Episode 882: Tatiana Moroz on Cryptocurrency, Causes Worth Supporting, Being an Independent (and Pro-Liberty) Musician, and Creepy People in the Liberty Movement

Guest: Tatiana Moroz

WOODS: So just a few days ago, you had your new album, *Keep the Faith*, released, which is the first — according to the press release, your first studio album in about five years. Wow. So first of all, what made you say, I think I've got to go back and record a new album, when maybe a couple years ago you weren't doing that? What suddenly changed? You just had a lot of music? Why did you do it?

MOROZ: Well actually, I recorded this album in late 2014, and it's taken me this long to put it out. But I did it in order to sort of illustrate people also about the technology that we've created that empowered the album. So I had to sort of wait until the technology caught up, and that's why we're releasing it now when everything is sort of set, and so I can use it as a teaching tool and bring other artists into the fold.

WOODS: All right, so then that pretty much compels my follow-up question, because people are not going to know what you're talking about. I know what you're talking about. Tell me about artist coin and Tatianacoin in particular. I knew you'd been talking about this for a while, but I have to admit I never quite figured out exactly how it works. So tell me how that works. It has something to do with bitcoin and supporting an artist you like, but I'm afraid that's all I know.

MOROZ: Sure. So first of all, I know bitcoin itself can be a little bit of a complicated topic. I know it was for me when I first learned about it. I was basically zoning out within a couple sentences just because I don't really like technology. But as I learned more about bitcoin and as I became more disillusioned with the political process, I realized that bitcoin could ensure financial autonomy for people all around the world. There's over 2 billion people in the world that are under-banked, which means that they can't have access to banking services. Now, as a Chase customer, I think, Oh, good, forget them. I don't need a bank account [laughing] — because nobody wants to pay the fees. But at the same time, if you're living in an impoverished area, you need a bank account in order to dig yourself out. You need it to be able to be an entrepreneur.

So I got really excited about cryptocurrency, and I realized that there was that hurdle to jump. So I started out by creating the bitcoin jingle, which is on the new album, *Keep the Faith*, and I use that as sort of a fun way to get people involved in cryptocurrency. But I also started to see the possibilities of using cryptocurrency to

solve some main problems that I see for artists, and that's mainly fans and funding: how you make sure that you're playing to more than just the bartender and the waitress in the club, and how do you make sure that you have enough money to survive while you're creating your art. These have been challenges that I have faced, even though I went to Berkeley College of Music, supposedly this great school, whatever. But that didn't really help me in my career, so — well, not completely. But anyway, that's another story.

So with Tatianacoin, what you can do is you can fundraise directly from your fan base, but unlike a traditional crowdfunding platform, where you can donate $50 and then you get a T-shirt and that's in, with Tatianacoin, you donate and you actually get little digital gift certificates that you can use in my store. So let's say you donated $50. You could send $10 worth to your friend, $10 worth to your wife, $10 worth to a child, and this way you could spread the message of the music. Alternately, if you decided that you didn't like my music and a year later you wanted to, you could sell those Tatianacoins to other fans. So it sort of allows a lot more flexibility for the fan base, and now they have a lot more of an interest in seeing you succeed.

So that was one of the initial features, but then the other thing was I have been on all the different social media platforms, so from Friendster to MySpace, now Facebook. And as you go from platform to platform, you lose your fans because in actuality the platform is the one that owns that relationship. And that's never been more clear as with Facebook right now, because I have a Facebook page and I have, let's say, 6300 likes on it, but that doesn't mean that when I make a post my fans are seeing it. In fact, even though I'm — unless I'm paying them, only 50 people or 100 people tops will see it. Now, that's bad for me because I have to keep paying to access my audience, but that's also bad for my audience because they wanted to hear from me. They liked my page, and now instead they're getting a sort of weird algorithm created by Facebook telling them what they should think about.

Obviously security's a big issue, and I think a lot of your readers will say that Facebook is sort of skewed toward one certain political agenda. And that is not what art is supposed to be about. And through the artist coin technology, I now have a direct connection to my fans no matter where I go. So if Facebook becomes less popular and everybody moves on to a new platform, I'll still be able to communicate with them directly. And as a result, we created a platform that not only would allow artists to fundraise, would not only allow them to offer sort of exclusive prizes, sort of like a Patreon model; it allows them to have a store where you can accept not only dollars, but also cryptocurrency.

But we also have a way where you can stream your music and you can stream your music collections. So now what we're doing is we're offering people the ability to curate and to communicate with each other through music. Right now if you buy music on iTunes, for example, you can't share it with Bob because iTunes doesn't allow you to do that. But if you had a Tatiana *Keep the Faith* album token, you could share it with Bob, or you could rent it to somebody and make money off of it, or if you make a playlist and enough people are listening, you can even get a little bit of the residual streaming fee that's paid to the artist. And we're also paying artists 20 times more than what traditional streaming platforms are paying them.

WOODS: Wow. Did you come up with this on your own? This is brilliant.

MOROZ: Thank you. We tried. It is not just me. The main person that I've been working with is Adam B. Levine, and when we created Tatianacoin, we didn't think that we would have to build this whole platform; we just thought, okay, well, you build the token and that's it. Since this was the first of its kind, being a pioneer is very glorious, but they don't tell you about the time where you're sleeping in the cold and you don't know what to do [laughing]. So as a result, Adam created Token.ly, which is the parent company of Token.fm. So Token.ly can allow this technology to be adopted for a number of different businesses, but Token.fm really focuses on content creators.

And we're starting out with music, but we're really quickly going to be moving into podcasts, video content, and basically trying to solve the problem of what's going on, for example, on YouTube right now, where not only are they paying very, very small amounts of money to people, but they're censoring the information. So even if you subscribe to somebody, you might not be getting the information that you want, whereas if you were using our platform, you're constantly connected.

WOODS: All right, well, man, there's a lot here. I have to ask you the question that I've asked other independent musicians I've had on the show, which is that when I hear you describing all these tools that are at your disposal in the year 2017 that were not even dreamed of 20 years ago, it makes me think, wow, now's the best time ever to be an independent musician. On the other hand, precisely because there are a lot of tools available, a lot more independent musicians are out there, so the competition is greater. So which of these two factors do you think outweighs the other? There's a lot of competition; now it's harder? Or there are a lot of tools out there that you can use, so now it's easier?

MOROZ: Well, these are questions that have plagued me, because I came up during the time when the do-it-yourself kind of streaming thing came out. Not even streaming, but just mp3s. And it's great that artists can use the Internet to reach out to each other, but you're right, there's too much information out there and you don't know how to curate it. And that's been one of my sources of frustration with some of these streaming platforms, is that it takes away some of that curation aspect. The radio used to play a lot of great songs. Now, not so much. But you didn't have to look at 17 blogs to figure out what the cool song was, so it's sort of a balance.

As I've been putting out my record, I've also seen that it still is very, very difficult to make it into the mainstream music industry. I wanted to get some reviews for my album, and you know, we sent out 300 or 400 emails asking for people to review, and we got very little response, and I was very depressed. But then I went around and I looked. This is a problem that so many artists are facing, and what's been exciting about this is that now I can, through my own suffering, implement these changes into this platform, which I see as a platform for artists, by artists, that helps them be the entrepreneurs that a lot of them actually naturally are, but streamline it for them so they're not busy managing 20 different entities and trying to keep it together. We're trying to help them have as much control as they can and also let them basically keep track of it in a way that's actually going to make sense at the end of the day.

WOODS: Now, I got to know you of course because of the Ron Paul movement, and I've gotten to know several musicians that way. And I'm curious to know before we go any further just a little something about your personal story, because if you're like me, you weren't always in the Ron Paul camp. I remember I was in high school in 1988, and I saw a couple of Ron Paul bumper stickers. He was running for the Libertarian Party. I didn't know who this guy was and I didn't even care. So I'm curious about how you got into this world, and then the music angle after that.

MOROZ: Well, I think of these things as all sort of tied together, because when I was a little girl, I was always thinking about how to make the world organized and how to make it better. As a small child, I went up to my mom and I said, "Mom, why doesn't everybody put their money into a pile and then people will work and they'll take whatever they need?" And she says, "No, Tania, that's communism and it doesn't work." [laughing] And she was from Poland so she knew what she was talking about.

I also listened to a lot of music from the '60s and '70s, those old folk singers that were singing about a revolution, and I remember hearing Cat Stevens' "Peace Train," think, wow, you can use music to convey and idea and you can use the emotion of that idea in order to bring people over to your way of thinking. In high school I was reading a lot of dystopian novels, but my own generation didn't really have much to contribute. We didn't have a movement.

However, in 2011, I heard about the Federal Reserve, and all of my previous interests sort of came into clarity and I became a really big Ron Paul fan, and I was really excited because this was my movement. And so I went on and I wrote my album, *Love and Liberty*, and I recorded it and put it out to that community, and I was very well received. So this is I guess a little bit of an evolution from that.

WOODS: All right, I want to — man, there's so much fun stuff we can talk about, especially since you were on the Contra Cruise with us, which, I don't know if that makes the cruise cooler or you cooler or me cooler by association. I don't know. We'll have to figure that out in a minute after we thank our sponsor.

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All right, so your new album is called *Keep the Faith*. And as I started listening to it, by the way, I just started from the beginning, and I thought, Hey, wait a minute. I recognize this music from the Contra Cruise, because you were there with us for that. And you were tremendous. I mean, everybody absolutely raved about you. You did a lot of material by yourself, and then you were joined by the band, and it all just sounded tremendous. We just absolutely loved it. So tell me about — I'm not going to ask you to tell me about the cruise. Tell me about the album. Is there a theme running through it? Is there anything political in it? Is it personal? What kind of things are we going to find there?

MOROZ: Well, I think it's all of those things. All of my records are really personal, and I think that that's why maybe people relate to it, because I'm not really afraid to be vulnerable. This album was challenging for me in a lot of ways. The title track, it's called "Keep the Faith," and the reason why I wrote it was because when I first got involved in the liberty movement, I was in love with everything. And it never occurred

to me that people could use the guise of liberty to rip you off, frankly, and it made me really depressed. And when I would see some of the bad actors in what was generally an amazing space, after a certain point I started thinking, Well, is this really worth it? Should I do this? It's not exactly popular as an artist to take a libertarian position or right position because everything is so leftist. But at the end of the day, I decided to keep the faith and keep going because that was something that's driven me since I was a small child. And maybe I don't get an immediate reward for it, but it's the right thing to do.

And I think that that whole record is really calling a lot of people to accountability. I have a song called "Call You Out," which was written as a result of — there was a libertarian event and I was supposed to get paid, and I went to try and get paid and the guy groped me, and I reported it and nothing happened. I got fired from the tour. And there was no real justice that I could have for that situation, so I wrote the song "Call You Out." And so if you want to hear about that, you can hear about my dirty laundry.

But for me, art is the way that you can really take something that's truly bad and make it into something holy, and that's kind of what I tried to do with this album, especially with one of the songs, "The Silk Road." I became friends with Lynn Ulbrecht, who is the mother of Ross Ulbrecht, who is the alleged founder of the Silk Road. For people who are maybe not familiar with this, the Silk Road was the first free market website, and they used bitcoin so people can have anonymous transactions. And the rules were as long as it didn't hurt other people, you could sell it. So for example, in certain countries, bibles are illegal. They sold bibles. They sold medicine. But of course they also sold drugs. And I think that the real problem with the Silk Road was that the Silk Road gave the first real test case for bitcoin and it drove the price of bitcoin up. It skyrocketed because it could actually be used. And the ethos on the site was very libertarian, very freedom-oriented, and that is of course a big threat to the state.

So when they arrested Ross Ulbrecht, a lot of people view him as a political prisoner. The way that his case was handled, obviously there was a lot of corruption. There have been people that have gone to jail, government agents that stole from the site, extorted money from people. They're now in jail for their corruption. But they also allowed digital evidence to be used, which, digital evidence can be manipulated. These corrupt officials had access to this digital evidence. It's now been proven since Ross' conviction that that evidence was tampered with. They also got their server from Iceland, and you're not supposed to just go into other countries and just go into their servers, so that's an issue.

And then they also took his laptop, which with a regular search warrant, you need to have specifics. You can't just say "file cabinet." You have to say, "file that says, 'Tom is such a great guy.'" Whatever. You have to have some sort of specificity. And they didn't have that, so what they did was they took his entire laptop and they went through the entire thing. Now, this sets a very dangerous precedent for the future.

And these are just some of the cases. Obviously the judge was very biased. She brought up Ross' political views during the sentencing, but she didn't allow him to use that in the defense. And overall, a lot of people view it as something that was really

railroaded and a miscarriage of justice, because Ross, for all nonviolent crimes, an Eagle Scout, had a scholarship for physics, over 100 letters testifying to his character, was given double life plus 40 years. I mean, let that sink in for a minute. This guy's 33 years old. I was just at his birthday at the prison. I heard him speak because they had this sort of program at the prison.

And through my experiences getting to know Ross and also getting more familiar with the horrors of the drug war, I was compelled to write a song called "The Silk Road," which is one of the songs on the album. And you know, Ross decided to draw a picture of me — he's a great artist — from prison for my birthday, and I decided to use that as the album cover, because I want to bring attention to the drug war. I want to bring attention to Ross' case. But it also illustrates just how important it is for artists to have free speech. If I was signed to a major record label, I wouldn't be able to have a political prisoner drawing my album cover from prison. But because I'm supported by my community, I can have a free voice and I can reflect the views that maybe someone who works for a bank or somebody who has more of a corporate job can't necessarily express but wants to show support for.

So I think that that's something that's lacking in our music today. Even though we've had so much war for over 17 years nonstop, you barely hear a single antiwar song on the radio. Is that because everybody likes war? I don't think so. And I think that that is because we have this kind of corporate monopoly on music, and I'm trying to sort of disrupt that, and I'm very happy to be able to support the Ulbrecht family and to also be a voice for all of those people in prison that are having their families destroyed over nonviolent crimes, over things that need to be treated with actual rehabilitation versus throwing everybody in prison where they're just going to come out with a new skill set for criminality.

WOODS: Tatiana, when you were talking about "Keep the Faith," you mentioned bad actors in the movement. And I don't know if you necessarily want to relive a lot of drama, but yet I feel compelled to ask about this because just the other day somebody was reminding me of what Ralph Raico used to tell Murray Rothbard. When something crazy would happen, he would say, "Murray, this is the movement we have chosen." So I'm curious, can you tell me — you don't have to name names if you don't want to, but give me some idea of what you have in mind about bad actors.

MOROZ: Well, I think it's very — it's people, if they look at my history, they know I went down to Galt's Gulch, so I don't mind talking about it. I feel very bad for all of the people there. And when I went down to Galt's Gulch, I was hired to be their marketing person, and I —

WOODS: I think some people don't know what that is, by the way.

MOROZ: Oh, okay. So Galt's Gulch was supposed to be this libertarian paradise down in Chile. It was a land project spearheaded by Jeff Berwick and Ken Johnson. And unfortunately, by the time that I got there it was a little bit late, and I didn't realize that the land wasn't properly owned and it couldn't actually be for sale. But as soon as I started working there, I had a lot of questions. And I started saying, Where's the paperwork? Who is your lawyer? Who is the accountant? Where is the deed? Where is the title? And I was stonewalled and then vilified shortly thereafter. And basically, the

main guy, Ken Johnson, he drove a wedge between me and the rest of the staff, and this was part of his manipulation.

And I had a lot of different celibertarian friends come down there, and at the time, people didn't necessarily believe me because, at that point, I had been so isolated from everybody. I was having basically a breakdown, because my most holy thing, the most sacred thing that I had was the integrity of my music. And I felt like my brand and my music were being used in order to sell what I perceived to be a scam project, and no matter how many people I told, everybody thought I was crazy and I was being difficult. And that's how really I wrote the "Keep the Faith" song. It was a result of that heartbreak and that realization that not everybody is a good person, and also not everybody is going to stand up for the right thing, even when they know that that's the right thing to do. I had a really hard time — a lot of the people that came down to visit were able to sympathize, but nobody really stood out. Some people did a little bit, but I have to admit I was very disappointed with a lot of things there.

And about eight months later after I kept trying to blow the whistle, it did finally come out, and over $10 million was not recovered. And that's $10 million from libertarian-leaning people that got ripped off. It's a bad look for everybody and it's disheartening for those people and sort of destroyed a lot of people's lives. And to date, nothing has actually been done in order to remedy the situation, despite their attempts at resolving it through the court system. Nobody's actually been reimbursed, and it's been a big nightmare.

So that coupled with the groping incident and all these other kinds of things compounded onto themselves. But at the end of the day, I can't really turn into less of a person just because there's bad people around me, and it doesn't reflect on everybody in the liberty movement. But at the same time, I think that people should be careful and they should not be lulled into a sense of safety just because somebody claims to have the same ideology as you.

WOODS: Why don't we play one of the songs from the album right now for people? And which one do you think would be best?

MOROZ: I think "Keep the Faith." I think it really unifies the record. Or we could use "The Silk Road," if you'd like. Either one is good.

WOODS: Let's do "Keep the Faith." So everybody, here we go. This is "Keep the Faith." And by the way, when people listen to this and love it, before we come back I want them to know even before the song comes on, how would they get this album that's just been released?

MOROZ: Well, it's available on all the mainstream sites, so you know, Amazon, iTunes, Spotify, all that stuff. But I like it when people get it from me, of course, directly, and they can get it at my site at TatianaMoroz.com or Tatianacoin.com.

WOODS: Okay, good, and I'll link to both of the — in case people forget those links, I'll have them up also at TomWoods.com/882. All right, and without further ado, here is "Keep the Faith."

[Music plays]

All right, well, listen, I'm glad I thought to ask you, let's put a song on here. If I have a musician on and I'm not playing a song, there's something the matter with me, so I'm glad people got a chance to hear that. The song and album are called *Keep the Faith*. You can get them at Tatiana's website, TatianaMoroz.com, and as I say, TomWoods.com/882.

A couple more things I want to ask you about. You are a musician of course, but you also are — you know, you're a libertarian, you have interests, you have values that are very important to you. And you are inclined to use your music to promote these sorts of things. You were telling me about one particular project that you're very pleased about that you've been able to be or are going to be a part of, so tell us about that.

MOROZ: Sure. So one of the things that I'm excited about is Art for Ross, which is something I came up with pretty simply. We were hanging out at Porcfest, and I thought, Hey, why don't we make some pictures for Ross since he can't be with us? But it's really expanded into something where other artists are going to be donating their artwork and using it to raise attention to this. And it kind of snowballs into overall the reason why we need artist coins. And my goal is to encourage artists to use their voices to tell something with meaning. We want to change culture, so I'm excited to sort of an angle of art for a revolution. There's a lot of craziness going on in the world right now, and I think that art kind of opens up a gateway where people are a little bit more willing to listen, and hopefully listen respectfully and come up with some different solutions. So I'm excited to kind of help people get into artist coins and into the cryptocurrency space, but also just connect with each other in a more genuine way.

WOODS: What do you do in terms of touring? I mean, you don't necessarily have a gigantic nationwide tour, but you do make various appearances. How do you coordinate that? Are these necessarily liberty events? And is this all listed on your website?

MOROZ: Yeah, well, all my events are listed on my website, and I get approached to do a lot of different events. I found that playing gigs is — you know, in the more traditional way, Oh, I'm going to play a show in New York — is a way to get really depressed and waste time. I just don't think it's very effective. I have a really core fan group. This year I'm doing a lot more speaking and to a wider audience, which I think is really exciting, because I don't want to just play to the echo chamber. But later this summer, I'm going to go on tour in Europe and go around to a bunch of different cities, and I'll probably bring Lynn with me, Ross' mom, and we're going to talk about some of the freedom issues that come up in America and kind of relate them to other places. So there's a lot of music going around, but there's also a lot more conversation too, which is something that I wasn't really as familiar with. But I guess now with artist coins and sort of the innovations that we've spearheaded, I've got more to say.

WOODS: Well, that's tremendous, and I've — gosh, I don't even remember when I met you for the first time, but it's been quite a while. Certainly it's a number of years. I don't remember what the original event was. But anyway, who can tell, right? We see each other all the time at different sorts of things.

MOROZ: I think it was in Texas. I have a feeling it was in Austin.

WOODS: Yeah, yeah, that could well be. And given that — I would say I get more invitations — I don't know if this is true for you too, but I get more invitations coming out of Texas than almost all other states combined. I don't know what the deal is with Texas — Now I'm going to get all these Texans saying, "Well, of course — what's the mystery? Texas has this independent streak." All right, fine. So that would not surprise me at all if it were there. But I'm glad you've got — this is a very exciting time for you, releasing this new music. The Contra Cruise of course will just be the icing on the cake, obviously, for everybody's 2017, but I really, really hope people will check out — especially if they like the song they heard today, I really hope they'll check out your website, TatianaMoroz.com, or Tatianacoin.com. All this stuff will be linked at TomWoods.com/882. And support Tatiana. You're going to get tremendous music, and you'll get to see her perform live on the Contra Cruise in October 2017. So I'll link to that also at TomWoods.com/882. And best of luck, Tatiana. Hope it's very successful for you.

MOROZ: Thanks very much, Tom. Thanks for having me on.