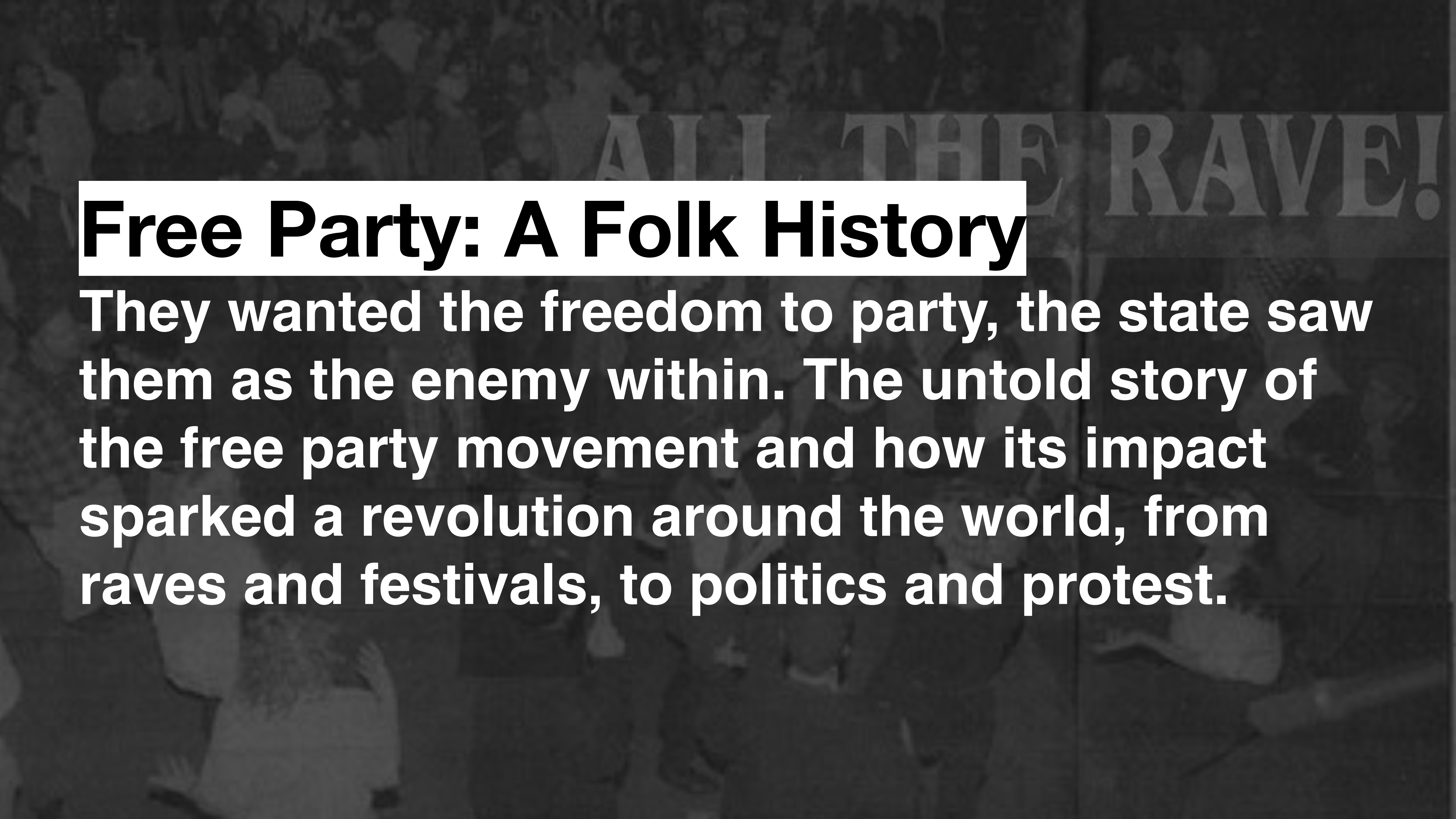


An aerial photograph of a large crowd gathered in a field, likely for a festival or event. The crowd is dense and colorful, with many people wearing bright clothing. The background shows a green field and some trees.

FREE PARTY: A FOLK HISTORY

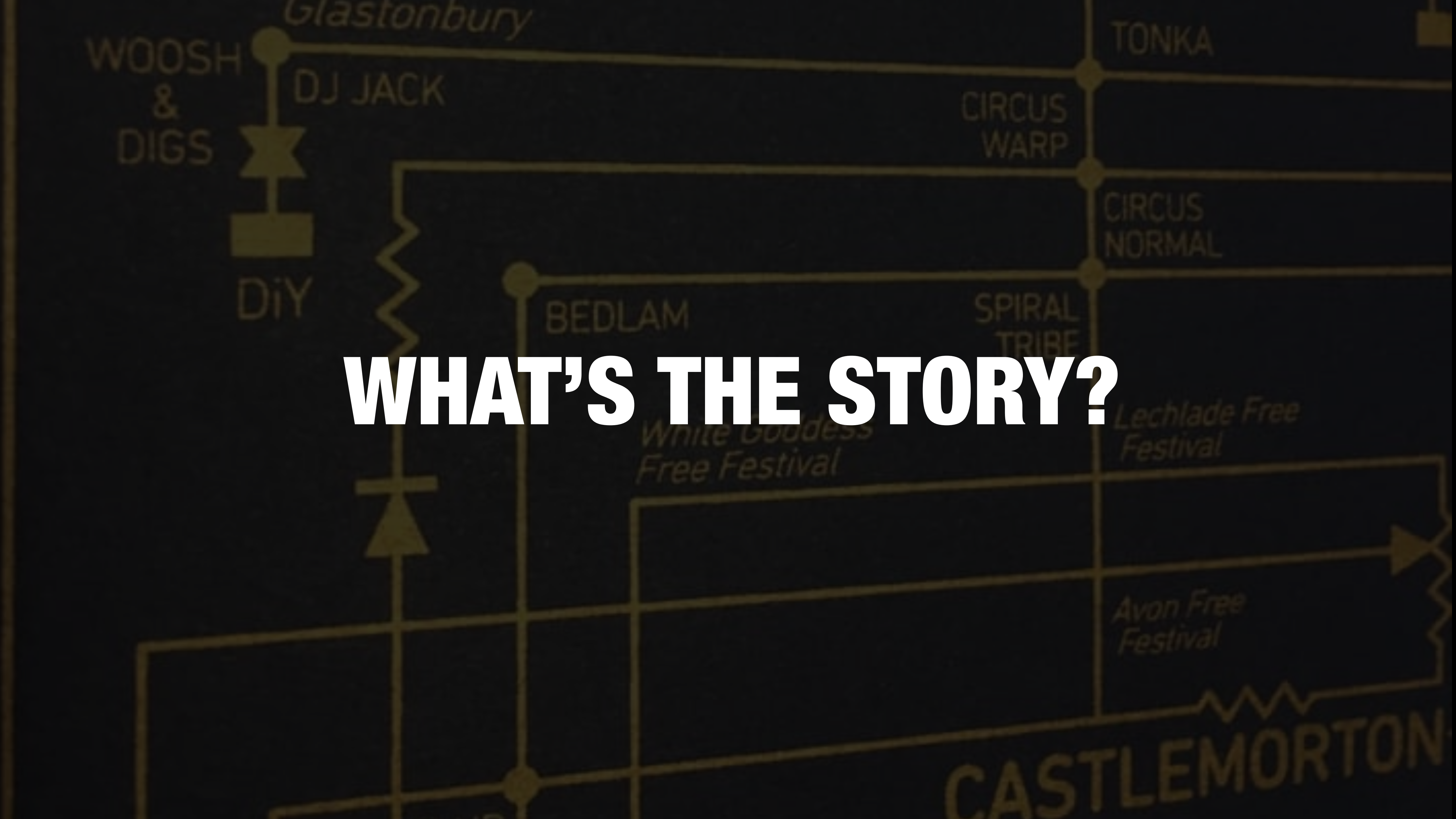
Castlemorton and the origins of the Free Party movement

Trinder Films 2023

The background is a dark, grainy photograph of a large crowd of people at a rave or festival. Many people have their arms raised in the air. Overlaid on the upper portion of the image is the text "WALL THE RAVE!" in a large, bold, serif font, with the word "WALL" appearing slightly faded or transparent compared to "THE RAVE!".

Free Party: A Folk History

They wanted the freedom to party, the state saw them as the enemy within. The untold story of the free party movement and how its impact sparked a revolution around the world, from raves and festivals, to politics and protest.

The background is a dark, textured surface resembling a circuit board. It features a network of thin, light-colored lines representing traces. Various electronic components are depicted in a simplified, schematic-like style: a resistor (zigzag line), a capacitor (two parallel lines), a diode (triangle with a line), and a transistor (a circle with a line). Text labels are scattered across the board, including "Glastonbury" at the top, "WOOSH & DIGS" on the left, "DJ JACK" near the top center, "CIRCUS WARP" and "CIRCUS NORMAL" on the right, "BEDLAM" and "SPIRAL TRIBE" in the middle, "White Goddess Free Festival" and "Lechlade Free Festival" at the bottom right, "Avon Free Festival" below that, and "CASTLEMORTON" at the very bottom. A large, bold, white text overlay is centered in the middle of the image.

WHAT'S THE STORY?

Story / Synopsis

1990, UK. The initial euphoria of the acid house orbital raves had waned after a government crack down on illegal 'pay parties'. The energy, creativity and radical promise of the 'second summer of love' assimilated into clubland, or commercial 'rip off raves' charging £50 a ticket or more.

With the recession beginning to bite, the dream seemed over.

But a new underground began to emerge with a radical idea to fill the void. Why not make these gatherings go beyond weekend hedonism, instead rejecting the conventional transactional relationship between party go-er and organiser and in the process, commercialism itself.

Why not make them - free parties?

Sound systems such as **Tonka** in Brighton, Nottingham's anarchic collective **DiY**, with their 'everyone welcome' attitude and London's **Spiral Tribe**, with their secretive, cult-like image, started to appear across the country. Starting in small squats and 'broken' warehouses, left abandoned by years of dying industry in Thatchers Britain, they aimed to create an antidote to mainstream clubbing.

At the Glastonbury Festival in 1990, both **Tonka** and **DiY** decided to take their decks and records to try and get a gig, only to end up playing for three nights to an entirely new audience in the 'anything goes' travellers field.

"We met these travellers at Glastonbury 1990, and it just ... clicked" - Harry DiY

Story / Synopsis cont.

More and more sound systems began to venture out of the cities and into what was left of the free festival circuit, which, although badly bruised after Thatcher's attempts to destroy the travellers lifestyle at the Battle of the Beanfield, still offered a glimpse of the freedom the urban ravers craved.

At first this meeting of travellers and ravers was problematic. Events dating back decades, where traveller families lived 'on site' in buses living an entirely nomadic alternative lifestyle, began to turn into 72 hour raves. The urban ravers had little idea of the notion of 'leaving no trace' on the land, and the new music pounding through the night was a world away from the acoustic and punk that had gone before. But gradually, the two tribes began to merge, and these free festival / raves began growing in numbers, from hundreds, to thousands, to tens of thousands, through word of mouth alone throughout the summer of 1991.

In the winter of 1991 the sound systems returned to the warehouses in the cities, but now with a growing following and with **Spiral Tribe** in particular, a growing media interest. Each week ravers dialled into the 'info line' with excitement to find out where the next party would be. But after a series of larger urban events including the Roundhouse in London, whose size seemed to take everyone by surprise, the police began cracking down using much more brutal tactics, including a full scale assault on a **Spiral Tribe** party in Acton Lane, with Tactical Aid Group police attacking ravers seemingly at random.

Despite the violence, the missionary zeal of the sound systems was undeterred, and as 1992 began the parties got bigger and bigger, with more and more sound systems appearing including **Bedlam**, **LSDiezil**, **Desert Storm** and many others. More and more ravers attended, attracted to the lifestyle and freedom the festivals offered away from the humdrum of conventional life in recession hit Britain.

Story / Synopsis cont.

A huge convoy began to travel around the country, with the media stories becoming increasingly alarmist, and government discussions about how best to deal with this 'band of medieval brigands'*. This 'unholy alliance' of ravers and travellers provoked fear in the establishment as local police forces shunted it from county to county.

By a series of accidents, word of mouth and police collusion, this finally culminated at Castlemorton Common in May 1992. Headline TV news for a week, between 20-60,000 ravers and travellers partied for 7 days. For some this was utopia, largely trouble free and self policed. But now the media had its new folk devils. The British establishment cracked down heavily with both force and legislation, arresting various members of **Spiral Tribe** and other sound systems and eventually changing the law with the draconian criminal justice act (CJA). The resulting trial lasted years, and cost the tax payer millions, and despite **Spiral Tribe's** eventual acquittal, the game was up.

Police oppression and violence, backed by the threat of the new laws forced the travellers, Spiral Tribe, Bedlam and many other sound systems out to the newly established EU and around the world, where they took their buses and sound systems on the road, inspiring a generation of local youth to create techno utopias of their own, including the enormous 'Teknivals' in France and Czech. Living life on the road came with numerous personal consequences along the way, but this quest for freedom was hard to quench.

The adventures on the road lasted a decade including **Desert Storm** sound system going to war-torn Bosnia and **Dance Conspiracy** crossing into India overland. **DiY** meanwhile headed around the world, including linking up with former **Tonka** sound system members in San Francisco, turning on a new generation in the US to the free party lifestyle.

Story / Synopsis cont.

30 years later, dance music and festival culture is the dominant youth medium, from Glastonbury to Coachella, Burning man and even the hyper commercial disaster of the 'Fyre' Festival. Huge EDM events, using the template of the free parties but on a huge commercial scale, criss-cross the US, raving, festivals and dance music now a huge commercialised industry.

Was the free party dream itself consumed into the mainstream?

But with a rise in authoritarian regimes, endless austerity, as well as epoch defining global issues such as climate breakdown, we see a resurgent radical culture, with its roots in the free parties of the 90s. With governments across the world increasingly creating new laws restricting freedoms to gather, dance, protest, use common land and making travelling lifestyles illegal, the story is more relevant than ever before.

In the 30 years since the birth of the free party movement we find ourselves once again in an era of political turmoil, where mainstream society's norms are being questioned.

The 30th anniversary of the Criminal Justice Act in 2024 in the UK means the film has a significant contemporary relevance as we look back to how we got to where we are.

This story must be heard, and here's how we tell it.....

STORY STRUCTURE

Story Structure

The power of the story is that it has a classic structure. An unfolding dramatic narrative based over 5 acts.

We have multiple protagonists (the sound systems, DiY, Spiral Tribe, Bedlam, Travellers, Circus Warp) naive, utopian but with a common goal, something magical, a holy grail - community, unity, ecstasy, an alternative way of living. But they have an ultimate antagonist in their way - the state, with its powerful side kick - the media.

ACT 1: A group of utopian young people discover something magical, then go on a mission to spread this radical magical experience, suffering great challenges along the way.

ACTS 2+3: But they come up against the full force of the state (antagonist) determined to destroy it. The protagonists challenge is increasingly overwhelming, and indeed once the violence of the state becomes real, the community begin to fracture, with increasing paranoia, fragmentation and eventual arrest at the enormous Castlemorton Common Free Festival in 1992.

ACT 4: Ultimately the dream seems shattered with the Criminal Justice Act, but lives on to fight another day when they escape to the continent, the US and beyond evading jail, and spreading their message across the globe.

ACT 5: Despite the commercialisation of festivals and rave culture, we see a resurgence in the present day, where the need for radical culture has become ever more present as oppressive regimes are on the rise, and climate breakdown's effects become more and more evident.

Free parties and protest back to the forefront once again.

TRAILER

FREE PARTY: A FOLK HISTORY

<https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/mrtorquay/free-party-a-documentary>



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-C1XxSKQTI8>

PRODUCTION



Contributors

The film's been in development by Trinder Films for over 5 years and we've cultivated incredible and deep connections with the contributors in our film. The film really does show aspects of a very intense and secret lifestyle never seen before including references to personal challenges, illegality and living as outlaws in a societal structure they saw as unjust.

Our characters are very open about their experiences, shedding light on the intensity and personal journeys they've had. They're also engaging and fascinating to listen to. Mark from Spiral Tribe is a mesmerising speaker and story teller, Grace DiY is funny and dead pan, Harry DiY is cutting, direct and also hilarious, Debbie is straight talking, warm and honest. We have a fascinating array of characters who've very rarely, if ever, shared their experiences on camera. They've also opened up their archives to us, including many elements of film, photos, artworks, diaries which have never been seen on film before.



Film / Archive / Music

We've also filmed at contemporary festivals and raves such as **Glastonbury**, **Boomtown** and at protests such as Kill the bill, **Extinction Rebellion** and **Youth Strikes**, anniversary events and political rallies, refugee kitchens and illegal parties bringing the story up to date and showing the connection of our contemporary culture with its free party origins.

We've researched and included archive material from a variety of commercial sources, and this creates the context and sense of the mainstream perspective throughout. But we do need funding for these key 'commercial licenses, and including them will make a huge difference to create a complete picture of the story from the various different perspectives.

We have an amazing soundtrack! Containing an original musical score as well as classic tunes from the era evocative of the time, transporting you back to the fields of the early 90s. The classic tunes are essential, and obtaining licenses for these is another budget challenge, but with great relationships to artists of the day they're allowing us to use tracks at a much reduced and reasonable rate in comparison to standard licensing costs.

A large crowd of people is gathered at a festival at night. In the background, a hillside is covered with people sitting on the grass. A large, colorful, smiling face sculpture is visible on the hill. The word "GLASTONBURY" is written in large letters on the hillside. The foreground is filled with people standing and walking. The text "SALES POTENTIAL" is overlaid in large, white, bold letters across the center of the image.

SALES POTENTIAL

Sales potential

The film has an 'in-built' and 'ready made' audience in the UK, France, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Holland, US etc including 150k+ members of currently active social groups for Spiral Tribe, DiY, Bedlam, Liberator etc on Facebook. This audience is already desperate to see the film having seen the trailer and backed the film on Kickstarter - The trailer alone has been watched over 50k times.

There is a very active and buzzing Facebook group for the film with 5000 members and growing. The initial Kickstarter campaign raised £32k (260% of its target) which lead to a rough cut of the film, as well as a series of events including a work in progress screening @ Lost Horizon in Bristol (funded by the arts council) celebrating Free Party culture, including DJ nights (with Spiral Tribe, DiY hosting a night) and a special 'work in progress' screening of the film over 3 nights, which was packed each night.

The reaction to these 'work in progress' screenings has been astonishing.

Tears, cheering and wildly positive responses to the film from people who lived it, and, interestingly a huge positive response from young people who knew nothing of the film or its story before! Since then we've equally successful work in progress screenings at Glastonbury, Boomtown, London College of Fashion, Amsterdam ADM, FOLD and POP up in Stroud.

Film Festivals / Distribution

About

Discussion

A number of film festivals have already confirmed for Autumn 2023 Q3 screenings, including Doc n Roll (UK wide screenings including potentially BFI, Rio, London, Bristol, Brighton, Manchester Glasgow, Leeds etc), Musical Ecran (Bordeaux), Sound Clash (Berlin), as well as screenings at events in Portugal and Zurich, plus discussions with major institutions such as the Southbank and Barbican about possible screenings and associated events.

Events

We've been approached by several distributors and sales agents already, but we're keen to get the film into festivals before committing to a specific sales agent. The exposure and interest created during our festival run will create even more of a buzz around the film and ideally, create a 'bidding war' between potential distribution and sales partners.

Photos

It will resonate across trans-generational audiences from millennial consumers of popular culture, to middle aged persons remembering the stories of their youth, plus a much wider audience who love dramatic cultural history docs such as **'Wild Wild Country'**, **'Amy'**, **'Fyre Fraud'**, **'Senna'** or **'Montage of Heck'**.

Watch party

There is a large public appetite for counter cultural stories such as this one, both on streaming platforms and on domestic broadcasters. Dance music is big business across the globe and the film has potential to be acquired in a large amount of territories including UK, EU, North and South America, Asia. We've already had offers but have decided to wait until our festival run to maximise potential returns once the film is in the public eye.

Group quality

A large crowd of people is gathered at a festival at night. In the background, a large sign reads 'GLASTONBURY'. The crowd is diverse, with people of various ages and styles. Some are standing, some are sitting. The scene is illuminated by festival lights, creating a vibrant atmosphere. The text 'REVIEWS OF THE 'WORK IN PROGRESS SCREENINGS'' is overlaid in the center of the image.

REVIEWS OF THE 'WORK IN PROGRESS SCREENINGS'

ERA 1990-1994

WERE YOU THERE?

The group is growing!!!!!!

We saw the work-in-progress at a small festival in Hampshire and it was everything we hoped it would be. From the earlier backstory of the travellers and the ravers, through the ecstatic explosion of the late 80s and early nineties and on into the modern festival and free party scenes. The audience was spellbound, chanting, laughing, jeering and singing along. I honestly don't think there was a dry eye in the house by the end. A nostalgic and optimistic portrait of a seminal moment in the dance.

Susan Edwards,

Rob Large, aged 57, former traveller, now living in Devon

Sarah Burns,

My fella and I went to see the film on a sunny Saturday afternoon in Bristol. It was the best retrospective of our lives together - from start to finish. We were both free festival goers before getting into the party scene. The scenes from various sites and parties bough back so many memories, the music and images fitted so well as a record of that very special time. My chap was in the layby before taking Castlemorton and he can still find his van on the aerial pics in a nano-second! By the end of the showing there were grown men in tears and folks hugging - one thing that struck me chatting to several couples was we had all met our partners about 30 years ago, were still together and connected to the scene in some way - that's a testament to how special and important a time it was and how it has influenced so much since. This is a great record of the counter culture of the time and an important piece of our shared history.

Lisa Somerset 58

Nigel Little,

Group insights

Andy Smith

"Free Party" is one of the most important documentaries of recent years. Capturing the whole essence of the free party scene of the late 80s into the 90s. The people, the places and the political backdrop that brought a diverse group of people together in fields and warehouses around the UK in search of pure enjoyment to the sound of repetitive electronic beats. Driven by free thinking people, as acts of resistance and creativity. This scene is only now gaining the respect it has deserved for time because of this film. It is essential viewing for both those that were there and those too young to know about it.

Charles Lawrence,

Andy P. (60) Brighton

Clancey Gardiner,

Geoffrey Chandler,

ERA 1990-1994

WERE YOU THERE?

Private group

Your film is so hugely inspiring to me as a DJ in my 20s at the beginning of my journey in music. I've been thinking about saving for a sound system for some time now and your film has really emboldened me. As I mentioned, I'm part of [Sisu](#) a collective of women and non binary DJs and producers. A few of us went to see the film on Wednesday and it was so uplifting and reminded us of why we do what we do. Thank you for your amazing work.

Sophia and Sisu crew x

Sarah Burns,

It's an evocative and very accurate representation of what was happening not only in the scene at that time but in the wider world - the UK post-Thatcher and the impact that a bunch of house and techno rebels had on the culture at the time. It's clear that Castlemoreton and the free parties scared the absolute shit out of the people in charge. It was radically new and a clear threat to the ruling class - they couldn't understand anything about it and their reaction is something we all live with today, politically, culturally, even economically. Because of this, the documentary isn't just a record of a very special time in the lives of those of us fortunate enough to have been there. It is also an important piece of social history that deserves a wide audience. It's also funny, nostalgic, very moving and has some banging toons in it. Great work guys - thank you!

Ian - Barcelona

Nigel Little,

Free Party: A Folk History is a beautiful, fascinating film: one which captures the sound and colour of the free party with rare insight and personal connection, but also successfully knits those stories into a wider narrative about British society, politics and culture. By turns hilarious, unsettling, righteously banging and elegiac, it's a vital record of a critical and hugely influential moment in UK underground culture, and a stunning piece of cinema in its own right.

ED Gillet - Author of 'Party Lines'

Arty Type,

Moderate group

Charles Lawrence,

Group quality

Clancey Gardiner,

Geoffrey Chandler,

A large crowd of people is gathered at the Glastonbury Festival at night. The scene is illuminated by warm festival lights and string lights. In the background, a large sign reads "GLASTONBURY". A tall, colorful, smiling face sculpture is visible in the middle ground. The crowd is diverse and appears to be enjoying the event.

PRESS

ERA 1990-1994

WERE YOU THERE?

Private group

After the kickstarter campaign the film received a great deal of press attention, including articles in the Observer, a BBC 6 curated DJ night and a host of interest from international press. A few links below.

About

BLESSED MADONNA SHOW

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/w754bwv8n80qx8m/The%20Blessed%20Madonna%20100721%20pt3of4.wav?dl=0>

Members

Raves from the grave: lost 90s subculture is back in the ...

<https://selector.news/2021/05/20/aaron-trinder-films-free-party-folk-history/>

<https://mixmag.net/read/documentary-90s-free-party--folk-history-news>

<https://djmag.com/news/new-documentary-history-uk-s-free-party-movement-works>

[https://electro-news.eu/nouveau-documentaire-naissance-free-party-2021/?fbclid=IwAR0D-Goo6z-](https://electro-news.eu/nouveau-documentaire-naissance-free-party-2021/?fbclid=IwAR0D-Goo6z-unjt3sy4AQE4NzSBJvT7ObxdLGZCJrMwNjFiZujuzP9YwGGE)

[unjt3sy4AQE4NzSBJvT7ObxdLGZCJrMwNjFiZujuzP9YwGGE](https://electro-news.eu/nouveau-documentaire-naissance-free-party-2021/?fbclid=IwAR0D-Goo6z-unjt3sy4AQE4NzSBJvT7ObxdLGZCJrMwNjFiZujuzP9YwGGE)

<https://fourfourmag.com/free-party-a-documentary-kickstarter-project/>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000xsns>

Group insights

Free party: A Retrospective - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7qWX_WhWb1I

Watch party

Moderate group

Group quality

THE TEAM



THE TEAM

Aaron Trinder / Director / Producer

Aaron Trinder is a director / producer and company director at Trinder Films creating short, medium and long form films within documentary, commercials, narrative and brand. His clients include Historic England, National Trust, BT, Nokia, Vodafone amongst many others. He's won a 'jury special mention' award for a short sci fi film 'Mr Torquay's Holiday' commissioned by Film London, and been a 2nd unit director on feature films (Blue Iguana) where he directed Oscar winner Sam Rockwell. He's also been 1st AD on numerous short films and tv.

His primary passion is long form film-making and Free Party: A Folk history has been in development for over 5 years. Aaron's personal experiences inside the rave and dance scene as a DJ and producer, gives him a unique insight into the free party era, and deep access to the contributors of a previously camera shy culture. His next projects are producing a feature documentary about Welsh Punk Band 2000DS as well as a fiction feature film set in 1970s London.

www.trinderfilms.co.uk



THE TEAM

Andrew Gaston / Editor

has been working as an artist since buying his first video camera in 1990, aged 19.

His work since then has led him into documentary filmmaking, editing and video installation.

Documentary editing is currently his mainstay but Andrew continues to run his art projects alongside his commissions for television editing.

In the last ten years he has completed documentary projects for Netflix and the BBC and also produced original content for many fashion, film and global advertising campaigns.

He lives and works in Camden, London.

Nick Evans / Editor

Nick Evans graduated from Central Saint Martins with a BA in Art & Design, specialising in film. His directorial debut was a short film titled 'The Secret Life of Insects', which explored The Uncanny and feelings of disassociation growing up in a small West Midlands town. After starting his career as an editor in the video games industry, he then worked out of Soho with various directors and advertising agencies on commercials before discovering his passion for long-form content. His love for the craft of narrative storytelling has led him to pursue a career in drama and documentary editing. He recently completed a documentary examining the impact of colonialism in the Caribbean for BBC2.

Marc Hardman / VFX / Animation

is a filmmaker, graphic designer and animator who has worked for some of the UK's leading broadcasters and design agencies including English&Pockett, Lambie-Nairn, BBC, MTV, ITV and The Discovery Channel. Marc has worked extensively in both Television and Film (earning Visual Effects Supervision credits on feature films). He has also produced and directed his own documentary (broadcast on Sky) and has written several feature screenplays with his first going into production in 2022 and currently in post-production.

THE TEAM

Jez Lewis / Exec Producer

Jez Lewis is a company director of Bungalow Town Productions, specialising in international feature documentaries which have won numerous awards including an Emmy, a Grierson, and two Peabodys. Director, producer and executive producer, Jez also trains emerging feature documentary producers.

Jez's own feature documentary as director, *Shed Your Tears And Walk Away*, (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CzkAahsr5qY&t=214s>) premiered at London Film Festival 2009, and won Best UK First Feature at London's East End Film Festival 2010, an award intended for drama.

Previously Jez worked very closely with Nick Broomfield for two years, co-writing and producing Nick's feature drama *Ghosts*.

<http://www.bungalow-town.com>



LETS TALK

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