Bill Johnson, the Monkey, and the Dago

Bill Johnson, the Monkey, and the Dago

Bill Johnson, he was a desperate man; he come to town one day;
And he sold a herd of cattle that he raised out in the west.
And standin', on a corner, was a dago and his monkey,
And the monkey tickled Johnson way down in his chest.

Then they passed the hat around, and Johnson put some in;
And when he found out his mistake, it was then that the trouble begin.
'Cause he thought it was a quarter, but it was a five and gold.
That's when they started in just like brave warriors of old.

Chorus:

They had it in and out, Lordy, up and down
In the alley and on the ground,
I swear I never seen such carryin' on before.
I do not know that monkey's name, but he got there just the same.
Bill Johnson, the monkey, and the dago.

Well the dago, he threw a brick at Bill; Johnson let it go past.
It hit a dutchman on the head and broke a chinaman's window glass.
Then the chinaman, he come runnin' out; imagine what he found.
Old Johnson, he'd picked up the monkey by the tail and he knocked that Dago down.

Chorus:

They had it in and out, Lordy, up and down
In the alley and on the ground,
I swear I never seen such carryin' on before.
I do not know that monkey's name, but he got there just the same.
Bill Johnson, the monkey, and the dago.

Then the dago he drew a stilletto, old Johnson went for his gun;
The dutchman whipped out a razor, and the chinaman broke into a run.
He ran into a policeman, and knocked him right offa his pins.
The cop, he sent for the big patrol and they run that whole crew in.

Chorus:

They had it in and out, Lordy, up and down
In the alley and on the ground,
I swear I never seen such carryin' on before.

I do not know that monkey's name, but he got there just the same.
Bill Johnson, the monkey, and the dago.

People who were offended by the Taco Bell commercial probably won't like this little song very much either, but I think it's pretty neat. As far as I know, this song exists only in oral tradition. A friend of mine, a retired newspaper columnist named R.C. Smith, who lives in Guilford College, N.C., recorded this song in about 1960 at a party in Raleigh where it was sung by an aging state employee. He and I used to sing it together at parties in the 60s. I have the old man's name somewhere, but can't find it at the moment. DEB

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