

INTERVIEW NO WITH DOGS IN SPACE



QUESTION 1

MADELEINE: Our last issue was gossip focused. It was about the myth making, myth busting, and community building that gossip creates in music scenes. We wanted to know, as people who have heavily researched the New York City punk scene, how do you think gossip plays a role in scene formation? /

CAROLINA: It makes everything in scene formation, does it not?

MARCUS: It's kind of the bedrock. Gossip, at its core is, is about friendship. All these scenes start as social scenes. Once the social scene forms, the music kind of comes second. Especially in the New York City punk scene, that was fueled by gossip. I mean, *Please Kill Me* is one of the best music books ever written. And that's nothing but gossip. You can definitely see how that scene formed based upon gossip and friendship and people dating. By God, everyone dating.

CAROLINA: I've been told it's nothing but a gossip book, not a music book. I disagree a bit. But yes, it's so much gossip. Also the UK punk scene! In the beginning, it was very much a gossip group that was also a squatters group. That made it really fun because that was post World War II; people were just trying to get ice cubes and get a scene together. At first, there was only 50 people, then there was 200. That's on par for everything when you're in your early 20s. You've got all kinds of people. You've got this person who's into artsy music. And this person who's into shit, like literal shit. And then this person who's into disco music. They all get together, hang out, and have the same kind of ideas. It makes a very, very cool scene. I think gossip is part of what fuels that. /

MARCUS: At the center of that U.K. punk scene, you've also got, "Did you hear one of the girls from The Slits is dating one of the guys from The Clash?" Friendship really does form the basis of all these scenes we've seen again and again. It usually started with high school kids hanging out. Then those high school kids got a little bit older and once they got old enough to drink that's when things get really interesting, I suppose. /

CAROLINA: That's when they become roommates. And then there's more fucking gossip. /

QUESTION 2

MAGGIE: The next question is going to be for Carolina. With your experience in comedy and as a fabulous researcher, do you notice the ethos of scenes blending between different mediums?

CAROLINA: Yes, absolutely. You know what? That's one of the things that I found really fascinating. When you say different mediums, you mean like past music?

MADELEINE: Comedy, music, writing, whatever. I always think about *Cowboy Mouth*, Sam Shepard and Patti Smith working together and that punk ethos shifting into like the playwriting world.

CAROLINA: Absolutely. I was thinking the same thing, actually. Patti Smith and Sam Shepard free associating a play, just throwing it out there. Last week, we made a EDM music video that we did in two takes and then we sent it out. Who cares? It's fun. In the 70s, you had a typewriter and you made whatever kind of art you wanted to out of it. You perform it or, let's say, you make a video, and you release it. Whatever you came up with that morning comes out that night. Punk has a lot to do with that, especially during the early scene with Andy Warhol. Everything was multimedia from the beginning. The Mercer Art Center back in the early 70s had video projection, music, and live performance. It's what? 50, 60 years later? We're doing that today but back then it was a crazy thing to do. It just really speaks to how powerful the punk aesthetic and punk attitude really

is. I find that really, really cool because that's what we do today. And I never thought that we would do it any other way.

MARCUS: It's pretty insane, that attitude that they had. We have this network that we've built where we can move across mediums and move across genres and do kind of whatever we feel like just because we think, "Hey, this could be fun."

CAROLINA: I started in stand-up and Marcus started in radio. And then we ended up marrying, not just each other, but our mediums.

MARCUS: I started in FM radio. Like, actual, like, radio.

CAROLINA: How old are you?

MARCUS: 42.

QUESTION 3

MADELEINE: Speaking of FM radio, we love to talk about regionalism and different scenes in different places. Maggie's in Boston and I'm in New York. It's really fun comparing and contrasting what's going on there. We talk a lot about how regionalism develops and serves the taste of different communities and sort of defies homogenization of mass media. So, Marcus, when you were working at KTXT-FM radio, what was the regional sound that you were working on developing at that time?

MARCUS: KTXT-FM was a very interesting place. We were in Lubbock, Texas, in the early 2000s. I went to college from 2001 to 2006. This was when Saddle Creek Records was really starting to get big out of Omaha. Saddle Creek, at the time, was Bright Eyes, The Faint, Rilo Kiley.

MAGGIE: I am wearing a Spirit of the Beehive shirt. They're with Saddle Creek, I think.

MARCUS: Fuck yeah. Saddle Creek was starting to get pretty big at the time. We started to believe scenes could happen anywhere now. If we try hard enough, we can make a scene happen because if they did it in Omaha, we can do it in Lubbock, Texas. We tried our asses off. Explosions in the Sky were just starting and they were from Midland, which is an hour and a half, two hours from Lubbock. So, Explosions in the Sky used to come and play and there'd be like ten of us there and it would be an incredible show.

CAROLINA: I saw them on Letterman, like when I went to the Letterman taping.

MARCUS: That's fucking awesome. I saw them and it was like five of us and their family that had driven in.

CAROLINA: It wasn't Letterman. It was Stephen Colbert. Sorry. I'm sorry. How old am I? Continue. Continue.

MARCUS: It was like. Yeah. Ten people seeing Explosions in the Sky. And then the next time there was one hundred. And then after that, they were massive.

CAROLINA: Take it from me, from Letterman.

MARCUS: When John Darnielle released *Tallahassee*, The Mountain Goats album, he came through a few times.

CAROLINA: Who slept on your couch?

MARCUS: Lightning Bolt slept on my couch. I actually have a great story about that. The show was absolutely fucking incredible. And they needed a place to stay so I said, "Alright, like you can crash at my place." My place was an absolute shithole. But we had really nice couches. It was the two Brians and their roadie. On that tour, they never had a couch all to themselves and they said it was the nicest place they had ever slept in *because* they had the couch all to themselves. The next morning, I woke up and you know how Brian Chippendale, the drummer, wears the mask during the shows? I woke up in the morning and I looked outside at their minivan. He had hung the mask on the antennae and all of their clothes were laid out on the minivan drying in the sun. We had a washer and dryer in our kitchen! We had it there and they still washed everything in the bathtub that night. The roadie was like, "I stared at that washer and dryer for like an hour, man. It didn't hit me that's what it was and that we could use it." I was like, "Yeah! You can use my washer and dryer. It's fine. You're Lightning Bolt!"

CAROLINA: Couches were enough.

MARCUS: They also cut their own hair. They all had really fucked up hair.

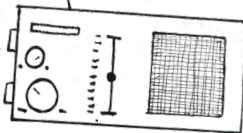
CAROLINA: Have you seen my bangs? They are not normal.

MARCUS: Then we took them out for burritos, and they went on. Mike Watt slept on my couch once. Yeah, Mike Watt and The Secondmen came and played. He had an organ player with him. After Mike Watt went to sleep, the organ player, this fairly large man, stripped down to nothing but his leopard print bikini. We just sat in my kitchen talking about touring and music for, like, an hour. That was very cool.

CAROLINA: Did you stare at the bikini the whole time?

MARCUS: I tried not to. I tried really hard not to.

CAROLINA: That's very professional of you.



MARCUS: It was hard not to. But as far as the regional scene goes, we were trying to bring in as many bands as we could. We tried to use the radio station as a local place where bands could develop. We would run into problems like finding the right venue. Lubbock, for all the shit that it talked about, like, "Oh, home of Buddy Holly," - not very receptive to live music. Venues kept closing down. I was in a band all throughout college. We tried to keep it going, opening for whoever came through. I was in a few bands, actually. But the style that Lubbock produced, we never quite found it. Our only thing was just trying to bring good music to people who otherwise wouldn't have heard it. We just never quite got there. But we tried our asses off. That was what made it worth it. I really learned so much. When we started building the network here, a lot of the stuff that I used I had learned in Lubbock trying to build a scene there. Failed, but I took all that stuff-

CAROLINA: Woah! That was not a failure. It's like what RuPaul always says, "All my failures become my successes." That is the one question that we get all the time. We'll get an email being like, "Hey, I just started a basement show that happens once a month. We just put on shows and a couple bands play. We all hang out because we listen to No Dogs, and we thought, like, it'd be really cool to have a whole scene." Sometimes a scene is just a basement show once a month. It doesn't really matter how big or how impactful it is. Although, Marcus, I think you did pretty well for yourself.

MARCUS: I did all right.

CAROLINA: But if you get a basement show once a month, I think that's also a very big success.

MARCUS: No Dogs is an outcropping of something that I actually did do in college as a part of trying to create a scene. There wasn't a whole lot of, I guess, knowledge amongst the people that worked at the radio station. People might not even know who David Bowie was. So, we would have these street team meetings to try to get the word out about the station. After the meeting, I would teach a music education class where I would be like, "Alright, here's who the Velvet Underground is." And I would go play a couple of Velvet Underground songs and say why they were important. Then, "These are the bands that we play now that are influenced by the Velvet Underground." Those would technically be the first episodes of No Dogs.

QUESTION 4

MAGGIE: Incredible. The next question is a pretty loaded one, fanzines act as a first person account of scenes in a lot of ways, but this imperfect journalism is almost gonzo in nature. From the scathing reviews of Steve Albini, rest in peace, in the zine *Matter* to the utopic ambitions of John Foster's *OpMag*, how do you think that fanzines walk between gossip, criticism, and scene culture?

MARCUS: Man. We use *Search and Destroy* a lot.

CAROLINA: We use a lot of the zines as gospel, to be honest. I read a lot of reviews, music journalists, and music critics. Almost every time, the zines have more honest reviews. It's like why would I look up a Top 15 *Variety* thing about the best hair salons in my city? No, I'm gonna ask the real people. That's what the zines are for me. I will actually take that as gospel, but grain of salt and all that stuff.

MARCUS: But, you never know who had a personal vendetta, like, "Fucking KK Barrett was a dick to me last week, so I'm gonna say, 'The Screamers show sucked.'"

CAROLINA: Yeah but they don't because The Screamers are awesome! But sometimes that does happen. There's interpersonal relations, so it's important to look into that. We look into everything. The thing about the zines is that they don't have the kind of political agenda a lot of media has. People actually in the scene don't benefit, other than making art. I believe them more.

MARCUS: It's more honest. We were talking about this before, there's something that that Carolina always says, "There's really no such thing as truth, only consensus."

CAROLINA: And that's not even truth.

MARCUS: Consensus is very difficult to find. Then, if you're going off of consensus, you may end up creating an entirely new story from 10 other stories. Zines have that on the ground feeling. They're there because they want to be, because they love it.

CAROLINA: There's passion behind it and I think that is fantastic. As I said, I believe them more than *Melody Maker* sometimes. Or almost every time. Okay, every time!

MARCUS: Oh, very much so.

MADELEINE: *Melody Maker's* takes are oof.

MARCUS: Oof. The worst.

CAROLINA: We did shit on *Melody Maker* a lot.

MARCUS: Cause they're always wrong! *Melody Maker* was always wrong. I do love *Creem*.

CAROLINA: Lenny Kaye. He was an early writer for *Creem*. It's people who love music or love the art of everything that they come across. Those are the people you should follow. More than anything.

MARCUS: Like Patti Smith writing for *Crawdaddy*.

QUESTION 5

MAGGIE: So many people have done that in the past. Just using your free time for something that you feel so passionate and is so incredibly rewarding. How do we propose longevity to our passions while also pursuing our own careers?

MARCUS: I mean that's what you got to do. You always follow the passion in life, it's the only path.

CAROLINA: That's what we said for *The Replacement* series. We talked about Paul Westerberg. He was a janitor, but during his off time he would write song lyrics. That's exactly what I did during my day. I mean, I didn't write song lyrics but I wrote jokes at my day job. I was a pastry chef for a restaurant/hotel in Midtown. I worked back of the house for \$8 an hour. I also worked on the weekends, I coached kid's soccer for like 10 years. Birthday parties, I was the clown. Doing those jobs actually makes you into the person that you are today. I'm taking this from Steve Martin, "Everything that you learn and everything that you do, you will eventually use."

MARCUS: When I was first moving to New York, one of the first, maybe the second or third jobs (I kept getting fired) was a janitor job because it was very easy. But what I did during that job was listen to podcasts, all day. It was like 2008. The very early days of podcasting were hardcore history, *This American Life*, *Radio lab*, *Savage Love* with Dan Savage.

CAROLINA: I love Dan Savage.

MARCUS: *Savage Love*, especially in the early days, was incredible. I learned so much about podcasting. Just cleaning the floors, and toilets, and trying to pretend like I was working. Without that janitor job I don't know if we'd be here.

CAROLINA: Never have a plan B is what we're telling everybody. Work those dead end jobs, baby!

MARCUS: Yeah, work those dead end jobs till you die!

MADELEINE: I was a PM pastry/bread chef too, actually. I was all alone in the bakery and I had nothing better to do than listen to my headphones. That's how I audio-booked *Our Band Could Be Your Life* and like three Chuck Klosterman books. I relate to that experience so heavily.

MARCUS: I love Chuck Klosterman so much. He's got my favorite take, which is the last time everybody agreed on anything was "Hey Ya!." That was the last time everybody in the world was like, "This thing is good," and we haven't been able to agree on anything since.

MADELEINE: My favorite take of his is, "Don't listen to music critics; all they do is review their mail."

CAROLINA: I don't listen to critics at all. For anything. Especially our critics. Fuck them.



MAGGIE: This is where I'm going to shout out Madeleine because she came up with the name PTO and the concept. It's called Paid

Time Off because this is what we do in our free time to feel like people. I totally agree with you. I get mad at my dead end jobs and then I look back at them like the good old days. I am a master lollygagger who finds a way to do something creative. Maddy taught me to always carry around a notebook, write everything down, and eavesdrop. It's just fun watching it come together.

CAROLINA: That's smart. Lou Reed did the same thing. Pretty much everyone did the same thing. I did the same thing. We all worked our jobs. I was making ice cream, I was writing down stuff. I did not care. I was doing the bare minimum. Just do the bare minimum. Don't get fired unless you're Marcus.

MARCUS: I learned how to not get fired, eventually.

CAROLINA: And then you spend that time being as productive as humanly possible while you're getting paid and that is most amazing feeling ever. Until you start getting paid to do what you want to do.

MARCUS: And if you do keep getting fired from your dead end jobs, just try to find the central theme of why you keep getting fired.

CAROLINA: And then make your own job.

MARCUS: Eventually, I found the ones that were best ones for me. Manual labor jobs, like janitor, dishwasher, warehouse worker, stuff where I didn't have to talk to people and there were no numbers involved. Once I found those, then I didn't have to worry about getting fired and spent all my free time making the job that I actually wanted. That's been my goal my entire life, to work a job that I didn't hate.

CAROLINA: I made sure never to get promoted from my job.

MARCUS: Oh, never get promoted to your dead end job. Never take the promotion!

CAROLINA: 11 years I spent and I never got promoted once! Never end up in middle management! It will be hell and it's just a little bit more money. You deserve better.

QUESTION 6

MADELEINE: I guess to finish it off, this is a little bit of a selfish question, but as people who lived in New York for so long, I was wondering if you had any "You gotta go there" recs in terms of music history. We just started a record store series where we're going in and interviewing local record store owners and asking how long they've been around and why record stores are so important right now. So if you have any record store recs, that would be lovely.



MARCUS: Record Grouch. Go see my man, Brian. Tell him I said, "Hello." It's in Greenpoint. Our studio used to be around the corner from Record Grouch. I spent a lot of time there. And Academy over in Greenpoint was always pretty solid, too. If you want a place that's a very cool New York thing, what is Lamont Young's thing called, the House of Dreams?

CAROLINA: Oh, yeah, Dreamhouse. Go to Dreamhouse, downtown. It is amazing. I don't know if you have to call ahead or anything like that, but you can't wear your shoes. It is a whole kind of, I don't want to say hippie, but it is a hippie feeling.

MARCUS: No, it's definitely a hippie thing, yeah.

CAROLINA: Yoko Ono was there, everybody was there. You kind of just sit there on pillows, and you stare at lava lamp type art. So, actually, it is a hippie dreamland, now that I think about it.

MARCUS: I mean, it's a drone project.

CAROLINA: It's like a meditation.

MARCUS: It's across the street from the Soho Grand in Chelsea. And it's an actual apartment where they just set up these massive, huge, huge speakers that play this continuous drone piece 24 hours a day.

CAROLINA: And you have to sit there. After a while, you meditate into that same drone, which is what Lamont Young plays. And he played a lot with Tony Conrad and John Cale, who famously was the viola artist of Velvet Underground. So, this is some real avant-garde shit.

MARCUS: The way they set it up, the different ways you tilt your head can give you different notes and different sounds. It's an incredible experience. But I'd recommend that. You kind of reach back and you feel a little bit of a connection, much more than going to the fucking John Varvatos store and being like, "This used to be CBGB."

CAROLINA: Or you can go to the Bronx, 1520 Sedgwick Avenue and check out the first hip-hop show that ever happened in New York, maybe, probably. And Queens, where they recorded a lot of Beastie Boys stuff. It's where Kiss came from, as well as the New York Dolls.

MARCUS: It's so funny to me that Ridgewood is cool now. Like, that's so fucking strange. Now, you know, TV Eye's out there, which is fucking great. Our buddy Alex is a bartender there. Do you know Alex Moore?

MADELEINE: No, I don't but I love TV Eye. It's one of the few places that still does \$15 shows.

MARCUS: Alex is the large man with long hair and goatee.

CAROLINA: Oh, great. Now everyone's gonna go see Alex Moore. He would actually love it. Please, actually, make him the cover.

MARCUS: Yeah, please. Best bartender in Ridgewood.

MADELEINE: Incredible. That's it for our questions I just really wanted to say, I feel like for so many people, you meet, like, the guy in college that introduces you to so many people. Like, new music that opens up your world, and for Maggie and I in a lot of ways, you guys were our, our guy. So we wanted to thank you for that.

MARCUS: Thank you so much for the kind words.

CAROLINA: We'll let you know when we're in town and stuff like that you never know we might be at TV Eye with Alex and be like you remember Alex!

