

00:00:00	Music	Transition	Gentle, trilling music with a steady drumbeat plays under the dialogue.
00:00:01	Promo	Promo	Speaker: <i>Bullseye with Jesse Thorn</i> is a production of MaximumFun.org and is distributed by NPR.
00:00:13	Music	Transition	<i>[Music fades out.]</i> “Huddle Formation” from the album <i>Thunder, Lightning, Strike</i> by The Go! Team. A fast, upbeat, peppy song. Music plays as Jesse speaks, then fades out.
00:00:20	Jesse Thorn	Host	It’s <i>Bullseye</i> . I’m Jesse Thorn. My guest is Julio Torres. Julio was born in El Salvador. He came to the United States to pursue a life in comedy. His first big gig was writing for <i>Saturday Night Live</i> . Maybe you’ve heard of it. His sketches on the show are... well, they’re a little different than the usual <i>SNL</i> stuff. It’s not like topical material about politics or pop culture. It’s dreamy and magical and almost wistful.
00:01:03	Sound Effect	Transition	Here’s a good example. When Ryan Gosling hosted <i>SNL</i> , back in 2017, Julio wrote this sketch about a man who is haunted by the font used in the logo of the film <i>Avatar</i> . Music swells and fades.
00:01:04	Clip	Clip	<i>[The audience laughs regularly.]</i>
			Music: Solemn, documentary-style music.
			Therapist (Saturday Night Live): <i>Avatar</i> , the movie from like nine years ago?
			Ryan: Yeah. He just highlighted <i>Avatar</i> . He clicked the dropdown menu, and then he just randomly selected Papyrus. Like a—like a thoughtless child just wandering by a garden, just yanking leaves along the way.
			Therapist: And so, now you’re worried about the sequels that are coming out?
			Ryan: They’re making more?
			Therapist: Yes. Well, I think I heard that.
			Ryan: Did they change the artwork? They fixed it.
			Therapist: Um... It looks... similar.
00:01:46	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[He flips the table.]</i> Music swells and fades.
00:01:47	Jesse	Host	Julio is also one of the creators of <i>Los Espookys</i> . It’s a wonderful television comedy about a group of friends who turn their love of horror films into a business. They provide events and—I don’t know, I guess maybe happenings to people who want to be scared. Like the gig economy for spooky stuff. <i>Los Espookys</i> ’ second and tragically final season aired late last year, on HBO. It is one of my favorite shows ever. I figured we’d send off <i>Los Espookys</i> by replaying my 2019 conversation with Julio.

When he and I talked, he'd just released his first comedy special on HBO. It's not exactly what you might expect from an HBO comedy special. The premise of the special—and let's start with that. Most comedy specials don't have a premise. But the premise of Julio's special is his favorite shapes. It's a surreal watch. He shares his favorite shapes with the audience. The shapes are on display on a special conveyor belt, sort of like the one in a sushi restaurant. There's a lot of glitter. And he imagines lives for these shapes—they're objects, really—that you would never expect. But the shapes end up helping us learn more about Julio.

00:03:10 Sound Effect Transition

Music swells and fades.

00:03:11 Clip

[The audience laughs regularly.]

Julio Torres (*My Favorite Shapes*): It's a pyramid second. But first, it is one of my favorite kinds of shapes, which is clear with a little animal trapped inside of it. As I was preparing this show and I was deciding which shapes were gonna go in which order, and I was weighing out the pros and cons of all of them, thinking which one of them were stars, which ones were more supporting. And as I was just deciding all of that, I thought, "Oh, I'm sorry, is this one of the many good jobs that I'm stealing from hardworking Americans?" Because look, I'm just doing it 'cause no one else was doing it, and it needed to be done.

00:03:54 Sound Effect Transition

Music swells and fades.

00:03:56 Jesse Host

Julio, welcome to *Bullseye*. I'm so happy to have you on the show.

00:03:58 Julio Torres Guest

I'm so happy to be in the show!

00:04:00 Jesse Host

Did you aspire to be a comedian when you were a kid, in El Salvador?

00:04:05 Julio Guest

No. No, I did not. I thought I was going to and wanted to be an architect, as a child.

00:04:12 Jesse Host

Why did you think and want to be an architect? What was the appeal?

00:04:15 Julio Guest

Uh, well my mother's an architect, and I have always just wanted to decide the way that things looked was something that I really liked as a kid. I would dream up these like dollhouses, and my mom would make them with cardboard and an X-Acto knife. And I just love the idea of creating and dreaming up worlds, for lack of a more specific term. I mean, I was writing little stories in as much as I was playing—you know, creating little dramas within those houses that—within those little cardboard houses. But it wasn't until way later that I sort of stubbornly decided that that was going to be my path—writing and writing funny things. Before then, it was purely visual.

00:05:06 Jesse Host

What was the comedy that you saw as a kid? Were you watching American comedy or Salvadoran comedy? Or Cantinflas movies?

00:05:14 Julio Guest

Or what movies?

00:05:15 Jesse Host

[Chuckling.] Cantinflas?

00:05:16 Julio Guest

Oh! *[Laughs.]* Uh-huh, I was familiar with Cantinflas, but I was not consuming—I don't think many kids my age were consuming Cantinflas. But I mean, there were successors of Cantinflas that I was also not consuming a lot of. Inevitably, as a kid abroad, you end up consuming so much American media. I loved *The Simpsons*

at an age where I was probably too young to understand most of it, as are so many of *The Simpsons*' fans, I think. So many of those episodes really stayed with me for some reason—I say “some reason”, not because the show is not excellent, but because I was so young. But I loved *Ally McBeal*, as a little boy.

[They laugh.]

I just—Lucy Lu's character in *Ally McBeal* was, I thought, the funniest thing. And of course, Calista Flockhart and everyone in it. But I loved, loved, loved *Ally McBeal*. Also, just like older shows. Like, I loved *I Dream of Genie*. Inside of her genie bottle was something that I was always hoping I would get to see in any given episode. And also, just cartoons. A lot of cartoons that were American cartoons. I mean, it's just a very tender form of imperialism, really, *[laughs]* that as a kid you're consuming these—you're lovingly consuming these American products.

00:06:44 Jesse Host

One of my most vivid memories of my childhood was being in southern Mexico, in Chiapas, when I was nine-ish. I think I was about nine, with my mom, and I had made this friend. And my Spanish was very bad, and he didn't speak any English. So, it was mostly us chasing lizards. And one day, he knocked on our door, and he just—he just was wide-eyed. And he looked at my mom, and he said, “Micky y Goofy. Micky y Goofy.”

[Julio laughs.]

And we were like, “What's up? What's going on?” And he's like let's go! And we went, and there was like a Coca Cola Micky and Goofy show in town that we went to see. I mean, talk about soft imperialism when Micky and Goofy are—

00:07:29 Julio Guest

Yeah, a Coca Cola show, starring Micky and Goofy. Well, that's—that is something that I'd been thinking a lot—I mean, just with the news and everything that's going on, a really twisted tragedy in seeing a lot of these detained kids wearing like Disney merchandise, wearing like a Micky Mouse t-shirt.

00:07:52 Jesse Host

Migrant kids.

00:07:53 Julio Guest

Yes. Yeah. Because the US produces, produces, produces, produces. And its fingers extend all over the world. And no matter where you live, the US is a part of your life, and you are informed it is the place to be by the US, by portraying it as like the only form of life that you can see on TV. And then, people are like, “Well, maybe if that's—what if we went there? And then, suddenly it's like, “Hm, not so fast! It only goes one way.” Which is the sad part about that Micky and Goofy story, right? That that kid can't just—can't just come here. It's not that easy.

00:08:39 Jesse Host

When you were a kid, your parents were like middle class/upper middle class in El Salvador, from what I understand. Were they committed to living and staying in Salvador?

00:08:53 Julio Guest

I mean, they live there. So, I would say they are committed in living there in as much as they live there. *[Chuckles.]*

00:08:59 Jesse Host

But I mean, was—I guess what I'm asking is, you know, if you're—if you're highly educated, you have relative opportunity to leave. And there were reasons to leave, especially in the '80s in El Salvador.

00:09:12 Julio Guest

No, they never—as hard a time as they have had, because everyone is having a hard time in El Salvador. My mom's an

architect, and she's very smart. My dad is a civil engineer, and he's very smart. And they're very talented, very capable people. And yet, finding jobs is very hard. Making a living is very hard. But no. No, they've never thought about—I don't think they've ever thought about picking up and leaving and coming to the States. Because the hurdle of doing that legally is so much more daunting than the everyday hurdle of being there, I think. Which is why my father was perplexed by me wanting to come here and make a life here. Because in his eyes—correctly—I had chosen the most difficult place to choose that I was going to move to. It would've been a lot easier for me to go to Spain, for me to go to Mexico, for me to go pretty much anywhere [*chuckles*] than New York City.

00:10:22 Jesse Host

But you always wanted to move to New York City.

00:10:24 Julio Guest

I always wanted to move to New York City, yes. Yeah.

00:10:27 Jesse Host

Was that just because there was a lot of *Friends* on TV or—?

00:10:31 Julio Guest

A lot of friends—? Oh! The TV show *Friends*?

[*Jesse confirms with a chuckle.*]

I think that—I think that subconsciously my brain was trained to see New York City as the center of the world. And I think I romanticized what New York City could be. But then, also that just became a reality, because it is in many ways the center of the world I want to be in. If you like *Saturday Night Live*, then you should probably be in New York City! You know? And it is I think the only—it is currently still the only place I want to be in permanently. So yeah, no, I've stuck by it.

00:11:10 Jesse Host

Why do you think that you wanted to leave? I mean, to leave your home country is a big deal, irrespective of—you know—visa issues, of which you've had, you know, your fair share. Just leaving one country and moving to another is a big deal. I was scared—when I finished high school, I was scared to—

00:11:35 Julio Guest

Go to college.

00:11:36 Jesse Host

—move to the east coast to go to college. I'm like, "Uh, I'll stick to California."

00:11:40 Julio Guest

Yeah. I think that I could only be scared at the next step ahead of me. I think that if, as a teenager, I had sat and really thought about the predicament of going from one visa to another visa, then I would've been daunted by it. But if you take it one step at a time and you think that your problem is, currently, just getting enough money for the application—for the college application, then it's a matter of taking it one step at a time, I think. Which is how I pursued my comedy career as well, just being like, "Well, I'm just gonna do this open mic, and then I don't know what the next steps are. I just know that right now, this is what I'm gonna do." Which is a lot easier to do when you're younger, I guess.

00:12:38 Jesse Host

Let's hear some more from my guest, Julio Torres's, new comedy special, *My Favorite Shapes*. So, he's talking about objects that come to him on a special conveyor belt in a kind of *Miami Vice* colored, Memphis Group set. And in this clip, a horse figurine that's maybe like ten inches tall comes up before him.

00:13:05 Sound Effect Transition

Music swells and fades.

00:13:07 Clip Clip

[*The audience laughs regularly.*]

Julio: A fact about me is that I wholehearted believe in reincarnation. Because I know in my heart that I was the Trojan guard who saw the Trojan Horse approach the gates and was like, “Let it in!”

“Oooh, my god. It’s a big [censored] beautiful horse. Open the gates and let it in. No questions asked. I don’t care.” Like any of you would see a big [censored] beautiful horse come to your apartment, and you wouldn’t let it in, no questions asked.

00:13:57	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:13:59	Jesse	Host	How did you get the job on <i>Saturday Night Live</i> ?
00:14:01	Julio	Guest	There was a friend who was then a head writer—Rob Klein. He was very into what I was doing. I think he was keeping track of my work as a standup, and he asked—I mean, if you ask them, I don’t know if their version is the same, but my version is that I think he was the one who brought me to the table. So, I guest wrote there for three episodes. And then, they asked me if I wanted to write there fulltime.
00:14:35	Jesse	Host	Did you ever have to have a conversation with like an HR person or a line producer or something where you had to say, “Yes, I want to do this, but you have to deliver a—you know, a TV star level of lawyers to get my visa situation settled?”
00:14:59	Julio	Guest	Luckily, lucky me, by the time I got there, those visa situations had been dealt with. I already had an artist visa by the time that I was hired for <i>Saturday Night Live</i> . And the irony is that as soon as I was hired for <i>Saturday Night Live</i> , lawyers who I never even met swiftly got me a work visa specifically for <i>Saturday Night Live</i> , just because that’s their company policy. And then, I believe I also got one for <i>Los Espookys</i> , with HBO. So, then it’s just one of those things that like it gets really hard, and then it’s like easy without you even noticing it.
00:15:39	Jesse	Host	My stepmother got her original status in the US in the mid-’80s in a Reagan Amnesty, and when she married my dad, became a lawful, permanent resident. In the aftermath of September 11 th , she became a citizen. And you know, that had been an option available to her for some time by then, because she was married to a citizen. But I remember her saying to me that like—I’m gonna be frank with you, she’s not a—she’s not nuts about the United States. And in the end, she just became a citizen because, as she said, like, “I’m just scared I’m gonna steal something and get caught.” Which she doesn’t go around—she’s not a thief.
00:16:32	Julio	Guest	But I absolutely understand what she’s saying. The stakes are so much higher. Little mistakes that Americans can make that—you know, are a ticket maybe snowball into your livelihood when you’re not from here. I was terrified of jaywalking! Not so much because of a car, but because, “Oh, is this gonna be the thing that kicks me out?” So, yeah, I mean, I sympathize with her and what she’s saying. It’s a security thing.
00:17:07	Jesse	Host	My conversation with Julio Torres continues after a quick break. When we return, we will talk about one of my favorite <i>Saturday Night Live</i> sketches of all time: “Wells for Boys”. It’s <i>Bullseye</i> , from MaximumFun.org and NPR.
00:17:23	Promo	Clip	Music: “Pomp and Circumstance” plays.

Janet Varney: My fellow graduates, for 500 episodes, my podcast—*The JV Club with Janet Varney*—has gathered story after story of all the scandalous things we’ve done throughout our childhoods.

[Mumbling from the crowd.]

Stories like how Jameela Jamil survived a horrific house party and she was on crutches!

Crowd Member: This is great!

Janet: Or how Hal Lublin learned a Shakespearian monologue in his pajamas.

Staff Member: This is not the speech we approved.

Janet: Without your love and life tragedies, there would be no podcast. In fact, I have an exclusive look at how Maggie Lawson’s mom confronted her after a sneaky basement meetup with her crush.

[Someone gasps.]

Speaker: Spill the tea, JV!

Staff Member: Security!

Janet: Uh, listen to *The JV Club with Janet Varney*, Thursdays on Maximum Fun! Class of—*[microphone feedback]*—forever!

[Music ends to thunderous applause.]

00:18:08 Music Transition
00:18:12 Jesse Host

Thumpy synth with light vocalizations. Welcome back to *Bullseye*. I’m Jesse Thorn. My guest, Julio Torres, is the cocreator and star of the great horror comedy, *Los Espookys*. Alongside Torres, Fred Armisen and Ana Fabrega among others are stars. It is one of my absolute favorite shows. It wrapped its second and final season late last year. Julio Torres is also a standup comic. His 2019 special is also on HBO. It’s called *My Favorite Shapes*. Let’s get back into our conversation.

00:18:50 Julio Guest
00:18:52 Jesse Host

I wanna talk about this sketch that you wrote for *Saturday Night Live*, called “Wells for Boys”. I really think this is—you cowrote. Yes. With Jeremy Beiler. I really think that this is one of the best sketches that *Saturday Night Live* has ever put on television. And given that *Saturday Night Live* is almost certainly the best sketch comedy show that was ever put on television, that’s like serious business that I’m saying that. I mean it, too. It’s a commercial for a children’s product that’s called Wells for Boys. Let’s take a listen.

00:19:14 Sound Effect Transition
00:19:15 Clip Clip

Music swells and fades.
[The audience laughs regularly.]

Music: Standard, upbeat children’s toy ad music.

Speaker: With Fisher Price playsets, some kids can be four-star chefs.

[Children laugh.]

Some kids can win the race!

[The music turns ephemeral and contemplative.]

But some just long to be understood. Introducing Wells for Sensitive Little Boys, from Fisher Price. Wells for sensitive boys to wish upon, confide in, and reflect by. Some boys live unexamined lives. But this one's heart is full of questions. Just hear how much he loves the well. He'll enjoy running his little fingers around the edge of the well. On days when he's had too much, he'll lean on it and contemplate his reflection. Some kids like to play. Others just sort of wait for adulthood.

00:19:56 Sound Effect Transition

Music swells and fades.

00:19:57 Julio Guest
00:20:01 Jesse Host

That was me! Just waiting for adulthood.

[Laughing.] Yeah, I mean it feels like you decided to write like your autobiography in the form of a parody television commercial.

[Julio agrees.]

You know, there's all these specifics in this sketch that I like dream on while I'm driving my car or something, here in Los Angeles. One of them is *[laughing]*, there's a companion toy that's a balcony for when he's ready to make an announcement.

[Julio confirms.]

And I feel like that is—like, the idea of it being a sensitive—like, just the idea of like naming and describing and seeing sensitive boyhood is a big deal. Right? Like, you don't get that much of that. But it could also just be like—you know, it could also just be the opposite of—you know, rough and tumble boyhood, or whatever. Right? That's a pretty straightforward premise. But to me, that insight of a sensitive boy being ready to make an announcement at some point is so powerful *[laughing]* and beautiful.

00:21:12 Julio Guest

Yeah! I mean, it's written from truth, which is why I think that it registers as true to people. And I think that we have seen the trope of sensitive boy a lot, but it's always pointing at it and mocking it. And by the trope of sensitive boy, I mean like the nerd, the loser, like whatever sort of broad label you wanna put on it. And I think a lot of comedy has been mocking the weird or the other, which—as someone who feels like both—doesn't really come naturally to me. So, I'm proud of what we did with that sketch, because it feels—it 'cause I think it shows that being on the side of the weird or the other can be funny. You don't have to mock it in order to be funny.

00:22:03 Jesse Host

Are you nervous when—I mean, this is a—this was a taped sketch, but they play it for the audience, on the big screen there. You know, I imagine you must've at least thought—when you were pitching it in the room—well, I'm proud of this. Like, I think this is actually good. It's got good specifics. It's got good jokes. These comedy people, 2/3rds of whom were—you know—well boys and 20% of whom

were well girls, are ready for this. But then like when it runs out for the dress rehearsal or when it runs out in front of that live audience, it must be nerve-wracking to know that this is not a sketch about—you know, Lana Del Ray.

00:22:50	Julio	Guest	When you say a sketch about Lana Del Ray, do you mean like a broad sketch? 'Cause I think you're— <i>[laughs]</i> .
00:22:55	Jesse	Host	Not just a broad sketch, but a sketch that's like—
00:22:56	Julio	Guest	That's not a very broad premise, actually!
00:22:59	Jesse	Host	Yeah, that's true. I picked—I picked probably too specific a celebrity. Let's say a sketch about <i>Hobbs & Shaw</i> , let's say. That article where we found out that no one in those movies is allowed to lose to each other, because it would make them look weak. You know.
00:23:16	Julio	Guest	Right, right. No, I know what you mean. I'm always—I'll say this. I'm always very pleasantly surprised when what I'm proud of resonates with other people. And I think the same is true of this special.
00:23:34	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:23:36	Clip	Clip	<i>[The audience laughs regularly.]</i>

Julio: Something that would happen sometimes is that we had this dog who I was so-so on, and it was mutual. And this dog—this puppy, at this time—would chew on some of my toys. And I'd come back and find them disfigured. Whenever that happened, my mother would rush to the store and find the exact same one. And then, I would perform a little ritual that I, in my head, called the transference, where I would take the soul of my old friend and whoosh it away from its body and deposit it into its new vessel. And then, I'd be like, "Great. I can play again."

00:24:32	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:24:33	Julio	Guest	I go out there thinking like, "Well, I know I like this! Let's see if other people do." And that has been true of every dress rehearsal and also my standup, too. Because I feel like I operate the same way for the two of them. And also, I don't know how to do anything else. So.

[They laugh.]

00:24:55	Jesse	Host	So, I will continue to do that. I'm Jesse Thorn. You're listening to <i>Bullseye</i> . My guest is Julio Torres. He was a <i>Saturday Night Live</i> writer, and he was the cocreator of <i>Los Espookys</i> .
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I wanna play another *Saturday Night Live* sketch that you worked on. And my guest, by the way, is the comedian, writer, and actor Julio Torres. And this when Lin-Manuel Miranda hosted, and it's another filmed piece where he is making a call home from the Iowa cornfields. And it has the—you know, it has the aesthetic quality of, if I may be permitted, literally the single most straight White guy aesthetic reference of all time. It has the aesthetic qualities of *Field of Dreams*.

[Julio chuckles.]

But with a—with a phone booth instead of a baseball field. And he's having this conversation with his mom, on the phone.

00:25:54	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:25:55	Clip	Clip	Music: Calm, touching music.
			Diego: Aprendí muchos American sayings. Como “hit the road, Jack!” “Hold your horses.” “These immigrants are coming to steal our jobs, but not like you, though. You’re different.” <i>[Singing.]</i> “Every kiss begins with Kay.” Algo más, then todo de las casas son carpeted. Everything in America is carpeted. Espero verte pronto, Mama. Buenas noches. See you later, alligator! <i>[Laughs.]</i> Bendición.
00:26:23	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:26:24	Jesse	Host	What’s amazing about this sketch to me is it has this magical quality to it that—like I said—reminded me of <i>Field of Dreams</i> , right? Which is the ultimate hegemonic <i>[chuckles]</i> , you know, magical realist American story. Right? It’s like all straight White guys also have a silent straight White dad who just wants to play catch with them. But it has that quality, and it applies them with an outsider’s perspective on these things about American culture that we are used to being presented from an insider’s perspective. And that it also has this—at its heart is this—is him relating to his mom what is essentially a romantic relationship between him and the high school quarterback.
00:27:20	Julio	Guest	Yep. Which is a point, by the way, that—when people talk about—whenever like—that is rarely brought up to me, <i>[chuckling]</i> the queerness and the—
00:27:27	Jesse	Host	<i>[Surprised.]</i> Really? <i>[Julio confirms.]</i> I feel like it’s so queer! Like, that’s what’s so—and what’s beautiful about it—what’s remarkable about it to me is that—is that this character’s voice is encompassing both this—you know, he’s describing what—you know, things that would be easy to see as grotesqueries, right? Like, there’s so many Walmarts or there’s salads made of marshmallows. But describing them in a way that is reverential of what’s beautiful and remarkable about them, including being reverential of what’s beautiful and remarkable about—you know—the high school football team’s quarterback from the perspective of a queer kid. Who—you know—may or may not understand his own queerness. That’s not entirely clear. <i>[Julio chuckles and agrees.]</i>
00:28:19	Julio	Guest	But, you know, like— I don’t—I think that the—I don’t think they do. Or at least, I recall giving Alex Moffat, the very funny <i>SNL</i> cast member who plays the quarterback—he asked me like, “Are they together? Are they not together?” And I believe the note I gave Alex was this is something that he will look back on years from now and maybe understand. <i>[They chuckle.]</i>

00:29:10	Jesse	Host	<p>So, let's make a sketch! And that sketch, which I think is so beautiful to look at, was directed by Dave McCary, who directed "Wells for Boys" and the special, as well. My friend and collaborator. Let's talk for a minute about your new HBO show, <i>Los Espookys</i>. You are kind of a pan Latinx cast and set of creators. Did you find—I mean, Fred Armisen is half Venezuelan, if I remember correctly. I think a couple of the main actors are Mexican. You have a variety of different—you're Salvadoran, of course. You have a variety of different places in Latin America and—Latin American and Latin American American experiences. What was the thing when you started working with—I guess Fred Armisen maybe was the person who started developing this show—that you found bound this group of people together?</p>
00:29:58	Julio	Guest	<p>Well, there's a—well, first of all, bound—I feel like the show is not attempting to be the definitive representation of any kind of people. It's not a show that attempts to or is interested in educating the American audience of like what it's like to be Latino. That's not the show that it is. It's just a show that I think thrives in its own oddity. It's a show made by people who enjoy things that are eerie. And there is a particular kind of Latin American eerie that is explored in the show that I think bound the Mexican actors and the Mexican director and the Chilean crew and the Chilean actors and the—I think that the show almost developed a language in itself that was learned and quickly shared by the people who worked on it.</p> <p>I recall earlier on, our really incredible Mexican actors were like [<i>chuckle</i>], "Can you help me access what this show is?" 'Cause it's—you know, like me or my character are not like immediately clear. And then, sort of once you get into that wavelength and learn that it's not that I'm missing something, it's not that I'm misinterpreting something, it's that this is something new that we're all learning together. Then, I think it became clear and fun to them. We'll finish up with Julio Torres after a short break. Stay with us! It's <i>Bullseye</i>, from MaximumFun.org and NPR.</p>
00:31:36	Jesse	Host	<p>[<i>Computer beeps.</i>]</p>
00:31:44	Promo	Clip	<p>[<i>Computer beeps.</i>]</p>

Music: Bright, playful synth.

Adam Prianca: They, that's Ben!

Ben Harrison: And that's Adam!

Adam: And together, we host a show called *Greatest Trek* on Maximum Fun that covers all of the new *Star Trek* shows: *Lower Deck*, *Strange New Worlds*, *Picard*, *Prodigy*, *Discovery*, and any other *Star Trek* show Paramount throws at us!

Ben: Come check it out for our funny and formative recaps of all the new stuff the *Star Trek* Industrial Complex churns out.

Adam: It's in your podcatcher every Tuesday. Subscribe to *Greatest Trek*. It's a new *Star Trek* podcast from the makers of *The Greatest Generation*.

00:32:17	Music	Transition	<p>[<i>Computer beeps.</i>] Relaxed synth with a steady beat.</p>
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00:32:22	Jesse	Host	<p>It's <i>Bullseye</i>. I'm Jesse Thorn. My guest is Julio Torres. He's one of the creators of <i>Los Espookys</i> and was a writer on <i>Saturday Night Live</i>.</p> <p>You know, it's funny. Like when Fred Armisen started developing this show as something else, I read originally he was inspired by a trip to Mexico City. And man, I went to Mexico City recently. I had never been before, and I was like, "This is the best place I've ever been, and this was just the effing greatest." I would also, if I were the kind of guy who created TV shows, be pumped to create a TV show about it. But it's not a show that ended up set in Mexico City. In fact, it didn't even end up set in a particular city at all. As you mentioned, you shoot it in Chile, but it really exists in this almost magical world.</p> <p>I mean, like the closest you get to making it not live in a magical world of its own imagining is a part where Ana Fabrega's character, they ask her why she has that accent, and she says—and the explanation is like, oh, she went to Minnesota for a year and came back talking like that or something. <i>[Chuckles.]</i> And it must be—it must be fun that you're getting to write one of the first ever HBO shows that's primarily in Spanish. And that in so doing, you get to write something that is so weirdly specific about something that does not even actually exist. Like, it's not even like you're reproducing something weirdly specific. You are imaging something this weirdly specific.</p>
00:34:07	Julio	Guest	<p>Yeah! I mean, there's this sort of irony, right? That it's like, oh, a show gets to be made in Spanish by Latinx people. Oh wait, the show is so obtuse that it might as well be in a completely new language.</p>
00:34:29	Jesse	Host	<p><i>[They laugh.]</i> Yeah, there definitely could be a version of this show that's made in Esperanto, the international language.</p>
00:34:34	Julio	Guest	<p>Oh, I would love that.</p>
00:34:38	Jesse	Host	<p><i>[They laugh.]</i> But like, honestly, the show—when I watched it—that it reminded me the most of—I mean, like any time you're—any time you're watching something in Spanish on English language television or in a normally English language movie theater, you're expecting like social realism. You know what I mean? You're expecting somebody who's delivering a capital M Message, because that's why the—that's why the English speakers who program the thing decided it was—</p>
00:35:03	Julio	Guest	<p>Right. That is what allows a foreign work to have a seat at the table, right? To be an ambassador and say like, "Well, this is actually what's been going on with me." <i>[Chuckles.]</i> But this is a show that's unpreoccupied by that, I think. Or approaches it differently.</p>
00:35:22	Jesse	Host	<p>The show it reminded me of was one of my favorite television shows of the last decade or so: <i>Bored to Death</i>, which is—you know—set in a very particular Brooklyn-y world, but mostly it's just—the thing that was always so distinctive about it to me is that Jonathan Ames, the creator of the show, who I like very much personally. He's been a guest on this show and is a good and smart man. He's a weirdo who has his own way of seeing the world,</p>

			100%. And it's amazing to me that they let him make a TV show that so reflected his own weird way of seeing the world. And it's so rare that you get to see anything on television that feels like it comes from someone's individual voice that is not one that you would—not an individual voice that you would expect! Like, this is a odd show! I love it.
00:36:15	Julio	Guest	Yeah. It is an odd show, yeah.
00:36:18	Jesse	Host	This is <i>Bullseye</i> . I'm Jesse Thorn. I'm talking with comedian, writer, and actor Julio Torres.
00:36:29	Julio	Guest	Do you actually, yourself, love spooky things? No. I am very easily scared. I like the eerie. I like eccentric people. I like—I'm attracted to the strange and the mysterious. So, I think that is sort of—that—I approached quote/unquote "spooky" from that angle. And silly, 'cause spooky things are silly, I think.
00:36:58	Jesse	Host	Yeah. I mean, it is much—it's much more gentle and silly than you might expect from the premise of a gang of people gets together to start a company putting on spooky happenings. <i>[Chuckles.]</i> Like, there's a real—there's a real gentleness to it that you don't expect from your—from seeing a big exorcism scene.
00:37:23	Julio	Guest	Right. Which is such a tender scene! <i>[Chuckles.]</i>
00:37:28	Jesse	Host	Let's hear a scene from <i>Los Espookys</i> . So, most of it is in Spanish with subtitles. Some of it is English with Spanish subtitles. So, we'll play some of that. And one of the characters in the gang is portrayed by Ana Fabrega. And her name is Tati. And so, she has been taking any job she can get, including a job breaking in other people's shoes for a while, working the second hand in a clock tower for a time. And at one point, getting wrapped up in a pyramid scheme selling nutritional supplements.
00:38:13	Sound Effect	Transition	So, in this clip, Úrsula, who is Tati's sister, gets a phone call from the CEO of the supplement company. Music swells and fades.
00:38:14	Clip	Clip	<i>[A cellphone rings and vibrates.]</i>
			Úrsula: Bueno?
			Mark: Hi! I'm calling from Hierbalite collections. Is this miss Ursula I'm speaking to?
			Úrsula: Sí?
			Mark: <i>[Chuckles without humor.]</i> Well, good evening to you and your family. This is just a friendly reminder that you're out of time. <i>[Whispering furiously.]</i> Where's my money, <i>[censored]</i> ? Do you know who the <i>[censored]</i> you're talking to? I'm the Hierbalite CEO, Mark Stevens, and I <u>personally</u> handle collections. Chasing down people like you is what I live for. You have five days to come up with my <i>[censored]</i> money.
00:38:53	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Returning to a pleasant customer service voice.]</i> Please remain on the line for a brief survey about our call today! Mark's threats were: A) concise and articulate, B) a little vague and confusing. Music swells and fades.

00:38:55 Jesse Host *[Laughs.]* That was the great John Early, one of the funniest dudes out there. Man, that dude's funny. Um.

00:39:02 Julio Guest He's brilliant.

00:39:03 Jesse Host That little giggle at the beginning really killed me.

[Julio agrees.]

00:39:25 Julio Guest How do you cast—how do you cast a show like this? I mean, a couple of cast members are people who made the show. So, you've got those. But you have a couple of cast members who are actors who mostly work outside the United States, in Spanish. How do you find the people?

Well, in the case of—very quickly, in the case of all the English-speaking roles, including John's, those are all friends. Those are all buddies that were excited to be in the show that we're lucky that they made the time to be in our show. But as for the actors who play Fernando and Úrsula and like pretty much everyone else, the—some of the casting was done out of Mexico, where our director knew a lot of actors, so we were guided by him and our casting director. And that's how we came to know Bernardo, Cassandra, and José Pablo, who are in every episode. And then, our guest actors, most of them that are casted out of Chile. And it's just watching a lot of self-tapes, just watching a lot of auditions.

00:40:30 Jesse Host And we've gotten so, so lucky to meet so many incredible actors who are just so, so funny and just got the show completely. Are you surprised that things have worked out for you, personally, in the way that they have lately?

00:40:37 Julio Guest I don't think so. *[Laughs.]* I mean, first of all, I'm—you know—starting. I'm very conscious of that. I'm very conscious of like I'm just starting building something. And I'm also very conscious of the fact that not everyone gets to be afforded the opportunities to start building something. But I think it's because I'm stubborn that I've always been like, "Well, yes, of course, that's what I was going for." *[Chuckles.]* So, what next? What now? Which is kind of how I operate.

00:41:14 Jesse Host *[Music fades in.]* Well, I'm so glad—for my own sake—that you've gotten to do all these wonderful things, so that I get to see them. I'm such an admirer of your work. I'm so grateful that you took this time to be on *Bullseye*. Thank you very much.

00:41:29 Julio Guest Thank you! Thank you for having me.

00:41:31 Music Transition Chiming synth with light vocalizations.

00:41:33 Jesse Host Julio Torres, from 2019. His special, *My Favorite Shapes*, is streaming now on HBO Max. It's so good. His TV, *Los Espookys*, so, so good. One of my all-time favorites. That's also on HBO Max—at least, 'til they decide they don't wanna pay residuals anymore.

And good news for my fellow Torres freaks out there! That's Julio Torres superfans—my producer, Kevin, made that up and made me say it. Julio is working on yet another show, also for HBO. Its working title is *Little Films*. It's set to be in production next month.

[Music fades out.]

00:42:15 Music Transition Thumpy, relaxed synth.
00:42:19 Jesse Host That's the end of another episode of *Bullseye*. *Bullseye* is created from the homes of me and the staff of Maximum Fun, in and around greater Los Angeles, California. Here at my house, there was a great triumph. I figured out how to put up straight curtain rods on my curved walls and windows.

Our show is produced by speaking into microphones. Our senior producer is Kevin Ferguson. Our producers are Jesus Ambrosio and Richard Robey. Our production fellows at Maximum Fun are Tabatha Myers and Bryanna Paz. We get help booking from Mara Davis. Our interstitial music is by DJW, AKA Dan Wally. Our theme song is "Huddle Formation" by the band The Go! Team. Thanks to The Go! Team. Thanks to their label, Memphis Industries.

Bullseye is on YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook. You can follow us in any of those places. We will share our interviews with you. And we do hope that if you heard something you enjoyed on this week's show, you'll share it with somebody. I think that's about it. Just remember: all great radio hosts have a signature signoff.

00:43:20 Promo Promo **Speaker:** *Bullseye with Jesse Thorn* is a production of MaximumFun.org and is distributed by NPR.

[Music fades out.]