

“ I SPENT 20 YEARS DOING CRACK AND WATCHING ALIEN MOVIES IN MY BEDROOM!

HE WAS A STAR OF THE GENDER BENDING '80S ALONGSIDE BOY GEORGE AND PETE BURNS, THEN BECAME DRUG ADDICTED FOR DECADES. THROUGH REHAB, A BRIGHT AND BUBBLY MARILYN IS BACK TO TELL HIS CAUTIONARY TALE. INTERVIEW BY MARC ANDREWS.

Exactly one decade ago, DNA ran one of the strangest interviews that have ever graced these pages. The subject was Marilyn, a minor pop star from the 1980s best known for being Boy George's buddy, being very pretty and his hit *Calling Your Name*.

Then – *poof!* – he disappeared even quicker than he arrived. Rumours swirled that he had become a heroin addict – he and George were inseparable at the time of George's own smack crisis. Later, when Marilyn insisted to the press he was the true love of Gwen Stefani's husband Gavin Rossdale it all seemed like a desperate bid for a few more minutes of fame. Little did we know that all of this was true.

In 2006 when I interviewed Marilyn there was all kinds of bizarre backstage shenanigans going on with a “manager” called Mary who appeared to actually be Marilyn in disguise except not (!) and a veritable tsunami of nasty tirades about his former pop pals from the New Romantic era.

I'd asked Marilyn to comment on Blitz Club founder and Visage frontman Steve Strange's bold declaration that Marilyn was “a heroin addict who lived at home with his mum”. Marilyn's huffy response? “I could let my age show and become a frightful leather handbag, but I wouldn't dare



Marilyn today, aged 54, shooting the video for *Love Or Money*.



The *Calling Your Name* look.



Boy George and Marilyn at The Blitz.



Marilyn with Madonna around 1986.

steal his look. He must be out of what's left of his tiny little mind on drugs.”

Fast forward ten years and Steve Strange has not just faded to grey, he's passed away. Marilyn, meanwhile, managed to get himself into recovery in 2010 after a 20-year battle with drug addiction. The 54-year-old has now got a new life, a new boyfriend and a new record (courtesy of some help from old ex-bestie Boy George) called *Love Or Money*.

He's finally in a good place and, not surprisingly, has no recollection of our “crack in whack” interview. That's addiction for you.

DNA: We last spoke about ten years ago.

Marilyn: Wow. I don't remember it. Maybe it was one of the other Marylins you spoke to [laughing]!

You seemed to be in quite a dark place at that time, but have turned your life around.

I really have [laughs].

What has brought about all these changes for the better?

It started with me suffering and I think I've suffered quite long enough really. I was sick and tired of being sick and tired. About six years ago I started to get serious about this. I got pneumonia and was in hospital and it was a culmination of everything. I had had enough and was fucking sick of being ill. It was all bullshit. I thought, if this is living I would rather die and I can't die so I had to put away the drugs.

You said recently you spent 20 years doing crack and watching the *Alien* movies in your bedroom. Is that true?

It's not an exaggeration in the slightest. I basically sat in a room for 20 years in solitary isolation.

There are lots of things about life that aren't nice. There's a lot of unfairness and people who aren't particularly nice to you. It's not easy when you are extremely sensitive. That was a lot to deal with.

Deciding to pick up your career and make a record again, is this all part of the healing process for you?

It just evolved. It wasn't thought out or calculated. My album [1985's *Despite Straight Lines*] turned out to be a bit of a classic really. If you had your ears and your heart open it's all right there. It's a shame more people didn't get to appreciate it.

Your new single *Love Or Money* continues the reggae vibe of your last hit *Baby You Left Me*.

My whole thing with that particular song and look I did in the video is about coming full circle. I'm working with a lot of the same people again like (Boy) George. When I locked myself away I didn't say goodbye to anyone. I just disappeared and left everything. This reemergence is about reestablishing where I left off with everyone. It's a weird dynamic, but to be welcomed back the way I have been has just been an incredible experience and mind-blowing.

Has George always been there for you or have you picked up the friendship again recently?

We have phases. When someone is taking drugs it's very difficult to know what to do. Unless a person wants to help themselves there's not a lot you can do. You have to get on with your own life and hope the penny drops. The gut instinct is to want to help and fix and make it right but that doesn't work. In reality, all you can do is reassure the person that when they are ready you will be around.

Have you made amends to each other?

Well, I have, but I don't know about her! Like Diana Ross said, I'm still waiting.

In the *Love Or Money* video you're clearly loving being a sexy fifty-something.

It's all about freedom, being yourself and being comfortable with that. I wasn't trying to be

overtly sexual. It's about being happy.

You look amazing – what's your secret?

I've been eating everything that isn't nailed down! I don't know if there is a secret as much as common sense. If you want great skin you have to look after it and drink a lot of water. All this body shaming... that you have to have a six-pack... it's like, "Oh, fuck off!" My motto is about being comfortable with who you are. You don't have to look a certain way to be sexy. Being confident and accepting who you are is much sexier than glutes and a six-pack.



Anyone who has overcome the nightmare of addiction inspires me!

How easy is it for you to slip into the Marilyn persona?

It kind of is. Apart from being comfortable being myself I can also become something else. I let you in on a secret – Marilyn and Peter Robinson are one and the same person. So just call me Marilyn. It was chosen for me. I have earned it, I lived it, I am it and now I own it. That's who I am and I am comfortable being that.

Is there a new album in the works?

We are finishing an album and I am really excited because I'm getting a show together.

Will you be singing some of the old hits or have you disowned them?

I love my songs. They meant something at the time I wrote them and they mean things to other people. You can't edit your life. Those songs are a

part of me. I am very proud of my first album and worked very hard to make it come into creation. It's part of my life.

On a personal level you're in a relationship and seem quite settled now.

Oh, I hate him [laughs]. I'm alive and I'm experiencing life and I have a partner. Today I do, anyway [laughs]. There could be someone else tomorrow if he doesn't behave himself.

It's so nice to see you and Boy George back together as buddies and having fun after all the shit that went down in your lives.

Yeah, it is. It's quite a journey but I don't know if I'm surprised by that. We are both in really good places but let's not get it twisted – it's not easy. We're still who we are at the end of the day and we still have huge disagreements. It's a relationship like any other that goes up and down and sideways but when you go through recovery you learn certain guidelines and boundaries and apply them as you go forward in any kind of relationship situation. It's about self-management. To have two people keeping each other in check and doing the same thing doubles the power of one person being in recovery. George and many other people are in recovery and anyone who has overcome the nightmare of addiction inspires me.

Will you ever return to Australia after getting punched during a promo visit in the '80s?

Oh God, I love Australia. It was the most incredible place and the people were amazing. I just happened to have an iffy situation, but that was my fault as well. I made flippant statements afterwards because I was really hurt. I had an amazing trip, despite that awful experience. One person is not going to taint my whole perception of a country and the people in it. I would go back in a heartbeat. ★

MORE: *Love Or Money* is available now to purchase. For more go to mistermarilyn.com.



MARILYN ON PETE BURNS

The death of Pete Burns was a huge blow to Marilyn. After hearing the news and declaring he was in "absolute shock" Marilyn tweeted a photo of himself with Pete – dressed up like Marilyn Monroe – with the caption "two glamorous icons together". (See left.) A few days later he told fans "sometimes, in my life, the only thing that gets me through is my music". Soon after... "Yes, my eyes have seen a lot of sorrow, but they've born witness

to so much happiness too. The trick is to see the beauty in both."

He also retweeted a fan comment that Pete loved Marilyn's 1985 single *You Don't Love Me* insisting it should have been a much bigger hit than it was at the time. Go to YouTube to see if you agree with Pete and check the original video that features classic '80s footage from Maz's tumultuous Australian promotional trip.