

Three Chords and the Truth

Ry Cooder

I'm going to tell you a story right here
Huh, you may not believe it

I dreamed I saw Joe Hill last night, standin' in the prison yard
They were taking poor Joe, chained and bound, to a Utah firing squad
Well he turned and looked at me right then, sayin', Don't you be misled
They're trying to tear our free speech down, and Buddy, they ain't near quit yet
See, they framed me on a killin' charge, you know I wouldn't lie to you
But the only crime here that I done was three chords and the truth

Three chords and the truth, oh three chords and the truth
Well the only crime that Joe Hill done was three chords and the truth
Well he sang his good old union songs, he got his message through
But they couldn't stand to hear a workingman sing three chords and the truth

I see you don't believe you're old friend Buddy here
Heh, take a drink, I think you need it

Oh J. Edgar Hoover liked to hear the darkies sing, till one man changed that all around
Paul Robeson was a man that you couldn't ignore, and that's what drove J. Edgar down
(Yah drove him down)
He called up his New York Klan boyfriends, sayin', I got something good for you
Get right down there to Peekskill, New York town, and kill three chords and the truth

Three chords and the truth, oh, three chords and the truth
Well the only crime you ever got from Paul was three chords and the truth
Now if this is the land of democracy, I got one question for you
Why wasn't Paul Roberson set free on three chords and the truth?

I see you still don't believe it
I'll bother you one more time
I'll bother you one more time, right mister

Now they took Pete Seeger before the law and put him on the witness stand
But he stood right up to tyranny with just a banjo in his hand
Such a righteous banjo picker, watchin' out for me and you
That was just a man who wouldn't back down on three chords and the truth

Three chords and the truth, three chords and the truth
Well the only crime Pete Seeger done was three chords and the truth
Yah, he sang his freedom songs real good, he's still getting his mess

age through

Better check out old Pete Seeger on three chords and the truth

Three chords and the truth, well its three chords and the truth

Well you better check out your old friend Buddy right now on three chords and the truth

Better check out old Harlan Howard, personal friend of mine

Check out old Harlan on three chords and the truth