

= Sue Me , Sue You Blues =

" Sue Me , Sue You Blues " is a song written by English musician George Harrison , released on his 1973 album *Living in the Material World* . Harrison initially let American guitarist Jesse Ed Davis record it for the latter's *Ululu* album (1972) , in gratitude to Davis for his participation in the Concert for Bangladesh . When writing the song , Harrison drew inspiration from the legal issues surrounding the Beatles during the early months of 1971 , particularly the lawsuit that Paul McCartney initiated in an effort to dissolve the band's business partnership , Apple Corps .

The inclusion of " Sue Me , Sue You Blues " on *Material World* marked a rare example of a secular composition on Harrison's most spiritually oriented album . Recorded at the Beatles' Apple Studio in London , the track features his extensive use of the dobro @-@ style resonator guitar , as well as musical contributions from Gary Wright , Nicky Hopkins , Klaus Voormann and Jim Keltner . The song's musical mood and lyric recall aspects of old English square dance , a quality that some writers identify as mirroring the changing of sides amid the lawsuits relating to the Beatles' break @-@ up . Some critics have compared the track with John Lennon's " How Do You Sleep ? " ; Stephen Holden of *Rolling Stone* magazine described it as a " clever Lennonist diatribe " .

Harrison performed " Sue Me , Sue You Blues " throughout his 1974 North American tour , utilising a funk @-@ inspired arrangement that featured musicians Willie Weeks , Andy Newmark and Tom Scott . For these performances , Harrison modified the lyrics to reflect the former Beatles uniting against manager Allen Klein . The song's title was a phrase that Harrison and commentators adopted when referring to Beatles @-@ related legal issues during the 1970s . A film clip containing Harrison's 1971 demo of " Sue Me , Sue You Blues " appeared on the DVD accompanying the 2006 remaster of *Living in the Material World* .

= = Background and composition = =

As third songwriter to Lennon and McCartney , George Harrison had written about his experiences regarding the disharmonious atmosphere within the Beatles during the late 1960s , in compositions such as " Not Guilty " , " I Me Mine " , " Wah @-@ Wah " and " Run of the Mill " . The latter two songs , which reflect on the failing friendships among the Beatles , appeared on Harrison's critically acclaimed triple album *All Things Must Pass* , released in November 1970 , seven months after Paul McCartney's departure had initiated the band's break @-@ up . On 31 December of that year , McCartney filed suit against Apple Corps and his former bandmates at London's High Court of Justice , in an effort to free himself from the legal obligations imposed on him by the Beatles' partnership , and particularly from manager Allen Klein . Author Robert Rodriguez describes the situation as an " unfathomably sour turn of events " that " mystified " the public and angered fans of the Beatles .

Beginning on 19 February 1971 , the court heard reports from Harrison , John Lennon and Ringo Starr of McCartney's attempts to control the band , and McCartney's equally unflattering assessment of Klein . Although the other three former Beatles had presented a united front against McCartney since his April 1970 departure from the band , the recent publication of Lennon's scathing comments to *Rolling Stone* editor Jann Wenner , about McCartney , Harrison and Starr , added to the ill @-@ feeling surrounding the group .

On 12 March , High Court judge Mr Justice Stamp ruled in McCartney's favour , appointing London accountant James Spooner as Apple Corps' official receiver . While Lennon reportedly unleashed his anger that day by throwing two bricks through the windows of McCartney's St John's Wood home , Harrison channelled his frustration into a new composition , " Sue Me , Sue You Blues " . Harrison biographer Simon Leng suggests that the song " takes a nearly impersonal overview of the Beatles' self @-@ inflicted legal wounds " . In his 1980 autobiography , *I , Me , Mine* , Harrison describes the opening verse as being " vaguely based on the Square dance type of fiddle lyric " :

Well , you serve me and I'll serve you
Swing your partners , all get screwed
Bring your lawyer and I'll bring mine

Get together , and we could have a bad time

In Leng 's opinion , the song 's lyrics " revel in the certainty that lawyers are an easy target for general scorn and a quick way of securing a common denominator " . During the second verse , the line " It 's affidavit swearing time " reflects real @-@ life events ? whereby Harrison , Lennon and Starr all submitted their statements to the court via affidavit ? before Harrison concludes : " Now all that 's left is to find yourself a new band . " In the third verse , Harrison predicts the eventual outcome of the lawsuit :

Hold the block on money flow

Move it into joint escrow

Court receiver , laughs and thrills

But in the end we just pay those lawyers their bills

Author Ian Inglis identifies Harrison 's use of the plural form " we " in the lyric as evidence of his hope for " a shared and sensible outcome " for the former Beatles , since the situation " disadvantages them all " . While Harrison biographer Dale Allison interprets a degree of animosity towards the other Beatles in the song 's lyrics , Leng argues that they are directed solely at the legal profession . Inglis similarly dismisses the idea that Harrison was targeting his former bandmates ; instead , the song expresses " frustration rather than hostility " and addresses the " absurdity " of the situation . Inglis writes of " Sue Me , Sue You Blues " : " It makes clear that amid the legal arguments , financial requirements , and technical language ... there are four former friends who are powerless to control events . "

Regarding the song 's square @-@ dance theme , Leng suggests that folk dancing 's cycle of about @-@ turns and to @-@ and @-@ fro movement reminded Harrison of the Beatles ' " seemingly endless , and pointless , legal orbits around one another " . The song 's lyrics are set against a blues @-@ based bottleneck riff , typical of Harrison 's work at the time with the dobro . Played in his favoured open E tuning , " Sue Me , Sue You Blues " was one of a number of bottleneck @-@ inspired Harrison compositions from the early 1970s .

The song title soon became part of regular Harrison parlance , as evidenced by his appearance on The Dick Cavett Show in November 1971 , when he used the phrase to goad Capitol Records boss Bhaskar Menon over delaying the release of the Concert for Bangladesh live album . Commentators similarly adopted " sue me , sue you blues " as a description for the litigation surrounding Harrison and his fellow ex @-@ Beatles throughout the 1970s .

= = Pre @-@ Living in the Material World recording history = =

= = = Harrison 's solo demo = = =

Harrison recorded a brief demo of " Sue Me , Sue You Blues " , in the Delta blues style , which became available in the 1990s on bootleg compilations such as Pirate Songs . Leng describes this 1971 recording as " astonishing " and a " must " for inclusion on any forthcoming George Harrison anthology , with Harrison sounding like " a lost bluesman , bootlegged in Chicago " .

The demo was officially issued in September 2006 , on the DVD included in the deluxe edition of Harrison 's remastered 1973 solo album , Living in the Material World . The song is set to archival footage , showing images of Harrison 's National resonator guitar , over which his handwritten lyrics are superimposed . In the opinion of Music Box editor John Metzger , this version of " Sue Me , Sue You Blues " " stings more than its studio counterpart " . Although the 2006 reissue lists it as an " acoustic demo version " , Harrison played electric slide guitar on the recording . The same film clip appears on the DVD exclusive to the Apple Years 1968 ? 75 Harrison box set , released in September 2014 .

= = = Jesse Ed Davis 's version = = =

Harrison met Tulsa @-@ born guitarist Jesse Ed Davis through mutual friends , singer @-@

songwriter Leon Russell and drummer Jim Keltner , both of whom took part in the hastily arranged session for Harrison 's " Bangla Desh " charity single in July 1971 . Russell also assisted Harrison in recruiting personnel for the associated benefit concerts , held at Madison Square Garden in New York , and suggested Davis as a replacement for Eric Clapton , who was then dealing with a severe heroin addiction . Both Davis and Clapton ended up playing at the two shows , on 1 August . In gratitude to Davis , Harrison offered him " Sue Me , Sue You Blues " for inclusion on his second solo album , Ululu .

A former guitarist with blues singer Taj Mahal , Davis arranged the song as a Southern blues shuffle , creating a " beautiful version " in the words of music critic Thom Jurek . As on the 1971 demo , which Harrison had passed on to Davis , this version of " Sue Me , Sue You Blues " omits the song 's third verse and , at just 2 minutes 45 seconds , it is significantly shorter than Harrison 's better @-@ known 1973 recording . Other musicians on Davis 's version include Keltner , Dr. John and Billy Rich . Like Keltner , Davis went on to work with all the former Beatles except McCartney during the 1970s , remaining close to Harrison and playing regularly with Lennon over the 1973 ? 75 period .

Ululu was released in March 1972 , before which Atco Records had issued " Sue Me , Sue You Blues " as the album 's advance single on 25 January . Davis co @-@ produced the recording with Grammy Award @-@ winning producer Albhy Galuten . In an interview with Los Angeles Free Press the following year , Davis expressed disappointment with his two albums on the Atco label and named " Sue Me , Sue You Blues " as one of the few songs he liked .

= = Living in the Material World recording = =

Harrison returned to the song in December 1972 , during a break in the sessions for his Living in the Material World album , the start of which had been delayed by the various business and tax problems connected with his Concert for Bangladesh aid project . By this time , Harrison , Lennon and Starr had grown disaffected with manager Allen Klein and had chosen not to renew his contract . Once album sessions resumed in January 1973 , Harrison taped the basic track for " Sue Me , Sue You Blues " at the Beatles ' Apple Studio , in central London .

Harrison was backed on the recording by Keltner on drums , keyboard players Gary Wright and Nicky Hopkins , and bassist Klaus Voormann . These musicians provided the core line @-@ up throughout the Material World sessions , in a deliberate move by Harrison to work with a small band and pare down the production after the excesses of All Things Must Pass .

The recording begins with the song 's single @-@ chord riff , created by a combination of Hopkins ' low piano notes and Harrison 's dobro , before the rhythm shifts to what author Alan Clayson calls " downbeat hootenanny " over the verses . Leng identifies the rhythm as approximating the do @-@ si @-@ do dance step found in square dancing . Harrison takes the first solo , midway through the track , playing a second , overdubbed dobro , while Wright 's Wurlitzer electric piano leads the instrumental passage that closes the song . Contrasting with his more substantial presence on All Things Must Pass , " Sue Me , Sue You Blues " marks a rare instance where Wright 's keyboard work , rather than just Hopkins ' , features prominently on Living in the Material World .

Harrison completed the song 's vocals by late February , soon after his 30th birthday . He then travelled to Los Angeles for a series of Beatles @-@ related business meetings held at the offices of Apple 's US distributor , Capitol Records , primarily to discuss the upcoming Beatles compilations 1962 ? 1966 and 1967 ? 1970 . While these two double albums were intended to foil bootleggers , Doggett notes that the profits financed the Beatles ' litigation against Klein until well into 1974 .

= = Release = =

" Sue Me , Sue You Blues " was issued at the end of May 1973 as the second track on Living in the Material World , following the album 's lead single , " Give Me Love (Give Me Peace on Earth) " . According to authors Chip Madinger and Mark Easter , Harrison considered an alternative running order , whereby " Sue Me , Sue You Blues " was track 1 and " Give Me Love " opened side two of

the album . In the UK cassette format , " Sue Me , Sue You Blues " was the opening track , followed by " The Lord Loves the One (That Loves the Lord) " .

The song 's inclusion marked the only secular composition on Material World . It also served as a rare foray into rock amid the album 's abundance of spiritually themed ballads and occasional acoustic @-@ based pop such as " Give Me Love " and " Don 't Let Me Wait Too Long " . Reflecting the album content , Tom Wilkes 's design for the record 's face labels contrasted a devout spiritual existence with life in the material world , by featuring a painting of Krishna and his warrior prince Arjuna on side one and a picture of a Mercedes stretch limousine on the reverse .

Regarded by some as the most level @-@ headed and musically consistent ex @-@ Beatle in mid 1973 , with " Sue Me , Sue You Blues " Harrison provided observers with another example in the band 's tradition of self @-@ referential songwriting . Leng has written of the public and the media " long [ing] for these further installments of ' the Beatles soap opera ' " , of which this song was " less paranoiac " than " How Do You Sleep ? " and " not as roseate " as Starr 's " Early 1970 " .

= = Reception = =

On release , Billboard magazine noted " Sue Me , Sue You Blues " as a comment on " the Beatles and their mish @-@ mash " , while Stephen Holden of Rolling Stone described the track as " a biting slide @-@ guitar showcase for Harrison , its lyric a clever Lennonist diatribe against such monetary quarrels as those that ended the Beatles " . In their respective books discussing the former Beatles ' first decade as solo artists , Nicholas Schaffner and NME critic Bob Woffinden likewise praised Harrison 's dobro playing , Schaffner likening it to the " vicious slide guitar work " Harrison had supplied for Lennon on " How Do You Sleep ? " Woffinden compared " Sue Me , Sue You Blues " with Harrison 's 1966 Beatles track " Taxman " , as a composition that showed its author 's " impatien [ce] with those who come between him and his money " , and for that reason , found it " rather out of place " on Material World . Recalling the album 's release in The Cambridge Companion to the Beatles , Michael Frontani writes : " Harrison 's slide @-@ playing is featured throughout , with the swamp @-@ drenched , nocturnal wails of ' Sue Me , Sue You Blues , ' in particular , demonstrating his grasp of the form . "

Among more recent reviewers , AllMusic 's Lindsay Planer draws parallels with Lennon 's compositions " How Do You Sleep ? " and " Steel and Glass " , and describes " Sue Me , Sue You Blues " as a " scathing rocker " in which Harrison " forgoes his trademark arid wit for a decidedly more acerbic and direct approach " . To Zeth Lundy of PopMatters , " Sue Me , Sue You Blues " expresses Harrison 's " passive @-@ aggressiveness " . John Metzger views the lyrics as " ridiculously simplistic " and the track as " perhaps , the most bilious song that [Harrison] ever penned " .

AllMusic critic Bruce Eder and Chip Madinger and Mark Easter instead recognise humour in Harrison 's lyrics . Writing for Rough Guides , Chris Ingham views this track and " Try Some , Buy Some " as " wry , reasonable digs at symptoms of what Harrison sees as symptoms of a diseased world " , while Hugh Fielder of Classic Rock magazine recognises the song 's place on its parent album , in that the legal wrangling " explains his retreat from the material world " . Blogcritics ' Chaz Lipp considers " the sinewy ' Sue Me , Sue You Blues ' " to be among the highlights of Material World and a song that " rank [s] right alongside Harrison 's best work " .

Among Harrison biographers , Ian Inglis finds an additional comic element in the use of dobro and , like Leng , sees the do @-@ si @-@ do rhythm as an apt musical metaphor for the changing alliances occurring in the courtroom through the early 1970s . Another author who recognises " a good pinch of humour " in the song , Elliot Huntley describes " Sue Me , Sue You Blues " as an " excellent " track , with a " magnificent steel guitar riff " . Leng praises the performance of all the musicians on the recording , particularly Keltner , and describes it as " one of Harrison 's most accomplished pieces " . " It speaks of a very confident , classy musician near the height of his powers " , Leng writes , while remarking on the contrast between Harrison in 1972 ? 73 and the " resigned figure " he had portrayed in the Beatles ' 1970 documentary film Let It Be .

= = Live performance = =

During an interview midway through Harrison 's 1974 North American tour with Ravi Shankar , band leader Tom Scott described " Sue Me , Sue You Blues " as having been a certain inclusion in the setlist from the start of rehearsals , along with " What Is Life " , " While My Guitar Gently Weeps " and Lennon 's Beatles @-@ era composition " In My Life " . Harrison gave " Sue Me , Sue You Blues " a new musical arrangement , the track " reborn as horn @-@ driven funk " , Leng writes , via the all @-@ American rhythm section of Willie Weeks and Andy Newmark , and Scott 's three @-@ piece horn section . In a feature article for Rolling Stone that otherwise savaged the opening West Coast portion of the Harrison ? Shankar tour , Ben Fong @-@ Torres wrote approvingly of its inclusion while bemoaning the paucity of other " familiar Beatles or Harrison songs " in the setlist .

The tour coincided with speculation about a possible Beatles reunion , as well as an agreement regarding the official dissolution of their partnership , which would be ratified following the receipt of all four members ' signatures in December 1974 . With Starr opting to sign in London , to avoid being subpoenaed by Klein upon entering the United States , Harrison and McCartney provided their signatures in New York on 19 December . Throughout the tour , Harrison changed a line in " Sue Me , Sue You Blues " to reflect the turnaround in his , Lennon 's and Starr 's allegiances over the previous two years ? " Bring your lawyer and I 'll bring Klein " name @-@ checking the common enemy of all four ex @-@ Beatles by 1974 . Instead of a copy of the Bible , as in the studio versions of the song , Harrison now sang " Hold your Gita in your hand " .

Despite his plans for a live album and a concert film , no recording of this or any other Harrison song from the tour has ever received widespread official release . A noted performance of " Sue Me , Sue You Blues " appears on bootlegs from his show at Long Beach Arena , where , Leng writes , " the crowd was buzzing " , so " set [ting] the tone " for a series of successful concerts in America 's Southern states . During this Long Beach performance , on 10 November , Harrison followed his lyric about " find [ing] yourself a new band " with the quip " I think I 've got one of those ! " , reflecting his claim that he was having " too much fun " with his current musicians to consider a Beatles reunion .

= = Personnel = =

George Harrison ? vocals , dobros , backing vocals

Gary Wright ? electric piano

Nicky Hopkins ? piano

Klaus Voormann ? bass

Jim Keltner ? drums