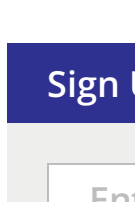


ON THIS DAY: 1976: The Clash and Sex Pistols bring punk rock to Sheffield at legendary gig



The Clash and The Sex Pistols played Sheffield on July 4, 1976.



By **CHRIS PAGE**
Email

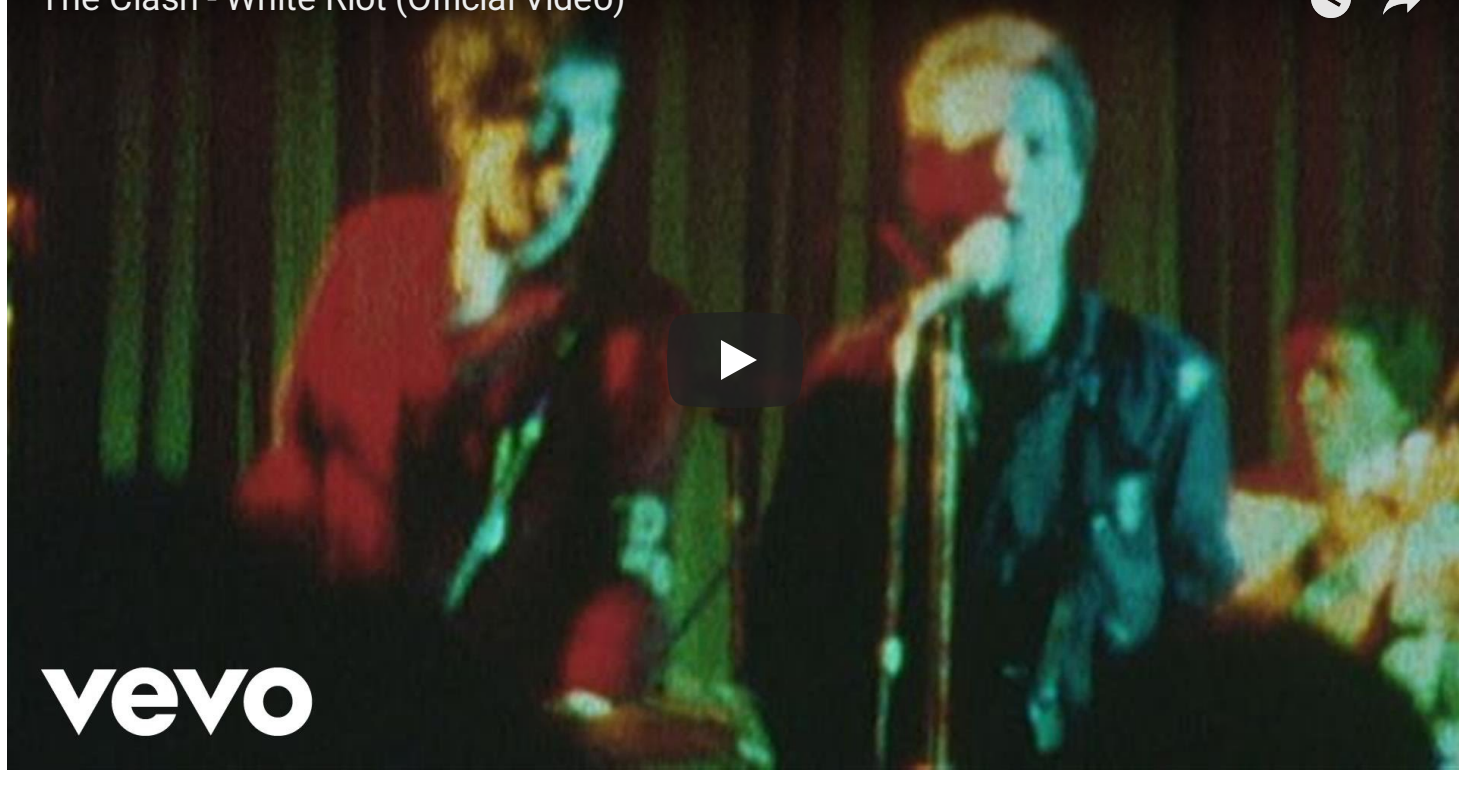
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Four decades ago today The Clash rocked, if not the casbah of their later hit, a Sheffield venue at an iconic gig.

The band's Black Swan live debut on this day in 1976, supporting The Sex Pistols, is documented as the night punk moved overground amid a blistering heat wave.

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Notoriety would, within six months, see cancellation of scheduled December 17 Sheffield City Hall Anarchy Tour appearance by both bands alongside The Damned.

John Robb's "Punk Rock- An Oral History" confirms the importance of the concert at the Snig Hill "Mucky Duck" that would become Compleat Angler and The Boardwalk.

"4th July: The Clash played their debut gig supporting the Sex Pistols at Sheffield's Black Swan pub. The Black Swan was a regular venue on the pub rock scene with the likes of Brinsley Schwarz, Ducks Deluxe and the ubiquitous Dr Feelgood playing there.

"There was probably only a handful of people present, although some eyewitnesses reported a sizeable crowd in the sweltering venue in the middle of the 1976 summer heatwave."



The Black Swan where the concert took place.

The Clash singer-songwriter-guitarist Mick Jones recalls: "We played our first gig at the Black Swan in Sheffield.

"We went in the back of a removal truck with the gear piled up next to us.

"We all sat in the back. It had a gate on the back. It was open like an old army truck.

"We put someone's shoes on a string and put them out the back and they bounced along!

"And the gear was going like this [waves his hand about, laughing] andœ it was quite hairy!

"It was the back room of a pub. There were 50 people there, a couple of punks, It was interesting. Wherever you went you would see a couple of them in the early times.

"Then you would see them getting more all the time. They would tell their friends. It was a big thing.

"Very often people got it completely wrong. But in a way you couldn't get it wrong. It wasn't formed.

"We were just starting to find out what it could be. You didn't think about it too much really. When you are young you think about it after in the post-match analysis!

"By the time everyone had sussed it, it was already over.

"We were dressed in black and white. A couple of us had ties on, black and white shirts with suity bits. It was punky style. Not good suits, a bit ripped. Kind of tight suits, slightly different.

"We were dressed fairly straight and well-behaved in a way. Maybe a rip here and a little splash of colour there.

"A couple of pin-type things, not safety pins. The look was still formulating.

"There was a bit of paint dribbled here and there. It had come off when we had to paint the rehearsal room.

"We got the paint from the car spray place down the road.

"Bernie (Rhodes, Clash manager) was involved in garages and he used to go down there and get spray. We started painting all the amps pink and, as we were painting everything, we were getting covered in paint.

"I guess that was our first look. Also Glen (Matlock, Sex Pistol) has a claim to this as well, because he had a pair of trousers that were paint-splattered a la Pollock, so he should take a bit of credit for it.

"The style thing came naturally through Paul.

"We were all into the style, especially Paul and I. Joe not so much, but we would always encourage each other.

The Clash (and later Public Image Limited) founding member, multi-instrumentalist Keith Levene adds: "At the Black Swan I remember John sitting miles away from the rest of the band members, looking miserable, and there's me sitting in another corner away from all my band members, looking miserable.

"So I walk over to Lydon and talk to him. We know each other, but we don't know each other, because we're the rival bands.

"We were both in the same scene but we knew we were the best bands on the scene at the time.

"I said 'I'm out of here after this gig' (It turned out I was out a few gigs later, after the Roundhouse show.)

"Do you want to get a band together if the Pistols ever end? Though it doesn't look like it at the moment.

"Looks like you could be the next Beatles. But if it ever changes. There's no way I'm going to be in a band with Steve Jones.

"It's going to be a different band or it's going to be the Sex Pistol with me."

Were you there? Did you take photos? Were The Clash billed by that name or lead vocalist Joe Strummer's previous vehicle The 101ers? Share your punk rock memories, while revisiting the band's raw energy with live video of first single White Riot.

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