

EP. 256 THE BYTE

ANGELA PETRILLI

# BSB

miracles - magic - mystery



[MUSIC PLAYING] Hey, hey, everyone, and welcome back to another episode of the podcast. This time, I'm introducing you to Angela Petrilli. And it's yet another human being where, when we got on the Zoom call and we began talking, I just wished that she and I could talk for hours and hours and hours. She's absolutely enchanting. She's hilarious. She has a great sense of humor. And she has some really seriously powerful things to say. Now, I don't want to ruin her miracle moment, but suffice it to say that when she got on the call, I let her know that one of the songs that she has up online-- I was listening through her catalog-- and "Ghost Inside a Frame" absolutely gobsmacked me. And then later on in the conversation, that song was part of her miracle. So everything kind of dovetailed really beautifully when we began talking. And we kind of were on the same wavelength. And I really love that. Now, in 2019, Angela was one half of Los Angeles' Americana duo, Roses and Cigarettes, along with her bandmate, songwriting partner, and best friend, Jenny Pagliaro. They'd already generated a ton of buzz on the LA scene and opened for some pretty fabulous people. And honestly, Roses and Cigarettes were poised for a breakthrough. They had a tour in the works. And then on March 25 of that year, Rolling Stone named Roses and Cigarettes new single, "Fast as I Can," one of its 10 best country songs of the week. But then fate intervened. And I'll let Angela tell you about that. Sometimes life ends up taking us in directions that we don't expect. But I'll let Angela tell you her story, because truly, she's an incredible speaker and has a really astounding tale to tell. So without further ado, here's my conversation with Angela Petrilli.

Angela: I was talking with my mom just soon after Jenny had died, and my mom said, "You know what's really strange is when you look at pictures of someone who's died and they will always stay the same and you are the one that changes, but they are stuck." And I'm like, "Oh, you know, the creative in me is like, 'That's a good idea for a song. I need to remember that.' " And I remember writing it in my little red notebook where I keep all my lyric ideas and stuff.

Kirsten: Well, I'd love to ask you the main question of the podcast, which is, I would so appreciate... Gretchen is hilarious, okay? She's like, "I've got three stories for you. I've got more, but I can tell you..."

Angela: She's so wonderful.

Kirsten: I know. She's really funny. I mean, we did spend an extensive amount of time talking about her sweet heart for a man. So... Yeah, I mean, a good boy. Yeah, he is a good boy. But it's... I would love for you to share one story, two stories. However many you feel like sharing, something that you consider to be magical, miraculous, or mysterious.

Angela: Oh. All right, I'm gonna tie this in to "Ghost Inside a Frame," if you don't mind. Yeah, okay. So my song, "Ghost Inside a Frame," it was inspired by my friend, Jenny Pagliaro, so we were in a band together called Roses and Cigarettes. And two months into the release of our first album, she was diagnosed with stage 2 breast cancer at 31. And, yeah, it was... Yeah, we got something thrown at us, for sure. And... Yeah, it was really... It was hard. It was really hard to see a friend and a sister go through what she went through. It was just... It was really hard. And in 2019, she died of stage 4 breast cancer, and she was 35. And... You know, we had built this whole... You know, this really cool thing together, and we made these two albums, and we got to travel around and play and write music. It was a really beautiful... It was a really beautiful time in my life. And, again, talk about juxtaposition. You know, this horrible thing that's constantly looming. And, yeah, we tried our best to make something beautiful out of it. And with the time that was given. And... After she died, they say, "Music is healing." But, like, it wasn't healing for me for a while. It just wasn't. 'Cause I was just so reminded by everything. Couldn't listen to our music. Still can't. And I was about... She died about six years ago. I still can't listen to it. It's still really hard for me. And... I was talking with my mom. This was soon after Jenny had died. And my mom said, "You know, what's really strange is when you look at pictures of someone who's died, and they will always stay the same, and you are the one that changes, but they are stuck." And I'm like, "Oh." You know, the creative in me is like, "That's a good idea for a song. I need to remember that." And I remember writing it in my little, like, red notebook, where I keep all my, like, lyric ideas and stuff. And for years, I would... So Jenny died in 2019. For, like, two years. I would try and come up with stuff and da-da-da-da. And just nothing. It sounded dumb. And it sounded too forced. And that's something I... I try not to do. I try not to force things. Like, things to just... When they are meant to come to you, it would be very natural and just very easy. You don't have to think about it. It just is. So I was in Austin. I was playing some shows. I think this was 2022, I believe. I'd have to look at my notes. I think it was. And I was just watching some stupid, like, dating show on Netflix, 'cause I find those incredibly fascinating. As someone who studied, like, yeah, interpersonal communication and, you know, mass media and stuff. And I just, yeah, nonverbal communication. I find those shows incredibly fascinating. So, yeah. So I was just in a chill zone. I was in a chill zone, had the AC on, 'cause it was really hot outside. And I had a guitar with me. It was my friend's guitar I borrowed. And then, just all of a sudden, like, my hand was, like, kind of tingling. And, like, it was really strange. Even, you know, and I try to remember all the stuff that happens, but I remember, it felt, like, very miraculous. I really have never felt so much like a conduit than I did in this moment. And I had that red notebook, and I grabbed it, and I just started writing and writing and writing and writing and writing. And there was a last line where, now, I'm just, now I'm just a picture of a ghost who doesn't age. I'm like, "Hmm. Let's like," And then I crossed it out, and then, a ghost inside a frame, and I'm like, "There it is." I'm like, "Okay, I was looking at this the wrong way the entire time."



I was trying to talk for my perspective of the person who was alive. Nope, the song needs to be in the perspective of the person who is no longer here. That is gonna be, in that, like, crack the nut of that song. And from there, it just, pfft, five minutes, those lyrics were done. And then, you know, maybe another five, 10 minutes, maybe the chords were there. And it was just a, pfft, pfft, and then it left. Yeah, I've never felt so much like a conduit in my life. It was, I just totally cried after, 'cause I knew, like, she helped me right now, so I'm just certain of it. I'm certain of it. So that was really, that was really moving, I have to say, like, you know, miracles. That's definitely one of them, for sure. 'Cause I know that song really helped me in my grief journey. And I have had so many people, since I've released that song, send me messages on how it has helped them, and just saying thank you for the words that I could not find. Oh, I'm a mess every time I read, you know, messages like that. Yeah, I feel like songs are given to you. And that one, I was a conduit. I was a conduit, for sure.



Kirsten: All right, babes, you already know what I'm gonna say. Thank you to Angela for being such a bad-ass guest and being so hilarious, and making me fall in love with the world again, just knowing that there are such incredible human beings out there. There will be a link to Angela's website in the episode show notes. And then there's gonna be a link to her YouTube video where she goes into that gallery and finds her great-great uncles' incredible artwork. And just for fun, I thought I'd include a link to that same uncle's Wiki page, I did a little bit of a deep dive on this incredible creator, this incredible artist. And I learned a lot, and I think you should learn a lot too. So click on that link and check it out.

There would be no podcast, except that all these people keep referring their friends and encouraging other people to be on the pod and to have me grill them and ask questions about magic. So I need to thank pretty much every guest who's ever been on the show, and then everyone who is referring all of their fabulous friends to me. It's really helping me out, and I'm meeting so many incredible people. I wanna just ask you, if you like what you hear, please do consider leaving a rating or a review wherever you listen to the podcast. Those ratings and reviews help other people find this little labor of love of mine.

Thank you for listening, and here's my one request. Be like Angela. I mean, Angela does talk about what loss looks like, about what devastation looks like, about what heartbreak looks like. I think most of us by now have lost someone who is close to us, someone that we hold dear to our hearts, and it is never easy getting over those losses. I mean, I still, my friend Linda died in 2011, and I still cry sometimes thinking about her. I mean, it is so difficult to go through a life knowing that you'll never talk again. You know, in real life, to that person that you love, and who's already gone. But Angela has really modeled this way of living with your grief, moving forward in life with your grief, honoring her grief, honoring your grief, and still building something beautiful, still emerging on the other side, keeping that person in her thoughts, in her heart, but moving forward, even still, to make this world a more beautiful place. So this time, I'm urging you to be like Angela and hold those people that you've lost close to your hearts, remember them daily or weekly, and be grateful for what they brought into your life, and remind people to do the same. Grief is not a bad thing. Sorrow is not something we should be ashamed of. It's okay to be sad when you're thinking of someone you've lost, and it's okay to bring that person and their memories along with you and the adventures you're going to be creating, because those people who have touched us, who have made our lives more beautiful, they deserve to be honored, they deserve to be remembered, and they deserve wherever they are to witness you making not only this world, but your life a more beautiful and more incredible place.

