

Moby Transcript

Moby: If you can have any response to the existential question of what's the best use of a life, it might as well be dancing with Wayne Coyne and a bunch of weirdos on a roof in Southern California. Well as sunsets and happy songs.

[00:00:14] **Bryan:** Bryan Smith here and welcome to the dream path podcast, where I try to get inside the heads of talented creatives from all over the world.

[00:00:24] My goal is to demystify and humanize the creative process. And make it accessible to everyone. Now let's jump in folks, Moby's on the show. That's right Moby. I was so excited when prepping for this interview, but I got lost in his music catalog with 19 studio albums under his belt, the prep was quite an undertaking.

[00:00:46] But I was glad I took the time to do this deep dive into his music because it made me appreciate all over again, his contributions to the music that was part of the soundtrack of my musical consciousness in the nineties, two thousands and beyond. Although Moby probably requires no introduction, I'll say just a few things about his career to get you oriented before hearing our chat. Moby is a musician songwriter, singer producer, and animal rights activist who has sold more than 20 million albums worldwide.

[00:01:15] He is considered to be among the most important dance music figures of the early 1990s, helping bring dance music to a mainstream audience throughout the world. He has also collaborated with some of the most iconic musicians and performers in music history, including Lou Reed, Kris Kristofferson, David Bowie, Bono, Michael Stipe, Mark Lanigan.

[00:01:37] Gwen Stefani Public Enemy and Slash among others. And although Moby had an amazing career, he's also experienced some dark, dark moments in his life and some failures as well. And I found these dark moments in failures to be just as if not more fascinating than the many high points in his life, all of which are laid out with remarkable insight and vulnerability in the documentary Moby doc, which we talk about during the dinner.

[00:02:03] We also of course talk about his most recent album reprise, where he continues to create unique and compelling synergy by collaborating with artists like Gregory Porter and Amethyst Kia on the song. Natural blues.

[00:02:32] He also worked with Mark Lanigan and Kris Kristofferson on my personal favorite song on the record, The Lonely Night

[00:02:59] I think this one really hits. Because of how raw Mark and Kris's voices are deep gravelly and uniquely theirs. Although my chat with Moby is shorter than most. In my humble opinion. This interview is pound for pound, one of the most thoughtful, meaningful, and impactful discussions I've had with a guest.

[00:03:17] And I hope you agree. So, without further ado, let's jump into my chat with Moby. Well, Moby, welcome to dream path podcast. Thanks for being on the show.

[00:03:27] **Moby:** I'm happy to be here. Thank you.

[00:03:29] **Bryan:** Yeah, well, I wanted to start off by pointing out that this documentary, the Moby Doc, I've watched it twice now, and I'm very impressed with how vulnerable you made yourself.

[00:03:41] I was a little skeptical going in. I have to admit with a documentary made by the subject of the documentary, but you tackled that question right out of the gate. Why am I doing a documentary on myself? And I was like, that's perfect because that's the exact question I came into the film with. But maybe you could just explain for my listeners who may have not seen the film yet.

[00:04:04] Why you went into this project, the Moby doc, the way you did.

[00:04:08] **Moby:** Well, I guess it started about six years ago. I got approached to write a memoir and my immediate response after being asked to write a memoir was why in the world would I write a memoir? Like I I've lived with myself my entire life. And as a result, I both am lacking an objectivity as regards me and my life.

[00:04:30] And also, I tend to think that the circumstances of my life are pretty normal and the book publisher made it clear to me that the circumstances of my life are not in fact normal. That I've had a very odd life. And that just made me start to think like, how can I presumptuously share, you know, maybe any, I dunno, insights that sounds overly grand, but like, you know, to, to share the life that I've had in the hope that somehow someone watching it might get something.

[00:05:05] Or if it's a memoir that someone reading it might get something from it. And then saying that I do understand how presumptuous that does sound, you know, the assumption that somehow, you know, what I've lived through the circumstances of my life, whatever insights I've had would be relevant. Or insightful, you know, or have resonance for other people.

[00:05:26] But my feeling with telling your story is I'm so grateful for other people who are willing to tell their story in an honest way that I just thought if I'm grateful for other people being willing to tell their story, why shouldn't I be willing to tell my own story and like worst case scenario. No one pays attention, and as a result, there's no audience, which is, you know, as far as worst case scenarios go, that's not all that bad.

[00:05:57] **Bryan:** Well, you've had a lot of worst-case scenarios in your life, starting with when you were very young, very young child at age of two, losing your dad. In that horrific accident and the, I mean, I'm not going to give it the audience, any spoilers about the film, but you have had a lot of low points in your life and a lot of high points.

[00:06:16] And I think that's what makes the film so intense emotionally is you see very openly and in a vulnerable way, all of the ups and downs. And I think it is objective because you're bringing in folks who are like in the therapy session. Very unique way of approaching storytelling by having these kind of pho therapy sessions, these psychodramas that you did with your friends, I assume that would re-enact childhood scenes.

[00:06:44] And then, you know, the multimedia approach of having an animator professional illustrator illustrate scenes from your life. It's just a very engaging.

[00:06:56] **Moby:** Hmm. Well, thanks. I mean, when we started out Rob the director and I, we gave ourselves very broadly speaking, two remit or two goals, one was to try and be honest.

[00:07:08] And the other was to try and make a documentary unlike anything we had seen before. I used to be a Tribeca film festival doc judge, and also an international documentary association documentary judge. So, I have watched possibly more music documentaries than any person on the planet. And as a result, I have gotten to a place where I kind of, I think I don't know what to do and making a music documentary, but I sort of know what not to do, like what tropes to avoid cliches and pitfalls to try and stay away from. So, that that's sort of what guided us and trying to make this.

[00:07:49] **Bryan:** Yeah, it has so many different storytelling devices packed into an hour and a half.

[00:07:55] One of them is where you're just looking at the camera and you're saying, "alright, so we've had some conventional storytelling up until now and now we're going to get weird again." So, I like how you're leading the audience through it that way. And it's also a concert film, and it's not just one concert, but you have all of these moments of concerts in your life, whether it's the Vegas show toward the end or the performance with David Bowie, which just blew my mind. I mean, I had no idea about the connection with David Bowie until watching this. You have all of these storytelling devices just packed into this very tight film. And I'm wondering what kind of feedback you're getting from your colleagues and your friends about your story and whether they knew your story before watching this film, the way that they thought they did, or did they learn something new about you by watching this.

[00:08:49] **Moby:** Well, it's funny because I don't really have much in the way of feedback. I mean, I've been doing quite a lot of interviews and so I get some feedback from the people I speak to and I'm doing interviews, but I categorically, I don't read reviews and I don't read my own press. So, I know nothing. I think I released the album *Reprise*, I released this movie, Moby doc. I haven't read any articles or any reviews because I'm almost not psychologically sturdy enough or strong enough to expose my fragile psyche to the ravages of people like journalists and people I've never met. So- and then with my friends. Yeah. I, the most I'll ever get from any of my friends is them saying that they've watched it and they like it.

[00:09:40] So, I actually don't have a clue for the most part as to how people might be responding. And usually, I value my ignorance. I prize my ignorance because I really don't like letting my sense of self or my wellbeing be affected by the opinions of strangers. But now that you've asked me, I'm kind of curious.

[00:10:02] It'd be nice to know, like, are people dismissing the movie? Cause it's unconventional and strange are people, is it resonating with people? I actually have no idea.

[00:10:12] **Bryan:** Yeah, I don't know that I would call it strange. I think it is unconventional. You know the way I judge a film is... is there a cohesive narrative and a story that you come

away with where you understand someone better than you did before, when you started in terms of a documentary in the merit of the doc.

[00:10:30] And I came away with, I think, a very comprehensive understanding of your psychology of your childhood trauma of your formative years in terms of your influences and very eclectic influences, by the way, the hip hop influences. Punk rock. I read about Nick Drake being one of your influences and The Silver Apples, I believe, which was, I never even heard about the silver apples before, but I looked them up and they seem to be like a 1960s, very early house music, sort of dance vibe, bang.

[00:11:05] **Moby:** You know, one could argue that The Silver Apples invented contemporary electronic music. Like you go back and listen to like, they have a song called "Oscillations" that could have been made by an indie dance band two weeks ago. And they made it in 1968.

[00:11:25] **Bryan:** I just listened to that song.

[00:11:28] **Moby:** I mean, cause up until then in a way electronic music was incredibly academic. Like, I mean, electronic music was invented in the late 19th century. And up until the late sixties, it only kind of existed in Princeton at bell labs and it's very academic, electronic music studios. And then all of a sudden along comes The Silver Apples and they sort of created this more like populist art form around electronics.

[00:11:54] **Bryan:** And when did you start listening to them? I mean, they're a sixties band and you kind of came up in the eighties.

[00:12:00] **Moby:** So, I have this phenomenal musical education. I mean, I've had a lot of ways in which I've learned about music when I was growing up from fanzines, from college radio, from hanging out in New York city.

[00:12:12] But after I dropped out of college, I got a job working at this really weird record store in Darien, Connecticut. And the owner of the store, his name was Johnny, and the store is called Johnny's. He had the most eclectic musical taste, and he was sort of like, he taught me about, he introduced me to Nick Drake, Silver Apples.

[00:12:34] I can't count the number of albums. He sort of turned me on to, and this was 1984 or so he was like my one-person in a lot of records that I otherwise never would have heard.

[00:12:47] **Bryan:** Isn't that great to have, and we all need someone like that in our lives. When we're teenagers, someone who really shows us the way they're our tour guide in music, like, Hey, don't listen to the other stuff or you can, but also listen to this.

[00:13:01] I worked at a record store too, so I, I get what you're talking about. It's that, that sort of crash course on music that may not be mainstream but is still really important. Yeah. So let's talk about your album. Now you call it *Reprise*. Is that how you pronounce it? I thought it was *Reprise*, but.

[00:13:22] **Moby:** Here's what I've learned is that there are some words that can be pronounced multiple ways.

[00:13:27] Like I remember when I was at college, having a debate with someone over the word hegemony, cause it turns out you can also pronounce hegemony. Like if you look at the Oxford English dictionary hegemony and hegemony are both perfectly valid. So, reprise and reprise. Same thing. They're both valid.

[00:13:47] I call it reprise because Frank Sinatra's record label was called Reprise. So, growing up in and around the music business, I kept hearing about Reprise records. And so it was sort of baked into my brain that that's how you pronounce it, but it turns out reprise is they're both perfectly fine pronunciations.

[00:14:08] **Bryan:** Okay. Well, let's talk about *Reprise*. This album, I listened to start to finish probably three or four times to prepare for the interview. And I'm so impressed with your ability to collaborate and find folks that I've never heard of before listening to your album. But now I'm doing a deep dive on all of these people that you've collaborated.

[00:14:30] The one person that I do know and listen to his music for years is Mark Lanigan. And it looks like you had collaborated with him all the way back in 2013 and then Kris Kristofferson on this version of that song and *Reprise*. So, tell me how you look at collaborations and how you incorporate musicians and performers into your music. Is it at the recording stage? Is it at the writing stage and how do you view them in terms of the formation of the music that you're putting out there?

[00:15:02] **Moby:** Well, so going way, way, way, way, way back when I was around nine years old, when I was nine, I had a music teacher who wanted me to be a virtuoso guitarist.

[00:15:13] He wanted me to be the next Andre Segovia, classical guitarist. And so I studied music theory and we played jazz together. And he, even though he was idiosyncratic, his approach to music was quite dogmatic in a way, like he only liked complicated music. And when I was around 13, I discovered The Clash and then I discovered old blues and I fell in love with the simplicity of music.

[00:15:40] And then in the early eighties, I started hanging out in nightclubs in New York. You know, I would go to a nightclub like Danceteria to see Black Flag or the Bad Brains, but then hear hip hop and hear all these other types of things. And at some point, I finally realized that I didn't care how music was made.

[00:16:00] Like I didn't care if it was made electronically or acoustically. I didn't care if the singer was a man or a woman or black or white or living or dead. I didn't care if they were singing in English. The only thing I cared about was my emotional reaction to the music. And so when I started making my own records, I sort of brought that.

[00:16:24] We'll call it like a kitchen sink approach to making music with no allegiance to genre. And regarding vocalists and collaborators to your question, my criteria is simply how did their voices affect me? You know? And if it's a live singer, if it's sampling a dead singer

that never even crosses my mind, if it's using like on this album, *Reprise* all the instruments are played live, but some of my records have been all electronics and very sample-based.

[00:16:53] Because at the end of the day, it's hard to repeat myself. The only criteria I apply to music is how does it make me feel when it's coming out of two speakers and, to that end, I'll put anything into the actual compositional process. Without any sort of formality or adherence to genre. And the end result is people have been confused by my approach to music, but all I care about is that magical moment that hopefully I've achieved a few times when a piece of music, whether I've made it or someone else has made it when a piece of music is playing and it's transferred.

[00:17:31] **Bryan:** Well, that's the vibe I get when I'm listening to these songs on *Reprise*, because the sound is huge. The vocals are so deep and impressive. And I think some of the gospel singers that you bring in, and then the folks that you've worked with a lot like Mindy and Julie, well Julie was on the film a lot, but, and I think performed on stage with.

[00:17:54] But the talent that you've surrounded yourself with, it's really heartwarming because my vision of an artist that has reached your success level is someone who is only going to work with folks that are going to move the needle for them personally, you know, like, okay, I want to collaborate with Gwen Stefani that I know you did a long time ago, but some type of name that's going to move the needle in and you're focusing on not the name necessarily, but just the pure talent of that individual. And it's awesome.

[00:18:27] **Moby:** And I guess there's a, there's a very, almost selfish, subjective aspect to it on my part where I think at a very, very early age, I realized that a lot of my understanding of the world, a lot of my emotional life is tied up in music. And so, the idea of compromising emotional validity or emotional power for marketing, that actually feels kind of like a repulsive sin to me, like to prioritize. And I've nothing inherently against the marketplace. I have nothing against commerce inherently, but in my mind, at least there is a hierarchy and commerce.

[00:19:14] And marketing should always take a back seat to the emotional expression that you can have through music. And maybe there've been times in my life when I've been willing to blur those lines a little bit. And when I look back at my life, those are kind of the only regrets I have. Is when I was a little too quick to accommodate the marketplace. Not Kai Ryssdal's marketplace on NPR, but the big, broad, general global marketplace, right? Because you know, commerce is fine market. The market is fine, but they're never, you'll never have transcendent beauty in a marketplace. Whereas you always have that potential with art and music.

[00:19:59] **Bryan:** As you may have noticed, there are great resources and advice mentioned in all our episodes. And for many of them, we actually collect all of these resources for you in one easy place: our newsletter. You can go to dreampathpod.com/newsletter to join. It's not fancy, just an email about each week's episode, featured artists and resources to help you on your journey.

[00:20:22] Now back to the interview. I'd like to talk to you about it The Lonely Night with Mark Lanigan and Kris Kristofferson. And I think that was originally recorded with Mark back in 2013, but then you brought in Chris on *Reprise*. Tell me about your thought process on who you were going to bring in to record that song and what your instructions were, if any to Mark and Chris, when they were recording.

[00:20:46] **Moby:** So, I had known Mark not knowing him personally, but I had known of him when he was on SST with The Screaming Trees and then his voice. I mean, I'm stating the obvious for anyone who's ever heard Mark Lanigan thing. It's like, he just has that voice, you know, like it's a, like not just a 100 million voice, it's a one in a billion voice.

[00:21:06] So, I met him about 10 years ago. And when I first met him, I was terrified because he's got this dark voice, in public he never smiles. I saw him perform and he was kind of intimidating, but I'm so mercenary when it comes to pursuing voices. That I found myself backstage and I approached him, and I asked if he'd ever want to work on music together, and my assumption was that he would either stab me or ignore me. And instead, he was delightful. Like you, I was living in Hollywood. He was living in Glendale. We're both in 12 step programs. And we started working on music together and I just, he was. And I'm not just being nice, but like he was really creatively, both inspired and phenomenally hard-working, you know, like he has this work ethic where, when we recorded The Lonely Night, the first time he came to my studio, and we recorded at once and it was perfect because he had done all the work at home in his studio beforehand.

[00:22:06] It, obviously it was a very obscure song. You know, it was an obscure song on an obscure album, but I really have always loved it. And I wanted to revisit it for this album for reprise. And to hear what it would be sound, what it would sound like, played with an orchestra. And I wanted another voice of experience on it because as time has passed, I've really lost interest in anodyne voices or overly professional voices, or even really young voices. You know, I want voices that reflect the human condition that reflect an individual's experience. And so, Kris Kristofferson was one of the, I mean, I just immediately thought like, "who has a voice of experience?" And I thought of Kris Kristofferson, and I reached out to him, assuming he would say no. And 30 seconds after emailing him, he basically wrote back and said, "yeah, that sounds great."

[00:22:59] **Bryan:** Both of those voices are definitely voices of experience in the type of experience that you project on them, whether this is true or not, but it's like both voices have seen some shit in their life. I mean, they have seen some things and been through a lot.

[00:23:15] I know Mark struggled with addiction early in his career and came through the other side. Thank goodness. I'm not sure about Chris's history, but both of those voices. Ah, it's so raw. It reminded me a little bit of Johnny Cash. His last album produced by Rick Rubin, I believe.

[00:23:32] **Moby:** Oh yeah, we will. The reference absolutely.

[00:23:34] You know, Johnny Cash's version of hurt is definitely as far as a benchmark of a voice of experience representing the human condition through a song like Johnny Cash has

heard it sort of like the ne plus ultra of that. Yeah. Or like Leonard Cohen's later work when his voice had gotten to that place as well of just like that gravitas.

[00:23:58] And I don't think Leonard Cohen was a bottomed out addict. The way I am the way mark Lanigan, Kris Kristofferson, Johnny Cash were, but like, as we're saying, like I just I've so much, I've come to appreciate adult voices. Where there's just a complexity and the humility. You know, it's really hard to be arrogant if you're me or Mark Lanigan or Kris Kristofferson who have been so completely comprehensively bottomed out as addicts, that kind of knocks the arrogance out of you.

[00:24:29] It makes me think a little bit of, and this is a very odd analogy, but do you remember a Simpsons episode where Bart Simpson sells his soul?

[00:24:37] **Bryan:** I don't.

[00:24:38] **Moby:** Okay. So, there's an episode. Bart sells his soul to Millhouse and as a result, he has no soul. And so suddenly like the animals in his house won't interact with them.

[00:24:48] He tries to pet the cat and the cat runs away from him. And he says to the cat, like, "well, you're pretty picky for someone who eats bugs." And I sort of feel that way about bottoming out about addiction. With addiction where like where no matter what happens, the bottomed out addict can't take refuge and arrogance because they remember the degradations of how they bottomed out.

[00:25:13] Right. You know, and that might be sort of where like some of the, the humility in the voices of, you know, Mark Lanigan and Kris Kristofferson and that song where that comes from.

[00:25:23] **Bryan:** Yeah, it's fantastic. I've listened to it on a loop on the way to work and back. And, and it's great to capture a voice like Chris, who just looking at mortality issues.

[00:25:33] I mean, any day could be any artist's last day, but Chris is on the tail end of his career for sure. But to capture that voice and also capture that collaboration like that, it was really wonderful. So, on your Twitter feed, I saw that you posted your favorite music video "Why Does my Heart Feel so Bad" I believe? Can you tell us about that song, that video and why it's so special?

[00:25:58] **Moby:** The original version of the song, luckily was never released. I wrote it in 1992 as a really not very good techno song. And I love techno don't get me wrong, but like, this was just not a good techno song, but I love those voices. And in 1999, the original version, the next version of Why Does my Heart Feel so Bad was on the album *Play*.

[00:26:22] And there was a video that costs 30 cents to make of like very rudimentary animation of some characters that I was drawing. And the video in Europe became this accidental monster hit based on, I don't know what, like maybe it was charming because it costs nothing to do. And then in redoing, Why Does my Heart Feel so Bad for the *Reprise* album?

[00:26:45] I was talking to an animator friend of mine, Steve Cutts, and we've met, and I've made a couple of videos together and we thought it would be interesting to remake or revisit the Why Does my Heart Feel so Bad video. And Steve Cutts is a phenomenal animator. I mean, just, you know, like sort of in a class by himself.

[00:27:04] And the thing that he and I share is the desire to make art that effectively represents activism and issues. I mean like sometimes, sometimes gratuitous content or gratuitous art can be fine, but if you have the ability to take your most deeply held beliefs or take y'know, issues that you think are profoundly important and represent them through your work.

[00:27:30] I feel like it's incumbent upon you to do so. And so the video really looks at sort of like the dystopian world that we've created, but especially like the dystopian world that we've created for animals, because working on behalf of animal rights is that's, that's my life's work more, more than anything.

[00:27:50] **Bryan:** Yeah, purpose-driven art. I love that concept of purpose-driven art because frivolity and triviality is important too. Sometimes. I mean, sometimes we just want to escape and get away from, from thinking, but I think art has to evoke and provoke in order to be remembered and to be felt. And so, thanks for explaining that about the video and that's what I pulled from it.

[00:28:14] At least the activism part of it, but I'm glad that you, added some more context.

[00:28:19] **Moby:** And if you get the chance. So, Steve Cutts the video that I first saw of his it's called *Man*, nice, easy, simple title. And it's probably the greatest thing I've ever seen in my entire life. So, when we're done talking, I highly recommend go to YouTube and just Google Steve Cutts, *Man*.

[00:28:40] **Bryan:** Steve Cutts, *Man*.

[00:28:41] **Moby:** It's the best video. It's the best. It's not a music video. It's a short, animated film and it's phenomenal.

[00:28:47] **Bryan:** I will put it in the show notes when we launch the episode, so my listeners can easily find it. I think in terms of purpose-driven art, going back to your film. One thing that it does for me anyway and I think it might for my listeners, is it really gets you thinking about the existential dilemma that we're all faced with, which is what is happiness, how do you find happiness and the chase that we all have for whatever that means to us happy. And so in that way, the Moby doc is purpose-driven art because you have the activism in there and you're talking about veganism and animal rights. Incidentally, it's not a big part of the film, but it's there, but there's also this, especially with the last scene where you you're approaching death.

[00:29:33] And I'm not going to give away too much, but there's, there's a pretty unique way of looking at our existential dilemma and how you are tackling it. Right now in your mid-fifties, after decades of these ups and downs and these successes and these failures, it's a lovely film. I would like to ask you about David Lynch.

[00:29:53] That really caught me by surprise. I know the connection to Laura's theme and the song that became a big hit that you use Laura's theme for. But how did that relationship start? Was it because of that?

[00:30:07] **Moby:** Yeah. I mean, so I, like a lot of people have been an obsessive David Lynch fan since I first saw either *Eraserhead* or *Mother* in the late seventies, early eighties, where I grew up in Connecticut, there was this art cinema called the Sono cinema and it was one of my lifelines to the, to the outside world.

[00:30:26] You know, it's where I first saw Tarkovsky, where I first saw David Lynch movies. And when I first started making my own records in 1990, *Twin Peaks* was on, and I was obsessed with it. And I did a remix of my first ever single and I incorporated some music from *Twin Peaks*, and it became a weird, surprising baffling.

[00:30:47] Yeah. And that's how I think David Lynch first became aware of me and then fast forward, almost 20 years, we became friends. We traveled together a little bit. We've worked on a bunch of different creative projects with each other. And when Rob, the director of Moby doc and I started working on Moby doc, we interviewed a lot of people.

[00:31:09] And then we realized to make something unique, we didn't want to use interviews because as you know, most documentaries, especially music, documentaries rely on talking heads on interviews. But we also said, you know, if David Lynch is willing to be interviewed for the movie, we have to include that because if David Lynch is willing to sit down and talk to you. Talk to me about me for my movie. How could I not? And how did I not include my favorite filmmaker of the last 50 years?

[00:31:43] **Bryan:** Right. Well, he adds a lot to the film, and I can't really put my finger on it, but gravitas, you mentioned the word gravitas with Mark Lanigan. And I think he brings gravitas in terms of just an intellectual weight and everything that he says.

[00:31:58] He's not talking about complex things when he talks about the concept of ideas and how important ideas. But when he talks, he's just so freaking charismatic and intense, and you just can't take your eyes off of him. So, really well done to bring them into the film because it adds something. You have so many of those encounters in your life, so many relationships like the David Bowie relationship that seem to come to you organically. I don't get the sense that you are seeking out a friendship with David Lynch or a friendship with David Bowie, or even these collaborations on Reprise. These relationships seem to just flow organically to you based upon your interests and what you're paying attention to it.

[00:32:43] **Moby:** Yeah. I mean sometimes, like I told you about like meeting mark Lanigan, like there was an organic quality, but I also really made an effort to potentially even humiliate myself and try to get him to work on the music with me.

[00:32:56] **Bryan:** Right.

[00:32:57] **Moby:** But I realized, so where do you, where do you live?

[00:33:01] **Bryan:** I'm in Seattle area.

[00:33:02] **Moby:** Okay. Have you ever been hiking by any chance in Southern California?

[00:33:06] **Bryan:** No hiking in Southern California.

[00:33:08] **Moby:** Okay. So, I live in Los Angeles, right by Griffith park. And I go hiking all the time and being a resident of Los Angeles, I occasionally end up doing new age things with my friends. And a couple of years ago, some friends did this new age thing where everyone had to like, identify with their spirit animal.

[00:33:29] And so first you meditate, and you think about your spirit animal and what it might be. And everyone went around the circle, and I was last and most people picked really cool spirit animals, like an Eagle or a Falcon or a dolphin. And it came to me, and my spirit animal is this little black beetle that I see in Griffith park.

[00:33:52] **Bryan:** Hmm.

[00:33:53] **Moby:** And it's about the size of the end of my thumb. And it's just as black beetle that stumbles around and leads this completely unglamorous life, but it's always stumbling forward. And so, to your point, I feel like that's my spirit animal where, 'cause I'm just clumsily, always stumbling forward. And if you like put something in front of this beetle, it just goes over it or it goes around it, but it just keeps going forward in a very awkward way.

[00:34:21] And so as far as meeting David Bowie, working with David Bowie, working with David Lynch, working with so many of my heroes, there is just this accidental stumbling quality where I do sort of manage to stumble into a lot of these, these amazing situations, similar to my spirit animal, the awkward black beetle.

[00:34:41] **Bryan:** Wonderfully put. One last question. I think we're running out of time here and there's a hard stop here in a couple of minutes, but speaking of new age activities with friends, the last scene in the Moby doc reminds me of a very new age activity where you're sitting there with Wayne Coyne, I believe with The Flaming Lips who wrote that song, The Perfect Life with you.

[00:35:04] And you're singing this song as a group with people who are, some of whom were wearing some suits or underwear, some of them are wearing sombreros. There's just this communal kumbaya type of moment at the end of your film. That is so cool and special because I'm almost 50. But one of the things I think about a lot is the lack of focus on friends throughout my life, because I've put everything into work and to family.

[00:35:30] I've neglected the friendship part, but you have this group of folks in this last scene that are clearly very close to you, and you all trust each other enough to do this weird scene in this movie. It was just fantastic. Tell me about how that came together and why that's the last scene in your movie?

[00:35:49] **Moby:** Well, we had been making- Wayne and I were making the video for a Perfect Life. And what I found was if you ask people to do something with Wayne Coyne, everyone just says yes, you know, one of those guys, because he's such a good nature

goofball, you know? So, you can round up anybody from like, I assume like William asked for a William Burroughs to Miley Cyrus.

[00:36:12] He's like, I mean, granted William Burroughs is not alive any longer, but everyone just sort of joins in. What I've also found is if I'm willing to be ridiculous, it makes it easier for other people to be ridiculous. So, in that closing scene, I was like, well, I'm going to Wayne. And I am going to wear crazy Cinco de Mayo outfits.

[00:36:33] And we're going to jump around like lunatics and by doing so hopefully that will empower other people to jump around like lunatics. And the idea of ending with that with *The Perfect Life*. Is it because the movie is basically, and I know this might sound a little pretentious, but you sort of alluded to it.

[00:36:51] The movie is an existential meditation. You know, this question of what's the best way to live a life. What's the best response to the human condition? Is it degeneracy, is it nihilism? Is it pseudo intellectualism? Is it affluence and materialism? Is it addiction? You know, like, and at the end it's also reminds me a little bit of what I think might be the greatest movie made in the last 30 years, which is saying something is Harry Dean Stanton's last movie *Lucky*. Did you see it by any chance?

[00:37:25] **Bryan:** No, I haven't.

[00:37:26] **Moby:** Okay. David Lynch is actually in that too. It's one of the, I it's, I've seen this movie now four or five times. I might even watch it again tonight. It's so good. And the spoiler alert at the very end, Harry Dean Stanton has this phenomenal soliloquy about the existential dilemma, and someone says, "and so, what do you do?"

[00:37:50] And his last line, he says, "you smile." And it's that to me is like when we're in a universe that's 15 billion years old when we have no possible way of knowing if our lives have meaning or significance, when everything we care about and everyone, we care about will get sick and die and disappear. How do we respond?

[00:38:10] And to me, the respond is like response is like humble service. Be compassionate to other people who are going through the same things, try to enjoy duty while you can and recognize it all goes away and live in a place of sort of benign acceptance. So that's why that last scene is, you know, was quite important to me to say like, this is if you can have any response to the existential question of what's the best use of it.

[00:38:40] It might as well be dancing with Wayne Coyne and a bunch of weirdos on a roof in Southern California while the sunsets singing happy.

[00:38:49] **Bryan:** So wonderfully put, and what a great way to end the interview. I could talk to you for at least another hour about your career, but I know you got to go. Moby. Thank you so much for sharing your story with us.

[00:39:01] **Moby:** Oh, my pleasure. And hopefully everything recorded and everything's fine.

[00:39:04] **Bryan:** Hey, thank you for listening and I hope you enjoy today's episode. If so, I have a favor to ask. Can you go to wherever you listen to podcasts and leave me a review?

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