

The Clash are on the road in the USA and Ray Lowry is right there with them. He'll be presenting his, uh, unique reports for as long as he or the tour lasts.



Clash USA '79

By Lowry



THAT'S FAMILY DOG,

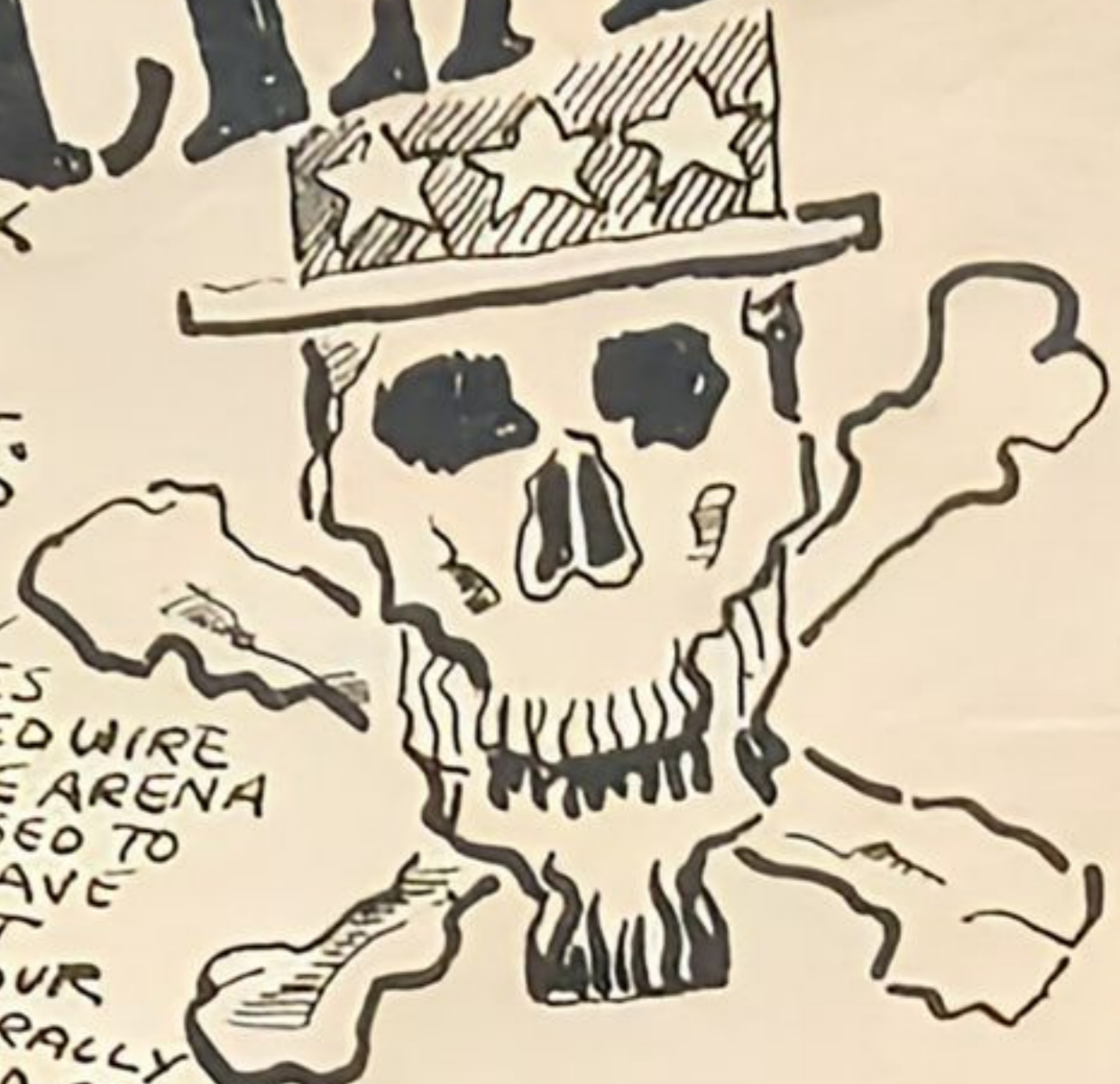
MEET THE

CLASH

AT THE SECOND ANNUAL 'TRIBAL STOMP' AT MONTEREY FAIRGROUNDS,

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 8TH 1979 ON THE VERY SAME STAGE JIMI HENDRIX ABUSED WITH HIS LITTLE TIN OF LIGHTER FUEL ALL THOSE YEARS AGO. AHH HISTORY, AHH BULLSHIT. WHAT HAD HAPPENED WAS THAT AT THE

CONCERT OF THE CLASH 1979 TOUR OF THE AMERICAS. WELL, NATURALLY A LOT OF THOSE INSIDE HAD DIED, MANY HAD GONE INSANE, THINKING IT WAS STILL 1967, AND THE REALLY CLEVER ONES HAD GARVITATED TO THE BACKSTAGE AREA WHERE THEY HUMPED MASSES OF SPEAKER CABINETS AROUND OR LISTLESSLY PUSHED DRUM RISERS FROM ONE SIDE OF THE STAGE TO THE OTHER. THE MUSICIANS HAD ALL ESCAPED IN PRIVATE HELICOPTERS BUT THE MORE IMPRESSIONABLE MEMBERS OF THE AUDIENCE CARRIED ON APPLAUDING AND SHOUTING "RAH ON!" OR "OH BROTHA!" AT ANY ONSTAGE ACTIVITY. AFTER YESTERDAYS WAVING GRAY, STILL AT HIS ZINGY BEST AFTER SO MANY YEARS, HE STUMBLED AROUND DRESSED IN A SANTA CLAUS OUTFIT AND DEMANDED THE ANSWER TO THE ALWAYS PERTINENT QUESTION "WHAT DOES DIDDY WAH DIDDY MEAN?". WHAT A CAT, HUH? WHEN THE CLASH ARRIVED TO PLAY TO THE DAZED SURVIVORS THE MORE LIVELY ONES GATHERED ROUND TO MARVEL AT THEIR BIZARRE DRESS AND PHOTOGRAPH THESE OUTRAGEOUS ENGLISH GUYS HAIRSTYLES



Part of the Clash T-shirt design

"WELL, CATCH THESE YEEHAW! GUYS! HUH?"



AFTER THIS HIGHPOINT OF CULTURAL EXCHANGE AND NATION SPEAKING WITH FORKED TONGUE UNTO NATION THE DOZEN OR SO STRETCHER CASES WERE LAID OUT IN FRONT OF THE STAGE AND APART FROM JOE ELY'S SET WERE SOOTHED, RATHER THAN INSPIRED TO ANYTHING STRENUOUS. DESPITE CONSTANT REASSURANCES THAT THE ARENA WOULD FILL UP FOR THE CLASH THEY PLAYED TO AN AUDIENCE SIZE THAT WOULD HAVE HAD HITLER THINKING TWICE ABOUT INVADING HIGH BARNET, NEVER MIND ENGLAND, IF HE'D DRAWN AS WELL AT LOUREMBURG. CONSPICUOUS BY THEIR ABSENCE THEY WERE. STILL, THEY DID THEIR BEST TO GODDAMWELL GOP WHEN THE CLASH CAME OUT. THIS IS PUHNK RORK, HUH? WELL LEMMEJES SHOW THESE LAHMYS WHUT US AMERRCAN PUHNK RORKER'S SKINDO! YESSURR. OUTMAWAY BOAH. UNFORTUNATELY, BY THE TIME YOUR PUHNK RORKER'S SORTED OUT WHICH FOOT BELONGS ON WHICH ARM THE GAND ARE INTO ANOTHER NUMBER AND HE'S GOT TO WORK OUT HIS COMPLICATED REACTION ALL OVER AGAIN. WHEN THESE PEOPLE GO APE THEY DON'T POGO BUT PULL OUT A GUN AND WIPEOUT THEIR NEIGHBOURS. THE HILLBILLY CAT AND EDDIE COCHRAN IS THE MISTS OF ANTIQUITY AND ROCK AND ROLL MEANT WOODSCHTOCK. THE BAND WERE COMPETENT, RATHER THAN INSPIRED BUT THE ICE HAS BEEN KICKED THROUGH AND THE SHOW IS GOING DOWN THE ROAD A PIECE. THE LIAISON BETWEEN BAND AND PROMOTERS, INCIDENTALLY, WAS A FOUNDER OF AMERICAN R.A.R., AND RUNS A POLITICO ROCK MAGAZINE ALONG THE LINES OF TEMPORARY HOARDING! UNFORTUNATELY HE UNDERMINES THE CREDIBILITY OF HIS GOODWORKS BY ACTING THE COMPLEAT ACID CASUALTY. WATCH OUT FOR THAT BROWN ACID, MAN. NEXT WEEK - MINEAPPOLIS AND OTHER MISSPELT AMERICAN TOWNS, THE NOISES IN THE NIGHT, THE POSTCARDS HOME (COMING, HONEST) AND WHAT'S BEHIND THE FEAR AND LOATHING BEHIND THE 'WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?' BEHIND THE 'RAH NARCE TUH MEET YUH?' MEANWHILE, BYE FROM THE

* CONCERT PROMOTER

TRIBAL STOMP



I'M SO BORED WITH THE U.S.A.



ME TOO, BROTHER! SHOOT.



Sign of the times

From the New York Post (August 23) Sent by Roo and Oak fresh from Broadway.

Finally, if you do not mind travelling to Manchester or Liverpool, you could see the enigmatic Gary Numan, who recently, with the aid of Takeaway Army, got to No. 1 in the charts with "Are Friends Electric?" He will be appearing

Comin' soon to a Col Saunders in your area! Spotted by Neil Ratbrain Ratcliffe, computer programmer, In't Burnley's Evening Star.

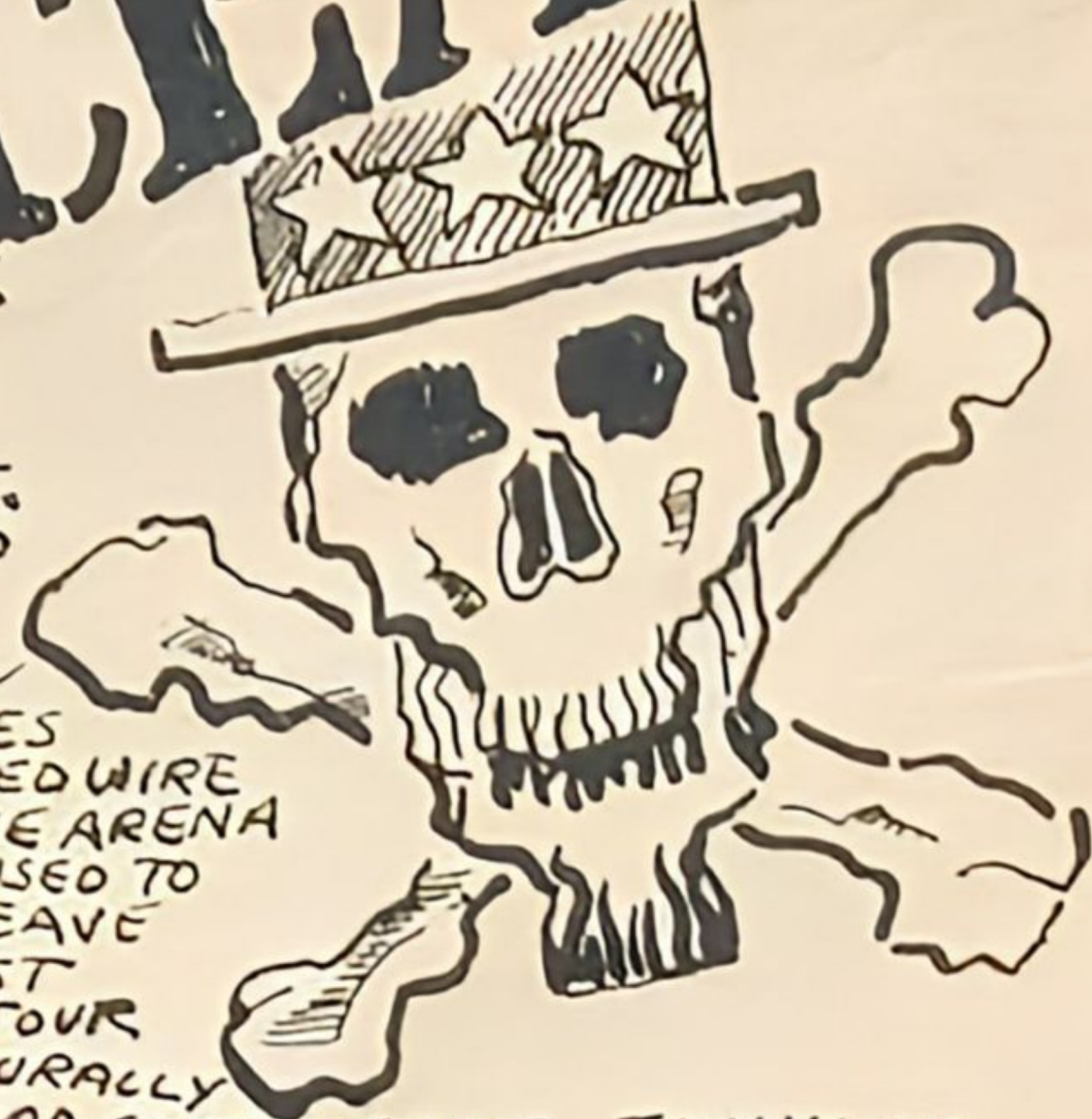
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Part of the Clash Crew Teeshirt design.



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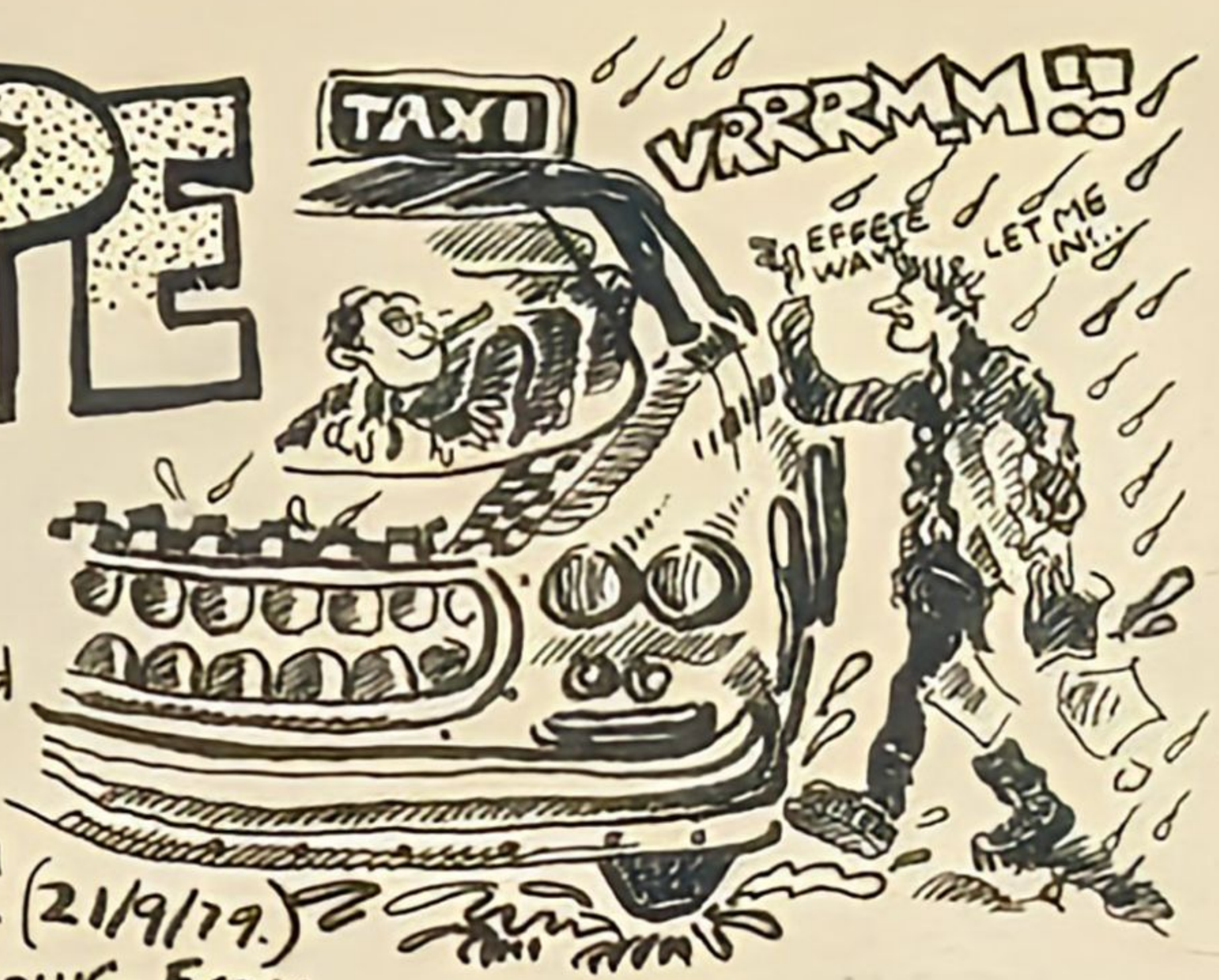
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THE SHAPE



by fab, one-off, Johnny Restivo was blasted out to New York punters in the intermission before the Clash came out and shredded the second night audience at New York's Palladium theatre with their magnificent rock and roll. (21/9/79.)

opinions vary as to which have and haven't been great shows, but everytime I've been down in the audience rather than shuttled in to the liggers enclosure at the side of the stage, I've seen only excellence from the Clash. It's been said before, to the point of embarrassment, but, as the band currently shouldering the burden of redefining white rock and roll for the rest of the world, they are doing it right on so many levels as to make most of their predecessors and nearly all of their contemporaries look like slob and jerks.

But on with the tour - From Chicago to Detroit to Boston to New York on a bus called Arpeggio, fuelled by great foods like I.C.I. used to make.



The New York audiences knew what was expected and after the Under-tones and Sam and Dave had got them boiling they went outrageous for the Clash - applauding and shouting for about ten minutes solid after the first nights set. In New York I became a pawn in the ongoing saga of the New Backdrop which involved my spending most of a day shunting around in pouring rain on a fruitless

mission to find a space large enough to lay out and paint a forty by twenty feet backcloth to replace the flags you're probably familiar with. Feeling like the most insignificant speck of shit in the world's biggest dustbin I trudged aimlessly from one fictitious address to another, only able to get a taxi out of it all, eventually, by hurling myself on to one as it stopped at traffic lights. New York is hell, on foot, in the rain. For all I know the backcloth has been chopped into small pieces and sold as genuine, holy relics and the paint I lugged around has been hurled into New York harbour but I fear I'll be seeing a lot more of it soon.



THE BIG CRAB-APPLE



Philadelphia was a great snow from out in the audience and I celebrated by getting so vilely drunk that I spent the next day mostly comatose, occasionally trying to find the hole in my head to shovel the pills in and periodically barfing up quantities of old bilge water, paint stripper and ships barnacles. Terrific! NEXT WEEK - I ENTER A MONASTERY AND SOLVE THE MYSTERY OF

THE SOILED TOUR



Meanwhile, the casualties mount as we roll into Canada after a stopover in Philadelphia where the audience stood and pounded their hands together for so long that Joe had to come out after the encore and explain that they were too tired from travelling to play any more



Clash USA '79 By Ray Lowry

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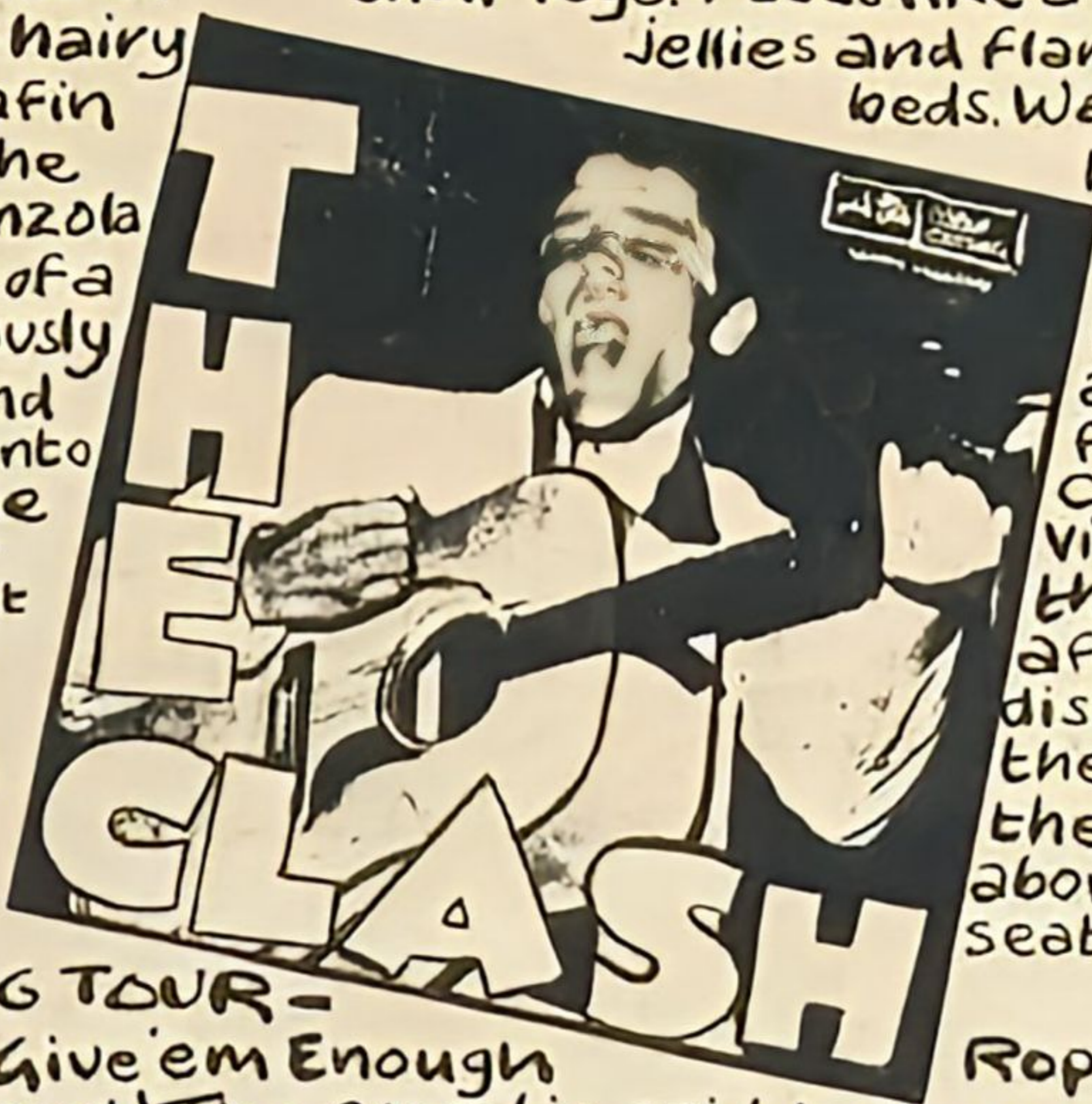
By Ray Lowry

HAVE YOU HEARD THE NEWS?

THERE'S GOOD ROCKING TONIGHT!!

Atlanta, Georgia

I forgot to mention Philadelphia's mutants - more disturbing looking people than even Liverpool or Warrington can boast. People with noses in their ears and hands growing out of the sides of their legs. Faces like a handful of stones set in dripping. Heads like hairy sunset over the parrafin pillows stuffed down the disappeared and gorgonzola. There's a metal statue of a these people ostentatiously All that was left behind on to Montreal and Toronto and 26th September. The aspired to the level of in England and this meant of this tour, although from Joe, the long - ended. On both nights stage at the end of Centre in Toronto



October 1st.

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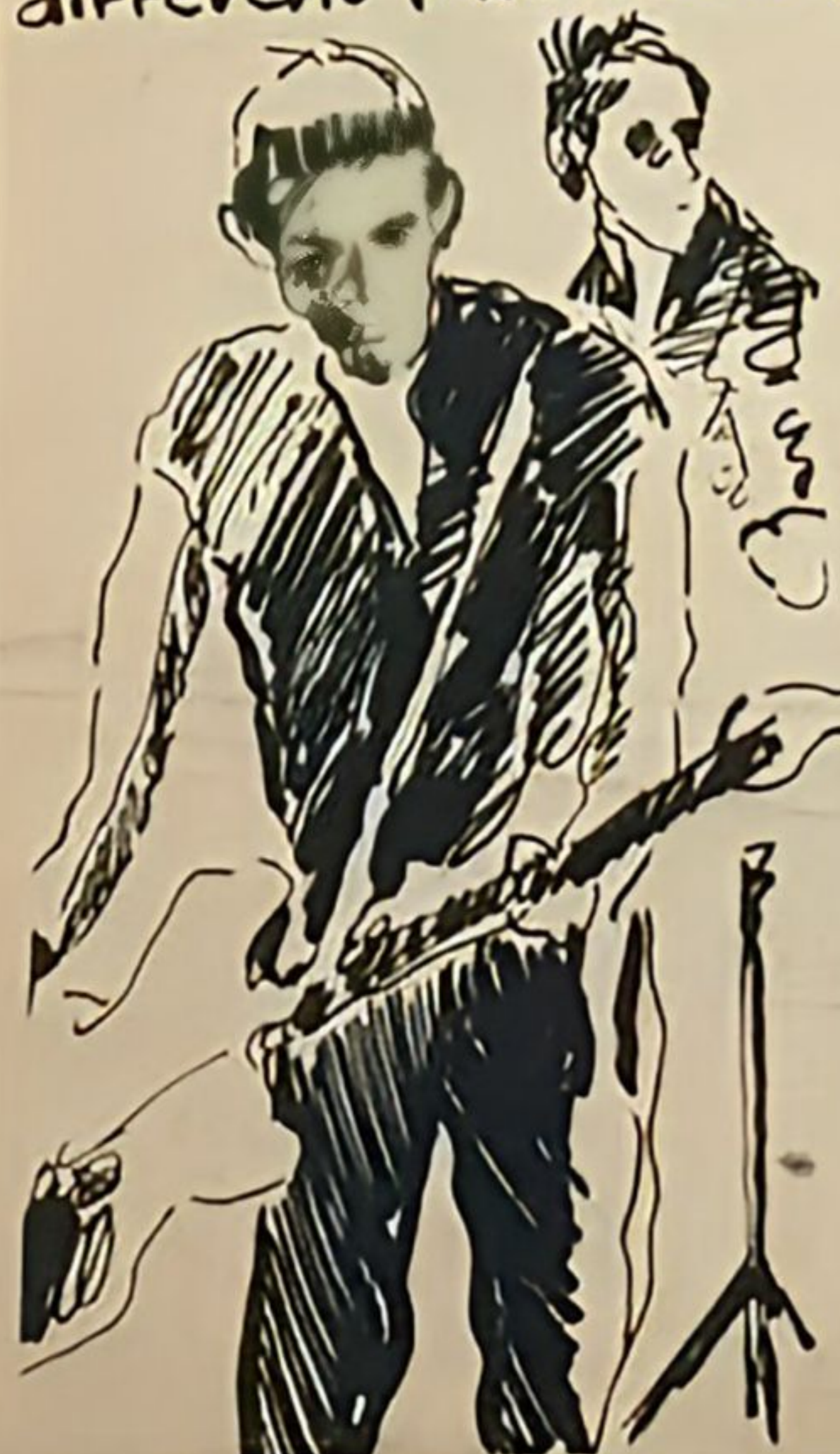
Jellies and flaming complexions like beds. Walking potatoes with hole where their heads smeared all over them. giant clothespeg that ignore.

and the Clash bus clogged for two shows on the 25th Canuck audiences visible enthusiasm displayed the first serious gobbing after a touching request distance throat clearing the audience invaded the the set and at the O'Keefe about twenty or thirty seats died. That's New Pop.

THIS IS AN AMAZING TOUR -

The Americans had 'Give 'em Enough Rope' as the first official album release (Although 'The Clash' is said to have sold in vast quantities on import) and an ammended version of the first album has only recently been released, but the lights are going on over peoples' heads all over the place, and the (P)political message has obviously been picked up by many of the punters who try to get their messages of goodwill through at the end of each show. ("What I saw in the band was a concentration of all the pain and outrage this system has lodged in my gut" - U.S. Revolutionary Worker 28/9.179) To many, of course, it's just a great rock and roll show and, as if guided by some infallible rock and roll tribal consciousness, the Clash are looking more than ever like the bastard offspring of Eddie Cochran out of Gene Vincent and a Harley Davidson. Dumbfounding to see the most intelligent, positive rock and roll on earth at the present time, being presented nightly by a band who look like the wild ones who haunted the troubled skies of the fifties. America is being reminded of how rock and roll looks, as well as how it's never sounded before. A girl hesitantly unveiling two oil paintings of Mick and Paul in Monterey, was face to face with different incarnations. But there's much more going on here than that. American

Kids are being given the rude awakening that was so swiftly pooh-pooed by the vested interests when it happened in England. After Canada it's marathon drives again to Worcester Mass., and Maryland. More images of America being given the message. London's calling to the faraway towns. To the abandoned drive-ins and the big Macks like sleeping dinosaurs in the fog at the side of the truck-stop, to the gas attendant in the yellow, all night doorway, to the uneasy sleep of the cities, to the people. Rolling Stone has just printed the album review that was needed here in 1977. This is the beginning of the end of many things. **NEXT WEEK: WAR WITH THE U.S.S.R.**



BROTHER CREEPERS OVER AMERICA OR SUEDES OVER THE STATES



A ROCK AND ROLL RESCUE OPERATION

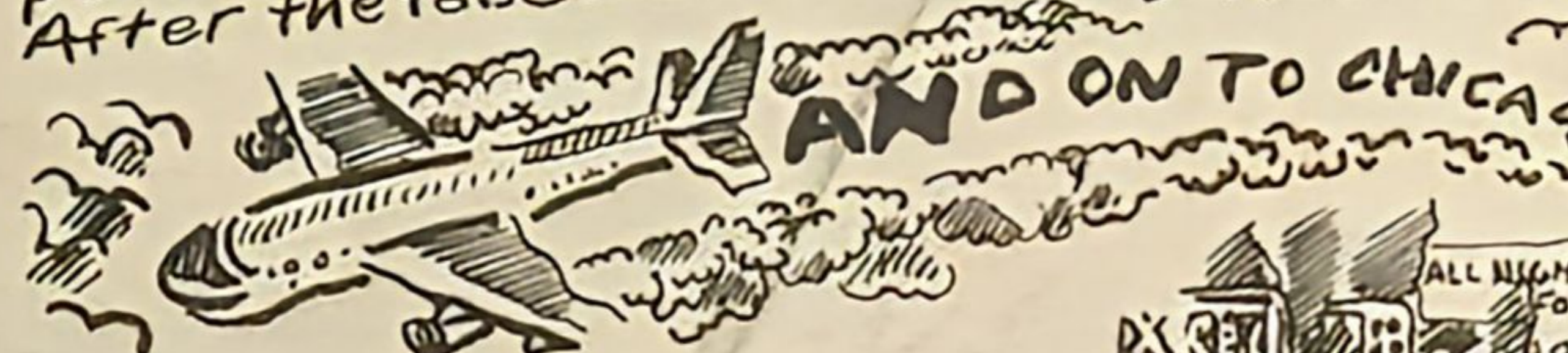
Part 2..

The Clash are in Chicago where the streets can be intimidating if you're a goddam, wimp, English white boy like me. Battered, old pimpmobiles limp around like wounded animals and the most popular taxi style resembles a mobile, size two hundred and seventeen Dr. Martens boot with a girder slapped around it for a fender and a MADE IN HONGKONG style colour scheme complete with painted on windows and driver. After the false start of Monterey,

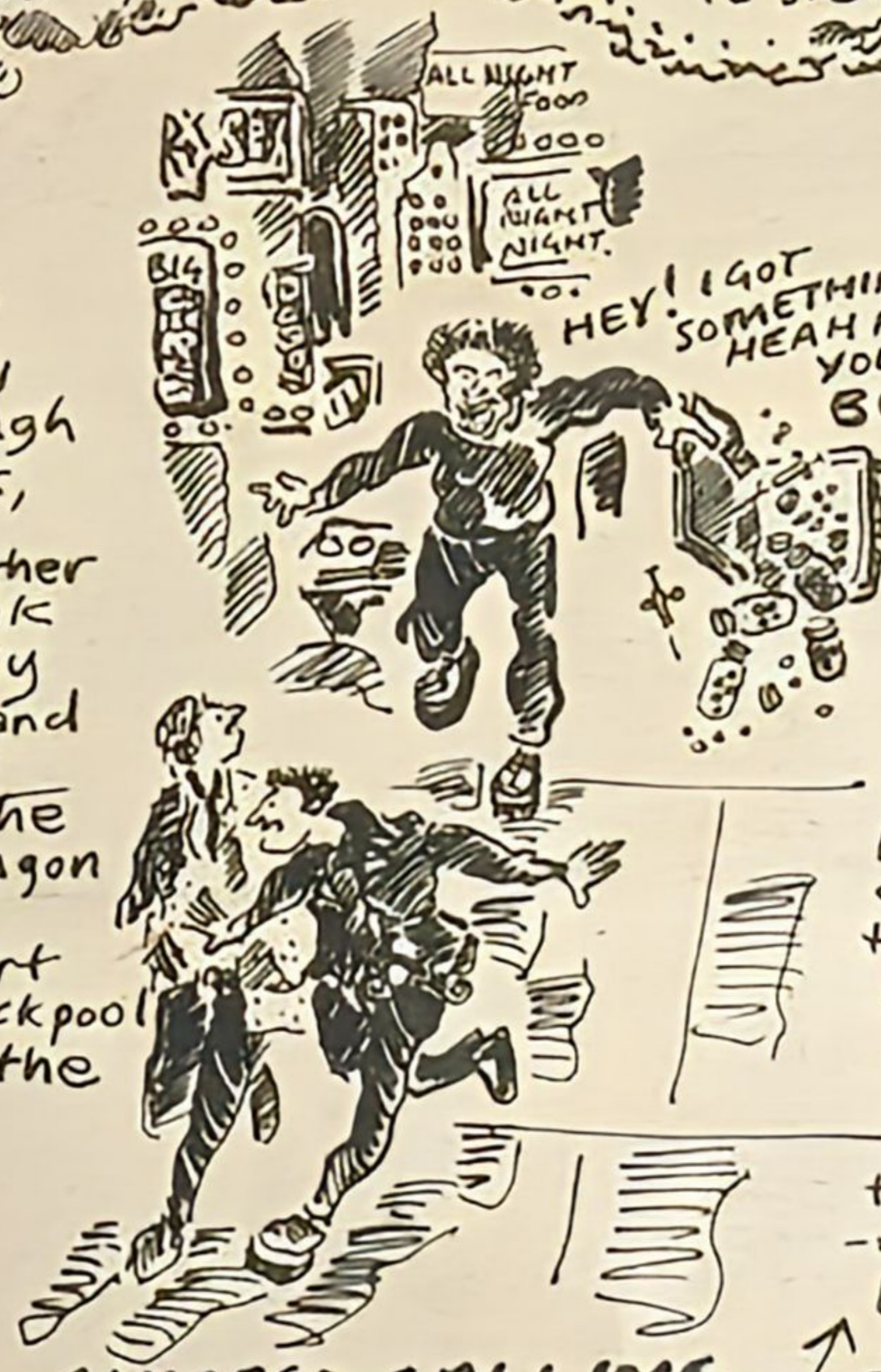


things clicked into gear in Minneapolis where it rains a fair amount and the Undertones and David Johansson supported the Clash at the Civic Centre and it became evident that a lot of Americans do still care

about rock and roll rather than Rock Music. The excitement HAS finally touched the U.S.; and though it's bad news for English isolationists and Public Images the Clash are not going to get lost over here. American rockers need the example of the Clash every bit as much as England, and when you think of the horrendous alternatives doing the rounds and the impracticability of the rock and roll population of the States being imported, common sense says that they have to get out here periodically to stamp their authority on the Cowboys.



Where I hide behind a double-locked door from the violence and intimidation which is room service coming to tidy up and empty the ashtrays. A ride through darkened, beat-up streets, over heavy duty industrial bridges roughly banged together from enormous lengths of junk metal and tossed haphazardly over rivers of raw sewage and worse, delivered the Clash to their first Chicago show at the Aragon ballrooms. The Aragon is the result of mating the Ponderosa ranch with the Albert Hall, setting it down in Blackpool in Scots week and calling in the Mongol hordes. And the Mongol hordes love the Clash! The Undertones and Bo Diddley stoked up the rampant insanity and by the time the Clash



had finished their set the audience had melted down into a heap of steaming insides and twitching nerve ends slithering around the floor of the theatre. Songs like The Right Profile, Guns in Brixton, Revolution Rock are being infiltrated into the older material and making for a great new Clash set. This band is still rock and roll central and the standards they're setting on every level are still so high. Any of the popular English criticisms of them have to be measured against their admirable achievements. GOT TO MOVE NOW - NEXT WEEK AMERICAN T.V. AND THE MEANING OF LIFE.

Part 2 of our compelling, heart-rending serial
— Clash USA '79.

By our man on the spot — Ray Lowry

Great American Greases

Los Angeles

10/9/79

What am I doing here? I got on this tour because I wanted to do some paintings about rock and roll. About what shows are like. The light and the lights, the audiences, the performers from the audience point of view, the stage. I had an idea that I could convey something that the camera, and the kind of heroic, icon-like images that most rock and roll paintings have been concerned with, perhaps couldn't. That was a month and a continent ago and I've had plenty of second thoughts along the way. Simply being out of England at a time when



things are getting tougher is obviously quite-inducing. I've stood among American audiences or at the side of the stage on many nights through this tour wondering what the hell I was doing here and why the Clash were away from England as another winter and all that entails, closes in. I'm massively-compromised of course, but it's never going to be 1977 again, there's such a transparent desire by the band that they galvanize the audiences out here into doing something for themselves, (what they're always striving for in England) and the fact is that if there is anything honest and worth caring about in contemporary rock and roll, it's still best embodied in this band. And paintings. Do paintings matter at all? At the moment, I don't know.

SINCE ATLANTA

From Georgia, through Texas to Los Angeles the band have played five shows in seven nights, Texas (one of the few American towns I've seen that I could imagine living in) Dallas and it's schoolbook Depository, horrible Houston and Lubbock with Buddy Hollymania. Joe Ely has been supporting again, through Texas. It's supposed to be heresy to say -steel, accordion, kitchen sink and all mod cons arrangement that he has at present. After the Austin show on the 4th, he did a spot of jamming with a local band plus one M. Jones and one N. Heaton for one number (Be Bop A Lula) running through a bunch of straight old rockers like 'that's Allright', 'Whole Lotta Shakin' etc., in a local booze bar. Good stuff which I'd like to see him do with his own band. The Clash show in The Armadillo was a good one - the Club has a nice atmosphere and I nicked a Coors beer jug.

★ By Houston, on the fifth, I was walking in my sleep and I vaguely remember a college show. Pennie Smith flew back to the NME with vast numbers of Clash photographs. It's a great pity that only a small percentage can be used by the weekly music press.

DALLAS, on the sixth, was another big city, another small gig, but a well won audience and a look at the spot where John F. Kennedy was assassinated. The book depository is far closer to the point where the bullets hit the Presidential limousine than films of the event ever indicate and standing on the road in bright sunlight it's hard to believe that dozens of people wouldn't have spotted Oswald and any accomplices and nabbed them within minutes. A very surprising place and oddly disturbing to see traffic trundling along the short stretch of road and into the underpass as though nothing special had ever happened there.

I GROW MY FINGERNAILS LONG SO THEY CLICK WHEN I PLAY WHITE RIOT!



JOE ELY COWBOY PUNK

★ What happened in Lubbock on the seventh, was that after the show at the Rox nearly everyone got wasted in their chosen fashion and made a middle of the night visit to Buddy Holly's grave-stone. This was my great error of the tour because I was in such a Zombielike state that I went to sleep right after the show and missed what to me, should have been an essential trip. Dreadful time to get knackered but I'm completely well again now and rode the famed Route 66 to Los Angeles on the famous Arpeggio rock and roll bus. The band flew it. What a bunch of softies!

NEXT WEEK: I WALK HOME



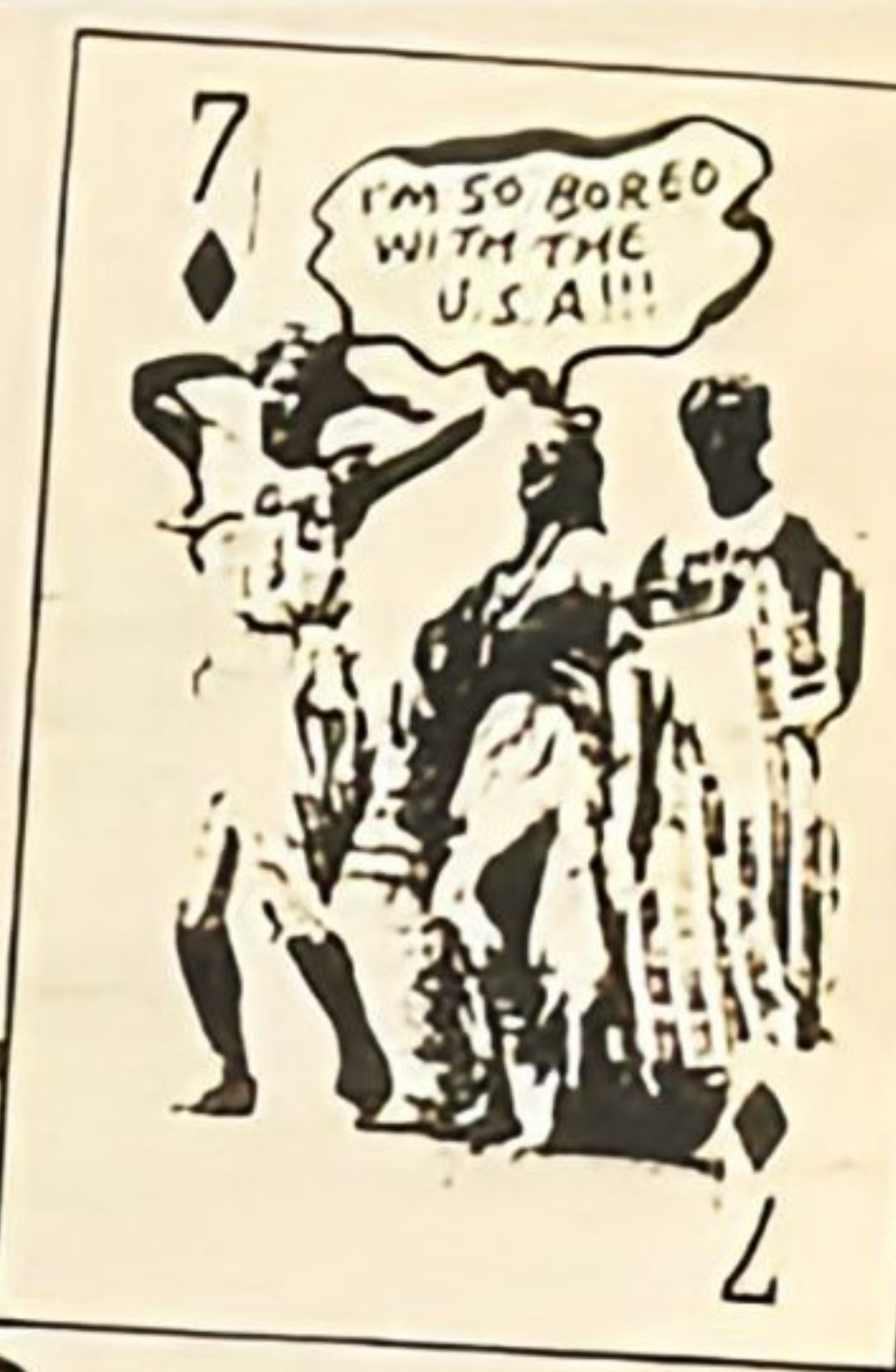
P.S. I believe they're cramming these despatches into smaller spaces. Write to complain! Now.

Clash USA '79

Final curtain



THE FINAL SCENE WAS FARCE WITH FLIGHT-TIME NEARER & NEARER & NO PLANE TICKETS, NO LUGGAGE, NOBODY READY, NO IDEA WHAT WAS HAPPENING. AN HOUR OR SO BEFORE FLIGHT TIME ATTEMPTS AT ORGANIZATION WERE ABANDONED IN FAVOUR OF PERSONAL SALVATION AND A DASH TO THE PLANE. THE BAND DIDN'T MAKE IT. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?



MY LAST DISPATCH WAS SUPPRESSED BY THE AUTHORITIES BUT CHRONICLED CLASH SHOWS IN AUSTIN TEXAS ON THE 4TH. OCTOBER - 'CLASH QUADROPEDS' DALLAS ON THE 5TH - 'PRESIDENT KILLERS' WITH HOUSTON 'THE WORLD!' AND LUBBOCK ON THE 7TH AS HOLLYMANIA SWEEPS CLASH

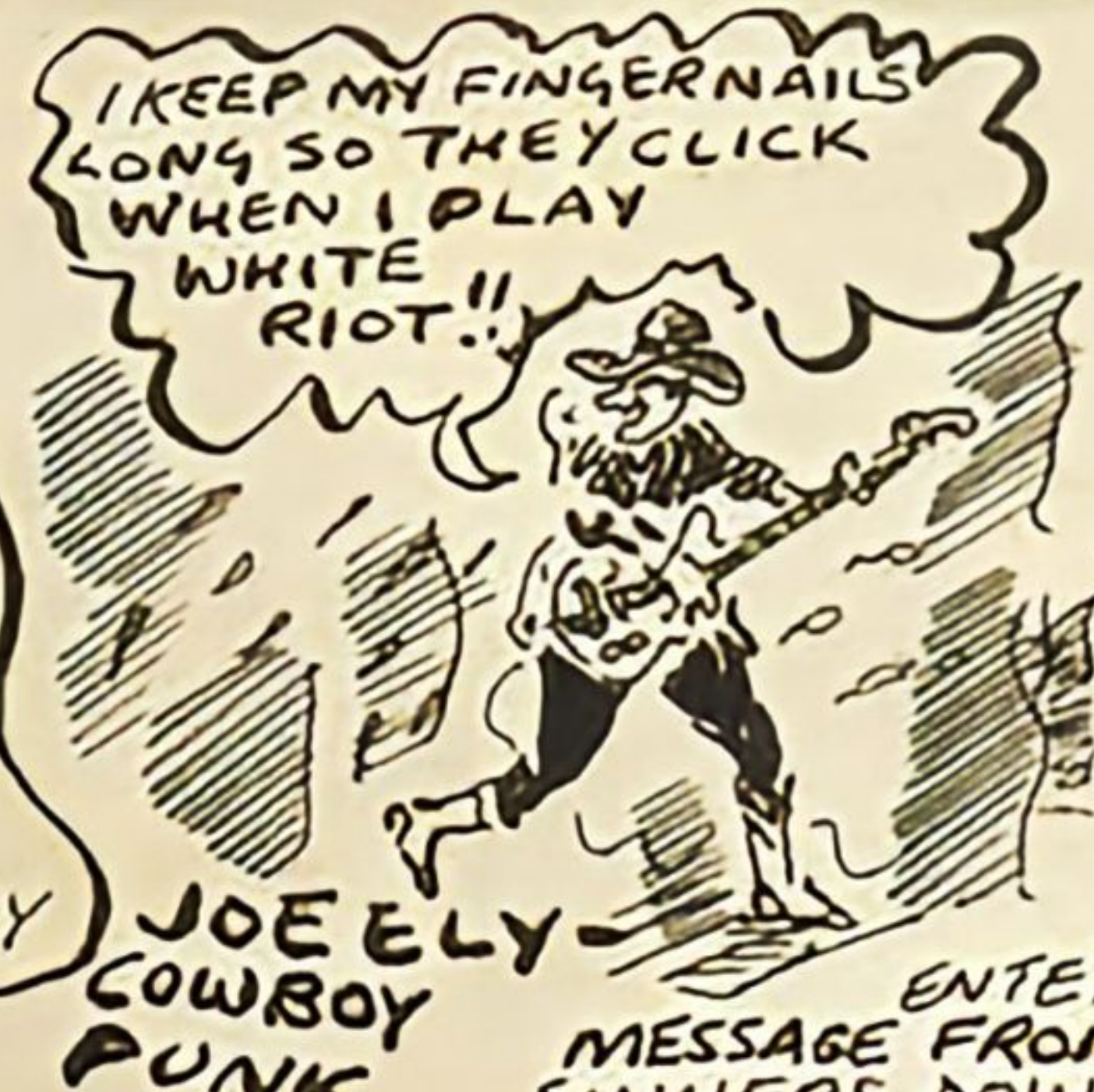
AT THE ARMADILLO WORLD HEADQUARTERS TRASH ARMOURD, BURROWING 'CLASH ASSASSINATE' ON THE 6TH - 'ARSEHOLE OF BUS!' INTERESTING AND INFORMATIVE OF THE LAST FIVE DATES OF THE



AS ALL THIS WAS, I'VE ONLY SPACE HERE TO WRITE TOUR. FROM LUBBOCK, THE BAND FLEW AND THE ALCOHOLICS BUSSED (VIA ROUTE 66) TO LOS ANGELES AND THE WILDEST SHOW OF THE WHOLE TOUR. THE HOLLYWOOD PALLADIUM AUDIENCE LOOKED DIFFERENT - AS MEAN AND NASTY AND POSY LOOKING AS AN ENGLISH AUDIENCE - AND WERE DETERMINED TO GOZ ALL OVER ANYTHING ON STAGE THAT WASN'T THE CLASH AND TO HURL A GOOD BIT ON THEM AS WELL. JOE ELY (A CONSTANT PRESENCE ON THIS TOUR) AND THE (ROCKABILLY) REBELS PLAYED THROUGH NON-STOP ABUSE AND SPIT AND THE ELY BAND MADE THE MISTAKE OF RETALIATING WITH A DUSTBIN OF WATER, WHICH UNDERSTANDABLY MADE THE FRONT ROWS EVEN

MORE HOSTILE TO ANYTHING ON THE STAGE. A LOT OF THIS WAS THE RITUAL BELLIGERENCE THAT AUDIENCES EVERYWHERE

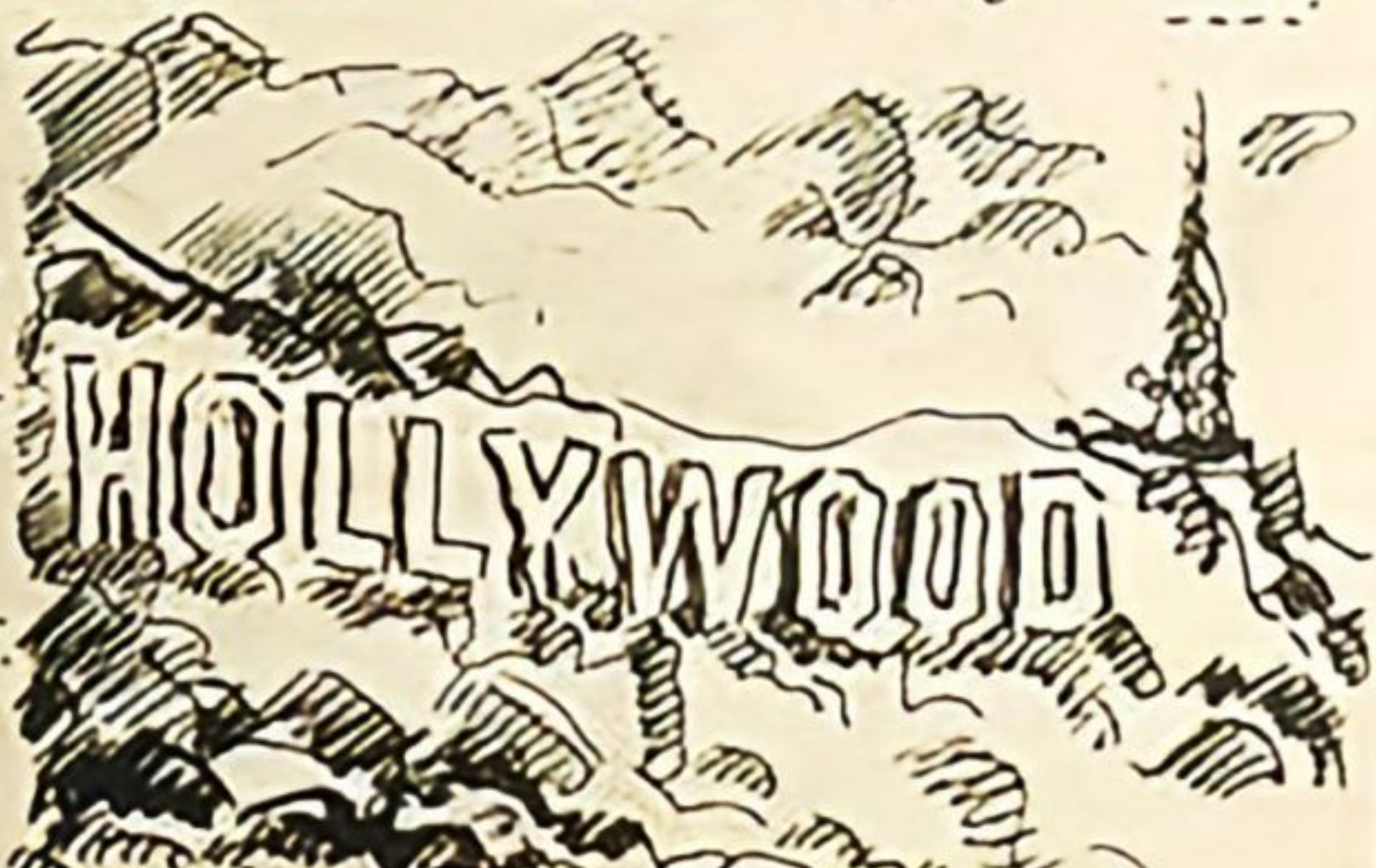
THINK THAT THEY HAVE TO DISPLAY, AND THE CLASH CAME ON TO GREAT CHEERS, MASS JUMPING UP AND DOWN, SURGES ON TO THE STAGE, FIGHTING, CURSING, SPITTING AND STOMPING ASS (OBSCURE AMERICANISM - SEE ALSO GITTIN' DOWN AND KICKIN' ASS). AT THE END OF THE SET WITH JOE ELY, THE REBELS, A FEW DOZEN OF THE AUDIENCE, THE CLASH AND ASSORTED ROADIES, BOUNCERS AND LIGGERS ON THE STAGE PLUS A CONSTANT STREAM OF BODIES BEING HURLED OFF INTO THE PULSATING MASS, THE HALL LOOKED LIKE ONE OF THOSE BIG CECIL B. DEMILLE BLOWOUTS JUST BEFORE SAMSON COMES OUT AND PULLS THE ROOF DOWN OR MOSES ENTERS ON A MOUNTAIN TOP WITH A MESSAGE FROM GOD FOR ALL THE FORNICATING SINNERS DOWN BELOW. GOOD SHOW



SAN FRANCISCO (13th OCT), SEATTLE (15th) AND VANCOUVER, ALL TRIED BUT COULDN'T REALLY MATCH LOS ANGELES. SAN FRANCISCO WAS A GREAT SHOW BUT THE AUDIENCE WERE A BIT LESS BOISTEROUS THAN L.A., SEATTLE, I DIDN'T HAVE A DRINK ALL NIGHT AND DON'T REMEMBER TOO MUCH OF IT. VANCOUVER (16th) WAS A QUIET END TO THE TOUR WITH JOE STRUMMER AGAIN RAILING AGAINST PASSIVE AUDIENCES STEALING HIS SOUL. THE PARADOX HERE, OF COURSE, IS THAT THE REWARD FOR GOING OVER THE TOP AND SHOWING ULTIMATE ENTHUSIASM BY CLAMBERING ON STAGE IS TO BE BUNDLED OFF AND OUT OF THE DOOR OR HURLED BACK INTO THE CROWD - AND ANYWAY (AS THE LONE GROOVER WAS ASKING, RECENTLY) IS JUMPING UP AND DOWN ANY KIND OF INTELLIGENT RESPONSE TO MUSIC THAT ASPIRES TO DEAL WITH REALITY? QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS. BACK HOME... AND ALREADY SICK



OF MAKING PLANS FOR NIGEL AND THE COLO AT NIGHT AND AUTHORITARIAN VIOLENCE BEING SO NEAR AND SO PERSONAL AGAIN. THE OPTIMISM AND THE NAIVE HOPE THAT THIS LAST ROCK AND ROLL UPSURGE WAS ACTUALLY GOING TO CHANGE ANYTHING HAS LONG GONE, OF COURSE, BUT IT'S A STUPID MISTAKE TO TURN INWARD AND IGNORE THE ISSUES THAT THE CLASH BROUGHT INTO THE 'POP' MUSIC FIELD OF INTEREST, OR REVILE THEM FOR FAILING TO OVERTURN THE GOVERNMENT. IF THE CLASH PACKED IT INTO TOMORROW WE'D LOSE THE SOLE LIVING EVIDENCE THAT ROCK AND ROLL ASPIRES TO BE ANYTHING MORE THAN BLIND ESCAPISM AND THEY'D BE REPLACED BY SOMETHING INFINITELY LESS WORTHY WITHIN WEEKS.



I WAS SICK BENEATH THE HOLLYWOOD SIGN - I VOMITED ON PARTS OF AMERICA THAT OTHER LIGGERS CAN'T REACH.

I'D LIKE TO BE BACK ON THE BUS WITH THE LAST ROCK & ROLL BAND.

By Ray Lowry

THE CLASH
UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL
DVD & BOOK

THE CLASH
UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL
DVD AND BOOK SET

The Clash
Up Close & Personal
★★★★
Storm Bird UCAP 2289 (DVD+book)

Fantastic portrait of an era often overlooked

The biggest problem with this gorgeously-put together package is whether to begin by watching the DVD, or dive into the book, chronicling artist Ray Lowry's memories of the band. Lowry accompanied the lads on their second American tour (in Joe Strummer's words, as their 'war artist') and the fiery, energetic days of thunder and belief are captured with his remarkable eye for character. It's reproduced with a respect and passion that makes you wonder if the ink even dried. The genesis of 'that' London Calling cover is shown from notebook sketch to near-as-damnit final design. Even without the DVD feature, this would be worth the money.

With the great DVD, however, the package becomes near-definitive; an impressive overview of the heady time between late 1978 and the dawn of 1980, when the garage band turned energy, enthusiasm and scratchiness into a diverse and ultimately world-baiting/conquering powerhouse. The interviewees are engaging, incisive and sometimes hilarious (road manager Johnny Green leads the way on that score), and with input from Kris Needs, Caroline Coon, Don Letts and many others directly involved in the innermost Clash circle, the disc hits home on every level. There's even a poster, too.
Joe Shooman

This is the true story of the Clash as told by the insiders who toured and recorded with the Clash from the rough beginnings of the band to the conquest of America.

Essential viewing for every Clash fan, this incisive film features long-serving road manager and author Johnny Green who reveals the philosophy and the spirit which drove the band.

Accompanying the DVD is a 96-page book by Ray Lowry featuring an extensive selection of the cartoons, writings and drawings completed during his time on the road as artist in residence with the Clash.

FEATURES I Fought The Law, I'm So Bored With The U.S.A., London's Burning, All The Young Punks, Police & Thieves, Garageland and more... Cat no UCAP2289

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