

Whores of Yore @WhoresofYore Sat Aug 08 17:37:18 +0000 2020

This is Lucille Bogan (1897-1948), an American blues singer. Along with Bessie Smith and Ma Rainey, Bogan was one of the 'big three' women of early blues music. She recorded some of the most sexually explicit songs of that era (and many others).

Thread! <https://t.co/0zpA0Vbmuz>



She was born Lucille Anderson and was raised in Birmingham, Alabama. She married Nazareth Lee Bogan in 1914 & they soon had a son, Nazareth Jr. She later divorced Bogan and married James Spencer.

She started recording vaudeville songs in 1923. Her first big hit was "Sweet Petunia" in 1927. She started performing as Bessie Jackson in 1933 and her big hits included "Seaboard Blues", "Troubled Mind", and "Superstitious Blues".

Some of her songs came straight from the rowdy jazz clubs where Bogan started her career. Songs about drinking and sex were staples of her repertoire.

"BD Woman's Blues", for example, is about lesbians - the "BD" stands for 'bull dyke'. Here are the lyrics. Listen here <https://t.co/EDXoNtw3df> <https://t.co/nrU5oun3R8>

Comin' a time, B.D. women ain't gonna need no men
Comin' a time, B.D. women ain't gonna do need no men
Oh they way treat us is a lowdown and dirty sin

B.D. women, you sure can't understand
B.D. women, you sure can't understand
They got a head like a sweet angel and they walk just
like a natural man

B.D. women, they all done learnt their plan
B.D. women, they all done learnt their plan
They can lay their jive just like a natural man

B.D. women, B.D. women, you know they sure is rough
B.D. women, B.D. women, you know they sure is rough
They all drink up plenty whiskey and they sure will strut
their stuff

B.D. women, you know they work and make their dough
B.D. women, you know they work and make their dough
And when they get ready to spend it, they know they
have to go (?)

Bogan's most famous sexually explicit song is "Shave Em Dry", which was first recorded by Ma Rainey in August 1924. The phrase "shave em dry" means sex without sentiment or emotion - just sex. "Shave em dry, baby."

Rainey's version doesn't make any mention of this and is pretty clean. Some of the lyrics are "Here's one thing I don't understand, / Why a good-lookin' woman loves a workin' man, / Eeh, hey, daddy won't you shave 'em dry?" You can listen to it here <https://t.co/YbUTT8NITf> <https://t.co/8i3TiP4oIx>



Bogan recorded two versions in 1935 - a dirty one and really dirty one. The more explicit of the two was only released in 1991 on the compilation album *Raunchy Business: Hot Nuts & Lollypops*.

The opening lyrics are "I got nipples on my titties big as / the end of my thumb, / I got somethin' 'tween my legs / 'll make a dead man come."

Other lyrics are "Say I fucked all night, and all the night before baby, / And I feel just like I wanna, fuck some more".

And, "Now your nuts hang down like a damn bell sapper, / And your dick stands up like a steeple, / Your goddam ass-hole stands open like a church door, / And the crabs walks in like people."

You can listen to it all here <https://t.co/NpyyfLE2hd>

Bogan didn't record again after 1935 and "Shave Em Dry" was one of the last songs she did record. She managed her son's jazz group, Bogan's Birmingham Busters, for a time, before moving to Los Angeles shortly before her death in 1948.

Bogan may have recorded the most sexually explicit blues song, but she certainly wasn't the only one singing them.

Ethel Waters recorded 'My Handy Man' in 1928. Some the lyrics run,

<https://t.co/JGfrXjQDSp> <https://t.co/niA5vIYjLg>

"He shakes my ashes, greases my griddle,
Churns my butter, strokes my fiddle,
My man is such a handy man.
He threads my needle, creams my wheat,
Heats my heater, chops my meat.
My man is such a handy man"



Bessie Smith's records are charged with sexual content. In "Kitchen Man" she sings 'Anytime he wants to, he can use my sugar bowl' and 'His jelly roll is nice and hot'. <https://t.co/6BfqTv6vkl>



Smith's "Empty Bed Blues" is about waking up after a one night stand to find her lover has left.

"He poured my fresh cabbage and he made it awful hot, / When he put in the bacon, it overflowed my pot."

In 1922, Trixie Smith sang 'My Daddy Rocks Me (with one steady roll).' "I looked at the clock and the clock struck three, / I said, 'Now daddy you're killing me.'" <https://t.co/iOQld9nVQv> <https://t.co/qwtjbuLgea>



Lil Johnson was famous for her dirty songs. She recorded "Anybody Want to Buy My Cabbage?" And "Press my Button, Ring my Bell" in 1935 - some lyrics to that include.. <https://t.co/hrbBA0twTU>

"Come on, baby, let's have some fun
Just put your hot dog in my bun
And I'll have that thing
That ting-a-ling
Just press my button, give my bell a ring"

Victoria Spivey recorded "One Hour Mama" in 1936. These are the lyrics, listen to it here. <https://t.co/khBjyZHIZr>
<https://t.co/J0jJGVR9H7>

I've always heard that haste makes waste
So I believe in takin' my time
The highest mountain can't be raced
It's something you must slowly climb
I want a slow and easy man
He needn't ever take the lead
'Cause I work on that long-time plan
And I ain't a-lookin' for no speed

I'm a one hour mama
So no one minute papa
Ain't the kind of man for me
Set your alarm clock papa
One hour, that's proper
Then love me like I like to be

I don't want no lame excuses
'Bout my lovin' bein' so good
That you couldn't wait no longer
Now I hope I'm understood

I'm a one hour mama
So no one minute papa
Ain't the kind of man for me

I can't stand no greenhorn lover
Like a rookie goin' to war
With a load of big artillery
But don't know what it's for

He's got to bring me a reference
With a great long pedigree
And must prove he's got endurance
Or he don't mean that to me

I don't like no crowin' rooster
What just kicks a lick or two
Action is the only booster
Of just what my man can do

I don't want no imitation
My requirements ain't no joke
'Cause I've got pure indignation
For a guy what's lost his stroke

I'm a one hour mama
So no one minute papa
Ain't the kind of man for me
Set your alarm clock papa
One hour, that's proper
Then love me like I like to be

I may want love for one hour
Then decide to make it two
Takes an hour before I get started
Maybe three 'fore I'm through



So, as you can see women of colour singing sexually explicit songs is nothing new. It has a very long and glorious tradition.

This entire thread was inspired by Nick Nitely whose tweet quite rightly pointed to Lucille Bogan's work when ppl lost their minds at Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion's new WAP video.

<https://t.co/0W0pCi2hnm>

As conservatives are now gearing up to try and ban Cardi B & Megan Thee Stallion's WAP song, it's worth remembering that every artist in this thread also appalled white conservatives who tried to cancel them & their dirty songs almost 100 yrs ago

<https://t.co/HxzEshZvZe>