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FILMMAKER'S STATEMENT BILL LICHTENSTEIN ON "WBCN AND THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION."

On a summer evening in 1968, I was watching the local evening news on my family's TV in our living room in Brookline, Massachusetts. As a 12-year-old, I was aware of the psychedelic, LSD-fueled youth revolution which had already exploded in San Francisco the summer before in the city's Haight Ashbury district as part of the "Summer of Love," and concurrently in New York City's East Village. But in Boston, even with its 250,000 college students and more than 100 colleges and universities, the youth revolution that would soon upend the world had yet to arrive. And then, suddenly, it did.

In that summer of 1968, "the hippies," as they were called, appeared suddenly on the Boston Common. There they were on my family's TV screen as I watched the news: thousands of young people, dressed in rainbow colors, barefoot with long hair, playing guitars and Frisbee. They took up residence on "the Common," the plot of land in Downtown Boston that had traditionally been the backyard of the city's bluebloods who lived on exclusive Beacon Hill.

Like the story of the Pied Piper, the presence of the hippies sent out a clarion call to young people throughout the city and suburbs. As for me, I remember getting up and leaving my family's living room after seeing the hippies on the local evening news without saying a word to anyone, and taking the train from Brookline to the Boston Common to see the hippies and the scene for myself, followed by a pay phone call to my parents to let them know where I had gone.

Soon after, in 1970, I was in a 9th grade alternative educational program in Newton, MA, called Tri-School, where students were asked to get a volunteer job at which they could work one day each week.

Being a devoted fan of radio, albeit the only radio available at the time that played rock and roll, which was Top 40 radio, I called what was then a newly-launched underground radio station in Boston, WBCN-FM, and asked if they needed help. My timing couldn't have been better as they had recently started a "Listener Line" staffed by volunteers, to handle the flood of calls the station was receiving from listeners to answer questions about everything from how to help a roommate on a bad LSD trip to how to respond to a draft notice, to people looking for a ride cross-country ride or help finding a lost cat or dog. Or a request to play a newly released album.

I began answering the station's Listener Line, and soon after I was recruited to cover demonstrations for the news department. I helped develop a distinctive sound for news reports that combined highly-edited sound bites, often of President Nixon or other politicians, with music and comedy, a style that would remain a signature of the radio station. Soon after, I was given my own weekly four-hour radio show. It left me with a keen sense of belief in the power of media – especially radio – to create and fuel political, social and cultural change, to give a voice to those who didn't have one, and to serve as the connection between all of us.

With everything going on in the world, it's a lesson and story as relevant and timely now, as it was then.

ABOUT WBCN AND THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

The amazing, untold story of the radical underground radio station WBCN-FM, set against the dazzling and profound social, political, and cultural changes that took place in Boston and nationally during the late-1960s and early-70s. Told through the *actual sights, sounds, and stories* of a compelling cast of characters who connected through the radio station, exploding music and countercultural scenes, militant anti-war activism, civil rights struggles, and the emerging women's and LGBTQ-liberation movements.

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WBCN and The American Revolution