

Interviewed by
Cecilia
Corrigan

■ Cecilia Corrigan: Can you hear me okay?

■ Maria Bamford: Yeah, yeah, I'm just putting you on speakerphone for a second so I can grab one of my dogs.

■ Corrigan: Okay, go for it.

■ Bamford: Hey. Okaaaaay.

■ Corrigan: Which one of your dogs was it?

■ Bamford: Oh, well Bert and Blueberry are both on the bed, so I was going to try to rescue them off of it, in case they needed to be rescued, but it doesn't seem like they want to be rescued, so I'm just going to leave them there.

■ Corrigan: Are they allowed to be on the bed?

■ Bamford: Oh yes, yes, they are. They're so happy, they're so okay on the bed that they're... still there.

■ Corrigan: Cool, good. Well if you need to grab them at any point, you know, go ahead. So, are you still in LA, or are you out?

■ Bamford: Yeah, yeah, I'm in LA right now. Next week I'll go to St. Louis and Chicago.

■ Corrigan: When you go out on the road, do you go on a band-style trip where you stay in hotels, or do you fly back to LA in between?

■ Bamford: No, I just go right back home. I know it would be more cost-effective to go on a long tour, but I'd rather just do one show and come home, or two shows and come home, or four and come home.

■ Corrigan: It seems like you're in a pretty good sitch there with your pooches. Are you still living in—I forget, but you have a bit about where you live. Was it Eagle Rock?

■ Bamford: Eagle Rock, yep,

I'm in Eagle Rock, still live there. And my fiancé now lives with me.

■ Corrigan: Yeah! Congratulations!

■ Bamford: Thank you—thank you—thank you—thank you. It's a wonderful new development.

■ Corrigan: Yeah, I was happy when I saw that. How are you gonna adapt the bit [about people in long-term relationships giving you advice,] where you're like, "I'm sorry if you're bored with your miracle!"?

■ Bamford: Hahaha, yeah, yeah, I think I still feel like it is a huge miracle, like it is amazing. But yeah, I don't know. All I know is my own life experience. I think part of it has been me all these years, kind of going, oh, I've gotta wait, you know, until I don't know. Until Armageddon? I'm not sure.

■ Corrigan: I think I know what you mean. Did you feel like you needed to become—oh I don't know, nevermind.

■ Bamford: No no, well, women's magazines are always like, "He's the one." That means a deal breaker, you know, like this really confusing set of perfectionisms—you've gotta be perfect, and then he's gotta be perfect. It's only since I've realized that I'm a huge mess, I mean really accepted that, that I've been able to commit to someone who's also not perfect. That we're not perfect together has been wonderful. It's always felt like I had to be, and then I tried to be ... I don't know. I don't know what I'm doing.

■ Corrigan: There's so much pressure. It's like this different thing than being just blindly pressured—not that I know what the 1950s were really like—but to just get married or

something. Now there's this other pressure, this new agey pressure to fully become the ultimate supervillain or something. And then you'll attract the other fully formed person. From what I've seen so far in my pseudo-adult life, it doesn't really seem to work that way. And when it does it's really terrifying.

■ Bamford: Yeah and if it does, good for them, good for both people. My parents' relationship became one with this mythical status. It's 45 years later they're still together and you're like, there were a couple years when it wasn't going so well, and I was there to witness it, where it was difficult, and not that they didn't love each other, but they weren't pleasant to each other, and neither person was a dreamboat. The other person had red flags all over them. But you know, if you look at somebody's behavior over time, nobody's going to be a winner.

■ Corrigan: Very wise words.

■ Bamford: Oh, well, I know I read it somewhere and I'm spouting it off.

■ Corrigan: I read that you like to read books that offer advice and stuff, you know, personal life advice.

■ Bamford: Oh I love it.

■ Corrigan: Yeah I like that stuff too, actually. I've gotten more into it. I used to really make fun of it, because it seemed like you're just deceiving yourself. But now it kinda seems like it can be so difficult to just do normal things. If there's a cheat that's available, I'll totally take it, you know, like a secret code to the game or something.

■ Bamford: Well it's like that book **The Artist's Way**, I've done that



a billion times. I'll say those affirmations to myself. I don't believe in God. But I do believe in the structures, you know, like neural pathways. We can restructure, I can restructure my brain in a way so that I'm empowered, so that I'm more likely to create and do things that will make me and the world around me better, if I'm in a more positive state of mind.

■ Corrigan: I totally believe that too. You can teach yourself new habits, because habits are so powerful, and if you can get into ones that are more conducive to not having bad times, then you can really change your life.

■ Bamford: I was writing a joke about this very topic. So my friend Jackie does video games. I always feel like a jerk, going *Oh come on*, what a waste of time. Video games over there. But I'm *really* doing something. And then I look at myself and I'm like, have I changed, really, at all? Cause like all I'm doing is emotional Sudoku, you know like those things you do on planes.

■ Corrigan: Totally, yeah yeah yeah, oh my god.

■ Bamford: My great-grandmother was an alcoholic and lived in her cabinet and never left and your father was an alcoholic and died of diabetes, and so that means we need to look for a 7, I mean the only thing that will work there is a 7.

■ Corrigan: I love that. So wait, I wanted to ask you, you said that you were writing—it's funny, I wrote down all these questions and I haven't asked any of them yet, but you said you were writing a joke and I wanted to ask you what your process is like, when you're working on material, because, I should just say this, because I feel like I'm gonna keep saying weird things that sound fancish, but I am I really big fan of your work, you're like one of my favorite artists probably.

■ Bamford: That's so nice. I always wonder about people's process because it's so hard, it's so painful to get myself to do stuff. I have to call some friend every day and bookend 20-minute segments of free working time. I go, okay, I'll call you and I'll do 20 minutes of work on my set, and then I'll call you back. And then I'll call her again, and I'll do it again.

■ Corrigan: Oh that's smart.

■ Bamford: Otherwise I will not do it. It's funny because the creative process makes me so happy, once I've done it, I feel so excited, but I don't know what that is, because it doesn't seem like everybody has it.

■ Corrigan: Yeah. I mean I totally have that and it's like my

main thing that I'm trying to work on right now, because work really does make you happy. But there's all those pop psychology things like, oh if you're a perfectionist, that means you're scared of working. But it doesn't really seem like the whole story, I don't think that's it. I mean maybe you think you're a perfectionist, I don't think I am, I just think that there's something really hard about doing the thing that I tell myself I care the most about, you know?

■ Bamford: Yeah yeah, maybe that's it. I know I have a lot of ego about going, oh, it's gotta be good. I don't even know what good is. I don't know what that means. Like "oh no!" I don't even know what that means.

■ Corrigan: So, when you say you're working on your set, do you say things out loud? Do you write a bunch of different drafts of something? What does it actually look like when you're at the base level of just brainstorming or whatever?

■ Bamford: Well I say things out loud, and I kind of write on stage, too, a little bit more than I used to, because I didn't use to do that at all.

■ Corrigan: Yeah I've been listening to some of your different live recordings and it's funny how your bits have evolved over time, you know? You'll do a really different version of one joke versus another version of that joke later on. I notice a transition—I actually really like a lot of the style in some of your earlier stuff, but I can see why you'd change it. I mean it's less polished, it's a little bit more kooky. Do you still do that joke about the wall covering in the bathroom being someone's baby's skin?

■ Bamford: No, no, I don't do that one. But it's a good one, yeah.

■ Corrigan: You should do it! I really like that joke, it's so good! I guess that's not really a question, more of a comment... but anyway. It seems like you're always changing things. When do you decide to retire something? Or do you?

■ Bamford: I think it's out of needing to move on. And I get worried about that. Half of my act is new now, but half of it is still the old material, and I feel scared to let go of the old material, especially if people like that material. So it's a fear of the new, and that people might not like the newer stuff, but it's like, well, you just have to keep making stuff. Otherwise I think I'll feel bored, and I think creativity does make me happy, it brings joy, so to keep holding on to old stuff feels boring.

■ Corrigan: Right, right, and if you're bored, then what's the point, except making millions of dollars,

trillions, trillions of dollars. No but, I really relate to that, it must be really intense to be at this moment in your career. I actually got into your work, I don't know, four or five years ago. I had been like an artist-weird person, and then I ended up writing for TV for a while in LA and somebody showed me **The Maria Bamford Show**, that short bunch of skits that you did, and I freaked out. It was like the best thing I had ever seen and I had never seen anything like it, and I never thought that comedy could be like that, that it could just be so, honest. I mean I really liked, you know, old school **Saturday Night Live**, like my mom's a comedic actress so I saw stuff like that, but I had never seen something that was not stand-uppy, but was just so great. So I was like, who is this person? Why aren't they mega-famous? And then, you know, you're pretty famous now. That must feel, well, how does that feel? I mean in relation especially to what you were saying when you said—well people like this thing that I'm doing, but then you want to change it. Is there a part of you that wants to undermine yourself or something? I don't know why I'm asking that.

■ Bamford: Aaaaah, yeah, I mean, a change of any kind is scary. I guess just being human you go, oh, look at my dogs, they're anxious to know if they're gonna get food every day, even though it's happened over and over again. That they're going to get food seems to be a concern every day. It's the same thing for me. I always have a concern. And if comedy doesn't work out, well, it is a business, and if there were some reason I wanted to leave show business, or if it wanted to leave me, then there's other things to do. And I've enjoyed doing other things as well. So it's okay, whatever's supposed to happen.

■ Corrigan: Do you think there's anything you could have done, anything else that would have—I mean this is kind of a silly question—but the kind of energy and the kind of questions that you're able to ask from comedy, do you think there's something else? Were you ever were like, I want to be an astronaut! Or something like that.

■ Bamford: Ooooo, not, yeah, well, I've really enjoyed this path, so it's hard to say what would happen when you've chosen one thing. But sure, yeah, I would just be, ah—hh—I'd be an astronaut.

■ Corrigan: I think you'd be really good at that, you'd be a natural.

■ Bamford: I think you'd be a really good astronaut too. We'd both





be really good astronauts!

■ Corrigan: You've got the right stuff, the calm under pressure, you know, the physical fitness. Well we're basically at the end of the time, but I have so much I want to ask you. I'll just ask one more question. Ummm, oh, oh, oh, oh, I wanted to ask you about your relationship with Tom Leykis...

■ Bamford: Oh okay.

■ Corrigan: The shocking disc jockey...

■ Bamford: Yes yes.

■ Corrigan: I'm sure you're really happy with your new partner, but is there a little bit of a feeling of a missed opportunity there with Tom? That *will they or won't they* tension? Is that a big regret? Or has it faded into the background?

■ Bamford: You mean the

James Adomian version of Tom? I think, ah, the actual Tom Leykis I have no idea about, but James Adomian's Tom Leykis—well first of all I'm interested in James Adomian, his Jesse Ventura, anything really. But that was so funny...

■ Corrigan: Oh my god it was so funny.

■ Bamford: I used to listen to that on talk radio, listen for as long as I could, because it is oddly compelling. Somebody yelling and having such a strong point of view, blowing people up, telling you what you have to do to get women, but that women are idiots. Like why would you want the burden of an idiot on you?

■ Corrigan: I know I know, like just count your blessings that they're

leaving you alone. When I first found that podcast, I had never heard of Tom Leykis. I was just looking for a podcast that you were on, and I found that one. I had listened to **Comedy Bang Bang** before so I was like, oh, this looks good, and at first I thought it was a real guy, I thought he just was a real person, but by the time it got around to talking about how he was bouncing around the room like a balloon...

■ Bamford: Hahaha

■ Corrigan: Yeah, that slayed me.

■ Bamford: Oh that's good, that's good. Tom Leykis. Well, there's always a place in my heart for James Adomian's Tom Leykis.

■ Corrigan: Cool. Okay, I'll let you get back to your dogs.

