

Louie Louie

Written by bluesever

Sunday, 04 December 2011 20:54 - Last Updated Sunday, 22 March 2015 13:17

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KFJC, a college radio station in Los Altos Hills, California, once played it for 63 hours straight without repeating the same recording twice, receiving unprecedented coverage in the Wall Street Journal, Entertainment Tonight, Playboy magazine and various other international media sources.

With the exception of Paul McCartney's "*Yesterday*," it's been covered more times than any other pop song (over 1,000 versions and counting).

Louie Louie

It's been called everything from a musical joke, pure garbage, the dumbest song ever written, to the quintessential pop single, the first punk record and the missing link between fifties rock n' roll and sixties hard rock.

This is the song „**Louie Louie**”. The original *Louie Louie* was written in 1955 by **Richard Berry**. With his group 'The Pharaohs', he was also the first to record it, and it got some airplay in some cities in the Western US when it was released in 1957.



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Richard Berry

A 21-year-old black man by the name of **Richard Berry** had been a part of the music scene in Los Angeles for quite some time. In the Summer of 1955 he found himself singing with a band called Ricky Rillera and the Rhythm Rockers at the Harmony Park Ballroom in Anaheim. The band launched into an instrumental version of "*El Loco Cha Cha*", an obscure song that the Rhythm Rockers knew but with which Berry was unfamiliar.

He liked the driving rhythm of the song and went out and bought the record the next day, as performed by an artist named **Rene Touzet**. Borrowing from the Latin rhythm of *El Loco Cha Cha*, he wrote some words about a Jamaican sailor who was bemoaning being away from his girlfriend. The song was written as if the narrator is talking to someone else, perhaps a bartender, about how much he misses his girl. The title Richard Berry chose for his composition, taken from the name of the person to whom the story is being told, was **Louie, Louie**.



Rene Touzet

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A garage band called **The Wailers**, fronted by **Rockin' Robin Roberts** recorded it and got some airplay on some local and regional radio stations, where it was somewhat of a hit. Rockin' Robin Roberts is credited with adding one line to the song that many Louie fanatics particularly enjoy:

to 'em right now.!

'OK, let's give it



The Wailers

Two groups in particular began playing it in their concert appearances: **The Kingsmen** from the Portland and

Paul Revere and the Raiders,

a group that was originally formed in Idaho. On a Friday night in April, 1963, The Kingsmen performed at an outdoor concert and did a marathon version of the song, and the crowd couldn't get enough of it. The following morning, according to lead singer

Jack Ely,

they went to a small recording studio in Portland called Northwest Recorders to do the song. Paul Revere & The Raiders recorded the song in the same studio the same month, but it was The Kingsmen's version that was destined for greatness.



The Kingsmen

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Rumors began to spread (and they persist to this day) that **Louie, Louie** is a dirty song. That the words were filthy. The fact is, the words are not dirty at all. It's just a simple little song derived from a Latin beat. But try telling some people in early 60's America that. Governor Matthew Welch of Indiana had the song banned from the airwaves in his state, because of the alleged dirty lyrics. J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI actually investigated the song, determining that no one could say definitively from listening to the recording just what the words are.



Paul Revere & The Raiders

The Kingsmen originally thought the original recording was pure garbage, and were equally disgusted when they discovered they had to pay the \$50 recording fee!! They are one of the great garage bands from the early days of Rock-and-Roll. Those were the days when a group of friends could get together, go to a small studio, and come up with a hit song (unlike the present time, when nearly everything is controlled by the giant recording companies).



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The Kingsmen

The Kingsmen version has remained the most popular version of the song, retaining its association with wild partying. It enjoyed a comeback in 1978-79 and was associated with college fraternity parties when it was sung, complete with the supposedly obscene lyrics, by **Bluto (John Belushi)**

and his fellow Delta House brothers in the movie *National Lampoon's Animal House*.

Some bands have taken liberties with the lyrics, including attempts to record the supposed "obscene lyrics".



John Belushi

On August 24, 2003, 754 guitarists played this at "*Louie Fest*" in Tacoma, Washington. The event was held to raise money for music programs. Dick Peterson from The Kingsmen was one of the guitarists.

Louie Louie as originally written by Richard Berry, here it is:

Fine little girl she waits for me Me catch the ship for cross the sea Me sail the ship

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*all alone Me never think me make it home Louie, Louie, me gotta go Louie, Louie, me
gotta go Three nights and days me sail the sea Me think of girl constantly On the ship
I dream she there I smell the rose in her hair Louie, Louie, me gotta go Louie, Louie,
me gotta go Me see Jamaica moon above It won't be long, me see my love, I take
her in my arms and then Me tell her I never leave again Louie, Louie, me gotta go
Louie, Louie, me gotta go*



Richard Berry - Louie Louie