Sidedoor Season 4, Episode 17:
Cars, Stars, and Rock 'n' Roll

[MUSIC]

Lizzie Peabody: This is Sidedoor, a podcast from the Smithsonian with support from PRX. I'm Lizzie Peabody.

[MUSIC]

Lizzie Peabody: A few weeks ago, I sat down with my boss. Actually, my boss's, boss's, boss's boss: Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III.

Lizzie Peabody: Would you like for us to call you Secretary Bunch?

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: How about Lonnie?

Lizzie Peabody: Lonnie's okay?

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: Hmm, mmm.

Lizzie Peabody: Alright.

Lizzie Peabody: This was an intimidating interview. Not because Lonnie is hard to talk to, he's actually really friendly.

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: Do you need water? You guys okay?

Lizzie Peabody: I'm alright, thank you.

Lizzie Peabody: And not even because of the location, Smithsonian headquarters, on the National Mall in Washington D.C.

Lizzie Peabody: This is the most regal place I've ever conducted an interview.

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: Well, I must admit it is, it is pretty special. I mean, there is something about when you pull up and you're like, "Okay, it's the Castle!"

Lizzie Peabody: It's an actual castle built for the Smithsonian in the 1850s. Red sandstone, turrets, flags and all. The only thing missing is a drawbridge. And this interview was intimidating because, as you may have begun to suspect, Lonnie is a big deal.

Lizzie Peabody: So, you are the Secretary of the Smithsonian. I think there might be people out there who might assume that a Secretary is an administrative assistant, but that is not your job!

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: (Laughs).

Lizzie Peabody: Can you tell us what your job is?

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: I think being Secretary is like being the CEO of an organization.

Lizzie Peabody: Lonnie is the head of the Smithsonian: the world's largest museum, education, and research complex. That's 19 museums, 9 research centers, 21 libraries and the Zoo! It's a big job, and it's a rare one. There have only been 13 Secretaries in the past 174 years.

[MUSIC]

Lizzie Peabody: The first Secretary was basically the personal advisor to President Lincoln. He took office 1846 and John Phillips Sousa wrote a march just for him.

[Audio of John Phillips Sousa's, "Transit of Venus March"]

Lizzie Peabody: Lonnie Bunch is the 14th Secretary of the Smithsonian, and he stands out from all the men who held that role before him. Not only is he the first African American to hold this position, he's also the first historian.

Lizzie Peabody: So, the first Secretary of the Smithsonian was a scientist and most of the Secretaries since, have been scientists. You are the first historian to head this Institution. If someone were to say to you, you know, "The past is the past. We need to look forward," what would you say to that person?

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: Oh, that's easy. The past isn't even done with yet! Look at the discussions around Confederate monuments, look at the notions of, "What does it mean to be an American" as more people want to come to the United States; all of this is shaped by the past. We're comfortable recognizing that certain things shape our DNA, but I would argue our DNA is also shaped by the past, by our experiences. So that, in some ways, there is nothing more powerful than a people who are steeped in their history. And there's nothing sadder than people who don't understand how almost everything they do has been shaped by the past.

[Audio of John Phillips Sousa's, "Transit of Venus March"]

Lizzie Peabody: So, this time on Sidedoor, we talk about how history can help us better understand who we are today, through a couple of seemingly ordinary objects, with extraordinary stories. Don't miss it!

[Audio of John Phillips Sousa's, "Transit of Venus March"]

[MUSIC]

Lizzie Peabody: I sat down with Secretary Lonnie Bunch in an actual castle on the National Mall, but inside, it was pretty homey. We sat in a room with a fireplace, surrounded by objects from America's history. And fittingly, we met to talk about what objects from the past can teach us about today.

Lizzie Peabody: So, let's get into some specifics then. The Smithsonian is, of course, made up of collections and within those collections are many, many objects. So, you've chosen a few favorite objects to talk about. Um, where would you like to begin?

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: I think it's important to realize, as we begin to talk about specific objects, that in some ways, the only thing that is permanent at the Smithsonian are the

collections. Everything else is fleeting: exhibitions, staff, even buildings, but it's the collections that are always going to be the center of the Smithsonian.
Lizzie Peabody: There are nearly 155 million objects in the Smithsonian collections. Far more than could ever be displayed at once. And the first thing Lonnie chose to talk about is not in any museum.

Lizzie Peabody: Tell me what we're looking at.

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: When you look at this basically glass plate, it looks like it has little pencil marks on it, and it looks like something that a kid might draw on.

Lizzie Peabody: And when Lonnie says, “plate,” he’s not talking about a dinner plate, more like a rectangular piece of glass, the size of a small window pane.

Lizzie Peabody: It almost looks like, um, I don’t know. You know when you have spiders in your house? And you look up in a little corner and there's like a little dimpling of black, almost looks like dust from where a spider built a web?

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: (Laughs).

Lizzie Peabody: Do you not have spiders in your house?

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: (Laughs).

Lizzie Peabody: Well, maybe it’s just me. (Laughs).

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: (Laughs). Okay, well, all of us have spiders. I guess I never thought about it that way, but yeah, some of this does look web-like.

Lizzie Peabody: Yeah!

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: Um…

Lizzie Peabody: Or like, like spider, spider excrement. That's what my mom always told me. Anyway! It looks like little gnats or bugs or…. (Laughs).

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: (Laughs). You know something I don't know. Sorry. I'm just a 19th century historian.

Lizzie Peabody: (Laughs).

Lizzie Peabody: “Excrement” is the word that comes out when you’re trying not to say, “poop” in front of a very important man, while wondering why you’ve decided to bring up poop in the first place. Anyway, the point is, this glass plate is covered in tiny black dots, some so small and so close together that they look like bruises, and others, bigger, the size of gnats. And between them are faint pencil scratches and letters drawn in cursive. It looks like nonsense to my untrained eye.

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: But what you're really looking at is the use of photography as a way to capture the stars. This is really a glass plate from the 19th century. And what is so

powerful about this, for me, is this is something that is an example, not just of science, but an example of the intersection of science and gender.

[MUSIC]

Lizzie Peabody: This glass plate is an early example of, “astrophotography,” technology that enabled astronomers in the 1870s to record photographs of the night sky by attaching a camera to a telescope.

[MUSIC]

Lizzie Peabody: This was a big deal, because photographic plates lasted longer, and they provided more reliable records than notes and observations made by the fallible and easily-fatigued human eye. That meant astronomers could reliably record and therefore, track celestial movements over long periods of time. And this particular plate is one of about 500,000 like it at the Center for Astrophysics (or CfA), a Harvard & Smithsonian collaboration. That’s where Lonnie first saw the plates.

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: Well, one of the things you do when you become Secretary, is you go on a Goodwill tour.

Lizzie Peabody: Oh! (Laughs).

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: And so, you visit where the Smithsonian has branches. And one of the things I really wanted to do was to go to the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory at Harvard.

Lizzie Peabody: The Observatory is an active research center, studying things like black holes, dark matter and the formation of stars.

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: When I was going through the space, they said, “I bet you've never seen this.” And we just walked into this tiny room that was sort of full of boxes and crates. And suddenly, they said, “here are these glass plates from a hundred years ago that document the sky.” I was stunned.

[MUSIC]

Lizzie Peabody: Before Harvard and Smithsonian partnered to form the CfA in 1973, it was the Harvard Observatory. And in 1877, Edward Pickering was the guy in charge. He saw the benefits of these photographic plates and he pushed to expand the astrophotography program at Harvard. And he was successful, almost too successful because by 1881, the lab had a backlog of uncatalogued photographic data they couldn’t keep up with.

[MUSIC]

Lizzie Peabody: On top of that, Pickering’s assistant seemed inefficient and disorganized. So, he fired him, and hired someone whose work he could vouch for. His maid.

[MUSIC]

Lizzie Peabody: And she was so efficient at computing and cataloguing the positions of stars that Pickering realized, maybe he should be hiring more women instead of men.

[MUSIC]
Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: Women, who were really restricted in the late 19th century and early 20th century, suddenly played an important role. They were the computers.

Lizzie Peabody: That's right! Before computers were machines, they were people, who did mathematical computations. And during Pickering's 42-year tenure as Director, he hired over 80 female computers.

[MUSIC]

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: Here was something that initially was seen as maybe not that important. And suddenly, they've turned to women to handle this and they took something that someone could see as custodial and made it more research driven; that they were the scientists, um, not the sort of handmaidens.

[MUSIC]

Lizzie Peabody: Initially, Pickering had seen women as a cheap source of labor. But over the years, several of the women he hired made significant astronomical discoveries in their own right. Like Henrietta Swan Leavitt, who developed a method to calculate distances between stars by measuring their brightness. Or Annie Jump Cannon, who created the system for classifying stars that is still used today.

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: In some ways, this is one of those wonderful hidden figures, stories; stories of how women who are left out of the narrative profoundly shaped what we know about the stars.

Lizzie Peabody: But they stood out even at that time. I mean, it's surprising to hear that now, but it would have been surprising even then?

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: Absolutely. I think it's really important to recognize this is rare, but it's also tells us a lot about how women were able to overcome the challenges and the barriers that they faced.

Lizzie Peabody: Those barriers were significant. For American women in the 1800s, going to school simply to get an education was pretty much unheard of. In fact, some medical professionals believed women were too fragile to handle the stress of learning. In 1873, a Harvard professor and doctor wrote in his book, "Sex in Education."

[MUSIC]

Lizzie Peabody: (Clears throat). Reads from the text of, "Sex in Education:" "A woman's body could only handle a limited number of developmental tasks at one time. Girls who spent too much energy developing their minds during puberty would end up with undeveloped or diseased reproductive systems."

[MUSIC]

Lizzie Peabody: Well, there's a lot to unpack there, but basically, you could either have ovaries or brains. Not both.

[MUSIC]
Lizzie Peabody: And even though the computers Pickering hired made significant contributions to our modern understanding of the size and shape of the universe, they were not remembered individually for their accomplishments, but rather collectively, and insultingly, as quote, "Pickering's Harem."

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: Let's be clear. The role of women has always been undervalued and downplayed. There are probably so many inventions across the board that should be named after people of color or women that aren't. This is the kind of story that often institutions don't want to tell about themselves.

Lizzie Peabody: Hmm.

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: And so, I think one of the great things about the Smithsonian is to be able to say, this is a part of our past. We didn't handle this the way we'd handle it today. And the key is to learn from that.

Lizzie Peabody: 120 years later, women continue to work as scientists and mathematicians, now more publicly and with more recognition. The 2018 Nobel Prize categories of chemistry & physics were both won by women; Donna Strickland received the prize in physics, and Frances Arnold for chemistry. In 2019, Karen Uhlenbeck was the first woman to win the Abel Prize, the equivalent of the Nobel Prize for mathematics. And for the first time in history, a national observatory was named after a woman: Vera C. Rubin, the astronomer who proved the existence of dark matter. Unlike the women of Pickering's Harem, and countless others, these women's names made headlines worldwide.

[MUSIC]

Lizzie Peabody: And the astronomical plates give us context to understand this moment. They tie us to a legacy that we might not be proud of, but one that gives us context, helps us identify echoes of the past, when we hear them today.

[MUSIC]

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: For me, it's a great lesson of sort of what it means to look into your history and to use that history to make sure you don't make the same mistakes today.

[MUSIC]

Lizzie Peabody: Coming up, we'll put the "roll" in rock and roll with a much larger object from the Smithsonian Collections. So, get ready to tap your toes!

[MUSIC]

Lizzie Peabody: We're back! And we're talking with Secretary of the Smithsonian, Lonnie Bunch, about the power of history to give context to the present, and even hope for the future. We're doing it by looking at a couple objects from the Smithsonian Collections. Now, Lonnie understands better than most how an object can be a connection to a particular moment or

person in history. That's because, before becoming the Secretary, he was the founding Director and the force behind the creation of the Smithsonian's newest museum: The National Museum of African American History and Culture. That meant figuring out which objects would best represent the story of an entire group of people in America, across all areas of American culture, including music.

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: I knew that as we looked at the history of music, that it was important to talk about that rock and roll was not just a white creation. That there are many ties with rhythm and blues and many of the earlier performers. And one of the most important performers was Chuck Berry.

[Audio of the Opening Guitar riff to Chuck Berry's, "Roll Over Beethoven"]

Lizzie Peabody: Chuck Berry was an African American singer-songwriter who hit the music scene in the 1950s, when it was largely segregated. There was black music and there was white music. Chuck Berry was among the first artists to straddle that divide, combining the twang of country with the swing of blues to create a new sound that appealed to both black and white audiences. It was called, "Rock and Roll."

[Audio of Chuck Berry's, "Roll Over Beethoven"]

Lizzie Peabody: So, this is Chuck Berry's 1973, "Candy Apple Red Convertible Eldorado!"

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: Yes.

Lizzie Peabody: I think I just heard my Dad faint somewhere.

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: (Laughs).

Lizzie Peabody: (Laughs).

Lizzie Peabody: This car is part of the Musical Crossroads Gallery at the National Museum of African American History and Culture. Um, so tell me, why did you choose this snazzy car?

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: Well, I'm going to be honest, I didn't choose it. I wasn't that smart!

Lizzie Peabody: (Laughs).

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: Um, I knew that we needed to tell his story. And I thought, well, the best way to tell his story is to get a guitar. And so, we went to Chuck Berry and said, "Alright. I want a guitar." And he said, "I'm not going to give you a guitar, unless you take this car as well."

Lizzie Peabody: Really?

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: That's right! And so, I said, "Why would I want with a car? Why do I want with a 1973 Cadillac?"

Lizzie Peabody: (Laughs).

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: Um…

Lizzie Peabody: Where do you put it?

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: Well, I'm not a Cadillac guy. Alright?

Lizzie Peabody: (Laughs).

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: Um, but the staff was so much smarter than me. They basically recognized that this car tells us so much about Chuck Berry.

[Audio of Chuck Berry's, "Maybellene"]

Lizzie Peabody: Berry's first hit, "Maybellene" came out in 1955, and it reached number 5 on the Billboard pop charts. But with this success, Chuck Berry got an unpleasant surprise. Although he wrote the song himself, he found out that his record label had split the songwriting credit three ways. He shared the royalties with a white disc jockey and a random white guy the record label owed a favor. For every record he sold, he earned half of one penny. He realized he would have to stay vigilant in order to earn what was rightfully his.

[Audio of Chuck Berry's, "Maybellene"]

Lizzie Peabody: For the next tseveral years, Chuck Berry churned out hits like, "Johnny B. Goode," "Rock and Roll Music," and "Roll Over Beethoven." He sang about cars, school, and teenage love. He was a showman, dancing and duck-walking and shredding guitar licks onstage. His sound inspired some of the most iconic rock and roll bands of the era: the Beatles, The Rolling Stones, the Beach Boys, but he had trouble getting the recognition he deserved.

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: I remember my earliest memories, I had an aunt who had, who had left her records behind when she moved or married. And so, as a kid, I would sort of pull out, now this is now in the 60s, I'd pull out her records and she would have Chuck Berry. I didn't know who this guy was. Here was a time when most of the rock and roll guitarists were white. Eric Clapton and people from the Yardbirds. Who is this guy? He had a distinctive style and suddenly I realized that these songs he wrote, like, "Maybellene," that they were then covered by white artists.

[Audio of "Maybellene" Cover by Everly Brothers 1963]

Lizzie Peabody: White artists covered his songs, they copied his guitar riffs, his sound, and some even copied his duck walk.

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: Everybody built on Chuck Berry. Nobody knew that. For me, Chuck Berry is one of those symbols of how so much of African American culture got appropriated and that wasn't then recognized as African-American.

Lizzie Peabody: You know, I was listening to Chuck Berry last night before bed. I've been listening to Chuck Berry for a few days now.

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: Sure!

Lizzie Peabody: And there's a song I think, "Sweet Little 1Sixteen."

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: Yup. “Sweet Little Sixteen.”

Lizzie Peabody: That is exactly the same as, “Surfing’ USA.”

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: Hmm, mmm!

[Audio of Chuck Berry’s, “Sweet Little Sixteen”]

Lizzie Peabody: For a side-by-side comparison, here’s Chuck Berry’s, “Sweet Little Sixteen,” followed by the Beach Boys’, “Surfin’ USA.”

[Audio of Chuck Berry’s, “Sweet Little Sixteen” that fades into the Beach Boys’, “Surfin USA”]

Lizzie Peabody: How is that allowed?

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: I would argue that in the, from World War II into the 1970’s really, so much appropriation of music was done. I mean, you know, you think of people like, you know, Mama Thorton who did, “You Ain't Nothing, But A Hound Dog,” before Elvis Presley. Elvis Presley took that song, made all this money, she never got anything out of it. So, I think in a way, what you’re seeing with Chuck Berry is, here's what happened to so many musicians. That their work was taken because African-Americans were restricted to the race records and they thought that this music wouldn't translate to a white audience. So…

Lizzie Peabody: The race records?

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: Race records were records that were… There were race films and race records that were created just for the black community. So, part of what Chuck Berry does is breaks out of that.

Lizzie Peabody: Chuck Berry threatened to sue the Beach Boys over, “Surfin’ USA,” and the threat of that lawsuit earned him song-writing credit and publishing royalties. White artists had been lifting songs from black albums and passing them off as their own for ages, but this was one of the first major plagiarism scuffles in rock history.

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: Many people thought Chuck Berry was a difficult person to deal with. I think he was only difficult because he demanded the respect that other artists received, to make sure that his contributions to music were known and respected and that he was respected. Partof Chuck Berry's persona was making sure they knew he was special by riding in that Cadillac.

Lizzie Peabody: (Laughs). Oh yes. That Cadillac.

[Audio of the 1974 commercial: *America’s Number One Luxury Car is Cadillac...]*

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: It really is a symbol of making it. Having a Cadillac symbolized that you were able to overcome the racism in this country, that you were able to be middle-class or upper class. So, it had that sort of symbol for the African American community as well.

Lizzie Peabody: Chuck Berry owned several Cadillacs, but this Cadillac, here at the Smithsonian, has a special story. As a kid in Saint Louis, Berry went with his father to get tickets

to see a play at the historic Fox Theater. Here's a clip of Chuck Berry telling that story in the 1987 documentary, "Hail! Hail! Rock and Roll."

[Audio of clip from the 1987 documentary, "Hail! Hail! Rock and Roll!"
Chuck Berry: You know, when I was 11 years old, I came up to this very box office to get a ticket to see, "The Tale of Two Cities." My father wanted us to see it because it had a lot of artistic qualities about it. Lady said, "Come on, we're not selling you a ticket. You know you people can't come in here. Go away."]

Lizzie Peabody: He did, but 50 years later, Chuck Berry returned to Fox Theater, and not as an audience member. He played to a sold-out crowd in celebration of his 60th birthday. The same year he was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. The documentary captures and incredible scene from that night.

[Audio of clip of, "Rock and Roll Music" featuring Chuck Berry, with Etta James on vocals, Keith Richards, Robert Cray and Eric Clapton on guitars from the 1987 documentary, "Hail! Hail! Rock and Roll!"]

Lizzie Peabody: In the final act, Chuck Berry rides on stage in his candy apple red Cadillac, playing his guitar. He gets out of the car, the crowd is on their feet going crazy, as silver confetti falls to the stage.

[Audio of clip of, "Rock and Roll Music" featuring Chuck Berry, with Etta James on vocals, Keith Richards, Robert Cray and Eric Clapton on guitars from the 1987 documentary, "Hail! Hail! Rock and Roll!"]

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: So, imagine what that felt like, right? That here you are, someone who has been shaped by the racial attitudes of America and hurt by them. And then suddenly, because of your success, because of a changing time, you get to be where you were told you weren't, weren't wanted.

Lizzie Peabody: And not just be there. In a car on a stage!

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: (Laughs). That's Chuck Berry! (Laughs).

Lizzie Peabody: (Laughs).

Lizzie Peabody: Lonnie says the Cadillac he reluctantly accepted is now one of the most popular items in the Smithsonian. Maybe Chuck Berry recognized something that Lonnie didn't at the time.

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: I think he knew that this was an important symbol to him. That it spoke of his success. It spoke of his visibility. Um, it spoke of the work it took to get to be Chuck Berry. That he was more than just a musician.

Lizzie Peabody: Oh! So, "who I am is more than just the music I created."

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: That's right. And the music allowed me to express myself more fully. And this Cadillac is part of that expression.

Lizzie Peabody: The Cadillac is about power and control. It's about the place Chuck Berry claimed for himself in mainstream pop culture and in music history. It's about the business of success.

[Audio of Jay-Z's 2003, "Threat"]

Lizzie Peabody: In the music industry today, artists still work hard to claim their due, which isn't easy at a time when you can find and stream just about any music you want, for free, on the internet. Rapper and songwriter, Jay-Z famously said, "I'm not a businessman. I'm a business, man." When he first began his rap career and labels shut their doors to him, Jay-Z started his own record label, Roc-A-Fella Records. He later sold the record company to Def Jam Recordings and has since become the first billionaire rapper.

[Audio of Jay-Z's 2003, "Threat"]

Lizzie Peabody: Chuck Berry's Cadillac is a candy apple red reminder of why Jay-Z might have chosen to buy the first artist-owned streaming subscription service, TIDAL, to control the distribution of his own music.

[Audio of Jay-Z's 2003, "Threat"]

Lizzie Peabody: What are you most excited for, for the future? I mean, you have this job. How long do you have this job for? Is it a lifetime appointment? Do you get to decide?

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: As long as…Yeah, unless they chase me out! (Laughs).

Lizzie Peabody: (Laughs).

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: But you know, I mean, I think that what I want to do is to help the Smithsonian build on its traditions, but to not be held captive by those traditions, so that we can think of new ways to engage audiences and new ways to be of value.

[MUSIC]

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: I want the Smithsonian to be visited, venerated. And I want it to be valued in a way that says, "This is a place that helps me understand my life today."

[MUSIC]

Lizzie Peabody: Thank you so much! This has been a really, really interesting discussion and it's such a privilege to speak with you.

[MUSIC]

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: Oh, it's my pleasure. Thank you.

[MUSIC]

Lizzie Peabody: And I know when you were talking about other ways for people to engage with the Smithsonian, I know you were really talking about this podcast, so thank you for that.

[MUSIC]

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: I'm the podcast guy. You call me. I'm there!

[MUSIC]

Lizzie Peabody: (Laughs).

[MUSIC]

Lizzie Peabody: Thank you so much Lonnie!

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: Thank you! My great pleasure.

[MUSIC]

Lizzie Peabody: You've been listening to Sidedoor, a podcast from the Smithsonian with support from PRX.

[MUSIC]

Lizzie Peabody: For a full list of songs we used in this episode, and a photo of Lonnie with the astronomical glass plates, check out our newsletter! Subscribe at si.edu/Sidedoor and follow us on Twitter @Sidedoorpod!

[MUSIC]

Lizzie Peabody: The story of the astronomical plates is just one of many you can hear through the Smithsonian American Women's History Initiative. To learn more, go to womenshistory.si.edu or join the conversation using #becauseofherstory on social media.

[MUSIC]

Lizzie Peabody: This is our last episode of the season! We'll be back in just over a month with a whole new season! While we're working hard to produce more stories you'll love, you can help us by spreading the word about Sidedoor. Next time you're at a party making small talk and someone asks you if you listen to any podcasts, you can say:

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: I'm the podcast guy!

Lizzie Peabody: Then tell them about Sidedoor!

[MUSIC]

Lizzie Peabody: Special thanks to Linda St. Thomas, Lindsey Ortbal, Natalia Rawls, LeShawn Burrell-Jones, Beah Jacobson, Greg Bettwy, Dave Haddock and Maxwell Suechting. And thanks to the producers of, "Hail! Hail! Rock and Roll" for their work, which helped bring this episode to life. And of course, mammoth thanks to Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III for taking the time to talk with us about cars and stars and rock and roll.

[MUSIC]

Lizzie Peabody: Our podcast team is Justin O'Neill, Jason Orfanon, Nathalie Boyd, Caitlin Shaffer, Jess Sadeq, Lara Koch, and Sharon Bryant. Episode artwork is by Greg Fisk. Extra support comes from John, Jason and Genevieve at PRX. Our show is mixed by Tarek Fouda. Our theme song and other episode music are by Breakmaster Cylinder, with notable exceptions. by John Phillips Sousa and Jay-Z.

[MUSIC]

Lizzie Peabody: If you want to sponsor our show, please email sponsorship@prx.org.

[MUSIC]

Lizzie Peabody: We end this season with a hello and a goodbye. After leading Sidedoor production for four seasons, from conception to this very moment, our esteemed and beloved video-game playing Executive Producer, Jason Orfanon, is moving onto his next great adventure. We wish him well, but we will really miss him.

[MUSIC]

Lizzie Peabody: And, not a moment too soon, we welcome our newest podcast team member, Aida Josephine O'Neill, daughter of Senior Producer, Justin O'Neill. Welcome to the world, and welcome to the team! We expect you'll be jumping into Jason's shoes any minute.

[MUSIC]

Lizzie Peabody: I'm your host, Lizzie Peabody. Thanks for listening and see you next season!

[MUSIC]

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: Baseball was something I loved. I used to… I was not…. I was pretty good, wasn't great, but I was pretty good.

Lizzie Peabody: You played?

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: I always thought I wanted to be a second baseman for the Yankees, but that never happened. Umm…

Lizzie Peabody: This is a pretty good backup plan.

Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III: (Laughs). It's not too bad. I'm pretty happy about that.

Lizzie Peabody: (Laughs).