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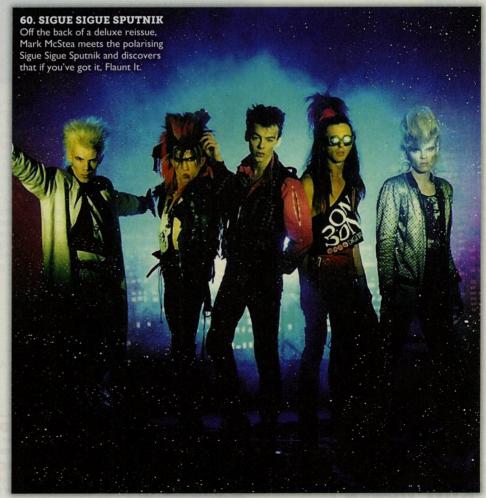
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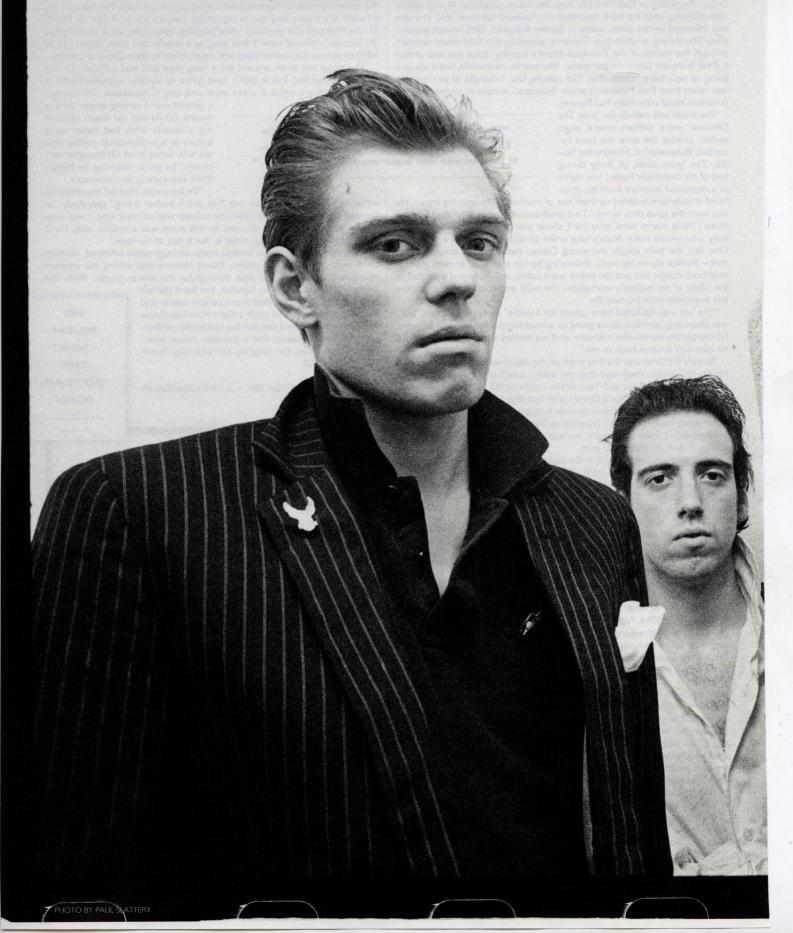
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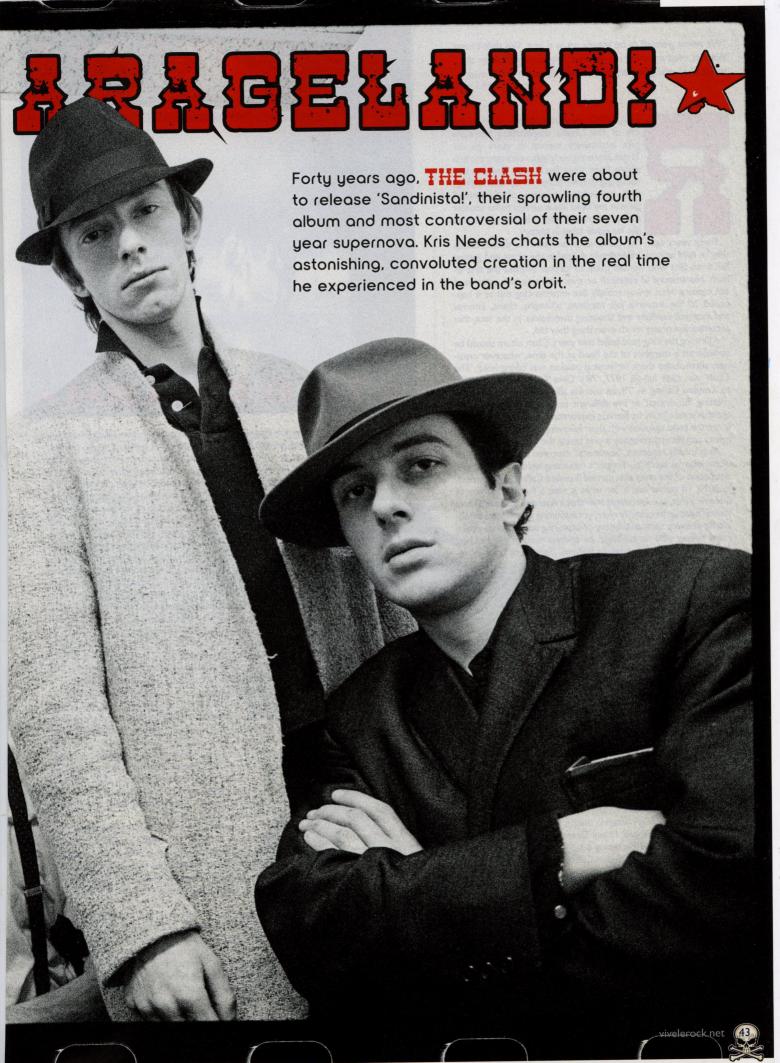
VLR reminisced with Pauline about her rollercoaster journey through the years.





# APARADISE E





"We never wanted to be totally up in a box. We didn't care. We just tried anything we wanted. We always took on the music that was going on around us and made it our own."



ECALLING seven tumultuous years in the eye of The Clash's shapeshifting hurricane gets increasingly surreal as years go on. Those blistering early gigs, recording the first album, from 'Give 'Em Enough Rope' to skyrocketing to the triumph of 'London Calling', then convoluted creation of 'Sandinista!' plays in my head like a surreal roller coaster movie, partnered with a legacy and legend like no other band in history.

Forty years ago, The Clash were far from the deified beings they're held as now, relentlessly slagged in the press and getting flak from fans who wanted them to forever retread the first album. No amount of research or even retrospective interviews can capture what it was actually like experiencing this as it happened; all the extreme joy, mayhem, triumphs, chaos, internal and external conflicts and shooting themselves in the foot that

accompanied pretty much everything they did.

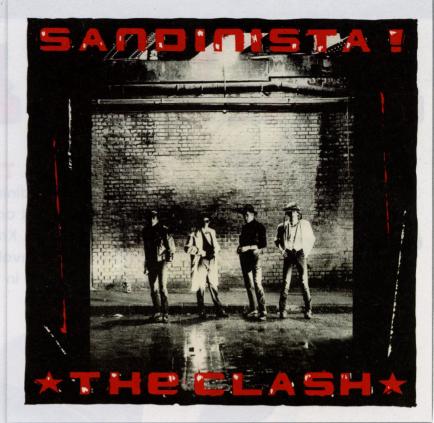
Affirming the long-held belief that every Clash album should be considered a snapshot of the band at the time, whatever craziness surrounded them or musical passion was taking hold; 'The Clash' was their full-tilt 1977, '78's 'Give 'Em Enough Rope' led to 'London Calling' in '79, its success allowing 1980 to be spent creating 'Sandinista!' in five different studios. The Clash's most controversial album, its fearless exploration and indulgence nearly ran the band aground with their following, blinkered press elements and record company it was taking the piss out of.

As is usually reported, 'Sandinista!' captured a splintering band facing internal conflicts, Topper's mounting heroin problem and dissipation of the unity that carried 'London Calling' to greatness. In 2020, I'd rather see it for what it was; a fearless journey of discovery that, like Apocalypse Now that influenced it, moved like a stoned boat up its creative river, encountering new visions or obstacles at every turn; an odyssey of exploring sound. From where I was sitting, with no hindsight or endless rantings yet belching from the music establishment's bottom, 'Sandinista!' was an unfettered blast; studded with highs and great songs featuring Joe's fine-crafted lyrics and Mick's burgeoning studio suss transforming its sonic aura into a radioactive dub forest.

Just as it's simply not possible to capture The Clash's live impact in words without having experienced their full-bore charge with Topper on drums, writing with any authority about '70s-'80s New York and the bands it produced can't be done without having experienced the city's high-voltage buzz, beautiful chaos, dangerous edge and unbridled hedonism; often happening all at the same time. Although started in Jamaica and finished in London, 'Sandinista!' is The Clash's New York album, reflecting the city at this seminal, transitional time when hiphop, post-disco dance music and post-punk were throwing startling new mutants against the ever-changing skyline. Straddling all three, The Clash's sprawling triple album predicted the upcoming decade simply by capturing the state of punk's most forward-thinking band at that particular time; from definitive punk group, they became the ultimate post-punk band.

The road to 'Sandinista!' starts in January 1980 on the 16 Tons Tour promoting 'London Calling'. After support act Toots and the Maytals fell through (Imagine that?!), enter Jamaican DJ-toaster Michael Campbell, aka Mikey Dread. Inevitably, they would work together, Mikey becoming a huge presence on the album The Clash had to follow 'London Calling' with. Rather than standing still and retreading any formulas, they wanted to take the next step - with Mikey as co-pilot.

I remember when tapes of his Dread At The Controls radio show for the Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation started filtering into London around '77, followed by pre-release 45s produced under the wing of King Tubby. We sat there laughing at the bonkers exclamations, jingles and sound effects while grooving to the heavyweight rhythms, the show also featuring rib-rattling dub plates given him by Lee Perry and King Tubby. In some UK circles, Mikey was a legendary figure by the time his show stopped in 1978, compounded by '79's album debuts 'African Anthem: The Mikey Dread Show Dubwise' and 'Dread At The Controls'.



Above: The album's iconic cover was shot by Pennie Smith (who had also shot the London Calling album cover) behind King's Cross Station in London. On the original photograph you can see West Ham raffiti that was removed rom the actual Sandinista! LP cover artwork. The group had recently finished shooting a video for 'The Call Up', and Mick Jones is still wearing the helmet he wore for the filming.

There were a lot of times I been to places where skinheads and punks wanted to kick my butt, as a black man, and The Clash would warn me, Tomorrow, don't go out alone, have one of us follow you."

Mikey Dread

Mikey joined the tour a few dates in as Jamaican studio royalty, yet had to contend with racist boneheads hurling abuse as he opened the evening's entertainment toasting over backing track rhythms. It uncannily echoed the reception given Suicide on the '78 jaunt, but they were old hands facing down ignorant violence. With Mikey, The Clash took direct action to validate and protect him from these hapless twerps. During last song, 'Rockers Delight', Mikey would be joined by seven skanking masked men in trilby hats, shades, long coats and bandanas obscuring their faces. The audience usually didn't have a clue it was Joe, Jonesy, Johnny Green, Robin Banks, Jock Scott, Kosmo Vinyl and a skinhead called Don they'd bailed out of jail in Dundee. Joining the tour in Stafford, I got recruited when Joe went down with flu, borrowing his coat, hat and the red bandana hanging there on the wall.

As Mikey told me in 2004, "There were a lot of times I been to places where skinheads and punks wanted to kick my butt, as a black man, and The Clash would warn me, 'Tomorrow, don't go out alone, have one of us follow you.' They start to wear their Doctor Martin boots, and they buy me a pair as well so they know we're on the warpath. Anybody come, we just mess them up."

This punky reggae solidarity set the scene for 'Sandinista!'. It also cemented the bond that spilled inevitably into the studio when The Clash took two days off and booked into Manchester's Pluto Studios to record 'The Bank Robbing Song' that'd been gestating on the tour. Joe's original versions followed punk then 'Rudie Can't Fail' ska routes before Mikey suggested his poignant vocal would sound most effective against a slow, heavy dub backdrop. After stoned studio experimentation, they emerged with the classic original, enhanced by Volga boatmen chorale and Mick's perfectly-spaced guitar, plus 'Robber Dub' and Mikey's toast version 'Rockers Galore...UK Tour'.

Bankrobber' was planned as first shot in what Joe called 'The Clash Singles Bonanza', where a new single would be fired out every month. But CBS boss Maurice 'Obie' Oberstein hated the track, likening it to "all David Bowie's records being played backwards at the same time", storming to Heathrow Airport to tell the band just that as they waited to board a plane for their third

I'd first met Obie in 1973 when I was running Mott The Hoople's fan club and the amiable old school New Yorker was rising through the ranks to become one of the most powerful figures in the music biz. Next time we met was at the 'London Calling' sessions (when Guy Stevens famously lay down in front of his Rolls Royce). The success of the album The Clash had deftly upped to a double was already catapulting The Clash into the big league, so Obie predictably demanded more of the same on its follow up.



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### THE ARMAGIDEON TIMES no3

#### THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN

RING!RING! ITS SEVEN A.M!
MOVE Y'SELF TO GO AGAIN
COLD WATER IN THE FACE
BRINGS YOU BACK TO THIS AWR BRINGS YOU BACK TO THIS MINULFILE RECHAINS AND DUBBNEES TOO, MUST GET UP-AN LEARN THOSE RULES WEATHER MAN AND THE CRAZY CHIEF ONE SAYS SUM AND ONE SAYS SUBET A.M..THE F. M..TOO CHURNING OUT THAT BOOGALOO GETS YOU UP AND GETS YOU OUT GETS YOU UP AND GETS YOU OUT
BUT HOW LONG CAN YOU KEEP IT UP P
GIMME HONDA GIMME SONY
SO CHEAP AND REAL PHONY
HONE KOND DOLLARS - INPIAN CENTS
ENGLISH POUNDS & ESKIMO PENCE
FOLL BOLL WALL ? DEWIS STOP!
WORKING THE ALL YOU GOT!
WORKING THE AND STOP!
WORKING THE ADDS, HET THINK! ITS NICE
BETTER WORK HARD - I SEEN THE PRICE
NEVER MIND THAT ITS TIME FOR THE BUS
HE GOT TO WORK - MYOURE ONE OF US
CLOCKS GO SLOW IN A PLACE OF WORK

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Cheen boiger!

UHAT DOWE HAVE FOR ENTERTAINMENT?

COPS KICKIN' GYPSIES ON THE PAVEMENT

NOW THE NEWS - SNAP TO ATTENTION! NOW THE NEWS-SAME TO ATTENTION!
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YOU LEST / MINT ? DON'T SEED! / MINT ?
SO GET FORK TO LUKE AN SHEET SME ROKE
ITS SUN SILL SINK AN WE'L FEOTOTH DOOR
ITS NO GOD TOE MAN TO WORK W CAGES
HITS THE TOWN, HE PRINKS HIS WAGES
YOU'RE FRETTIN / YOU'RE SWEATIN /
BUT DIS NO NOTICE YOU AINT GETTIN /?

THE TOWN IN THE CODE I OWN FERMILLE HE FORM! BUTDID BUNDTICE YOU AINT GETTIN?
DON'T YOU EVER DON'T LON'T GROUND IT TO GET YOU CAR OUTTA THAT GEAR?
KARLO MANX AND PERPELIN' BINGELS
CAME TO THE CHECKOUT AT THE ?-11
MARK MAS WIN'THE HAD SEN'SE
ELKELS LERT LIMIT ME NOCOSEANY PENDE
CHAEL AME US AND TO CHECK ON THE BALL
BUTTLEY RING WO MANATHAM GANDHI
WENT TO THE PARK. TO CHECK ON THE BALL
BUT THEY WIN HEDDER'S BY HEDTHE TERM
WHO WENT ON TO WIN - 50 - NIL
YOU CAN BETTEL! YOU CAN BE FALSE
YOU CAN BETTEL! YOU CAN BE FALSE
YOU GO GIVEN THE SAME REWARD
SOCRATES AND MILLHOUS MYCOM
BITH WENT THE SAME WIN THE WIND THE PRINCH
PATO THE GEEK OR BUTTHETH THE MEND. BAH DEEM IN STEEL OF RIN-TIN TO STEEL OF RIN-TIN TO STEEL OF RILLION MILLION MESCH / VACUUMCLEAVER SIKKS UP BUDGE OON BUB-BYZ ' MAGNIFICENCE!!

HITSVILLE U.K.

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THEY SAY TRUE TALENT WILL ALLWAYS ENERGE IN TIME, THEY SAY, TRUE TALENT WILL ALLWAYS ENERGE IN TIME, THE MATTHER, TERES AND MUSICE MEM. ARE SMAKING LIKE A LEE MEM, ARE SM



JUNCO PARTNER (WAITER, AT PRESENT, UMANO.

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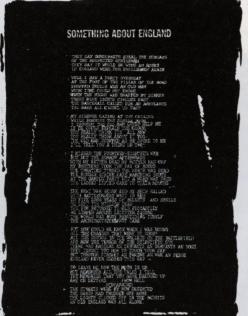
I WOULD RAISE ME

BUT NOW I AINT GOT

THE LEADER

TRIES A GOVERNMENT CAR ST HER MINISTER
HE WORE A LEATHER, MASK FOR HIS DIRMER CURSTS
HEVER LEAVES HIS DOOR ATAR
HEY PROPRIED THE SORR WAR...
HE PROPOSED A TOCK TO THE VOTES HE GETS
THE SEELING OF FOURER, AMO THE THOUGHT OF SEX.

OF THE LEAK YET? THE MOLEHILL SETS THE





◀ Everyone else loved 'Bankrobber', including fans who'd heard it at gigs and voted it Best Unreleased Song in the Zigzag Readers Poll. It finally made it to wax when The Clash sneaked it on the B-side of 'Train In Vain' in Holland, selling so well on import CBS would release it in the UK in August. Flipped by 'Rockers Galore' on the 45, 'Robber Dub' and 'Rockers Galore...UK Tour' on twelve, The Clash got the last laugh when it made number 12 in the UK charts. The combination of 'Bankrobber' progressing the band's long-running reggae fixation and 'London Calling's panoramic embrace of global musical styles would naturally impact on the album they'd start recording after their short US tour.

The US 16 Tons Tour started on March I with two nights at San Francisco's Warfield Theatre, supported by Mikey, fabulous female punk band the B-Girls and, carrying on the mission to show America its black music legends, '60s soul legend Lee Dorsey, of 'Working In A Coal Mine' fame.

That first night their mate Mo Armstrong, who they knew from previous visits, brought bandanas and posters from the Nicaraguan Solidarity Campaign, giving Joe literature about the Sandinista freedom fighters (Fronte Sandinista Liberacion National) victory over Nicaragua's military dictator General Somoza. Joe became fascinated by the Sandinistas, who'd gathered in the

Above: The album included Armagideon Times Issue 3, supplying the lyrics and recording credits within. Steve Bell, now The Guardian's political cartoonist, contributed a cartoon interpretation of the lyrics to Ivan Meets G.I. loe.

'60s, inspired by pioneering freedom fighter Augusto Cesar Sandino, a martyr/national hero since being murdered by the country's US-backed National Guard in 1932. Later that decade, Nicuaraga was taken over by dictator Anastasio Somoza Garcia, whose US-backed rule saw social conditions deteriorate terribly for over 40 years until guerilla factions came together to form the Sandinista National Liberation Front, finally toppling the regime in 1979 after years of conflict. President Regan was not amused and, while the Sandinistas commenced rebuilding the country, there was little about it in the media. The Clash remembered that.

The tour continued with two nights at LA's Santa Monica Civic Auditorium then Philadelphia's Tower Ballroom before The Clash returned to New York's Palladium, watched by Debbie Harry, Bianca Jagger, Robert De Niro and Martin Scorsese. Afterwards, Scorsese asked the band to maybe appear in his next film The Gangs Of New York, about New York's warring street factions during the mid-19th century. The director wouldn't make his pet project for another 20 years but The Clash make a fleeting street cameo in '82's The King Of Comedy.

The following day, The 16 Tons tour strafed Passaic's Capitol Theatre in New Jersey, Mikey mercilessly booed by meatheads before a bomb-scare delayed The Clash's set. The jaunt ended on March 10 with a last minute benefit at Detroit's Motor City Roller Rink for soul legend Jackie Wilson, in a coma since a heart attack onstage in 1975. Next day, Joe and Mick visited Hitsville USA, home of Motown.

Tour finished, The Clash started thinking about their next album. The idea is floated of making a reggae/dub version excursion with Mikey. Better still, recording in Jamaica, living out a long-held dream that could only work out better than Joe and Mick's visit to Kingston in early '78 when they were imprisoned in their hotel room by the violent atmosphere. Enabled by Mikey (and, she said, paid for with Paul's girlfriend Pearl Harbour's credit card), they fly to Kingston to record at the legendary Channel One Studios on front line Maxfield Avenue, scene of so many great records and Clash favourites since opened by the Hoo Kim brothers in 1972, including the Mighty Diamonds, Horace Andy, Leroy Smart and Jimmy Cliff, most backed by legendary house band the Revolutionaries.

Even if Paul was happy to get a guided tour from Mikey that made up for missing out on Joe and Mick's '78 visit, The Clash found themselves in the middle of a war zone. Kingston had got worse, inflation and unemployment boosting gun-related crime along with pre-election skirmishes between paramilitaries from JNP and PNP political parties. While they were there, a 14-year-old boy was shot dead on Hope Road, minutes after they'd driven through. The Clash got as far as Joe plinking piano on a cover of traditional R&B standard 'Junco Partner (Worthless Man)', which he remembered from the 101'ers. Mysterious singer James Wayne had recorded the song's most popular version in 1952 for Bob Shad's Sitting In With label, according to Dr John, "the anthem of the dopers, the whores, the pimps, the cons. It was a song they sang in Angola, the state prison farm, and the rhythm was even known as the 'jailbird beat'."

The studio initially resembled a rammed blues party, swamped with visitors, party people and "drug men" demanding hand-outs from Mikey. When the atmosphere got too tense to continue, Mikey whisked the band to Montego Bay for some relaxation before returning to New York. With Rude Boy finally making it to UK cinemas, wildly dated but containing great live footage, Paul is committed to filming Ladies and Gentlemen, The Fabulous Stains in Vancouver with director Lou Adler. Along with Steve Jones, Paul Cook and young Ray Winstone, he plays a member of a UK punk band.

The remaining Clashers and Mikey elected to continue recording in New York, holing up at the Iroquois Hotel on 44th Street, loving that James Dean resided there between 1951-53. So, two years since starting 'Give 'Em Enough Rope' at Basing Street studio in Notting Hill, Joe, Mick and Topper embarked on 'Sandinista!' in New York City, starting at the Power Station on West 53rd Street, as recommended by Ian Hunter and home of the Chic Organisation, then working on Diana Ross's 'Diana' album.

As with 'London Calling', The Clash warmed up with cover versions, Mick on bass, including 'Louie Louie', Prince Buster's 'Madness' and a rousing, siren guitar version of the Equals' ever-pertinent Clash tour bus favourite 'Police On My Back'. Finding the studio beyond their resources (funds yet to come from 'London Calling'), along with having to fit around other bookings, they looked for somewhere cheaper they could block book. Promising a shit-hot album recorded on post-tour energy, Obie agreed to finance three weeks in April at Electric Lady, the creative bolthole Jimi Hendrix built before his death in September 1970.

While living in downtown New York in the '80s, I often found myself walking past the studio's curved brick belly on Eighth Street until, in '86, I got to see inside when Rick Rubin was producing The Cult's 'Electric'. Hendrix's psychedelic murals still adorned the walls of this fearlessly-ambitious first bespoke studio.

They might have been "full of go", as Joe put it, but The Clash entered Electric Lady with no new songs and without their bassist. That didn't stop them; after Mick bumped into Joe's old busking buddy Tymon Dogg in the Village, he came in and recorded his Cajun-style knees-up 'Lose This Skin', playing violin and singing.

Continuing their decision to draft in outside musicians for extra input, first up was guitarist Ivan Julian, who The Clash knew from Richard Hell's Voidoids and was starting a new band called the Outsets. When he arrived they were playing new song 'The Call Up'; Chic resonating in its chiming bells and Mick's chunky riffing, Ivan lacing spectral guitar over its skin-tight funk as Joe railed against the ominous shadow of the US draft.

As always, current fixations informed The Clash's new music.

"We were just knocking out some numbers. We just wanted to do our thing. We didn't necessarily wanna be part of this big, happening thing that was so cool."

Mick Jones



Francis Ford Coppola's epic *Apocalypse Now* had a profound effect that would linger into 'Combat Rock'. "It doesn't leave you, it's like a dream," Joe told Sounds. The film inspired the rotoblade killing fields shimmy (Mick deploying guitar synth) of 'Charlie Don't Surf'. Sung by Mick, the hook comes from Robert Duvall's famous beach speech as Lt. Colonel Bill Kilgore, the song's hazy allure heightened by its classic New York soul ballad chords.

allure heightened by its classic New York soul ballad chords. It was an incredibly exciting time and Mick was on a roll. My old NYC friend Marc Mikulich (guitarist in the Band of Outsiders, who introduced me to Ivan Julian), recalls, "When The Clash were recording at Electric Lady, I was working there as gofer; my boss was maintenance engineer Joe Blaney. It was an interesting time. The Clash were in Studio A - the room Hendrix built. And the Stones were upstairs in Studio C, finishing 'Tattoo You'. Funnily enough, I remember Mick coming to the studio with Barbara Charone's Keith Richards biography. I don't recall the two ever meeting there, but I only worked day hours and the Stones worked nights."

Working in such a time and place in New York kickstarted The Clash's creative spark-plugs, its inevitable influence perfectly summed up by Suicide's Martin Rev when he told me, "I have to always admit that New york must have been essential to something in the sound, the environment, the architecture, the tension, the intensity, the particularity of it."

In 1980, going to New York was special, those who did reporting epiphanies that usually started with that first awesome glimpse of Manhattan's sky-line in the cab ride from the airport, then that unique energy that seemed to course under the sidewalks when you set foot. With its early TV and pub shutting hours, London seemed dull compared to the city that never slept, with its 24 hour diners, around the-clock bars, clubs and gigs, and black music radio stations playing hiphop, disco and electro in audacious mastermixes. Experiencing the city's effervescent buzz felt like a massive door being flung open in the soul, never to be the same again. This was the socio-cultural hotbed that inspired 'Sandinista!' (so affecting me I moved there later that decade).

Mick was already into hiphop, America's ghetto answer to punk. His interest was hot-wired by New York's 24 hour black music radio stations, KISS FM, WBLS and WKTU, where astonishing DJs like Red Alert and Chuck Chillout cut and scratched live on air. As a fresh, original underground movement from New York's decaying, blighted streets, hiphop impacted on Joe too. While Joe soaked it up to join his internal arsenal of influences, Mick dived in with gleeful relish as The Clash adapted hiphop into their sound and productions like they'd done with reggae, soul, country and rockabilly.

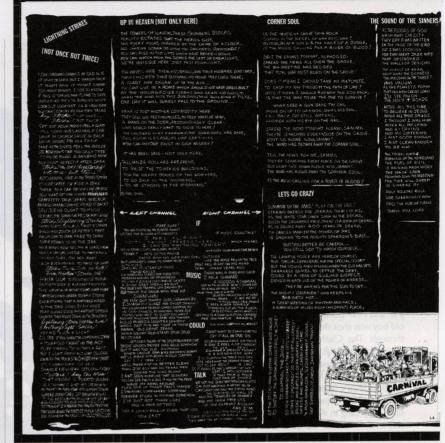


"I was so gone with the hip-hop thing that the others used to call me Wack Attack!" Mick told me. "I'd walk around with a beatbox and my hat on backwards. They used to take the mickey out of me. I was always like that about whatever came along; I'd sort of get excited for a while."

Descended from American jail toasts, rapping was first presented as a new blues by New York's Last Poets in 1970, expressing political protest, social narrative and rage over hand-drum tattoos. The technique was hijacked by MCs as DJs like Kool DJ Herc, Afrika Bambataa and Grandmaster Flash cut and scratched classic rock, funk and disco. Kids taking it to the streets with ghetto blasters, came up with toasts and party chants over the booming grooves. Mick was gripped by the audacious production on the records that intensified after the Sugar Hill Gang's 'Rapper's Delight' hit charts on both sides of the Atlantic, Clashing up backdrops with Topper the human drum machine supplying the all-important groove. Joe had always been a rapper anyway, speaking and shouting his slogans along with his singing. Hiphop gave him licence to rant off the top of a head already swirling with punk anger, early rock 'n' roll's primal war-cries, country pathos and Jamaican MC toasting.

After a week at Electric Lady with Bill Price, they sent for their live keyboardist Mickey Gallagher and bass-playing fellow Blockhead Norman Watt-Roy. Arriving at the studio on April 7 before Mick and Joe, they jammed with Topper, planting seeds for several tracks, including 'The Magnificent Seven', which Mick and Joe seized when they arrived to fashion the first stab at hiphop by a white band.

"At the start it was called 'The Magnificent Seven Rap-O-Clappers'," recalls Mick. "But it was also a slice of life too; something which we felt, which we got as well, kind of what was happening at the time when we talked about it, like with records like 'The Message' later on."





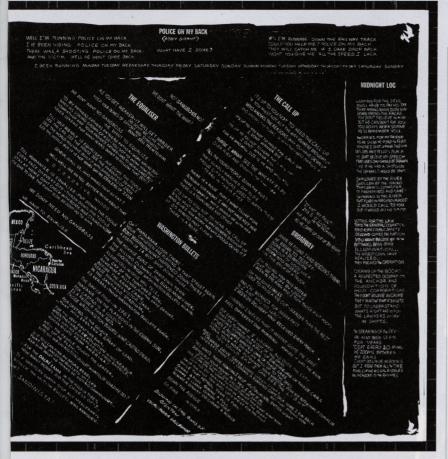
Propelled by Norman's upfront bassline, Topper's metronomic ticking clock groove, Mick's Chic-like riffing and gossamer counter-figures, the groove wrapped tight as an over-heated gnu's foreskin - fertile ground for Joe's vivid declarations about the drudgery of labour ("Clocks go slow in a place of work/Minutes drag and the hours jerk"), enlivened by newspaper-derived ad libs like "Vacuum cleaner sucks up budgie" and "Italian mobster shoots a lobster". With their first stab, The Clash actually took hiphop forward, away from the usual chest-beating self-aggrandisement into socio-political comment that, like Mick says, wouldn't infiltrate rapping's own protagonists until Grandmaster Flash's 'The Message' two years later. Public Enemy named the Clash an influence a few years hence.

Despite all this, Mick never consciously thought The Clash were doing anything that would later be hailed ground-breaking. "We never thought that, at any time," he told me. "We were just knocking out some numbers. We just wanted to do our thing. We didn't necessarily wanna be part of this big, happening thing that was so cool. We just did what we wanted to do. I guess it's because we had that kind of attitude. We were so open to other things, and we attracted it as well. We were open to meet other artists in other fields."

When the track was released on 12-inch a year later, its 'The Magnificent Dance' dub swept New York's radio stations along with clubs like Danceteria and Larry Levan's infamous Paradise Garage (I heard it played in both). In 1997, top NYC DJ-producers 'Lil' Louie Vega and Kenny 'Dope' Gonzalez told me, "It was a really groundbreaking record. I used to play that dub when I was DJing at these real underground dance clubs and the crowd would go nuts."

"It was quite inspiring, because there was this whole new thing," continued Mick. "They did things like putting bits of movies on top of it. There was this mix on WBLS called the 'Dirty Harry Mix' that used that (Clint Eastwood) bit that goes, 'Do you feel lucky today, punk?' It also had characters from Bugs Bunny; 'De wabbit kicked the bucket.' That was kind of a pointer, yeah. For us it was amazing because they'd picked up on this record, particularly the instrumental, and didn't know who we were. Everyone was playing that record and it turned out to be us! It was really funny because we were punk rockers (laughs)! And we'd come all this way. It was just lucky, really, and just right. You couldn't have written or contrived it. I guess we did the first proper I2-inch dance mixes too, but it wasn't planned that way.

Taking on this musical form built on mechanical beats, The Clash



were blessed to have Topper nailing their grooves with his effortless precision pulses and the amazing flexibility displayed on 'London Calling'. All he had to do was reach back to the soul groups he'd played with a few years earlier. The Clash never could have got so heavily and effectively into this style without him.

"I like to think so," he agrees. "But the hiphop was Mick more than anyone. What I thought I did was, if Joe wanted to play rock 'n' roll, I could play it. If Mick wanted to play hiphop, I could play it. If Paul wanted to play reggae, I could play it. Without sounding arrogant, I was also powerful on stage. Again, without sounding arrogant, I think because I was in the band we were able to explore these different avenues of music."

Opening with a scene-setting snatch of New York's WBAI radio station, the clipped JBs funk of 'Lightning Strikes (Not Once But Twice)' spurred Joe's next rap attack, barbed and hilarious. He was obviously enjoying this, settling in by constructing his Spliff Bunker bolthole in the middle of the studio out of flight cases. Complete with window and desk, here loe wrote most of the album's lyrics, continuing the practice for the rest of his life. "You can't have a load of idiots partying in the control room, because the engineer can't hear and no decisions can be made," he explained. "So, I invented the Spliff Bunker, which was a place where you could smoke weed, hang out and talk - in the main body of the studio as far removed geographically as possible from the control room, so that in the control room sanity could reign, and people could EQ things and get things rewound correctly. The Spliff Bunker was where you could think up your next thing while they were fiddling with your last thing.

"As soon as they'd got a rough mix down, we'd be like 'fresh tape on the reel, get the mikes out because we're gonna go like this and this and this.' We'd just keep doing that, day and night. And that's why it had to be a triple album, even though it would have been better as a double album, or a single album, or an EP. Who knows? The fact is that we recorded all that music at one spot at one moment."

Joe moved out of the Iroquois and slept under the studio piano, writing or recording every waking moment. Since observing the Westway from Mick's balcony inspired 'London's Burning', Joe's lyrics still reflected his immediate environment, his bunker getting a mention in 'If Music Could Talk', the skyline horns-draped reggae lilt evolved from the Pluto sessions' 'Shepherds Delight'. 'Broadway' was inspired by a homeless guy he saw sleeping over a heating vent every night outside the Iroqois. Placing himself as the bitter, disillusioned former boxer on this most subtly-brilliant realisation of The Clash's American dream,

"After I'd done my drum parts I had nothing much to do except get into trouble."



its smoky mood (brilliantly underpinned by Topper's light reggae pulse) captures perfectly the simmering yellow-light ambience of early hours New York, although the emotional power of Joe's vocal riding its moving piano riff could be any gutter in the world. "It ain't my fault it's six o'clock in the morning" is one of his many immortal lines.

As their creative trickle turned into a torrent, The Clash struck out in diverse musical directions like a masturbating octopus. New York also imbued 'Corner Soul''s haunted valley gospel chorus, 'One More Time' a rolling noir skank framing Joe's lyrics about youth embroiled in ghetto violence (with 'One More Dub'). On later recorded 'The Sound Of The Sinners', Joe's street wandering could've taken him into a full-on gospel service (or, as happened to me when up to no good in East Harlem, fell in the wrong door).

At Electric Lady, Topper often worked with Mick and Joe on the music, also playing guitar and piano. On 'Ivan Meets GI Joe', he sang Joe's lyrics about superpowers clashing in the disco over wired urban maelstrom and big city piano splattered with video game uproar. 'Stop The World' rose from Joe and Topper jamming around Booker T-style organ vamp, lyrics dealing with global disarmament.

"I loved New York," says Topper now, also citing the perilous thrill of scoring heroin from Alphabet City's corners or shooting galleries (inspiring the roughshod rockabilly of Joe's 'Junkie Slip'). It turns out we both traversed the same burnt-out streets east of Avenue A; gateway to a surreal parallel city that, thanks to landlords setting fire to their old buildings to claim insurance, resembled blitz-ruined Warsaw. Topper experienced the rituals of waiting for the dealer, scoring ten dollar bags stamped with its brand, or infiltrating the more dangerous shooting galleries past gun-toting sentries. If you became known as a white boy spending money, you weirdly became part of their dysfunctional little family, until the inevitable rip-off or getting busted by a patrolling squad car, hauled in to spend a night in the cells then face court next day, let off with a caution. An occupational hazard. Topper got busted a few times but we both remember characters we met with affection (even if they might stick a gun in your back to demand back your purchase).

With the dense high-grade ganja smoke enveloping Electric Lady, 'Sandinista!' can also be considered The Clash's druggiest album, as well as their most adventurous. "If someone had come in and gone, 'Let's play this with balalaikas,' everyone would have gone, 'Give me the biggest balalaika!'" recalled Joe in Westway To The World. "We were open about stuff. Mick Jones bringing in the new sound of New York... Simmo with his reggae thing, me with my R&B thing and Topper with his soul chops. We could just do that."

With Paul finished filming and 'Train In Vain' chugging up the Billboard charts to number 23, The Clash made their US network TV debut on *Fridays*, ABC's answer to *Saturday Night Live*, and appeared on the cover of Rolling Stone. 'London Calling's success gave The Clash a respectability they could never have imagined, Joe reacting with typical bluster; "To break, crack, storm or blitz America, you have to work as hard as Elvis Costello, shake hands and smile like the Boomtown Rats and sound like Dire Straits. Out of three, we would only make the first and not the rest."

Having split with Viv Albertine, Mick's love life enjoyed a boost when he met Ellen Foley, who'd come up through TV acting, sang counter vocals on Meatloaf's 'Bat Out Of Hell' and just had her first album produced by lan Hunter. A lovely lady who I'd already interviewed when she appeared on The Old Grey Whistle Test, Mick fell in love. It was inevitable they'd make music of a recorded nature together too.

If New York's hiphop, clubs and the city itself redefined Mick's attitude and his approach to creating music, it also widened the gap between him and Joe. For Mick, the musical traditions Joe clung to were to be deconstructed, genres blurred and new technology deployed - pure punk as the DIY ethic dominated hiphop and independent labels ruled. With Joe and Paul still favouring reggae and rockabilly, it would inexorably lead to Mick getting booted out of the band he'd formed, free to pursue the glorious B.A.D. For now, Mick and Joe's evolving musical ideals and attitudes just about cohabited on the same album (before Mick was savagely reined in on 'Combat Rock').

May saw a 16-date European tour, extended by UK 16 Tons tour gigs postponed due to Topper's injury. The Clash were dismayed to encounter sheep-like herds of punky latecomers bellowing for 'White Riot'. "It's become everything it wasn't



supposed to be," Joe told NME, bemoaning, "junior punks in their expensive designer uniforms with concrete heads and no ears." In Hamburg, he clonked one aggressive crowd moron with his guitar and got dragged off by cops. "I was emotionally shattered... completely disheartened to see what's happened to the seeds of what we have planted," he explained to press. "If those pricks and kids like them are the fruits of our labours, then they're worse than those people they were meant to replace."

UK shows started in Derby on June 9th, winding up with two nights at Hammersmith Palais, supported by Whirlwind when they couldn't pay for Mikey's whole band (although he joined them for encores). It was undoubtedly monumental seeing The Clash at the venue immortalised in one of their greatest songs, but the sound wasn't brilliant and they seemed knackered; hardly

surprising given the last few months' activities.

After June 21st's final show in Reykjavik, Iceland, the band wisely took July off, although hyperactive Joe produced a single for London R&B band the Little Roosters and found a Ladbroke Grove flat with girlfriend Gaby. After 'London Calling's US success, CBS released ten-inch mini-album 'Black Market Clash' in the US, featuring B-sides and rarities, including NME freebie 'Capitol Radio' and their soundcheck favourite version of Booker T. & The MGs' 'Time Is Tight'. Side two's dub extravaganza included 'Bankrobber', 'Robber Dub' and 'Armagideon Time', with 'Justice Tonight' and 'Kick It Over' versions.

In August, The Clash returned to Wessex studios, recording a further third of 'Sandinista!', while polishing their previously-re-

corded stash, often working through the night.

Joe's musical lens refocused on reggae, including 'The Equaliser' with its monster-snake-below-the-earth bass rumble, and startlingly hallucinogenic 'Rebel Waltz' revisiting 'English Civil War' turf as a mutant reggae dream waltz with baroque harpsichord and brass band. Balancing New York elements with the his home country's, 'Something About England' saw Joe railing that, despite the wars recalled through an old pensioner in the song, the class system was still in full effect. Along with its burst of "It's a long way to Tipperary", its arcane sepia quality is enhanced by brass band comprising Gary Barnacle on sax, trumpet-playing dad Bill and David Yates; Topper had played in bands with the Barnacles while growing up in Kent, Bill an early mentor.

Mick had sung 'Somebody Got Murdered' as the only 'Sandinista!' track on the tour before recording it at Wessex, although Joe had written it after after the car park attendant at his World's End estate was stabbed to death for a fiver. Originally commissioned by Jack Nitzche for William Friedkin's 1979 Cruising movie, it was one of the few recalling previous classic Clash rockers, with multi-story guitars, intricate counter-melodies and, keeping the work-in-progress's ambience, rinky-dink keyboard entrails in the ether, building to an mighty climax. The dog at the end is Topper's Battersea, Joe faking attacking his master to get him barking.

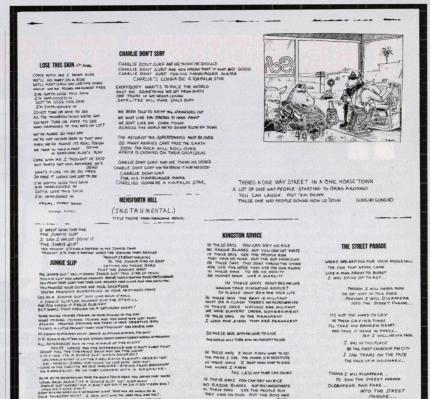
Mick wrote 'Up In Heaven (Not Only Here)' after visiting his gran at her 18th floor flat on returning from New York; appalled by its further deterioration as one of London's rotting tower blocks. Even when I was visiting between 1976-77, the graffiti'd elevators stunk of piss, decay and danger everywhere. It had only got worse and Mick responded with this deeply-resonating, heartfelt rocker, referencing "the towers of London", where "children daub slogans to prove they lived there", its feedback coda glowering like a New York subway train ramming its teetering edifice (The line, "one of these days it will surely fall to the ground" could be predicting Grenfell Tower).

Getting gripped by soca at 1980's Notting Hill Carnival inspired Joe's 'Let's Go Crazy', his lyrical SUS law attack embellished by steel drummers and opening remarks from Ansell Collins, ending with a riot. Although weighted with Mick's juggernaut guitar riff, 'The Street Parade' is another Apocalypse Now-style shimmering dream sequence, its loose, jazzy cloud-bursts garnished with Gary

Barnacle's sax.

Mick was inspired by his Motown visit to write 'Hitsville UK', transposing the daddy of all indies to the UK's independent label scene. For some Clash diehards, duetting with girlfriend Ellen on this sweetly innocent Motown bassline romp proved too much of a departure from normal Clash fare, bombing as the album's second single. I always loved it, mainly for the love tangibly sparking between the pair, enhanced by Mick's lower counter-vocal highlighted on 'Sound System's remastering.

Joe had suggested the cover version of jazz legend Mose Allison's 'Look Here', Topper relishing its featherlight bebop groove. He also amped up his rockabilly fixation to attack tabloids



"It's a magnificent thing. I wouldn't change it even if I could."

Joe Strummer



on 'The Leader' ("You've got to give people something good to read on a Sunday") and corporate corruption on sinister 'Midnight Log'. After rising organ intro, 'The Sound Of The Sinners' flamed into full-on gospel blow-out with preacher Joe venting about organised religion, wacky Darts vocalist Den Hegarty adding baritone vocals and pulpit patter. 'The Crooked Beat' was Paul's vocal vehicle, swapping 'The Guns Of Brixton' for homaging reggae, bathed in thick ganja ambience.

If their bison's cock of a creative fountain continued spurting like a New York fire hydrant, inter-band camaraderie was markedly different from the buoyant unity of 'London Calling'. I didn't visit so much this time but the vibe was different as Mick performed microscopic mixing and Joe scribbled lyrics or recorded new ideas. One day he'd announce, "We're done, just got to finish the mixing," the next shrug, "Oh, that's a new one that just happened." Our mate Robin Banks was there more than me and backed that up, recalling it as, "quite heavy. They were never in the studio together. Mick and Joe were growing apart, which was just natural. I think Joe and Mick just progressed in different directions. That added to the problem. There were problems with Topper. Everyone was worried about Topper. That whole experience with Blackhill was pretty negative. It didn't do anything to hold the band together. Joe certainly wasn't too enamoured with them."

While, in a weird way, these ructions recalled the occasionally-violent divides between Lennon-McCartney and Jagger-Richards, Topper's ongoing heroin use posed a more real threat, escalating from corner copping maintenance in New York to full-blown junkie squalor when he joined girlfriend Dee shooting up.

blown junkie squalor when he joined girlfriend Dee shooting up.

"I started using during 'Sandinista!'," he told me in 2002. "It got regular when we were back in London. After I'd done my drum parts I had nothing much to do except get into trouble. There was me using smack, Paul didn't give a toss, Mick and Joe were at loggerheads. It was a band in name only by now. The four of us were pretty mad at the time. Mick was completely insane. We were four conflicting personalities. The only thing we had in common was The Clash."

Having said that, Topper's marimba laid early foundations for 'Washington Bullets' to become another illustration of Joe's advancing lyric-crafting and the band's musical palette, all contributing to the outbreak of moth impersonations (dressing room fave) that erupts during its middle eight. Joe's words dealt with the C.I.A.'s role in overthrowing Central and South American governments, its hook naming the album 'Sandinista!'. Fielding accusations of political chic and all that bollocks, Mick told Rip It Up fanzine about Nicuaraga's bloody history;



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hen The Clash decided to play a residency at New York's Bonds International Casino, near Times Square, in spring 1981, they brought the city to a standstill with one of their most memorable moves of all. One of the most enduring events in the band's history, the Bonds stint also peaked the band's connection to the hiphop culture that so informed 'Sandinista!'.

Rather than tour coast-to-coast, this time The Clash reasoned playing seven nights at Bonds would be a more economical and eventful method

of playing the US.

On May 28th's opening night, fire marshals swooped on the former department store. Next day the New York fire department imposed a restraining order limiting capacity to 1750 when Bonds had sold 3500 tickets for each of the seven nights (possibly a result of inter-promoter skullduggery as 4,000 had attended a recent Plasmatics show). At a summit meeting between band, fire department and Bonds it was agreed upcoming gigs by Gary Glitter and The Stranglers be cancelled so The Clash can extend their residency a further eight days to accommodate all ticket-holders.

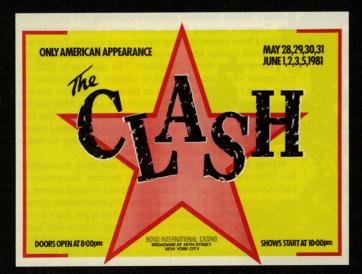
Next day, it's all over TV news and media, 'The Magnificent Seven' hammered on hip radio stations. Riot police are called to deal with irate ticket holders told to come back a week later in scenes not seen since Sinatra in the 50s as the area around Times Square came to a halt in a crush of cars and bodies. Don Letts' surviving footage for a projected film called The Clash On Broadway (used on the video for 'This Is Radio Clash'), captures the ebullient crowds, mounted cops, breakdancers and car jam chaos, giving some idea of the glorious mayhem The Clash brought to the Big Apple. "It has to be said, for the time they were in New York, The Clash ran New York," Don recalled.

Further complications arose when the New York Buildings Department slapped an order closing the club completely, further crowd-cop confrontations erupting when Saturday afternoon matinee and evening shows were cancelled. After the media furore, the building commissioner intervened, prodded by his Clash-fan daughters agreeing to let shows proceed if fire restrictions are observed and security improved.

The Clash's choice of support acts was sharp and daring, including Lee Perry, the Slits, ESG, the Fall, Dead Kennedys and yet-to-record Washington DC Rasta-punks Bad Brains, along with some of hiphop's finest, including Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five and Harlem rap group the Treacherous Three, who met similar disgusting abuse to Mikey Dread in the UK from bridge-and-tunnel punks and rock dullards checking out the latest hot group.

After The Clash took the stage to Ennio Morricone's 'Sixty Seconds To Comply' from Sergio Leone's For A Few Dollars More, they played for over two hours every night; always starting with 'London Calling' before rollicking through 'Safe European Home', 'The Leader', 'Train In Vain', '('White Man) In Hammersmith Palais', 'This Is Radio Clash', 'Corner Soul', 'The Guns of Brixton', 'The Call Up', 'Bankrobber', 'Complete Control', 'Lightning Strikes (Not Once But Twice)', 'Ivan Meets G.I. Joe', 'Charlie Don't Surf', 'The Magnificent Seven', 'Broadway', 'Somebody Got Murdered', 'Police And thieves', 'Clampdown', 'One More Time', 'Brand New Cadillac', 'The Street Parade', 'Janie Jones' and 'Washington Bullets'.

The Clash's desire to shove America's black artists back in its face, that





started with Bo Diddley on the first US tour, reached its apogee at Bonds, the bills acting as both consolidation of 'Sandinista!''s panoramic diversity and solidarity with hiphop artists from a cultural movement poised to globally explode. Holed up at the cool Gramercy Park Hotel, the band were courted by Martin Scorcese, Joe's hero Allen Ginsberg and Blondie, along with hiphop luminaries Fab 5 Freddy (as immortalised in Blondie's 'Rapture') and graffiti artist Futura 2000, whose rapping they'd back on 'The Escapades Of Futura 2000' 12-inch and would perform live graffiti on their next UK tour.

Again, Mick thought his band's championing of hiphop as perfectly natural after its influence on Sandinista!, telling me, "I think The Clash's involvement in the start of that whole thing was by luck, really. We were in the right place at the right time. If you travel with a group like that you find out about things that are happening much quicker. It's like a fast track to what's culturally happening in whatever place you go to. We were fortuitous in the fact that we had to be there. We met all these graffiti artists and stuff. They did a banner for us at Bond's. There were quite a few of them. It was a new thing, but clubs always interested us. We attracted all the different, creative people to what we did. They came and checked us out.

"What had started as a punk group turned multi-national. We took on different concepts of what people were doing and tried to make it part of it, but still retaining our own thing. We did it our own way, not by slavishly following fashions. You said yourself it helped some people find a way into these things. You wouldn't have known that, even when hiphop was in its genesis, that it would become one of the major forces of music later on.

With the Bonds residency, The Clash made their deepest impact on America's popular consciousness. "You can't march into a city like New York and take away the night life," explained Joe. "We were presented with a situation that escalated beyond control. We were on the news. That was fantastic! Doing that fifteen nights in a row nearly killed us. But to go to New York and take New York. That is great.'

 "There was a media blanket covering the whole bloody thing, and people didn't even know there was a revolution there. We really wanted to have a title that was useful for once. It was something that would draw people's attention to something that was going on at the time.'

By now, 'Sandinista!' had become a triple album to accommodate all the music then, finding themselves short, included dubs of 'One More Time' ('One More Dub'), 'Junco Partner' (Version Pardner'), 'Washington Bullets' ('Silicone On Sapphire'), Mikey's 'Living In Fame', Mickey Gallagher's kids singing 'Career Opportunities', ran 'Somewhere in England' backwards as 'Mensforth Hill' and closed with 'Shepherds Delight', the farmyard-into-industrial noise dub-fest that started it all (and later morphed into gently loping 'If Music Could Talk').

(The dubs) was an old idea that they always did on the 12-inches," Mick told me. "They'd do the version of the song first, and then they'd do a toast. That was quite fun to put them together like that. But again, we didn't think any more of it. It was quite English too. The ideas and the imagination are English. The humour is English. You retain all that stuff, y'know, even though

we were going all over the shop.'

Ultimately, 'Sandinista!' ended up Mick's stoned studio vision, achieved with Bill Price. In some ways, his relationship with Joe recalled Keith Richards and Mick Jagger in the '70s Stones. 'Exile On Main Street' was Keith's album before he got incapacitated by smack, Jagger then grabbing the reins to make 'Goats Head Soup'; compact, economic and mainstream commercial.

"Mick had a really tight line and Joe wobbled about under all that," said Johnny Green, who left The Clash for Joe Ely in Texas before joining me when I was managing Basement 5. "It was Mick who had everything together and pushed things through. Mick was the tough guy, who had the vision and the determination. Joe could be really tough, but was very inconsistent. Mick is not inconsistent. He knows what he wants. Sometimes Joe was with it but he also liked his own solitary space. Mick was always prepared to be a really strong character. I only understood that when they split."

And what of Mikey Dread; there at 'Sandinista!''s birth, his presence all over it, from radio-style track links to toasting, dub science and sound effects? Considering the sampling-mania coming that decade, this really was ahead of its time. According to Mikey, a lovely, genial soul who I sat with many times, Blackhill didn't see it that way, leaving him feeling increasingly marginalised and deprived of credit beyond 'Version Mix' on the 'Armagideon Times' included with the album. Talking in 2004, Mikey said he should have got publishing royalties on the songs he helped evolve, or at least a gold disc.

'I feel like those guys owe me that. Back then, they were like my family. I blame the people round the group. I trusted in them to work on my behalf. It ticked me off for a long time, that little joke money, but I'm still pleased about it. It was a very creative project. We were truly collaborating. I showed them the way we make reggae music. But when my involvement finished I had nothing to show. I didn't benefit

from it. That's why I stayed away."

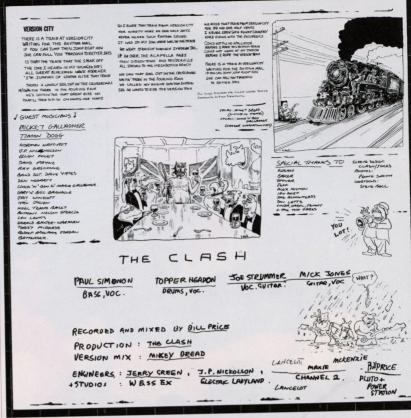
Mikey brightened when I mentioned Joe, who we'd recently lost; "I feel he was a great lyricist. Joe was a philosopher, a messenger. He didn't go for the glitz and the glamour. He had a humble image. Every time I see him he was reading the prophecies of Nostradamus. We smoked a lot. He was a hard smoker.

If CBS balked at the singles bonanza, the label positively pebble-dashed Rice Crispies from their corporate bung-hole when The Clash presented them with a finished triple album, insisting it sell for the price of a single disc. There had to be compromise, resulting in it selling for £5.99; counted as one disc in their ten album contract and the band waived royalties on the first 200,000 sold.

Speaking on promo 12-inch, 'If Music Could Talk', Mick said, "It's pretty much designed to last for six months to a year of listening, people don't have to listen to it all at once. They can listen to it a bit at a time. However much they can take."

Exacerbated by Paul insisting on attending business meetings in a rabbit suit and the band's overall monkey house jinks, this was the last straw for Blackhill - no longer managing The Clash when 'Sandinista!' was released that December in Pennie Smith's cover shot against a wall behind Kings Cross station.

'The Call Up' was the first single, released on November 28th, reaching number 40, the band sporting military clobber from Chris Farlowe's shop in Don Letts' video.



'There's rarely been an LP this big or far reaching." John Piccarela Rolling Stone



First time I heard the album was the advance cassette I hammered in Basement 5's tour bus when we were supporting lan Dury. So much to take in, though predictably my charges loved the dub excursions. Not so the music press, then obsessed with pretentious non-trends like 'New Musick'. But 'Sandinista!' laid itself wide open to get panned, even by NME's Nick Kent, who flounced the worst review The Clash ever got between nodding out.

My stop-press, hand-written Zigzag review bucked the trend as I felt something should be said against this hail of clueless, blinkered vitriol. "They say 'Sandinista!' is two and a half hours of self-indulgent sprawl... A recent Saturday afternoon bending the ears to the 36 new Clash tracks - with depressing let-down half expected - proved to be a severely uplifting experience. However, the mind boggled - two and a half hours of assorted musics all with rhythm in common. And all for six quid!"

The US was above self-obsessed pettiness, Rolling Stone's John Piccarela giving it five stars, citing its "red-hot rock and roll, a joyful noise and politics that live...an everywhere-youturn guerrilla raid of vision and virtuosity. Produced with greater care but taking more risks, (Sandinista!) is a sprawling smoke screen of styles... there's rarely been an LP this big or far reaching. Spot on.

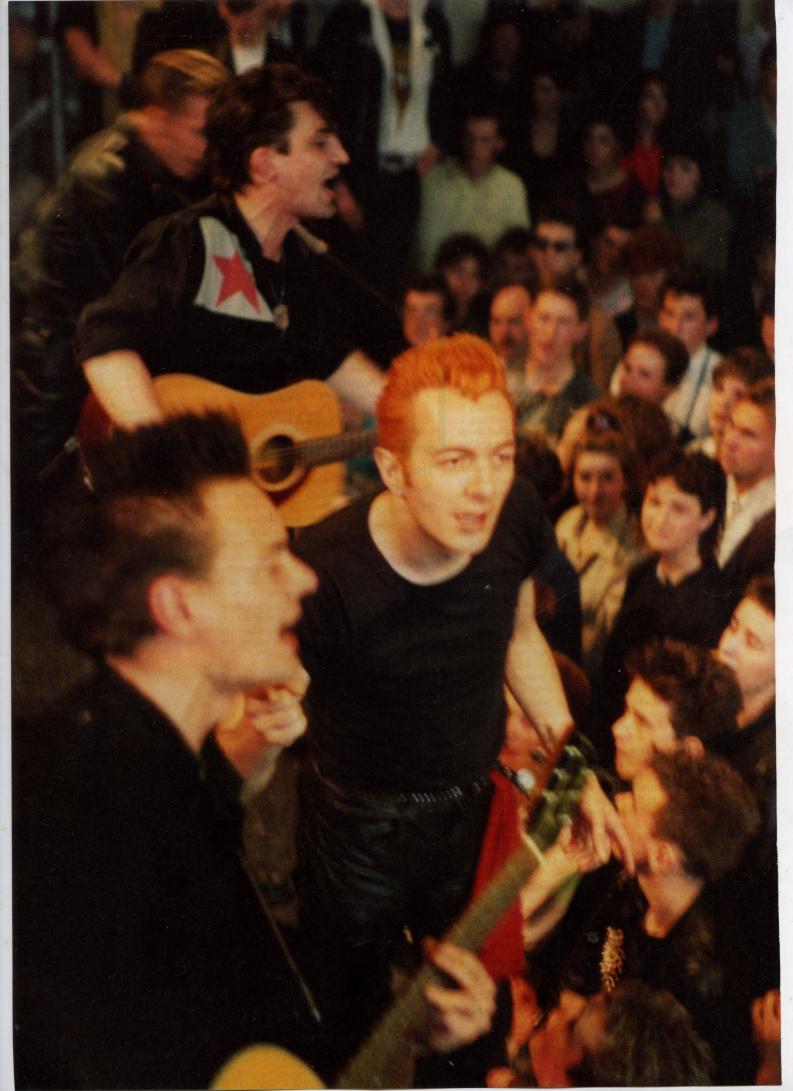
The following year, I said to Mick how the UK press wanted to bury The Clash. "They would love to... Hip? Hip hop hippity hop! What would they put there instead? Perhaps they can give one of Paul Weller's old suits to Martin Fry and it'll be all right. All that stuffs really nice and it works well in a small environment like London. People can be hip putting down other people. It don't work so well in a place like America. It's a bigger deal, a

Now, 'Sandinista!' can be held alongside the Stones' 'Exile On

Now, 'Sandinista!' can be held alongside the Stones' 'Exile Oh Main Street', itself slagged as a sprawling mess on release, later hailed a shape-shifting classic. 'Sandinista!' predicted the rest of the decade and beyond, starting with world music and advanced production techniques; as a whole, it's absolutely stunning.

Back in 1980, if Mick didn't give a fuck about smart-arse reviewers, Joe was stung into instigating the return of Bernie Rhodes, slagging 'Sandinista!' himself until he was able to look back at the "madness" they'd achieved and sold for a bargain price. Like he does in 1999's Westway To The World, "I can only say I'm proud of it, warts 'n' all, as they say. It's a magnificent thing, I wouldn't change it even if I could. That's after nificent thing. I wouldn't change it even if I could. That's after some soul searching. Just for the fact it was all thrown down in one go. It's outrageous... It's doubly outrageous! It's triply outrageous!" VLR





## ART SCHOOL CLAS

Joe Whyte speaks to Ross Sinclair of Soup Dragons fame about shooting The Clash during their querilla Glasgow gigs as he unearths some unseen Clash Busking Tour photos,



AY 17th, 1985. The faltering Clash had imploded then reignited with a new line-up and without founder Mick Jones (ignominiously fired a short time before) and drummer and heartbeat Topper Headon. Strummer, Simonon and manager and arch provocateur Bernie Rhodes had decided that a back-to-basics route was the best way to re-engage with the original spirit (and obviously drum up some positive press) so they'd set out on a busking tour of British cities

without any of the rigmarole of hotels, transport or an itinerary.

Travelling by train, the now five-piece group pitched up in Glasgow and played some legendary and chaotic gigs in pubs The Rock Garden, Dukes and The Fixx. Absolute mayhem ensued in that pre-internet world with folk in phone boxes calling mates, work and college classes being abandoned and rumour and counter-rumour flying across the city. After the police closed down the Dukes gig, the band stayed with a couple of art students they'd met and tentative plans were made for another guerrilla gig at the Art School the following day.

Ross Sinclair was a young art student who never let his camera leave his side. He recently found his photos of both of those days and here they are for the first time in public.

Ross latterly became drummer in the Soup Dragons and currently is a professor of Fine Art at the place he saw The Clash, weirdly. He's travelled the world as an artist and is hugely renowned among the cognoscenti.

Here are his own words as regards a couple of days that have taken on legendary status in Glasgow...

"I'd seen The Clash before, I think it was the 16 Tons tour, or London Calling, 1979/80, as a spotty 13-year-old - but that was at The Apollo in Glasgow where the stage was 20-foot-high and there was an army of obnoxious bouncers determined to stop you having a good time and pogoing! This just couldn't have been more different.





"When The Clash came back in 1985, most of the photos I took were out of focus because I was literally too close to the band - touching distance, standing right beside Joe at The Glasgow School of Art student Union or downstairs at the Rock Garden in a sweatbox singalong."

"I was in first year at Art School and in a couple of bands at the time, Gods for all Occasions with my mates Neil Menzies and Raymond McGinley (later of Teenage Fanclub) and The Soup Dragons who had just started to take off, It was just a couple of months later we would play our first gig supporting Primal Scream at the legendary Splash One club in Glasgow.

"My memory is that the band just suddenly appeared in a pub on Sauchiehall St and it was lucky that our pal Gillian from Art School randomly bumped into them and suddenly the rumours started spreading like wildfire about gigs and meeting them and no one could believe it. I think they actually stayed in her flat. I saw them first in the middle of the afternoon in the basement of The Rock Garden on Queen St. I had my camera with me everywhere then so I took photos everywhere and I taped it too – immediately gave the tape to someone and never saw it again! I think it was the next day they made it to The Art School, But it was more hanging about! Would they, wouldn't they. They had been spotted the day before at the art school too but no gig transpired but everyone was by now on high alert!

"But then suddenly they were here, hanging about on the steps of the

Vic Café, way too cool for school, chatting to everyone that had the nerve

to go up and speak to them.
"I think they started off in the downstairs cafe but then so many folk "I think they started off in the downstairs cafe but then so many folk crowded in they had to go upstairs to the bigger hall! It was an amazing gig. The drummer beating hell out of a plastic chair and Joe singing at the top of his lungs to make himself heard above 200 art students! Paul Simonon looking so fucking cool like he's just stepped off Mount Rushmore. To my ears they played all my favourites — 'Straight To Hell', 'Guns Of Brixton', my all-time favourite, 'White Man In Hammersmith Palais', 'Pressure Drop' and I think they finished off with 'White Riot', joined in by a 200 strong Glaswegian punk choir.

"I think after that gig they headed off to get the

"I think after that gig they headed off to get the train to Manchester, dis-ppearing off into the sunset like the last gang in town that they sure were. Ok, so that last album they were trying to promote was rotten, it wasn't

even the beginning of the end; it was the end of the end.

"That whole experience of seeing the band, meeting the band in that context reached into a deeper place, a real authentic connection, especially if like me you have been a lifelong fan of the band and their music. It showed you that your heroes were just people too, needing a place to kip and beer money for the road." VLR