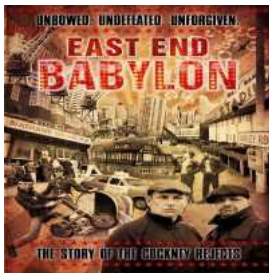




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[Cockney Rejects](#)

Cockney Rejects: East End Babylon
 [DVD]**East End Babylon [DVD]**
 (2013)

Cadiz Music

Reviewer
 Rating: 4

Contributed by: Rich27 [Rich27](#)
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Published on March 25th 2014 'I like punk and I like Sham, the Cockney Rejects are the world's greatest band' So sang the Big Boys from Austin, TX after appropriating the intro to the Cockney Rejects' "I'm Not A Fool" and then adapting a line from another Rejects song, "Police Car." Quite remarkable that a group of spotty 'e.



'I like punk and I like Sham, the Cockney Rejects are the world's greatest band'

So sang the Big Boys from Austin, TX after appropriating the intro to the Cockney Rejects' "I'm Not A Fool" and then adapting a line from another Rejects song, "Police Car." Quite remarkable that a group of spotty 'erbets from the East End of London could make such an impact on people thousands of miles away. To this day the band is revered by many around the world on the evidence of footage in *East End Babylon*, and it would seem that they're certainly less divisive than in their heyday of the late 1970s and early 1980s. For me the Cockney Rejects were never the world's greatest band and I've held nothing more than a passing interest over the years after the first few singles. However, the band now seems to be on an upward trajectory again and the DVD release of *East End Babylon* piqued my interest into what was behind the sometimes fervent reactions fans had towards the band.

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The first half an hour or so focuses on the habitat of the band – the East End of London. The picture painted is of a tough environment that took no prisoners yet saw people look after their own, although this is slightly offset by the Jeff "Stinky" Turner statement that fathers would often be found goading their kids on in fights in the streets. However, the most poignant part of the film is the inclusion of Jean Geggus, mother of both Jeff and Mickey. Her retelling of how the war ripped apart the East End of

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London (the area was heavily bombed due to it being where the docks were situated) set the scene for me - to think that over 13,000 homes were destroyed by various bombs, explosives etc. seems unthinkable to someone who was born twenty years after the end of the Second World War.

The film shows Jean Geggus as a caring mum of a large brood, raising her children as best she could. The early years of both Jeff and Mickey are depicted as one of fun and fights, with the latter being both on the streets and in the boxing ring where both achieved a minor level of success. Then punk came along and the boys basically blagged themselves a deal and from there the band took off. The film includes the band's first manager, Garry Bushell, often regarded as the High Priest of the Oi! movement, and he talks fondly of his days with the band and how his successor took the band for a bit of a ride.

There is some great footage of the band playing at The Bridge House in London, a regular punk haunt once the scene moved away from the more central venues as well as some clips from appearances on the BBC's prime time weekly chart show, "Top of the Pops" (including the drunken performance of "Bubbles" in 1980).









The band's links to West Ham United are featured heavily as well and it's no surprise given that they never hid the fact that a) they supported the team and b) were likely to be found on Saturday afternoons enjoying a bit of a ruck with opposing supporters. This allegiance to The Hammers would prove to be the undoing of what was a promising career as on tour the band was increasingly faced by mobs of rival fans united in attacking the Rejects for this overt loyalty. This was never more the case than what was dubbed "Rorkes Drifts" -- a gig in Birmingham in which all hell broke loose when the Rejects and friends numbered 20 in a battle against upwards of 150 locals.

With the addition of being falsely labelled as a right-wing band aligned to the British Movement when stitched up on a television programme, the band was in a no-win situation and this, along with the violence encountered at gigs, ultimately led the band to reappraise it's direction. The result was The Rejects -- a heavy rock band which alienated many of the punks although garnered them some favourable press for their efforts.

Later years saw a return to that more in your face, kick in the balls kind of music that made the band what it was -- a powerful, anger-fueled outfit with an immense pride for the East End of London. The band seems to have gone from strength to strength with tours taking place around the world and to see the footage of the fans and their obviously devotion (West Ham shirts being worn all around the globe) shows what the band means to many diverse people. Let's face it, not many bands managed to combine punk rock and football, two of the things that many kids in the '70s and '80s were into, as well as the Cockney Rejects did/do. Love them or hate them, they wore their hearts and colours on their sleeves for all to see and hear. Likewise they were one of the few bands that really sang with pride about where they came from and not in a nationalistic way, but in respect of the area of London that they were brought up in.











As music documentaries go this is a highly enjoyable one, even if you're not a big fan of the band. Both of the Geggus brothers talk passionately and articulately at times, and it's the obvious anger that Jeff shows at having been pinpointed as being in a band that had right-wing politics that made the biggest impact on me (recent YouTube footage of a Rejects show has seen Jeff confronting a member of the crowd who was giving a Nazi salute). The brothers come across as eminently likeable but also, they're not people I'd like to cross - they just seem bloody hard!

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Obviously *East End Babylon* is made by people who like the band, it's going to be potentially one-sided but I've not yet read anything that contradicts certain events depicted and referred to in the film. Jean Geggus's contributions are enlightening and amusing (even down to her claim of providing the idea for the name Cockney Rejects) and certainly add to the film rather than come across as pointless. Whilst the film does feature a lot of violence, both footage from football matches when huge fights would break out in grounds and discussion from the band members, it's not glorifying it – those times were tough. As a young kid going to watch my local football team I clearly remember big fights in and out of the ground and going down to watch my team play at local rivals Cardiff City was never trouble free, providing some of the scariest moments of my football-following life. Similarly, going to punk gigs it was also a case of watching your back to see who was behind you and I took my fair share of punches when just stood focusing on a band due to no reason than just being there. So, this aspect really does need to be shown in the film as it was a part of the band's existence as well as how those times actually were.

East End Babylon is a highly enjoyable, informative and interesting film.

[Nariman Shariat](#)

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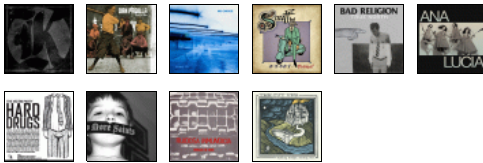
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[nedsammy](#) (1 week ago)

I used to think that Big Boys line was "I'm a punk - AND I LIKE CHER!!!" I was quite disappointed when I found this wasn't the case.