

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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Two Butchers

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Its of two noble butchers as I have heard men say
They started out from London all on the market day
And as they were riding along, as fast as they could ride
"Oh, stop your horse" says Johnson, "for I hear some woman cry."

"I will not stop," says Willson, "I will not stop." says he
"I will not stop," says Willson, "for robbed we shall be"
So Johnson he got off his horse and he searched the woods all round
And there he found this woman with her hair pinned to the ground

"How came you here dear woman? How came you here fast bound?"
"How came you here stark naked with your hair pinned to the ground?"
"They robbed me, they stripped me, they left me here fast bound."
"They left me here this morning, with my hair pinned to the ground."

So Johnson he being a valiant man, and a man of valiant mind
He wrapped his coat around her, and he took her up behind
And as they were riding along, as fast as they could ride
She put her fingers to her mouth, and she gave three shivering cries

Out jumped three bold and struggling men with swords keen in hand
Who then commanded Johnson, commanded him to stand
"I'll stop, I'll stand said Johnson, I'll stop, I'll stand said he
"For never was I in all my life afraid of any three

Oh, two of them he quickly slew, and the third he did not mind
Till the false young woman took her knife and she stabbed him from behind
Poor Johnson he spun round about and fell down to the ground
And cursed that wretched woman, who gave him his dead wound

The day it being the market day, there were people passing by
Who saw the awful murder, who saw poor Johnson die.

Collected by Cecil Sharp

Recorded by Martin Carthy on his "Second "Album", Topic 12TS341

Fairly common on both sides of the Atlantic, the story stays essentially the same, only varying in the number of butchers or the number of robbers who range themselves against Johnson. A treacherous woman has always seemed more despicable than a

treacherous man.

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