Jake 00:16
Thank you, Phil, for coming on the podcast and taking the time. I appreciate it. And I'm looking forward to the conversation. We've met a while ago, I guess on the internet somewhere and been in touch a lot on, you know, forecaster and elsewhere. I know you are a founding member at bright moments, and generally just deep in crypto and involved in all these sorts of projects. So looking forward to digging into a bunch of that. But I think before we go too deep, it would be great to get your story from as early as you're willing to start to where you are today and talk about some of the decisions you made along the way.

Phil Mohun 00:48
Yeah, thanks for having me on, Jake. Looking forward to it. So I was born in Buffalo, New York, and I grew up in a little town called Attica, and Attica is known for two things are rodeo, and the maximum security prison. We are a pretty small town, and we're one of the largest school districts in the state of New York. And that's because, you know, not in terms of student population, but I live in a very rural area. And so we're very spread out. And so growing up, you know, I had friends that were live very far away from me. And because of that, I had to sort of develop my own hobbies. I'm the youngest, I've got two older sisters, and my parents are both entrepreneurs. But they've never called themselves that or think about themselves that way. But it's only really over time that I've sort of realized that what they were doing growing up is, you know, trying to carve out a life for themselves through their own initiative. And, you know, having control rather than working for somebody else, my dad has his own law practice, which he ran out of a small shed on my property. And he grew that over, you know, my childhood, before going into public service, he's an elected official, he's the county court judge, and my mom, you know, worked with my dad to help him grow the business, She now runs a car dealership, as well as a self storage unit in our town, and has been on the town board in my town for as long as I can remember. And that means things like making sure the roads are paved, making sure that the utilities function, and sort of this really interesting just American system that I think take a lot of people take for granted. And so very young, I sort of saw the value of being

able to choose things you're interested in and just grinding away at them for many years. And my parents are very good at setting a goal and then you know, not talking about it for two or three years, and then just sort of steadily making progress. My childhood was pretty isolated, I Delica, we didn't really have a lot of, you know, people that were famous or that were involved in cutting edge industries. And I became interested in computers pretty young. One of my earlier memories is we had a school network system that was pretty new, and teachers could store files, and students could access it from anywhere, once they're logged into the system. And I managed to find a way to hack into the system and download a cracked version of hmm players onto it. So my friends and I could play during study hall. And so you know, sort of early on, I realized, like, Hey, if you know more about this digital sphere, you can do things that other people don't even realize it's possible. And I now looking back and sort of see how these interests converge. Now one on the sense of people being able to self govern and self organize and then to with computers. But I don't think at the time, I really realized that it was anything that I could maybe make a living doing. It was just what interested me and what I was exposed to. I ended up going to school a couple hours away to a place called Syracuse, Syracuse, a pretty big school, there's a strong, athletic presence, I got pretty involved in the social scene there in Greek life. And my original major started as biology. But I very quickly realized that I didn't want to go into pre med. And so I switched into biochemistry, which sounded more difficult and sort of was closer to the types of things I was interested in. But I realized that I wouldn't be able to really pursue a career without continuing my education to graduate school. And so I finally switched into bioengineering, which sort of combined both worlds right, let me have this like strong academic interest, while also still what I felt was playing with computers and what other people you know, called programming classes. And so I really liked the fact that I was able to get credits by essentially, you know, creating algorithms and doing programming work that I was already doing in my free time. I had a bunch of gigs in college, some blue collar things like you know, working construction working at a local landscaping company, and then others that were sort of more academic I worked in a research lab where the the professor there was studying upper arm movement and

orthopedics. So I spent a lot of time with cadavers and trying to just identify the way that the motions, you know, differed across people with different injuries. And so a lot of that was was sort of interesting, I feel like I got a pretty broad cross section of the types of careers that were available early on, and what I liked doing. And coming out of college, I was offered a job at Deloitte, which is a consulting firm that has offices all over the world, and I joined their analytics department. And it was useful for me to see, you know, the way that a lot of businesses worked on the inside. But I think about a year in, I realized that I wasn't sure if any of the work that we were doing actually really matter, we would work for clients on sort of nebulous projects and create PowerPoint decks. But the output of the work seemed to be more about convincing the executives of the company something they already knew, and being able to provide a cover story than it was actually producing anything new. And this sort of became apparent to me, one of my jobs was we were on a big project, and we were onboarding a few dozen people every week. And I was tasked with the assignment of sort of manually taking the data and putting it into the system. And I spent about a week, staying up all night programming it and automating it. And for maybe a month, I got away with it, where I'd come in every morning, I press a button on the computer, and then sort of kick my feet up. And one day, my manager came in and said, Hey, what are you doing, and I showed him, and rather than, you know, trying to surface it to the client, he says, You can't show anybody this right? Because it was it was not sort of within the scope of work. And that was sort of a very telling lesson for me. And I realized at this time that, you know, it's useful to sort of have colleagues within existing institutions. But if I wanted to be able to find things that were interesting to me, I needed to carve out my own path. And so I started working on tons of side projects. Some of them were crypto related, I have an NFT project from maybe 2018 or 2019, that I launched, that I wanted to assign people non fungible tokens to verify their age, they could use certain websites. And this was right when the crypto kitties spec was sort of being finalized in the ERC. 721 standard wasn't quite done yet. So I think it was a little bit too early. And I also got really interested in AI, the firm was pushing a lot of AI initiatives. And so you know, I got pretty deep into machine learning and neural networks. And a lot

of this is just linear algebra, which I was familiar with, from my degree in bioengineering. And so I was, you know, trying to find projects that intersected these interests. I then got an offer to lead the blockchain division within a large health insurance company in the US fortune 30 company, you know, one of the biggest in the world. And it was interesting, you know, to try to drive it forward, because they didn't really have a good sense of what the technology could do. But they were clearly interested in being able to share data more freely. And I worked there for a couple years and helped spin out what became a start up in a consortium that's still active today. And I sort of got to a tipping point where I realized, Hey, do I want to continue, you know, working on this sort of business development role? Or do I want to jump and do something else. And at the same time, I had started a crypto mining company, mining Aetherium, with GPU farms with one of my friends from college. And it sort of seemed to me like this, you know, opportunity of working in smaller companies was just more suited to my lifestyle. So I, I left the organization once they spun out the consortium. And I joined a small startup working on a decentralized protocol that has a few a few billion users, which is email. And my thought process at the time was, you know, I'm really interested in crypto, it seems like we're still pretty early. And there's companies that are being built or sort of past the protocol phase. But I want to get a sense of what this looks like from the other end, I want to see what a decentralized protocol looks like, once it's already reached critical adoption and what lessons we can learn. And so I worked with the the team at shortwave, for a little over a year, and I was sort of I was done with with crypto, right, I had done the mining thing, I had spun out the, you know, Blockchain business Consortium, and I was like, Yeah, you know what, I'm going to take some time and go work in a start up and put my head down, and just sort of focus on sort of a traditional technology path to try to build some network within Silicon Valley. And of course, as soon as I stopped looking for crypto, it found me and at this time, I was living in Venice Beach, California, and I was spending a lot of time, you know, trying to find other people that had shared interests. And I ran into, I ran into Seth, who is the founder of bright moments, and he said, Hey, you know, I'm starting an NFT gallery. You should come by and I swung by, and that was how I got introduced to bright moments.

And that's sort of where the current, the current story starts. But that feels like a pretty good summary of, you know, the first two decades of my life.

Jake   09:47
Yeah, it's an awesome story. I think. There's a bunch of interesting threads to pull on. But one I might sort of start with is when you you know, you join this email company, like you said, sort of Seeing what a late stage decentralized protocol might look like, before that you had started this theory of mining company in Texas, on the side of what you were doing. These are pretty unusual sort of first, you know, steps into the world of crypto versus like most people who are like, oh, you know, I learned about crypto from like board apes or like I learned about, you know, a theory on when it launched or whatever it might be. They're like, you know, or I got into Solana, not a lot of people came in through like mining, and then we're like, oh, you know, I'm gonna go see what like, email looks like there's a pretty like, unique paths. And I'm curious, like, what about those entry points? And maybe there are others as well. You know, does that give you sort of a different perspective on crypto sort of fundamentally what it's useful for, versus, you know, other people who might have gotten from more of an investment perspective, just buying and selling tokens, or whatever it might be?

Phil Mohun   10:58
Well, I mean, I think it's a different layer of the stack. And I, I love to read I've been a reader my whole life. I'm I read when it's dangerous, like I'll read while driving the car. And I always have books stashed under my driver's seat. It's like a compulsion. There's a Japanese word for it, which is son Docu, which is the habit of buying books faster, you can read them, and they pile up on your nightstand and floor. And I definitely have had that affliction. And so I think I became very interested in the history of technology. And I've read as much as I can get my hands on not only about Silicon Valley, but also just different waves of business before that. And I think crypto the culture is really interesting, because everyone believes, hey, let's rip this thing down and start from the ground up. But in a lot of ways, we're reinventing things that have already

existed. And crypto is going to have to integrate with the real world at some point. And so, you know, I'm very interested in seeing how do we fit into the broader trend of technological adoption and growth? And how can we learn from previous lessons to make sure that we sidestep some of the issues with the early Internet, and with, you know, sort of decentralized movements in general. There's a great book, the innovators, which is by Walter Isaacson, and he talks about some of the the early digital movement that Stuart Brand led in San Francisco, around the whole earth catalog and, you know, trying to get people to understand what was happening with the digital revolution. And I think in some way, you know, crypto is still in that phase. There's a group of people who are really passionate about that, and you need it early adopters. But you also need to be willing, at some point to accept how your vision is going to be able to enter the mainstream. And I think, you know, email is something that we all live in work with. And it's so boring, we just take it for granted that it works. But there's a lot of really interesting lessons there.

Jake   12:49
Yeah, totally, I think, you know, I'm not surprised to hear that books were at the origin of some of this interest, I read on your blog, or on your website, you've got this long list of all these books that you've read. And it's like, you know, extremely long to the point where I'm not surprised that you keep a book under your, under your driver's seat or on the bedside table. But um, you know, talking about crypto, there's a bunch of different sort of angles, we can take on it, but one that's outside of, you know, money or Bitcoin sort of the most fundamental, I think, is that still fairly fundamental and quite important, I think, is decentralized social media. And, you know, that's how, like I mentioned at the top of the podcast, we connected largely on forecaster, which is one of the more interesting projects out there, certainly the one that I've spent the most time on, over the longest period of time. Others have been, you know, like, there's big clout. Recently, like friends tech, which is sort of a different version of that in a way where there's more speculative investing in people, forecasters very sort of non money oriented. And then there's been others as well, I think, lens and GM dot XYZ was a little one that I played with for a while, and people are trying to figure this

thing out. But it's not that easy to build a new social network, especially when we've got, you know, I was gonna say, really good ones. I don't know if that's the right word, but really, you know, highly used and arguably addictive ones like Facebook and Instagram, and Tiktok, and Twitter. But nonetheless, some ambitious projects are trying and forecasters seems to sort of have some momentum. So I'm curious sort of your thoughts on, you know, decentralized, social, in general, what you've enjoyed about forecaster, and maybe you can talk a little bit about your involvement with purple, which is sort of this forecast or related data that you're part of?

Phil Mohun 14:36
Sure. Yeah. I mean, I haven't spent too much time on some of the other protocols, but I think I'm fid 149 on forecaster, you know, the Merkel manufactory team is based out of here in Venice. And so that's how I think we first got in touch and I joined the protocol. I think, I think a social network is always a function of the quality of its users. And if you can think about the chats that you've had with friends over the course of your life for different forums that you've been involved with, you can tell when something's active and when it has a life of its own. And that's usually when it's a space for conversations that can't happen elsewhere, whenever you try to have two conversations about the same thing, you know, it either fractures that community, they're sort of a winner take all or one dries up. And I think forecaster has done a really good job of being the place for conversations about Aetherium for Aetherium users, right, and people talk about crypto, but a lot of them don't use it. And then crypto Twitter is sort of you get this interesting sort of influencer mentality where people are able to bootstrap the Twitter network to grow really quickly. And because forecaster has always been a small network, it feels like sort of an isolated community, or like one of these islands that segmented from the rest of the world for a long time, which gives us the opportunity to sort of grow in different directions. And I've always been interested in it, because I think, you know, these messaging layers are really fundamental. And as I mentioned earlier, if you look at the trends of sort of decentralized networks, messaging has always been a core component. And there's always various waves that happen. And it feels like, with the rise of

people creating a theory and wallets with it being easier for people to go on chain, there needs to be an associated messaging layer. And I think the forecasts are team is the combination of the credentials as well as the right strategy to get people to actually bootstrap on top of it. Protocols succeed, if that's where the developers are, and developers want to join a protocol if that's where the users are. And so I think the path that far pastor has taken has been really promising. And you always look for clues, right? And it's not super obvious, but you sort of have to squint to see it. And I think purple was a really interesting clue, which is, Hey, there's this group of people who are not associated with the core team. It's not some paid group. It's not some, you know, ecosystem fund that has a bunch of money from an Ico, it's a group of people putting their own capital at stake to try to grow the network. And the incentives felt very aligned, right, as a forecaster user. Sure, you know, I'm getting interesting content. But I'm also doing it because I'm doing a calculation, which is, if this network grows, and I'm an early an active user on it, I'm going to be able to have an outsized presence here compared to what I would be able to do on Twitter today, where I have to worry about competing with accounts that have 100,000 or a million followers. And by the way, if I say the wrong thing, I might get deep platformed. And I think Twitter has been moving in the right direction in terms of free speech, but I'm not, you know, under any illusion about whether or not someone would care about deleting my account, it's like, you know, an elephant swatting a fly off, its back, you wouldn't even think about it with some of these networks. And so you really need credibly credible neutrality. And I think forecasts are is a good shot at becoming that. You know, just a quick note on purple, it sort of is a similar level of decentralization, where everyone's joined Dows, where there's actually you know, a multisig, at the end of it. And for some days, that can be okay, right, if they really need to have a clear mission, and they really need to get things done, it's okay to have a group of people who are driving it forward in what you mostly have as a token aligned community. Purple isn't that purple is more like an alternative to open source funding. And if you look at a lot of the open source projects today, they're actually funded by corporations, which works really well as long as they're in this growth mode, where they're

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throwing off cash. But it really doesn't feel nice to have some of our more core software infrastructure funded at the whims of corporations. And so I'm excited about purple as a potential, you know, new institution to be able to fund developers building on top of decentralized protocols.

Jake   18:35
Right, so then taking a brief tangent from, you know, the crypto side of things, I noticed something interesting in, you know, checking out your Twitter, you follow just, I think three people or three accounts, and one of them is Stop, stop scrolling or something like that, where they just literally tweet like five times a day to, you know, different variations of stop scrolling and get off your phone. And it resonated with me, because I've sort of, I think Twitter is like one of the most amazing things in the world, at least on the internet. But I also think it's like one of the worst things and one of the like, the most dangerous things, basically. And you have to make sure that sort of you're using it and not letting it use you and whatever. So I'm curious if you have any sort of thoughts on that and practices for how you use it and forecaster as well, for that matter, or generally, your phone or whatever else it might be. I know you had a another interesting blog post that I read on on boredom, and the value of boredom. And I'm a big proponent of that it's extremely hard to sort of shut everything off these days and just be bored for a little while, but I think it's super useful. So I'm curious if there's any sort of tricks of the trade or things you think about in terms of managing, you know, living on the internet, but also trying to unplug once in a while and, you know, get bored.

Phil Mohun   19:51
Yes. So I have a theory here, right, which is, obviously Twitter is a slot machine. We all know that and most of the services that we use that are in The top 10 are also slot machines, right? You pull the lever, sometimes it gives you nothing but when every 10 times it gives you something. And so like, you know, the EV of going on Twitter is negative most of the time, right? slightly negative, it's a little bit of a waste of time every time you open the app. But once in a while you open it and boom, you hit a jackpot, you come across some tweet,

or you reach out to some person or have some conversation that totally changes your life. And so it gets you to keep coming back. Because sort of, you know, in aggregate Yasher, maybe it's, you know, a positive expected value. But most of the time you're using it like the medium time you open the app, it's a waste of time. And so, you know, I am not going to beat a team of 100 product managers in Silicon Valley, who spend every waking moment of their life convincing me how to stand their app, I just, there's no way I'm gonna beat it. So you have to fight software with software. And so I've got a pretty sophisticated stack that used to be really complicated, but has gotten easier over time with some of the recent updates to iOS. And it basically just gives me a little zap in my brain every time I try to do something. And the trick is to program these things when you're feeling motivated. Because at six o'clock in the morning, when you wake up and go to check your phone, your brain is in dopamine mode, and you're not going to be able to have the self control. So you need to sort of set up guardrails for yourself while you're motivated to do so that then you don't have to think about later. And so yeah, the people I follow on Twitter is one reminder of that, where if I go on Twitter on a given day, my home feed is just like, Get off, stop scrolling, it's not worth it. I also use you know, a bunch of things on my phone, like screen time, I've got some apps that I use to help, you know, give me time limits and things like that. And I just generally think that more people need to be aware of how they spend time. Because you know, especially if you don't have a purpose, and you're going on, it's really easy to waste entire hours or day is really really sort of meaninglessly and that feels like a shame.

Jake   21:54
Yeah, it's this. That's all really interesting. And I sort of I have some systems there, maybe not as complicated or sophisticated, rather, but I've systems nonetheless. And I think it's interesting, the slot machine, you know, I've heard that before. And it's not like the first time I've heard that, but I never thought of it exactly in the way that you put it. And I just never really thought about it deeply before. But it's interesting, because I think it actually is genuinely difficult to determine whether it's like a positive return to play our game, or if the house always wins in the end, I don't really know. And

that's sort of like the hardest part, it's like, and then there's another component of, if you spend an average of 10 or 15 minutes a day on Twitter, like, is it diminishing returns? Where if you spend 1015 minutes a day, or you know, an hour or two a week, or whatever it is? It has like sort of a better return to player than if you spend hours? Or could it be that actually the more time you spend on Twitter, the better of a game it gets for the players? And you know, I don't know. So it's one of the things I deal with. But fundamentally, if I spend, you know, multiple hours of the day on Twitter, I don't end the day very happy. And if I don't spend too much time on my phone, I tend to have good days. So that's sort of like enough of math for me, I guess.

Phil Mohun 23:08
Yeah, everyone's gonna reach their own sort of, you know, answer there. And I think that for many people who do understand that it's a game and understand how to play it, it's probably a positive, a positive expected value. However, I am not under any impression that the majority of people on social media are probably not using it in a way that's bettering themselves, and are really at the whims of what the algorithm wants to show them. And that is something that I'm hoping, you know, client diversity, and decentralized social media can really help with, because when everything's aggregated under an advertising business model, there's really not much you can do in terms of innovation, or even like subscriptions to try to get people you know, Elon says, you know, something about undergrad user minutes. And actually, I think that's a really strong metric. And I think he's fairly earnest. And so I'm gonna take him at face value at that. But I don't think that that's the case or the equilibrium for a lot of the social media companies that run the world today.

Jake 24:03
Right? So let's talk about your main project that you're spending most of your time on these days, that's bright moments and crypto citizens is sort of like the related NFT project for membership to bright moments, but maybe you could just well, even before we get into it, maybe you could talk a little bit about sort of like how you got into art, which is not sort of evidently apparent from like studying

bioengineering and school and everything. And then how you sort of got involved with bright moments and what it is fundamentally

Phil Mohun   24:31
Yeah, so I, you know, I I think that generative art and the type of work that I do today is another chapter in an existing art movement. But I am not a person who has studied the entire movement and I'm probably you know, woefully underprepared to give someone an entire history on how it came to be. Compared with the history of technology. I have not spent nearly as much time digging in and that's had pros and cons, right? On the positive side, I think we've done a lot of things that have been, you know, if you had knew the history, you might say, Oh, that'll never work. And it turns out to work, because obviously today is different. On the other side, you know, I'm still everyday learning about how we can sort of contextualize what we're doing within a broader history. And so I've tried to spend a lot of time talking to people who've been involved in different art movements, or even different, just adjacent creative movements. I mentioned Stuart Brand. And I think there's a lot of parallels to what was happening in San Francisco. And what's happening today. We are fundamentally trying to create, you know, experiences around digital assets. And I can talk a little bit about how we started. But this idea of sort of on chain permanence is really new. I think that it is, you know, maybe where the internet was in 1995 when commercialization opened up, and we're still at the phase of like, trying to get a web browser on most people's computers with these wallets. And so you know, even to be going and talking about applications, like yes, that we definitely need that for user adoption. But most people don't even have Netscape on their computer yet. And that's where we need to spend a lot of time educating people and allowing them to find their own path, sort of into the ecosystem. And I spend a lot of time trying to teach people and personally onboarding them.

Jake   26:18
Now, that makes sense. And I think sometimes when it comes to like, especially creativity, ignorance gets a bit of a bad rap. Like, I think it can actually be enormously helpful to not really know what came before you see, like, you know, typically, if a startup is

created by a bunch of like industry experts, it's sort of less likely to be truly innovative and pioneering and disruptive, then, you know, something that's created by someone who doesn't have experience with the industry, but generally as good, you know, head on their shoulders and thinks from first principles you think could be long gone, and doing what he's done in several industries, obviously, it's always silly to use him as an example, because he's just insane. But, you know, nonetheless, there's other examples as well. So, I think one of the most interesting things about bright moments to me is the way that you guys have sort of bootstrapped this community, you know, globally, which is not totally unusual, but also within, you know, real life, you know, in real life component where it's not just a discord, but it's people in you know, LA, it's people in New York, people in Berlin, London, Tokyo, etc. And so, I mean, you guys aren't even playing around with like, okay, it's like, you know, LA, San Francisco and San Diego, like, you guys are going full on global from the beginning, and bootstrapping communities in each of these places, and then doing these sort of like kickoff events, but also sort of maintaining activity in each of these places, at the galleries, that you're opening to display these, you know, pieces of artwork. So any thoughts on sort of principles that you've sort of, I imagine you've sort of got a bit of a playbook by location seven or eight versus when you were, you know, opening the second, and just sort of principles for building communities in the modern world, you know, internet first and then sort of bringing them to fruition in the real world.

Phil Mohun 28:07
Yeah, I mean, we couldn't have started at any other time are placed in Venice Beach, California, in the spring of 2021. This confluence of different events came together that allowed us to exist. And if we tried to replicate the origin story today, I'm not sure it would work. But there were some sort of generalizable things that happened that we've been able to tweak. And so just taking, you know, back to that, that may, in 2021, there was this insane interest in cryptocurrencies that was really, you know, grassroots it was growing organically fueled by zero interest rates. Pandemic had also just ended, more or less right lock downs were just being lifted. But most existing businesses still had safeguards in place. And so we were able to sort

of as a new organization, say, hey, wait a minute, like, this isn't six months ago, what are people looking for, and people really wanted to be together, you know, we had been locked inside for over 12 or 18 months at that point, and really just wanted human to human interaction. And so we sort of took these two things, and put them together and open this gallery in Venice Beach, where because everything is on chain and permissionless. We could show NF T's and we just wanted to educate people and bring them into the gallery. And we would do shows for artists and people would come to the shows. And inevitably they'd say, hey, I want to buy this, how do I get it? And we'd say, oh, you know, you have to open a Metamask wallet, and you have to write down your 12 magic words and put it on a piece of paper. And you're trying to do this during an event when music's playing and they've had a couple beers and like you've lost them. And so there was this idea which is well what if we gave away NF T's for free during the day to bring people into the gallery and then when they come back for the artist shows they'll already have a crypto wallet, they'll have a little bit of Ethernet they'll they'll know the drill and because they got a free NFT they'll know you know if they want to buy the artwork they can do so And this project became what was the crypto Venetians. And very soon it became obvious that this was the interesting thing. We launched our blocks, which was very fortunate. Jeff Davis was one of the first artists that we did a show with in Venice Beach on June 24. And because of that, we were in touch and we said, hey, you know, we have this idea we want to do crypto punks, but in Venice, and Jeff said, Oh, we should use our blocks, you could do it on that. And so crypto Venetians became a sub 100 project and our blocks are project number 95. And we had this requirement which was you need to come in person, you need to come in person you can't mint it online, in a world where everyone is able to get something for free and there used to minting online, you needed to get in your car or got get in a plane and fly to Venice Beach and walk into this gallery at you know, three to 5pm every day, and mint, your crypto Venetian. And we made a little ritual out of it right there was a few of us working in the gallery that time I say working but it was really a volunteer thing. I was sort of still at shortwave trying to balance, you know, my existing work with this sort of really rapidly growing community. And what it became was this really strong on chain symbol where

everyone that had one of these assets, was also telling us Hey, I am not only you know, a person that knows about generative art, but I know enough that I'm in on the secret where in Venice Beach is is really interesting cultural movement happening. And look, I can prove it because it's in my wallet. And it became almost like a status symbol or credential. And then because we are in this period of rapidly inflating asset prices, the crypto Venetian's became worth a lot of money. And it was actually really scary. It was like we were giving away 10 or 15 of these things every day. And at one point, they were trading for 15 $20,000. And so we're giving away what was essentially cars to people that would sign up. And it showed us a lot about human nature. It showed us a lot about greed. It showed us a lot about how to I you know understand people's intentions. And we sort of made it through this initial period. Not without you know, some some hiccups at one point an internal member of the team actually heisted, you know, 209 Crypto Venetians and essentially embezzled them. And that's a whole other story. But we made it through this initial period and said, There's something worth doing here, we can do this and take this model and replicate in other cities. And so we went to New York, we went to Berlin, we went to London, Mexico City, Tokyo, and we're getting ready to head to Buenos Aires, Paris and Venice. And when we're done, there's going to be 10 cities around the world that are voted on by the holders of these tokens. And those 10 communities that exist in the physical world will be networked together through this online token, and all of these people will have gone through the same initiation ritual. And it's different in every city. But the fundamentals are the same, which is you come in person, you meet the team and you meet other community members, and you have a shared experience. And we do our best to make that experience something that you'll never forget as long as you live. And that's a really high bar. But also, a lot of people don't have the opportunity to travel. And so even going to one of these cities, which tend to be some of the best cities in the world is a bucket list item for many. And we layer on top of that the opportunity to be present with other people that have shared interests. And if you're someone who's into crypto and none of your friends get it and you finally go to an event in a foreign city, it feels like this, oh my God moment, like people understand they're speaking the same language. And the feedback we've gotten, you know,

it's I've worked in startups, I've worked in big companies, bright moments isn't either of those. We're an on chain organization, we're a project. We are, you know, probably the worst capitalists of all time, like every event that we make, we funnel it back into the project and try to just throw better and better events. But the feedback that we get from people is like this changed my life, or I've met someone, you know, amazing through this. And we're best friends now. And it's sort of this really compelling feedback loop that's able to motivate us to keep going, despite how sort of difficult it's been with the broader market conditions, as well as just the toll of being on the road for almost two years.

Jake   34:11
Yeah, it's all super interesting and obviously struck a chord and it was interesting what you said, just just kick that off was like, you know, this, probably, like you hear things that you know, like too early, like that NF T side project you described that you had worked on with the sort of age verification, but it's not often that something comes along. It's like, it wasn't too early, but it also like could have been too late. And there was just a particular time and a particular place that made something work. So it's really cool that you guys were able to sort of strike lightning in a sense in Venice Beach in 2020. I believe you said and COVID are

Phil Mohun   34:45
2021 2021 Yeah. 21. It was right when the restrictions were lifted, right. And so people were so hungry to come in. And we would do every week. We would get together twice a week, and it was a volunteer group. We'd have a meeting where We'd sit in a circle, what can you contribute to the organization? What are your ideas, and then on Thursday nights, we throw these events. And then we sort of layered in this concept of life minting, which is what we do now for artists everywhere. And we help artists bring their work to life with the collector present. And for anyone who's ever gone to a museum or sort of, you know, seeing something that is more abstract, it can be really hard to understand what the artist is thinking or feeling. And so we try to make sure that the collector is always present when the art is being revealed. And that moment feels like magic. It's like we

realized very early on, there's something really special here, because it's on chain, because it's non, you know, you can't fake it. There's just a lot of things that weren't possible with previous technologies that crypto has enabled. And it's really allowed us to be international. It doesn't matter what language you speak, people all over the world really, really tend to love this.

Jake   35:56
So when you talk about a, I don't wanna use the wrong terminology, but like, basically a kickoff event, or the initial men at one of these locations that you're you're opening, the next one, I think, is in Argentina, in Buenos Aires. These other ones you've done, like, pick one that you like, or maybe talk about the Buenos Aires one coming up, but I'm curious to sort of get the, you know, start to finish or the high level of like, what actually goes into the kickoff, you know, are people buying these, you know, crypto citizens now, the given city up front, and I know there's, you sort of have to like show up with this NFT in order first of all that gives you access, and then you have the ability to mint one of these things. And so how is like the actual process go for people who might be listening now and an interested and then also like in Argentina, for example, like is this, you know, 50% of the people are flying in from LA in New York and other places where you've done these, or is this like a lot of Argentinians, or they're just sort of painting a picture of what it's actually like to be in one of these events. That sounds like it's a pretty unique experience.

Phil Mohun   37:00
Sure. So I think about it in three phases. There's the pre mint, the mint, and the post mint. And each one has different psychological effects on you know, the team doing it's really hard, frankly, because there's there's so much work involved, and you're in a new environment. And so the preeminent, what we do is we fly down to the city that's been selected by our community. And we always do sort of a vote that's looking forward. So Paris was just chosen, for example. So I just got back from Paris. And about six months ago, we went to Buenos Aires for the first time, we send out a small dance team. And we basically plant our flag there. And we'd like, hey, you know, here's who we are. Here's what we've done early on, we had nothing to

show. And so people were like, you know, who are you? And we'd say, well, we're nobody. And it's like, well, what have you done? We're like, Yeah, well, nothing, really. And it's like, what are you planning, and we're like, we're not sure of it, it's gonna be really good. And now over time, we've sort of been able to show past examples. And so in the present, we send out a small team. And we identify local artists, people that live in that city, who are within our sort of very niche, this idea of generative or AI art, and especially if they're doing work on chain, that really helps but we also bring artists on chain as well. And we put together essentially a collection, think about this, like a music festival, where there's 10, headliner artists who maybe you know, maybe some of you don't, and but you'd like to discover, and we broadcast it to our community, we say, Hey, we've gone to Argentina, we found 10 artists, here, we're going to be the dates, plan your travel. And that is sort of our initial planting the flag, we then raise revenue by selling some of the art ahead of time. And we sell that through this idea of a mid Pass, which is basically a ticket to come in to work in person. As it relates to our crypto citizens, we sell a third of them. And you know, that is basically saying, Hey, I definitely want a citizen from the city, I want to be a member of the crypto Patagonian community, we AirDrop a third for free to existing members on the stipulation that they come in person. And what this does is it creates a really interesting mix, you get people coming from Tokyo coming from Berlin, coming from Mexico, and then another third 334 to 1000, which is the largest percentage we give away for free to locals. And that's how we bootstrap the community. And so we take the art, which essentially provides, you know, an entertainment and a shared experience, sort of a creative opportunity and an outlet. And then we take the membership and we give them access to the artists and then we do our best to throw a world class event. And so for example, in Buenos Aires, it's from November 2 to the fifth of this year. And so we I don't want to share too many of the spoilers, but we rented out what was essentially private residence when Argentina was at the peak of its economic powers. It was built with hope for the future. It's very opulent, and obviously times have not gone well for the country. But there's still the sense of like optimism very embedded into the place and over two or three days will reveal all the artwork live. The Crypto Patagonia's

will be revealed. And then for a small group of collectors, we're flying 50 people down to the end of the world and Patagonia for a special mint with death beef and death beef is an on chain audio, visual generative artist, he's also a blacksmith. And so he's hand forged 100 steel objects that we're going to reveal to collectors in a live experience. And you can think about this, like, you know, it's a combination of a consumption good a travel experience, you know, a music festival, a community, a membership club, it's all of these things in none of them at the same time. And we try to do something that's unique to every city, right? So what we did in Tokyo is very high tech, what we did in what we're planning in Buenos Aires, is we're calling it on chain offline, right. So it's very sort of analog. And we really want to make sure that each experience feels authentic to the place that we're going. And so we work with the locals, we get them on boarded early, and and then we give them membership tokens to them, you know, for free. So when we leave, there's an existing community during the postman, and that forms the nucleus of the sub Dao. And it's really important that we put all of these resources in because it's like, you know, it's like a chemical reaction, you need a catalyst, you need something to get you over the activation energy, otherwise, people won't come together. And so we do that by bringing people in bringing our energy and expertise. And then when we leave the sub Dow behind, we'd give them the tools that we have, which is, you know, our marketplace, our display tech, you know, the playbook for throwing good events, and we try to give them the tools to self organize.

Jake   41:37
I like that oxymoron of on chain offline. That's a pretty cool combo. And sounds like something that that's very much up my alley personally, you guys are coming up, like you said, on I think, Buenos Aires, this is maybe the seventh or eighth location, you've got Paris and you know, finishing in Venice, like you started but in Italy instead of California. And so once you get through with these 10 locations, you know, obviously that was sort of the initial goal. And it seems sort of poised that there would be a next chapter after that of some kind, do you have sort of any vision at this point or

expectation of of what could come to follow or sort of the long term ambition of bright moments.

Phil Mohun   42:25
I mean, our mission has always been progressive decentralization and this core team of people, which has fluctuated over the years and grown and shrunk in size, we've always thought of ourselves as the ones who bootstrap the communities, but ultimately, they need to be able to sustain on their own. And so when we finished the 10 cities, the first thing that we want to do is take a moment appreciate the completion of this art project, right that there's 1000 citizens in every city, there's 10 cities, there's going to be 10,000 of these on chain assets, which represent, you know, I know, every token holder, I've met them in person have touched their hands. These are friends of mine, and these are friends of each other. It's highly networked community. And it's a roadmap that's going to take three years to complete. And so we want to just reflect on on the fact that this project that we said we were going to do is completed now, we'll also have at that point, worked with 100 artists who have each created 100 on chain assets, which is, you know, 10,000 assets. And so there's this really interesting duality of the 10,000 citizens, these 10,000 on chain assets that I hope will stand the test of time as this complete art project. And, you know, looking forward, we have such a strong expertise and throne world class productions and events, I would love to be able to get people together regularly. I'm very inspired by existing organizations. You know, I think that things like Coachella and Burning Man are great examples of how groups of people can continue to sustain, you know, creative energy over many decades. But right now, we're so focused on finishing the roadmap, that we don't want to take our eyes off the ball, and it's gonna take everything that we have, you know, financially and emotionally to get to the tent city. It's really hard. We all of us had careers and friends that we basically put on pause over the last few years to travel around. And you know, it looks really glamorous, but when you're, you know, by herself in a hotel room somewhere, and all your friends are back home, and you're trying to explain to them, you know why you need to finish this thing. It's not easy. And so we just really, we want to focus on finishing, we want to focus on completing

the roadmap that we set out to do. And then you know, at that point, we're going to have the goodwill of these 10,000 people around the world. And hopefully we can continue creating, you know, amazing experiences together, but we need to earn it first.

Jake 44:45
Yeah, that's super cool. And I think just having an eye on, you know, running through the finish line and, and just crushing the last chapter of the project makes a ton of sense. It sounds like it's definitely been, you know, a long and tough effort but Uh, hopefully seems to be paying off in a lot of ways. And a lot of people around the world I'm sure it sounds like, very much appreciated and things could sort of develop outside of this, I'm sure that aren't even, you know, the whole point of decentralization basically is you guys don't really necessarily need to determine what's next, their community can kind of decide if and when, you know, it gets to that point. So I guess, you know, I know we've got a few minutes coming up to wrap up, but outside of sort of this project, and, you know, we talked a bit about forecaster, but is there anything else sort of in crypto that, that you're paying close attention to, and maybe if not, you could just speak to sort of your transition from, you know, you talk about sort of like, the world is sort of very slowly migrating towards crypto, we still need people to sort of get wallets that are convenient, and everything like this, and it might be like, sort of 1995 and, and all of these things, but you sort of took like a fast track where, you know, you started with a consulting firm and ended up, you know, basically leaving the Dow in a matter of a few years. So it's a very different lifestyle. And, you know, the way the Dow is work is quite complex. So if there's not something else in crypto, that might be interesting for you to talk about them. Just hearing what it's like to sort of be fully immersed in, you know, the crypto world, I think would be a pretty interesting place to wrap up.

Phil Mohun 46:27
Sure. So yeah, you know, I mentioned we're an on chain organization. And so what does that mean? It means we get paid in eath, which by itself is sort of a very interesting experience. Your mood, day to day, month to month is often determined by the market and and we don't

peg people in USD, we don't say, Oh, you're gonna make X USD a year, and we'll back in into eath. It's like, No, you get x eath a month. And if eath is up, congratulations, we're happy together. And if he if he's down, we're happy together. And and why don't we do that? One, I think it from a cultural standpoint is really interesting as an organization, because it means that we're all in, but to all of our revenue is in eath. And so it would actually be backwards for us to pay people in Fiat. And I think we're gonna see more of this in the future, where as revenue is denominated in, you know, baselayer tokens, people are being paid in that token, then it's sort of on them to be able to, you know, balance it across different currencies. And Balaji has a great line here, which is, you know, constants become variables. And so I think this is a variable that has changed for me over the last few years, and will probably change for more people in the future, where it's like, what currency you paid in, oh, it's not Fiat, oh, it's not USD. Now. Well, it's actually, you know, ether, or Bitcoin or some other base level currency where the business actually operates. You know, the other thing is just the fact that we've been able to have an international team of contributors, I think, is uniquely something that is possible with crypto and our ability to scale really quickly, and go to these international communities, and sort of find a small group of people who are very interested in what we're doing, and then quickly ramp them up and give them the skills and processes that we've developed, develop to build their own community. It feels a little bit like a proto network state, it's early. And it's, it's you can't really, there's a lot of things are missing. But every month, there's some new developments. And the one I'm looking at right now is this idea of account abstraction and giving people eath wallets with social logins. And it's like this is a huge unlock. And internally, we're thinking about all the ways that we can use it. And so when the protocol is changing this quickly, a lot of what we do is just try to hang on for the ride and wait for the technology, they come to us and move on to the market. And there's a great story about you know, when the iPod was being, you know, thought through, what actually happened was that there was a small storage unit that got developed that can hold, you know, 1000 songs, and this thing was just created, it was brand new. And you know, they went out and they struck a deal, basically, to have the exclusive license to

use this thing. And without that the iPod couldn't have existed, you really need to have your ear to the ground. And so I think a lot of what we do in crypto, and as this crypto native organization is just trying to, you know, evaluate all the changes in the market and see what's coming. And then that unlocks a lot of new things. You know, I'm really interested in what the nouns builder team is doing. I think their ability to unlock crypto Native organizations like ours with a native governance policy that doesn't rely on off chain snapshots or three of five multi Cigs is, you know, part of where the future will go. And then I also look at what purple is doing as a way to fund open source goods. And so a lot of these things are you have to see something that's very early and not quite ready yet, but then be willing to extrapolate and think about, well, how big could this get right? And take off the skeptic hat for a moment and allow yourself to play out okay, if everything goes according to plan, and then we work backwards. What do we need to do today to make sure we're in the right place. And so that's a lot of what we do. And we're really fortunate to have people from all over the world that give us input because not everything happens here in California, believe it or not, there are things in other countries that are way ahead of what we're doing here. And so we have the benefit of physically going there and having conversations with these people who are able to share with us a little bit of what the future looks like.

Jake   50:23
Awesome. Well, I think we're both very much looking forward to seeing what that future looks like. And it's cool to sort of have a peek through your perspective as to what's going on, especially in crypto land and even just getting paid and eath is a pretty unique thing. And, you know, people talk about crypto is sort of going from a store of value to something else. But that's quite clearly, you know, store of value medium of exchange and unit of account for you and with with a lot of consequences, for better or worse. So hopefully it all ends up going really well. And I believe it will, but thanks again, Phil, I know we're up on time for coming on. And, you know, it's been great talk with you, where can people go to sort of follow your story and, and bright moments and everything like that?

Phil Mohun   51:04
Yeah, so I'm on I'm on forecaster at Phil. My website is my first
name, last name, Phil mo Hu n.com. And then we're bright moments.io.
And so you know, over the next year and a half, I'll be in Buenos
Aires, Paris in Venice, helping to complete the roadmap. Or if you're
in a city where we have a self doubt, please stop by we have a
community of really wonderful people. Whether you're crypto native or
not, who would love to either get you your first wallet or go deep in
the weeds about something. You can find a home there.

Jake   51:35
Awesome. Well, thanks again, fellas. It's great to talk

Phil Mohun   51:39
to you soon. Thanks, you