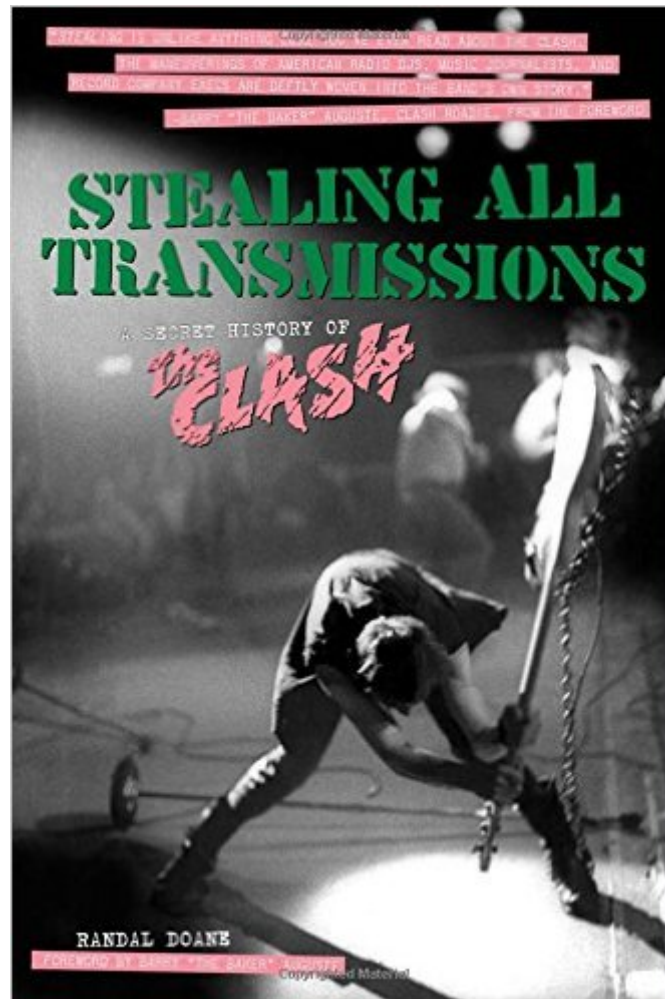


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# Stealing All Transmissions: A Secret History Of The Clash



## Synopsis

Winner of: 2015 Independent Publisher Book Awards, Silver Award, Popular Culture Stealing All Transmissions is a love story. It tells the story of how the Clash fell in love with America and how America loved them back. The romance began in full in 1977, when select rock journalists and deejays aided the band's quest to depose the rock of indolence that dominated American airwaves. This history situates the Clash amid the cultural skirmishes of the 1970s and culminates with their September 1979 performance at the Palladium in New York City. This concert was broadcast live on WNEW, and it concluded with Paul Simonon treating his Fender bass like a woodcutter's ax. This performance produced one of the most exhilarating Clash bootleg recordings, and the photo of Simonon's outburst that graced the cover of the London Calling LP was recently deemed the greatest rock and roll photograph of all time. The book represents a distinctive take on the history of punk, for no other book gives proper attention to the forces of free-form radio, long-form rock journalism, or Clash bootleg recordings, many of which are now widely available on the web. This story, which takes its title from the 1981 single "Radio Clash," includes original interviews with key figures from the New York punk scene.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I enjoyed this book very much! Each sentence is juicy, beautifully crafted, and flows effortlessly into the next sentence. One of the pleasures for me in reading this book was in being able to relish and dig deeply into each sentence. Although it's only 78 pages, each page is dense with description and

detail, like a finely polished jewel. The writing is impeccable from beginning to end, perfect punctuation and all, attaining great clarity. This is a fascinating and personal story, not only of a great punk band and its cultural impact, but also of the great FM free-form radio movement from its beginnings in the late '60s to its demise in the '90s. Many of the important players of the era were contacted and interviewed, and this book is filled with their quotes. Growing up in New Jersey during the '60s and '70s, WNEW was my station: Scott Muni, Pete Fornatele, Dave Herman, Alison Steele, Vin Scelsa... These deejays were intelligent, serious, articulate, and viewed the rock music of the time as art. They gave dignity and importance to the field, and as this book relates, played a huge role in promoting the music and bands of the era. It was a special time indeed.

Great read. Not so much about the Clash as a description of the context in which they flourished in the USA. Free form radio, music label renegades and underground music writers inadvertently teamed up and created fertile ground for 'the only band that matters' to become legends.

Doane's book skillfully traverses the fine line between the formal study of culture (e.g., as a scholar) and the lived experience of culture (e.g., as a fan and participant in punk subculture). *Stealing All Transmissions* is thus a brilliant analysis of the synergistic forces of cultural production and audience reception, in which free-form FM radio deejays, critics, and fans coalesced to pave the way for the emergence of the Clash as a bona fide revolutionary phenomenon and an articulation of widespread discontent with the tired monoculture of mainstream American corporate rock (and radio) in the mid- to late-1970s. Doane brilliantly chronicles the inner workings of the music, radio, and rock media industries (social-structural factors), which combined to set the stage for the emergence of punk onto the American scene, and for the rise to prominence of the Clash in particular. But Doane's book is also inescapably cultural. It is a celebration of the Clash's music as an authentic expression of disaffection, rebellion, and empowerment that resonated with renegade deejays, critics, and fans alike. The book is thus a must-read for any serious fan of the Clash. At the same time, *Stealing All Transmissions* is a cogent and informative analysis of how a musical subculture emerges within a specific social-historical context, and thus constitutes a valuable contribution to the sociological study of popular music.

As one who has always sought out anything written about The Clash or any of the group's members, having a book that also pulls in its surrounding family -- their stage crew, managers, writers who regularly covered and championed them -- to share stories and remembrances of

previously untold adventures is fabulous.

Writing on rock is a tricky business -- many have been wrecked in the narrows between the Scylla of academicism and the Charybdis of mere fandom. Doane knows these waters well and strikes a tone that passes unscathed. There is new research here, great detail and social criticism, as well as humor, erudition, and a deep sense for the music itself and the scene it both engendered and reflected. The most interesting aspect of the book relative to other works on the Clash is its focus on the dynamics of free-form radio and the disseminating power of critical punk writing on punk. A cultural moment is captured here -- and thought through in its ramifications for the current sonic-cultural conjuncture. If the Clash ever mattered to you, punk, go read it.

"The effervescence of analog radio, in which the joy of listening was a serendipitous, real-time affair, shared with friends in the car and elsewhere, has largely been lost." *Stealing All Transmissions* is a multi-leveled but highly readable book on the rise of the Clash and the almost simultaneous last-gasp of free-form commercial radio. Based on interviews with key players, both in the Clash camp and with New York DJs and rock critics, it reminds us of all that the modern rock listener has potentially lost: the shared experiences of live radio, the true craft of disc jockeying, and the eclecticism of radio. The latter has now been hyper-micro-divided into little genre fiefdoms with a minimum of human input. (Satellite radio is the last holdout, has its own problems, and is beyond the reach of most people.) The reader will be truly surprised by some of the play-list juxtapositions of the era that the rock community - musicians, DJs, and critics - took for granted. In this way the story of the Clash, and really punk in general, becomes more complex than we imagine, or mis-remember. The book could use a discography woven in, but otherwise a fine romp that combines a fan's joy in the music with a fascinating larger story.

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