

**THE  
END  
OF THE 70's  
IN FULL COLOR**

# LONG LIVE ROCK 'N' ROLL!

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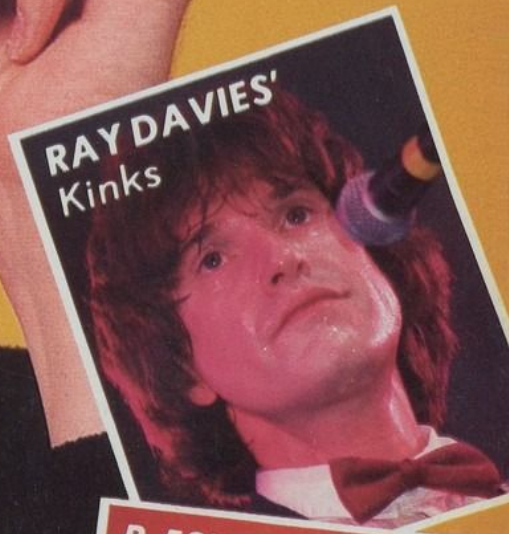
# CREEM

INTERVIEW  
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Trash!



## by Dave DiMartino

Joe Strummer and I are sitting in a bar, talking about his band. I ask him about "I Fought the Law" and its relatively unexpected success on American radio. Doesn't he think it odd that the one song promising to break the Clash in America is a tune he didn't even write?

Joe shakes his head in disgust, something he's been doing quite a bit of. "It just goes to show ya, ya know?" he says.

"I'd just like to say this: America, how is it we make *twenty-nine* brilliant records and you won't give us a drop of airplay—and we make one *shitty* one and you lap it up. How is it? Tell me ..."

☆☆☆

Howard Johnson has a lot more going for him than HoJo cola. His hotels, for instance. Right in the middle of beautiful downtown Detroit sits a real *beauty* of a scrap-heap, the kind of mammoth, overgrown monstrosity that only the Motor City or any other dying metropolis can provide.

Vertical, not horizontal, it shoots upward and leaves little room for people to walk about comfortably. The ceiling of each floor's hallway hangs down ominously, threatening the safe passage of anybody over six feet tall and adding even more to the already pervasive, claustrophobic atmosphere. The view outside—cars and busses streaming in every direction, city construction men attempting to beautify what can't be beautiful with their jackhammers and sledges—it all says more about Detroit than any chamber of commerce ever could. [Ah, go back to Miami, wetback. —Ed.]

In the lobby, we sit waiting for the Clash's bus to take us to an afternoon soundcheck at the nearby Masonic Temple, tonight's venue. A well-dressed, fifty-ish man sticks some change into a lobby vending machine as we wait and pulls out a fresh new copy of the latest *Penthouse* magazine. Outside, a weary-looking black man, old and hunched over, sticks his arm deep into a city garbage can and pulls out a prize—an empty Stroh's bottle that some unknowing tourist didn't

realize was worth five cents. He sticks it into his half-full burlap sack, throws the sack over his shoulder, and walks on, halfway to his own bottle or halfway to his own copy of *Penthouse*. Who cares? Welcome to Detroit.

We climb on the bus.

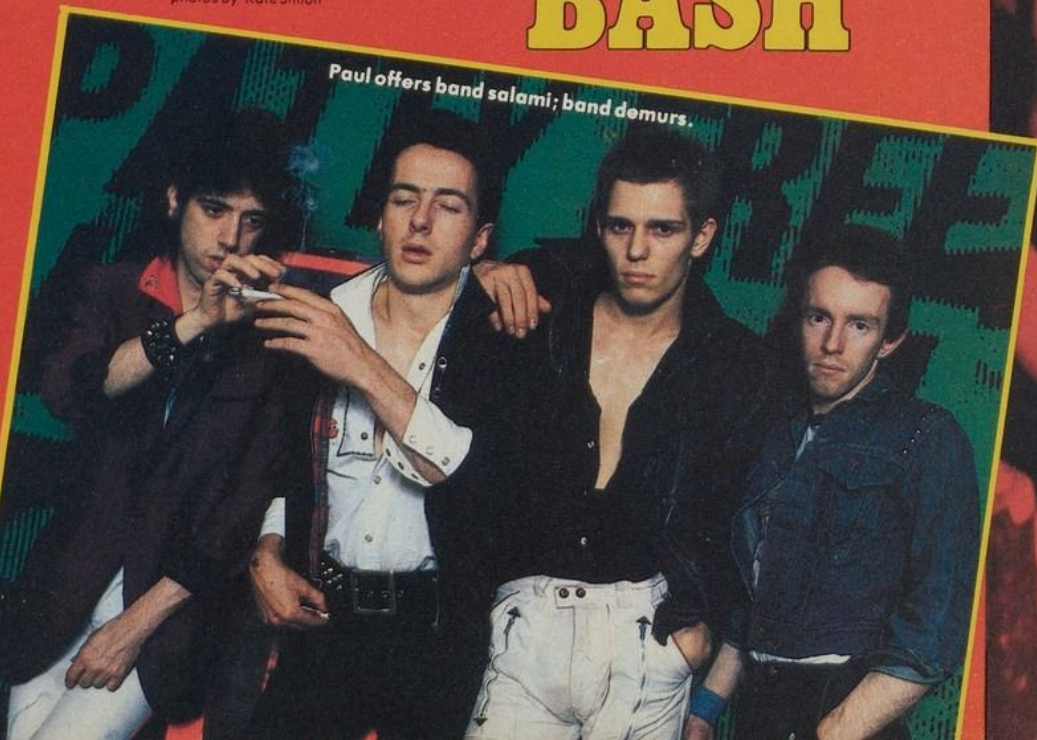
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Mick, had you any preconceptions about

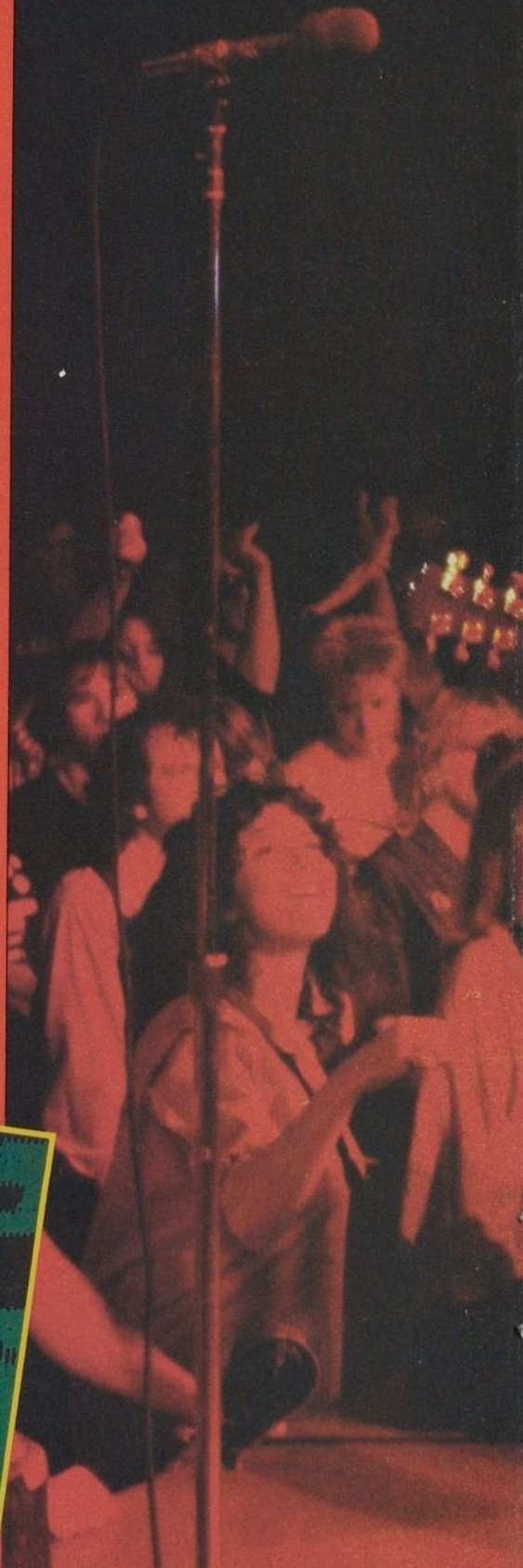
# RASH CLASH MASH IN MOTOR CITY BASH

photos by Kate Simon

Paul offers band salami; band demurs.



Dear Abby: Do leather pants cause jock itch? A: Ask Forrest Tucker.



what America would be like before you came here?

Mick Jones: Yeah, plenty.

And?

Mick Jones: Most of my preconceptions were absolutely true.

Like?

Mick Jones: Everything's bigger here. And the food tastes twice as bland. Like the

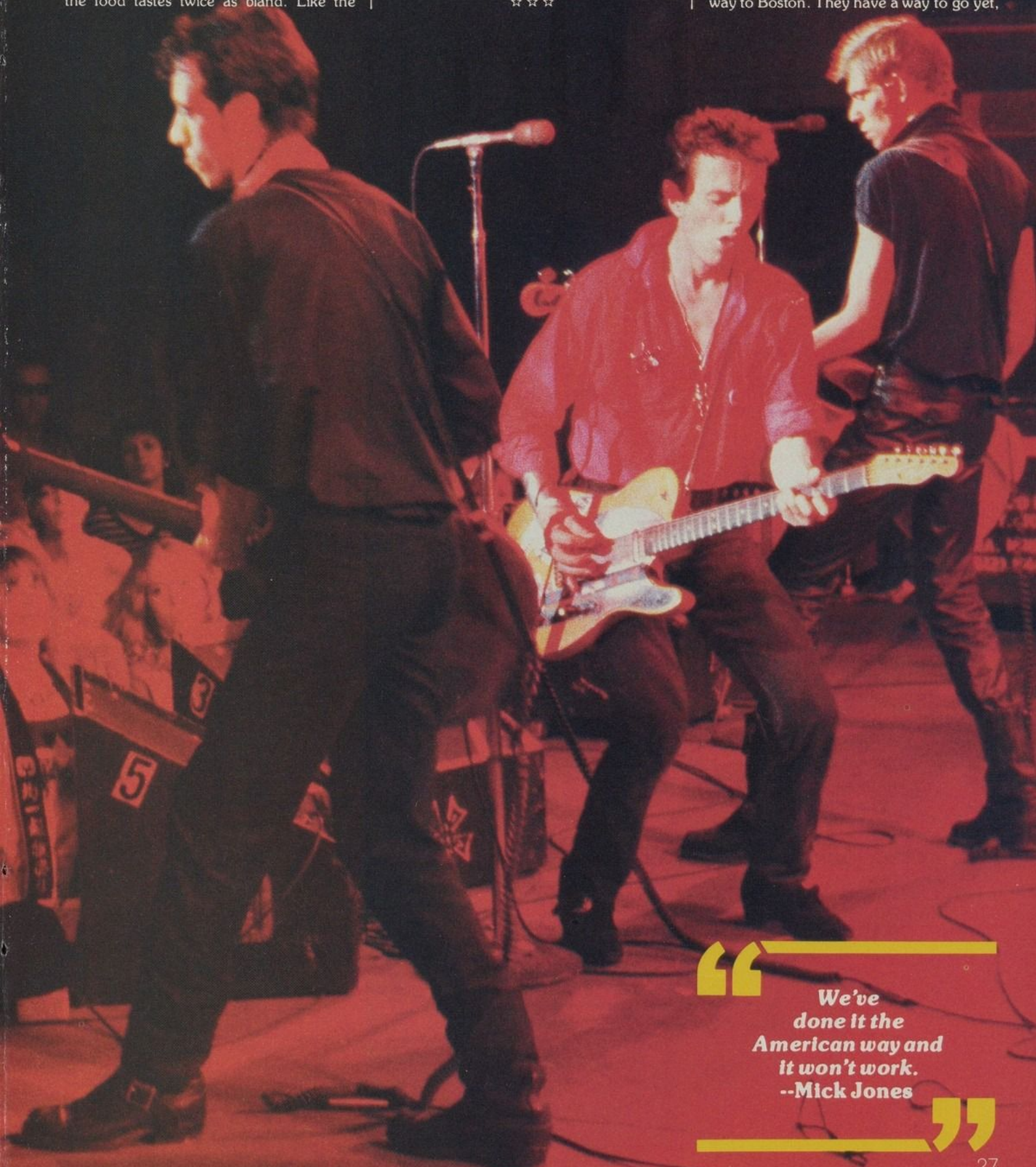
tomatoes, for instance—they're so big, but they don't taste like anything. Everything's been given a shot of something. It doesn't seem quite real.

How about you, Paul? Any preconceptions about your Detroit audience?

Paul Simonon: I dunno. Only that they must all have cars or something.

☆☆☆

Detroit is the Clash's fourth stop on this, their second American tour. They began at Monterey—an ex-hippie's failed attempt at recreating the 60's festival and a total financial washout—and reportedly went down a storm, pulling in encore after encore. They've hit Minneapolis, Chicago a night ago, and tomorrow they're on their way to Boston. They have a way to go yet,



“ We've done it the American way and it won't work. --Mick Jones ”

and they want to make sure everything will be running smoothly for tonight's Detroit show.

At the Masonic Temple, the equipment is already set up. The band goes through several numbers, extending them, obviously less concerned with tightness and more concerned with sound quality. *Everything* sounds good—the system, the players, the monitor system they weren't quite sure about—and another part of the band, the less disciplined, more adventurous part, surfaces. They have no one to impress but themselves, and they sound terrific. They ought to do more things like this. In public.

☆☆☆

Clash bassist Paul Simonon is upstairs relaxing in a Masonic Temple dressing room. The soundcheck is over, and Simonon sits talking to the most spectacularly beautiful girl I've ever seen.

Some questions about the band's new album. The one you just recorded, *OK?* What were you looking for when you asked Guy Stevens to produce it?

"Madness," Simonon says. "And we found it."

How so?

"Well—he's just loony." Simonon points down at the tape recorder. "Like he'd pick this up and just throw it somewhere, ya know? He wouldn't care." A smile creeps up on his face. "Like we had this big piano in the studio, right? He poured beer all over it. Once everybody was getting ready to watch Marilyn Monroe films on the telly, right? He started crying. He walked over to the telly, hugged it and then poured beer all over it. And then it blew up. So we didn't do much telly watching while we were recording."

Simonon is extremely happy with the new album, as is the rest of the band. Sandy Pearlman's production efforts on *Give 'Em Enough Rope*, its predecessor, seem to have left no small impression.

"I'm not as pleased with the second album as I'd like to be," Simonon says. "I dunno ... it's just like ..." He pauses. "It doesn't seem loose enough, that's all. Seems a bit uptight."

Mick Jones, who's just walked into the room, is even harsher. The new album, recorded within two months, slam-bang, in and out of the studio, seems the total antithesis of the carefully measured, laboriously drawn-out Pearlman affair.

"I didn't realize the significance of how quickly it was done until people kept bringing it up," says Jones of the new LP. "That's only because all the records over here take nine years to do. And believe me—the big production, the last one—we've done it, we've done it the American way, and it don't work, and it's a load a shit. So we've done it the English way now and we've got two albums instead of one. And it's all much better. Guy Stevens is probably the best English producer of the last two decades."

"Definitely," says Simonon.

☆☆☆

In the Howard Johnson's bar, Joe Strummer is methodically removing ice cubes from the mixture of orange juice, grenadine and tequila that makes up his Tequila Sunrise. He's putting them in the ashtray that sits on the table between us, talking about America to yet another



“ I’m  
in a situation  
where I couldn’t even go  
into a drugstore and get  
a hamburger.  
--Joe Strummer ”



Well, I could go to art school, I suppose...

“ Since  
Margaret Thatcher,  
things aren’t as easy for  
poor people. Or  
young people.  
--Paul Simonon ”

Audience? What audience?



Here's how much we love ya, Mick!

anonymous American. He's also talking about business.

"Clash will one day sell millions of records in America," he says. "But in the 1990's."

You plan to stay together that long?  
"No," he grins. "It'll be like on TV, ya know? *Thirty Hits from the Temptations*, *Twenty-two Highballin' Truckers' Hits*. It'll be one of those. *Thirty-nine Greats from Old England* or *Remember the Seventies*. Yeah, they'll buy all that shit—and now, when we need the dough, need it to keep going, we're gonna get the two fingers. But that's how you like it over here, don't you? Repackaged nostalgia."

Again, Strummer looks disgusted.  
"I saw a fuckin' Jackie Wilson record on sale on the telly, right? And Jackie Wilson's lyn' sick 'n half dead in a New York hospital, but they're still floggin' it. I bet Jackie Wilson don't see none of the \$9.99 that goes for that."

☆☆☆

So what do you think of American audiences so far?

Mick Jones: Well, they're pretty receptive, at least on some levels. They seem to listen, they seem to be aware. I mean—it's not like it's made out, it's not like they're all dummies or something. No, the people that come to our concerts seem to be pretty alive.

What exactly are you talking about? The mass American audience that goes to see all the heavy metal groups and drop quaaludes and throw firecrackers? Man, if that's representative of America then you know you're in shit as well as I do ...

☆☆☆

Joe Strummer is still back at the bar, talking about business, while a nearby cocktail pianist plays Barry Manilow's "Daybreak." It's an interesting scene.

It's also been fascinating watching Strummer speak. At first, he makes absolutely no eye contact with me—making it painfully obvious that a) he's only speaking with me because he feels he should, and b) personally, he doesn't like me in the least. But as he warms up to the subject—record company screw-ups, *American* screw-ups—he looks me straight in the eye. He's talking advice now, advice to newer bands who've seen the Clash grow and become what they now are. He's talking about traps on the wayside for new, younger bands,

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material. This list isn't exactly unusual (or exclusive: they also asked me when and where the new Fellini film was opening); you probably watch the same movies on Saturday morning. But you probably weren't a sort-spoken, slightly strange townie in a frat environment, or a folkie in the deep South, or a good-looking blonde serving coffee and biscuits to flirtatious good ol' boys. You definitely weren't smart enough, or desperate enough, to concoct off-beat, costumey, funny pulp-rock and jump at the opportunity to pack up. The B-52's were, and that's why this article is about them.

There were two major misconceptions about the band that The B-52's wanted to clear up in the interview. One is that they are "a bass-less quintet." Kate and Fred both play keyboard bass. The other is that they are "saccharin." "We're not The Archies." No, they're not. They are nice people, though. They remind you of kids you might have gone to summer camp with: kids who strike up a sort of neurotic alliance as a defense but who become delightfully uninhibited in the talent show.

KEITH: "We work with our limitations. We just do all we can do."

FRED: "The visual part is real important. It's so busy. There's so much going on it's hard to focus on any one thing, which is good."

KATE: "I found that during the tour of England that writers made political and social connotations to the way we presented ourselves visually. As if the visual image was very calculated to mean a certain thing."

FRED: "The 60's."

KATE: "Or trying to say something about 'American trash aesthetic.' Different opinions. There wasn't any specific thing they all said we were trying to say, but that it had more serious meaning than just dressing up in some fanciful way. That was the first time that we got reviews that were real analytical. We try not to pay any attention to it."

FRED: "Other writers have the right idea. They seem to know that we're not a nostalgia band, or a mod band. Maybe you have to be American to understand what we do."

KEITH: "I think we're just trying to set an atmosphere that can be interpreted however one wants, because I feel that it works on a lot of different altitudes."

KEITH: "It's great to be almost like voodoo people. Drive people into a frenzy."

☆☆☆

A Happy Ending for *Intergalactic Sand Shenanigans*, a low budget musical comedy with Special Guest Stars The B-52's: the band, after being discovered doing the Coo-ca-choo on the beach by agent Morey Amsterdam, are booked to headline Vincent Price's Monster Mash Bash. Cindy does a way-out wobble in a white fish-net one-piece. They become stars. Meanwhile, Jody McCrea holds Frankie Avalon's head under water until he (Avalon) turns a deeper shade of magenta. Then, with Donna Loren on one arm and Eva Six on the other, Jody leads the gang in a delirious dance to "Rock Lobster." He laughs a lustful, victorious laugh.

"If you're in outer space  
Don't feel out of place  
'Cause there are thousands of others like  
you"

— "There's A Moon In The Sky  
(Called The Moon)"

## CLASH

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 29

unavoidable corporate politics that might be avoided. *Maybe.*

"I'd say that there are several smart things you can do," says Joe. "Number one—set up your own business operation before you start, so that—Number two—you can peg your own prices. And I'd say, speaking personally, that it's a bit of a wind-up to get with a major label. You never make a penny out of it, as far as I can see."

*How would you have done things differently?*

"I would have set up my own operation, for a start. You know, my own company, my own publishing, I'd set it up all our own. Maybe we couldn't in those days, maybe if we did we wouldn't still be here. I dunno—but if I had a chance to go back and do it again, that's one thing I'd change, I think. 'Cause the understanding is virtually nil, and you always are pulling in the opposite direction. Ya know, we pull pretty hard, but we face a battery of 60 lawyers. When we try to get the price down on one of our things we face a battery of 60 lawyers all pullin' the other way. I just see it as a waste of spirit and effort and time. I think maybe if we got free we'd try to do something like that."

*Can you get free? What're the terms of your contract?*

"It's a 99-year deal with 18 tracks a year. Same sorta contracts like the ones they give at Sing-Sing."

☆☆☆

The bill tonight features not only the Clash but the Undertones, a very young, very talented outfit from Ireland whose debut LP should be out here soon on Sire Records. More than likely, few in the Detroit audience will have ever seen or heard the band before.

Not so with David Johansen. Johansen is to follow the Undertones, and Detroit is very much a New York Dolls stronghold. Johnny Thunders' recent local gigs with former MC5 guitarist Wayne Kramer seem to have rekindled interest in what the Dolls have wrought. Detroit is very anxious to see David Johansen.

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*Have the things the band sung about on the first LP changed much since the record was made?*

Paul Simonon: No, I think those songs still ring pretty true. Probably more so, now. Like "Career Opportunities"—we wrote it a couple of years ago, but the situation about getting jobs is worse, and it's getting worse. Since Margaret Thatcher's come in it, I dunno, things aren't as easy for poor people. Or young people.

☆☆☆

Back in the bar again. Joe's half-finished his drink and I'm on maybe the sixth or seventh beer of what's become a very long day, asking if Joe thinks his experiences will

ultimately be of any value to anyone but himself.

"At least some buncha jerks will read this article," he scowls, "if you're ever gonna write it, that is, and, I dunno, maybe it'll help 'em a little, maybe it won't."

"Actually, I'd like to think that I've done all that for a good purpose. So you can pass on a message, so all that bollockin' around wouldn't have been in vain. But secretly I have to believe that you cannot tell one person anything—I can't tell you anything, can't give you no advice, 'cause you won't believe me until it happens to you. Not you personally, but to everybody."

"I mean it's vice-versa, too, 'cause I heard things like 'don't sign anything.' Keith Richards, for instance, he did an interview five years ago. 'Don't sign anything, kids,' he said. I read that, ya know, thousands of others like me read it—but I signed the fuckin' thing. So I'm not sure. Only now I know, 'cause I been ripped, now I know 'don't sign anything,' but I had to be ripped to get here. Even though I read that before. So I'm not sure that what we're sayin' can really help anybody. Not until you've really been in it yourself—done in, done over."

"That's why I don't mind bein' done over—'cause I know that I'm learning something. Slowly."

*Do you think you might be able to remove yourself from the situation?*

"Lissen," says Joe, "I'm in a situation where I couldn't even go into a drugstore and get myself a hamburger. So I'm not in any situation I can get myself out of."

☆☆☆

I manage to make it to the Masonic Temple shortly after the Undertones' set, which apparently met mixed reactions. Barry Meyer, also with the Clash on their debut U.S. tour, is back again between sets spinning 45's and having a great time. The Detroit audience seems especially feisty, here to witness a headlining band they've heard on record, read a lot about, but never actually seen in person. When David Johansen emerges onstage, cheers are heard—but there's a tacit understanding between the performer and the audience. He's not the headliner, it's not really his show, and what happens next is essentially Johansen's own making.

In short: Johansen is superb. Three encores, Mitch Ryder and Four Tops tunes, even "Personality Crisis." The audience loves it, totally behind Johansen, totally behind his surprisingly magnetic stage appeal. Fists raised in the air after his third encore, he shouts "DETROIT!!!" into the microphone and the audience shouts just as loudly.

And the Clash are next.

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A final trip back to the bar. Joe Strummer is getting ready to leave, I've got yet another beer and the day's third pack of Merit Menthols, a new record. I want to talk about Joe's record company problems.

Joe, you've been saying that you've been done in and screwed over and taken advantage of. What exactly is the deal? What do you have to do that's so terrible? What exactly is the obligation to CBS that's so unfair you can't even get a hamburger at a drugstore?

"How do ya mean 'obligation'?"

# Clash Cool Bash With Trash

LONDON—The recent wave of crowd violence at punk rock concerts may soon be under control, thanks to that lovable gang of peacemakers, the Clash.

At future concerts, when a fight breaks out, the plan is to turn the spotlights on the brawlers and then play "the most boring song we know" until the situation cools down.

Clash boss Joe Strummer is currently going through the Joan Baez songbook, looking for a tune boring enough to settle any punch-out without actually boring the participants to death.

Rick Johnson



I'll get me thumb up that bastard's nose if it kills me!

Wendi Lombardi

# At Hair's End

WEST COVINA, CA—Our culture has been progressing technologically at such a rate, this was bound to happen sooner or later.

It seems that the owner of Hair 2000 in this little burg, one Jacques Brodeur, has taken the guesswork out of cutting (if you prefer, styling) some of his more finicky clientele's locks by employing a computer, an IBM 5100, that processes 23 bodily measurements including the length of the particular nose, the weight and height of the subject into a formula for the perfect coiffure. If your schnozz happens to look like something out of the twilight zone, the computer can determine a hairstyle that will detract attention from the unsightly nasal malformation to

your newly computerized locks. Elton John should become one of his biggest clients once he becomes enlightened, but the Ramones are just laughing it off.

Keeping this scientific discovery in mind, we are wondering about the possible effects on other factions of beautification and mental health. With a little American know-how and laboratory testing, it seems purely logical, from this author's viewpoint, that Rorschach tests could dominate the Eighties in the determination of the possible color combinations for manicures and pedicures, leg waxings, blackhead removals, and dermabrasion. Instead of going to some quack for a prescription of tetracycline and a strict diet, which adds up to a lot of hard-earned cash spent for five minutes of ultra-violet treatment and being told to lay off Coca-

Cola and chocolate, you would simply go down to your local shopping mall, smear some ink on a piece of blotter, feed the blotter into an analytical machine of sorts, and wait for your remedy. This seems much easi-



No. Dennis Day is not my brother. Now buzz off!

Ebet Roberts

# Smells Like A Hit To Me

LONDON—Not since the Raspberries applied a jelly-scented sticker to their first LP has a record's smell been of much interest.

That is, until Peter Tosh revived the scratch 'n' sniff trick with the English release of his *Bush Doctor* album. Old spliflips ran into trouble, however, because the scent he had applied to his record was that of marijuana and many retailers refused to sell it until the sticker was removed.

This order-by-odor method may be useful in Helen Keller-ville, but you can see how it might get out of hand. Peroxide-



scented Blondie albums. A whiff of upholstery on the next Cars LP. And how about scratching a Boston record and getting a noseful of thoroughly digested baked beans?

At least Black Shit Puppy Farm are no longer recording.

Rick Johnson

# This Ain't No Party

BIRMINGHAM, MI—According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, skateboards and swimming pools have been dropped off the list of the ten most dangerous consumer products, to be replaced by "liquid fuels" and, if this doesn't beat all, "chairs, sofas, and beds".

Here at CREEM, we know the dangers of reclining in a comfortable chair with our favorite "liquid fuel".

It seems that they have been keeping a file at Detroit General Hospital of all cuts, concussions and abrasions suffered by the staff of this magazine, as a result of the intake of various "liquid fuels", and are using it as evidence to support these charges.

What we want to know is when and how often they contact Rick Johnson to find these embarrassments out, and where they got his phone number. (From the Macomb, Ill., detox ward?)

We've had it with you, Rick. That's the last time we ever tell you about Billy Altman's visits to Detroit.

Mark J. Norton

# 5 YEARS AGO



# Rod Stewart Goes On Wagon!

Rockin' Rod Stewart climbed on the wagon recently, giving up serious drinking (is there any other kind?), confessing "I don't get sick, I don't get hangovers, I became a lush, lost my memory..." To date, there's no truth to the rumor that Rod will star in a remake of *Lost Weekend*.