

LITTLE SADIE (LAWS I8)

Old-time Appalachian Blues; **CATEGORY:** Early Country and Bluegrass Songs; **DATE:** Early 1900's (1922); **RECORDING INFO:** Clarence Ashley -1930; Freight Hoppers; Tommy Jarrell; Doc Watson; Hedy West; **OTHER NAMES:** "Bad Man's Blunder," "Bad(Man) Lee Brown;" "Penitentiary Blues;" "Bad Man Ballad;" "Cocaine Blues;" "Chain Gang Blues;" **NOTES:** "Little Sadie" originated in the Appalachian region but has been found as far west as Arkansas as early as 1939. "Bad Man's Blunder," by Hays and Cisco Houston is a variant of "Little Sadie" that was a hit for the Kingston Trio. "Penitentiary Blues/Cocaine Blues," was released by Johnny Cash in 1960 and redone by George Thorogood many years later. In the song lyrics the reference to Thomasville (North Carolina) and Jericho (South Carolina) could possibly represent a local North Carolina murder ballad.

Dm F Dm C A7

Went out last night to take a lit-tle round I met lit-tle Sad-ie and I shot her down.

C Dm A7 Dm

Went back home and I got into bed, a for-ty four pis-tol un-der my head.

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Dm F Dm C A7

Went out one night to make a little round, I met little Sadie and I shot her down.

C Dm A7 Dm

Went back home, and I got into bed, Forty-four pistol under my head.

Wake up the next morning about half past nine, The hacks and the buggies all standing in line.
Gents and the gamblers all standin' around, Taking Little Sadie to her buryin' ground.

Then I begun to think of what a deed I'd done, I grabbed my hat and away I run.
I made a good run but a little too slow, They overtook me in Jericho.

I was standin' on the corner a readin' the bill, When up stepped the sheriff from Thomasville.
He said young man ain't your name Brown, Remember the night you shot Sadie down.

Well I says, "Yes sir, my name is Lee, And I shot little Sadie in the first degree.
First degree, second degree, If you got any papers won't you read them to me?"

They took me down town, dressed me in black, And they put me on a train and started me back.
All the way back to that Thomasville jail, And I had no money for to go my bail.

That judge and the jury took their stand, The judge had the papers in his right hand.
Forty-one days, and forty-one nights, Forty-one years to wear the ball and stripes.