

This Couple's Wedding Was Canceled Because Of The Coronavirus. So They Got Married At A Drive-In Theater.

<https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/olivianiland/coronavirus-wedding-drive-in-movie-texas>

"It was almost surreal how engaged and connected it made everyone feel at one of the most disconnected times of our lives."



Olivia Niland BuzzFeed News Reporter

Posted on May 2, 2020, at 6:02 p.m. ET



Greg Fulks

Bri Leaverton (left) and her wife, Lindsey.

We at BuzzFeed News are proud to bring you a range of stories, from the serious to the lighthearted. To help keep it all free, [become a member](#) and sign up for our newsletter, [Outbreak Today](#).

Bri and Lindsey Leaverton have always been a spontaneous couple: They went on their first date within 12 hours of matching on a dating site in 2018, and three days later they became girlfriends.

After they got engaged, they planned to marry on April 10 of this year — Good Friday — in a historic hotel where they live in Austin, Texas.

"We had everything planned down to a tee," said Lindsey, 37. "We were supposed to get married on 4.10.20, Good Friday, because nothing says 'Happy Easter' like a good old lesbian wedding."

But when Austin instituted shelter-in-place advisories just weeks before their wedding, and they watched as their guest list shrunk down to 50 and then just 10 people, the couple realized their day wouldn't be going on as planned.

Still, when the [coronavirus](#) pandemic hit close to home, Bri and Lindsey decided they didn't want to wait indefinitely to get married.

So they — or rather, their wedding planner — decided to think outside of the box.

"Our wedding planner had this crazy idea: What if we did this at a drive-in movie theater? She said, 'I feel like that suits you guys,'" Lindsey said.



Greg Fulks

Their local drive-in theater in Austin was closed, so they widened their search and found Doc's Drive In Theatre in nearby Buda, Texas, just south of Austin. The theater has been allowed to remain open because it serves food for pickup, and is therefore considered an essential business.

“We asked them, ‘How crazy would it be if we got married there?’ and they said ‘Absolutely,” said Bri, 31.



Greg Fulks

Despite the unconventional venue and strange circumstances, the couple's friends and family were immediately on board with the new wedding, they said.

“They said, resoundingly, ‘This is so you, this is so Bri and Lindsey,’” said Lindsey.

Despite all of the setbacks, the big day finally arrived on April 28.

There was a 90-car limit at the drive-in theater, and the couple estimates about 85 cars were in attendance, with guests staying in their cars



Greg Fulks
for the entire event.

“We asked everybody to come in their PJs, and to decorate their cars, so our straight friends were putting rainbows on their cars,” said Lindsey.

There were some elements of their original wedding still in place: the couple called on their original videographer to help them livestream the wedding on the two theater screens, as well as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, so friends and family not in attendance could still witness the wedding.

[Youtube link to the wedding ceremony: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iqrd9YG-ark>]



Greg Fulks

Their original officiant, Lindsey’s friend and author Jen Hatmaker, was also able to marry the couple, though her book tour complicated the schedule a bit (“Which is why we got married on a Tuesday,” Lindsey said).

Lindsey was walked down the aisle by her twin daughters, Annabelle and Olivia, and Bri walked down the aisle with her sister — but “everyone was compliant, six feet apart,” Lindsey said.

Each speaker even was their own microphone — including Annabelle, who sang and read a poem — and everything was sanitized.

Of course, not everything was exactly the same: The brides did their own hair, makeup, and nails, and rather than getting ready for their big day in a “bougie mansion,” they prepped in the Star Wars and Harry Potter–themed tiny homes on the theater’s lot.

They did put on their wedding dresses separately (“No one needs to see me getting into my Spanx,” said Lindsey), though the white dresses dragged in the dirt because they were originally hemmed to be worn with heels, rather than the cowboy boots required for the drive-in theater gravel.

There were also a whole lot of bugs, one in particular that was in Lindsey’s dress throughout the ceremony. “The June bug was getting fresh with me,” she laughed.

The happy couple were congratulated with a chorus of car honks, flashing lights, and even a cowbell — “the new applause,” Lindsey said.

Afterward, Lindsey — a musician who was part of the Christian music industry until coming out in 2009 — surprised Bri with an original song.



While the couple had to do away with dinner, a cake, and a bouquet toss, they were still able to provide popcorn and champagne, served by theater staff wearing masks and gloves.

Guests were treated to a showing of the movie *Airplane* and, with a strict curfew at the drive-in, were promptly sent on their way at 11 p.m.

There were some bittersweet moments during the happy day, too.

“It was crushing to not be able to hug my parents,” Lindsey said. “My dad’s my best friend. I’ve always dreamed of him walking me down the aisle, having the daddy-daughter dance. Having to air-hug him and my mom from the car was really, really hard, but at least they were there.”

Bri's 3-and-a-half-year-old son, Atlas, was also unable to attend the ceremony because she shares custody with her coparent, who decided because of the coronavirus that it would be best for their son not to attend.

Still, the couple said the impromptu wedding was better than they ever could have imagined.

“It was above and beyond anything we could’ve dreamed of,” Lindsey said. “I’m so glad it happened the way it did. Our whole theme has been: we’re making some really tasty lemonade out of some really rotten lemons.”

The brides hadn’t thought they’d be able to say goodbye to each of their guests because of social distancing, but were thrilled when each car stopped on its way out to say their congratulations and farewells — from a distance, of course. The couple says they’re also still receiving well-wishes from people they’ve never even met on YouTube and Instagram.



Cora Eulke

“It was one of the most connected moments I’ve ever felt,” Lindsey said. “I thought it would be disconnected, but we got to wave at people as we left the venue. It was almost

surreal how engaged and connected it made everyone feel at one of the most disconnected times of our lives.”

While Lindsey and Bri originally planned a 10-day honeymoon in Tulum, they were able to celebrate with a “mini-moon” for two nights in an Airstream trailer after the wedding. And whenever the pandemic is over and they can safely gather with family and friends again, they’ve already got plans for “the biggest party ever.”