

# DIRTY SQUATTERS

They lived on the road as a lawless punk family.

But their search for freedom would come at a heavy price.

A DIRTY SQUATTERS FILM 2024



# **Dirty Squatters The Story Of 2000DS**

**This documentary film is about an outlaw family from Wales, who were also one of the UK Traveller scene's most notorious punk groups. Together with their children, they toured the lost squats and no-go areas of the world, living and dying on the road.**



A dark, high-contrast, grainy image of a group of people, possibly a band, with text overlaid. The image is very dark and has a high level of contrast, making it difficult to discern specific details. The text is overlaid on two white rectangular boxes.

**WHO ARE THEY?**

**WHAT'S THE STORY?**

# THE STORY

The story starts with a series of flashbacks to the 1980s & '90s, as seen through the eyes of Josie and her brother Gwyn. As some of the youngest members of the band, they both appeared onstage at punk gigs since they were toddlers.

We join them ten years after the road accident that killed their family and destroyed the band.

The siblings were both involved in the accident and experienced traumatic injuries, which they still carry with them today.

As two of our main interviewees, Gwyn & Josie lead us through the story of the band's remarkable history.

Formed by two teenage brothers from the Welsh Valleys, 2000DS travelled the world with like-minded groups Mutoid Waste & Spiral Tribe.

At the tail end of the 1980s there was still a large squatters network in the cities of Europe & North America. In a convoy of vehicles 2000DS toured the world with their family at breakneck speed, playing gigs, having fights and often being chased or beaten by the police.

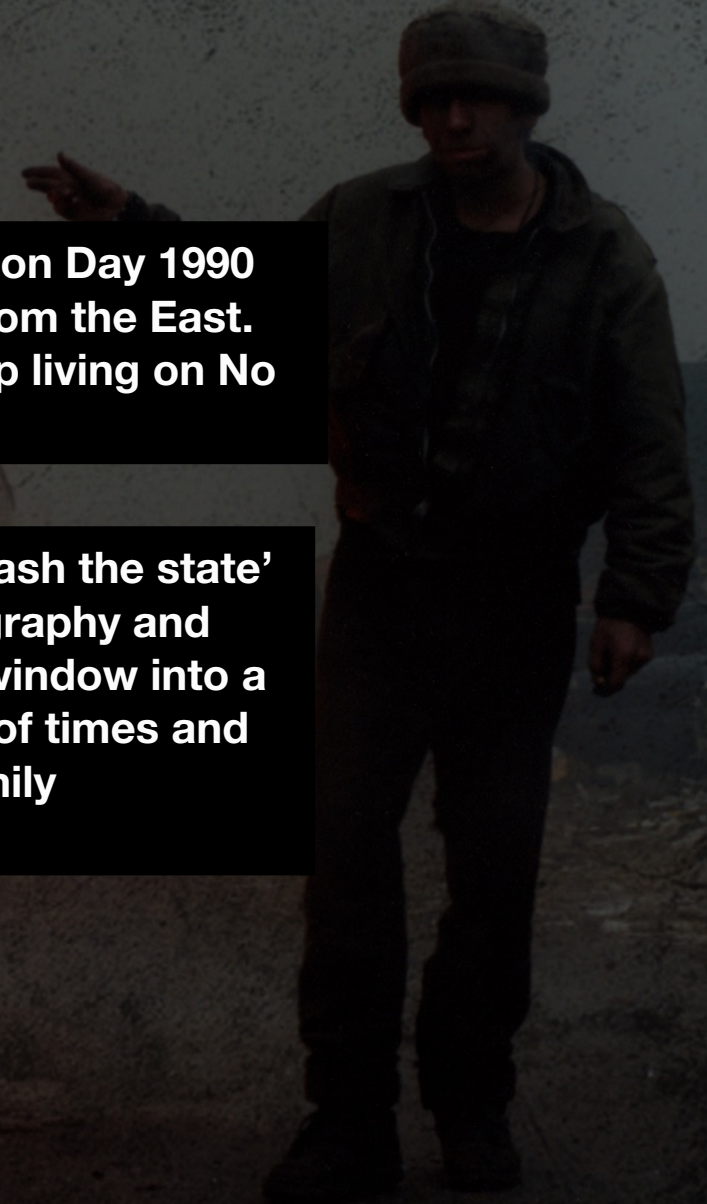


# THE STORY

continued..

When they ran out of diesel and money in Berlin on Unification Day 1990 they played a street gig as people poured over the border from the East. Huge swathes of the city were empty and the band ended up living on No Man's Land, next to remnants of the Berlin Wall.

Despite their anarchist lifestyle and modus operandi of 'smash the state' the band shot and collected a vast amount of video, photography and tour paraphernalia on their travels. Like looking through a window into a lost world, this archive not only presents a valuable record of times and places few other people dared to go but also acts like a family scrapbook.





# **THE STORY**

**continued..**

For Gwyn and for Josie, who still has gaps in her childhood memories due to the brain damage inflicted by the crash, there are mixed feelings about their family's past.

In some footage Josie can be seen aged 5, dancing around onstage, as 2000DS let rip behind her.

Sometimes she had to man the door and ask for donations, holding her own against hardcore punks four times her age.

But by counting the door money she would at least teach herself maths.

In 1996, aged 11 Josie was involved in her first car accident, and although miraculously escaping serious injury, her mother Kath was tragically left permanently disabled.

Kath had been used to the fast life, singing onstage, creating Dirty Squatters merchandise and supporting the band with cash.

As Kath began a very slow recovery, she demonstrated tremendous willpower and eventually after years of treatment she became able enough to travel the world again.



# **THE STORY**

**continued..**

**In 2011 Kath, Gary, Gwyn & younger sister Caisie were on the last leg of their trip round the world. This trip needed a great deal of organizing with Kath in her wheelchair. But on the family's trip to Jamaica tragedy occurred. Their minibus was involved in a head-on collision with another car and mother and father Kath & Gary, their sister Caisie and Josie's best friend Talei were all killed.**

**Gwyn & Josie have persevered but in the interim almost all squats have been demolished and redeveloped, communities scattered - crushed by unrelenting gentrification. Travellers have all but disappeared, confined to permanent sites as their way of life became outlawed.**

**Recently, the Cost of Living Crisis has driven a rise in homelessness but also an interest in a new style of 'van living'. As a story we unfold the past through interviews with the remaining Dirty Squatters to witness a time where DIY culture and communal living promised a new utopia. Serving as a part human interest, part music documentary, the story is a reminder that there is another way to live, with the idea of family at its core.**



# STORY STRUCTURE



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The power of our story is that it has a classic story structure. A dramatic family story unfolding across 5 acts. A penniless family create the dream of living freely on the road and despite great challenges, overcome everything until a cataclysmic ending.

**ACT 1:** A group of Welsh youths coalesce around the new sound of punk and move to London in 1986 to start a band. They squat huge buildings and put on their first gigs but are edged out by another new sound - Acid House - and take to the road as New age Travellers.

**ACT 2&3:** They tour Europe & North America in mutated buses & trucks, garnering a reputation as an explosive live act. They start families and take their kids on tour with them, living freely. After several years the band and families begin to splinter and their squatting and travelling lifestyle comes into jeopardy when the mother and daughter are involved in a car accident. The mother is permanently disabled.

**ACT 4:** With their dreams of a free life in ruins, the family gravitate around the mother, helping her with her recovery. The father starts new musical projects and gathers together new groups, forming a record label and many European tours.

**ACT 5:** As the mother becomes more mobile in her wheelchair, the family start to take trips around the world together. But tragically 4 of them are killed in a car accident in Jamaica. The 2 survivors (sister & brother) aim for a deeper understanding of their past and with it some closure.





# PRODUCTION



# Production/ Casting

Since 2021, we have been working with the surviving family and tracking down all the other band members. Although there were 30 guitarists in the band over the years, we are only scheduled to interview 3 of them. 2000DS drummer Paul ( who was 16 when he joined the band ) has already given us 2 revealing interviews, running at some 7 hours in length.

Our other protagonists feature former members of Mutoid Waste Company, Spiral Tribe and a whole host of other artists, musicians and former squatters. Each person has a revealing story to tell about the family and band.

This underground scene is a period of history which is largely overlooked, being before the advent of camera phones and the internet.

We have been working on building trust with many others who were there and continue to gain access to many of their private archives and memories. All of which helps to paint a unique picture of this incredibly creative period in our subcultural history.





# Filming / Archive

In 2020 I tracked down the band's archives, which were spread across England in several boxes and suitcases. Since then I have digitised almost 60 videotapes, scanned in scores of old photos, flyers and organised all the old 2000DS music masters into the project.

I've also been on various missions to find other archives in Europe & UK. The majority of these have been stored in old analogue media formats and previously unseen for decades. There is a wealth of folk history here, linking crucial aspects of our story. We have even found newsreel footage of the 2000DS lead singer Gary from 1978, where he appears as a Junior Welsh Trials Bike champion and separately, ringleader of a school strike he led to his local County Hall.

We have been filming interviews since we started, mainly in the UK but we have also been around Germany. In total we have filmed 16 interviews with more pencilled over the coming months. The film will have a gritty, analogue feel with a handmade graphic treatment - much like a photocopied fanzine. A family story at its heart, the film will swing between relatable everyday drama and a hardcore anarchist folk story. It will be a unique and eye opening tale, witnessed through a pre internet lens and before the era of hot showers!



# **SALES POTENTIAL**

The film has a broad fan base already with an in-built audience stretching from Europe to North America. This includes 150K+ members of currently active social groups for 2000DS, Mutoid Waste, UK Travellers, Spiral Tribe etc. on Facebook. The audience is already desperate to see the film after the release of several teasers which now have tens of thousands of views.

The film has a dedicated and buzzing Facebook page with 1200 members, growing daily.

This group is providing contributions to archive, footage, stills and contributors, plus new leads and story strands generated organically every day. We also ran a successful crowdfunding campaign in 2023, raising £20K for the film's production. Dirty Squatter merchandise also helps to raise our profile and we have a shop section on our website.

The film has a huge community behind it. Not only from their contemporary musicians and fans of the music but also by a traveller community which is desperate to see the culture being represented. The 2000DS back catalogue and the family's record label 'SCRAP Records' is immense as it is varied. This isn't just a film about a scrap metal band, it's a fascinating insight into an underrepresented culture and it will connect more people through its story of a singular family and it's rich & rebellious music score.

It will resonate across trans-generational audiences from millennial consumers of popular culture, to middle aged people remembering the music & stories of their youth, plus a much wider audience who love dramatic music documentaries such as 'Montage of Heck', 'Crock of Gold: A Few Rounds With Shane MacGowan', 'The Devil and Daniel Johnston' or 'Amy'.





# THE TEAM

ACK



# THE TEAM

**Andrew Gaston : Director/ Editor**

**Andrew has been working as an artist since buying his first video camera in 1990, aged 19. He took it on the road with him, meeting 2000DS in 1996 and started filming them around Europe. His work since then has led him into documentary filmmaking, editing and video installation. 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 is perfectly placed for this project, having a long relationship with the 2000DS family and wider festival culture.**

**[www.dirtysquattersfilm.com](http://www.dirtysquattersfilm.com)**





## THE TEAM

**Aaron Trinder/ Producer / DOP**

**Aaron is 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 amongst many others. He's won a 'jury special mention' award for his short film 'Mr. Torquay's Holiday' commissioned by Film London. He's also worked as 1st & 2nd AD on numerous short and feature films.**

**His film 'Free Party : A Folk History' is now playing on the film festival circuit to sold out audiences across the globe.**

**[www.trinderfilms.co.uk](http://www.trinderfilms.co.uk)**



# LET'S TALK

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