

[Parallel Lives: Having A Twin With Mental Illness](#)

January 3, 2011 | NPR · Composer Allen Shawn's twin sister, Mary, was diagnosed with autism and sent to an institution when they were 8 years old. He writes about his relationship with Mary — and his feelings of survivor's guilt — in a new memoir, *Twin*.

[Actor Pete Postlethwaite, 1946-2011](#)

January 3, 2011 | NPR · Virtually unknown in America until his Oscar-nominated role in the 1993 film *In The Name of the Father*, the British actor died Jan. 2 after a long battle with cancer. *Fresh Air* remembers him with highlights from a 1997 interview.

[Henry Threadgill's No-Groove Groove](#)

January 4, 2011 | NPR · Air was a flagship of the 1970s avant-garde, but saxophonist Henry Threadgill, bassist Fred Hopkins and drummer Steve McCall first came together to play Scott Joplin's piano music. That and more are documented on a massive eight-CD box set of Threadgill's music.

[The 'Fallout' Of The CIA's Race To Get Khan](#)

January 4, 2011 | NPR · A new book by journalists Douglas Frantz and Catherine Collins alleges that the CIA was so obsessed with getting information from nuclear trafficker A.Q. Khan's network, it waited too long to shut it down — and stood by while Khan and his associates spread dangerous nuclear technology around the globe.

[How Thousands Of U.S. Guns Fuel Crime In Mexico](#)

January 5, 2011 | NPR · Since 2006, more than 60,000 of the weapons used in Mexican crimes have been traced back to the United States. *Washington Post* investigative reporter James Grimaldi explains how a team of reporters uncovered the names of the top 12 U.S. dealers of guns traced to Mexico.

[Marc Ribot: Translating 'Silent Movies' To Music](#)

January 5, 2011 | NPR · Guitarist and composer Marc Ribot's latest album, *Silent Movies*, pays tribute to film scores. The creation of the album, he says, allowed him to express his more lyrical side.

[Wahlberg, Russell Pack 'Fighter' Full Of Punches](#)

January 6, 2011 | NPR · Mark Wahlberg and David O. Russell talk about creating a movie based on the real-life boxer Micky Ward, who won a welterweight championship in 2000 after several years away from the boxing ring.

[Will Ferrell, Adam McKay Champion 'The Other Guys'](#)

January 7, 2011 | NPR · Will Ferrell plays a cop who prefers pushing paper to chasing criminals in the new comedy from his frequent collaborator Adam McKay. Actor and director join *Fresh Air* to discuss how they prepared for the buddy-cop film.

['Blue Valentine': A Romance Raw And Unhinged](#)

January 7, 2011 | NPR · *Blue Valentine* stars Ryan Gosling and Michelle Williams as a couple in its final throes -- and also, through flashbacks, in more romantic times. Director Derek Cianfrance has previously made several documentaries. Critic David Edelstein says Cianfrance employs that documentary style in this film.

Folklorist Alan Lomax: Everyone Has A Story

January 7, 2011 | NPR · Lomax, the subject of a new biography by John Szwed, spent more than a half-century recording folk music and customs around the world. In 1990, he spoke to *Fresh Air*'s Terry Gross about the decades he spent compiling sound recordings from around the world.

For Anglophiles, Three New TV Shows To Enjoy

January 7, 2011 | NPR · Three shows, all with ties to Britain, premiere Jan. 9. TV critic David Bianculli says all three -- a period drama on PBS and two comedic adaptations on Showtime -- are clever, well-acted and pleasures to watch.

After Death, Protecting Your 'Digital Afterlife'

January 10, 2011 | NPR · What happens to your online presence when you die? Evan Carroll and John Romano edit *The Digital Beyond*, a website that helps users plan what happens to their online content after death. They suggest you start planning now for the inevitable.

Arizona Gun Laws Among Most Lenient In U.S.

January 10, 2011 | NPR · Arizona's gun laws, among the most lenient in the country, allowed Jared Lee Loughner to conceal and carry his firearm without a permit, explains *Washington Post* reporter James Grimaldi, who wrote a piece Sunday about Arizona's lax gun laws and Saturday's Tucson shooting rampage.

William Trevor: A Short-Story Master's Life Work

January 10, 2011 | NPR · William Trevor has been writing for more than 50 years and has won more literary awards than we have time to list. A volume of selected stories has recently been published, and *Fresh Air*'s book critic Maureen Corrigan has an appreciation.

A Memoir Of Memory, Mental Illness And Trauma

January 11, 2011 | NPR · Writer Mira Bartok's memoir, *The Memory Palace*, is in part about the car accident that left her with traumatic brain injury and about her relationship with her schizophrenic mother. She explains how her brain injury helped her understand — and reconnect with — her mother.

Tiger Mothers: Raising Children The Chinese Way

January 11, 2011 | NPR · Amy Chua, a professor of law at Yale, has written her first memoir about raising children the "Chinese way" — with strict rules and expectations. Maureen Corrigan predicts the book will be "a book club and parenting blog phenomenon."

'Lights Out': A Total Knockout Of A Boxing Drama

January 11, 2011 | NPR · The new FX series *Lights Out* centers on a retired heavyweight boxer contemplating a comeback. TV critic David Bianculli says the intense boxing drama may end up being the best new dramatic series of 2011.

Coen Bros. On Wet Horses, Kid Stars: It's A Wild West

January 12, 2011 | NPR · Joel and Ethan Coen's latest film is an adaptation of the Charles Portis western novel *True Grit*. The filmmakers and writers discuss the making of the film and the difficulties of working with both child actors and horses.

How High-Frequency Trading Is Changing Wall Street

January 13, 2011 | NPR · Computerized algorithms now do much of the work on Wall Street. Financial journalist Felix Salmon says they've become ingrained in the financial system -- but are also increasingly complex and difficult to regulate.

Remembering Margaret Whiting: The Voice Of Standards

January 13, 2011 | NPR · Singer Margaret Whiting, who collaborated with lyricist Johnny Mercer and performed classic standards like "Moonlight in Vermont," died Monday. *Fresh Air* remembers Whiting with highlights from a 1988 interview, where she explained how Mercer taught her to read a lyric.

Green Day's Billie Joe Armstrong Takes Broadway

January 14, 2011 | NPR · The frontman for the pop-punk band Green Day details the group's early days in Berkeley and describes what it's been like to see *American Idiot*, the Broadway musical based on one of his albums.

'Green Hornet', 'Dilemma' Prove Bromance Is Dead

January 14, 2011 | NPR · Both *The Green Hornet* and *The Dilemma* open this weekend. The two big-budget male buddy pictures -- one starring Seth Rogen; the other Kevin James and Vince Vaughn -- illustrate that the juvenile "bromance" genre is just getting old.

Following The 'Trail' Of King Assassin James Earl Ray

January 17, 2011 | NPR · After Martin Luther King Jr. was killed on the balcony of the Lorraine Hotel in Memphis, Tenn., the man who shot him, James Earl Ray, was able to evade the FBI during a two-month-long massive worldwide manhunt. Writer Hampton Sides traces the movements of both King and Ray in his book, *Hellhound on His Trail*.

'Dream' Speech Writer Jones Reflects On King Jr.

January 17, 2011 | NPR · Clarence Jones helped draft Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have A Dream" speech and was a close personal adviser and lawyer to the civil rights leader. But he almost turned down the chance to work with King. He explains what changed his mind in his memoir, *Behind the Dream*.

[An Army Wife Reflects On 'When The Men Are Gone'](#)

January 18, 2011 | NPR · Debut author Siobhan Fallon writes about the lives of soldiers and their families in her new short story collection, *You Know When the Men Are Gone*. Families, she says, take the strangeness of deployment and learn how to create a new normal.

[The Decemberists' New Album Fit For A 'King'](#)

January 18, 2011 | NPR · The Decemberists' albums have been characterized by a wide variety of styles, from indie-rock minimalism to art-rock expansiveness. Rock critic Ken Tucker says the band's new album, *The King Is Dead*, is its best album so far.

[Weaver and Michod Go Inside 'Animal Kingdom'](#)

January 18, 2011 | NPR · In the film *Animal Kingdom*, Australian actress Jackie Weaver plays the matriarch of a criminal family who has a twisted relationship with her sons. Weaver and *Animal Kingdom*'s director Michael Michod discuss their unglamorous portrayal of a crime syndicate.

[Lowering Medical Costs By Providing Better Care](#)

January 19, 2011 | NPR · In this week's *New Yorker*, Atul Gawande asks whether it's possible to lower medical costs by giving the neediest patients better care. Gawande says that primary care physicians who target the chronically ill are the new leaders in health care reform.

[Sargent Shriver: A Man Of Public Service](#)

January 19, 2011 | NPR · Sargent Shriver, the founding director of the Peace Corps and the architect of President Johnson's War on Poverty, died on Tuesday. He was 95. Shriver spoke to Terry Gross in 1995 about his role in the War on Poverty.

[How Traumatic Events Change Our View Of Language](#)

January 20, 2011 | NPR · Linguist Geoff Nunberg reflects on the recent shooting in Tucson, Arizona, arguing that traumatic events make people self-conscious about their language — and perhaps, rightfully so.

[Brain Injuries Haunt Football Players Years Later](#)

January 20, 2011 | NPR · Chris Nowinski has made a crusade of fighting head injuries in football. The Harvard-educated former pro wrestler had to leave the ring after suffering multiple concussions. He now educates others — including the NFL — on what head injuries can do to players' brains years later.

[Corin Tucker: '1,000 Years' Of Emotional Longing](#)

January 21, 2011 | NPR · Tucker, a founding member of the band Sleater-Kinney, is back with a new group, The Corin Tucker Band, and an album called *1,000 Years*. Rock critic Ken Tucker says the record has an "air of heavy but often beautiful melancholy."

[Remembering Wilfrid Sheed, A Master Of Wit](#)

January 21, 2011 | NPR · Wilfrid Sheed, the satirical British essayist known for bringing his trademark wit to a wide range of novels, reviews and nonfiction books, died this week. He was 80. *Fresh Air* remembers the writer with excerpts from a 1988 interview.

Reynolds Price: A Southern Writer, A Lyrical Gift

January 21, 2011 | NPR · Reynolds Price, the acclaimed writer known for his evocative novels and stories about rural North Carolina, died in Durham on Thursday. He was 77. *Fresh Air* remembers the writer with excerpts taken from several interviews he gave over the past 20 years.

'No Strings Attached': Corny, Contrived, Conservative

January 21, 2011 | NPR · In *No Strings Attached*, Natalie Portman plays a medical resident who wants to sleep with her friend, played by Ashton Kutcher, with none of the messy emotions that come with a relationship. Critic David Edelstein says the film is calculated — and not particularly good.

A Physicist Explains Why Parallel Universes May Exist

January 24, 2011 | NPR · It is possible that there are many other universes that exist parallel to our universe. Theoretical physicist Brian Greene, author of *The Elegant Universe*, explains how that's possible in the new book, *The Hidden Reality*.

Goldwax Records: A History Of '60s Memphis Soul

January 24, 2011 | NPR · Goldwax, a label which issued some of the greatest soul records ever made in Memphis, is almost completely unknown. Given the quality of what it released, it had very few hits, but its legend has lived on. Ed Ward reports on the label's impressive run from 1963 to '70.

Paul Krugman: The Economic Failure Of The Euro

January 25, 2011 | NPR · Using a shared currency has made it difficult for Europe to recover from its economic crisis, Nobel Prize-winning economist Paul Krugman says. He explains why the euro experiment may fail — and what that would mean for the global trading system.

Digging For Pearls In The New Salinger Biography

January 25, 2011 | NPR · J.D Salinger died a year ago this Thursday, and in time for that anniversary, there's a newly published biography called, simply, *J.D. Salinger: A Life*. Book critic Maureen Corrigan says readers who revere Salinger will find a lot that's surprising in his early background.

Stirring Up 'The Feminine Mystique' 47 Years Later

January 26, 2011 | NPR · On *Fresh Air*, social historian Stephanie Coontz explains how the publication of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* in 1963 helped women view themselves differently. But Coontz, author of *A Strange Stirring*, also critiques many aspects of Friedan's pioneering book, including its omission of minority women.

['Next Stop Is Vietnam': The War In Music](#)

January 26, 2011 | NPR · A recent 13-CD box set called *Next Stop Is Vietnam: The War on Record 1961-2008* documents the music that dominated the airwaves during the Vietnam War. Rock historian Ed Ward says the compilation could have used some "conscientious curation."

[After Tucson Shootings, NRA Again Shows Its Strength](#)

January 27, 2011 | NPR · The shootings put gun control back on the political radar screen. But political scientist Robert Spitzer says legislative changes are unlikely because of the relationship Congress has with the NRA.

[Charlie Louvin: Remembering Country's Harmonizer](#)

January 27, 2011 | NPR · The Louvin Brothers, Ira and Charlie, were considered one of the all-time great country-music duos. *Fresh Air* remembers Charlie, who died Wednesday, with highlights from a 1996 interview.

[Walton Goggins: Playing Brother Boyd On 'Justified'](#)

January 28, 2011 | NPR · The Southern actor discusses playing a white supremacist turned born-again Christian on the critically acclaimed FX series *Justified* — and how he gets into the mind-set to play one of TV's worst bad boys.

[Wanda Jackson: Getting The 'Party' Started](#)

January 28, 2011 | NPR · The Queen of Rockabilly has just released *The Party Ain't Over*, a new album with Jack White of The White Stripes. In 2003, Jackson sat down with Terry Gross to explain why she switched from country to rock, and what it was like to tour with Elvis Presley.

['The Mechanic': A Crisp Thriller From Mr. Man-Crush](#)

January 28, 2011 | NPR · British actor Jason Statham plays a professional hit man in *The Mechanic*, based on a 1972 Charles Bronson thriller. Critic John Powers says the film offers a revealing look at Statham's distinctive appeal.

[The Fresh Air Interview: The Black Keys](#)

January 31, 2011 | NPR · Dan Auerbach and Patrick Carney of The Black Keys join Terry Gross for a discussion of their musical influences, their recent album *Brothers* and why Stephen Colbert recently accused them of "selling out."

[La Lupe: A Performer Ruled By Instinct, Ecstasy](#)

January 31, 2011 | NPR · When La Lupe, the "Queen of Latin Soul," peaked in the 1960s, she was a regular at the Palladium Club and played Madison Square Garden. By the late 1980s, she was on welfare with no fixed address. Critic Milo Miles says a new retrospective album redeems the forgotten singer.

['Times' Editor: The Impact Of Assange And WikiLeaks](#)

February 1, 2011 | NPR · *New York Times* Executive Editor Bill Keller explains why the

paper decided to publish the classified dispatches and cables from WikiLeaks, the effect those documents had in Tunisia and Egypt, and why he came to regard WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange as indifferent to the people whose lives were at risk.

Celebrating James Levine's 40 Years At The Met

February 1, 2011 | NPR · In honor of Levine's 40th anniversary conducting the Metropolitan Opera, the Met has released two box sets of his live performances. Classical music critic Lloyd Schwartz says the new releases prove what a vital figure Levine has been.

Hezbollah, Israel And Egypt: What Happens Next?

February 2, 2011 | NPR · Journalist Thanassis Cambanis puts what has been going on in Egypt in a historical context — and explains what the popularity of other political parties, like Hezbollah, could mean for relations with Israel and the United States.

Javier Bardem On A 'Biutiful' Acting Career

February 3, 2011 | NPR · The Spanish actor received his third Academy Award nomination for his performance in Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu's new film. Bardem reflects on his role in *Biutiful*, as well as his performances in *Before Night Falls* and *No Country for Old Men*.

Two Titian Masterpieces Traveling Through U.S.

February 3, 2011 | NPR · Two Titian masterpieces — *Diana and Actaeon* and *Diana and Callisto* — are in the United States for the first time. *Fresh Air*'s Lloyd Schwartz says art lovers will want to see them in person — particularly because there's a chance they may be permanently separated.

'Kaboom': Innuendo, With A Graphic-Novel Punch

February 4, 2011 | NPR · The winner of the inaugural Queer Palm at Cannes, Gregg Araki's *Kaboom* is a freewheeling apocalyptic comedy centered around a sexually curious college freshman. Critic David Edelstein says the exhilarating movie is "part Blake Edwards, part David Lynch." (*Recommended*)

Remembering James Bond Film Composer John Barry

February 4, 2011 | NPR · Barry, who died Sunday at age 77, wrote the scores for 11 Bond films, as well as the theme songs for *Goldfinger* and *Thunderball*. *Fresh Air* remembers the prolific, Oscar-winning film composer with highlights from a 1999 interview.

The People Behind Pixar's 'Toy Story 3'

February 4, 2011 | NPR · Director Lee Unkrich and screenwriter Michael Arndt discuss the final film in the *Toy Story* trilogy. One inspiration for the movie? An incident in which Unkrich accidentally threw out his wife's toys.

Hollywood 'Stuntman!' Reveals Tricks Of Trade

February 7, 2011 | NPR · Hal Needham worked as a Hollywood stuntman for over 40

years. He details some of his most death-defying feats (and why he can't stand modern special effects) in his new memoir, *Stuntman!*

'Chicago Code': This Time The Good Cops Get A Shot

February 7, 2011 | NPR · Shawn Ryan's first series, *The Shield*, starred Michael Chiklis as a corrupt cop. His new series *The Chicago Code* is also about cops — but this time, they're honest. And TV critic David Bianculli says the heroes (played by Jennifer Beals and Jason Clarke) turn in very strong performances.

The Church Of Scientology, Fact-Checked

February 8, 2011 | NPR · *New Yorker* writer Lawrence Wright explains how he found a number of inconsistencies between documents the Church of Scientology says are official records of founder L. Ron Hubbard's war service and the actual official military records that Wright obtained.

Explaining Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood

February 8, 2011 | NPR · Lawrence Wright talks about the history of the Muslim Brotherhood, a group banned in Egypt by the regime of President Hosni Mubarak that could play an important role in the future of the country.

Visiting Rodney Crowell's Dark, Raucous Childhood

February 9, 2011 | NPR · Country singer-songwriter Rodney Crowell brings his guitar into the studio and performs songs that relate to his memoir, *Chinaberry Sidewalks*, about his rough-and-tumble childhood in East Texas.

Vidal Sassoon: Fresh Hair On 'Fresh Air'

February 10, 2011 | NPR · The trend-setting hairstylist's 69-year career is the subject of a new documentary. He explains how he created some of the most iconic looks of the 20th century, including the geometric, the wash-and-wear and the asymmetric five-point. *With photo gallery.*

Ed Helms: In Scranton Or 'Cedar Rapids,' He's Plucky

February 10, 2011 | NPR · Ed Helms plays a paper pusher on *The Office* and an insurance salesman in the new comedy *Cedar Rapids* — but on Thursday's *Fresh Air*, he plays the banjo. With his band The Lonesome Trio, he joins Terry Gross for an in-studio performance and a chat about his latest film.

The Coen Bros. Reflect On Making A 'Gritty' Western

February 11, 2011 | NPR · True Grit has been nominated for ten Academy Awards, including Best Picture. Directors Joel and Ethan Coen discuss the making of the film and the difficulties of working with both child actors and horses.

'Never Say' Justin Bieber's Not An Awesome Package

February 11, 2011 | NPR · Packaged teen idol Justin Bieber is the star of a new concert documentary, *Never Say Never*, which follows him as he prepares for a show at Madison

Square Garden. Film critic David Edelstein says the film is an "expertly engineered promo" that can make little girls — and Bieber's marketing team — scream with delight.

V.S. Ramachandran's Tales Of The 'Tell-Tale Brain'

February 14, 2011 | NPR · Neurologist V.S. Ramachandran, a pioneer in the field of visual perception, explains how his simple experiments in behavioral neurology have changed the lives of patients suffering from a variety of neurological symptoms in *The Tell-Tale Brain*.

One Man Says No To Harsh Interrogation Techniques

February 14, 2011 | NPR · Matthew Alexander, a pseudonym for the author, was a military interrogator in Iraq who rejected previously used harsh techniques. He writes about how his team hunted down two key al-Qaida operatives in *Kill or Capture*.

Remembering The Composer Of 'Lullaby Of Birdland'

February 15, 2011 | NPR · George Shearing, the jazz pianist who wrote the standard "Lullaby of Birdland" and amused audiences for decades on both sides of the Atlantic, died Monday. *Fresh Air* remembers Shearing with excerpts from a 1986 interview.

PJ Harvey: On War And The New 'England'

February 15, 2011 | NPR · British singer-songwriter PJ Harvey watched hours of war footage before writing the songs for her eighth album, *Let England Shake*. Here, she describes how she translated what she saw into a mournful elegy about the bitter brutality of combat.

Twitter's Biz Stone On Starting A Revolution

February 16, 2011 | NPR · The co-founder of Twitter talks about how the service was used in Egypt to help organize the protests, and about the rumors that the popular microblogging service could be purchased by Google or Facebook.

'I Think I Love You,' David Cassidy

February 16, 2011 | NPR · Allison Pearson follows up *I Don't Know How She Does It* with *I Think I Love You*, a screwball comic novel about the lengths a girl will go to for her teen idol.

A Look At The Youth Of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood

February 17, 2011 | NPR · Journalist Charles Sennott recently returned from Tahrir Square, where he was filming a documentary on the revolution for PBS's *Frontline*. It focuses on the young members of the Muslim Brotherhood who played an important role in Egypt's revolution.

Unexpected Excitement In 'Cold Weather' & 'Poetry'

February 17, 2011 | NPR · Aaron Katz's mumblecore flick *Cold Weather* is set in Portland, Ore.; Lee Chang-dong's *Poetry* is from South Korea. Critic John Powers says both films are wonderful, in part because the stories they tell are so unpredictable.

(Recommended)

James Franco: On Balancing His Many Passions

February 18, 2011 | NPR · James Franco doesn't just spend his time acting in the movies. The star of *Milk*, *Howl* and *127 Hours* is also an accomplished writer and graduate student. He explains how he juggles his many roles — and why he continues to take on new challenges.

Tom Hooper: On Directing 'The King's Speech'

February 18, 2011 | NPR · Tom Hooper's film, *The King's Speech*, tells the true story of King George VI's stammer and his relationship with an unconventional speech therapist who helped him speak. The movie was recently nominated for 12 Academy Awards, including Best Director.

'Unknown': A Suspenseful, Action-Filled Mind-Bender

February 18, 2011 | NPR · Liam Neeson plays a botanist-turned-action-star in Jaume Collet-Serra's thriller *Unknown*. Critic David Edelstein says the tricky thriller takes viewers on a hell of a ride while letting Neeson shine as an action star.

Ella Mae Morse: The Voice Of Capitol's First Hits

February 21, 2011 | NPR · In 1942, the founders of Capitol Records were in urgent need of a hit. It came from a most unlikely place: a young woman named Ella Mae Morse, whose place in pop-music history has never really been given its due. Rock historian Ed Ward shares her story.

Tracing President Lincoln's Thoughts On Slavery

February 21, 2011 | NPR · Abraham Lincoln always thought slavery was unjust — but struggled with what to do once slavery ended. Historian Eric Foner traces how Lincoln's thoughts about slavery — and freed slaves — mirrored America's own transformation in *The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery*.

Lambert Wilson: 'Of Gods And Men' (And James Bond)

February 22, 2011 | NPR · You may know him from *The Matrix*, but the French actor portrays a Trappist monk in his latest film — inspired by the true story of seven monks who were kidnapped during the Algerian Civil War.

Teddy Thompson's 'Bella' Lives Up To Its Name

February 22, 2011 | NPR · British singer-songwriter Teddy Thompson worked with David Kahne, who's helped acts ranging from The Strokes to Tony Bennett, to write and record his fifth album, *Bella*. Rock critic Ken Tucker says the result is a romantic album that spans a wide range of styles and moods.

Allison Pearson's 'Love' Affair With Keith Partridge

February 23, 2011 | NPR · Allison Pearson follows up her 2002 best-seller, *I Don't Know How She Does It*, with *I Think I Love You*, a novel about a teenage girl's obsession with

teen star David Cassidy. The book wasn't hard for Pearson to write. When she was growing up, she was madly in love with Cassidy too.

Joe Lovano: Drawing On 'Bird'

February 23, 2011 | NPR · In the 1940s, Charlie Parker, nicknamed "Bird," was a prime mover behind the new style of bebop, with its refined harmonies, offbeat rhythms and abstract melodies played at breakneck speed. On *Bird Songs*, Joe Lovano looks for new ways into Parker's material.

Dolorean: 'Unfazed' By Life's Challenges

February 24, 2011 | NPR · Dolorean is an Oregon-based band that started out playing country-rock but then slowly moved into pop-music territory. Rock critic Ken Tucker says the group's new album *Unfazed* is deliberate, but not maudlin.

The Supreme Court's Failure To Protect Blacks' Rights

February 24, 2011 | NPR · After the Civil War, the United States seemed poised to grant equal rights to blacks. But the Supreme Court's rulings in the late 19th century kept blacks segregated for decades, says constitutional scholar Lawrence Goldstone.

Natalie Portman: Going Dark For Thriller 'Black Swan'

February 25, 2011 | NPR · The *Black Swan* star describes what it was like to train with members of the New York City Ballet in preparation for her role as a mentally unstable ballet dancer in Darren Aronofsky's psychological thriller.

Melissa Leo: Playing Alice Ward In 'The Fighter'

February 25, 2011 | NPR · Melissa Leo isn't that much older than actors Mark Wahlberg and Christian Bale. But the acclaimed character actress plays their mother in David O. Russell's boxing drama *The Fighter*. She discusses her role, which has earned her an Academy Award nomination.

A 'Hall Pass' To Cheat Keeps Marital Despair At Bay

February 25, 2011 | NPR · The Farrelly brothers' latest comedy stars Owen Wilson and Jason Sudeikis as sexually frustrated men given a week off from marriage by their spouses. Movie critic David Edelstein says the movie's premise — while creepy — leaves viewers "with a sad and wise view of adulthood."

Weaver And Michod Go Inside 'Animal Kingdom'

February 25, 2011 | NPR · In the film *Animal Kingdom*, Australian actress Jackie Weaver plays the matriarch of a criminal family who has a twisted relationship with her sons. Weaver and *Animal Kingdom*'s director Michael Michod discuss their unglamorous portrayal of a crime syndicate.

Dirk Vandewalle Peers Inside Gadhafi's World

February 28, 2011 | NPR · Dirk Vandewalle, an associate professor of government at Dartmouth College, gives an inside look at Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi and his

42-year rule. Vandewalle has studied and written about Libya since the 1980s. In 1986 he lived in Libya for 14 months, the only Western scholar there at the time.

The Long-Term Effect Of Wisconsin's Union Battles

March 1, 2011 | NPR · *New York Times* labor and workplace reporter Steve Greenhouse explains why other states with large budget deficits are now also considering taking on public unions — and how the standoff between organized labor and Republican governors is likely to play out.

Remembering Suze Rotolo, Dylan's 'Freewheeling' Muse

March 1, 2011 | NPR · Suze Rotolo, who strongly influenced Bob Dylan's songwriting and walked beside him on the album cover for *The Freewheeling Bob Dylan*, died of lung cancer on Friday. She was 67. *Fresh Air* remembers Dylan's muse with excerpts from a 2008 interview.

Without Intervention, Lions Heading For Extinction

March 2, 2011 | NPR · The worldwide lion population has declined a staggering 90 percent in the past 50 years. In their documentary *The Last Lions*, conservationists Beverly and Dereck Joubert track the giant hunters across Botswana and warn that without intervention, lions may soon go extinct.

In 'Pym,' A Comic Glimpse Into Poe's Racial Politics

March 2, 2011 | NPR · In his new book, *Pym*, fiction writer Mat Johnson plays with the premise of Edgar Allan Poe's only novel, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*. Poe's novel was a "master text of anxious white fright," says Maureen Corrigan, and Johnson's clever book shines new light on the material.

Grant Achatz: The Chef Who Lost His Sense Of Taste

March 3, 2011 | NPR · Two years after opening his award-winning Chicago restaurant Alinea, chef Grant Achatz was diagnosed with tongue cancer. He describes losing and regaining his taste in *Life, on the Line*. "My palate developed just as a newborn," Achatz says. "I don't recommend it, but I think it made me a better chef."

'Of Gods And Men': A Moving Test Of Faith

March 4, 2011 | NPR · Xavier Beauvois' *Of Gods and Men* is inspired by the true story of seven French monks working in Algeria, who were kidnapped in 1996 during the Algerian Civil War and later executed. Film critic David Edelstein says the stark drama is both powerful and perceptive.

'Next Great Restaurant': Delicious Reality TV

March 4, 2011 | NPR · February sweeps ended Wednesday, so most broadcast networks are back to reruns and reality shows. TV critic David Bianculli says that one of the reality shows, NBC's *America's Next Great Restaurant*, is much better than the rest — and makes him hungry for more.

[**Alice Cooper: The Gentle Man Behind The Shock Rocker**](#)

March 4, 2011 | NPR · Shock rocker Alice Cooper is a member of the incoming class of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. In 2007, he spoke to Terry Gross about the creation of the Alice Cooper persona, his early stage shows and his vaudevillian humor.

[**Tom Waits: A Raspy Voice Heads To The Hall Of Fame**](#)

March 4, 2011 | NPR · On March 14, Tom Waits will be inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. *Fresh Air* honors the gritty vocalist with highlights from a 2002 interview, in which he discussed his musical influences and his longtime collaboration with his wife, Kathleen Brennan.

[**A Covert Affair: When CIA Agents Fall In Love**](#)

March 7, 2011 | NPR · Former CIA operatives Robert and Dayna Baer met on the job and fell in love. They talk about their relationship and some of their assignments in *The Company We Keep: A Husband-and-Wife True-Life Spy Story*.

[**'Sweet Smell Of Success': Gossip With A Cutting Edge**](#)

March 7, 2011 | NPR · The classic 1957 film about the gossip industry has been remastered and rereleased on DVD and Blu-Ray. Critic John Powers says the movie's Manhattan is a "seamy, deglamorized world in which small men destroy lives to make themselves big."

[**Angels Play The Harp, Printup Plays The Trumpet**](#)

March 8, 2011 | NPR · Marcus Printup isn't the first trumpeter to combine the trumpet and the harp. It's long been an instrument where jazz women could make their mark. *A Time for Love* is a quiet and cozy album with Printup's wife, harpist Riza Hequibal, but it's never dull.

[**Sam Chwat, Dialect Coach To The Stars \(And To Us\)**](#)

March 8, 2011 | NPR · Sam Chwat, a dialect specialist who worked closely with people in business, politics and the film industry who wanted to lose their regional accents, died last Thursday. In 1994, Chwat explained how he helped clients like Robert DeNiro and Julia Roberts lose their famous regional dialects.

[**Putting Wisconsin's Union Battle In Historical Context**](#)

March 8, 2011 | NPR · In *There is Power in a Union: The Epic Story of Labor in America*, journalist Philip Dray follows the labor movement as it grew out of 19th century uprisings in textile mills. There are several parallels between those historical battles and what is currently going on in Wisconsin, he says.

[**Jimmie Dale Gilmore: Old-Time Sounds On 'Heirloom Music'**](#)

March 9, 2011 | NPR · Gilmore travels back to the 1930s for inspiration on his forthcoming album, *Heirloom Music*. The Texas singer talks about his songs and his upcoming performance at the 2011 South by Southwest music festival in Austin.

[Trading Wall Street For Life In A Monastery](#)

March 9, 2011 | NPR · Henry Quinson was a very successful currency trader when, at the age of 27, he walked away from his comfortable life and joined a rural monastery in France. He shares his story and explains how he became an adviser for the 2010 French film *Of Gods and Men*.

[On '21,' Adele's Voice Is Wise Beyond Her Years](#)

March 9, 2011 | NPR · Adele won two Grammys in 2009 for her debut album, *19*. She's just released her second album, *21*, which was recorded when she was that age. (She's now 22.) Rock critic Ken Tucker says it's Adele's voice, even more than her material, that makes her special.

['Unprotected Texts': The Bible On Sex And Marriage](#)

March 10, 2011 | NPR · Pastor Jennifer Knust says that the Bible shouldn't be used as a guidebook for marriage or sexuality because passages related to sex, monogamy, homosexuality and gender roles are more complex and nuanced than popular culture has led us to believe.

[Filmmaker Susanne Bier, Seeking 'A Better World'](#)

March 10, 2011 | NPR · The Danish film *In a Better World* won the 2011 Oscar and Golden Globe for Best Foreign Film. Director Susanne Bier explains how stories about her family's escape from the Holocaust inform her work.

['Certified Copy': A Marvelous, Mind-Blowing Movie](#)

March 11, 2011 | NPR · Iranian director Abbas Kiarostami's *Certified Copy* appears to tell a simple story — two people, played by Juliette Binoche and William Shimell, are mistaken for a long-married couple. But there are plot twists that will "ping-pong around your mind for days," says critic David Edelstein.

[Neil Diamond: A 'Solitary Man' Enters The Hall Of Fame](#)

March 11, 2011 | NPR · Adult-contemporary music legend Neil Diamond will enter the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame on Monday. *Fresh Air* celebrates the best-selling singer-songwriter with highlights from a 2005 interview.

[Dr. John: A New Orleans Legend In The Hall Of Fame](#)

March 11, 2011 | NPR · Five-time Grammy winner Mac Rebennack, better known as Dr. John, is a member of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame's 2011 class. In 1986, Rebennack joined Terry Gross for a conversation about his early days performing in the New Orleans club scene.

[Darlene Love: A Background Singer Takes The Spotlight](#)

March 11, 2011 | NPR · Love sang background vocals on some of the biggest hits of the 1960s, including "Da Doo Ron Ron" and "Johnny Angel." On March 14, Love will be inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall Of Fame. *Fresh Air* honors the vocalist with excerpts from a 1988 interview.

Frank Calabrese Jr. On 'Operation Family Secrets'

March 14, 2011 | NPR · Frank Calabrese Jr. has written a memoir about bringing down his father's murderous Chicago crime family. In *Operation Family Secrets*, Frank details how he helped the FBI convict his father of several murders by wearing a hidden wire and taping his father's conversations.

Remembering 'Christmas' Songwriter Hugh Martin

March 15, 2011 | NPR · Songwriter Hugh Martin, who co-wrote the classic song "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" for Judy Garland's 1944 movie, *Meet Me in St. Louis* died on Friday. He was 96. *Fresh Air* remembers Martin with highlights from a 1989 interview.

Anne Roiphe's 1950s Feminism In 'Art And Madness'

March 15, 2011 | NPR · In *Art and Madness*, her memoir of the literary 1950s, writer Anne Roiphe describes going into labor by herself in a snowdrift, unable to wake her sleeping playwright husband. Over the years, she learns her own power, charting her course through feminism and a life in art.

'Win-Win': Tom McCarthy Wrestles With Morals

March 15, 2011 | NPR · Director and screenwriter Tom McCarthy's film *Win-Win* stars Paul Giamatti as a high school wrestling coach struggling with a moral dilemma. McCarthy, a former wrestler himself, explains why he left the mats in high school and turned to improv comedy.

Medicine's Rising Costs Put Hippocratic Oath At Risk

March 16, 2011 | NPR · Are doctors rationing health care? Health policy analyst Gregg Bloche says doctors routinely compromise the principles of the Hippocratic Oath when they decide which expensive tests and treatments they can and can't provide, in order to please lawmakers, lawyers and insurance companies.

The 'Secret History' Of Baseball's Earliest Days

March 16, 2011 | NPR · Baseball's official historian, John Thorn, sets the record straight on the game's earliest days ... in the 1700s. Yes, that's right, baseball started decades before Abner Doubleday supposedly created the game at Cooperstown — and it only became popular when professional gamblers took an interest.

When A Rock Historian Loves Soul Singer Percy Sledge

March 16, 2011 | NPR · The master of country soul, Percy Sledge crooned some of the genre's greatest hits, like "When a Man Loves a Woman." Rock historian Ed Ward says a new box set featuring all of Sledge's Atlantic recordings is certainly worth a listen.

How Offshore Tax Havens Save Companies Billions

March 17, 2011 | NPR · Google, Forest Laboratories and other companies shave billions off their taxes by shifting their revenue through countries with lower income tax rates,

Bloomberg News reporter Jesse Drucker says.

Greg Mottola: Making 'Paul' Realistically Alien

March 17, 2011 | NPR · The director's new sci-fi comedy stars Simon Pegg and Nick Frost as two guys who hit the highway after Comic-Con — and pick up an ET on the side of the road. The character-driven laughs depend on your buying into a main character who's entirely computer-generated.

Tracing The 'Immortal' Cells Of Henrietta Lacks

March 18, 2011 | NPR · In 1951, Henrietta Lacks died after a long battle with cervical cancer. Doctors cultured her cells without permission from her family. The story of those cells and of the medical advances that came from them, is told in Rebecca Skloot's book, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*.

'Win-Win': A Go-For-It Movie With Dissonant Notes

March 18, 2011 | NPR · Tom McCarthy's new comedy stars Paul Giamatti as a suburban lawyer who moonlights as a high school wrestling coach. Critic David Edelstein says the film is "a symphony of marvelous voices" reminiscent of *Little Miss Sunshine*.

Before 'Ipanema,' Stan Getz's Exquisite 'Quintets'

March 18, 2011 | NPR · Before he was famous for popularizing bossa nova with "The Girl from Ipanema" in the early 1960s, saxophonist Stan Getz recorded with small jazz groups all through the '50s. Jazz critic Kevin Whitehead says a new reissue shows Getz was one of the best at playing pretty.

A Reissue Of Nick Lowe's 'Labour Of Lust' Is 'So Fine'

March 21, 2011 | NPR · It's hard to believe that Nick Lowe's second album, *Labour of Lust*, was out of of print for over 20 years. But a new reissue by Yep Roc has remedied that situation. Rock historian Ed Ward says that it's good to have the album — featuring the tracks "Without Love" and "Cruel to Be Kind" — back on shelves.

'Big Love's Creators Deconstruct The Show's Finale

March 21, 2011 | NPR · Mark Olsen and Will Scheffer, who wrote and produced the HBO drama, explain the show's surprise ending — and why it's going to be hard for them to let their fictive polygamous family go after five seasons. (**Warning: major spoilers**)

Why Libya Matters To The Middle East's Future

March 22, 2011 | NPR · The future of Libya has become a key part in the rapidly changing transformation of the Arab world. On today's *Fresh Air*, political scientist Marc Lynch explains why the United States and its allies decided to intervene — and what's at stake for each side.

Dan Savage: For Gay Teens, Life 'Gets Better'

March 23, 2011 | NPR · Dan Savage is an advice columnist who spawned a worldwide movement after hearing one too many times about anguished gay teens committing

suicide. Savage and his husband, Terry Miller, talk about their "It Gets Better" project, which now has over 10,000 video submissions.

Cyro Baptista: Sounds From Everywhere, Evoking Home

March 24, 2011 | NPR · Brazilian percussionist Cyro Baptista has played with everyone from Paul Simon to Herbie Hancock to Yo-Yo Ma. On his album *Caym*, Baptista and his band interpret the music of John Zorn. Music critic Milo Miles says the album "avoids the typical downfalls of eclectic world-music albums."

'We're Broke': Empty Bank Accounts, Empty Meaning?

March 24, 2011 | NPR · Linguist Geoff Nunberg says everyone's using the phrase "we're broke" these days to justify cuts in government programs and services. But what does "we're broke" actually mean? The answer, says Nunberg, is trickier than you might think.

How 'Italian Food' Became A Global Sensation

March 24, 2011 | NPR · Twenty years ago, Italian food was regarded as cheap, peasant food. Now it's served on menus worldwide and considered to be one of the healthiest cuisines. *Esquire Magazine's* food critic John Mariani chronicles the story of pizza, macaroni and red sauce in *How Italian Food Conquered the World*.

How Western Diets Are Making The World Sick

March 24, 2011 | NPR · Physician Kevin Patterson has treated patients in the Arctic, in Kandahar and on remote Pacific Islands. He says that Western ideas and the effects of urbanization are making people everywhere in the world both fatter and sicker.

'Mildred Pierce': A Masterpiece Of Modern Film Noir

March 25, 2011 | NPR · The HBO miniseries *Mildred Pierce* is based on the 1941 novel by James M. Cain, replacing Joan Crawford — who won an Oscar for the 1945 film version — with Kate Winslet. TV critic David Bianculli says Winslet does wonders with her role — and will be tough to beat, come Emmy season.

Wahlberg, Russell Enter Ring With 'The Fighter'

March 25, 2011 | NPR · Mark Wahlberg and David O. Russell talk about creating a movie based on the real-life boxer Micky Ward, who won a welterweight championship in 2000 after several years away from the boxing ring.

Elizabeth Taylor's Legacy: AIDS Activist, Movie Star

March 25, 2011 | NPR · *Fresh Air's* critic-at-large John Powers was raised to dislike Elizabeth Taylor. But he soon fell for her charms. He remembers the legendary actress who was a siren on-screen — and a committed supporter of HIV/AIDS research.

Playwright LANFORD WILSON.

March 25, 2011 | NPR · He has died at age 73. Wilson won the Pulitzer Prize for his play, "Talley's Folly." He wrote 17 full length plays and 30 one acts. Titles include "The Hot L Baltimore," "Burn This," "Fifth of July" and "Redwood Curtain," which had just come

out when Terry spoke to Wilson in 1992. Wilson was one of the founders of The Circle Repertory Company in New York. He was nominated for Tony Awards for "Angels Fall," "Talley's Folly" and "Fifth of July." (REBROADCAST. ORIGINAL AIRDATE: 3/13/92)

Timothy Olyphant: 'Justified' In Laying Down The Law

March 28, 2011 | NPR · Actor Timothy Olyphant stars in the FX series *Justified* as Deputy U.S. Marshal Raylan Givens, a present-day lawman with Wild West instincts. Olyphant also starred in HBO's *Deadwood* as sheriff Seth Bullock.

'Middle Brother': Hand-Clapping Foot-Stompers

March 28, 2011 | NPR · Middle Brother is a trio formed by members of other bands: Deer Tick, Dawes and Delta Spirit. Critic Ken Tucker says the group's new self-titled album reaches across decades of rock, folk and country music.

The Joy Of The Mundane In 'Emily, Alone'

March 29, 2011 | NPR · In his new novel, *Emily, Alone*, Stewart O'Nan explores the topics of widowhood and old age — but the book never feels stale, says *Fresh Air*'s Maureen Corrigan. Instead, it is a charming, quiet meditation on getting older.

'Moby-Duck': When 28,800 Bath Toys Are Lost At Sea

March 29, 2011 | NPR · In 1992, a cargo ship container tumbled into the North Pacific, dumping 28,800 toys into the ocean. What happened to those toys led writer Donovan Hohn on a worldwide journey filled with beachcombers, oceanographers, ship captains and environmentalists.

The Vagrants: A Hot '60s Band, For Exactly Four Years

March 29, 2011 | NPR · The Vagrants, one of New York City's most popular bands in the 1960s, recorded only 30 minutes' worth of music. Rock historian Ed Ward explains what happened to the band and why its music is worth hearing today.

A Journalist Bears Witness To Mugabe's Massacre

March 30, 2011 | NPR · African journalist Peter Godwin returned to his native Zimbabwe in 2008 to follow the presidential election. He writes about President Robert Mugabe's refusal to give up power — and Mugabe's torture campaign against opposition supporters — in *The Fear*.

'The Killing': 'Twin Peaks' Meets '24' On AMC

March 31, 2011 | NPR · The new AMC drama *The Killing* tells the story of the murder of a young girl from three different perspectives. TV critic David Bianculli says the show is "AMC's most depressing series yet" — and explains why it reminds him of *The X-Files*, *24* and *Twin Peaks*.

The Future Of Nuclear Energy In The U.S.

March 31, 2011 | NPR · Before the Fukushima disaster, nuclear power was being rebranded as a green form of energy. *New York Times* energy reporter Matt Wald explains

how the situation in Japan is now raising questions about the safety and disposal of nuclear waste in the U.S.

Jon Hamm: Mad Men's Don Draper Redefines Himself

April 1, 2011 | NPR · On Thursday night, *Mad Men* creator Matt Weiner signed a new deal with AMC to create at least two more seasons of the Emmy-winning drama. On today's *Fresh Air*, actor Jon Hamm talks about playing the character Don Draper and details how he auditioned for the role.

Mitchell: On Bringing 'Thousand Autumns' To Life

April 1, 2011 | NPR · Post-modern writer David Mitchell pulls off an old-fashioned yet action-packed tale in his fifth novel, *The Thousand Autumns Of Jacob de Zoet*. The story follows Jacob, a bookkeeper at an outpost of the Dutch East Indies Company, as he falls for a local midwife in early 19th century Japan.

'Source Code' And 'Insidious': Two Twisty Thrillers

April 1, 2011 | NPR · The less you know about the unnerving thrillers *Source Code* and *Insidious* the better, says critic David Edelstein. But only one of the two films "has so much emotional heft that it never loses that exhilarating jitter."

The High Probability Of Finding 'Life Beyond Earth'

April 4, 2011 | NPR · Science journalist Marc Kaufman says we're closer than ever to finding out if there's life on other planets in the universe. He details the current research and challenges for scientists in *First Contact: Scientific Breakthroughs in the Hunt for Life Beyond Earth*.

Paul Simon: Back In 'Graceland' With 'So Beautiful'

April 4, 2011 | NPR · Paul Simon has again teamed up with producer Phil Ramone for his new album *So Beautiful or So What*, the first since 2006's *Surprise*. Rock critic Ken Tucker says the album succeeds in blending elements of *Graceland* and Simon's self-titled 1972 solo album.

How The 'Pox' Epidemic Changed Vaccination Rules

April 5, 2011 | NPR · During the 1898-1904 pox epidemic, public health officials and policemen forced thousands of Americans to be vaccinated against their will. Historian Michael Willrich examines that epidemic's far-reaching implications for individual civil liberties in *Pox: An American History*.

'Please Look After Mom': A Guilt Trip To The Big City

April 5, 2011 | NPR · A blockbuster Korean novel has just been translated into English, in which a mother from the country goes missing in Seoul. *Fresh Air*'s Maureen Corrigan says the book delves deeply into traditional values, putting the mother's melancholy squarely on the shoulders of her grown (unappreciative) children.

Why The Future Of Yemen Is So Important

April 6, 2011 | NPR · *New Yorker* writer Dexter Filkins recently returned from Yemen, where he met with demonstrators who have called for President Ali Abdullah Saleh's immediate resignation. Filkins explains why Yemen's uprisings are particularly worrisome for U.S. counterterrorism officials.

[Under The Sea, Sex Is Slimy Business](#)

April 7, 2011 | NPR · In *Sex, Drugs, and Sea Slime: The Oceans' Oddest Creatures and Why They Matter*, underwater researcher Ellen Prager describes some of the craziest activities that help ocean creatures stay alive, fight predators, find food and reproduce.

[Brian Carpenter: Eclectic Jazz, Rooted In Americana](#)

April 7, 2011 | NPR · Singer-songwriter Brian Carpenter has cited places like Coney Island and the Florida Panhandle as inspiration for his work. On his latest album, *Hothouse Stomp*, Carpenter musically travels back to the jazz scene in 1920s Harlem and Chicago.

['Your Highness': Low Comedy's Crowning Glory?](#)

April 8, 2011 | NPR · James Franco and Danny McBride set off on a quest in David Gordon Green's action comedy *Your Highness* — a sword-and-sorcery spoof that David Edelstein says is fantastic if you're in the right gross-minded juvenile mood.

['Upstairs, Downstairs' Returns To 165 Eaton Place](#)

April 8, 2011 | NPR · After 34 years, the British miniseries *Upstairs, Downstairs* will return to PBS on Sunday. TV critic David Bianculli says the surprisingly fresh yet faithful sequel was worth the wait — but now he wants more.

[For Two Decades, Defending Death Row Inmates](#)

April 8, 2011 | NPR · Attorney David Dow has spent his career representing inmates who have been sentenced to death. Despite his efforts, many of his clients have been executed — and most of them were guilty. He details what it's like to become emotionally involved with the people living on death row in a new memoir.

[The Worldwide 'Thirst' For Clean Drinking Water](#)

April 11, 2011 | NPR · Investigative reporter Charles Fishman says the past 100 years have been the golden age of water in the developed world — but now that's about to change. He profiles communities grappling with water shortages and details the efforts to conserve water in *The Big Thirst*.

[The Smithereens' Sweet Nostalgia, With Fresh Variations](#)

April 11, 2011 | NPR · The Smithereens' music contains touches of The Beatles and Buddy Holly, with a hint of metal and prog-rock. Rock critic Ken Tucker says the new *Smithereens 2011* is fresh, joyous and as "neurotically rich as a David Lynch film."

[Looking At The Civil War 150 Years Later](#)

April 12, 2011 | NPR · Tuesday marks the 150th anniversary of the start of the U.S. Civil

War. Historian Adam Goodheart explains how national leaders and ordinary citizens across the country responded to the chaos and uncertainty in *1861: The Civil War Awakening*.

Edwyn Collins: 'Losing Sleep' And Continuing Life

April 12, 2011 | NPR · Collins was the leader of the 1980s post-punk band Orange Juice. In 2005, he had two cerebral hemorrhages and doubted whether he'd ever make music again. But now he's back with his seventh solo album, *Losing Sleep*, which Ken Tucker says addresses the singer's past with "bracing clarity."

Tina Fey Reveals All (And Then Some) In 'Bossypants'

April 13, 2011 | NPR · Tina Fey's new memoir *Bossypants* contains her thoughts on juggling motherhood, acting, writing and executive producing *30 Rock*. Fey joins *Fresh Air*'s Terry Gross for a wide-ranging conversation about her years in comedy, her childhood and her 2008 portrayal of Sarah Palin on *Saturday Night Live*.

Going West: The Making Of 'Meek's Cutoff'

April 14, 2011 | NPR · Michelle Williams plays settler Emily Tetherow in Kelly Reichardt's frontier drama *Meek's Cutoff*. Both Williams and Reichardt join *Fresh Air*'s Terry Gross for a discussion about the film, which was shot with exquisite landscapes and virtually no dialogue.

'The Conspirator': A Trying Trial For Lincoln's Foes

April 15, 2011 | NPR · Robert Redford's historical drama focuses on the months after President Lincoln was assassinated — and on Mary Surratt, the woman alleged to have aided the plotters. Critic David Edelstein says it's a dramatized civil-liberties lecture, both transparent and exaggerated.

Sidney Lumet: A Director Who Gave Actors His All

April 15, 2011 | NPR · *Fresh Air* remembers director Sidney Lumet — who died Saturday at age 86 — with excerpts from a 1988 interview. One of Hollywood's most prolific directors, Lumet created more than 40 films, including *Network*, *Serpico*, *Fail-Safe*, *Dog Day Afternoon*, *The Wiz*, *The Verdict* and *Prince of the City*.

Will Ferrell: The Comedian Reflects

April 15, 2011 | NPR · Will Ferrell is starring in a four-episode arc on NBC's sitcom, *The Office*. To celebrate, *Fresh Air* is replaying highlights from a 2006 interview with Ferrell about his time on *Saturday Night Live*.

Jon Sarkin: When Brain Injuries Transform Into Art

April 18, 2011 | NPR · Jon Sarkin was working as a chiropractor when he suffered a massive stroke. Afterwards, he became an obsessive visual artist whose work was as fragmented and cluttered as his mind had become. Sarkin is the subject of a new book, *Shadows Bright as Glass*, by science writer Amy Nutt.

[**Ernie Kovacs: The King Of Early Television Comedy**](#)

April 18, 2011 | NPR · From 1950 until he died in an auto accident in 1962, Ernie Kovacs created some of the most inventive and unusual television ever made. A new box set collects more than 13 hours of the TV pioneer's best and rarest programs. TV critic David Bianculli says it's "a mandatory purchase for anyone who loves TV."

[**An Old Romance Blooms Anew In 'Love Of My Youth'**](#)

April 19, 2011 | NPR · In Mary Gordon's luscious, wistful new novel, two former lovers meet in Rome after not having seen each other for almost 40 years. Book critic Maureen Corrigan praises the book's "undeniable appeal."

[**Our 'Toxic' Love-Hate Relationship With Plastics**](#)

April 19, 2011 | NPR · Science writer Susan Freinkel chronicles the rise of plastic in consumer culture — and its effects on the environment and our health — in *Plastic: A Toxic Love Story*. Freinkel says plastics leach potentially harmful chemicals into our bloodstream — and that scientists are now figuring out what that does to our bodies.

[**How The Bristol Sessions Changed Country Music**](#)

April 19, 2011 | NPR · In 1927 and '28, Ralph Peer, a talent scout for the Victor Talking Machine Company, set up recording sessions in a town straddling the Tennessee-Virginia border. The resulting sessions, rock critic Ed Ward says, laid the framework for all of country music.

[**Tim Berne: Slow-Cooked Jazz**](#)

April 20, 2011 | NPR · Saxophonist Tim Berne came up on New York's so-called "downtown scene" 30 years ago. That scene is known for postmodern jump-cutters like John Zorn, who'd leap from one style to another in the space of a beat. But Berne went another way; he's fascinated by gradual transitions.

[**Herzog Enters 'The Cave Of Forgotten Dreams'**](#)

April 20, 2011 | NPR · German filmmaker Werner Herzog was one of the few people permitted to enter a cave in France containing the oldest recorded cave paintings. What he saw — and what he imagined — is the subject of a new documentary, *The Cave of Forgotten Dreams*.

[**The Past, Always Present In The Atacama Dark**](#)

April 20, 2011 | NPR · In the splendid documentary *Nostalgia for the Light*, Chilean filmmaker Patricio Guzman draws parallels between astronomers searching for stars in the world's driest desert and women searching for the remains of loved ones who were disappeared under the Pinochet regime.

[**Two War Photographers On Their Injuries, Ethics**](#)

April 21, 2011 | NPR · Combat photographer Joao Silva is at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, where he's recovering after losing his legs in an explosion in October. Greg Marinovich is a Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer who was shot four times while

covering conflicts. Silva and Marinovich talk about life as war photographers with *Fresh Air*'s Terry Gross.

[**An Oncologist's Pulitzer-Winning Cancer Biography**](#)

April 22, 2011 | NPR · Oncologist Siddhartha Mukherjee chronicles how our understanding of cancer has evolved in his new book *The Emperor of All Maladies: A Biography of Cancer*.

[**This Weekend, HBO Has Something For Everyone**](#)

April 22, 2011 | NPR · On Friday, Saturday and Sunday, HBO presents three different types of TV in three days: a new comedy special, a new dramatic telemovie and the return of a continuing drama series. TV critic David Bianculli, who has seen all three, explains why they're all worth watching.

[**A Heartbreaking Work Of Staggering Horror**](#)

April 22, 2011 | NPR · *Incendies* is a French-Canadian film that was nominated for a 2010 Academy Award. The title translates as "scorched," and the movie tells the brutal story of a woman who lived through her country's civil war. Critic David Edelstein says it's an extraordinary piece of storytelling.

[**You Won't Feel A Thing: Your Brain On Anesthesia**](#)

April 25, 2011 | NPR · Anesthesiologist Emery Brown explains what physicians know — and what they don't know — about the effects of anesthesia. Unlocking its mysteries, he says, will help scientists better understand consciousness and sleep — and could lead to better treatments for pain, sleep disorders and depression.

[**Where To Find The World's Most 'Wicked Bugs'**](#)

April 25, 2011 | NPR · Parasitic tapeworms, the world's largest hornet and a bug with overly aggressive mating habits are all featured in science writer Amy Stewart's book *Wicked Bugs*, which examines more than 100 of the strangest entomological creatures on the planet.

[**Remembering Hazel Dickens: A Feminist Bluegrass Voice**](#)

April 25, 2011 | NPR · Folksinger Hazel Dickens, a pioneer for women in bluegrass music, died Friday. She was 75. *Fresh Air* remembers the feminist role model with excerpts from a 1987 interview.

[**Examining Bernie Madoff, 'The Wizard Of Lies'**](#)

April 26, 2011 | NPR · *New York Times* financial writer Diana Henriques was the first journalist to interview Bernie Madoff after he was sent to prison. Henriques' new book, *The Wizard of Lies*, details how Madoff created the biggest Ponzi scheme in history after playing a prominent role in shaping modern markets.

[**Bombino: High-Energy Sounds From 'Agadez,' Niger**](#)

April 26, 2011 | NPR · Since the 1960s, the electric guitar has provided a bridge between

international folk cultures and modern pop music. An example today is the singer and guitarist Bombino from Niger, whose album *Agadez* contains currents of blues and rock, along with traces of African folk.

Foster Wallace: An Ordinary Guy Who Couldn't Be

April 27, 2011 | NPR · David Foster Wallace's unfinished novel, *The Pale King*, was recently published. But to truly enjoy his work, says critic John Powers, you must read his earlier pieces, which were filled with "a staggering eye for detail" from "a mind that was never predictable."

Obama's Foreign Policy: The First Two Years

April 27, 2011 | NPR · *The New Yorker's* Ryan Lizza details President Obama's response to the ongoing uprisings in North Africa and the Middle East. He explains why the president's actions — in Egypt and then in Libya — say a great deal about the administration's larger foreign policy ideology.

Emmylou Harris: An Invigorating, Inviting 'Hard Bargain'

April 27, 2011 | NPR · The singer-songwriter's new album, *Hard Bargain*, includes a new song about her days with country-rock pioneer Gram Parsons and a tribute to her late friend, singer-songwriter Kate McGarrigle. Rock critic Ken Tucker explains why the album is both mature and emotionally daring.

Rotherham: Don't Discount Charter School Model

April 28, 2011 | NPR · The debate over school reform is often contentious — and charter schools are often a key part of that debate. Educational consultant Andrew Rotherham explains why he supports strategies that will redesign American public education with the help of charter schools and teacher accountability.

Bullwinkle DVD: Take A Trip In The Wayback Machine

April 28, 2011 | NPR · For the first time, the complete adventures of *Rocky and Bullwinkle and Friends* are available on DVD. TV critic David Bianculli says even 50 years later, the humor in the original episodes still "hits it out of the park."

Ravitch: Standardized Testing Undermines Teaching

April 28, 2011 | NPR · Former Assistant Secretary of Education Diane Ravitch explains why she was once an early advocate of No Child Left Behind, school vouchers and charter schools — and what changed her mind.

Get On The Bus: 50 Years Of 'Freedom Rides'

April 29, 2011 | NPR · Wednesday marks the 50th anniversary of the start of the Freedom Rides, when an integrated group of Civil Rights activists rode together by bus through the deep South challenging integration. Historian Raymond Arsenault recounts their journey in *Freedom Riders*.

A Freedom Ride Organizer On Nonviolent Resistance

April 29, 2011 | NPR · The late James Farmer Jr. was one of the leaders of the civil rights movement and an organizer of the 1961 Freedom Ride, which challenged segregation across the American South. In 1985, Farmer spoke to Terry Gross about his lengthy career fighting discrimination.

Roy Orbison: A 'Monument' To A Pop Legend

April 29, 2011 | NPR · Although Roy Orbison started out as a rockabilly performer on Sun Records, he didn't really find his identity until he signed with a small Nashville label, Monument, in 1959. Rock historian Ed Ward looks at the 17 singles that put him, and the Monument label, on the map.

Lawrence Wright: Bin Laden's Death 'Long In Coming'

May 2, 2011 | NPR · *New Yorker* staff writer Lawrence Wright has spent the past 15 years of his career thinking about al-Qaida. Wright assesses what bin Laden's death means for the future of al-Qaida and the United States' relationship with Pakistan.

How Some Made Millions Betting Against The Market

May 2, 2011 | NPR · ProPublica reporters Jake Bernstein and Jesse Eisinger recently won the Pulitzer Prize for their stories about the banks and hedge funds that realized what was happening to the U.S. economy while it was happening — and then made vast fortunes by betting against the markets and creating fake demand.

Ahmed Rashid: What Did Pakistan Know?

May 3, 2011 | NPR · The Pakistani journalist, who has written extensively about the Taliban and al-Qaida, discusses what officials might have known about Osama bin Laden's presence in Abbottabad and what impact his death may have on the future of U.S.-Pakistan relations.

The 'Singular Woman' Who Raised Barack Obama

May 3, 2011 | NPR · In the media, Stanley Ann Dunham is often identified simply as "a white anthropologist from Kansas," or "a single mother on food stamps." But biographer Janny Scott argues that those descriptions don't do justice to the president's mother — a complex, intellectual woman who led an "unconventional" life.

James Levine: The Man Behind The Met's Baton

May 4, 2011 | NPR · Conductor James Levine is known for bringing out the best in musicians and ensembles. Here, he reflects on his 40-year tenure with the Metropolitan Opera, his life in music and the back troubles that recently led him to step down as the musical director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

WWI: A Moral Contest Between Pacifists And Soldiers

May 4, 2011 | NPR · Adam Hochschild's pensive narrative history, *To End All Wars*, focuses on those who fought — and also on those who refused. Hochschild is a master at chronicling how prevailing cultural opinion is formed and, less frequently, how it's challenged.

[What It's Like To Be An Elderly Widow, All 'Alone'](#)

May 5, 2011 | NPR · Stewart O'Nan's moodily comic novel *Emily, Alone* follows an 80-year-old woman as she navigates the minutia of everyday life. O'Nan explains how he got inside Emily's head — and why he wanted to write about the daily indignities of getting older.

[Pete Hamill Revisits The Newsroom In 'Tabloid City'](#)

May 5, 2011 | NPR · The veteran journalist's new novel takes place in an old-school print newsroom, not unlike the one where he worked. Hamill, a longtime columnist, reflects on changes in the news industry, and explains how columnists of his day differed from today's media bloggers.

[Three New Action Movies Battle At The Box Office](#)

May 5, 2011 | NPR · A trio of rousing adventure flicks — *Fast Five*, *13 Assassins* and *Legend of the Fist: The Return of Chen Zhen* -- all opened this past week. David Edelstein says each one is pretty singular, in its own way.

[Broadway Playwright Arthur Laurents Dies At 93](#)

May 6, 2011 | NPR · Laurents, best known for writing the books for the landmark Broadway musicals *Gypsy* and *West Side Story*, died Thursday. *Fresh Air* remembers the writer and director with excerpts from a 1990 interview.

[The Fresh Air Interview: The Beastie Boys](#)

May 6, 2011 | NPR · In a 2006 interview, Terry Gross sits down with Mike D, MCA and Ad-Rock to talk about The Beastie Boys' 2006 concert movie *Awesome; I...Shot That!* and their 25 years making hip-hop.

[The Beastie Boys: Hip-Hop With A Dash Of 'Hot Sauce'](#)

May 6, 2011 | NPR · *Hot Sauce Committee Part Two* is the first Beastie Boys album since the all-instrumental 2007 collection *The Mix-Up*. Rock critic Ken Tucker says the new record is fresh and vital because it sounds so old-fashioned and defiant.

['The Beaver': Redemption For Mel Gibson?](#)

May 6, 2011 | NPR · David Edelstein's friends all say they just won't see a Mel Gibson movie. But Edelstein says the actor's new film *The Beaver*, directed by Jodie Foster, might be worth a look — if only for a certain cameo appearance.

[William Dodd: The U.S. Ambassador In Hitler's Berlin](#)

May 9, 2011 | NPR · William Dodd served for four years as the ambassador to Germany before resigning — after repeated clashes with both Nazi Party officials and the State Department. Erik Larson chronicles Dodd's time in Berlin in his new book, *In the Garden of Beasts*.

[Bad Apple Proverbs: There's One In Every Bunch](#)

May 9, 2011 | NPR · The phrase "a few bad apples" is much more popular now than it was decades ago. Linguist Geoff Nunberg says the phrase may owe its popularity to a change in meaning — and The Osmond Brothers.

[**A Father's Quest To Help His Severely Disabled Son**](#)

May 10, 2011 | NPR · Ian Brown's son Walker has a rare disorder that left him with severe cognitive, developmental and physical disabilities. Brown's new memoir, *The Boy in the Moon*, is about his journey trying to answer medical and philosophical questions about his son's existence.

[**Loudon Wainwright III Looks Back At '40 Odd Years'**](#)

May 10, 2011 | NPR · Wainwright has just released an elaborate box-set career retrospective called *40 Odd Years* — and the pun in the title is definitely intended. Rock critic Ken Tucker says it presents the singer-songwriter just the way his music does, artful warts and all.

[**'Big Girl Small': Humiliation, High School Style**](#)

May 11, 2011 | NPR · Rachel DeWoskin's novel follows a gutsy 16-year-old girl navigating her way at a new performing arts high school. The book is a distinctive addition to the already packed library of coming-of-age stories.

[**Anna McGarrigle: On Life Without Her Sister**](#)

May 11, 2011 | NPR · The Canadian singer-songwriter discusses the death of her sister and singing partner Kate McGarrigle, who died in 2010. Their early albums have been remastered and are part of a new collection, which also includes previously unreleased songs.

[**Iggy Pop: A Punk Rocker Devoted To Imperfection**](#)

May 12, 2011 | NPR · Over the course of 40 years, Iggy Pop has changed from a noisy brat with seemingly no chance at stardom to a widely respected founder of punk. A new box set, *Roadkill Rising*, collects many of his unreleased concert bootlegs.

[**For-Profit Colleges: Targeting People Who Can't Pay**](#)

May 12, 2011 | NPR · The for-profit college industry has grown substantially in the past decade by targeting underprivileged students who qualify for federal loans, investigative journalist Daniel Golden says. But he says many of these students aren't getting what they hoped for out of college.

[**Gary Shteyngart: A 'Love Story' In A Sad Future**](#)

May 13, 2011 | NPR · His third novel, *Super Sad True Love Story*, is a black comedy set in a futuristic America — where books don't exist and where the economy has collapsed. Shteyngart explains why he decided to write a love story in this dystopic vision of the future — and why he thinks technology is changing the way we think.

[**'Bridesmaids': A Raunchy, Hilarious Chick Flick**](#)

May 13, 2011 | NPR · After six years on *Saturday Night Live* and many supporting film parts, Kristen Wiig has her first starring role in the romantic comedy *Bridesmaids*, which has been touted as a Judd Apatow movie for ladies. Critic David Edelstein says it's likely to be a hit with both women and men.

Early Impulse: A 50-Year Legacy In Jazz

May 13, 2011 | NPR · The Impulse jazz label, famous for its fold-out black and orange album covers, turns 50 this year. To celebrate, the label has released a box set featuring its early releases. Jazz critic Kevin Whitehead says the set showcases the diversity and talent of the musicians Impulse recorded.

Neil Diamond: The Earliest Days Of A 'Solitary Man'

May 16, 2011 | NPR · Diamond has sold 128 million records and written and recorded 37 Top 40 songs. But in the early 1960s, rock historian Ed Ward says, Diamond was writing songs for other musicians while struggling to get his own career off the ground.

Reporting On Hidden Dangers Of Medical Radiation

May 16, 2011 | NPR · *New York Times* investigative journalist Walt Bogdanich discusses his ongoing series on mistakes made during radiation treatments. He also details what a patient should always ask before receiving any type of X-ray, scan or radiation treatment.

Area 51 'Uncensored': Was It UFOs Or The USSR?

May 17, 2011 | NPR · Area 51 is classified to the point that its very existence is denied by the U.S. government. Journalist Annie Jacobsen says it's not because of aliens or spaceships — but because the government used the site for nuclear testing and weapons development.

Food: The Hidden Driver Of Global Politics

May 18, 2011 | NPR · The world's rapidly expanding population has created elevated demand for food, but changes in climate and irrigation have made it increasingly difficult to boost production accordingly. Environmentalist Lester Brown explains why he believes "food is the new oil" and may lead to political upheaval.

Burgers From A Lab: The World Of In Vitro Meat

May 18, 2011 | NPR · Would you eat a steak grown in a laboratory? Science writer Michael Specter examines the progress scientists have made in developing test-tube meat. "Depending on what your definition of any sort of life is, this is as fundamental as any animal is," he says.

'Book Of Mormon' Creators On Their Broadway Smash

May 19, 2011 | NPR · Trey Parker and Matt Stone talk about *The Book of Mormon*, their blasphemous, hilarious and oddly endearing Broadway hit, which leads the Tony nominations field this year — and will probably go down in history as the only Broadway musical ever to combine Mormons, Uganda, filthy language and a chorus line.

[**A 'Paris' Review: Woody Allen, In Fine Form**](#)

May 20, 2011 | NPR · The director's latest comedy stars Owen Wilson as a time-traveling writer who winds up in Paris, in the 1920s, alongside Fitzgerald, Hemingway and Stein. Critic David Edelstein says Wilson's acting is superb — and the film recalls Woody Allen's earliest days in film.

[**The Rise And Fall Of The Comanche 'Empire'**](#)

May 20, 2011 | NPR · Quanah Parker, considered the greatest Comanche chief, was the son of Cynthia Ann Parker, a white pioneer woman kidnapped by a raiding party when she was a little girl. Their story — and the saga of the powerful American Indian tribe — is told by S.C. Gwynne in his book, *Empire of the Summer Moon*.

[**Jimmie Dale Gilmore: Classic Sounds On 'Heirloom Music'**](#)

May 20, 2011 | NPR · Gilmore travels back to the 1930s for inspiration on his forthcoming album, *Heirloom Music*. The Texas singer talks about his songs and his performance at the 2011 South by Southwest music festival in Austin.

[**Late Night 'Thank You Notes' From Jimmy Fallon**](#)

May 23, 2011 | NPR · Fallon is thankful for slow walkers, people named Lloyd and the word "moist." The comedian and host of *Late Night* collects more than 100 nuggets of gratitude in a new book called *Thank You Notes*. He talks with Terry Gross about giving thanks and doing impressions.

[**How 'Reckless' Greed Contributed To Financial Crisis**](#)

May 24, 2011 | NPR · Pulitzer Prize-winning financial reporter Gretchen Morgenson chronicles the failings of Wall Street regulators in *Reckless Endangerment: How Outsized Ambition, Greed and Corruption led to Economic Armageddon*.

[**Raphael Saadiq: Paying Homage To Soul's Past And Future**](#)

May 24, 2011 | NPR · Saadiq has become one of the leading lights in the "neo-soul movement." Rock critic Ken Tucker says the singer's new album, *Stone Rollin'*, broadens his canvas to take on other soulful styles, as well.

[**Bradley Cooper: A Wild 'Hangover' Set In Bangkok**](#)

May 25, 2011 | NPR · Bradley Cooper starred as a schoolteacher heading to Vegas for a wild bachelor party in the 2009 raunchy bromance *The Hangover*. He reprises his role for the sequel, alongside actors Zach Galifianakis and Ed Helms — and a drug-dealing monkey named Crystal.

[**John Powers: Reflections On Cannes 2011**](#)

May 25, 2011 | NPR · The film critic reports his impressions of this year's Cannes Film Festival. On Powers' list of notable films: Terrence Malick's *Tree of Life*, about a young boy growing up in 1950s Texas, and an Iranian film by a director who was explicitly told by the Iranian government not to make films.

'The Sentimentalists': Submerged Emotions Surface

May 26, 2011 | NPR · Johanna Skibsrud's award-winning debut novel about an alcoholic father's relationship with his adult daughters was written for a master's thesis at Concordia University. Book critic Maureen Corrigan says the language of the story settles deep into a reader's consciousness.

The New Science Of Understanding Dog Behavior

May 26, 2011 | NPR · Animal behaviorist John Bradshaw has spent much of his career debunking bad advice given to dog owners. His new book *Dog Sense* details what pet owners should expect from their dogs — and what their dogs should expect in return from their owners.

'The Tree Of Life': A Creation Trip Worth Taking

May 27, 2011 | NPR · Terrence Malick's film, part creation epic and part Oedipal family drama, recently won the Palme d'Or — the top prize at the Cannes Film Festival. Critic David Edelstein says reaction to the film has been mixed, but he "recommends the experience unreservedly."

Ambrose Akinmusire: An Expressive Range Emerges

May 27, 2011 | NPR · Akinmusire would rather fit into a cohesive band and spread the solos around than put himself way out front.

John Waters Reflects On His 'Role Models'

May 27, 2011 | NPR · The writer and filmmaker known for the cult classics *Pink Flamingos*, *Cry-Baby* and *Hairspray* reflects on the many people who have inspired him throughout his life — from playwright Tennessee Williams to the crazed martyr Saint Catherine of Siena — in his memoir, *Role Models*.

Keith Richards' 'Life' With The Rolling Stones

May 30, 2011 | NPR · The guitarist opens up about his music, his legendary journeys on the road with The Rolling Stones and his occasionally contentious relationship with lead singer Mick Jagger in his memoir, *Life*.

'Incognito': What's Hiding In The Unconscious Mind

May 31, 2011 | NPR · Neuroscientist David Eagleman says everything we think, do and believe is determined by complex neural networks battling it out in our brains. In *Incognito*, he explains what scientists are learning about this hidden world of cognition.

Fangtastic Voyage: 'True Blood' Vampires Live On

May 31, 2011 | NPR · The third season of HBO's vampire soap *True Blood* is now out on DVD. TV critic David Bianculli says the show's success proves that vampires — more than werewolves, zombies or witches — will turn out to be the most durable media monsters of all.

Bobby Fischer: A Chess Champ 'Against The World'

June 1, 2011 | NPR · Fischer, one of the greatest chess players of all time, was also a recluse who made anti-American and anti-Semitic statements and seemed increasingly lost in the depths of his own mind. Filmmaker Liz Garbus examines the life of the troubled genius in the documentary biopic, *Bobby Fischer Against the World*.

[From The 'Vinyl Deeps,' Ellen Willis Wrote About Rock](#)

June 1, 2011 | NPR · The late Ellen Willis was the first pop-music critic for *The New Yorker*. A new anthology, *Out of the Vinyl Deeps*, collects her thoughts on Dylan, Joplin and The Rolling Stones, among others. Critic Ken Tucker says the anthology "resurrects a nearly lost, vital, invaluable voice" in pop music.

['Beginners': A Son's 'Love Letter' To His Gay Father](#)

June 2, 2011 | NPR · The movie *Beginners* stars Ewan McGregor as a young man who learns that his 75-year-old father, played by Christopher Plummer, is gay. The movie is based on filmmaker Mike Mills' own life. Mills explains what happened when his own dad came out.

[Craig Taborn: Investigating The Piano](#)

June 2, 2011 | NPR · Taborn's solo album is full of wide-open spaces between notes, and very quiet dynamics.

[Summer Reads To Transport You Back In Time](#)

June 2, 2011 | NPR · When book critic Maureen Corrigan was a kid, her family would pile into the car for trips to sites of historical interest. For Corrigan, summer has always been the season for traveling back to a bygone age — either by hitting the road or hitting the books.

['Beginners': A Marvelously Inventive Comedy](#)

June 3, 2011 | NPR · Ewan McGregor stars in Mike Mills' film about a young man who learns that his 75-year-old father (Christopher Plummer) is gay. Critic David Edelstein says the movie, based on Mills' own life puts the filmmaker in a category alongside Woody Allen and Charlie Kaufman. *(Recommended)*

['Then They Came For' Journalist Maziar Bahari](#)

June 3, 2011 | NPR · *Newsweek* correspondent Maziar Bahari was arrested in Tehran in 2009 while covering Iran's election protests. He explains how he endured 118 days in Iran's notorious Evin Prison, where he was repeatedly interrogated and tortured — and how he now views his homeland.

[Los Straitjackets: Helping Out Bandmate Danny Amis](#)

June 6, 2011 | NPR · Los Straitjackets are a Nashville-based indie-rock band that's made their name performing surf-rock classics from behind Mexican wrestling masks. The band is about to hit the road to raise money for band member Danny Amis, who was recently diagnosed with multiple myeloma.

[**Sugar Ray Leonard's Fight 'In And Out Of The Ring'**](#)

June 6, 2011 | NPR · The former boxing champ won world titles in five weight divisions and received a gold medal at the 1976 Olympics. In his new autobiography, *The Big Fight*, Leonard details the obstacles he battled — including sexual abuse and addictions — during his career.

[**Elvis Is Back \(And Now Reissued\)**](#)

June 7, 2011 | NPR · Elvis Presley is constantly being discovered by new generations, and by older fans in new stages of life. Critic Milo Miles talks about the surprise rewards he found while listening to the new reissue *Elvis Is Back!* — and during his first visit to Graceland in Memphis.

[**Keith Olbermann: The 'Countdown' To His New Show**](#)

June 7, 2011 | NPR · After abruptly departing MSNBC in January, Keith Olbermann returns to broadcasting on June 20 with a new version of *Countdown* on the Current TV network. The anchor explains why he feels like the environment at large news networks can be stifling.

[**Brad Paisley: 'Country Music,' Defined**](#)

June 8, 2011 | NPR · The star is admired for his guitar playing, and for the way he mixes elements of country and rock music without pandering to either audience. Ken Tucker says that Paisley's new album, *This Is Country Music*, is less a manifesto than an enjoyable way to hear him expand his fan base.

[**Leading The Charge To Make Better Electric Cars**](#)

June 8, 2011 | NPR · To make the electric car viable, manufacturers need to create better batteries. But the road to creating a better, long-lasting battery has not been easy. Science writer Seth Fletcher explains why in his book, *Bottled Lightning: Superbatteries, Electric Cars and the New Lithium Economy*.

[**'Pawn Star' Rick Harrison On His 'Deals And Steals'**](#)

June 9, 2011 | NPR · The star of The History Channel's *Pawn Stars* details how he became an expert in spotting fake Rolexes (he sees at least one a day), customer relations, human behavior, antiques and economics — all through running his family's pawn shop in Las Vegas.

[**British Comedian Steve Coogan's Improv-Based 'Trip'**](#)

June 9, 2011 | NPR · British comedians Steve Coogan and Rob Brydon trade barbs and impressions in the new comedy, *The Trip*. Coogan, best known for his character Alan Partridge, talks about the improvisational film, which sends the two comedians on a road trip in Northern England.

[**'Super 8': Close Encounters Of The 'E.T.' Kind**](#)

June 10, 2011 | NPR · J.J. Abrams' science-fiction thriller *Super 8* was inspired, in part, by Steven Spielberg's earliest works. Critic David Edelstein says the film hits home in a

way more impersonal franchise pictures don't.

Prohibition: Speakeasies, Loopholes And Politics

June 10, 2011 | NPR · Drinking didn't stop in the United States from 1920 to 1933 — it just went underground. Author Daniel Okrent discusses the lasting cultural and political impact of Prohibition in his book, *Last Call*.

J.J. Abrams: The 'Super' Career Of A Movie-Crazed Kid

June 13, 2011 | NPR · *Super 8* director J.J. Abrams says the inspiration for his latest science-fiction thriller came from his own childhood obsession with filmmaking. He shares his thoughts on the film industry and on trying to make movies more enjoyable for audiences.

'Guilty Passion' Leads A Housewife To Homicide

June 13, 2011 | NPR · Ron Hansen's latest novel, *A Wild Surge of Guilty Passion*, fictionalizes an infamous crime of sexual transgression. In 1927, Ruth Snyder killed her husband, Albert, after falling in love with a lingerie salesman. Hansen's sexy fictionalization of the real-life murder sizzles with the spirit of the Roaring '20s.

Stephen Colbert: In Good 'Company' On Broadway

June 14, 2011 | NPR · The political satirist and comedian talks about his Broadway performance (and performance anxieties) and about his recent segments on *The Colbert Report* featuring Sarah Palin and Anthony Weiner.

The Art Of Mimicry: A 'Trip' Down Memory Lane

June 14, 2011 | NPR · *The Trip*, a British comedy featuring two comedians trading their best celebrity impersonations, got critic John Powers thinking about memorable voices from the movies. Famous celebrity voices, he says, are not what they used to be.

A Night At The Opera (On The Silver Screen)

June 15, 2011 | NPR · *Senso*, a 1954 Italian political melodrama, and *Two Sisters From Boston*, a 1946 Hollywood comedy, couldn't be more different — except they're both set at the opera. Classical music critic Lloyd Schwartz says he loves them both.

A Romantic Anthology Of Comically 'Agonizing Love'

June 15, 2011 | NPR · Romance comics flourished in the 1940s and '50s, with titles like *Was I a Wicked Wife?* and *Kisses Came Second*. Pop culture writer Michael Barson collects some of his favorites in the new anthology, *Agonizing Love: The Golden Era of Romance Comics*.

'Life, Death And Politics' Treating Chicago's Uninsured

June 15, 2011 | NPR · Dr. David Ansell's experiences treating patients at Chicago's public hospital for 17 years turned him into a strong advocate for national health care reform. He details what it was like to work with Chicago's uninsured patient population in a new memoir and social history.

What The Arab Spring Means For Israel And Palestine

June 16, 2011 | NPR · The West Bank has yet to see a democracy movement on the level of those sparking dramatic changes in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya. It could have a huge effect on the region, were it to happen, says conflict resolution expert Robert Malley.

Nick Cave: An Australian On Love And Death In America

June 17, 2011 | NPR · Nick Cave and his band The Bad Seeds are best known for their angry, twisted ballads. Four of Cave's studio albums, including *The Boatman's Call* and *Murder Ballads*, have just been reissued.

'Buck': A Horse Whisperer Wrangles His Dark Past

June 17, 2011 | NPR · Cindy Meehl's documentary *Buck* tells the story of the horse trainer who overcame years of abuse to become the inspiration for the book and movie *The Horse Whisperer*. Critic David Edelstein says he's never seen a film that so vividly depicts the "link between a trauma and its transmutation."

'State Of Wonder' Deftly Twists, Turns Off The Map

June 20, 2011 | NPR · Ann Patchett's new novel lives up to its name; critic Maureen Corrigan's one-word review: "Wow." Patchett masterfully weaves her story through uncharted geographic and literary territory, all the while unraveling a story about the awful price of love and the terror of its inevitable loss.

'You Think That's Bad': Fiction Of The Unfamiliar

June 20, 2011 | NPR · Jim Shepard writes what he knows, but he also likes to write what he doesn't know. "I think literature is, in some ways, about the exercise of the empathetic imagination," Shepard says. "I'm always interested in stretching that capacity." *You Think That's Bad* is his latest collection of short stories.

Like Gilbert And Sullivan? You'll Love These DVDs

June 20, 2011 | NPR · You don't have to be an aficionado to enjoy Criterion's reissues of *Topsy-Turvy* and *The Mikado*. Classical music critic Lloyd Schwartz says these operettas on DVD are indispensable for people who love G&S, and might just change the minds of those who don't.

'Death And After In Iraq': Memoir Of A Mortuary

June 21, 2011 | NPR · Marine Jess Goodell spent eight months recovering and processing the remains of fallen troops in the Mortuary Affairs unit. "I don't think I ever stopped smelling death when I was in Iraq," she says.

Chris Weitz: From 'New Moon' To 'A Better Life'

June 22, 2011 | NPR · The director's latest film follows a Mexican immigrant living illegally in Los Angeles who tries to evade immigration officials and the city's pervasive gang culture. It's a far cry from Weitz's earlier films, the blockbusters *The Golden Compass* and *New Moon*.

'That's How' Christoph Niemann Explains It All

June 22, 2011 | NPR · Illustrator Christoph Niemann's work ranges from whimsical children's books to poignant cover art for *The New Yorker*, but he's not interested in ending up in a museum. "I get a much bigger kick out of having my image seen like a million times for like 20 seconds," he says.

Garland Jeffreys: New York's 'King Of In Between'

June 23, 2011 | NPR · *The King of In Between* is Jeffreys' first album of new music in more than a decade. Hailed as *Rolling Stone's* Best New Artist in 1977, Jeffreys later had more success overseas. Rock critic Ken Tucker says the new album showcases a lively artist who remains artfully ambivalent.

'Compass Of Pleasure': Why Some Things Feel So Good

June 23, 2011 | NPR · In his new book, *The Compass of Pleasure*, neuroscientist David Linden maps out the brain's relationship with pleasure and addiction. From junk food to sex to gambling, Linden explains that addictions are actually rooted in the brain's *inability* to feel pleasure.

Javier Bardem Reflects On A 'Biutiful' Acting Career

June 24, 2011 | NPR · The Spanish actor received his third Academy Award nomination for his performance in Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu's film *Biutiful*. Bardem reflects on his role in *Biutiful*, as well as his performances in *Before Night Falls* and *No Country for Old Men*.

Class Is Dismissed: 'Bad Teacher' Is Crude, But Fun

June 24, 2011 | NPR · How bad is this teacher? Director Jake Kasdan stuffs ineptness and inappropriateness into the lesson plan in equal measure. But critic David Edelstein says that the film's moral turpitude is also the source of its charm.

Robert Wittman's 'Priceless' Pursuit Of Stolen Art

June 24, 2011 | NPR · Robert Wittman founded the FBI's Art Crime Team and tracked down more than \$225 million worth of stolen art and cultural property — including a \$36 million self-portrait by Rembrandt. He describes the heists in his memoir, *Priceless: How I Went Undercover to Rescue the World's Stolen Treasures*.

Investigating Charter Schools Fraud In Philadelphia

June 27, 2011 | NPR · *Philadelphia Inquirer* reporter Martha Woodall details her ongoing investigation into Philadelphia's charter school system, where 19 of the 74 charter schools operating in the city are under investigation for fraud, financial mismanagement and conflicts of interest.

'Just One More Thing' About Falk, TV's 'Columbo'

June 27, 2011 | NPR · Peter Falk, who was known for his portrayal of the disheveled and seemingly inept homicide detective Lt. Columbo, died on Thursday at age 83. *Fresh Air*

remembers the actor with excerpts from a 1995 interview.

[How Industrial Farming 'Destroyed' The Tasty Tomato](#)

June 28, 2011 | NPR · In his new book, *Tomatoland*, food writer Barry Estabrook details the life of the mass-produced tomato — and the environmental and human costs of the tomato industry. Today's tomatoes, he says, are bred for shipping and not for taste.

['Rave On Buddy Holly' Pays Tribute To Holly's Soul](#)

June 28, 2011 | NPR · A new tribute album celebrating Buddy Holly has just been released, featuring artists like Lou Reed, Paul McCartney and Cee Lo Green. Rock critic Ken Tucker says *Rave On Buddy Holly* is the "rare tribute album that, by and large, succeeds artistically."

[Thelonious Monk: Making The Piano Hum](#)

June 29, 2011 | NPR · When Monk's band arrived late in San Francisco, it inspired a solo album recorded in 1959.

[Matchmaker, Matchmaker ... Run Your Algorithm](#)

June 29, 2011 | NPR · Online dating sites are now a multibillion-dollar industry. But how do they match people together? *New Yorker* writer Nick Paumgarten recently profiled several of the major online dating websites to find out how they pair people with compatible romantic mates.

[U.S. Military Searches For A Device To Stop IEDs](#)

June 29, 2011 | NPR · One of the most common dangers to American troops in Iraq and Afghanistan has been homemade remote-controlled bombs. *Wired* national security writer Noah Shachtman details the ongoing effort to create a device that could stop IEDs before they strike.

[What Does A 'Post-American World' Look Like?](#)

June 30, 2011 | NPR · America's dominance on the world stage is fading, says commentator and CNN host Fareed Zakaria. He explains why the U.S. is now lagging behind other countries on key indices such as patent creation and job growth — and what that could mean for America's economic future.

['Crowne' And 'Transformers': Fitting For The Fourth](#)

July 1, 2011 | NPR · One humble, one humongous, these movies couldn't be more different. *Larry Crowne* is low-tech with human-scaled characters. *Transformers: Dark of the Moon* is like *War of the Worlds* on steroids. But in their own way, each one is perfect for the holiday weekend, says critic David Edelstein.

[A Female 'Swordboat' Captain Returns To The Sea](#)

July 1, 2011 | NPR · Linda Greenlaw took a decade off from commercial fishing, but the siren call of the deep blue water drew her back in. The only female swordfish boat captain in the United States recounts her latest adventure at sea in a memoir, *Seaworthy*.

[The Future Of 'Wild Fish,' The Last Wild Food](#)

July 1, 2011 | NPR · Almost half of the fish we eat has been raised on farms — and the genetic modification of fish is increasing. Paul Greenberg writes about changes in the fishing industry — and what the future holds for our dinner tables — in his book, *Four Fish: The Future of the Last Wild Food*.

[The 'Making Of The President' In The 1960s](#)

July 4, 2011 | NPR · A new DVD set follows the presidential campaigns of '60, '64 and '68 — and shows just how much times have changed. Critic John Powers says it's hard not to feel a bit nostalgic for the days when running for president was treated as something noble, not grubby.

[Rodney Crowell: Singing From A Dark, Raucous Place](#)

July 4, 2011 | NPR · Country singer-songwriter Rodney Crowell brings his guitar into the studio and performs songs that relate to his memoir, *Chinaberry Sidewalks*, about his rough-and-tumble childhood in East Texas.

[How E.B. White Spun 'Charlotte's Web'](#)

July 5, 2011 | NPR · It all started one morning in 1949, when White discovered a beautiful web in his barn, glistening with dew. In *The Story of Charlotte's Web*, Michael Sims explores how White wrote his magical meditation on time, mortality and friendship — for children.

[Gene Autry, America's 'Public Cowboy No. 1'](#)

July 5, 2011 | NPR · The Singing Cowboy was one of the country's most popular and prolific film stars during his career; he also gained fame as a radio star, producer and TV personality. Biographer Holly George-Warren traces Autry's lengthy career in *Public Cowboy No. 1*.

[Dolly Parton: No 'Better Day' Than Today](#)

July 5, 2011 | NPR · Since releasing her first solo album in 1967, Parton has become a star in movies and on television. But rock critic Ken Tucker says that her new album, *Better Day*, returns the focus to Parton's singing and her frequently underestimated songwriting.

[Ray Romano: Standup, Sitcoms And Real-Life Humor](#)

July 6, 2011 | NPR · Romano recently picked up a Peabody Award for his TNT show *Men of a Certain Age*, which co-stars Scott Bakula and Andre Braugher. Romano explains why he returned to TV after taking a few years off when his hit sitcom *Everybody Loves Raymond* ended in 2005.

[Horror's 'Shock Value' Redefined In The 1960s](#)

July 6, 2011 | NPR · *Rosemary's Baby*, *Night of the Living Dead* and *Targets* all came out in 1968. Theater critic Jason Zinoman says the three films redefined Hollywood horror in

the aftermath of the Vietnam War — and influenced the genre for the next several decades.

'Project Nim': Monkeying Around With A Chimp

July 7, 2011 | NPR · Documentary filmmaker James Marsh recounts the efforts of a Columbia University psychology professor to teach a chimp sign language in *Project Nim*. Critic David Edelstein says the brilliant documentary reveals more about humans than it does about the animal kingdom.

Coming Out As An 'Undocumented' Immigrant

July 7, 2011 | NPR · Jose Antonio Vargas, a Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter, recently revealed he has been living in the U.S. illegally since he was 12. "This country is not going to deport 11 million undocumented immigrants," he says. "What are we supposed to do with them?"

Why Jose Antonio Vargas Should Leave The U.S.

July 7, 2011 | NPR · Mark Krikorian runs the Center for Immigration Studies, a think tank that advocates for "low immigration" and "high enforcement" of current laws. He explains why the journalist who recently came out as an undocumented immigrant in the *New York Times Magazine* should return to the Philippines.

'Torchwood' And 'Curb': Two Summer TV Treats

July 8, 2011 | NPR · A new version of the British sci-fi series and a new season of the Larry David comedy begin this weekend on Starz and HBO, respectively. TV critic David Bianculli says while the broadcast networks are taking it easy, these competitors are serving up excellent, unusual television.

Comedian Louis C.K. Laughs Through Difficulties

July 8, 2011 | NPR · On the FX series *Louie*, comedian Louis C.K. plays a divorced father of two — in other words, a guy just like the real Louis C.K. The series is a sequel of sorts to his first show, *Lucky Louie*, in which he played a married father of two — which he was at the time.

Beyonce's '4': An Escape From Her Past

July 11, 2011 | NPR · Rock critic Ken Tucker says that Beyonce's new album, titled *4*, is something of a risk — it's not merely a collection of new songs, but a personal reassessment of the kind of pop star she wants to be.

President Obama's Father: A 'Bold And Reckless Life'

July 11, 2011 | NPR · Sally H. Jacobs' new biography, *The Other Barack*, follows the troubled life of Barack Obama Sr. — from Kenya to Hawaii and back. Jacobs believes that if Obama Sr. had played a larger role in his son's life, Obama probably wouldn't have become president.

Heads Up, TV Fans: Great Shows Start This Week

July 12, 2011 | NPR · New seasons of *Curb Your Enthusiasm* and *Torchwood* premiered over the weekend, and three other cable shows return to prime time starting Wednesday. Never mind that it's the height of summer — TV critic David Bianculli says this week will be a TV fan's Christmas.

[Paul Farmer Examines Haiti 'After The Earthquake'](#)

July 12, 2011 | NPR · The physician and anthropologist has spent 30 years treating patients in Haiti. In *Haiti After The Earthquake*, he details what it was like on the ground in the days after the 2010 quake — and why the country is still struggling to recover.

[From Bop To Baroque: The Modern Jazz Quartet](#)

July 12, 2011 | NPR · Jazz critic Kevin Whitehead reviews a seven-CD box set featuring the quartet's Atlantic years, which span 1956-64.

['Here's The Story' Of TV Creator Sherwood Schwartz](#)

July 13, 2011 | NPR · Sherwood Schwartz, who created the TV sitcoms *Gilligan's Island* and *The Brady Bunch*, died Tuesday in Los Angeles. He was 94. *Fresh Air* remembers the TV producer and writer with excerpts from a 1988 interview.

[Why Prosecutors Don't Go After Wall Street](#)

July 13, 2011 | NPR · *New York Times* financial reporter Louise Story explains how guidelines issued by the Justice Department in 2008 have allowed prosecutors to take a softer approach to corporate crimes. To this day, no high-level executive has been charged in a case related to the 2008 financial crisis.

[What It Means To Be 'Always On' A Smartphone](#)

July 14, 2011 | NPR · Constantly having access to our cellphones is changing the way we interact with the world, says technology writer Brian X. Chen. In a new book, he explains how being "always on" will affect law enforcement, the medical community and higher education.

['Brain Bugs': Cognitive Flaws That 'Shape Our Lives'](#)

July 14, 2011 | NPR · Neuroscientist Dean Buonomano explains why our brains make mistakes when we try to remember long lists of information or add large numbers in our heads. Humans live "in a time and place we didn't evolve to live in," he says.

['Turn Of Mind': The Haunted House Is In Your Head](#)

July 14, 2011 | NPR · Dr. Jennifer White is a retired orthopedic surgeon diagnosed with dementia — who cannot remember whether or not she killed her friend. Alice LaPlante's debut novel is a fearless and compassionate investigation into the erosion of her main character's mind.

[Spending 'Friday Night' With Connie Britton](#)

July 15, 2011 | NPR · The star of *Friday Night Lights* discusses her role playing Coach Taylor's wife on the NBC drama, which wraps up its five-season run Friday on NBC.

Behind The Scenes Of 'Friday Night Lights'

July 15, 2011 | NPR · Peter Berg, executive producer of NBC's *Friday Night Lights*, talks about the virtues of shooting on location, using local performers, and what the series explores that the movie couldn't.

Kyle Chandler: Playing A Coach On 'Friday Night'

July 15, 2011 | NPR · Chandler talks about playing Coach Eric Taylor on *Friday Night Lights*, the NBC series about the big drama of small-town Texas high-school football. The award-winning drama wraps up its five-season run tonight on NBC.

'Hallows' Part 2 Works Like A Patronus Charm

July 15, 2011 | NPR · The Boy Who Lived takes his final bow, in what proves to be a majestic, engrossing, proper fantasy conclusion. Critic David Edelstein approves of the film's steady aura of doom and will be sad to see the now-grown boy wizard hang up his wand for good.

The Fresh Air Interview: Gillian Welch & David Rawlings

July 18, 2011 | NPR · Welch and Rawlings perform an in-studio concert featuring several songs from *The Harrow and the Harvest*, and talk about many of the lyrics they've written over the years.

The Al-Qaida 'Triple Agent' Who Infiltrated The CIA

July 19, 2011 | NPR · In December 2009, an al-Qaida mole believed to be a CIA informant detonated a suicide bomb inside a fortified military base in Pakistan, killing seven CIA employees. Reporter Joby Warrick writes about the man who pulled off the attack — and explains how he did it — in *The Triple Agent*.

What The Word 'Compromise' Really Means

July 19, 2011 | NPR · Linguist Geoff Nunberg says the compromises we refuse to make say the most about our character. "Sometimes we stand on principle for the heady satisfaction of showing that we can't be pushed around," he says.

'Project Nim': A Chimp's Very Human, Very Sad Life

July 20, 2011 | NPR · *Project Nim* is the new documentary about a chimpanzee raised in a human household as part of an experiment to see if chimps could learn language. Director James Marsh and two of the people who cared for Nim talk with Terry Gross about the controversial study.

National Chairman Of ALEC Responds To Report

July 21, 2011 | NPR · Louisiana state Rep. Noble Ellington is the national chairman of ALEC, a membership-only group that brings together state legislators, interest groups and corporate representatives to draft model bills. He responds to a series of pieces about the organization recently published in *The Nation*.

[Who's Really Writing States' Legislation?](#)

July 21, 2011 | NPR · A group called ALEC — the American Legislative Exchange Council — "is at the forefront of an effort to push business-friendly, conservative legislation at the state level," says reporter John Nichols. He discusses what recently leaked documents reveal about the organization.

['Captain America': Nostalgic Fun, With Muscles](#)

July 22, 2011 | NPR · The latest Marvel Comics superhero movie stars Chris Evans as the 98-pound weakling who transforms into *Captain America*. Critic David Edelstein says the film "has an easy, classical pace and a lot of good, old-fashioned craftsmanship."

[Ace Records: New Orleans Hits, Made In Mississippi](#)

July 22, 2011 | NPR · New Orleans went decades without a homegrown label to document its riches. Rock critic Ed Ward says this explains why many 1950s New Orleans classics were released by Ace Records in Jackson, Miss.

[Ants: 'A Global Safari With A Cast Of Trillions'](#)

July 22, 2011 | NPR · Entomologist Mark Moffett loves ants. He's devoted his career to studying the tiny insects: how they move, what they eat, when they attack their prey. Moffett's book, *Adventures Among Ants*, details his explorations around the world, tracking many a species through jungle forests and remote mountain passes.

[Blake Shelton: Out Of The Ordinary, A Country Everyman](#)

July 25, 2011 | NPR · Singer Blake Shelton has just scored his fourth consecutive No. 1 country hit with "Honey Bee," from his just-released album *Red River Blue*. Rock critic Ken Tucker says the album shows Shelton's playful and unpredictable side.

[Weather Warnings For A 'Climate Changed Planet'](#)

July 25, 2011 | NPR · This summer of record-breaking heat followed a spring that brought some of the most extreme weather on record. In her book *The Weather of the Future*, climatologist Heidi Cullen writes, "It's time to face the fact that the weather isn't what it used to be."

['Stone Arabia': The Cost Of Artistic Commitment](#)

July 25, 2011 | NPR · Nik Worth is a failed musician who painstakingly documents his life and non-existent career, leaving his sister to worry about practical things like paying his rent. Dana Spiotta's new novel investigates the long-term costs of an artist's passion.

[Donald Ray Pollock On Finding Fiction Late In Life](#)

July 26, 2011 | NPR · Donald Ray Pollock worked in a paper mill and meatpacking plant for 32 years before becoming a writer. His second book *The Devil All the Time* is set in his hometown of Knockemstiff, Ohio, where he says "nearly everyone was connected by blood through one godforsaken calamity or another."

[Kristin Scott Thomas: 'Sarah's Key' To A Dark Past](#)

July 26, 2011 | NPR · Actress Kristin Scott Thomas stars in the drama *Sarah's Key*, about the French roundup of Jews during the Nazi occupation. "It's something the French have been extremely wary of talking about," she says. "It's been hidden away for a very, very long time."

[Brendan Gleeson, On 'Guard' As A Small-Town Cop](#)

July 27, 2011 | NPR · The Irish actor plays a cynical, small-town cop who is thrust out of his comfort zone in the black comedy *The Guard*. "I've met men like [my character] quite a lot," Gleeson says. "People who are underused a little bit and have terribly sharp wit, but pretend to be a little bit stupid."

[What It Means To Be 'Black In Latin America'](#)

July 27, 2011 | NPR · Historian Henry Louis Gates Jr. looks at the cultural legacy of African slaves brought to Latin America.

[Reporting In Libya And Dodging Bullets, Bombs](#)

July 28, 2011 | NPR · *New York Times* reporter C.J. Chivers details what he's witnessed in Libya, where he has covered the battle between Moammar Gadhafi's forces and the opposition. Chivers has traveled with the rebels through dangerous territory and is trying to tell the true story of the war.

[When Aliens 'Attack' And Fight 'Cowboys'](#)

July 29, 2011 | NPR · The sci-fi Western *Cowboys & Aliens* and the low-budget British film *Attack the Block* both open this weekend. Critic David Edelstein says both movies bring people together from different walks of life — but only one is really worth seeing.

[Remembering Jazz Lyricist And Poet Fran Landesman](#)

July 29, 2011 | NPR · Landesman, a songwriter and poet who wrote the words to the jazz standard "Spring Can Really Hang You Up the Most," died on July 23. She was 83. *Fresh Air* remembers the iconoclastic lyricist with highlights from a 1988 interview.

[A Dominatrix Reveals All In 'Whip Smart' Memoir](#)

July 29, 2011 | NPR · Melissa Febos graduated from college with straight As and a prestigious internship. She also led a secret life as a dominatrix. Her memoir, *Whip Smart*, which details her time working in a sex dungeon in midtown Manhattan, is now available in paperback.

[Gang 'Interrupters' Fight Chicago's Cycle Of Violence](#)

August 1, 2011 | NPR · Ameena Matthews is a former gang member who now works to stop retaliatory gang violence in some of Chicago's most dangerous neighborhoods. She is one of the subjects of a new documentary called *The Interrupters*.

[How Bin Laden's Death Has Affected Al-Qaida](#)

August 2, 2011 | NPR · CNN's national security analyst Peter Bergen just returned from Pakistan, where he visited the town where Osama bin Laden was killed. He talks about

the various conspiracy theories surrounding bin Laden's death — and how al-Qaida has changed in recent years.

New Releases Showcase Lieberman's Vocal Talent

August 2, 2011 | NPR · Mezzo-soprano Lorraine Hunt Lieberman died a little more than five years ago at the height of her career. Classical music critic Lloyd Schwartz says that, just when it seemed we weren't going to hear her sing anything new, some fantastic live performances have just been released for the first time.

Inside The Tea Party's Rising Influence

August 3, 2011 | NPR · The 87 new members of the House are the reason the GOP now controls the House. "Nearly 40 percent of them are self-styled 'citizen politicians' who have never held office and who rode into Washington on the Tea Party wave," says journalist Robert Draper.

The Making Of 'King Kong': Screams, Score And More

August 4, 2011 | NPR · There are many things that make the 1933 movie *King Kong* great — the special effects, the image of the giant ape climbing the Empire State Building, Fay Wray's screams — and the score, composed by Max Steiner. Film historian Rudy Behlmer tells the story of the movie's score and special effects.

Serkis: Playing Virtual Parts On The Big Screen

August 4, 2011 | NPR · You might not recognize actor Andy Serkis, but you've probably seen his characters on-screen. Serkis is Hollywood's go-to actor for computer-generated roles. His movies include *Lord of the Rings*, *King Kong* and *Rise of the Planet of the Apes*.

Fountains Of Wayne: Pop For Summer's Warm Intensity

August 4, 2011 | NPR · Chris Collingwood and Adam Schlesinger, the pair behind Fountains of Wayne, have just released their first new album since 2007. Rock critic Ken Tucker says *Sky Full of Holes* showcases the detailed storytelling and bright melodies that can occasionally hide the duo's darker thoughts.

The Rise And Fall Of Gangster Al Capone

August 5, 2011 | NPR · Jonathan Eig's book *Get Capone* reveals new insights about the famous Chicago gangster — including how freely he spoke to reporters, the time he shot himself in the groin, and how venereal disease eventually robbed him of his health and sanity.

'Sweethearts' On-Screen, But What Happens Off?

August 5, 2011 | NPR · Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers weren't the only famous Hollywood musical team of the 1930s. Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy also starred in a series of operettas. But classical music critic Lloyd Schwartz says the two couples achieved their success in quite opposite ways.

[**Fresh Air Weekend: Interrupters, Serkis, Pop Music**](#)

August 6, 2011 | NPR · Former gang member Aameena Matthews, the subject of the documentary *The Interrupters*; actor Andy Serkis, and a Ken Tucker review of a new Fountains of Wayne album.

[**In '1493,' Columbus Shaped A World To Be**](#)

August 8, 2011 | NPR · When Columbus crossed the Atlantic in 1492, his journey prompted the exchange of not only information but also food, animals, insects, plants and disease between the continents. In a new book, Charles C. Mann describes the aftermath of Columbus' arrival in the Americas.

[**A Delightful Portrait Of The Screwball 'Family Fang'**](#)

August 8, 2011 | NPR · In Kevin Wilson's first novel, husband-and-wife conceptual artists stage elaborate public acts of "choreographed spontaneity" — to the embarrassment of their children. Wilson's inventive energy makes *The Family Fang* a strange, wonderful and refreshing read in the summer heat.

[**Who's Behind The Movement To Ban Shariah Law?**](#)

August 9, 2011 | NPR · *New York Times* reporter Andrea Elliott profiles the Brooklyn lawyer behind the anti-Shariah movement. She says David Yerushalmi "has come to exercise a striking influence over American public discourse about Shariah."

[**The Books And Beliefs Shaping Michele Bachmann**](#)

August 9, 2011 | NPR · *New Yorker* Washington correspondent Ryan Lizza spent four days with Michele Bachmann and her staff aboard their campaign jet in late June. His profile looks at the writers, beliefs and books that Bachmann has specifically mentioned as influences in her life.

[**Heavy-Handed 'Help' Saved By Great Acting**](#)

August 10, 2011 | NPR · Emma Stone and Viola Davis star in the film adaption of Kathryn Stockett's best-selling novel about a white woman who sets out to tell the story of black domestic servants in 1960s Mississippi. Critic David Edelstein says that both Stone and Davis pull off stunning performances.

[**The Double Amputee Who Designs Better Limbs**](#)

August 10, 2011 | NPR · Nearly 30 years ago, Hugh Herr lost both of his legs in a climbing accident at age 17. Today, he runs the Biomechatronics group at the MIT Media Lab and designs better prosthetic limbs for other amputees.

[**The Human Toll Of The War 'To End All Wars'**](#)

August 11, 2011 | NPR · Historian Adam Hochschild traces the patriotic fervor that catapulted Great Britain into war during the summer of 1914 — as well as the small, but determined British pacifist movement — in his historical narrative *To End All Wars: A Story of Loyalty and Rebellion, 1914-1918*.

Sam Phillips: A Songwriter In A 'Solid State' Of Mind

August 11, 2011 | NPR · Phillips has been making albums since the 1980s, but her voice may be best known for her background music in the TV series *Gilmore Girls*. Rock critic Ken Tucker says there's a lot of terrific music on her new album, *Solid State*.

Gary Burton: A New Quartet, A Familiar Sound

August 12, 2011 | NPR · All these years later, Burton's old country and rock associations leave a mark on his new quartet.

Poet Laureate Philip Levine Reads From His 'Work'

August 12, 2011 | NPR · America's new poet laureate, Pulitzer-Prize winner Philip Levine, reads some of his work from *What Work Is*, his 1992 collection of poems about the working class. *This segment was originally aired in 1991.*

Tom Wolfe: Chronicling Counterculture's 'Acid Test'

August 12, 2011 | NPR · Tom Wolfe wrote about Ken Kesey's LSD experiments in the book *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*. In 1987, Wolfe spoke to Terry Gross about following Kesey and the Merry Pranksters.

Ken Kesey On Misconceptions Of Counterculture

August 12, 2011 | NPR · The new documentary *Magic Trip* follows the late Ken Kesey and the Merry Band of Pranksters as they criss-crossed across the United States during the tumultuous 1960s. Kesey joined Terry Gross in 1989 for a conversation about the counterculture movement and his writing.

Writer Robert Stone Relives Counterculture Years

August 12, 2011 | NPR · Award-winning novelist Robert Stone hung out for many years with Ken Kesey and the Merry Pranksters. He recounts the group's cross-country road trips and experiences taking hallucinogenic drugs in his memoir, *Prime Green*.

Fresh Air Weekend: 'The Help,' '1493,' Hugh Herr

August 13, 2011 | NPR · Historian Charles C. Mann examines Columbus' legacy; a double amputee talks about designing prosthetic limbs, and David Edelstein reviews *The Help*.

Learning Your Sister Is 'Someone Else's Twin'

August 15, 2011 | NPR · A pair of identical twins lived apart for 28 years after one of them was accidentally switched with another infant in the hospital nursery. Twin expert Nancy Segal details what happened next in *Someone Else's Twin: The True Story of Babies Switched at Birth*.

'Sex On Six Legs': When Insects Go Wild

August 15, 2011 | NPR · Everything you wanted to know about bug sex (but didn't bother to ask) is explained in a new book. Insect expert Marlene Zuk describes how ants learn, why some crickets don't chirp and how various bugs mate in *Sex on Six Legs: Lessons on*

Life, Love and Language from the Insect World.

Teens, Sex And Tech Tear A 'Beautiful Life' Apart

August 15, 2011 | NPR · Helen Schulman tells the story of a New York family's fall from grace in *This Beautiful Life*. Critic Maureen Corrigan says the novel is a parent's nightmare — a cautionary tale about what happens when hormones meet the Internet.

America's 'Secret Campaign' Against Al-Qaida

August 16, 2011 | NPR · America's anti-terrorism strategy has evolved in the years after the Sept. 11 attacks. *New York Times* reporters Thom Shanker and Eric Schmitt explain some of the tactics used by the United States over the past decade to disrupt al-Qaida both in real life and online.

Jeff Bridges: An Actor Who Can Actually Sing

August 17, 2011 | NPR · Bridges won an Oscar in 2009 for his performance as a broken-down country singer in the film *Crazy Heart*, for which he performed his own vocals. He also sings as himself on a new self-titled album.

Rating The Wall Street Ratings Agencies

August 17, 2011 | NPR · When Standard & Poor's recently lowered the U.S. government debt rating for the first time in history, it set off a firestorm of criticism, from the Obama administration to Wall Street. The downgrade raised questions about the influence of S&P and other agencies, which also faced blame in the financial crisis of 2007-'08.

Covering The Plate: A Baseball Catcher Tells All

August 18, 2011 | NPR · Brad Ausmus has been called one of the best catchers in baseball. He spent 18 seasons in the big leagues, playing for teams like the Dodgers and the Padres. He details what it's like to crouch behind home plate, deal with umps and make pitching calls.

Sly Stone: The Early Days In The East Bay

August 18, 2011 | NPR · Stone is known to millions from the records he made with Sly and the Family Stone. But his early days, and the recordings he produced for his own Stone Flower label, add another dimension to the career of this enigmatic character, rock historian Ed Ward said.

Four Hours In 'Lisbon': A Rich And Dreamy Voyage

August 18, 2011 | NPR · Raoul Ruiz's 4 1/2-hour Portuguese/French melodrama — a puppet theater of the upper class — won't be everybody's cup of tea. But critic David Edelstein says the film's haunting mix of distance and intimacy makes the hours fly by.

Rosanne Cash Runs Down Her Father's 'List'

August 19, 2011 | NPR · When Cash was 18, her father (you know him as Johnny) presented her with a gift: a list of 100 essential country songs to help the budding singer-songwriter connect with and better understand the music that came before her.

After holding on to it for the past few decades, Rosanne Cash decided to turn that gift into *The List*, her new album.

Fresh Air Weekend: Baseball, Bugs And Sly Stone

August 20, 2011 | NPR · Baseball catcher Brad Ausmus takes us behind the plate; a biologist answers probing questions about the insect world, and Ed Ward reviews some early Sly Stone albums.

Branford Marsalis And Joey Calderazzo: A 'Melancholy' Duo

August 22, 2011 | NPR · *Songs of Mirth and Melancholy* takes cues from the brooding romantic music of 19th century Europe.

Alice Waters: 40 Years Of Sustainable Food

August 22, 2011 | NPR · Waters founded her Berkeley restaurant, Chez Panisse, long before "organic" or "locally grown" entered the vernacular. In *40 Years at Chez Panisse*, Waters looks back on the sustainable food movement and the momentum it has built in recent years.

How The A&P Changed The Way We Shop

August 23, 2011 | NPR · The A&P changed the way Americans do their grocery shopping, but it did so at a cost — thousands of mom-and-pop corner stores closed as the chain grew. Economic historian Marc Levinson chronicles the rise and fall of the grocery giant in *The Great A&P and the Struggle for Small Business in America*.

Two Experimental Rock Bands Stay True To Their Roots

August 23, 2011 | NPR · The New York trio Battles and the Chicago-based experimental rock band Cheer-Accident come from very different directions. But critic Milo Miles says that both groups have recently put out their most appealing records, without losing their cerebral side.

The Evangelicals Engaged In Spiritual Warfare

August 24, 2011 | NPR · A new Christian movement that seeks to take dominion over politics, business and culture in preparation for the end times and Jesus' return is becoming more of a presence in American politics. Rachel Tabachnick, who researches the religious right, explains its beliefs and influences.

John Doe's New Album Is A Contemplative 'Keeper'

August 24, 2011 | NPR · Doe is probably still best known as co-founder of the punk-rock band X more than 30 years ago. Rock critic Ken Tucker says Doe's new solo album *Keeper* is less conflicted and more contemplative than his earlier works.

After The Rapture, Who Are 'The Leftovers'?

August 25, 2011 | NPR · What if the rapture actually occurred? That's the plot of Tom Perrotta's new novel *The Leftovers*, which examines the aftermath of an unexplained rapturelike event in which millions of people around the globe inexplicably disappear

into thin air.

The 'Complete Mythology' Of Syl Johnson

August 25, 2011 | NPR · Al Green wrote "Take Me to the River," but it was his labelmate Syl Johnson who first made it famous. Rock historian Ed Ward traces Johnson's early career, which started in Chicago blues clubs in the 1950s.

'Scarface': Over-The-Top, But Ahead Of Its Time

August 26, 2011 | NPR · In 1983, critic John Powers panned the Pacino film, saying it was trashy and shallow. But he recently watched the film again, and says that in retrospect, he can see how the film burned its way into the national psyche.

Two Slackers, A Roadtrip And An Alien

August 26, 2011 | NPR · Greg Mottola's sci-fi comedy, now out on DVD, stars Simon Pegg and Nick Frost as two guys who hit the highway after Comic-Con — and pick up an ET on the side of the road. The character-driven laughs depend on your buying into a main character who's entirely computer-generated.

Jerry Leiber: Remembering One Of Rock's Great Songwriters

August 26, 2011 | NPR · Leiber, the lyricist behind "Jailhouse Rock," "Yakety Yak" and "Stand By Me," died Monday. He was 78. *Fresh Air* remembers the songwriter with excerpts from a 1991 interview with Leiber and his songwriting partner Mike Stoller.

Fresh Air Weekend: WWI, Tom Perrotta, Rock Music

August 27, 2011 | NPR · Historian Adam Hochschild examines WWI; author Tom Perrotta talks about his newest novel *The Leftovers*, and rock historian Ed Ward examines two experimental rock bands staying true to their roots.

Grant Achatz: The Chef Who Couldn't Taste

August 29, 2011 | NPR · Two years after opening his award-winning Chicago restaurant Alinea, chef Grant Achatz was diagnosed with tongue cancer. He describes losing and regaining his taste in *Life, on the Line*. "My palate developed just as a newborn," Achatz says. "I don't recommend it, but I think it made me a better chef."

Brad Bird, Patton Oswalt On Cooking Up 'Ratatouille'

August 29, 2011 | NPR · Director Brad Bird decided to cast comedian Patton Oswalt as the film's leading rat after watching him perform a stand-up routine about a steak restaurant. He says Oswalt, a serious foodie himself, was "perfect for Remy."

Tube Burgers: The World Of In Vitro Meat

August 30, 2011 | NPR · Would you eat a steak grown in a laboratory? Science writer Michael Specter examines the progress scientists have made in developing test-tube meat. "Depending on what your definition of any sort of life is, this is as fundamental as any animal is," he says.

Bananas: The Uncertain Future Of A Favorite Fruit

August 30, 2011 | NPR · Americans consume more bananas than apples and oranges combined. Dan Koeppel, author of *Banana: The Fate of the Fruit That Changed the World*, gives us a primer on the expansive history — and the threatened future — of the seedless, sexless fruit.

'Kitchen Science': The Dinner Is In The Details

August 31, 2011 | NPR · In *How to Read a French Fry: And Other Stories of Intriguing Kitchen Science*, Russ Parsons answers all sorts of food science questions, including why meat browns, why sauces emulsify and how frying is different from roasting.

Ruth Reichl: Dining In Disguise And Going 'Gourmet'

August 31, 2011 | NPR · Food writer Ruth Reichl famously went undercover to review restaurants for *The New York Times*. In a series of interviews on *Fresh Air*, she discusses her formative food experiences, her restaurant reviews and her tenure at *Gourmet* magazine.

Julia Child On France, Fat And Food On The Floor

September 1, 2011 | NPR · In a 1989 interview, Julia Child describes the first meal she had in France in 1948 — the start of her lifelong love affair with French cooking. With her signature combination of gusto and charm, Child would spend the rest of her career guiding American amateurs through the intricacies of French cuisine.

Unlocking The Mysteries Of Good Cooking

September 1, 2011 | NPR · What's the difference between wooden and plastic cutting boards? When should you throw out frozen fish? Harold McGee, an expert on the science of food and cooking, untangles these kitchen mysteries and more in his *Keys to Good Cooking*.

Mark Bittman Explains 'How To Cook Everything'

September 1, 2011 | NPR · *New York Times* food columnist Mark Bittman is known for his straightforward approach to recipes. In *How To Cook Everything: Vegetarian*, he explains how to make more than 2,000 meatless meals.

A Graceful Search For 'Higher Ground'

September 2, 2011 | NPR · Vera Farmiga makes her directorial debut with *Higher Ground*, which centers on a woman who joins and then flees a fundamentalist religious order. Film critic David Edelstein says the movie is "complicated and unresolved in the best possible way."

The Couple Behind Some Of Hollywood's Classic Tunes

September 2, 2011 | NPR · Marilyn and Alan Bergman have been writing irresistible songs together for 50 years, putting words in the mouths of singers like Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett, Rosemary Clooney and Barbra Streisand. Here, the Bergmans discuss some of their favorite tunes and their many years making music together.

[Fresh Air Weekend: The A&P, Alice Waters, Music](#)

September 3, 2011 | NPR · Historian Marc Levinson examines the history of a grocery chain; restaurateur Alice Waters reflects on 40 years at Chez Panisse, Ken Tucker reviews John Doe's newest album *Keeper*.

[A 'Stuntman!' Discusses His Death-Defying Feats](#)

September 5, 2011 | NPR · Hal Needham worked as a Hollywood stuntman for over 40 years. He details some of his most death-defying feats (and why he can't stand modern special effects) in his memoir, *Stuntman!*

[Deep Blue Organ Trio Jazzes Up Stevie Wonder](#)

September 5, 2011 | NPR · The Chicago-based Deep Blue Organ Trio combines a Hammond organ with a guitar and drums. The group's fourth album *Wonderful!* pays tribute to the Stevie Wonder songbook. Critic Kevin Whitehead says more jazz musicians should cover Wonder, because his tunes are "jazz waiting to happen."

[The 'Top Secret America' Created After Sept. 11](#)

September 6, 2011 | NPR · *Washington Post* national security reporter Dana Priest's book *Top Secret America* looks at the top-secret intelligence and counterterrorism network created after Sept. 11. "No one knows how much money it costs, how many people it employs, [or] how many programs exist within it," she says.

[Could 'Submission' Be America's Sept. 11 Novel?](#)

September 6, 2011 | NPR · Reviewer Maureen Corrigan says Amy Waldman's debut novel might be *the* Sept. 11 novel — the one that finally does justice, artistically and historically, to the aftershocks of that day.

[NYC Firefighters Share Memories From Ground Zero](#)

September 7, 2011 | NPR · Firefighter Ken Haskell was off duty on Sept. 11, 2001, when his two brothers, also firefighters, died in the World Trade Center. Haskell's story of searching the rubble for his brothers' bodies is included in *A Decade of Hope: Stories of Grief and Endurance from 9/11 Families and Friends*.

[No Language Legacy: Where's The Sept. 11 Vocab?](#)

September 7, 2011 | NPR · The terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, linger in our thoughts, but not so much in our speech. Linguist Geoff Nunberg says "it's striking that 9/11 and its aftereffects have left almost no traces in the language of everyday life."

[Growing Violence Clouds Afghanistan's Future](#)

September 8, 2011 | NPR · Journalist Alissa J. Rubin has spent most of the past 10 years reporting on the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. On Thursday's *Fresh Air*, Rubin talks about the growing corruption and violence in Afghanistan, from which 33,000 U.S. troops are expected to withdraw by the summer of 2012.

[Glen Campbell's 'Canvas,' A Moving Farewell Album](#)

September 8, 2011 | NPR · In the liner notes to his new album, *Ghost on the Canvas*, Campbell writes that it's the last studio record he plans to make after being diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease. Rock critic Ken Tucker says the album "has a melancholy air of valedictory about it."

[A Military Clarinet Quartet Commemorates Sept. 11](#)

September 9, 2011 | NPR · The Air Force's Bay State Winds Clarinet Quartet joins Terry Gross for a discussion of military ensembles. The group also performs several songs in tribute to the men and women who've served since Sept. 11, 2001.

[Richard Engel: Covering War For A Decade](#)

September 9, 2011 | NPR · NBC News chief foreign correspondent Richard Engel details what it's like to report from some of the more dangerous war zones on the planet. He also discusses his recent dispatches from Egypt and Libya, where he was subject to tear gas attacks and artillery fire.

[Fresh Air Weekend: Remembering Sept. 11](#)

September 10, 2011 | NPR · Firefighter Ken Haskell talks about searching the rubble at Ground Zero for his brothers' bodies; linguist Geoff Nunberg reflects on language since Sept. 11; Maureen Corrigan reviews a debut novel, and a clarinet quartet plays several tribute songs.

[No Must-Sees In Fall Crop Of Network TV](#)

September 12, 2011 | NPR · High-profile changes in returning shows --*Two and a Half Men* and *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* — offer the most excitement in broadcast TV this fall. Critic David Bianculli says the new shows mostly disappoint, though you may be intrigued by Sarah Michelle Gellar in CW's *Ringer*.

[Margo Martindale: A 'Justified' Moonshine Matriarch](#)

September 12, 2011 | NPR · Margo Martindale plays Mags Bennett, the leader of a law-defying Appalachian family in the FX series *Justified*. The Emmy-nominated actress talks about playing Mags — as well as her other roles in *Paris, Je T'Aime* and *Million Dollar Baby*.

[An Interrogator Writes 'The Inside Story Of 9/11'](#)

September 13, 2011 | NPR · Former FBI agent and interrogator Ali Soufan talks about dysfunction and rivalries inside the government's counterterrorism agencies that led to missed opportunities — as well as the ineffectiveness of enhanced interrogation techniques on collecting intelligence.

['Porgy And Bess,' Adapted For Modern Times](#)

September 13, 2011 | NPR · Classical music critic Lloyd Schwartz just attended two productions of *Porgy and Bess*: an operatic performance at Tanglewood and a musical-theater version in Cambridge, Mass. He says it can work either way, "as long as

Gershwin's great score remains its heart and soul."

[How To Help Your Child's Brain Grow Up Strong](#)

September 14, 2011 | NPR · In a new book, neuroscientists Sam Wang and Sandra Aamodt detail how parents can help their children learn the ABCs and self-control. The book, *Welcome to Your Child's Brain*, explores how the human brain develops from infancy to adolescence.

[Arnett's Newborn Sitcom Keeps Him 'Up All Night'](#)

September 14, 2011 | NPR · Will Arnett is a sleep-deprived, stay-at-home dad in the new NBC comedy series about the perils of first-time parenting. Arnett also talks about his roles as Gob Bluth in the FOX sitcom *Arrested Development*, and Alec Baldwin's rival on NBC's *30 Rock*.

[The Fresh Air Interview: Nick Lowe](#)

September 15, 2011 | NPR · Singer-songwriter Nick Lowe joins *Fresh Air*'s Terry Gross for an in-studio interview and performance featuring several songs from his 13th solo album, *The Old Magic*.

[A Twisty, Brutal 'Drive' For A Level-Headed Hero](#)

September 16, 2011 | NPR · Drive is what Driver does, and driven is how audiences will feel after a screening of Nicholas Winding Refn's brutally moving thriller, which stars Ryan Gosling, Carey Mulligan, Bryan Cranston and Albert Brooks. **(Recommended)**

[Allison Pearson's 'Love' Letter To Keith Partridge](#)

September 16, 2011 | NPR · Allison Pearson follows up her 2002 best-seller, *I Don't Know How She Does It*, with *I Think I Love You*, a novel about a teenage girl's obsession with teen star David Cassidy. The book wasn't hard for Pearson to write. When she was growing up, she was madly in love with Cassidy too.

[Fresh Air Weekend: 'Justified' And 'Up All Night'](#)

September 17, 2011 | NPR · The Emmy-nominated actress Margo Martindale talks about playing Mags on *Justified* — as well as her other roles in *Paris, Je T'Aime* and *Million Dollar Baby*. Also, Will Arnett talks about his roles in *Up All Night*, *Arrested Development* and NBC's *30 Rock*.

['Breaking Bad': Vince Gilligan On Meth And Morals](#)

September 19, 2011 | NPR · Vince Gilligan's AMC drama *Breaking Bad* stars Bryan Cranston as a high school chemistry teacher turned drug dealer. Gilligan says he pitched the show by telling AMC: "You take Mr. Chips and turn him into Scarface."

[Aaron Paul: 'Breaking Bad' Dealer Isn't Dead ... Yet](#)

September 19, 2011 | NPR · Student-turned-drug dealer Jesse Pinkman was supposed to die in the first season of the AMC drama. But the writers decided the chemistry between high school teacher Walter White (Bryan Cranston) and Jesse (Aaron Paul) was too good

to let go.

In The Obama White House, A Crisis Of 'Confidence'

September 20, 2011 | NPR · Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Ron Suskind talks about his unflattering picture of rivalries and dysfunction within President Obama's first economic team in his book *Confidence Men: Wall Street, Washington, and the Education of a President*. Some of officials quoted in the book say they were misquoted or that their comments were taken out of context.

This Pig Wants To Party: Maurice Sendak's Latest

September 20, 2011 | NPR · *Bumble-ardy* is a deeply imaginative tale about an orphaned pig who longs for a birthday party. Sendak, who is 83, wrote and illustrated the book while caring for his longtime partner, who died of cancer in 2007. "I did *Bumble-ardy* to save myself," Sendak says. "I did not want to die with him."

'The Swerve': Ideas That Rooted The Renaissance

September 20, 2011 | NPR · Stephen Greenblatt chronicles the unlikely discovery of Lucretius' poem "On the Nature of Things" — by a 15th-century Italian book hunter. *The Swerve* is a masterfully written meditation on the fragile inheritance of ideas.

Becoming Mindful Of Medical Decision Making

September 21, 2011 | NPR · Navigating medical information is tricky, particularly when patients receive advice from doctors, family members, guidelines, the media and the Internet. In *Your Medical Mind*, two Harvard physicians offer advice on how patients can make the best medical choices for themselves and their families.

Roger Ebert: A Critic Reflects On 'Life Itself'

September 21, 2011 | NPR · Roger Ebert tackles lowbrow and highbrow topics alike in his memoir; critic John Powers says the chronicle is sunny and hopeful — just like Ebert himself.

Love Longitude? 'Maphead' Locates Geography Buffs

September 21, 2011 | NPR · Former *Jeopardy!* champ Ken Jennings charts what he calls "the wide, weird world of geography" in his latest book, *Maphead*. He profiles Google Maps engineers, geocachers, imaginary mapmakers, map collectors, geography bee contestants and "road geeks."

In 'Arabia,' Writing Life As You Wish You'd Lived It

September 22, 2011 | NPR · Dana Spiotta's third novel, *Stone Arabia*, is about an aging musician who never achieved the type of success he'd have liked. Rather than giving up, he chronicles an imaginary version of his life — as a successful rock star recording his career in a series of journals.

Brad Pitt: 'Moneyball,' Life And 'The Stalkerazzi'

September 22, 2011 | NPR · The veteran actor has played a Nazi-hunter, a vampire, a

cowboy hitchhiker and the outlaw Jesse James. In his latest film, Brad Pitt plays the manager of baseball's Oakland A's. He tells *Fresh Air*'s Terry Gross why the part interested him and what it's like to live life in the public eye.

Some Familiar Faces Return To Fall TV Lineup

September 23, 2011 | NPR · Ted Danson and James Spader join the casts of *CSI* and *The Office* this season — and Simon Cowell returns to TV with an Americanized version of his British hit *The X-Factor*. Critic David Bianculli says the three TV vets each bring something else to their roles: a likability factor.

'Moneyball': A 'Bad News Bears' For MBAs

September 23, 2011 | NPR · *Moneyball* stars Brad Pitt as Billy Beane, the Oakland A's general manager who used analytics and statistics to stay competitive against other teams with much larger payrolls. Critic David Edelstein says the film, based on the 2003 Michael Lewis book, is "entertaining as a sports-underdog story."

'Moneyball': Tracking Down How Stats Win Games

September 23, 2011 | NPR · In 2002, the Oakland A's made history, winning 20 games in a row to set a new American League record. In *Moneyball*, writer Michael Lewis goes behind the scenes and explains how the A's used statistics and analytics to compete with teams with much bigger payrolls.

Fresh Air Weekend: Brad Pitt, Maurice Sendak

September 24, 2011 | NPR · Actor Brad Pitt details his role in the new movie *Moneyball*. Also, children's author Maurice Sendak talks about his life and his latest book *Bumble-Ardy*. And critic John Powers examines Roger Ebert's memoir.

The Greedy Battle For Iraq's 'Hearts And Minds'

September 26, 2011 | NPR · In 2009, Peter Van Buren joined a team working to rebuild Iraq's infrastructure and economy. For the next year, he encountered comically misguided projects, greedy contractors and oblivious bureaucrats. In his new book, *We Meant Well*, he recounts the ground-level waste and corruption he saw.

The Bangles Are Back, And Still Clever As Ever

September 26, 2011 | NPR · *Sweetheart of the Sun* is the first album in seven years by the The Bangles. The original quartet is now down to a trio: Susanna Hoffs and sisters Debbie and Vicki Peterson. Rock critic Ken Tucker says the new album is a nostalgia trip for a period that's even older than The Bangles' 1980s stardom.

The 'Worm' That Could Bring Down The Internet

September 27, 2011 | NPR · As many as 12 million computers worldwide have been infected with a highly encrypted computer worm called Conficker. Writer Mark Bowden details how Conficker was discovered, how it works, and the ongoing programming battle to bring down Conficker in his book *Worm: The First Digital World War*.

[Low Cut Connie: Contagious, Low-Brow Fun](#)

September 28, 2011 | NPR · A band formed by Adam Weiner from Philadelphia and Dan Finnermore from Birmingham, England, Low Cut Connie has just released its debut album, *Get Out the Lotion*. Rock critic Ken Tucker says it's both a throwback to early rock and a vital collection of raucous new music.

[Gordon-Levitt, Reiser Tackle '50/50' Odds](#)

September 28, 2011 | NPR · Screenwriter Will Reiser coped with his cancer diagnosis by thinking up ideas for cancer comedy movies with his best friend, actor Seth Rogen. Rogen and actor Joseph Gordon-Levitt now star in a film based on Reiser's life. Both Gordon-Levitt and Reiser join *Fresh Air* for a conversation about the film.

[Deadly Insurgents With Ties To U.S. Dollars](#)

September 29, 2011 | NPR · The Haqqani Network operates in eastern Afghanistan, where it carries out bombings and kidnappings. It was also blamed for the recent bombing at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul. *New York Times* reporter Mark Mazzetti says the network finances its activities partially through extortion money it receives from U.S.-funded contractors in Afghanistan.

[The Trouble With Health Problems Near Gas Fracking](#)

September 29, 2011 | NPR · Many people who live close to gas drilling sites complain of serious illnesses. But there are few concrete data to help explain why they're getting sick. Investigative reporter Abrahm Lustgarten says weak industry regulations also make it hard to establish a clear connection between gas drilling and health effects.

[An Atmospheric 'Shelter' For Era Full Of Foreboding](#)

September 30, 2011 | NPR · In *Take Shelter*, Michael Shannon dreams of an apocalyptic storm, and builds a backyard bunker for his family to survive. Critic David Edelstein says the film is terrific. (*Recommended*)

['Freedom': Franzen's Novel Earns High Praise](#)

September 30, 2011 | NPR · Why all the adulatory attention, critics ask, for Jonathan Franzen's latest domestic drama about marriage and family? Even though Franzen gets more praise for doing what many fine female writers do "backwards and in heels," critic Maureen Corrigan says *Freedom* has earned its accolades.

[Franzen Tackles Suburban Parenting In 'Freedom'](#)

September 30, 2011 | NPR · Jonathan Franzen's novel *Freedom* was called "a masterpiece" by *Time Magazine* and received rave reviews from critics. Franzen talks about the runaway success of his previous novel *The Corrections*, and the strong reaction elicited by *Freedom*.

[Want Good TV? Try These Three Shows](#)

September 30, 2011 | NPR · TV critic David Bianculli says most shows on TV this fall are a big disappointment. But three offerings this upcoming Sunday night — *Prohibition*,

Dexter and *Homeland* — are all excellent, invigorating and exceptionally intelligent.

Fresh Air Weekend: 'Breaking Bad' And '50/50'

October 1, 2011 | NPR · Actor Aaron Paul talks about his role on TV's *Breaking Bad*; screenwriter Will Reiser and actor Joseph Gordon Levitt discuss their cancer comedy *50/50* and Ken Tucker reviews the debut album from the band Low Cut Connie.

A Leading Figure In The New Apostolic Reformation

October 3, 2011 | NPR · Several apostles affiliated with the movement helped organize or spoke at Rick Perry's recent prayer rally. A leading apostle, C. Peter Wagner, talks about the movement and its missions, which include acquiring leadership positions in government, the media, and arts and entertainment.

How The Financial Crisis Created A 'New Third World'

October 4, 2011 | NPR · In *Boomerang*, writer Michael Lewis tells the stories of the countries hit hardest by the 2008 financial crisis. He also profiles some people who bet against European governments and are likely to make millions if and when they default.

Unlike Most Marxist Jargon, 'Class Warfare' Persists

October 4, 2011 | NPR · Words like "proletariat" and "masses" have largely left the lexicon, but linguist Geoff Nunberg says "class warfare" is a specter that haunts the English language — whenever there are appeals for making the rich pay more.

Unearthed Sessions From A Saxophonist Who Dropped Out

October 5, 2011 | NPR · *Doin' the Gigi* showcases Gigi Gryce as a swinging saxophonist and writer of quirky melodies.

In 'Homeland,' It's Hard To Know Whom To Trust

October 5, 2011 | NPR · Heroic POW or al-Qaida double agent? Howard Gordon, creator and producer of the new Showtime thriller, *Homeland*, talks about the twists and turns of the series, and explains why it's very different from his previous show, *24*.

'Terrorists In Love': The Psychology Of Extremism

October 5, 2011 | NPR · What motivates someone to become a terrorist? That's the question former prosecutor Ken Ballen set out to tackle when he traveled to Saudi Arabia and Indonesia to interview more than 100 Islamist extremists. "We've never sat back and said, 'Let's really understand our adversaries,' " he says.

Steve Jobs: 'Computer Science Is A Liberal Art'

October 6, 2011 | NPR · Everyone should be able to harness technology, Jobs told *Fresh Air*'s Terry Gross in 1996. In memory of Apple's co-founder and former CEO, we listen back to excerpts of their conversation. "Our goal was to bring a liberal arts perspective ... to what had traditionally been a very geeky technology," he said.

The Multimillionaire Helping Republicans Win N.C.

October 6, 2011 | NPR · Businessman Art Pope poured millions of dollars into state legislative campaigns during the 2010 campaign. Republicans went on to win 18 of the 22 campaign seats Pope and his organizations targeted. *New Yorker* writer Jane Mayer talks about Pope's growing power — and how his money may influence the 2012 presidential election.

'Ides Of March': These Days, All Politics Is Lowball

October 7, 2011 | NPR · An idealistic campaign press secretary (Ryan Gosling) finds himself in the middle of a scandal that could threaten his candidate's chances of becoming president.

John Wayne: Icon Of America's Booming Confidence

October 7, 2011 | NPR · It's been more than 30 years since the rugged film star's death, yet he still looms large in the national psyche. Critic John Powers was surprised to find that the indomitable American fighting man was actually a hard-earned act of self-invention.

'Stand Up, Speak Out,' Derrick Bell Told Law Students

October 7, 2011 | NPR · Bell, the first tenured black professor at Harvard Law School, died this week at age 80. His 1973 book, *Race, Racism and American Law*, is a staple at law schools nationwide. He spoke with Terry Gross in 1992.

David Rakoff's 'Half Empty' Full Of Humor, Guilt

October 7, 2011 | NPR · Writer David Rakoff's received the 2011 Thurber Prize for American Humor for his essay collection *Half Empty*. In the book, Rakoff explains the powers of pessimistic thought as he analyzes topics such as a pornography trade fair, his neurotic childhood and his recent cancer diagnosis.

Fresh Air Weekend: Jane Mayer, 'Homeland'

October 8, 2011 | NPR · Writer Jane Mayer profiles a conservative businessman who influences politics in N.C.; TV writer and executive producer Howard Gordon talks about *Homeland*, and linguist Geoff Nunberg discusses the term "class warfare."

'Breaking Bad,' 'Horror' Leave Viewers Wanting More

October 10, 2011 | NPR · The new FX drama series *American Horror Story* premiered last week and last night, the AMC drama *Breaking Bad* presented its season finale. TV critic David Bianculli says both are must-sees — because they both leave him wanting more.

HBO's 'Enlightened' Take On Modern Meditation

October 10, 2011 | NPR · Laura Dern is Amy Jellicoe, a health and beauty executive who returns from a post-meltdown retreat to pick up the pieces of her broken life in the new HBO series *Enlightened*. Dern and series creator Mike White talk about the tone of the show, and whether it's possible for people to *really* change.

[**Tyshawn Sorey: Making 'Oblique' Patterns Move**](#)

October 11, 2011 | NPR · Under *Oblique* — *It's* zigzag lines, Sorey's drums barrel along like a runaway tractor trailer.

[**A 'Marriage Plot' Full Of Intellectual Angst**](#)

October 11, 2011 | NPR · Jeffrey Eugenides' third novel, *The Marriage Plot*, charts the lives of three young adults as they finish college, fall in love and navigate the real world after graduating from Brown University in 1982. Eugenides, also a Brown alum, based some of the novel on his own experiences directly after college.

[**Out And Proud After 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' Repeal**](#)

October 12, 2011 | NPR · Long before the policy barring gays from serving openly in the military ended, Air Force 1st Lt. Josh Seefried started OutServe, a network of gay troops on Facebook. Seefried and his partner talk about what it's like being a gay couple in the military — and about new challenges facing gay troops.

[**Breathing New Life Into Hank Williams' Lyrics**](#)

October 12, 2011 | NPR · *The Lost Notebooks of Hank Williams* features a number of major country and rock musicians, who craft songs around lyrics that Hank Williams left behind in four notebooks when he died in 1953. Bob Dylan, Alan Jackson, Jack White and Norah Jones are among the artists on the album.

[**'Lost Memory Of Skin' Goes Where Most Fiction Won't**](#)

October 12, 2011 | NPR · Russell Banks' latest is an uneven effort to excavate and redeem the dregs of modern society. Critic Maureen Corrigan says the novel — about porn addiction and sexual predators — is compelling in a low-grade, nightmarish sort of way.

[**Rebuilding Soldiers Transformed By War Injuries**](#)

October 13, 2011 | NPR · More soldiers are returning from Iraq and Afghanistan with wounds that would have been fatal a decade ago. The injuries have led to advances in combat medicine but have challenged the health care systems meant to help veterans back home. War reporter David Wood talks with *Fresh Air* about the hurdles facing these troops and their families.

[**Ted Danson, On 'Crime' And 'Death' After 'Cheers'**](#)

October 14, 2011 | NPR · Actor Ted Danson has been captivating audiences for over 20 years. This fall, the actor appears in two TV series, playing an aging hotshot in need of a little spice on the HBO series *Bored To Death* and a forensic analyst on the CBS series, *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*.

[**Twain Humor Award Honors Comedian Will Ferrell**](#)

October 14, 2011 | NPR · Comedian Will Ferrell will receive the 14th annual Mark Twain Prize for American Humor later this month at the Kennedy Center. The comedian became famous as a cast member on *Saturday Night Live* and went on to star in movies such as

Old School and *Elf*.

Almodovar Gets Under The 'Skin,' But How Deeply?

October 14, 2011 | NPR · Pedro Almodovar's film *The Skin I Live In* reunites him with actor Antonio Banderas, who first came to international attention as an obsessive lover in the director's 1987 film *Law of Desire*. This time, Banderas plays a scientist driven to replace his dead wife with a carbon-based copy.

Fresh Air Weekend: Mike White, 'Marriage Plot'

October 15, 2011 | NPR · Series creator Mike White talks about the tone of his new HBO series *Enlightened*; Jeffrey Eugenides chats about his third novel *The Marriage Plot*, and music critic Ken Tucker examines *The Lost Notebooks of Hank Williams*.

The Sad Lesson Of 'Body Snatchers': People Change

October 17, 2011 | NPR · Science-fiction writer Jack Finney would have turned 100 this month. Critic Maureen Corrigan says he had a knack for tapping into our shallowly buried psychological anxieties. At its core, Finney's *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* is about how our loved ones inevitably change — and it is as sad as it is scary.

Seth MacFarlane: TV's 'Family Guy' Makes Music, Too

October 17, 2011 | NPR · MacFarlane is best known for creating the animated TV shows *Family Guy*, *American Dad!* and *The Cleveland Show*. But he's also a singer whose new album features songs from the Great American Songbook.

'Turkish Freakout': A Musical Turkish Delight

October 18, 2011 | NPR · Milo Miles reviews a compilation of overseas grooves that carry on psychedelic styles long after they were dropped in the U.S.

The Man Who Tracks Viruses Before They Spread

October 18, 2011 | NPR · Nathan Wolfe travels to the viral hot spots of the world, where viruses first jump from animals to humans. The scientist spends his days tracking emerging infectious diseases before they turn into global pandemics.

A 'Zone' Full Of Zombies In Lower Manhattan

October 19, 2011 | NPR · Colson Whitehead's new novel *Zone One* is a post-apocalyptic tale of a Manhattan crippled by a plague and overrun with zombies. He explains that he created the novel, in part, to pay homage to the grimy 1970s New York of his childhood.

Justice Stevens Reflects On The Court And Its Chiefs

October 19, 2011 | NPR · After 35 years as a Supreme Court justice, John Paul Stevens retired last year. His newly released memoir is about his time on the bench and the five Supreme Court chief justices he personally knew. He details his views of those justices and how his viewpoints on various issues evolved over the years.

Poet Marie Howe On 'What The Living Do' After Loss

October 20, 2011 | NPR · "Poetry holds the knowledge that we are alive and that we know we're going to die," poet Marie Howe tells *Fresh Air*'s Terry Gross. One of Howe's most famous poems, "What the Living Do," was recently included in *The Penguin Anthology of 20th-Century American Poetry*.

[Shelby Lynne: A 'Revelation' With An Exceptional Voice](#)

October 20, 2011 | NPR · Lynne's new album *Revelation Road* contains both a torchy pop ballad and a startlingly direct song about her parents' murder-suicide. Rock critic Ken Tucker says the album is an excellent showcase for Lynne's sharp songwriting and fantastic voice.

[Jimmy Fallon's Giant List Of 'Thank You Notes'](#)

October 21, 2011 | NPR · Fallon is thankful for slow walkers, people named Lloyd and the word "moist." The comedian and host of *Late Night* collects more than 100 nuggets of gratitude in his book *Thank You Notes*. He talks with Terry Gross about giving thanks and doing impressions.

['Margin Call': A Movie Occupied With Wall Street](#)

October 21, 2011 | NPR · This fiscal thriller, starring Kevin Spacey, Zachary Quinto and Demi Moore, is set during one day in 2008, as a group of brokers try to prevent their firm from going belly up. David Edelstein says that given the headlines, the film's timing couldn't be better. *(Recommended)*

[Fresh Air Weekend: MacFarlane, Zombies, 'Snatchers'](#)

October 22, 2011 | NPR · Seth MacFarlane talks about his hit TV shows and his new album; writer Colson Whitehead discusses his post-apocalyptic zombie novel *Zone One* and Maureen Corrigan revisits the sci-fi classic, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*.

[Going Under The 'Boardwalk' With Michael Shannon](#)

October 24, 2011 | NPR · The actor plays a righteous federal agent who succumbs to all sorts of temptations on the HBO drama *Boardwalk Empire*. To build the character of Nelson Van Alden, he says, he worked out an elaborate back story about the agent's childhood.

['Deadly Monopolies'? Patenting The Human Body](#)

October 24, 2011 | NPR · In a new book, medical ethicist Harriet Washington details how genes and tissues are increasingly being patented by pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies. Those firms, she argues, are focused more on their profits than on the medical needs of patients.

[Jobs' Biography: Thoughts On Life, Death And Apple](#)

October 25, 2011 | NPR · After Steve Jobs was diagnosed with cancer, he asked Walter Isaacson to write his biography. The new book tells the personal story of the man behind the personal computer — from his childhood in California to his thoughts on family, friends, death and religion.

Steve, Myself And i: The Big Story Of A Little Prefix

October 25, 2011 | NPR · The "i" prefix began as an abbreviation for the word "Internet," but ended up being much more than that. "By the time i- was fleshed out, Apple had transformed itself from a culty computer-maker to a major religion," says linguist Geoff Nunberg.

The 'Informal Economy' Driving World Business

October 26, 2011 | NPR · More than half of all employed people worldwide work off the books. And that number is expected to climb over the next decade. Investigative journalist Robert Neuwirth examines how the underground economy works in his book, *Stealth of Nations*.

Reporting On The Front Lines Of Mexico's Drug War

October 26, 2011 | NPR · Since 2006, 40,000 people have been murdered in Mexico as drug cartels battle each other and the Mexican military. Journalist Ioan Grillo traces how Mexico came to control drug trafficking in *El Narco*.

David Carr: The News Diet Of A Media Omnivore

October 27, 2011 | NPR · David Carr, who writes the Media Equation column for *The New York Times*, says that despite cuts, the future of journalism has never looked brighter. "I look at my backpack that is sitting here and it contains more journalistic firepower than the entire newsroom that I walked into 30-40 years ago," he says.

Deer Tick: Finding 'Divine Providence' Along The Way

October 27, 2011 | NPR · Deer Tick has just released its fourth album, *Divine Providence*. Rock critic Ken Tucker says the album takes the Rhode Island band in a more raw-sounding direction.

'Primetime' TV, Like You've Never Seen It Before

October 28, 2011 | NPR · The PBS documentary series *America in Primetime*, which premieres this weekend, puts TV under the microscope, analyzing various tropes and character archetypes. Critic David Bianculli says it's the smartest TV show about television he's seen in the past two decades.

Scott Spencer: Plot Twists, Where Everything Changes

October 28, 2011 | NPR · Many of Spencer's novels feature a turning point — a dreadful, unplanned act committed by one of the characters. In his latest book, *Man in the Woods*, a carpenter accidentally kills a man, which leads him to question himself and his relationship with God.

Shakespeare, Thompson: Stick To The Print Versions

October 28, 2011 | NPR · The lives of writers drive two films opening this week: *The Rum Diary*, starring Johnny Depp, dramatizes a Hunter S. Thompson novel. Roland Emmerich's *Anonymous*, meanwhile, examines who wrote Shakespeare's plays. Critic

David Edelstein says both films show how hard it is to write about writers.

Fresh Air Weekend: Michael Shannon, David Carr

October 29, 2011 | NPR · Actor Michael Shannon talks about his role on *Boardwalk Empire*; David Carr, who writes the Media Equation column for *The New York Times*, reflects on the future of journalism; and rock critic Ken Tucker reviews a new album from the band Deer Tick.

Tom Waits: The Fresh Air Interview

October 31, 2011 | NPR · The darkness of Tom Waits' lyrics is accentuated by the rumble and rasp of his voice, which sounded old even when he was young. On *Bad As Me*, Waits reflects on loneliness, life, death and heartbreak. Here, he talks to Terry Gross about performing, being a father and writing his haunting melodies.

The SMiLE Sessions: A Window Into The Beach Boys

November 1, 2011 | NPR · *SMiLE* may be the most famous unreleased album of all time, but it's not really unreleased: Bits and pieces of it wound up on other Beach Boys albums. Now that EMI has assembled a definitive collection of the session tracks, Ed Ward has listened to them — and wonders what the shouting was about.

Interrupting Violence With The Message 'Don't Shoot'

November 1, 2011 | NPR · Criminologist David M. Kennedy's strategy for reducing gang violence has dramatically reduced youth homicide rates nationwide. In his new memoir, *Don't Shoot*, Kennedy outlines how community meetings and interventions have worked to curb youth violence in more than 70 cities.

'Tinker, Tailor': The Greatest Spy Story Ever Told

November 1, 2011 | NPR · At its core, John le Carre's *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy* isn't really about espionage, says critic John Powers. The 1974 novel, adapted for the screen in 1979 by the BBC, is actually about secrets and lies and shifting identities — which is to say, a metaphor for our own daily lives.

Joan Didion: Crafting An Elegy For Her Daughter

November 2, 2011 | NPR · Two years after the death of her husband, Joan Didion suffered the untimely loss of her only daughter. She pieces together her memories of Quintana Roo in her new memoir, *Blue Nights*.

Bill Nighy: From 'Love Actually' To 'Page Eight'

November 2, 2011 | NPR · The British character actor shot to international stardom after playing an aging rocker in the 2003 romantic comedy *Love Actually*. In his latest project, the BBC drama *Page Eight*, Nighy plays a British intelligence officer who discovers a state secret.

A Critic To Remember: Pauline Kael At The 'Movies'

November 3, 2011 | NPR · American film critic Pauline Kael was a brash, exuberant

female writer at a time when most of her colleagues were buttoned up — and male. *The Age of Movies*, a new collection of selected essays and movie reviews from Kael, showcases the gutsy and passionate style that made her a household name.

[The War Among Google, Amazon, Facebook, Apple](#)

November 3, 2011 | NPR · Facebook, Google, Amazon and Apple are expanding rapidly into finance, advertising, media and retail. Tech writer Farhad Manjoo outlines how the four companies are heading in new directions — and encroaching on each other's territory — as they try to expand their customer base.

[Kelly Clarkson's Vocals Keep Getting 'Stronger'](#)

November 3, 2011 | NPR · The former *American Idol* winner has just released her fifth album, *Stronger*. Rock critic Ken Tucker says the record doesn't contain Clarkson's strongest material, but still shows off her powerful vocal cords.

[Exploring 'The Hidden Reality' Of Parallel Worlds](#)

November 4, 2011 | NPR · It is possible that there are many other universes that exist parallel to our universe. Theoretical physicist Brian Greene, author of *The Elegant Universe*, explains how that's possible in the new book, *The Hidden Reality*.

['Crazy' In Love, And Feeling Every Moment Of It](#)

November 4, 2011 | NPR · In Drake Doremus' drama *Like Crazy*, a young couple is forced to separate when one of them violates the terms of her student visa. Movie critic David Edelstein says the movie is painful and compelling — and reminds him of Richard Linklater's *Before Sunrise*.

[Julius Hemphill's 'Dogon A.D.' Still A Revelation 40 Years On](#)

November 4, 2011 | NPR · The out-of-print and much-coveted album combines a dramatically spare sound with a heavy backbeat.

[Fresh Air Weekend: Tom Waits, Bill Nighy](#)

November 5, 2011 | NPR · Tom Waits talks to Terry Gross about performing, being a father and writing his haunting melodies. Also, actor Bill Nighy talks about his latest project *Page Eight* and rock historian Ed Ward reviews *The SMiLE Sessions* from The Beach Boys.

[How The World's Tallest Skyscrapers Work](#)

November 7, 2011 | NPR · How do skyscrapers withstand 100-mph winds? How does air circulate inside tall buildings? And what happens when you flush a toilet on the 100th floor? Those questions and more are answered by Kate Ascher in her new book exploring the inner workings of skyscrapers.

['SNL's' Darrell Hammond Reveals Cutting, Abuse](#)

November 7, 2011 | NPR · In 14 years on *Saturday Night Live*, Darrell Hammond did many impressions, including Bill Clinton and Al Gore. But few of his cast members

knew that Hammond struggled with drugs, alcohol and self-cutting as the result of systematic childhood abuse.

How Dogs Evolved Into 'Our Best Friends'

November 8, 2011 | NPR · Naturalist Mark Derr says our friendship with dogs and wolves goes back thousands of years more than previously believed. His new book explores how the relationship between humans and wolves developed.

James Wolcott: 'Lucking Out' In 1970s New York

November 8, 2011 | NPR · The *Vanity Fair* critic was an aspiring writer when he arrived in a turbulent Manhattan in 1972. In his memoir, *Lucking Out*, he writes about the crime and culture (and pornography) he discovered there.

Life Without Plot In 'Leaving The Atocha Station'

November 9, 2011 | NPR · Lerner captures the sense of everyday life with an unusual focus on thoughts rather than incident, betting on the premise that these thoughts are the events, rather than the stuff in between them.

'Four The Record,' Lambert Comes To Terms With Herself

November 9, 2011 | NPR · *Four the Record* is Miranda Lambert's first new collection of songs after her 2009 album *Revolution*. Since then, Lambert has quickly become one of Nashville's most prominent stars. But rock critic Ken Tucker says Lambert is still not a typical Nashville country act.

How Birth Control And Abortion Became Politicized

November 9, 2011 | NPR · Historian Jill Lepore writes about the early history of the birth control and abortion movements in this week's *New Yorker*. "I think it's easy to lose perspective [that] actually the arguments made by one side or another have switched sides over time more than once," she says.

Dunst: Expressing Something Blue In Melancholia

November 10, 2011 | NPR · The actress stars in Lars von Trier's new psychological drama *Melancholia*, about depression and the end of the world. She talks about making the film and about working with Von Trier, whose controversial remarks about Hitler got him kicked out of this year's Cannes Film Festival.

Joe Henry: An Eclectic And Raucous 'Reverie'

November 10, 2011 | NPR · Joe Henry has produced albums by Solomon Burke, Allan Toussaint, Hugh Laurie and others. The versatile singer, songwriter and producer has just released *Reverie*, his 12th album. It features acoustic performances from a three-day jam session in his basement.

Honoring Veterans With A Military Clarinet Quartet

November 11, 2011 | NPR · The Air Force's Bay State Winds Clarinet Quartet joins Terry Gross for a discussion of military ensembles. The group also performs several songs in

tribute to the men and women who've served in the armed forces.

[Treating Soldiers With Severe Combat Wounds](#)

November 11, 2011 | NPR · More soldiers are returning from Iraq and Afghanistan with wounds that would have been fatal a decade ago. The injuries have led to advances in combat medicine but have challenged the health care systems meant to help veterans back home. War reporter David Wood talks with *Fresh Air* about the hurdles facing these troops and their families.

[As The World Ends, A Certain 'Melancholia' Sets In](#)

November 11, 2011 | NPR · Lars von Trier's *Melancholia* stars Kirsten Dunst and Charlotte Gainsbourg as sisters who undergo a psychological transformation as disaster approaches. Critic David Edelstein says the film is a sublime fusion of form and content with a truly Wagnerian climax. *(Recommended)*

[Fresh Air Weekend: Kirsten Dunst, Darrell Hammond](#)

November 12, 2011 | NPR · Kirsten Dunst talks about her role in Lars von Trier's new psychological drama *Melancholia*. *SNL* actor Darrell Hammond talks about his struggle with drugs, alcohol and self-cutting as the result of systematic childhood abuse. And Ken Tucker reviews a new Miranda Lambert album.

[Exploring Supernovae Leads To Physics Nobel Prize](#)

November 14, 2011 | NPR · Astrophysicist Saul Perlmutter is part of the team that was awarded the 2011 Nobel Prize in physics for the discovery that the expansion of the universe is not slowing down but is accelerating. The results of that research suggest the universe is filled with dark energy.

[Two South-American Jazz Fusions \(No, Not That Kind\)](#)

November 14, 2011 | NPR · Kevin Whitehead looks at genre-bending new albums by Pablo Aslan and São Paulo Underground.

[Regis Philbin Explains How He 'Got This Way'](#)

November 15, 2011 | NPR · On Friday, Regis Philbin will step down from his hosting duties on the talk show *Live with Regis and Kelly*. But that doesn't mean he's retiring. In his new memoir, *How I Got This Way*, Philbin chronicles the twists and turns of his career and explains where he plans to go next.

[Astaire, Burns, Allen In 'Distress' In London Town](#)

November 15, 2011 | NPR · George and Ira Gershwin wrote some of their best songs for movies — one of which, 1937's *A Damsel in Distress*, has just been issued by Warner Archives. Critic Lloyd Schwartz says it may be the oddest of the Gershwin brothers' films.

[The History Of Hillbilly Boogie's Earliest Days](#)

November 15, 2011 | NPR · Boogie-woogie was a piano style that began sometime in the

early 20th century — and, by the 1930s, became a huge pop-music fad. Rock historian Ed Ward explains how the genre re-emerged in country music after WWII, when it was an important precursor to rock 'n' roll.

[**A Quaint, Compelling 'Pilgrim' Tale In The New World**](#)

November 16, 2011 | NPR · The year is 1622, and a tormented English Puritan strikes out for the Plymouth Plantation in Hugh Nissenson's moody, intelligent novel. Critic Maureen Corrigan says *The Pilgrim* is a work of straightforward historical fiction — of the sort that you don't see so much anymore.

[**Did U.S. Tax Policies Increase Economic Inequality?**](#)

November 16, 2011 | NPR · *Rolling Stone* political correspondent Tim Dickinson says the tax policies pursued by the Republican Party have benefited the top 1 percent of income earners. "The people at the very top of the income [bracket] are taking off like a rocket," he says.

[**Filmmaker Woody Allen Gets The 'Masters' Treatment**](#)

November 17, 2011 | NPR · Woody Allen is the subject of a new two-part, four-hour special on the PBS series *American Masters*. TV critic David Bianculli says the documentary is "a smart, sometimes serious study of a smart, sometimes serious filmmaker."

[**Miles Davis' Great, Often Bizarre 1967 Quintet**](#)

November 17, 2011 | NPR · Kevin Whitehead says this Davis quintet was consistently amazing, not least on its last big tour.

[**In Payne's 'Descendants,' Trouble In The Tropics**](#)

November 17, 2011 | NPR · Director Alexander Payne finds comedy in the crises of his flawed protagonists: a struggling writer in *Sideways*, a retired widower in *About Schmidt* and now a family man who must reassess his life in *The Descendants*.

[**'The Descendants': In Paradise, A Stranger To Himself**](#)

November 18, 2011 | NPR · A father (George Clooney) struggles to reassess his past and navigate his future after his wife is gravely injured in a water-skiing accident. Critic David Edelstein says the film blends broad comedy with the sting of tragedy.
(Recommended)

[**In 'Beginners,' A Gay Man Comes Out Late In Life**](#)

November 18, 2011 | NPR · The movie *Beginners* stars Ewan McGregor as a young man who learns that his 75-year-old father, played by Christopher Plummer, is gay. The movie is based on filmmaker Mike Mills' own life. Mills explains what happened when his own dad came out.

[**Fresh Air Weekend: Regis Philbin, Alexander Payne**](#)

November 19, 2011 | NPR · On Friday, Regis Philbin stepped down from his hosting

duties on the talk show *Live with Regis and Kelly*. He talks about his next step. Also, filmmaker Alexander Payne talks about several of his recent movies and musician Joe Henry reflects on his latest album *Reverie*.

[Degas' Nudes Depict The Awkwardness Of Real Life](#)

November 21, 2011 | NPR · The Boston Museum of Fine Arts and the Musee d'Orsay in Paris have collaborated on a show called *Degas and the Nude*, which includes works from all over the world. Lloyd Schwartz says that in portraits of everyday moments, Degas made women mysterious, vulnerable and heartbreakingly human.

[The American Behind The 2008 Attack On Mumbai](#)

November 21, 2011 | NPR · David Coleman Headley was one of the leaders of the 2008 terrorist attack on Mumbai. A new *Frontline* documentary chronicles how the son of a Pakistani father and an American mother became a radicalized Islamic militant while working as an informant for the U.S. government.

[Delicious Turkey Tips From Food Scientists](#)

November 22, 2011 | NPR · How do you make the perfect turkey? Shirley Corriher and Harold McGee, experts on the science of food and cooking, explain how to make sure the centerpiece of your Thanksgiving table is deliciously moist.

[David Lynch Dreams Up 'Crazy Clown Time'](#)

November 22, 2011 | NPR · Director David Lynch — the man who made *Blue Velvet*, *Twin Peaks* and *Eraserhead* -- has released his first solo album, titled *Crazy Clown Time*. Rock critic Ken Tucker says it's a strange trip that ends up making a lot of sense.

[Francis Ford Coppola Reflects On His Film Career](#)

November 22, 2011 | NPR · At this year's Toronto International Film Festival, the director of *Apocalypse Now* and the iconic *Godfather* films shared memories and anecdotes with a sold-out crowd.

[The Muppet Fans Who Made 'The Muppets' Movie](#)

November 23, 2011 | NPR · The filmmakers behind *Forgetting Sarah Marshall* have teamed up to create a new Muppet movie. "We set out to make a Muppet movie that harkened back to the late-'70s [and] early-'80s Muppets that we grew up with," says Jason Segel.

['Hugo:' A Dazzling 3-D Display Of Movie Magic](#)

November 23, 2011 | NPR · Martin Scorsese's film, adapted from Brian Selznick's children's book, follows a young orphan (Asa Butterfield) who stumbles on a mystery while living in a Paris train station. Critic David Edelstein says the movie's dazzling effects redeem the 3-D genre.

[Rocker Nick Lowe Still Has 'The Old Magic'](#)

November 24, 2011 | NPR · Singer-songwriter Nick Lowe joins *Fresh Air*'s Terry Gross

for an in-studio interview and performance featuring several songs from his 13th solo album, *The Old Magic*.

Jay-Z 'Decoded:' The Fresh Air Interview

November 25, 2011 | NPR · Jay-Z is one of the most successful hip-hop artists of all time. On *Fresh Air*, he discusses growing up in Brooklyn surrounded by drugs and violence, and the stories behind many of his famous songs.

Iron Butterfly Stretches Its Wings On 'Fillmore East'

November 25, 2011 | NPR · The psychedelic band has a complex legacy that goes beyond its big hit, "In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida," critic Milo Miles says. A newly released concert recording from 1968 provides the best chance in decades for a fresh look at Iron Butterfly.

Fresh Air Weekend: Coppola, The Muppets

November 26, 2011 | NPR · Francis Ford Coppola shares stories from his early film making career and from some of his most famous movies, including *The Godfather* and *Apocalypse Now*. Also, Jason Segel and Nick Stoller talk about their new Muppet movie and Ed Ward reviews hillbilly boogie's earliest days.

Danny Burstein On Living Up To Sondheim's 'Follies'

November 28, 2011 | NPR · Burstein has played a wide range of roles, from casino owner Lolly Steinman in HBO's *Boardwalk Empire*, to his current role as Buddy Plummer in the Broadway revival of *Follies*. He talks about his lengthy career on stage, screen and television.

'Pride And Prejudice' Meets 'Clue' At 'Pemberley'

November 29, 2011 | NPR · Mystery writer P.D. James, now 91, has written a suspenseful sequel to Jane Austen's classic. *Death Comes to Pemberley* picks up six years after Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy have wed. Maureen Corrigan says the story is "a glorious plum pudding of a whodunit."

'Physics Of The Future': How We'll Live In 2100?

November 29, 2011 | NPR · Theoretical physicist Michio Kaku describes some of the inventions he thinks will appear in the coming century — including Internet-ready contact lenses, space elevators and driverless cars — in his book *Physics of the Future*.

After U.S. Troops Leave, What Happens To Iraq?

November 29, 2011 | NPR · Tim Arango, the Baghdad bureau chief for *The New York Times*, shares personal stories from his time covering the war, including how he tracked down the subject of a famous photograph. He also talks about what the U.S. troop withdrawal means for the future of Iraq — and what will happen after the troops are gone.

Buck Owens: Finding His Voice In 'Bakersfield'

November 30, 2011 | NPR · Owens may be best known as the smiling country singer who co-hosted *Hee Haw*, but he also sang original tunes. A new collection, *Buck Owens: Bound for Bakersfield*, goes back to the days before Owens made it big.

[Interpreting The Constitution In The Digital Era](#)

November 30, 2011 | NPR · Technologies like GPS and social media are posing new challenges to interpreting the Constitution's guarantees of privacy and free speech. Law professor and journalist Jeffrey Rosen says we're now in an era the Founding Fathers could never have imagined, in which private companies are determining the rules for what can be shared.

[At Midseason, Serial Dramas Serve Up Big Twists](#)

December 1, 2011 | NPR · TV critic David Bianculli talks up some of the twists and turns presented recently in some of his favorite shows — including *Dexter*, *Homeland* and *The Walking Dead*. **Note: Spoiler-rich.**

[Going 'One On One' With Sports' Greatest Stars](#)

December 1, 2011 | NPR · Award-winning sports journalist John Feinstein explains how he's gotten some of the most talented and temperamental athletes and coaches in the world to talk to him. His book *One on One* details his conversations with people like Bobby Knight, Tiger Woods and John McEnroe.

[Fresh Air Remembers Jazz Drummer Paul Motian](#)

December 2, 2011 | NPR · A look back at Motian, who died last week at the age of 80, with highlights from a 2006 interview. Motian played with Bill Evans and Keith Jarrett before becoming a bandleader himself.

[For Fassbender, Two Perspectives On The Perils Of Sex](#)

December 2, 2011 | NPR · Critic David Edelstein looks at two current films starring the actor Michael Fassbender — the anti-erotic drama *Shame* and the biographical drama *A Dangerous Method*, both of which grapple with the dangers of desire.

['Lost In A Dream': Low, Loose And Slow](#)

December 2, 2011 | NPR · *Fresh Air* begins its remembrance of drummer Paul Motian with an archived review of his trio album.

[Fresh Air Weekend: Danny Burstein, Michio Kaku](#)

December 3, 2011 | NPR · Danny Burstein talks about his lengthy career on stage, screen and television. Also, theoretical physicist Michio Kaku describes some of the inventions he thinks will appear in the coming century, and rock critic Ken Tucker reviews a new collection of Buck Owens tunes.

['Times' Advice Guru Answers Your Social Q's](#)

December 5, 2011 | NPR · *New York Times* advice columnist Philip Galanes details how to handle breakups, cellphone calls and food allergies — among other topics — in his

book *Social Q's: How to Survive the Quirks, Quandaries and Quagmires of Today*.

[At MoMA, A Look At De Kooning's Shifts In Style](#)

December 5, 2011 | NPR · New York's Museum of Modern Art is currently hosting the first major Willem de Kooning retrospective. Critic Lloyd Schwartz says the exhibit traces the development of de Kooning's entire career, along with the little detours he took along the way.

[Thelonious Monk And More: 'Jazz Icons' On Screen](#)

December 6, 2011 | NPR · A new DVD set catches a rare solo Monk gig, plus sets by John Coltrane, Johnny Griffin and others.

[Dustin Lance Black: Crafting The Story Of 'J. Edgar'](#)

December 6, 2011 | NPR · The recent film portrays former FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover as a man who had to keep his sexual orientation a secret — while collecting other people's secrets to use against them. Screenwriter Dustin Lance Black explains how he researched the film, which stars Leonardo DiCaprio.

[Tried And True Tricks From 'America's Test Kitchen'](#)

December 7, 2011 | NPR · From perfect pie crusts to poached salmon, Christopher Kimball and Bridget Lancaster share cooking tips and secret shortcuts from *America's Test Kitchen*. The biggest challenge is getting home chefs to faithfully follow recipes, Kimball says: "They will substitute ingredients with great abandon."

['Occupy': Geoff Nunberg's 2011 Word Of The Year](#)

December 7, 2011 | NPR · *Fresh Air*'s resident linguist explains how the magic of metonymy gave "occupy" its symbolism — and how the word implies a culture that made a bunch of protests feel like a movement.

[Gingrich's Path From 'Flameout' To D.C. Entrepreneur](#)

December 8, 2011 | NPR · Newt Gingrich made a fortune from the businesses he started after leaving Congress in 1999. *Washington Post* reporter Karen Tumulty explains how Gingrich "transfigured himself from a political flameout into a thriving business conglomerate."

[The Black Keys: A Reinvention On 'El Camino'](#)

December 8, 2011 | NPR · The Black Keys just released a new album called *El Camino*. Rock critic Ken Tucker says that, while the album retains the band's roots in blues and R&B, it's also reaching out to a wider audience with its pop and rock touches.

[Fresh Air Remembers Soul Singer Howard Tate](#)

December 9, 2011 | NPR · Tate made a string of hits in the '60s, but then disappeared from public view for more than 30 years. In 2003, he joined record producer Jerry Ragovoy on *Fresh Air* for a conversation about their collaborations.

[Herzog's Doc Brings Prehistoric Paintings To Life](#)

December 9, 2011 | NPR · German filmmaker Werner Herzog was one of the few people permitted to enter a cave in France containing the oldest recorded cave paintings. What he saw — and what he imagined — is the subject of his documentary, *The Cave of Forgotten Dreams*.

[Spies Like Them: 'Tinker, Tailor' And Other Odd Ilk](#)

December 9, 2011 | NPR · Set in the Cold War era, the espionage thriller *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy* spotlights a retired security agent's mission to uncover a Russian spy within Britain's MI6. David Edelstein says the movie is thrilling, creepy and full of "faces you'll love to study."

[Fresh Air Weekend: 'Test Kitchen,' Dustin Lance Black](#)

December 10, 2011 | NPR · Christopher Kimball and Bridget Lancaster share cooking tips and secret shortcuts from *America's Test Kitchen*. Also, screenwriter Dustin Lance Black explains the research behind *J. Edgar*, and Ken Tucker reviews a new album from The Black Keys.

[Michael C. Hall: Playing A Killer Role On 'Dexter'](#)

December 12, 2011 | NPR · The star of Showtime's bloody crime drama talks about the show's eventual plans for an ending — and also about matters both professional and personal, from how he plays an emotionless killer to how Hall himself, while filming *Dexter*, has dealt with both cancer and a divorce.

[Losing 'Virginity': Olive Oil's 'Scandalous' Fraud](#)

December 12, 2011 | NPR · In his book *Extra Virginity*, Tom Mueller explains why you can't believe everything you read on olive oil labels. Much of the "extra-virgin" olive oil sold in the U.S. has actually been mixed with lower-priced, lower-grade oils and artificial coloring, he says.

[Louis C.K. Reflects On 'Louie,' Loss, Love And Life](#)

December 13, 2011 | NPR · The comedian's latest special, *Live at the Beacon Theater*, was released earlier this week. C.K. talks about why he went with Web distribution this time, and reflects on his award-winning TV series, his relationship with other comedians and his USO appearances.

[The Technology Helping Repressive Regimes Spy](#)

December 14, 2011 | NPR · As protesters in the Middle East use social media to communicate, the regimes they're battling are using sophisticated technology to intercept their emails and text messages. Journalist Ben Elgin details how Western companies are providing software and equipment to help Middle Eastern governments crack down on dissidents.

[Year-End Wrap-Up: The 10 Best Novels Of 2011](#)

December 14, 2011 | NPR · 2011 was a terrific year for fiction — both from first-time

novelists and much-decorated veterans. Maureen Corrigan's recommendations range from Karen Russell's dazzling debut, to David Foster Wallace's posthumously published novel, to what may be *the* Sept. 11 novel.

'Three Views' Of Trumpeter Dave Douglas

December 14, 2011 | NPR · Douglas' three very different quintet albums sound very good together, says critic Kevin Whitehead.

Reviving 'Songs For The Jewish-American Jet Set'

December 15, 2011 | NPR · Tikva Records was founded as an independent Jewish record label in 1947. For the next 30 years, it would record everything from folk songs to klezmer pop. A new compilation celebrates the now-defunct label, which once recorded some of the Jewish music world's biggest names.

Kevin Clash: The Man Behind Elmo

December 15, 2011 | NPR · For more than 20 years, puppeteer Kevin Clash has been the voice behind the lovable red monster on *Sesame Street*. Both Clash "and" Elmo talk with Terry Gross about performing with Jim Henson, and creating a fun, educational experience for preschool-aged children.

Wilhelm Furtwaengler: A Complex German Conductor

December 16, 2011 | NPR · German conductor Wilhelm Furtwaengler is regarded as one of the greatest musicians of the 20th century, but his legacy was affected by his decision to stay in Germany during WWII. Classical music critic Lloyd Schwartz looks at how Furtwangler is seen today.

Tracing Ballet's Cultural History Over 400 Years

December 16, 2011 | NPR · Ballet's history is not just about choreography and technique — it's also a history of nationalization, the changing ways we view the body, shifting gender norms and class struggles. Historian Jennifer Homans chronicles the art form in a cultural history, *Apollo's Angels*.

An 'Impossible' Mission Full Of Fun And Wonder

December 16, 2011 | NPR · Director Brad Bird makes his live-action debut with *Ghost Protocol*, the latest film in the *Mission: Impossible* franchise starring Tom Cruise. Critic David Edelstein says the movie is "wonderful fun" and "in a different league than its predecessors."

Fresh Air Weekend: Louis C.K., Sports Journalism

December 17, 2011 | NPR · Louis C.K. reflects on his award-winning TV series, his relationship with other comedians and his USO appearances. Also, sports journalist John Feinstein explains how he's gotten some of the most talented and temperamental athletes and coaches in the world to talk to him.

Trent Reznor: The Fresh Air Interview

December 19, 2011 | NPR · The man behind Nine Inch Nails composed the music for the U.S. film adaptation of *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo*. Here, he discusses composing the film's unsettling score, his early days making music in Cleveland and his work with Nine Inch Nails.

[The Left Banke: Teenage Pioneers Of Jangle-Pop](#)

December 19, 2011 | NPR · In the 1960s, it was hard to form a rock band, especially in New York. With connections, though, you could make it — and that's how one of the most mysterious and legendary New York bands, The Left Banke, came to be.

[Bianculli Picks The Best \(And Worst\) TV Of 2011](#)

December 20, 2011 | NPR · *Fresh Air's* TV critic reveals his top 10 list of the year's best shows, from a political drama on Showtime to a "risky" comedy on ABC. Bianculli also reveals which shows are the worst to hit screens this year — including not one but two shows featuring Snooki.

[Ken Tucker's Top 10: The Year In Music](#)

December 20, 2011 | NPR · *Fresh Air's* critic looks back on a fruitful year and lists his favorite music releases of 2011.

[The Story Of The Chitlin' Circuit's Great Performers](#)

December 20, 2011 | NPR · Before the Civil Rights movement, segregated American cities helped give birth to the Chitlin' Circuit, a touring revue that provided employment for hundreds of black musicians. Rock historian Ed Ward profiles two recent books which illuminate the conditions these musicians endured.

[A Foreign Correspondent Reflects On The Arab Spring](#)

December 21, 2011 | NPR · For the past year, veteran war correspondent Anthony Shadid has been reporting on the Arab uprisings in Egypt, Libya, Syria, Bahrain and Tunisia. Last March, he was kidnapped and beaten by security forces in Libya. "It remains one of the scariest moments of my life," he says.

[El Rego: A Singer From Benin With Soul And Funk](#)

December 21, 2011 | NPR · For many years, the search for unknown or forgotten soul singers has dug deeply into music archives. But surprises still turn up. Music critic Milo Miles says this year's best discovery is a West African singer and bandleader named El Rego.

[Flicks, Picked \(Redux\): Edelstein's 2011 Top 10 Films](#)

December 22, 2011 | NPR · From a white-knuckle Wall Street chronicle to a modernized Shakespearean war story, the films on David Edelstein's best-of-the-year list tell solid stories new and old.

[Hugh Martin's 'Hidden Treasures' Explored](#)

December 22, 2011 | NPR · Martin wrote "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" for

Judy Garland's 1944 movie *Meet Me in St. Louis*, along with dozens of other songs for MGM and Broadway musicals. His career is celebrated on a new CD and 88-page booklet with essays by Stephen Sondheim and Michael Feinstein.

Some Christmas Tunes From Rebecca Kilgore And Pals

December 23, 2011 | NPR · In time for the holidays, *Fresh Air* presents an in-studio concert. Singer Rebecca Kilgore, trombonist Dan Barrett and pianist Rossano Sportiello played at the NOLA studios in Manhattan.

Singer Darrell Scott Reflects On His Father's Death

December 23, 2011 | NPR · Country singer-songwriter Darrell Scott grew up performing with his father, Wayne. Last month, Darrell was in Texas in between gigs when he learned that his father had died in a car accident. Here, he reflects on his father's life and death, and reads a poem he wrote about his dad.

Fresh Air Weekend: Trent Reznor, Elmo

December 24, 2011 | NPR · The man behind Nine Inch Nails discusses composing film music, his early days making music in Cleveland and his music. Also, Kevin Clash, the man behind Elmo, talks about performing with Jim Henson, and creating a fun, educational experience for preschool-aged children.

Waits: Paying Homage To Outcasts On 'Bad As Me'

December 26, 2011 | NPR · The darkness of Tom Waits' lyrics is accentuated by the rumble and rasp of his voice, which sounded old even when he was young. On *Bad As Me*, Waits reflects on loneliness, life, death and heartbreak. Here, he talks to Terry Gross about performing, being a father and writing his haunting melodies.

Jimmy Fallon's 'Thank You Notes' For Everything

December 26, 2011 | NPR · Fallon is thankful for slow walkers, people named Lloyd and the word "moist." The comedian and host of *Late Night* collects more than 100 nuggets of gratitude in his book called *Thank You Notes*. He talks with Terry Gross about giving thanks and doing impressions.

Margo Martindale: A 'Justified' Backwoods Matriarch

December 27, 2011 | NPR · Margo Martindale plays Mags Bennett, the leader of a law-defying Appalachian family in the FX series *Justified*. The Emmy-nominated actress talks about playing Mags — as well as her other roles in *Paris, Je T'Aime* and *Million Dollar Baby*.

Aaron Paul: Playing Bad On 'Breaking Bad'

December 27, 2011 | NPR · Student-turned-drug dealer Jesse Pinkman was supposed to die in the first season of the AMC drama. But the writers decided the chemistry between high school teacher Walter White (Bryan Cranston) and Jesse (Aaron Paul) was too good to let go.

David Carr: A Media Omnivore Discusses His Diet

December 28, 2011 | NPR · David Carr, who writes the Media Equation column for *The New York Times*, says that despite cuts, the future of journalism has never looked brighter. "I look at my backpack that is sitting here and it contains more journalistic firepower than the entire newsroom that I walked into 30-40 years ago," he says.

Gillian Welch & David Rawlings: The Fresh Air Interview

December 28, 2011 | NPR · Welch and Rawlings perform an in-studio concert featuring several songs from *The Harrow and the Harvest*, and talk about many of the lyrics they've written over the years.

Maurice Sendak: On Life, Death And Children's Lit

December 29, 2011 | NPR · His latest book *Bumble-ardy* is a deeply imaginative tale about an orphaned pig who longs for a birthday party. Sendak, who is 83, wrote and illustrated the book while caring for his longtime partner, who died of cancer in 2007. "I did *Bumble-ardy* to save myself," Sendak says. "I did not want to die with him."

Buddying Up To 'Follies' Star Danny Burstein

December 29, 2011 | NPR · Burstein has played a wide range of roles, from casino owner Lolly Steinman in HBO's *Boardwalk Empire*, to his current role as Buddy Plummer in the Broadway revival of *Follies*. He talks about his lengthy career on stage, screen and television.

Stephen Colbert: A 'Company' Man On Broadway

December 30, 2011 | NPR · The political satirist and comedian talks about his Broadway performance (and performance anxieties) and about his recent segments on *The Colbert Report* featuring Sarah Palin and Anthony Weiner.

South Park Creators Talk 'Book Of Mormon'

December 30, 2011 | NPR · Trey Parker and Matt Stone talk about their blasphemous, hilarious and oddly endearing Broadway hit, which led the Tony nominations field this year — and will probably go down in history as the only Broadway musical ever to combine Mormons, Uganda, filthy language and a chorus line.

Fresh Air Weekend: The Critics' Best Of 2011 Lists

December 31, 2011 | NPR · Fresh Air's David Bianculli, David Edelstein, Maureen Corrigan and Ken Tucker share their favorite TV, movies, books and music of 2011.