

I Can't Be Satisfied

Words and Music by McKinley Morganfield

"I Can't Be Satisfied" (originally recorded as "I Be's Troubled" in Clarksdale, Mississippi, in 1941 by Alan Lomax) b/w "I Feel Like Going Home" became Muddy's first commercial success in 1948 and is a major milestone in the evolution of post-war Chicago blues. With Big Crawford's country funk doghouse bass providing all the rhythmic and harmonic accompaniment any soloist could desire, Muddy tossed off an elemental electric blues classic.

The combination of new and old made the record exciting. Muddy's powerful electric tone was new, but everything else was old-fashioned Delta style:

* The open G tuning created a droning, constant "G chord" tonality, even though the tune had standard blues chord changes.

* The old Delta players were not slaves to the 12-bar format.* In glorious Delta tradition, "I Can't Be Satisfied" featured odd 23-bar verses! (It was basically a standard 12-bar blues doubled up to 24 bars, but the first IV-chord section had three bars instead of four.) Besides, Muddy threw in an extra bar whenever the mood struck him.

* During Muddy's vocal, his guitar mimicked his voice. In old Delta style, guitarists often played the same line they were singing, instead of picking backup chords.

Muddy played nearly the same guitar part, with slight variations, for the intro, verses, and solo of this tune.

*The standard 12-bar blues progression goes like this (common variations in parentheses):

Open G Tuning
 ①=D ④=D
 ②=B ⑤=G
 ③=G ⑥=D

I Can't Be Satisfied (1948) Muddy: Slide guitar in open G tuning

Intro

Cut-time feel ♩ = 208

