

REQUIEM FOR MY RAVE

**THE STORY OF ANABOLIC
FROLIC, HAPPY Hardcore,
AND HULLABALOO!**

CHRIS FROLIC

For Robin.

You'll always be the love of my life.

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THANK YOU



While I aimed to tell the most authentic version of my story as my memory will allow, my memory is not infallible. When possible, I referenced video, audio recordings, and/or court transcripts, and I also asked some people for their recollections of events. Some names have been changed. While I'm writing about people who exist in real life, the way they are portrayed in this book is my understanding of them. The people discussed in this book are all very special to me then and now and will always be, so it's my hope they feel I did right by them.

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part one

PRESS START



INTRODUCTION



The noise was deafening, unlike any noise you might hear anywhere else. Nothing was like this. Thousands of young partiers, around 3000 of them, blowing their whistles and screaming simultaneously. It pierced into your brain, but it was also the sound of pure joy. It was also almost six in the morning.

This particular morning was a cold Canadian one at the Docks Entertainment Complex in the Toronto Port Lands—really the middle of nowhere, but with a beautiful view across a slice of Lake Ontario to the tall modern buildings of downtown Toronto. The lake was frozen over, with the wind blowing snow across its glass surface. Inside the venue the windows were steamy with condensation from the humidity of thousands of dancers, creating running tears on the inside glass. The city was sleeping, as the ear-piercing noise filled the club.

There was a rave happening here, one of the illicit all-night events of myth and legend. This wasn't any old rave, however; this was a "Hullabaloo!", affectionately referred to as "Hulla," one of history's most celebrated and revered rave promotions. The members of the crowd weren't just ravers but were the most colorful collection of "Hulla Ravers" you would ever come across.

The noise was meant in appreciation for me, Chris, better known to a generation of ravers as Anabolic Frolic, their DJ of the past hour. And also, the promoter of Hullabaloo, this very event that they so appreciated.

The venue was packed, a sold-out night, one of many for me and Hullabaloo. As a DJ, I was responsible for the best-selling electronic music series of its time, Happy2bHardcore. I had single-handedly popularized a unique style of electronic music, imported from the UK to North America. A whole generation of young people celebrated me and my music and the gift of receiving it from me.

A journalist for a major US magazine had flown to Toronto to cover this event. The legend of Hullabaloo was out there. We had built a reputation as one of the greatest rave experiences there was, and people were travelling from all over the world to attend. The journalist was here to document this phenomenon, along with a photographer shooting photos of the revelers, their costumes, their joy.

I had almost finished my set; I had one last song to play. A raver had asked if he could propose to his girlfriend onstage immediately following my set—a celebration of their love in front of everyone. I told him yes, to hang close, I'd invite him to the stage.

I was about to wrap up my set and pose for a photo onstage with the thousands of ravers behind me—the “money shot” for the magazine article. I was getting ready for that and ready to invite the young couple.

I spotted my good friend Will Chang, better known at Hullabaloo as “Klubmasta Will,” at the side of the stage. He approached me.

“The guy. He’s dead.”

My heart didn't just sink; it was crushed. How the hell could this happen at our events? There had been a stabbing earlier in the night, a young man taken to hospital. Now I'd just been hit with this news and had to suck it up for a photo in front of the ravers. And what exactly was this article going to cover, now, with this news happening while the reporters were in the building?

This photo, the same one used on the cover of this book, would eventually lead off a huge article in URB Magazine, the largest electronica-related magazine in the U.S. I love this photo for the visual of it, but it's also a permanent reminder of the news that I had just been given seconds before.

I forced myself to address the crowd as if nothing was wrong. I don't even recall what I said, other than thanking them for coming, and then I handed the mic over to the raver to propose. She accepted, and they hugged onstage as the crowd blew their whistles. Such a dichotomy of emotions and events happening right in front of me. A literal celebration of life amidst death.

I went to the Docks main office to sit. Robin, my girlfriend, was there, still wearing the body of a giant dog mascot costume she had been dancing onstage in during my set. Her head looked small poking out of the top, her red hair in braids. Will came in and sat with us quietly.

“I don't know how we'll ever have another Hullabaloo,” I told him solemnly.

It hurt to say these words. The work we did with Hullabaloo and the lives we affected really mattered to a lot of young people. I felt tremendous responsibility to them.

However, the real reason I said this, and the shocking thing, beyond a murder happening under our roof, was that we were only 18 months removed from another death, a drug overdose that had happened at a past Hullabaloo called A View to a Thrill. Another young man had died in the midst of all this revelry.

I had always thought that the events at A View to a Thrill were a one-in-a-million. That was the only way I was able to keep doing business. We all fought hard to save our scene, because we believed in it as a positive force. So many lives touched. Friendships made. Romances. Marriages. Children. Now someone was dead. Again. And murdered this time. How does one keep going when

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touched by death twice? How could you ever think it couldn't happen again if it had indeed happened again?

The police were already in the building, had been for hours, starting their investigation when the initial ambulance had been called. They would now be taking every single person's name and information on the way out as a potential witness to a murder. This was how the night was going to end. Somewhere else, a family was getting the worst phone call imaginable.

I felt sick. Nauseous. My chest was tight. Lightning had struck me a second time. Was it just misfortune and bad luck that this happened to go down at my event?

Two people were now dead under my watch, with all the collateral trauma that entailed. Even though these horrible incidents were not caused by my hands, I was forever tied to them.

I didn't know how much I could take of this. It had been bad the last time; how much worse would it be, finding myself at the centre of this kind of attention once again?

The police and authorities saw me as an evil predator of young people, packing thousands of them into dark rooms where they dined on ecstasy and repetitive electronic music and strobing lights.

My fans saw me as a pioneer of a new youth culture movement, of promoting peace and love, celebrating unity. A facilitator creating a group consciousness, giving them an outlet to be themselves, design new fashion, meet like-minded people, celebrate the music that they loved, and maybe get an opportunity to change the world—a world better than the one we came into. This was bigger than me and was important to a lot of people.

Should we abandon all of that? How should I handle this? Where do I go from here? How much trouble am I in?

I had no idea at the time.

From: Jed Eye

To: Anabolic Frolic

I've been a supporter of the rave scene for many years now and I understand what you're going through. Keep your chin up and look for the silver lining! Things can only get better.

(Posted on the Internet)