

[00:00:00] **Music:** Gentle, trilling music with a steady drumbeat plays under the dialogue.

[00:00:01] **Promo:** *Bullseye with Jesse Thorn* is a production of [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org) and is distributed by NPR.

[00:00:14] **Music:** “Huddle Formation” from the album *Thunder, Lightning, Strike* by The Go! Team—a fast, upbeat, peppy song. Music plays as Jesse speaks, then fades out.

[00:00:22] **Jesse Thorn:** It's *Bullseye*. I'm Jesse Thorn. My next guest is Ana Fabrega. Ana is a comedian, actor, and writer. She worked on *The Chris Gethard Show*. She had great parts on *High Maintenance* and on *At Home with Amy Sedaris*, but she's probably best known as a star and co-creator of one of my all-time favorite television programs, *Los Espookys*.

[00:00:44] **Music:** Ominous electronic dance music. Music continues under the dialogue then fades out.

[00:00:53] **Music:** Look, I'm not a horror guy. Slasher movies, too gory for me. Ghost movies, too creepy for me. Jump Scares, no thank you very much. But *Los Espookys* is not really a horror show. It's a show about four weirdos who love horror. They run a company where they go around town bringing scenes from horror movies to real life, or I guess the kind of stuff you would see in horror movies: demonic possessions, sea monsters, creepy aliens, that kind of thing.

It's not scary, though. It is sweet and goofy and a little bit surreal. It's about friendship and identity and carving a place in the world for yourself. It just nabbed a Peabody Award for its brilliant second season. A Peabody! Well-earned. To celebrate. We are replaying my interview with Ana Fabrega from last year.

Let's get into it.

[00:01:51] **Music:** Ominous electronic dance music.

[00:01:57] **Music:** Ana Fabrega, welcome to *Bullseye*. I am so, so happy to have you on the show. I'm such a fan.

[00:02:02] **Ana Fabrega:** Thank you. I'm happy to be here.

[00:02:04] **Jesse Thorn:** You're from Scottsdale, Arizona and grew up in Scottsdale, Arizona. What did you think of Scottsdale, Arizona when you were a kid?

[00:02:14] **Ana Fabrega:** We moved there when I was in first grade, like in the middle of the school year. We had been in Iowa before that. And so, you know, aesthetically very different from Iowa. I—you know, in my teenage years, I felt just kind of like bored, 'cause there's not a ton to do there. I mean, I think most places when you're a teenager, you only have so many options.

But I definitely knew I wanted to leave. So, when I was, you know, 18 or—I mean 17, and I was a senior in high school and was applying to schools, I was like, “I wanna go to New York. But when I started going back, once I moved to New York, I started to appreciate the desert landscape much more. I took it for granted growing up that it's really beautiful.

[00:02:58] **Jesse Thorn:** I read you describing somewhere feeling like you didn't realize the extent to which you didn't fit in when you were an adolescent until you were in New York and had perspective on your adolescence. Like you didn't have an unhappy childhood, it was just you were like, “Oh, wow. There's all this possibility.”

[00:03:24] **Ana Fabrega:** Yeah, I mean, I think that like by no means was I like, you know, unhappy or anything. Like I had my friends. I was like, you know, the type of kid in school who was like—I wasn't like the popular kid, but I was friends with everyone. So, it's like the popular kids liked me, but I wasn't hanging out with them. You know? I was like, you know, very much had like my small group of close friends, and we had shared interests and, you know, would bond over similar things.

And then, going to New York, like the first four years that I was here, when I was in school, I didn't find people that I felt like I had, you know, things I could connect with or felt like we had similar, you know, sense of humor or interests or anything. So, then I just kind of went like full, like—I don't know, like sort of reclusive and like my sister was living in New York at the time, so I would just hang out with her and her friends and then just like treat school as like put my head down, go to class, go to work, go home, do my homework. Like I wasn't very social in college.

And then when I graduated—a year after I graduated and I started doing standup is when I was like, oh, here's where my people are. Here are where like the people that I do sort of feel like I belong with are. And then found my like community that I didn't ever really find when I was in college, after college.

[00:04:42] **Jesse Thorn:** What was it that didn't feel like it was a fit with the other kids when you were in college?

[00:04:47] **Ana Fabrega:** Just like, you know when you make a joke and someone just goes like, (*chuckling*) “You're so weird.” Just like that feeling of like, oh, like you don't—you don't wanna like joke back. You just think that it's like absurd that somebody would say this. You know what I mean? It was that sort of feeling.

[00:05:02] **Jesse Thorn:** I mean, look, I'm gonna play a clip from *The Chris Gethard Show*, for which you wrote. And I—(*chuckling*) like, I just don't think I can describe how particular your work is without playing a little bit of it. And you know, the videos you make for social—for social media maybe are a little short and visual, but there's enough words in this. And basically, this is you after a writer's meeting, convincing Chris and the show's head writer/director that you're—that you have some ideas that they need to hear. And (*stutters and chuckles*) initially, they're gonna be all ideas about scorpions. And there's a picture of a scorpion on your binder of ideas.

[00:05:59] **Ana Fabrega:** Yeah.

[00:06:02] **Jesse Thorn:** (*Laughing.*) I don't think that we hear—I don't remember if there's scorpion jokes in there, but let's listen to the clip.

[00:06:07] **Sound Effect:** Music swells then fades.

[00:06:08] **Clip:**

**Music:** Peaceful, classical music.

**Ana** (*The Chris Gethard Show*): Sooo, um. The first idea is really simple. I'm walking down the street. There's a sign that says, "wet paint", and I walk up to it. I touch it. If it's dry, I remove the sign.

**Speaker:** (*Beat. Uncertainly.*) Yeah.

**Ana:** And if it's wet, I leave it. Okay, uh, there's one where I'm playing baseball. I'm up to bat, and as the ball comes, I drop the bat, and then punch the ball, and then I run. (*Beat.*) So, it's like—I mean, the backstory could be that I used to be a boxer. Or we could do it where instead, when the ball comes—instead of dropping the bat, I turn around and I hit the ball, so it keeps going that way.

**Speaker:** Can you do that?!

**Ana:** I mean, we could try.

[00:06:50] **Sound Effect:** Music swells then fades.

[00:06:54] **Jesse Thorn:** (*Laughs.*) So, uh, you can see how this, in little moments, can play on social media—especially to people who signed up for it. How did it play when you started doing standup open mics?

[00:07:08] **Ana Fabrega:** So, I like, you know, had been making videos and I didn't know what it would look like to try to sort of take what I like doing online and do it live. And so, the first few times I went to open mics, I was like, well, standup is like a setup and a punchline, and you tell a story. And so, I had sort of like the line that I thought was funny, and then I would write like context around it so that it would be like a little story the way I thought standup had to be.

And I did that a few times and I was like this doesn't feel right. Like what if I tried to just say the line that's funny to me? And then, I did that, and I felt like, oh, okay, this is I think the way that, you know, I should approach it. That like I don't need to try to make this look like what I think standup has to be. And a big part of sort of that moment of like, oh, I can do anything, was like starting to go to mics that were like from other people that had more similar sensibilities and kind of seeing like, oh yeah, it's—you know, standup is solo comedic performance, and you can interpret it however you want and do anything you want within it.

And the type of like, you know, specials on Comedy Central that I saw growing up is like one way to do this, but it's not the only way. And so then, yeah—I like, you know—I think the

first few years I was doing standup was kind of trying to figure out like what does—like, how do I take the thing that I think is funny and like present that in a live format?

[00:08:33] **Jesse Thorn:** Much more to get into with Ana Fabrega in just a minute. Stay with us. It's *Bullseye* from [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org) and NPR.

[00:08:42] **Music:** Thumpy synth with light vocalizations.

[00:08:46] **Jesse Thorn:** Welcome back to *Bullseye*. I'm Jesse Thorn. If you're just joining us, my guest is Ana Fabrega. She's the co-creator of the HBO show, *Los Espookys*. They just won a Peabody for their second season. Ana is also a comedian, actor, and writer. She's worked on *History of the World Part II*, *High Maintenance*, and *The Chris Gethard Show*. Let's get back into our conversation.

What was the first thing that you did on stage that really worked that you feel like still kind of represents you?

[00:09:19] **Ana Fabrega:** I mean, I remember the first mic—open mic I went to where I was like I'm gonna try to just say the lines that are funny to me. It was—so I had been going to an open mic that was at UCB, 'cause I didn't know where else to go.

[00:09:32] **Jesse Thorn:** The Upright Citizens Brigade Theater, in New York.

[00:09:34] **Ana Fabrega:** Yeah, there were open mics there. And so, I would go there, and I felt like this doesn't feel right.

And then some friends who I had known in college through another friend—they went to a different school. They were like, “We kind of wanna do standup too, and there's this mic in Bushwick, called Do Something.” And it was one that River Ramirez would host with, at the time, DJ Jeep Grand Cherokee, who would kind of do like psychotic visuals and torture people during their set sometimes.

But it was like, you know—they were like, “Let's go to this mic.” And I was like okay, I'm gonna—maybe this will be the mic where I try to just say the lines. And I remember like, I had a joke. I mean, I don't think it's a good joke, but it kind of embodies the like—that moment of like, oh yeah, I'm gonna—I think this is my thing. Was just kind of like marching in place for a sec and then like (*sighs heavily*)—like sighing and saying that like, “I hate going up stairs.” It was something like that.

(*Jesse snorts.*)

And it's like whatever. And people like really laughed, and I was like, oh yeah, I can just like do this and people will get it. And it's maybe not like a joke, but there's something funny about someone like just doing that and people go—you know, they relate to it. Like, yeah, it's tiring to go upstairs. (*Laughs.*)

[00:10:46] **Jesse Thorn:** I mean, speaking of not recognizing where you belonged or not recognizing the extent to which you were out of place as a teenager and adolescent, I read that you realized you were queer like as an adult.

[00:11:07] **Ana Fabrega:** Yeah. Yeah, I was like—I mean, it's like funny now, 'cause it seems so obvious. Even from like the youngest age, like photos of me—I'm like dressed like a tomboy. I mean, I'm dressed in things that like queer people wear now. I had like a little chain. I'm like, oh wow. I really like—you know, when I was five it was so obvious. But I think part of it was just kind of like the environment I grew up in was like very heteronormative and straight and like everyone at my school was like—there were no openly gay people. There was like maybe a couple people in like the theater department that people were like, “I think he's gay.” But no one was like really open. It was very like, you know—I don't know, not a place I think that sort of lent itself to that sort of like exploration.

And so, I just thought like, well, I'm not really that attracted to guys. So, like, maybe I'm just asexual. It like didn't occur to me that like maybe I like non cis males. Like, I don't know. And so then like—yeah, in college I was similarly just like not dating, not interested, nothing—very like sort of—I think like so out of touch with that part of myself and not open to the possibility that like maybe I wasn't straight.

I was actually thinking about this the other day. I was in college. I forget what year it was, but it was the year that *Blue is the Warmest Color* came out and I felt like, huh, I wanna see that movie. I don't know why, but I wanna see it. (*Chuckling.*) And I go to the theater. And I'm like so self-conscious going to the theater cause I'm like, people are gonna think I'm gay because I wanna see this movie.

And I was like by myself. I was like, oh my god, Like I hope I don't see anyone at the theater. You know, I went to like the IFC Center downtown, and in the middle of the movie there's a problem with the projector, and they have to stop the movie, and the lights come up. And I feel like, oh my god, now the whole theater is gonna be looking at me and thinking that I'm gay because I'm here. And like it was such—I mean it—when I look back on it, I'm like oh my god. I was like—I had so much like sort of like deep internalized homophobia and was like terrified at the thought of like, what if I—what if I am gay? And then seeing that movie, I was like, oh my god, I relate to this. And I was like, (*whispering*) no, no, no, no, no. This can't be happening. This can't be me. No, it's not me.

And then it still took me like a while to sort of like, come to terms with it and like be okay with it. And then once I did, I was like, oh, damn. Like if I had done this a long time ago, I would have felt so much happier, I'm sure. You know, it's not like something that I like necessarily knew and was repressing. I just like didn't know. And then, once I thought maybe it was that I still needed time to be like, you know, it's okay to like explore it and see if it is. But yeah, *Blue is the Warmest Color* was (*laughs*) huge for me.

[00:14:01] **Jesse Thorn:** I feel like *Los Espookys* is one of the queerest shows on television. And I don't know exactly—I mean, there's gay characters on it. But like, I don't know exactly what, besides that, makes it one of the queer shows on television.

[00:14:18] **Ana Fabrega:** I think it's that like the show is not trying to be anything or like trying to fit any sort of mold. It just sort of like is itself and it is what it is. And like, I don't know. I think like, especially like writing the second season, I feel like the show is so just okay with being itself and like there's no agenda, there's no like sort of desire to teach the audience. It's just sort of like, no, this is just what like comes out of us. And we're—you know, Julio and I are both queer and a lot of the actors on our, on the show that are friends of ours are queer. And it just—so it just, you know—it just is. But I think it's just because we're just being ourselves when we write it.

[00:15:06] **Jesse Thorn:** When you—(*chuckling*) when you were writing *Los Espookys*, like the thought of you handing it in to the executive who's also in charge of, you know, the *Sex in the City* reboot and *Hacks*, and like—none of those things being bad. Like, I especially like hacks. But, um, you know, just like to somebody who's in charge of regular television shows.

[00:15:31] **Ana Fabrega:** Yeah, I mean it's like I think that Julio and I didn't realize when we were making the first season how sort of unusual it was to be able to make this type of show. Like—and you know, we weren't involved in pitching or selling the show. Like Fred had sold the pilot to HBO about like a group of horror makeup enthusiasts in Mexico City. That was like the original idea. And then, once they ordered a script, he brought us onboard to develop it and then it became, you know, *Los Espookys*. And so, I think that like had Julio and I gone in and tried to pitch what the show ultimately became, I'm sure we would've gotten a lot of like, “What do you—? What is this? Why? No.”

And so, it feels almost like we were able to like Trojan horse this show like into the—like, you know, people's TVs just via like how we went about getting involved. But like, yeah, I do feel really like fortunate. And I mean—and especially like once I started to like pitch my own projects and I saw the way that people sort of react to or have a hard time, I think feeling comfortable with ideas that maybe aren't as like linear as they're used to or as sort of, you know, conventional story structure that they're used to. Like, then I was like, oh man, it feels like a miracle that we got this show made. And I think it really—you know, HBO has been so supportive in letting us, you know, make it the way that we wanna make it. And I feel very fortunate for that.

[00:17:00] **Jesse Thorn:** I mean, right from the start, *Los Espookys* is a show about a group of—like a crew, like a group of friends who work together as real-life special effects artists, sort of.

[00:17:16] **Ana Fabrega:** Tricking—yeah. It's like—it's like they like deceive people.

(*They laugh.*)

They help people trick other people.

[00:17:23] **Jesse Thorn:** And like when they're doing—when they're like doing a haunted house for an inheritance, like, a “you have to spend the night in this haunted house” thing, all of the—all of the effects that they do involve like pulleys. (*Chuckling.*) Like visible pulleys and like dayglow paint.

[00:17:48] **Ana Fabrega:** It's very like scrappy and DIY, like you know, we wanted it to feel very like practical. Like they're not doing like David Blaine style optical illusions. It's like, no, you can see the rope and pulleys if you just look closely, but people buy it.

[00:18:04] **Jesse Thorn:** But this is also a program where—like, I was just watching the first episode of season two, and it features heavily what appears to be the ghost of a beauty contestant who's been impaled on an anchor.

[00:18:20] **Ana Fabrega:** Yes.

[00:18:20] **Jesse Thorn:** And she doesn't—she's not—she doesn't come from pullies-world.

[00:18:24] **Ana Fabrega:** No. So, it's like a mix of like—the things that they do, we want them to feel practical, but then in their world, it's just sort of like anything can kind of happen. And it is kind of like surreal and abstract and absurd, but that the effects that they do are kind of like lame. Like even in the first episode of season two, when they do the ghosts, it's like—it looks like lame. It doesn't look cool, like good. It looks just kind of like, “Oh, we see the ropes when you guys are going up.” You know? But people buy it, which I think is really funny.

[00:18:51] **Jesse Thorn:** One of the things that's special about *Los Espookys* to me, is that Tati, in particular, but several of the main characters of the show have such a warm positivity. And that isn't always a quality on a comedy thing that's this odd or distinctive. It is something that you see a lot in Fred Armisen's work, who originally created the show. And it's something that I feel from, you know, your online work that I've seen. But was that a choice to make a show about—that's theoretically about, uh, dark goths—so wide-eyed and smiling?

[00:19:36] **Ana Fabrega:** I mean, I don't know if it was necessarily a conscious choice. I think that Julio and I are like optimistic people, and like—so, the characters that we, you know, created for the show wound up being like that. And also, it's like, you know, goth people are not just like, frowning all the time. Like, they laugh with their friends and they're—you know, have a full range of emotions. So, we're like, okay, let's have their like ringleader, Fernando, be like really sweet and have like a little dog that he takes care of, and like—you know, just things like that. But yeah, I do think that, overall, it's a very like happy and like upbeat show, you know, in a way that I think is—yeah, nice.

[00:20:19] **Jesse Thorn:** So, the show was originally, as you said, gonna be set in Mexico City. And one of the stars of the show, Bernardo Velasco—who plays Ronaldo, who's the—like the mastermind of this operation, such as it is. Or at least he's the—he's the guy who keeps barreling forward, at the very least. He's Mexican. How did you—and he feels very Mexican. Like as a guy in LA from a Mexican-American neighborhood in San Francisco, like he feels very Mexican. And he also—like, as a straight guy, I just want to be his friend so desperately. Like just—he's just everyone's dream of what your dude friend would be, attitude wise. So how did you—how did you cast him?

[00:21:12] **Ana Fabrega:** So, like when we were making the pilot and casting the pilot, at this time, the show was still gonna be set in Mexico. So, we were like, okay, Julio and I are not Mexican. Fred's not Mexican. We need our other like lead actors to be Mexican. And the

director who did the first episode knew, Bernardo, um, because Bernardo also works as a casting director, and he works a lot with like found actors. He's very good at like—yeah, finding people that are not actors and training them for film and TV and stuff. And he's like a talented stage actor too. And so, our director for the pilot was like, “You know, we should—like he should audition.” And as soon as we saw his tape, we were like, “Oh my god. Yes, it's him. Of course, it's him.”

And the same with Cassandra, who plays Úrsula. She's also Mexican. And similarly, like yeah, once we saw her, we were like, “Oh yeah, it's gotta be her.” And then, once the show was no longer set in Mexico, you know, and there was no sort of parameters on where they live or anything, then it was like, “Oh yeah, you guys can keep your accents. You can, you know, infuse your dialogue with like Mexican slang if you want. I mean, especially Bernardo's character uses a lot of slang. But yeah, it was like—I'm so happy that we sort of wound up picking from that pool in Mexico, because otherwise we wouldn't have found the two of them.

[00:22:36] **Jesse Thorn:** Velasco has like a level of friendship charisma that is so extraordinary that it leads you to believe that all of these characters would be friends with each other. (*Chuckles.*) And that feels to me like the special trick of *Los Espookys* is—well, Julio Torres as a performer is so sui generis that you can hardly imagine him talking to anyone else. You know what I mean? Much less having a relationship with them, 'cause he's just so his own thing. And your character is such a doofus and—you know what I mean? Like there's so much going on there that you—that you like need somebody that you could believe could bind any group of human beings together.

[00:23:25] **Ana Fabrega:** Yeah. And I mean, and that's Bernardo in real life. He is so sweet and so kind and charming and just like everyone that that meets him is like, ugh, in love. 'Cause he's really like the best. And same with Cassandra. Like when we got to know each other shooting the first season, I thought like, man, we really lucked out like that we have these people that we're gonna be working with a lot and that we really like and get along with who bring so much to the characters. And like, I mean, especially after we shot the first season, I feel like Bernardo and Cassandra's characters became so much more clear to us and helped us write better stories for them in season two. And yeah, they're like as sort of—I mean, Bernardo is as like captivating and friendly and like lovable as his character.

[00:24:14] **Jesse Thorn:** What's something that you learned about his character from seeing him perform it?

[00:24:19] **Ana Fabrega:** The, like he can be so like earnest and sweet in a way that I think I hadn't anticipated with the character. Like we knew like, oh, it's—maybe, it's kind of funny if he's like a little bit of like a mama's boy or something, like didn't fully like grow up, still at home. But then the way that he played it was like that but not sort of making fun of it. It was like very sweet and like, yeah. I think just like he's so like well—he has good intentions and is like always putting other people before himself. And yeah, it made it then like—I mean, especially his storyline in season two is a lot about like the sort of pitfalls of putting other people before yourself. And I think we wouldn't have had that storyline had it not been for, you know, how he played him in season one.



[00:25:10] **Jesse Thorn:** We've got more with Ana Fabrega still to come. Most of the dialogue on *Los Espookys* is in Spanish, and up until she started working on the show, Ana had only ever written jokes in English. So, when she sat down to start writing for *Los Espookys*, what changes did she have to make? She'll tell me when we come back.

It's *Bullseye* from [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org) and NPR.

[00:25:34] **Promo:**

**Music:** Intense rock music.

**Biz Ellis:** Parenting. It's hard. But don't worry! You're not alone. Belly up to the low bar with *One Bad Mother* and let us remind you that fine is good enough.

**Speaker 1:** They wanna climb on different things. And how am I supposed to keep them both from dying? (*Laughs.*)

**Speaker 2:** There is a right way to do this. And if I can figure out that right way, I'm gonna be a good parent. So, that is not a thing.

**Biz:** So, join us each week and let us tell you that you are doing a good job. You can listen to *One Bad Mother* on Maximum Fun or wherever you get your podcasts.

[00:26:10] **Music:** Thumpy rock music with a syncopated beat.

[00:26:14] **Jesse Thorn:** It's *Bullseye*. I'm Jesse Thorn. I'm talking with Ana Fabrega, star and co-creator of the Peabody Award-winning show, *Los Espookys*.

Had you written jokes in Spanish before you and Julio Torres started writing this show?

[00:26:28] **Ana Fabrega:** No, I had never like done any work in Spanish before. And the scripts, we initially write them in English knowing that they'll—that certain dialogue will be said in Spanish and read in English. So, there's that process of like, okay, we want it to look funny on screen for people that are reading it. And then, you know, in the back of our heads, we also know how it will be spoken in Spanish.

And so, we do all the English versions so that the network can read them and understand them. And then there's the Spanish pass. And when I like take a stab at it, like I always need to have Julio—whose Spanish is stronger than mine—like, you know, we'll look at things together and be like, “Oh, actually maybe it should be phrased like this or like that.”

But yeah, it's a funny kind of way of thinking, 'cause we know it'll be said in one language and read in another, and we want both of them to be funny.

[00:27:15] **Jesse Thorn:** It's such an amazing thing about the show, which is probably like 85-90% in Spanish. Some parts are in English, but substantially in Spanish with English subtitles on the screen. That, you know, subtitled comedy almost never plays, because you lose the—you lose the rhythm of the speech, and you lose particularities of the language, all

the jokes about puns and so on and so forth. And it plays so beautifully on *Los Espookys*. It is so funny reading the words. And so, what do you have to get right to make that work? Like what is different about writing a joke and imagining it being read on a subtitle in front of someone speaking in at a different language?

[00:28:06] **Ana Fabrega:** I mean a lot of it—like the subtitling process for the show is so meticulous, because it's not just about like, you know, we wanna phrase this right, but we also wanna make sure that the way—the timing of when it appears on screen is good, that if the text is broken up and we're gonna see like the rest of the sentence on the next like screen or whatever, we want it to be broken up in a way where it's like, okay, the joke will be in the second part and not the first part.

And so like, I don't know, it's just a matter of like tinkering and finding ways that like, you know, make us laugh when we read it. Because that's how a lot—you know, a lot of the audience in the US is gonna be experiencing it.

[00:28:46] **Jesse Thorn:** I mean, it also is such a comedy of images and ideas. You know, like it's full of jokes, but there are no—I don't know, *30 Rock* jokes that are a lot of funny words that end in K and two deep-cut cultural references, and it's like, “Here's an interesting idea.”

[00:29:10] **Ana Fabrega:** Yeah. Yeah. Julio and I are not like very pun-oriented writers. And so, luckily—I mean, I think if we were, the show would not work in two languages like this. And yeah, I think we are more drawn to like ideas that make us laugh. And sometimes they're like very visual things where like reading it is not as important as seeing it. And sometimes it's about like, yeah, the thing that somebody says and making sure that like that looks funny reading.

[00:29:41] **Jesse Thorn:** How do people talk to you about it differently who are watching it in Spanish, so to speak, rather than watching it in English?

[00:29:50] **Ana Fabrega:** I think that for people who are like bilingual—‘cause most people like that grow up outside the US will learn English in school. So, I feel like a lot of like my family, at least, in Panama—like they all speak English. And so, people—I think if you speak both languages, you'll get like certain little jokes, you know, will come across more in Spanish than in the text. Like, it's still like funny one way or the other. But I think if someone's bilingual, they will pick up on like a little more things here and there that are like, almost like an extra little joke that if you get it in Spanish and you can read it in English, like it just like pays off almost like a little bit better.

[00:30:29] **Jesse Thorn:** Are there any things that you cut from the show because they were too weird?

[00:30:35] **Ana Fabrega:** No, I mean, anything that's cut is ‘cause we don't have enough time for it. Like, we haven't ever really had anything come up like that in the writing process where HBO goes like, “Now, wait a minute, guys. This is too much.” Like, they're very like hands-off. Like, “Make the show you wanna make.” And we're—like I don't feel limited in like, you know, “Oh, well, we can't write that, because how are we ever gonna do that?”

Like our production crew down there and our production designer, Jorge Zambrano, and our wardrobe head, Muriel Parra, are like so talented and so funny. And they can like do anything. And so, it's like very fun to write sort of knowing like, yeah, maybe I don't know exactly how we will shoot an eclipse, but Jorge will figure it out. And he does, you know? So, it's like a very fun and free sort of way to write.

[00:31:29] **Jesse Thorn:** I was very scared that the show wasn't going to get a second season, particularly when—after the first season was announced—it got shut down right at the very beginning because of covid. I wonder if you kind of had your—if there was any point in there where you had your life flash before your eyes, so to speak, where you were like, “Look, here I am with my friend. We both—we have two of the most specific comedic sensibilities in all of comedy. We're making this show that is a really beautiful expression of both of them. We may never get this opportunity again.”

[00:32:07] **Ana Fabrega:** Well, so the—after the first season came out, in the summer of 2019, we started writing the second season. And we wrote all of the second season in the fall of 2019. And then, at the beginning of 2020, we go down to Santiago. We shoot almost four full episodes. And then the pandemic starts. So, we leave with like two episodes and a handful of scenes left.

And that was kind of frustrating, that like, oh my gosh, we were so close to finishing. Like if—truly, if we had stayed like three more weeks, we would've finished. And so then, you know, we come back here, and it's just a waiting game. You know, at that time everyone's like, “Oh, maybe in like a month it'll blow over.”

Obviously that's not the case. And HBO kept telling us like, “Don't worry, you're gonna finish. Don't worry, you're gonna finish.” And so, I did have some sort of peace of mind that like we will finish. I just didn't know when. And so, after one year of waiting, like—because we were also dependent on what the covid protocols in Chile were like. They were a lot more strict than they were here in the US. So, like we couldn't go and shoot the way that people could, you know, shoot after just a couple months in the States. And so, yeah, we were just like, “Alright, well, I guess we'll hope that cases and things are like under control in Chile and that they let—you know, open the border and that we can go back and finish up.”

And so, yeah, once we hit the like two-year mark and we got the green light that like everything is like—you know, ‘cause there were times where we thought like, okay, now we'll be able to go. And we would start planning. And then they would roll back their reopening, ‘cause cases rose. And then it was like, okay, I guess we're waiting again.

So yeah, it wasn't like—I didn't think like, man, what if we never finish? I just thought like what if it's a really long time before we finish? Because I think HBO was like, “You know, it's just two more episodes, so just go finish it.” But yeah, I mean, I know that there were other productions that were just kind of like, “That's it, you're done. Sorry if you didn't finish. So, I am very grateful that we were able to finish what we started. It felt like it was maybe gonna be never-ending.

[00:34:03] **Jesse Thorn:** In a broader sense, did you ever have that feeling? Like leaving aside whether you were gonna finish the second season, were you—have you had the feeling like how could I—how could I ever get to do something like this again?

[00:34:16] **Ana Fabrega:** Yeah, I mean like there's—I didn't realize how sort of unique the opportunity was that we had. I just kind of thought like, oh yeah, I got to do a TV show! Cool. Like I didn't realize that like—until I started to pitch other project—that people are gonna go like, “Wait, what?! Why is this—why is that happening?” You know? And it really feels like such a gift to have this show where we can really like write whatever we want and, you know, have the trust from the network and us to like make the show that we wanna make. But yeah, I mean, I have times where I'm like, “Man, is anyone ever gonna buy anything else from me?”

Because everyone thinks it's too niche. You know? That's been my main sort of thing is like it's too niche. And I'm like, yeah, but—I wish I was more broad, but I'm not! So, like—you know, it's gonna be niche the way *Los Espookys* is niche, but it finds it's—it finds its audience.

[00:35:15] **Jesse Thorn:** I'm looking at my imaginary list of questions I was gonna ask you, and there's only one left. It says, “Will Tati be my friend, and can we hold hands?”

[00:35:23] **Ana Fabrega:** Uh, yeah, Tati will be friends. Although, I think Tati is the type of person that if you hold her hand, she's gonna think it's romantic.

[00:35:30] **Jesse Thorn:** I mean, I watch the show with my wife, so I think she would understand.

*(They laugh.)*

[00:35:35] **Ana Fabrega:** In Tati's head, any sort of physical contact with a man is romantic.

*(Jesse laughs.)*

That's how Tati moves through the world, is like—yeah, she's not someone to do—to like flirt with if you're not ready to jump into something serious.

[00:35:56] **Jesse Thorn:** Well, Ana Fabrega, I'm so grateful to you for coming on the show. I just couldn't be a bigger fan of *Los Espookys* and of your work. I'm so happy I got to talk to you.

[00:36:06] **Ana Fabrega:** Thank you so much. It's so nice talking with you and—and yeah, thank you for having me.

[00:36:11] **Jesse Thorn:** My conversation with Ana Fabrega, from last year. Her show, *Los Espookys*, just won a Peabody, and they deserved their Peabody. If you haven't had a chance to watch *Los Espookys*, please do. It is so great. You can stream both seasons on MAX. And

hey, maybe MAX will reconsider and make some more. That happens sometimes. It's basically all I want in the world.

[00:36:41] **Music:** Bright, chiming synth with a steady beat plays under the dialogue.

[00:36:44] **Jesse Thorn:** That's the end of another episode of *Bullseye*. *Bullseye* is created from the homes of me and the staff of Maximum Fun in and around Greater Los Angeles, California. Although! This week we went to Ann-Margret's house to interview her. So, look forward to our interview recorded live on tape for Ann-Margret's house coming up in a couple of weeks.

Our show is produced by speaking into microphones. Our senior producer is Kevin Ferguson. Our producers are Jesus Ambrosio and Richard Robey. Our production fellow here at Maximum Fun is Bryanna Paz. We get booking help from Mara Davis. Our interstitial music is composed and provided to us by DJW, also known as Dan Wally. Our theme song is by The Go! Team. It's called "Huddle Formation". Thanks to them and to their label, Memphis Industries.

*Bullseye* can be found on all of your favorite platforms. YouTube, Twitter, Facebook. Follow us there. Share our interviews. If you liked one of the interviews today, please share it with a friend. Makes a big difference for us. Tell somebody you like the show. Don't keep it secret. I think that's about it. Just remember, all great radio hosts have a signature signoff.

[00:37:51] **Promo:** *Bullseye with Jesse Thorn* is a production of [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org) and is distributed by NPR.

*(Music fades out.)*