

JACKIE FOX: There were rumors that some of the Runaways were lesbians, and Kim got all these pictures of us taken with rock stars and tried to have them published everywhere to dispel those rumors. There was a very early series of pictures with Robert Plant and Jimmy Page, and I'm not in any of them 'cause there weren't any rumors about me.

LITA FORB: I think some of the band were having affairs with each other. I never knew gay existed until I joined the Runaways. One day somebody said something and all of a sudden I figured it out. I was like, "Oh my God, you mean you like girls? For real? Holy shit!" I didn't know what to think or say! I freaked out. I thought, "I can't believe this. This is something I never dreamed could ever exist in real life, you know?" I sat down outside and thought, "Ah, big deal. They're not hurting me. They're my friends. We're all handmates together, it's okay. Get over it."

JACKIE FOX: The songs were extremely simplistic, and most of the lyrics were really very silly, although there were a few that I really liked. Kim claimed to have fed in every set of Beatles lyrics into a computer and had it spit out the words that were most commonly used and then he wrote a song using those words. It was the worst song we ever did.

SANDY WEST: I wasn't aware of our image at first, or how Kim was promoting us. I just loved playing my instrument. I didn't give a shit. I'm not a feminist, but I still didn't like the group being called "sex kittens" or "teenage jailbait" by Kim.

CHERIE CURRIE: We made the first album in a matter of days and started doing interviews right away. It was a blur. I was going to school but was released on a furlough to get the recording done.

JACKIE FOX: Patti Smith didn't have to worry about being marketed as a sex kitten. And she wasn't sixteen years old, either.

JOAN JETT: We went to see Patti Smith in Huntington Beach 'cause we'd heard a lot about her. Lenny Kaye had seen us at the Starwood and he really liked us, so we were backstage talking to him and then we went back to meet Patti, and the second we got to the dressing room (I was second to last, so I didn't even make it in) she goes: "Get those bitches out of here." Ivan her guitarist was wearing a Runaways T-shirt onstage. She was being real rude to us for no reason. We were trying hard to be nice and she just

walked on by. Lenny said that Patti was only into her own trip and we just weren't in her world. We were getting in her way. I guess she was seeing us as female competition. She couldn't even say "Would you please leave?" She just threw us out. We were real hurt.

JACKIE FOX: Our first tour was just trying to survive. Kim had passed tour management over to Scott Anderson, and Scott was dating Cherie. He had all the money and he and Cherie would just disappear and the rest of us would be left in the middle of nowhere with no money trying to figure out how to eat. We were completely unsupervised. We were living like runaways!

CHERIE CURRIE: Joan and I were inseparable. They used to call us Salt and Pepper. Lita was very hard. Very intimidating. She seemed angry all the time, and she scared me. I wanted to be her friend terribly, but she was just so tough. I was uncomfortable around her. Jackie was just a whiner. She just whined about everything. And she would get on everybody's nerves. She also knew we were getting ripped off and she was trying to open our eyes to all this, but we were too afraid to rock the boat.

DON WALLER: Punk Rock really started when the Ramones and the Runaways went over to England to tour their respective debut records in 1976. They took it to the English kids and from there you get your Sex Pistols and your Clashes and all your great English punk singles bands.

GARY STEWART: The Runaways were truly pioneers, yet they're so under-appreciated. The sad part was that the things about them that didn't work were used to dismiss the things that did... but even the stuff that didn't work was done as a reaction to the empty spectacle that rock had become. They don't have a legacy like the Ramones in terms of great songs or records and people acknowledging them as an influence, but they made more of a difference at the time than they'll ever get credit for. They came along when they were needed.

ROBERT LOPEZ: I'd start to read about the New York bands in rock mags like *Rock Scene* and *Circus*. When glitter turned into punk rock, I'd start to hear hype about bands like the Ramones and Richard Hell and Television and Patti Smith and I'd have to imagine what they sounded like.

GEZA X: You'd hear people talking about, "Yeah, there's this band the Ramones, and they're all brothers. You should check them out."

CHERIE CURRIE: I didn't really know what was going on with the CBGB scene, but we got to hang out with the Ramones from there. I personally didn't like their music. It was too heavy for me. But I liked the guys. I thought they were great. But I've always been more into power ballads.

BLACK RANDY: I worked in New York doing these corporate training video films and some friends who were in underground theater—Warhol-type people—knew the Ramones from when they first started, like their very first show. I videotaped the Ramones' third show and became really good friends with them, and I hung around with Dee Dee, so when I came back to the West Coast later in 1974 I already had a nihilistic philosophy, actually more ironic than truly nihilistic. I already felt that something was going to take place at the end of the decade. Like everybody else in the mid-'70s, I was wishing that something would happen that would shake us free of the legacy of the hippies, and that there would be something new and there would be excitement again instead of disillusionment and total apathy. The Ramones felt they were reviving the sound of the Hollies. That's what they were seriously trying to do. They didn't think of it as glitter or punk at all . . . they weren't like the New York Dolls at all, and they were awkward, ugly, creepy-looking guys, and their idea was also to play the music real fast. The themes of the songs were, uh, "beat on the brat with a baseball bat," and "I don't care," and all that stuff that everybody else did to death afterward . . . it was all there in their first ten songs on the Ramones' first album.

RODNEY BINGENHEIMER: I heard about the Ramones as early as 1975, when my club was still going. People would come into the club and say, "Hey, I was in New York at Max's Kansas City and everyone's talking about the Ramones." But they didn't have anything out yet. Then they released their first album and went over to England to support it and it just exploded.

JACKIE FOX: In England the Runaways got lumped in with the punk scene. The crowds over there were almost all male, who were really there to ogle. When we played in Liverpool the crowd broke

through the safety barrier and I remember being rushed offstage. I remember looking out on the crowd at Leeds University and not seeing one female face, just these really pimply wound-up young males pressing up against the stage, and I remember praying there was enough security. The Japanese crowds were a lot nicer and the support was more genuine and a little less lecherous. Japan was a lot of fun. England was scary. The record company threw a party for us and the Sex Pistols crashed it and set it on fire.

SANDY WEST: Punk was amazing. During that first tour in England they were spitting at us onstage and so we started spitting back.

LITA FORD: The more spit you got, the better you were. Oh, fuck, yeah. We had loogies hanging over us by the end of each set. It was great. Now I'd run for the antibacterial wipes, but back then it was awesome. "Man, look at that loogie on your neck, that's cool!" We just got spat on left and right. In Europe the whole audience was just a sea of leather and denim, bad to the bone. Everybody was drunk off their ass, especially me.

CHERIE CURRIE: What started out as six weeks turned into a three-month tour. I stayed sane through my family. I did the best I could to send gifts and talk to them, but after three months away when you're that young, you don't think you're ever gonna see your family again.

JOAN JETT: We'd gotten back from the tour and had started work on our second album when Paul Beahn and George Ruthenberg—who became Darby Crash and Pat Smear—showed up at the studio one day to say they were gonna start a band.

KIM FOWLEY: I had seen Paul and George before. They were male groupies lurking for the Runaways. More like baby brothers, but there was some male groupie veneer beneath their shitick.

JOAN JETT: They'd see us play gigs in Hollywood and they got inspired. Darby liked the tough girl thing. The rebel aspect. He got a real kick out of that. We were really flattered.

SANDY WEST: The Gerns were really sweet people who told everybody that we influenced them. That's cool. I liked them. They were fun to be around. Me and Joan were the kind of people whose vibe was always "Come on over to my apartment and hang out." Her parties were pretty notorious.

CHERIE CURRIE: We were rebels, all of us were. And a lot of people looked up to us. It helped a lot of kids who had very mediocre, uneventful, unhappy lives. It gave them something to hold onto.

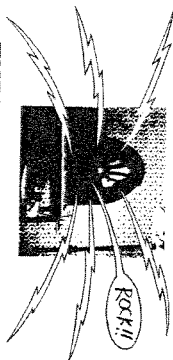
PAT SMEAR: We thought the Ramones were a throwback to the long-haired denim '70s thing. Paul and I were much more into the Run-aways. We thought if they could do it there was no reason why we couldn't do it, too.

Radio Free Hollywood (1976-77)

chapter 6

RADIO FREE HOLLYWOOD
PRESENTS IN CONCERT

POP
THE DOGS
THE MOTELS



TUESDAY, AUG. 24
TROUPERS HALL
1625 N. LA BREA NR. HOLLYWOOD BL.
ADMISSION-\$2.50 DOORS OPEN AT 8:00

Radio Free Hollywood promotional flyer, 1976. Flyer: Courtesy of Gene Scialitti.

DARRELL WAYNE: Around '76, KROQ went back on the air after a two-year absence, and most of the jocks were still hippies. Our standard playlist included the Steve Miller Band, the Grateful Dead, Little Feat, Elvin Bishop, and the Outlaws. When the station's owner Gary Bookasta hired Rodney, that year was a turning point for us. Rodney sounded nothing like a radio announcer. Most radio announcers talk very quickly. Rodney didn't care. He drew out his delivery. "AIIlllrrriiiight."

RODNEY BINGENHEIMER: After the English Disco closed, there was a year where I didn't do anything. Gary Bookasta at KROQ knew what had been going on at the club and in 1976 he or somebody at the station had the idea to put me on the radio. The idea was to get famous people that came to my club to be on-the-air guests.