



# GIVE 'EM ENOUGH ROPE

The Clash are definitely one of the top five rock 'n' roll bands of all time and their new album is one of the finest rock 'n' roll records ever made ... sez RONNIE GURR. Bearing that in mind, now read on.

**L**OOK I play, right? And people go bonkers. That is it. That's what I want out of it, that's all," asserts Joe Strummer from the opulent cocktail bar of his safe Barnton hotel home.

The statement is true, cold hard fact. The Clash do make people go bonkers. The following night, two thousand salivating fans, splintering seats and making bridge-heads onto the stage of the Odeon in Edinburgh are a testimony to the truth of Strummer's first piece of oratory.

Unfortunately I, and more than a few others, find as time goes by, that the Clash's opinions, statements and platforms are becoming a little difficult to agree with.

For this reason I tackled the problem with my Phillip's cassette recorder blazing. Before sharing the delights of the Clash clash with you, I think I should state that the new album, 'Give 'Em Enough Rope' is one of the finest rock 'n' roll records ever made and, as such it deserves your respect and attention.

What I find difficult to understand is that certain boy journalists write gushing articles backing the band's sensationalist and, for the most part, unfulfilled claims. Do you remember promises? I do. I do ... and babe, the sun most definitely don't shine out the Clash's asses. As someone once said, they may make good records but don't expect too much intelligence.

I knew it was going to be one of those interviews when, on reply to my first question — how is the writing split these days? — I received this eloquent discourse.

Quote from Mick Jones: "Me an' 'im write 'em"

Quote from "him" (Strummer): "We jus' write 'em, that's all."

At which point Jones hurls a rejoinder in my direction: "It's none of your business."

Hardly the incisive street-speak that one would expect from such a gathering of vital proles, eh what?

Still, we banter our way through a run-down of the tracks from the 'Rope' album. Strummer is the mainman chat wise, Jones is content to add the perfunctory snide insult and Simonon, stage right adding the occasional telling remark.

Side one opens, or rather explodes, with 'Safe European Home'. Thoughts?

'S'about Jamaica," slurs Strummer, "we went there to write songs, me an' 'im — Mick Jones is 'im — we 'ad a lousy time 'cos we couldn't find any black musicians. They were all in the bar of the Sheraton Hotel, y'know. We figured how safe it was back here y'know, and when we thought about it we wanted to come back."

Jones chips in: "We'd go back and have another go though."

Perhaps, I ponder, the man is joking. We move on. 'English Civil War' is "just about what could come", sums up Simonon concisely. This gives Strummer the cue to discuss the uselessness of both a governmental system and laws. His basic argument centres around the fact that he thinks that people are sensible enough to come to agreements without having to abide by laws.

**T**HE WHOLE darn thing gets even sillier when we discuss the single about to be lifted from 'Rope'. The song is 'Tommy Gun'. Presumably, I venture this concerns the mercenary mentality. This signifies a deadly fascination with things

that are inextricably nasty, a trend which seems to appeal to Strummer.

"The song's more about terrorists than it is about mercenaries."

Did he support the activities of terrorist groups, I wondered, thinking back to the days of his Red Army Faction shirts.

"Yeah," he states with some relish. "I support them for this reason ... 'cos they are acting, right? And even though they kill people, it's like innocent bystanders, right? It's followed like 20 years of negotiating, and people who go out and start shooting people are like, desperate. I was wondering what kind of people they were."

At this point Mick Jones interrupts: "I don't support this killing stuff," he blurts between mouthfuls of peanuts and leaves it at that.

"I know I wouldn't, couldn't go to those extremes myself so I thought about what kind of human beings they were and wrote the song, that's all," concludes Strummer in a manner which smacks of trendy sociological bollocks.

On the same militant theme, a mate of mine, visiting Edinburgh's local radio station noticed that Paul Simonon, after being interviewed there, had signed his occupation in the visitor's book as "a mercenary". He had spelt it wrongly. I didn't laugh, honest.

Julie's Been Working For The Drug-Squad' is, as Strummer points out, pure New Orleans with some magnificent ivory tickling from one Gloves Glover. The subject here is fairly straightforward, being an aural documentation of the Operation Julie LSD busts. At which point I broach the subject of drugs and the numerous references contained on 'Rope'.

'Drug Stabbing Time' is a song about people who spend all their

time taking drugs and what a way that is to live," explains Joe.

What, I wondered, of the "Cocaine flowing up our noses" quote from 'Cheapskates'? Hypocrisy, I would have thought, considering the fact that Jones was busted for possession of said drug a few months back.

"He was busted for a quarter of an ounce of the world's worst hashish and they found a minute trace in his pocket or something. Somebody must have given it to him for nothing, that happens in this game," continues Joe in Jones' absence. "And those hipsters at NME blew it all up."

**W**HICH IS where things start getting heated. Fed up of Jones' jaded smart ass comments and the way Strummer takes the piss out my accent — really funny Joe — I start asking blunt questions.

The album has been a long time coming, 18 months being the period of time usually associated with the likes of, say, Pink Floyd to come up with an over-produced, overblown 12 incher. Jones loses his head at the example I plucked out of thin air.

"You come in here with your hoary old cliches saying we're like the Pink Floyd," he explodes. (Wrong end of stick son.)

"We're pissed off with your slag angles," spits Strummer.

Why 18 months then? Cooling out Strummer explains. "The truth is, right, that we are not talented enough to produce an album as good as we have in three or four months, also we don't want to rip off anyone by bringing out a bad record, simple as that."

Admirable sentiments I suppose. How did he feel about the band's contemporaries who have produced three albums to the Clash's two. "They're all terrible records."

'The truth is, that we are not talented enough to produce an album as good as we have in three or four months, also we don't want to rip anyone off by bringing out a bad record'

though ain't they?" dismisses Strummer, with some point, I suppose.

Another pig's head which the Clash are into kicking is the rock media. I state that for what the band has actually done over the last year they have had more good press and front covers than anyone. This really, if you'll excuse the pun, put the gun amongst the pigeons. Strummer continues the mocking accent — yawn — and calls me a few well chosen expletives.

"What is the root of your belligerence?" he asks. I maintain that more than anyone the Clash have made claims that have not been carried and I doubt will ever be carried through.

Like... we ain't in it for the money. The root of my belligerence? I will not be fooled again. A straight question. Are the Clash in it for the money?

Joe Strummer: "Nah, there is no money." The man then goes on to explain how he is a party to a monumental debt. "I make sure things like that don't bother me. If you let it bother you you're in a bad way."

"It bothers me," interjects Jones.

Strummer then states that neither he nor Jones have had — no hum — a royalty cheque yet, they all went to CBS.

"Why are we talking about this?" Simonon wonders.

Strummer to Simonon: "People think we're rich."

They may not be tax exile status yet but they must be comfortable.

"Listen, I'd say that in London I had about 50 quid all told, all my worldly possessions. There is nothing else for me," offers Strummer. Simonon reckons that they will make money, but, he says rightly, it all boils down to what you do with it.

believe it or not, it's up to you and anyone else that reads the paper." Once I believed that, now, well I'll adopt a wait-and-see attitude. You would, for your own sake, be well advised to do the same.

Later, Strummer told me I could take him to task in the future, but he was gonna do something, give it away, just something with his royalties.

Something didn't gel though. The evening was riddled with contradictions in the rhetoric. The most potent example of this came when I asked why they had bodyguards. Jones and Strummer again erupted, then proceeded to deliver a diatribe on how they have no bodyguards, that this was a malicious rumour and it just was not true. The guys I referred to were drivers. At the end of their condemnation of me, the question, and the groundless rumour, Simonon leant over and said:

"Anyway in this game we need bodyguards." If the previous evening was one of contradictions, the night of the gig was one of matchless joy. The Clash proved beyond a shadow of doubt they are the most potent, vital and exciting band treading boards at the moment.

A joy, they performed 'Janie Jones', 'Garageland', 'Police And Thieves' and 'White Riot' from the most significant and important album ever released. Soaring through the new album's songs they proved their worth by performing 'Julie' and 'Stay Free' live.

The cream were the singles, 'White Man', and 'Complete Control', veritable bijous. The Clash are definitely one of the top five rock 'n' roll bands of all time. See them live, live with the new album and find out why. Sadly though their bullshit polemics prevent them from becoming heroes like say Mott, the Stones or the Faces.

As one local luminary said to me after brushing past Mick Jones in the lobby of the chichi Barnton Hotel: "He," motioning at Jones' back, "was about that" — he held up thumb and first finger an inch apart — away from being a hero.

I knew what he meant. The Clash are going to be very rich soon, they rock out better than anyone, it's just a pity that they're such a bunch of schmucks.

# INSTANT REPLAY

# INSTANT REACTION



LOOK BACK TO 1972 FOR AN INSTANT REPLAY OF THE DAN HARTMAN STORY. THAT WAS THE YEAR HE JOINED FORCES WITH THE EDGAR WINTER GROUP TO DELIVER A STRING OF MONSTER SMASH HITS AND A PLATINUM ALBUM. THEY ONLY COME OUT AT NIGHT. FLICK FORWARD TO '78 AND YOU SEE DAN HARTMAN RIDING HIGH AGAIN WITH 'INSTANT REPLAY', THE YEAR'S MOST IRRESISTIBLE SINGLE. NOW COMES DAN HARTMAN'S 'INSTANT REPLAY' ALBUM. BRIGHT AND HARD AS A DIAMOND, SMOOTH AND SUPPLE AS THE FINEST LEATHER. SEVEN TRACKS IN ALL, TOUCHED WITH THE MUSCLE THAT PUTS DAN HARTMAN IN A CLASS OF HIS OWN. GET INSTANT REACTION. GET 'INSTANT REPLAY'.

**NEW ALBUM**

**DAN HARTMAN**

**W**HAT WOULD he do with it? Strummer opined that he would, cheque book in hand go out and buy a pirate radio station and float it off the Thames. Simonon states that "money should be put back where it's taken from". "I'd put money into clubs and things. There's no solution to it, you just have to believe what we say."





**CLASH**

