

## Musician - Joe Strummer (The Clash) Part 2: I need a Dodge | Andalucia.com :: Reader View

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Joe Strummer - I Need a Dodge: Joe Strummer o



### Joe Strummer in Andalucía

#### Part two - I need a dodge

*by Chris Chaplow*

.....Continued from [Joe Strummer in Andalucía - Part 1 - Spanish Bombs](#)

### LONDON

Joe had returned to London and on 6 and 7 December he fronted The Clash Mk II at a coal miners' strike benefit gig at **Brixton Academy** and announced that an album would be released the following year. After the gig he secretly flew back to Granada.

### GRANADA

091 were preparing to record demos for the LP "Más de cien lobos" in the studio of **Fernando Romero**, in Calle Pasaje de Recogidas. Joe suddenly appeared, and full of enthusiasm helped the band not just with musical inspiration but practical matters like running out to buy longer electric cables. They worked together and 091 recorded a song Joe wrote called "**La Ferretería**", even though they did not understand it.

### CUT THE CRAP

It had been two and a half years since the last album release, an extraordinarily long period for a successful band. There was pressure to get the group into the studio again. Their manager booked a cheap digital studio in Munich where "**Cut the Crap**" was chaotically recorded. On May Day 1985 Joe set off with The Clash Mk II for a 17-day unpublicised "back to their roots" tour, which included a mix of busking in public places and playing small pubs. The equipment was only three acoustic guitars, and the transport was public or hitchhiking. By the time they reached Glasgow the word was out and there were 800 fans waiting.

The tour was followed by some practice sessions in studios in Richmond and Wood Green, where Joe walked out. The band continued preparing for a world tour expecting Joe to walk back in any day but he never did.

## GRANADA

Early in June 1985 Joe turned up yet again in the Silbar, ordering "Palido-cola" (Spanish brown rum and coke). He asked **Jesús Arias** to tell 091 that he wanted to invest 500,000 pesetas (€3,000) to produce their second album. "I want to do something really great with them." The next day he was gone. He returned two weeks later with Jazz and pregnant Gaby.

They stayed at a spacious double villa with a pool in [Las Gabias](#) a village six kilometres outside Granada. It belonged to **Fernando Romero** (brother of Paloma and Esperanza) and **Gabriel Contreras**, who Joe called the "Mad Doc". Living in London in the mid-'70s, he had been a close friend of **Sid Vicious** and was now a respected radiologist. He recalls how Joe was once seen in the village ironmonger's with the shop owner singing, "*Quiero tener un ferretería in Andalucía*" ("I want to have a hardware store in Andalucía") and making a tune on improvised objects. The "song" became the title of a Spanish indie documentary by Carles Prats in 2011.



Joe decided to hold a huge party in the villa and spent the next three weeks organising it. All the 091 band and their friends attended, as well as local media and even local politicians. The guests hoped Joe would play a set but instead he decided to go undercover and dressed as a barman, serving drinks all night.

Gaby persuaded Joe to take a break from Granada and the nightlife and they set off for a break up the coast where they chanced upon a small village on the Almería coast called [San José](#).

## LONDON AND ATHENS

Back in London Joe attended the 1985 **Royal College of Art** degree show where **Esperanza Romero** was exhibiting. He enjoyed the **Notting Hill Carnival** even though his **Ladbroke Grove** house was steamed.

He travelled to Athens for a festival in the Olympic Stadium on 27 August 1985 to join The Clash topping the bill over **Cure**, **Style Council** and **Culture Club** before 60,000 people. This transpired to be the last ever gig by any line-up of The Clash.

Joe "disappeared" again, leaving the rest of the band to support the release of the single "This is England" on 30 Sept 1985 and the album on 4 November 1985. In early 1986 The Clash Mk II disbanded.

## MADRID

In late 1985, leading up to the release of The Clash records, Joe was in Madrid helping 091 record their second LP. This turned out to be a disaster as Joe would not compromise on the recording company's tight studio time schedules, and it took several weeks to persuade the company to re-book the studio.

Joe contacted **Radio Futura**, Spain's top group at the time, to borrow 150,000 pesetas (€900) and with it he bought a large old silver **Dodge Dart** and drove it south to Granada, where he proudly motored around town.

## LORCA

At last he could make the pilgrimage with **Jesús Arias** to [Viznar](#), the village where [Federico García Lorca](#) is thought to have been shot in 1936. Joe wanted to stop by the "ferretería" to buy shovels to look for the remains, but Jesús persuaded him that that this was futile since the exact site of the mass grave was not known. (Today there is a memorial park and marker stone, but serious official excavations have been unsuccessful). Walking around, Jesús remembers Joe's phrase, "I can hear the screams of the dead".

Jesús noticed Joe was crying as he rolled a joint and explained, "I promised myself that if some day I visited Lorca's grave I would smoke a joint in his honour. When I was writing '**Spanish Bombs**' on a plane I made that promise. This is for you Federico" - lighting it and saluting the sky. He vowed to "return here one day" and write a song called "**Lorca**" and, after a silence, he said, "Well, now it's time to go back to Madrid and work hard."

Joe returned to Granada briefly from Madrid on a second occasion and also visited Lorca's birthplace at [Fuente Vaqueros](#) and had photos taken at the cottage and in the room where the poet was born, and he returned to Viznar with a small group of friends to sing a few songs.

This was his last visit to Granada for some time.

## MADRID

Joe was working so hard recording with 091 in Madrid in 1986 that he seemed to forget that Gaby was about to give birth to their second daughter. She managed to call one of the 091s, who reminded Joe there was just time for him to catch a plane to London. The only problem was that in the rush Joe had forgotten in which underground car park he had left his proud possession, the Dodge. He later went on Radio 3 to appeal to listeners to help find his car. If you want to know what happened to the Dodge, watch **Nick Hall's film "I Need a Dodge! - Joe Strummer on the Run"**.

On 14 January 1986 Gaby gave birth to their second daughter, Lola Maybelline Mellor.

## I Need a Dodge! Joe Strummer on the Run docun



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