

[00:00:00] **John Moe:** The following episode contains discussion of self-harm, suicide, and suicidal ideation. John, you asked me. You asked me, John, why do you have so many musicians, so many singer-songwriters on your show? Surely, John, the world is filled with mostly people who don't write personal confessional songs and then strum guitars and sing those words for an audience or onto a recording for distribution. Why, John, you asked me. Why is this such a thing on your mental health show, this singer-songwriter thing? Why do you do that?

Well, thank you for asking, and I'll tell you why I do that on this program. It's *Depresh Mode*. I'm John Moe. I'm glad you're here. Oh, look! Here comes another musician now! It's Rhett Miller.

[00:00:51] **Transition:** Spirited acoustic guitar.

[00:01:00] **John Moe:** There are a few reasons why I put so many musicians on *Depresh Mode*. One of them is just that I like music, and I consider writing music and playing music to be a kind of sorcery, a sort of alchemy. It's magical and neat. Another reason we book musicians on the show is that we can place samples of the guest's work on the show in a way that we couldn't if we were talking to, say, a plumber. Nothing against the creative work of plumbers. It's just really hard to convey that on audio. This is a little easier.

It's a new song called “Runaway” by this week's guest, Lydia Loveless.

[00:01:38] **Music:** “Runaway” from the album *Nothing's Gonna Stand in My Way Again* by Lydia Loveless.

Tripping on my legs

'Cause I can't keep up your pace

You like to run, I just like to run away

Don't like to run, I just like to run away

(Music fades out.)

[00:02:07] **John Moe:** And another reason why we have a lot of musicians is that there's something about music that can connect to people in a deep and profound way, make you feel less alone, like the thoughts that you have—one might unfairly call them crazy thoughts—are in fact shared thoughts, shared experiences. And we're all about sharing experiences on this show. It's *Depresh Mode*. I'm John Moe. I'm glad you're—I've already done that part.

Lydia Loveless's music has been classified as alt country. Wikipedia says her music combines pop music, classic country, honkytonk, and punk rock. And while I'm not in the habit of quoting Wikipedia, they did a pretty good job on that one.

Lydia, who uses she/they pronouns, is about to release a new album called, *Nothing's Gonna Stand in My Way Again*. It's her eighth album, going back to 2010, and it marks a return to Bloodshot Records—a label they parted ways with under difficult circumstances that we'll get into a little bit later. And this new album is bracing. It gets pretty raw. Lydia has been dealing with depression and suicidal ideation for a long time, and when she writes music, it's all there.

[00:03:19] **Transition:** Thoughtful acoustic guitar.

[00:03:28] **John Moe:** I was jotting down lyrics as I listened. “Gotta make a living, but I don't have the will to live anymore.”

(Lydia confirms with a laugh.)

“Every time I drive on the highway, I want to jerk the wheel to the right. Every time I'm on this sidewalk, I want to step into the road.”

(Still laughing, Lydia confirms.)

What are we to make of those?! I know you don't want to explain “this is what this song is about”, and it's not as simple as an A to B correlation, but what are we to make of those?

[00:03:58] **Lydia Loveless:** It's funny, the—yeah, the very suicidal lines, those come barreling in like—

[00:04:04] **John Moe:** They're hard to miss. *(Laughs.)*

[00:04:06] **Lydia Loveless:** *(Inaudible.)* It's like the first line is “I want to die”. But the first time my sister heard that, she was like, “These are horrible lyrics. How can you say such things?” And I was just like I'm just being honest. So, yeah, the line about like not having the will to live, like it's funny, 'cause that's from “Sex and Money”, which is like probably the pop-iest song on the record. But it's all about, you know, feeling like a failure in my career at that moment. I literally wrote it on tour. And I just felt like—you know, it was our first tour back after covid, and I just felt like a complete failure. I was completely miserable. I was throwing up all day, 'cause I was hungover. I was ashamed, but I had a really catchy song idea. *(Laughs.)* So—

[00:04:48] **John Moe:** A riff is a riff, you know?

[00:04:49] **Lydia Loveless:** I made that work. And as far as the other line, the song “Runaway”—yeah, I was just—I was realizing every time I went home to my relationship, I was just completely unhappy. You know, my partner and I would fight, and I was just realizing I am so unhappy. There's a line from that song. “Every time I go to the airport I try to miss my flight.” And I truly was at a point in my life where I would be on my way to fly home, and I would just have a complete meltdown and want to like switch flights and go to like Kansas and start a new life. *(Laughs.)* And I was like my gut is trying to tell me something. I need to make a change right now.

[00:05:33] **John Moe:** Yeah. When you don't want to go home, that's a...

[00:05:36] **Lydia Loveless:** Yeah. There's not really a worse feeling than that, honestly.

[00:05:39] **John Moe:** This wasn't your first experience with I guess what we'd call depression, with major depressive disorder.

[00:05:46] **Lydia Loveless:** Oh yeah. Yeah. I've pretty much been depressed my entire life. So. (*Laughs.*)

[00:05:50] **John Moe:** Well, let's go back to the beginning then. Where did you grow up?

[00:05:55] **Lydia Loveless:** So, I grew up on an 80-acre farm in this place called Newcastle, Ohio—like a little northeast of Columbus, which is where I am now. And yeah, extremely isolated. I think that's where a lot of the loneliness in me comes from, just—you know, being in a very small town, not a lot of people that I had anything in common with. 'Cause my family was, you know, a bunch of like intellectual farm folk that liked to watch musicals and get drunk and shoot guns. (*Laughs.*) I don't know! It was just—I didn't feel like (*inaudible*).

[00:06:31] **John Moe:** That does sound pretty intellectual, I gotta say.

[00:06:34] **Lydia Loveless:** Oh yeah, for sure. (*Laughs.*)

[00:06:38] **John Moe:** What is—and is Loveless your actual last name?

[00:06:44] **Lydia Loveless:** It is not. I wish it were. (*Laughs.*)

[00:06:44] **John Moe:** Okay. I was gonna say that would be—you know, for someone who writes sad songs, that's just—that's pretty brilliant.

[00:06:53] **Lydia Loveless:** That was a name I came up with when I was 14 and haven't been able to shake. So. (*Laughs.*)

[00:06:56] **John Moe:** Well, that's fine. When did depression enter your life?

[00:07:02] **Lydia Loveless:** I mean, I guess just as a child, I would definitely have feelings of deep emptiness and sadness. I mean, I can remember that as young as like being like seven years old, but my family is very like—I don't wanna hurt anyone's feelings or make them sound bad—but we're the kind of family that like if someone's bored, it's a reason to be mad at them. They're like not trying hard enough. And I always assumed that what I was experiencing was boredom, and I just needed to find a way to entertain myself. And I realized, you know, when I got older that I was just deeply sad. (*Laughs.*) That's what it was.

[00:07:39] **John Moe:** Why does that make you laugh?

[00:07:41] **Lydia Loveless:** I don't know. Uh, 'cause it's awkward to talk about. (*Laughs.*)

[00:07:44] **John Moe:** Okay, alright. That's fair. So, you were sad, but you mistook it for boredom?

[00:07:52] **Lydia Loveless:** Yes, yes. And I think that's, yeah—been kind of a theme in my life. Determining when I am sad versus maybe I just need a snack or to go work on a project, you know.

[00:08:05] **John Moe:** Right, right. Was mental health a thing that was talked about in your house growing up?

[00:08:12] **Lydia Loveless:** Not particularly. You know, my family is very religious, so often times that coincides with not really believing in therapy. Instead, you take it to God, or you take it to your priest or whatever. But I mean, over the years, my family has become very open to talking about mental health, because it's affected all of us. We've had, you know, a pretty healthy dose of trauma in all our lives. And there there's a lot of mental illness in my family. So, it's become way more talked about. You know, medication is no longer a bad word. Therapy is a cool thing now. So, that's been interesting to watch over the years. But in my childhood, no, it was not really a thing that we discussed.

[00:09:02] **John Moe:** So, when did you start figuring out that this wasn't boredom, and when did you start getting—or did you start getting help for it?

[00:09:10] **Lydia Loveless:** Mm-hm. I didn't go to therapy until I was like 22, but I was very interested in reading about mental health and psychology. I just didn't have access to it. But I struggled a lot just throughout my teenage years. You know, there were a lot of things going on that sort of caused me to spiral into a lot of depressive episodes. And ultimately, I was on tour in Scandinavia when I was 22, and I definitely should have been having the time of my life. And I was married, and I was doing pretty well, but I just—I felt completely isolated. I didn't have anyone that I could really talk to, and I ended up having a really bad breakdown.

I completely ruined a show, because I was just an absolute mess and ended up hurting myself really bad. And when I got home from Europe, I just told my manager like, “Look, I've been on tour for a million days in the past couple years. I am really unhappy, and I'm gonna quit music and maybe kill myself if I don't get into therapy and like take a little bit of a step back from this for a moment.”

[00:10:28] **John Moe:** This is when you were 22?

[00:10:30] **Lydia Loveless:** Mm-hm. And he actually listened to me and took me seriously. And I found a counselor through him. It was sort of like a rock and roll punk rock counseling situation, but it was the first time that I'd ever spoken to anyone about the things that were bothering me and how unhappy I was. And it helped me a lot.

[00:10:50] **John Moe:** What is a rock and roll punk rock counselor?

[00:10:54] **Lydia Loveless:** (*Laughs.*) It's where your manager says—

[00:10:57] **John Moe:** And when can I book an appointment with one?

[00:10:59] **Lydia Loveless:** Yeah. It was basically—I was just having like tea with this guy. His name is Bela Koe-Krompecher, and he just put out a book actually, called *Love and Photosynthesis*, and he's kind of just—he is a counselor and a social worker, but I didn't have really any healthcare access. So, it was just me meeting up with him and getting tea and him asking me what was wrong and me having no idea how to tell him what was wrong for like the first few weeks. But eventually, it ended up being very beneficial for me to have that relationship. So.

[00:11:35] **John Moe:** So, what happened over the course of those weeks where it started to turn around? What change happened?

[00:11:42] **Lydia Loveless:** You know, I've always been a very shy, awkward person. So, a lot of it was just me learning how to speak to another human that I wasn't in a band with or married to. And the other half was me accepting that—I think my biggest hurdle was someone asking me what was wrong and then telling me why I was doing the things I was doing really irritated me, because I thought to myself like, “Well, I know why I'm doing these things. I need to know how to stop doing them.” And I didn't really realize that that learning why you're doing something is the first step to being able to stop doing detrimental things.

[00:12:22] **John Moe:** So, then did the detrimental thing stop?

[00:12:26] **Lydia Loveless:** Not necessarily. I think a lot of what was making me very unhappy is that I was married to a bandmate, and I had no space for myself. And I felt like I could never get out of that situation. I felt like if I left my marriage, I would lose my career. And I would lose everything I had worked for. And in looking back now, I'm like, “Well, I was the breadwinner, (*laughing*) and I was the cool, badass, rock and roller in that situation.” But I didn't know how to leave, and I really had to hear myself say that out loud that I wanted to leave. And it took about three more years of talking it out and having people tell me that I was strong, and I had worth.

[00:13:10] **John Moe:** So, between a marriage when you were young and then this long relationship that you were just in—you're not very old now, so you've really been in these relationships a very long time.

[00:13:23] **Lydia Loveless:** Yes. Yeah. That's been the biggest thing I've learned the last two years is that, you know, I really didn't know myself, and I didn't know how to be an adult. And kind of my first reaction to being single for the first year was, “I need to find someone to take care of me and help me with these problems.” (*Chuckles.*) And when that didn't appear in exactly the way I wanted it to, I was like, “Oh, I guess I'll keep toughing it out.” And I'm just now getting to the point now where I'm like this is great! I'm—you know, I live in a complete dump. Horrible. I don't have air conditioning. But I can do what I want to do, and no one's yelling at me. And it's cool that I have to pay my own bills. (*Laughs.*) Little things like that.

[00:14:07] **John Moe:** And you're back in Columbus now you said.

(Lydia confirms.)

So, it seems like life is pretty different in a lot of ways. Like, you're not the rockstar in a relationship as much anymore. You're still a rockstar, don't get me wrong.

(They chuckle.)

But what has that done for your depression, this big life change?

[00:14:31] **Lydia Loveless:** Yeah. I mean, it's been a little difficult to come back home. I think when you move back home from being elsewhere, the impression is that you failed at something. But for me, I wanted to come back, because my friend started a recording studio and said that I could work there after I finished my recording program. And that's pretty much what I've been doing for the last two years is trying to get really good at engineering and producing. So, I've been sort of just like completely rebuilding my life from scratch. Basically, since covid, the music business has not been exactly booming either, but it's given me a lot of time to decompress and figure out what I want my career and my life to look like, which is exciting. It's boring and really hard sometimes, but it's exciting.

[00:15:25] **Music:** Relaxed acoustic guitar.

[00:15:28] **John Moe:** Just ahead, Lydia Loveless tries to figure out what life is like without a partner, with some careful management of mental health, and with some new pronouns. As we go to break, here's more music off *Nothing's Gonna Stand in My Way Again*. The song's called "Sex and Money."

[00:15:46] **Music:** "Sex and Money" from the album *Nothing's Gonna Stand in My Way Again* by Lydia Loveless.

All I think about is sex and money

I don't care how I get there

I just wanna be somebody

All I think about is sex and money

I don't care how you get here

I just wanna be with you, honey

(Music fades out.)

[00:16:10] **Promo:**

(Fantastical tinkling and sparkle sounds.)

Narrator: *(Echoing.)* Somewhere, in an alternate universe where Hollywood is smarter.

(Harp chords fade into applause.)

Presenter: And the Emmy nominees for Outstanding Comedy Series are *Jetpackula*, *Airport Marriott*, *Throuple*, *Dear America*, *We've Seen You Naked*. And *Allah in the Family*.

(Applause fades into harp chords.)

Narrator: *(Echoing.)* In our stupid universe, you can't see any of these shows. But you can listen to them on *Dead Pilots Society*.

(Rock music fades in.)

The podcast that brings you hilarious comedy pilots that the networks and streamers bought but never made. Journey to the alternate television universe of *Dead Pilots Society* on MaximumFun.org.

(Music fades out.)

[00:16:57] **Transition:** Relaxed acoustic guitar.

[00:17:00] **John Moe:** Back with singer-songwriter Lydia Loveless.

(Music ends.)

Something that I read on your Wikipedia page and that we were advised about is that you use she/her/they/them pronouns and define yourself as genderfluid. When did that knowledge come to you?

[00:17:25] **Lydia Loveless:** That's something I've definitely felt since childhood. I don't think I had any idea how to come to terms with it when I was a kid. But you know, I've been fairly out for the last, I would say, five or so years within my personal life. I mean, there's a lot of people who aren't as accepting of it, and they might be my family members. *(Chuckles.)* So, it's a little scary to talk about, but I think for me, accepting how I feel and how I present myself and how I want to live my life has been very freeing for me as well.

[00:18:09] **John Moe:** And what has that done for your depression—coming out about that?

[00:18:16] **Lydia Loveless:** It's been a little terrifying, but it feels good. I like how I feel. I like the swagger that I feel now. I just feel generally better. It's some—when you feel that

way your entire life and you can finally have access to language and acceptance, it feels pretty fucking great. So. (*Chuckles.*)

[00:18:40] **John Moe:** Yeah. When did you come out about that?

[00:18:43] **Lydia Loveless:** I pretty much only told a select group of friends, and I didn't have like a big moment of coming out. I think a lot of people who know me already knew, but lately—it's been like the last year that I've been telling people that aren't, you know, super close to me, and I've been more public about it.

[00:19:05] **John Moe:** I'm kind of a lyrics nerd. Like, when I listen to music, I'm like, “Yeah, there's melodies in there, but let me at those words.” And I noticed that the name of the album is *Nothing's Gonna Stand in My Way Again*, which sounds very bold and, you know, self-help book kind of thing. But the full lyric it's taken from is, “Now that I'm dead, nothing's gonna stand in my way again.”

[00:19:35] **Lydia Loveless:** (*Laughs.*) I like that you observed that. Yeah. It is kind of meant to be coy. You know, this record really does feel like a comeback for me and like escaping from a very difficult few years and situation. So, in a way, yes, it is a badass “don't fuck with me” statement, but when you think about the entire lyric in context, it is about—you know, I wrote that song when I felt like I was wasting my life, and I wasn't doing what I wanted to be doing, and I wasn't where I wanted to be. And I wrote it about, you know, the concept that we're all going to die and go to this magical land where we get a second chance, and we get to start over. (*Chuckles.*) And that's possibly not going to happen. I mean, I don't—I'm not going to claim that I know what happens when we die, but this is pretty much the only chance I'm going to get to make myself happy and feel good.

So, I guess I was in a way yelling at myself that I was going to wait until I was dead to make decisions that would make me happy.

[00:20:42] **John Moe:** Oh! See, I was reading it a different way. I thought now, now that I'm dead, you know nothing's gonna happen at all.

[00:20:50] **Lydia Loveless:** I mean, that's also—yeah, I mean there's a lot of layers to it. You can look at it in a lot of ways. Pretty much all of my records have some fairly suicidal songs, and that is definitely one that touches on that.

[00:21:04] **John Moe:** Why do you keep coming back to suicidal themes?

[00:21:08] **Lydia Loveless:** I just think about it a lot. (*Laughs.*) I'm sorry. It's my comfort thought. That's really—sorry. I'm trying not to laugh about all these (*inaudible; laughing*).

[00:21:17] **John Moe:** No, go ahead and laugh. It's—you know, if that helps you deal with the awkwardness, then go ahead and laugh.

[00:21:24] **Lydia Loveless:** Suicide's been a big part of my life. I've known people who have died by suicide. I've had a lot of family members use it as a threat over the years. So, it's

just—it's something that I think about a lot. I think about death a lot, and I think the main thing that I think is that I want—oh, this is gonna get real dark. Sorry. (*Laughs.*)

[00:21:45] **John Moe:** You've come to the right place, my friend.

[00:21:48] **Lydia Loveless:** The world is so fucked up. Like, I want to go out on my terms. That doesn't necessarily mean I'm going to, and I don't want anyone to worry about me, but the world's a fucked up place. So, I really don't want anyone—I don't wanna get taken out at Kroger by a gunman. So yeah, it's always in the back of my mind, I guess.

[00:22:10] **John Moe:** Is it cathartic to write and sing about that kind of thing? Is there some healing that goes along with that?

[00:22:18] **Lydia Loveless:** Yeah, absolutely. I mean, it doesn't make anything go away, but saying things out loud is always good.

[00:22:25] **John Moe:** I had a conversation with a friend of mine who was recalling a conversation with a neurologist that he knows, or a neuroscientist, who says that there's science behind the idea that listening to sad songs can make you feel better. You know, it's counterintuitive that listening to Patsy Klein sing about all her pain can make you feel better. But there's stuff that backs that up. Is that the case with you and your listening as well as your music making?

[00:23:03] **Lydia Loveless:** Yeah, I think so. I mean, for me, songwriting is like 90% about lyrics and things that I need to get out. So, and then when you put melody behind really sad thoughts and it makes them beautiful, it does wonders for me. And listening to other people and being able to hear things that you've been through, because it's the human experience—that that always feels better.

[00:23:32] **John Moe:** What do you like to listen to?

[00:23:35] **Lydia Loveless:** I think someone that lyrically blows me away lately is Indigo De Souza. I think she's incredible. But lately, have been stuck on a terrible early 2000s/'90s playlist, because I'm depressed, and I'm not feeling creative. (*Laughs.*) So.

[00:23:53] **John Moe:** What's on your playlist?

[00:23:55] **Lydia Loveless:** Oh, you know, just—it's just one of those terrible like LFO “Steal My Sunshine” bullshit playlists that I put on when I'm driving and don't wanna dissociate, and I just wanna listen to happy, ridiculous shit from my childhood.

[00:24:13] **John Moe:** Okay, so kind of the opposite of listening to the—

[00:24:16] **Lydia Loveless:** Yes, so I'm proving our theory wrong about the sad songs. But yeah. I go through different phases where I'm very exploratory with music, and then I go

through weeks where I'm just like, "I don't want to think about shit. Just play like "What a Man" and take me away, baby Jesus.

[00:24:36] **John Moe:** Are you religious?

[00:24:39] **Lydia Loveless:** Not exactly. I mean, I grew up extremely religious, so that definitely put me through the mental gymnastics of, you know, overthinking everything. But I don't know if I would necessarily call myself an atheist, but I definitely don't believe that God is a White man that is literally in the sky (*chuckling*) going to take us all to the golden roads of heaven. But I have a decent amount of Buddhism in me too. So, that's kind of been a big thing for me since I was about 17. So.

[00:25:11] **John Moe:** And what does that—what has that meant for this depression that you've talked about having for a very long time and have still presently as we speak?

[00:25:22] **Lydia Loveless:** Yeah. I think meditation and particularly things like the loving kindness meditation help me to—you know, I have a lot of—I don't know if I'm an angry person, but I have been through a lot of shit—particularly with my family in regards to mental health and trauma. And I don't want to walk around pissed off at my parents all the time. So, being able to have an understanding and a compassion for them has been a very big deal for me. Otherwise, I might be angry. (*Laughs.*)

[00:25:58] **John Moe:** Are they still pretty religious then?

[00:26:01] **Lydia Loveless:** Yes. Yes, absolutely. And I don't fault them for that. It's just we have different perspectives on the matter for sure.

[00:26:10] **John Moe:** So, the new record is on Bloodshot Records, and you've been—you've returned to Bloodshot records after some time away and a series of incidents involving sexual assault and harassment from somebody formerly—I guess around that label is...?

[00:26:31] **Lydia Loveless:** Associated with but not affiliated with.

[00:26:33] **John Moe:** Associated with. Right.

[00:26:35] **Lydia Loveless:** I have to say that, or someone will at me. (*Laughs.*)

[00:26:36] **John Moe:** Right, right. Which would seem to really throw a wrench into the creative process, into the life of someone who makes music. What did that situation do for your mental health and for your music?

[00:26:54] **Lydia Loveless:** Uh, going through it or getting out of it?

[00:26:56] **John Moe:** Well, both.

[00:26:59] **Lydia Loveless:** Yeah, I mean, going through it basically destroyed me. It destroyed my self-esteem. I was told by people at the time that were, you know, actively stealing from me and stealing my joy and stealing my autonomy by, you know, assaulting me that I wasn't working hard enough, and I just wasn't profitable. And I was working so hard. I was on tour all the time. I felt surely that I was selling records, and it turns out that I was. So, it really broke my brain for a really long time, and coming out of it was even harder, being told that I destroyed 25 years of hard work for people and that I was throwing people under the bus when I felt like I had done nothing wrong.

Please don't sue me for saying any of this, (*laughs*) but yeah, it was the worst thing I've ever been through to be—to finally come out about it, and maybe I didn't go about it in the best way. Maybe I had, you know, had a bottle of wine and tweeted my way into a nightmare. But I didn't feel like I was wrong. I felt like I was doing the right thing and trying to protect other people from going through what I went through, and I kind of got nothing but shit for it for a very long time. But what I learned was I'm making art because I have to, and I want to, and I love it. And it doesn't matter if at the end of the day some fucking two-bit label owner wants to tell me that I am not good enough. I'm still going to do it. And I'm gonna put my heart and soul into it. That was a lot. Sorry! (*Laughs.*)

[00:28:46] **John Moe:** No, I mean, so this happened. And this was, like you say, a person affiliated with the label and doing a bunch of really creepy things. And I don't think we need to go into a lot of detail on what those creepy things were, because I think by this point in our cultural moment, we understand.

[00:29:05] **Lydia Loveless:** We all know. (*Chuckles.*)

[00:29:05] **John Moe:** We all know what goes along with that. What did that do to your sense of self and how you thought of yourself? Which was a status that seems like it was already in some jeopardy.

[00:29:18] **Lydia Loveless:** Yeah, I mean, I was already—it's hard to explain. You know, I was talking to a friend of mine the other day, and we were talking about how sexualized we were as kids. And when that happens to you, it gives you a really skewed sense of identity. Because it makes you feel like no matter what you do—because when you're a child and you don't want to be sexualized and you aren't trying to be sexual and someone sexualizes you, it makes you realize that you—there's nothing you can do to keep predators from viewing you that way, but it feels like your fault. Um, I'm gonna stumble over my words a lot with this (*inaudible*) concept. But it's so—you know, even though I was, you know, technically an adult. I mean, I was 19 when this person entered my life, so I still very much felt like a kid. I just felt like, oh, this is happening again, because I am bad, and I make these things happen to me.

You know, I had—as a child, a family member sexualized me quite a lot. And his wife told me that if I didn't behave the way I did, it wouldn't happen. And I was six years old, so I had no idea what I had done to invite that into my life. And that's something—that's a statement that I think about all the time. You know, if I didn't act a certain way or present myself a certain way, maybe I could prevent this from happening. But you know, something I'm

definitely realizing is that it isn't my fault, and it's nothing that I'm doing. It's just that some people really fucking suck. So, yeah.

[00:31:01] **John Moe:** Yeah. When you write music, when you write a song that you will then perform, are you—do we read this as “these are my real thoughts; this is what I'm thinking right now; this is my point of view” or are there characters in it? Or are there, you know, versions of you that—different versions that might be reporting to the world from different songs? Where is the you in these things?

[00:31:30] **Lydia Loveless:** There's always a lot of me, but I would say within a lot of my songs there is a dialogue. You know, one verse could be from my perspective, and the second one could be from someone else's. So, it's difficult to pinpoint exactly which songs. But yeah, there are definitely characters, and there are songs written for people to be from their perspective and also for them, and some of it is just all me. Yeah. (*Chuckles.*) It's difficult to explain, yeah.

[00:32:05] **John Moe:** Yeah. I mean, you mentioned if people are hearing a song and saying, “Is that about me? Is that about me? Are you writing about me?” How do you deal with—how do you deal with that? Do you need to like publish a list of what's about who or what?

[00:32:20] **Lydia Loveless:** (*Laughing.*) I could! I guess I could do that. I like to keep mystery to things, because you know, there are songs that I love, and I don't want them ruined for me by the songwriter telling me how I'm supposed to take it. You know? It's important to me to let people relate to things on their own terms. Not to say that I'll never explain a song or where it was coming from, but it's nice to let people come to the song and feel how they need to feel.

[00:32:50] **John Moe:** Is there a part of you that wants to make LFO type music or something like “Steal My Sunshine” by Len.

(*Lydia confirms through laughter.*)

Like, something really damn poppy.

[00:33:07] **Lydia Loveless:** Yeah, I've wanted to do that for a long time!

[00:33:10] **John Moe:** Do you know how?!

[00:33:11] **Lydia Loveless:** No, not really! I mean, so I have a song that—oh god, it's in my holster, and it's terrible, but it's called “Baseball Butts”. And it's a song I wrote after going to see the Cubs, and it got stuck in my head. And it's about being at the ball game and looking at baseball butts. And my partner at the time walked into the house, and I was in the midst of recording it, and he was like, “What is going on here?” (*They giggle.*)

And I was just like, “Tell no one.” But I ended up putting it on SoundCloud. I guess if you look really hard, you can probably find it. But I basically just didn't tell anyone except my friends. And then, they started playing it at like bars. And now every summer I get like four

to five text messages a month of just a baseball player's butt. And it's just become a huge thing. So, I would like to make music that brings joy to people in that way. (*Giggles.*) For sure.

[00:34:01] **John Moe:** So, why is "Baseball Butts" on SoundCloud but not on this new album?

[00:34:08] **Lydia Loveless:** (*Laughing.*) Oh, it's so bad! So, my brother's a drummer and I like was programming the drums, like without a click, and just sort of playing everything manually. And my brother heard, and he was like, "I can't listen to this 'cause it's so offbeat and like terrible and I hate it."

(*They chuckle.*)

So, yeah, it might need some touching up now that I know a little more about recording. But yeah. (*Laughs.*)

[00:34:29] **John Moe:** Even as we talk right now, our producers are heading over to SoundCloud and downloading "Baseball Butts" as quickly as they possibly can.

[00:34:37] **Lydia Loveless:** If you can find it, I'll be extremely impressed. (*Inaudible.*)

[00:34:39] **John Moe:** We have good researchers. Yeah.

(*They laugh.*)

What do you hope people get from this new album?

[00:34:48] **Lydia Loveless:** Well, I really want people to think the songs are catchy. And that's kind of my number one goal. But we live in like such a bleak time right now, especially for artists. And everything just feels very dismal. And I guess what I want people to get is a lot of the deeper tones on maybe a song like "Sex and Money" and find maybe a sense of humanity again. I know I'm not gonna save the human race with this record, but I do hope it makes people think and feel things. I hope it brings a little bit of joy, but I do wanna make people cry too.

[00:35:32] **John Moe:** Yeah. Why do you wanna make people cry?

[00:35:34] **Lydia Loveless:** Uh, 'cause it feels good. (*Laughs.*)

[00:35:36] **John Moe:** It feels good to cry or to make them cry?

[00:35:40] **Lydia Loveless:** No, it feels good to cry, I think. Yes. (*Laughs.*) If you're feeling things, that's good.

[00:35:47] **John Moe:** Yeah. Yeah. So, how is your depression doing today as we talk?

[00:35:54] **Lydia Loveless:** You know, today I feel really good. I met up with my friend last night, and we were talking about the crazy things that have happened to us recently and how, particularly in—you know, a year ago I was desperate to find a relationship that was going to fix me and, and now I'm just really excited about my work again. I feel really free to make the art that I want to make. I feel like I have a good support system, and that makes me really happy. I'm a little terrified of the whole concept of people listening to this and hearing me talk about my suicidal ideation and sadness. But I think that feels good too. I really feel like I have a future again for the first time in a really long time. So, I feel good.

[00:36:42] **John Moe:** Do you think if covid had never happened, if there had never been a pandemic, you'd be in the same place you are now?

[00:36:50] **Lydia Loveless:** No, absolutely not. I think I'd probably still be coasting.

[00:36:55] **John Moe:** What do you mean coasting?

[00:36:58] **Lydia Loveless:** Um, I'd be letting someone take care of me and not confronting my own bullshit. I think.

[00:37:03] **John Moe:** So, how did covid change that?

[00:37:07] **Lydia Loveless:** I lost everything that I had worked really hard for, which kind of happened a couple years before when I blew up my life leaving my label. But I really had to confront what I wanted out of life and why I was unhappy. Because I couldn't go anywhere. I couldn't escape myself, and I couldn't escape my relationship that had felt like a safety net until then. And then, when sort of the veneer was ripped off, I had to confront my lack of independence. My codependency, really.

[00:37:43] **John Moe:** Was that done with the help of therapy, or did you just do that on your own?

[00:37:48] **Lydia Loveless:** A little bit. Yeah. I was still seeing a therapist then. I also got on medication shortly before the pandemic, which was probably a really big lifesaver, 'cause I don't know how I would've dealt with going into the pandemic unmedicated. But yeah.

[00:38:05] **John Moe:** Huh. Okay, good. Are you still doing therapy now?

[00:38:11] **Lydia Loveless:** No, I need to find a new therapist. That's a big hurdle for me. So, I definitely would not recommend that anyone like me not be in therapy. So, anyone listening at home do not do as I do. (*Laughing.*) But yeah, like I'm definitely on the hunt for a new therapist.

[00:38:29] **John Moe:** Okay, good. Are you going to—are you gonna send them a copy of the album before the first session? Just saying, “Here. I want you to know what you're up against here.”

[00:38:38] **Lydia Loveless:** (*Laughing.*) That might be wise, yes. Yeah.

[00:38:42] **John Moe:** Well, I have good news, Lydia. We—it looks like we have found on SoundCloud “Baseball Butts”.

[00:38:47] **Lydia Loveless:** Oh my god. (*Giggles.*) That's incredible.

[00:38:52] **John Moe:** So, now, even though we're gonna add that in post, you know, days from now, we all know what we're going out on.

[00:39:02] **Lydia Loveless:** I need to find it. Yeah, I haven't listened to it in a long time. It's pretty crazy.

[00:39:06] **John Moe:** We'll send you a link. Lydia Loveless, thank you so much.

[00:39:10] **Lydia Loveless:** Thank you!

[00:39:10] **John Moe:** That's Lydia Loveless. Their new album is *Nothing's Gonna Stand in My Way Again*.

(*Music fades in.*)

That comes out on September 22nd. Not appearing on that album, “Baseball Butts”.

[00:39:22] **Music:** “Baseball Butts” by Lydia Loveless.

Baseball's so boring, it takes so long

But if I get bored, I'll just check out your donk

Staring at your ass stained with grass

Makes the games go by so fast

I'll send my boyfriend to buy me another 60-ounce beer

It's not the double play that's making me cheer

Can't tell if I need to burp or just need to nut

Bend over, lemme look at your baseball butt

Baseball butts, baseball butts

(Music fades out.)

[00:39:58] **John Moe:** Laura House and a meditation moment right after the break.

[00:40:08] **Promo:**

Music: Thumpy synth.

Jesse Thorn: I'm Jesse Thorn. *Bullseye* is celebrating 50 years of hip-hop by bringing you an entire month of brand-new interviews with rappers. That means Jeezy.

Jeezy: I put my pain in the music.

Jesse Thorn: Angie Stone.

Angie Stone: You know, hip-hops—we called them hops back then.

Jesse Thorn: Master P.

Master P: Music is what's gonna open the doors for us. But whatever we come up with after this, it's gonna be bigger.

Jesse Thorn: Plus, Chika, Saba. Even the greatest of them all, Rakim. That's this September. Open up that podcast app. Type in *Bullseye* and hit subscribe. You're not gonna wanna miss any of this.

(Music fades out.)

[00:40:52] **Music:** Spirited guitar.

[00:40:53] **John Moe:** Well, let's take a meditation moment here, shall we, with our friend Laura House from Maximum Fun's *Tiny Victory* podcast. Hi, Laura.

[00:41:02] **Laura House:** Hi, John!

[00:41:03] **John Moe:** You were talking recently about the idea of meditation as an act of rebellion.

[00:41:11] **Laura House:** Yes. I—well, first of all, I like any kind of framing of meditation other than what we think of. Other than, you know, robes and sky and etc.. And—prepare for a compliment. I feel like they might make you uncomfortable, but you're like a cool guy. Like, you're like a cool music guy, podcast guy. Like, your taste of music is impeccable, and I just think like... meditation, we don't have to think like, “Well, I, but I'm not a—I'm not calm. I can't meditate.” We can be like, “You know what? It's cool. It's rebel.” Like, you're not supposed to stop working.

[00:41:54] **John Moe:** Right!

[00:41:55] **Laura House:** But meditation is like, “You know what? Hold my calls. I’m the boss. You know, I’m not gonna do that thing right now. This is me time!”

[00:42:01] **John Moe:** I’m putting the system on trial.

[00:42:03] **Laura House:** Exactly. Exactly. I’m gonna rage against the machine by not being involved for a few minutes.

[00:42:09] **John Moe:** I’m gonna peacefully sit against the machine.

[00:42:12] **Laura House:** Yeah! I’m gonna—guess what? This is like—'cause we’re so trained and you know, to just pursue money and pursue stuff. And this is like, no! Guess what? I’m not gonna do that. I’m gonna just sit here and feel good for a minute. Boom!

[00:42:28] **John Moe:** Yes. There you go. Alright.

[00:42:31] **Laura House:** (*Chuckling.*) It didn’t sound super rebellious there at the end, but—

[00:42:34] **John Moe:** No, it’s a—boom is good.

[00:42:36] **Laura House:** But it is a little like, no, I’m—you know, I’m taking back the day. And you can do it anytime.

[00:42:43] **John Moe:** You know how you say that you’re gonna have these loose thoughts, and you just have to let them happen?

[00:42:48] **Laura House:** Yeah.

[00:42:49] **John Moe:** My loose thought is this: sage against the machine.

(*Laura laughs.*)

I’ve said it out loud, now I can let it drift away.

[00:42:56] **Laura House:** I can’t wait to read your next McSweeney’s piece.

(*They laugh.*)

[00:43:00] **John Moe:** There it goes. There it goes. Alright, let’s have you get us to a better place.

[00:43:08] **Laura House:** Alright, I need a sage against the machine t-shirt.

[00:43:11] **John Moe:** I think we do have to—look for it in the merch shop, folks.

[00:43:15] **Laura House:** It's very good. Alright, so yeah! You're taking some time to yourself. Guitar riff. So, get where you can sit comfortably, safely, close your eyes. And here's the thing, you're already breathing, so just put some attention on that and therefore off of all the other stuff. We all have 78 things we need to do today. But not doing it right now! So, just notice your breath.

(Beat.) And you're having other thoughts. You're going to have other thoughts. We're not even gonna do anything about it. Thoughts can be there and at the same time, we just notice our breath. Let everything else just sort of fade away.

(Long pause.)

You can go ahead and open your eyes.

(John sighs.)

How was that? Did it work to go in rebellion-y or were you too amped up?

[00:44:58] **John Moe:** Well, I kind of felt like the rebellion succeeded right at the beginning. And then, I was living in this new sort of better society that—

[00:45:06] **Laura House:** Wow!

[00:45:07] **John Moe:** Yeah. Yeah. No, we overthrew our oppressors. It was great.

[00:45:10] **Laura House:** Man, we saged against the machine.

[00:45:13] **John Moe:** We saged against the machine, and all I had to do is sit here and breathe. What a bargain!

[00:45:19] **Laura House:** *(Laughs.)* That's all it is. Meditate! You can do it!

[00:45:21] **John Moe:** That's all it is. It's just that simple. Laura House can be found on the internet at LauraHouse.com. She can be found on Maximum Fun at the *Tiny Victories* podcast. Laura, thank you as always.

[00:45:34] **Laura House:** Thank you.

[00:45:36] **Music:** “Building Wings” by Rhett Miller, an up-tempo acoustic guitar song. The music continues quietly under the dialogue.

[00:45:43] **John Moe:** If people donate to the show, we can keep having a show. If people stop donating, the show goes away. Let's not make the show go away. If you've already

donated to *Depresh Mode*, if you've become a member, thank you. You know that you listen differently. Once you become a member, it becomes your show even more. So, if you haven't donated yet, it's easy to do. Just go to MaximumFun.org/join. MaximumFun.org/join. Find a level that works for you, and then pick *Depresh Mode* from the list of shows there. Be sure to hit subscribe. Give us five stars. Write rave reviews. All that helps get the show out into the world where it can help people.

Speaking of helping people, the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline is available 24/7 for free in the United States by calling 988. The Crisis Text Line, also free, always available. Text “home” to 741741. Our Instagram and Twitter are both @DepreshPod. If you're on Facebook, look up our mental health discussion group, Preshies, and become a member of that. Lots of good dialogue happening there about the show and about mental health in general and about just people helping each other out in the world. Our *Depresh Mode* newsletter is on Substack. You can search that up. I'm on Twitter @JohnMoe and Instagram, also @JohnMoe. Our electric mail address is deprehmode@MaximumFun.org.

Hi, credits listeners. Like Lydia Loveless, I've also written some songs over the years—a lot less successfully than Lydia to much smaller crowds and less acclaim and more total obscurity. One song I wrote was called “It's All Fun and Games ‘til Someone Pokes Their Heart Out”. Country song.

Depresh Mode is made possible by your contributions. The show is produced by Gabe Mara. Our senior producer is Kevin Ferguson. We got booking help from Mara Davis. Rhett Miller wrote and performed our music, including our theme song, “Building Wings”.

[00:47:37] **Music:** “Building Wings” by Rhett Miller.

*I'm always falling off of cliffs, now
Building wings on the way down
I am figuring things out
Building wings, building wings, building wings*

*No one knows the reason
Maybe there's no reason
I just keep believing
No one knows the answer
Maybe there's no answer
I just keep on dancing*

[00:48:13] **Miggs:** I am Miggs from Southeast Asia. May your heart be your guiding key.

[00:48:22] **John Moe:** *Depresh Mode* is a production of Maximum Fun and Poputchik. I'm John Moe. Bye, now.

(Music fades out.)

[00:48:36] **Sound Effect:** Cheerful ukulele chord.

[00:48:37] **Speaker 1:** Maximum Fun.

[00:48:39] **Speaker 2:** A worker-owned network.

[00:48:40] **Speaker 3:** Of artist owned shows.

[00:48:41] **Speaker 4:** Supported—

[00:48:42] **Speaker 5:** —directly—

[00:48:43] **Speaker 6:** —by you!