think of playing music as something like playing tennis or skiing or—you know? Where you can get a lot out of it without it being your job, you know. And very, very, very few people can do those things professionally, but everybody that wants to do it can do it for its own sake, right?

[00:30:00]

And I feel like the... as much of an economy as there needs to be will be supplied by the live music thing. Like, playing live is a reasonable thing to charge money for. So, people will charge money for it, and people will pay for it. And buying artifacts of the bands that you're obsessed with; I think that's a reasonable thing to charge money for. And I also—I really like the method that Radiohead used for their new record, where they said—

*(Cheers and applause.)*

Wow, that's the first time anybody's ever applauded for a business model.

*(Laughter.)*

Where they just said pay us what you think it's worth. You know? There's a restaurant that I've been to, that I went to in London, that had an open menu. Like, you'd go, and you'd sit down, and you'd tell them what you wanted from their menu for the day. And they would bring it to you, and they'd ask if you wanted wine, they'd bring you wine. And at the end of the meal, they'd tell you, "Just pay what you think it's worth." And they would have like grubby slackers that would show up. And for them, a meal of any kind is worth, I don't know, 10 bucks, tops. Or pounds, or whatever they have there.

*(Laughter.)*

And then—

**Jesse Thorn:** Gilders.

**Steve Albini:** Yeah, but then there were also—like, there was a Bentley with a driver out in front of this place, and there was this like super posh like *Monopoly* guy, you know?

*(Laughter.)*

And with his—you know, like a broad in an evening gown and everything. Like, the—and you have to use the word "broad" in that context. And I'm sure that they're—like, when they paid, I'm sure they paid like a lot of zeros on their check, right? So, I kind of feel like that model works in a lot of different ways. Like, if Radiohead means something to you, you're

really the only person that can decide how much it's worth, you know? And I think that's a pretty cool way to go about distributing your music.

It's sort of the same way that shareware and freeware works for software. I know I've bought quite a few things that I could have used for free, but I decided to support the people that made them by sending them money, that kind of thing. So, I think that's a legitimate way of doing it, but I also think that there will always be people like me who have record players and will want to buy records and will want to play them physically on a hi-fi system rather than listening to them on an iPod or on a computer. So, I think there will always be some market for physical media, but I also feel like it's changing from being an economy where the record company makes a thing and sells the thing to you, and then you can participate with the band, right?

And it's becoming more of an economy where the band's entire career is available to you in some way. You can go see them play, you know. Their music is available in different forms. You know, you might participate in their website, or you might—you know, there's a bunch of different avenues that you can develop a relationship with this band, and all of those have some commercial potential to them. And I just feel like instead of it being like focused on this crazy, single transaction of selling a thing, it's going to be about bands developing an audience, a natural audience, an audience that's unique to them, that will then participate in their career for the duration of the band's career, you know? In the same way that people support—like, I mean this sounds ridiculous when I say it, but in the same way that they support like churches and social organizations and stuff like that because they mean something to them. They will probably support arts groups and musicians and bands.

**Jesse Thorn:** Public radio shows.

*(Quiet laughter.)*

**Steve Albini:** Sure, yeah, it could happen.

*(Laughter.)*

**Jesse Thorn:** Well, Steve, thank you so much for taking the time to be on *The Sound of Young America*. It was such a pleasure to have you.

*(Cheers and applause.)*

Steve Albini, recorded live at the Second City in Chicago in 2007. Let's go out on a song that he produced. This is "Farewell Transmission" from the band Songs: Ohia, released in 2003.

**Music:** "Farewell Transmission" from the album *The Magnolia Electric Co.* by Songs: Ohia.

*The whole place is dark*

*Every light on this side of the town*

*(Music continues under the dialogue.)*

[00:35:00]

**Jesse Thorn:** 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—as well as our offices on beautiful MacArthur Park. Here at my house, I'm about to get a visit from my friend, Mariel Reyes, who worked on the show for years. She was one of our first ever interns and a wonderful pal. She's visiting from New York City. Hi, Mariel.

Our show is produced by speaking into microphones. Our senior producer is Kevin Ferguson. Our producers, Jesus Ambrosio and Richard Robey. Our production fellow at Maximum Fun is Daniel Huecias. We get booking help from Mara Davis. Our interstitial music is by DJW, also known as Dan Wally. Our theme song is called “Huddle Formation”, written and recorded by The Go! Team. Thanks to them and to their label, Memphis Industries, for providing it.

Hey, special thanks this week to Jenna DJ, who brought me out to the Second City all those many years ago. I appreciate that. And also I'm thinking of my friend Matthew Barnhart, who worked for Steve Albini and has been the touring engineer for *Judge John Hodgman* for years and is a good friend. So, we're thinking of you, Matty.

*Bullseye* is on Instagram. We have pictures from behind the scenes and videos and more. Find us at [@BullseyeWithJesseThorn](#). We're also on Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook, and I think that's about it. Just remember, all great radio hosts have a signature signoff.

**Music:** “Farewell Transmission” by Songs: Ohia.

*Listen*

*Long, dark blues*

*(Music continues under the dialogue.)*

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

**Music:** “Farewell Transmission” by Songs: Ohia.

*Long, dark blues*

*Listen!*

*(Song ends.)*

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