

THE CLASH DEFUSED!!

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it. I hope one day one of them tells me why he's doing it.

EVS: To meet bands.

MJ: Well, you don't need a tape recorder to do that. I can't really understand it.

EVS: 'Cause we're the go between.

MJ: No, not like you guys. Proper journalists like...

PE: Tony Parsons?

MJ: No, he's like you guys. I mean, like the hacks, the ones who go from fad to fad, their life is the life of a reporter with a little press card in their hat. I suppose they're opportunists but that's not a good enough reason for me. It's not even a creative field.

EVS: Who designed your album cover?

MJ: It's from a postcard, a guy in San Francisco called Hugh Brown. He actually introduced the postcard to us.

EVS: Is the Cowboy an American symbol?

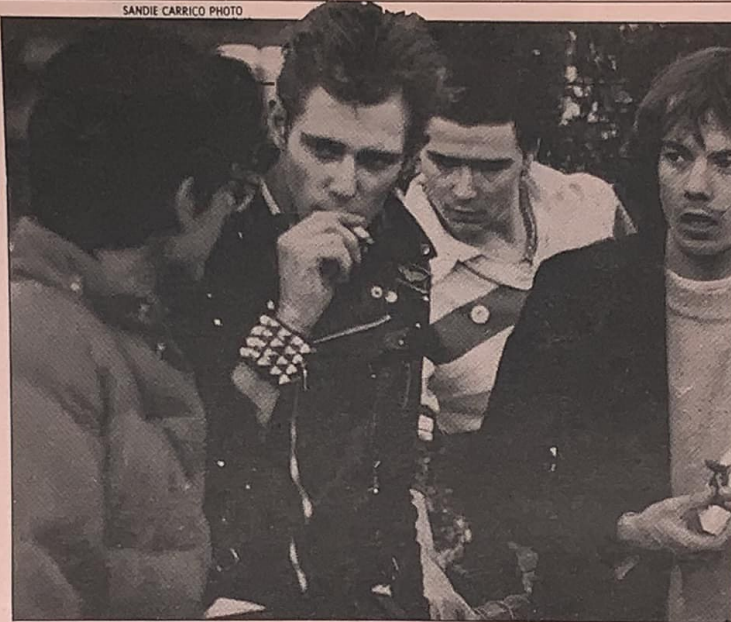
MJ: At one time the cover had a hammer and sickle on the vulture as well. That got taken off.

EVS: What about the people who won't understand "English Civil War" or "Safe European Home"?

MJ: They should understand it better than the English. It's an American folk song.

EVS: That's true, but I don't know what you're talking about. I've listened to that song eighty times, but it doesn't come

SANDIE CARRICO PHOTO



"See, we smoke cigarettes just like you."

across to me.

MJ: I know. It's gonna be a problem for those who don't. Hopefully they'll get off and understand the feeling of it, and then they'll take the time to look deeper into it. I think what you understand from it yourself is the key.

PE: I think there is something there without decoding the specific references.

MJ: On the other hand there are some very real and specific references. It's like its happening already.

EVS: How many people are going to know that "Guns on the Roof" is about the pigeon shooting incident?

MJ: It isn't. It isn't at all. It's got nothing to do with the pigeons. You've been misled on that. The pigeons is a big joke thing. Regardless, it's not about pigeons. It's about what the record says it's about. You think we're talking about terrorist pigeons?

EVS: I don't know. We get the NME...

MJ: It's like a joke. They don't like 'em in Japan. Like Japanese people are really serious.

PE: Over here the serious things are the jokes. The Sex Pistols were a joke when they toured.

MJ: I can imagine. That's why it took us a long time to come. We had to reappraise the situation. The English invasion...

EVS: What was it like on the Anarchy tour?

MJ: Not many gigs. It was wierd. We just sat in hotel rooms all the time, throwing Damned members into the baths. We just sat around.

EVS: Was there more comradeship back then?

MJ: Not really. There was some — like you had a group of friends and then there was another group over at that table you spoke to socially and were acquainted with, but were not really friends. We got things done — we overcame our personal differences — became motivated to do something en masse — actually worked for a while.

The concert was disappointing. Topper and Paul were superb throughout but neither Strummer nor Jones were in top form. Though his phrasing and stage presence is still awe inspiring, Strummer's voice was in terrible shape, sometimes barely louder than a mutter. Jones was the real irritant, prancing around stage and draping the songs with his phase shifter. While his playing is still technically and melodically excellent, his guitar work has lost much of its tension.

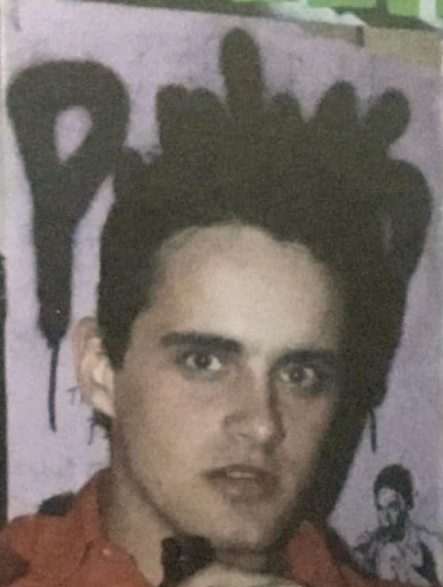
The new material sounded much better than on the album (especially "Tommy Gun"), but the old songs sounded lifeless and dated, except for a doomsday version of "What's My Name?" complete with revamped lyrics, Strummer prowling the stage as he "peeks in your windows when you're sleeping tight."

Taking into account opening night jitters, I still felt I was seeing a band past its prime. The Clash call into question the very conception of the permanent rock and roll band. It is not humanly possible to maintain the level of anger and energy which they first displayed. The Pistols broke up, the Clash will succeed. Which is the most destructive?

Neat Neat Neat



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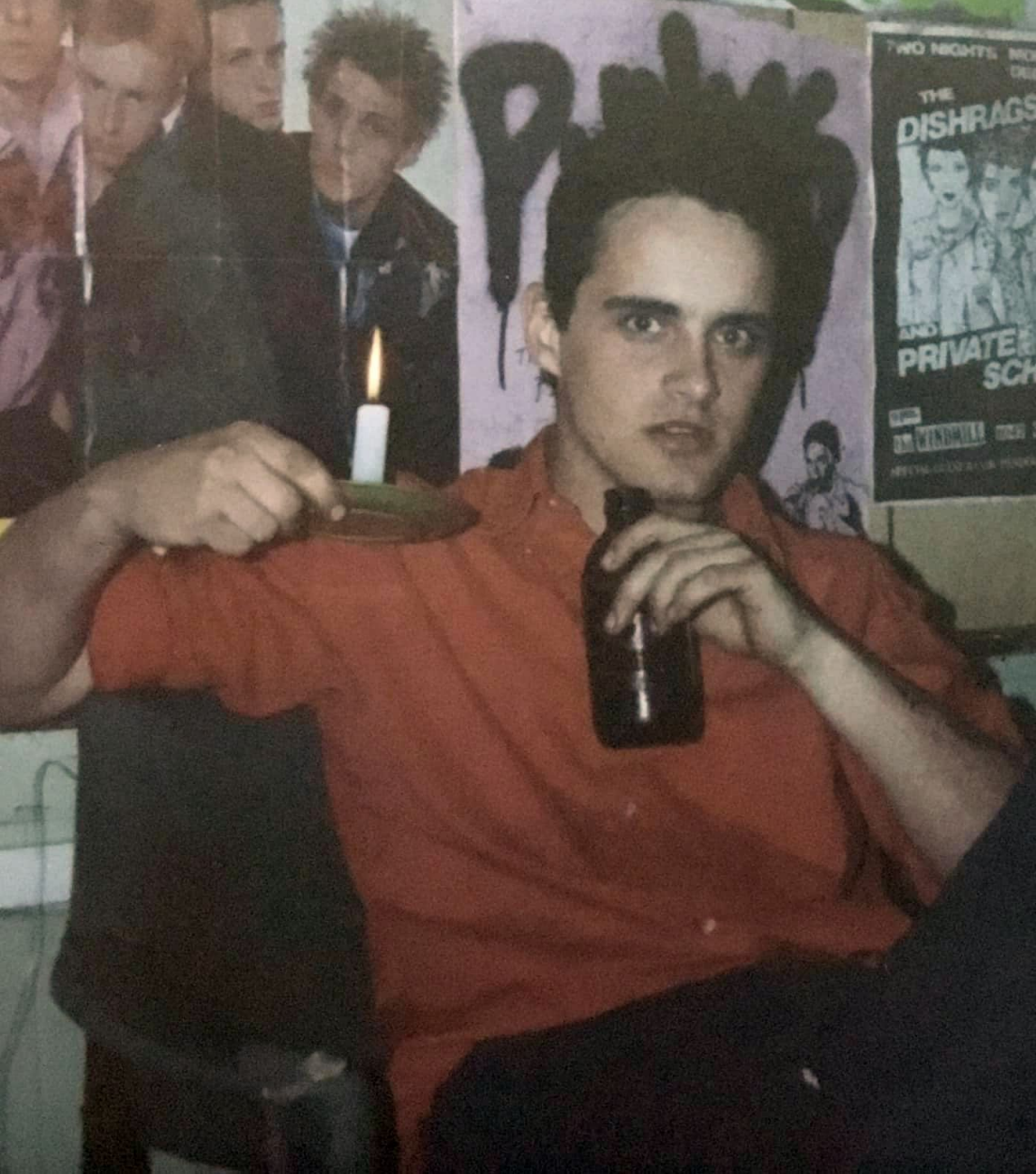
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The White Noise Test 18



D.G.A.



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The White Noise Tour 78
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