

Interview: Ziggy Marley Talks New Album, 'Marley' Documentary & Marijuanaman



It's been a busy year for Ziggy Marley, the eldest son of the legendary Bob Marley.

In fact, the Grammy Award-winning musician has launched a multitude of creative projects across the media spectrum just within the past six months. Oh, and [he's on tour](#) (he'll be in Washington, D.C., next week -- Wednesday, June 13, at the [Howard Theatre](#). Then, he's in New York, New Jersey and Vermont).

Thankfully, Ziggy was able to fit in some time to for a phone call to answer questions from the entire Glittarazzi crew about his new album, the just-released Bob Marley documentary he co-produced, why he created a comic featuring pro-marijuana superhero -- and more!

Here's a transcript of our conversation:

How has the tour been going?

Well, we're just getting ready to start. I'm just about to do a couple of these rehearsals before we hit the road right now.

Do you come to DC often? What's your impression of the town?

No, not that often. It's very historic town, I like the history of it. I like, you know, looking at the moneymen and trying to imagine what was like back when during the George Washington or Abraham Lincoln days. There's a vibe, a historic vibe that I appreciate.

Do you enjoy being on the road?

Yeah, man. I enjoy being on the road. It's good. It's life.

Your last album was called *Wild and Free* and you released it simultaneously with your comic book «*Marijuanaman*.» If people weren't so well-acquainted with the Marley name, they might think you were a threat to the establishment.

We celebrate truth. We don't over-analyze ourselves, we speak the truth and we're speaking true music. And, if that's counter-culture or anti-establishment, then maybe the truth is counter-culture and anti-establishment because maybe the establishment is full of lies and so the truth becomes the thing that is not normal anymore. And maybe that's the way the system and society is these days. And all of sudden, when you speak the truth it's weird and people are like, «What? That's not how we normally do things.»

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How did «Marijuanaman» come about?

I'm comic book fan and I read comic books. I love the imagination it takes to create them. So I've wanted to do something in that world and finally I came up with a character because after researching and after learning all of the beneficial uses of the cannabis plant, hemp, marijuana. I started to wonder, «why is this plant being demonized and criminalized by society?» So I wanted to create a «counter-hero» for the «counter-culture» movement. A hero that gets his powers from the plant. A hero that is a risky hero because this plant is «demon» and this «evil and wicked» and it's a «drug» and this stuff. He's risky hero, but I wanted to portray the plant as a hero, which we know it is because of all benefits it has. That's what we're trying to do with this comic book. While being entertaining and while we're expanding our imagination. I'm doing it just like superman or batman or any of those other comic guys. I'm doing like that. The only difference is that we're doing with this big thing over us, which is the marijuana plant and which is a big deal.

You just hosted a live Q&A and screening of «Marley,» the new documentary about your father, on Facebook. What type of questions did the fans ask? What did you gain from that experience?

It was very chill. It wasn't like a Q & A. It was like comments saying «Hey, what's up?» I was kinda trying to tell them a bit like if we were seeing scene and there was someone on the screen I had something to say about, I'd say it. And if there was something happening I'd say it. It was a conversation really, you know? It was really cool.

Your father's story has been told and his music analyzed again and again. Why did you decide to help produce this particular documentary?

I'm father's eldest son and in our culture that carries some responsibility and some burdens, too. So, the fact that I felt a lot of people were telling stories

about my father weren't close to my father to really understand him as person and as a human being. So, I wanted to represent him in any other project that would tell his life story. A friend came and said, «You know we should do a definitive piece on Bob that expresses his life in a full way.» And, I thought that was a good idea.

Is there any special significance for the Documentary's April 20th release date?

The 4/20 thing is obviously there and that probably played some role in it because in the culture of Jamaica and the religion that my father preached and lived the plant is of significance, spiritual and religious significance. So, I guess that was the reason why. It was good timing.

A line of headphones influenced by your father was recently launched. How involved were you with that?

That side of the business, I'm sort of involved with, but not really, you know? In terms of the family thing, if there's a deal with a company I have to sign some paperwork but I'm not really involved with that. There are other family members that deal with that kind of stuff. What interests me is to make sure we don't sell out my father's legacy. That's about being the eldest son and those responsibilities. That's what interests me. I'm not so much about going selling headphones with my father's name on them or selling products with his image. I'm not so much into that stuff, but I am into trying to make sure everyone within the family that we keep things on the level where we're not just trying to sell out, you know what I'm saying?

You've become a pop culture icon in your own right. Your music has been featured on 24 shows and films, according to imdb.com. How does one transition from «Men At Work» to «Shark Tale»?

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I don't know. They approach us with requests with music for things and I'm usually like, «Cool. Let's do it.» It's not something that when I make music that I think about. You know, I make music and if someone wants it in something, then they approach us and we consider it based upon how they want to use it and what the thing is about and we say, «OK, it's good. « It's good for me, too, because it gets me out there and exposed because my whole thing is an independent thing, so I have to work double hard because I don't have a machine behind me. I don't have a big record label behind me. So, I have to take every opportunity to get my thing out there, otherwise you won't hear anything from me.

Any new plans for another album? What other projects have you been working on?

Just yesterday, we gave away a [free song on my site](#). Stuff like that I'm doing constantly, just jamming and putting stuff out there. I'm going to finishing this tour and work on getting some of the things that are in my mind out there. I'm going to do some more work on the comic book, some more work on music. I want to do some film work and some other stuff. There's some kids projects I want to work on. It's just like getting everything that's in my head out, you know? But I've got to wait until after the tour.

One of our readers asks: it feels like current music artists have not yet produced a voice to characterize the tremendous movements in global social, political, and cultural landscapes. Where are our generation's anthems?

The voice is here, you just have to listen carefully. The media structure and the commercial structure is not set up in a way that is used to be the voice. Its main objective is to make money and so the voice that question refers to is contrary to that. So, you have to look for it, because it will not be given to you. It will not be played for you, because it does not serve the purpose that the system or the esta-

blishment wants. Their purpose is a machine, economics, money, money, money. Nothing to do with enlightening people or bringing people awareness or making people see thing and stand up for things. Those days are gone because of the money culture we exist in today. You have to search for yourself, otherwise it will not be given to you, it will not be shown. It's there though. The voice is there and that's where we work. We work on the outskirts of the culture and we're building and maybe one day it will come full circle where the voice will be the thing that is popular again, the thing that is cool, the thing that makes money, because that's what it's all about. Till then, you know, we'll keep working on the fringes, you know?

Finally, how many slang terms for marijuana do you know?

You know, I'm working on that. There's so many! [Laughs]. There's so many I don't even know! I'm working to on putting together a big list of that.

Thank you, Ziggy, for taking time to chat with Glittarazzi!

VIDEO: «True To Myself» by Ziggy Marley