



brand-new punk sensation known as the Clash. It was an eventful evening by any reckoning. The openers were Subway Sect and Snatch Sounds, who seem not to have made much of an

impression. At that point the Clash and the Sex Pistols were in a category of two in terms of being at the absolute pinnacle of delivering pissed-off punk music and generating the electric excitement of punk (and the associated publicity too). The night before and that night too, Patti Smith was playing the Hammersmith Odeon but managed to make her way to the ICA so that she could dance onstage to "I'm So Bored with the U.S.A." As will be easily imagined, the audience was in a rowdy mood and the alcohol was flowing freely. The show had been billed as "a night of pure energy," and it surely lived up to that. In the November 6, 1976, issue of the New Musical Express ran an account of the show written by Barry

Miles, who preferred to go simply by "Miles" as a nom de journalisme. The cheeky, startling headline of the piece was "CANNIBALISM AT CLASH GIG," with the subtitle "But why didn't anybody eat MILES?" At the top and the bottom of the writeup were two pictures, taken by Red Saunders, of Shane MacGowan and a renowned punk fan named Jane Crockford, unflatteringly nicknamed "Mad Jane." The pictures show indistinct mayhem as well as a generous portion of blood flowing from MacGowan's right earlobe. Interestingly, both of the subjects were, or would be, in notable bands of their own; MacGowan was in the Nipple Erectors and (of course) the Pogues, while Jane was in the Bank of Dresden and the Mo-dettes.



afford sausages?" Pic: RED SAUNDERS In Bob Gruen's must-own book *The Clash* he gets Mick Jones and Paul Simonon to comment on the show:

own wrists. But for the dudes in the audience it's just a regular Saturday gig. Maybe they eat earlobes themselves? Edgar Froese (left) wonders if they'll be turning out for T. Dream. "Can't these Englishers

it bitten off, you know. Isn't that the same show where Patti Smith got up on stage during our set? Paul: That was the ICA—it was called A Night of Pure Energy. My haircut's gone very

Mick: That was the night of Shane MacGowan's earlobe, wasn't it? He didn't really have

jumping about was a way of dodging gobs and missiles generally. There's Joe with his sharks' teeth—when I first met him they looked just like a real sharks' teeth.

got in the papers that week."

mod; it had flopped down from all the jumping around onstage. In the beginning all that

Gruen notes of the MacGowan incident that it gave the Clash "their first significant press coverage." He also quotes Joe Strummer as saying, "Without Mad Jane's teeth and Shane's earlobe, we wouldn't have



famous those photos were to become." The NME used them to accompany Miles's report under the headline "CANNIBALISM AT CLASH GIG": "A young couple, somewhat out of it, had been nibbling and fondling each other amid the broken glass when she suddenly

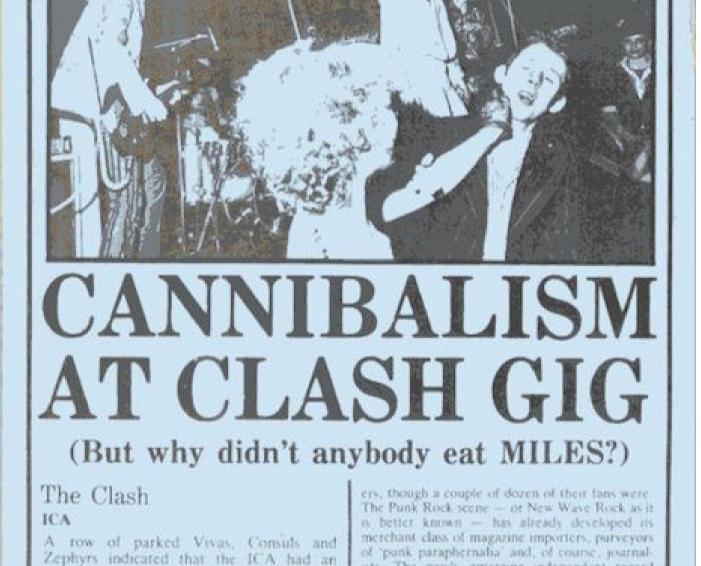
hipitude." ... the Clash gig was a wild night fuelled by speed and alcohol. The bar staff entered into the spirit of the evening to such an extent that they gave away a further £80 worth of booze ... and the twosome Miles and Red observed, Mad Jane and Shane MacGowan, were by no means content to loiter at the back of the queue. "Me and this girl were having a bit of a laugh which involved biting each other's arms till they were completely covered in blood and then smashing up a couple of bottles and cutting each other up a bit," Shane informed ZigZag's Granuaille in 1986, setting the record straight on the occasion of punk's 10th anniversary, and, in the process, offering another insight into the mythopoetics of punk. "That, in those days, was the sort of thing that people used to do. I haven't got a clue now why I did it or why anyone would want to do it, but that was how teenagers got their kicks in London if they were hip. Anyway, in the end she went a bit over the top and bottled me in the side of the head. Gallons of

blood came out and someone took a photograph. I never got it bitten off-although we had bitten each other to bits—it was just a heavy cut." As Shane noted, though, the anecdote was exaggerated with each telling. "It's like the old story about the bloke who

lunged forward and bit his ear lobe off [while the crowd] watched with cold, calculate

When the Clash started playing, a couple in front of Miles and Red were obstructing their view of the band. Apparently intent on attacking each other while laughing like maniacs, they refused to move out of the way. So Red took pictures of them. "I had no idea how

catches the fish. He says that it weighs this much and it's that big, and within a couple of days it's a whale." Over the years, few have been prepared to let the fact that his earlobes are both present and correct stand in the way of a good story. SATURDAY NIGHT. The Clash are playing. It's a regular gig. In the foreground, two young tovers fondle one anothers earlobes Pic: RED SAUNDERS 6 November 1976, page 43 WWW. SHAND MACGOWAN DO



## more than the Patti Smith Band the night before. They were not poseurs. They are everything that It was as if they had crystallized the dormant energy of all the hours of crushing boredom of

onstage to dance

I missed, and The Clash

your parents in a council flat, into a series of three minute staccato blasts delivered like a whiplash at the audience, who were galvanised into frenzied The audience stood out the discu, but now they demonstrated the choroeography of the West Side Story knife-fight, the sparring pariner bop, the villain seducing the virgin dance, the horse-ride, a little basic pogo dancing and even some old

fashioned high-steppin' truckin'. Patri Smith was

there, of course, and felt removed to climb

audience a little different to the usual. It was

"A Night Of Pure Energy" with Subway

Sect, who were terrible, Snatch Sounds, who

The Clash were real good. Lenjoyed them a lot-

being an unemployed school-leaver, living with

The Clash have the musical intensity of the Ramones - a concerted high energy delivery and their lynes are much better. You can't hear too well, but if you do catch them it's an extrabonus to what's going down In 1977, I hope I go to heaven 'Con I been too long on the dole, And I can't work at all. Danger, stranger! You better paint your face,

No Elus, Beatles or Rolling Stones,

Lead singer-guitarist Joe Strummer was in the litters until they broke up. The other guys are

Micky Jones on guitar, Paul Simenon on bass and

("1977" by The Clash)

Terry Chimes on drums. The Clash weren't wearing pink plastic trous-

So Bored With The USA" and "Career Opportunities", all of which had a vicious treble ring to them. Then Joe peered down at the audience in front of the stage and muttered "I don't believe what's happening down here at the front A young couple, somewhat out of it, had been nibbling and fondling each other amid the brokenglass when she suddenly lunged forward and bir his ear lobe off. As the blood spurted she reached out to paw it with a hand tastefully clad in a rubber glove, and after smashing a Guinness bottle on the front of the stage she was about to add to the gore by slashing her wrists when the

ists. The newly emerging independent record

labels are doing fine work, but I personally find it

hard to imagine a viable musical or social revolu-

tion coming from a clothes boutique in the Kings

the outlits were really neat and were certainly freaking the NW3 crowd who'd come to see one of

the ICA's other shows that evening. There were imaginative combinations of tri-colour hair, fish-

net stockings with plastic minis; the curious safety-

pin fetish, the ubiquitous plastic trousers and, of

The Clash played some great numbers like "I'm.

course, a lot of Keith Richard look-alikes

Not that the clothes don't look good - many of

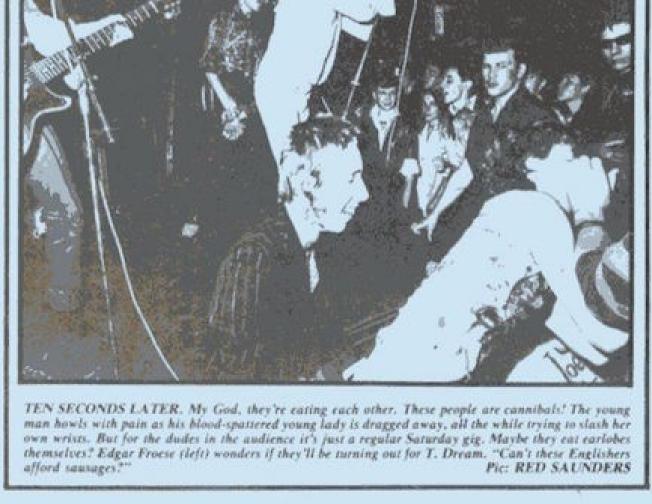
Road, Chelsea.

calculated hiptitude

Creepy, but not the much exaggerated violence that is rumoured to attend the new wave bands. I've seen numbles at everything from Who concerts to pacifist folk singing sessions. Meanwhile The Clash continued their 30 minute set, heads snapping forward like snakes on speed. They ended with their theme tune White Riot. I wanna riot. White Riot, a riot of me own!" If anyone's got the energy for it, they have,

security men finally reached her, pushing through

the trance-like crowd who watched with cold.



Previously on Dangerous Minds: Poguetry in motion: Time-lapse video of Shane MacGowan's portrait being painted



Record exec's letter to a punk fan about why he passed on the Clash

