

He's Been on the Job Too Long

by Paul Cooper

There are many versions of this song by a multitude of artists and folksingers. Some have elaborate spoken introductions, and some play very challenging guitar arrangements. The story is based on an actual incident that took place in the 1890s in St. Louis. The tag at the end of each verse, "been on the job too long", seems to refer to "King Brady" having been sheriff for so long that he came to believe himself invincible, or possibly that he was just burned out. Out of the many recorded versions, I chose one that is fairly straightforward, and easy to hear the chord changes (it's just a two-chord song). You can listen to Seth Reese perform the song here (You can play along with Seth using the chords shown): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sZJxRW4YSro&list=RDsZJxRW4YSro&start_radio=1 (on the Irish bouzouki, of all things), or on the HFMS Audio Archive page at <https://www.houstonfolkmusic.org/AudioArchives>

Duncan and Brady

C

Twinkle, twinkle, little star –

G

Along come Brady in his 'lectric car

G7

Got a mean look right in his eye

C

Gonna shoot somebody just to see him die.

G7

C

Well he's been on the job too long.

Duncan, Duncan was tendin' the bar

In walked Brady with his shiny star

Brady said, "Duncan you are under arrest"

Duncan shot a hole in Brady's breast

Well he's been on the job too long.

Brady, Brady, Brady you know you've done wrong –

Breakin' in here while my game's going on

Bustin down the windows, knockin' at the door

Now you're lying dead on the barroom floor.

Yes, you've been on the job too long.

Old King Brady was a big, fat man
Doctor reached up and took hold of his hand
Felt for the pulse, the doctor he said
"I believe to my soul, King Brady's dead"
Yes, he's been on the job too long

High-tailed carriages a-standin' around
Takin' Brady to the buryin' ground
High-tailed carriages, rubber-tired hack
Took him to the graveyard, he ain't comin' back
Yes, he's been on the job too long.

When the women all heard King Brady was dead
Well they went back home and they dressed in red
Slippin' and a-slidin' and shufflin' down the street
In their big Mother Hubbards and their stocking feet
Well, he's been on the job too long.

Brady, Brady, Brady you know you've done wrong –
Breakin' in here while my game's going on
Bustin down the windows, knockin' at the door
Now you're lying dead on the barroom floor.
Yes, you've been on the job too long.