

**MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT ASSEMBLY**

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**WITNESSES TO THE WOUND**

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*A Covenant Investigation into the Exploitation of the Zamar Carriers  
100 Years of the Music Business on Trial  
Report No. 6 of an Ongoing Series*

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# **BIG BILL BROONZY**

1893/1903 – 1958

## ***The Bridge Between Delta and Chicago***

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*One of 17 children of parents born into slavery — recorded hundreds of songs across three decades — no royalties — told Alan Lomax on tape: “I didn’t get no royalties, because I didn’t know nothing about trying to demand for no money” — forced by producers to abandon his authentic sound — opened the door to Chicago’s South Side for Muddy Waters — died of cancer in an ambulance, 1958*

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**NOTE: This report contains primary testimony in the artist’s own words — preserved in the Alan Lomax Collection, Library of Congress**

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March 2026 · Kepha Arcemont, Elder and Founder

## SECTION ONE — THE GIFT: WHO YAHWEH MADE HIM

## Biography: Son of Slaves, Father of Chicago Blues

**William Lee Conley Broonzy was born in 1893 or 1903 — the exact year disputed, even by Broonzy himself** — the son of Frank Broonzy and Mittie Belcher, one of seventeen children. His parents were born into slavery. He was raised in Arkansas, one of the seventeen mouths his parents fed from sharecropped cotton fields. The Mississippi Encyclopedia entry confirms: *"His parents, Frank and Nettie, were sharecroppers who eked out a living from the Delta soil by growing cotton."* This is the foundation. Not a musician's foundation. A laborer's foundation. A family built on the land that broke the people who worked it.

He learned to play the fiddle on a homemade instrument before he was ten years old. By his account he was playing for social and church events as a child. He served in the U.S. Army during World War I, stationed in Europe building roads and bridges — the labor the army assigned to its Black soldiers while white soldiers fought. He told Alan Lomax about this in 1947: the Black veterans built the infrastructure of the European front and came home to a country that met them with the same segregation they had left. He saw what the war cost and what it did not buy.

In 1920 he moved to Chicago and joined the Great Migration. He worked for the Pullman Company. He learned guitar from Papa Charlie Jackson on the Maxwell Street market. By 1927 he was recording for Paramount. Over the next thirty years he recorded on Paramount, Bluebird, Columbia, Vocalion, Okeh, Mercury, Chess, Verve, and Folkways — more than 260 songs documented by his own account, more than 300 copyrighted by other estimates. He was present at every major moment of the blues tradition's development in the 20th century.

**The gift was not only musical.** Broonzy was a connector, a teacher, a builder of community. When Muddy Waters arrived in Chicago in 1943 hoping to break into the music scene, it was Broonzy who gave him the opportunity to open shows at South Side clubs. Muddy Waters paid his respects in 1960 by releasing ***Muddy Waters Sings Big Bill*** — a full album tribute. Broonzy was also one of the first American bluesmen to tour Europe, beginning in 1951, where he introduced the blues to the audiences that would produce the British Invasion — the Rolling Stones, Eric Clapton, John Mayall — who would take American Black music and sell it back to America for millions. **The lineage of profit that runs from Broonzy's European tours to the British blues boom is direct, documented, and uncompensated.**

**He was also a songwriter of conscience.** His protest songs — ***Black, Brown, and White Blues***: *"If you're white, should be all right / If you's brown, stick around / But if you's black, well, brothers, get back, get back, get back"* — were banned by American labels for years. He recorded the song in Europe in 1952 before it was finally released in the United States. John Hammond and Alan Lomax both recognized its importance. The industry recognized its danger. **The covenant musician who speaks the truth about the powerful is always the last one the industry wants on the air.**

◆ *Big Bill Broonzy is the blues musician's blues musician. Not the most famous in this series. Not the one who sold the most records. The one who*

*opened the door for almost everyone else and then told the truth about what happened to him on the way through. When I read his words to Alan Lomax — 'I didn't get no royalties because I didn't know nothing about trying to demand for no money' — I hear every working musician who ever signed a contract they didn't understand because the room with the recording equipment was too important to walk away from. I have been in that room. Every musician reading this has been in that room.*

<b>Born</b>	1893 or 1903 (disputed) — Scott, Mississippi or Lake Dick, Arkansas
<b>Parents</b>	Frank Broonzy and Mittie Belcher — sharecroppers, parents born into slavery. One of 17 children.
<b>Military</b>	U.S. Army, World War I, 1918–19 — stationed in Europe building roads and bridges
<b>Moved to Chicago</b>	1920 — Pullman Company worker; learned guitar from Papa Charlie Jackson
<b>Recording career</b>	1927–1957 — Paramount, Bluebird, Columbia, Vocalion, OKeh, Mercury, Chess, Verve, Folkways
<b>Songs recorded</b>	260+ by his own account; 300+ copyrighted; described as 'hundreds' across three decades
<b>Key contribution</b>	Bridge between Delta country blues and urban Chicago blues; first American bluesman to tour Europe (1951)
<b>Carnegie Hall</b>	December 23, 1938 — Spirituals to Swing concert; filled in for Robert Johnson who had died
<b>Protest songs</b>	Black, Brown and White Blues (banned in US, recorded Europe 1952); When Will I Get to Be Called a Man
<b>Autobiography</b>	Big Bill Blues (1955, Cassell & Co., with Yannick Bruynoghe)
<b>Death</b>	August 14–15, 1958 — cancer — died in ambulance on way to Chicago hospital
<b>Burial</b>	Lincoln Cemetery, Blue Island, Illinois
<b>Recognition</b>	Blues Hall of Fame 1980

## SECTION TWO — THE WOUND: WHAT WAS DONE TO HIM

### The Exploitation — In His Own Words

**This report has a primary source no other report in this series possesses:** Big Bill Broonzy spoke on tape, to the most important American folk music archivist of the 20th century, about what the music industry did to him. The Alan Lomax interviews of 1947 (Decca Studios, New York City, preserved in the Library of Congress American Folklife Center) and 1952 (Paris, preserved in the Association for Cultural Equity archive) contain Broonzy's own testimony about the record industry, about royalties, and about what the industry forced him to do to his music. **These are not secondary sources. They are primary testimony from the artist himself, archived in the Library of Congress.** The covenant research standard requires no stronger witness.

## Testimony One: No Royalties — Because He Did Not Know to Demand Them

*"I didn't get no royalties, because I didn't know nothing about trying to demand for no money, see." — Big Bill Broonzy to Alan Lomax, 1947*

This is the most direct primary testimony in the entire series. He did not say the label refused to pay him. He did not say the contract was unfair. He said: **he did not know he could demand payment.** The system did not need to be overtly coercive in every instance. It needed only to be built on the ignorance of those it extracted from. Broonzy recorded hundreds of songs. He received flat fees. He did not know — as Billie Holiday did not know, as Robert Johnson did not know, as Ma Rainey did not fully know — that there was a mechanism called royalties that entitled him to a share of every copy sold. The labels knew. **The asymmetry of knowledge was the exploitation.** The labels were staffed by businessmen trained in the law. The musicians were trained in their gifts. The system was designed to keep the gap between those two kinds of knowledge as wide as possible.

The History.com account of race records confirms the same economic pattern: *"Though he recorded hundreds of songs in just a decade, responding to a national hunger for black voices and black music, he barely made any money."* Hundreds of songs. National hunger. Barely any money. The formula is consistent across every artist in this series because it was a formula — not an accident, not an individual's bad luck, but an industry structure designed to extract maximum value from the gifted while returning minimum compensation.

## Testimony Two: Forced to Abandon the Authentic Sound

*"I gotta forget what I know, and try to do what he [the producer] tells me." — Big Bill Broonzy to Alan Lomax, Paris 1952 — on the record industry*

The Association for Cultural Equity's archived description of this 1952 Paris interview records what Broonzy told Lomax about the complications of the recording industry: *"Blues musicians are made to play as they are told to stay on the meal ticket."* The producer decided what was commercially viable. The artist produced it or lost the session. Broonzy described having to abandon his authentic creative instincts — *"I gotta forget what I know"* — to satisfy what a label executive thought would sell.

This is a dimension of exploitation that appears in no other report in this series with such direct primary testimony. The financial theft is documented in every report. What

Broonzy adds is the **creative theft** — the systematic pressure on the gifted artist to suppress the authentic expression of the zamar in favor of commercially palatable product. **The covenant musician was not merely underpaid. He was required to muzzle his own gift as a condition of access to the studio.** The Torah's image of the muzzled ox is no longer metaphor. It is Broonzy's own words: ***I gotta forget what I know.***

◆ *That sentence has lived in me since I first read it. 'I gotta forget what I know.' Every musician who has ever been in a recording situation where the producer wants something other than what you carry knows exactly what that means. The pull to compromise — to give them what they want so you can get into the room — is real. It is constant. It is the mechanism by which the industry extracts commercial product while suppressing the covenant gift. Broonzy named it in Paris in 1952. It is still the same pressure in 2026.*

### Testimony Three: Black, Brown, and White Blues — The Song the Industry Refused

*"They say if you's white, should be all right / If you's brown, stick around / But if you's black, well, brothers, get back, get back, get back." — Big Bill Broonzy — Black, Brown, and White Blues (written c. 1945)*

**Big Bill Broonzy wrote one of the most direct protest songs in American music history** and spent years unable to record it domestically because American labels refused it. He told Lomax that he had tried nearly all the companies and none of them wanted it. John Hammond liked it. Alan Lomax liked it. **The label executives did not like it because it told the truth about their industry and their country.** He finally recorded it in Europe in 1952 — ten years after writing it. The song was eventually recorded in the United States, but its decade-long suppression by the domestic recording industry is itself a covenant charge: the gifted musician's prophetic song refused by the gatekeepers who controlled access to the microphone. The 1947 Lomax sessions were so controversial that when they were first published in *Common Ground* magazine in 1948 under the title *"I Got the Blues,"* the recordings themselves were not released as an album for ten years. When United Artists finally issued them in 1959 as *Blues in the Mississippi Night*, Lomax used pseudonyms to protect Broonzy and the other musicians — Memphis Slim and Sonny Boy Williamson. The conversations recorded in those sessions described the lynch system, the prison farms, the levee camps, and the systematic violence that produced the blues. **The truth was too dangerous to release in the country it described.** It was archived in the Library of Congress instead.

### Layer Four: The Second Job, the Foundry, the Janitor Work

Throughout the period when Broonzy was a recognized and respected Chicago blues musician, he held second jobs to survive. The EBSCO Research account documents: *"Although he devoted most of his time to performing on the Chicago blues circuit, Broonzy also held a second job as a laborer in a foundry in order to support his*

wife, Anne, and son, Ellis, born in 1924." The Encyclopedia.com account confirms he worked as a janitor at Iowa State University during another period of his career. This is the pattern the covenant research standard identifies across the entire series: **the artist whose gift feeds the record company's revenue works a second job to feed his own family.** The Levitical model — the covenant community providing for those it commissions to carry the sacred sound — is inverted in every generation of the American music industry. The musician provides the sound. The industry captures the revenue. The musician works a foundry. Broonzy was not a failure. He was one of the most prolific and respected blues artists of his generation. And he worked a foundry.

## Layer Five: The British Invasion and the Uncompensated Legacy

**In 1951, Big Bill Broonzy became one of the first American bluesmen to tour Europe.** His performances in England directly influenced the generation of British musicians who would form the Rolling Stones, the Animals, the Yardbirds, Cream, and the entire British blues movement. Eric Clapton, Keith Richards, and Mick Jagger all cited the American blues tradition — a tradition Broonzy had personally carried to their doorstep — as the foundation of their music.

The Rolling Stones alone have sold over 200 million albums worldwide. Eric Clapton's catalog has generated hundreds of millions in revenue. The British Invasion — which took American Black blues music, performed by white British musicians, and sold it back to American white audiences who would not have listened to the original artists — is one of the most commercially successful appropriations in music history. **Broonzy opened the door to that movement.** He was never compensated for it. He worked a foundry. He died in an ambulance.

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### SECTION THREE — THE THREE WITNESSES (DEVARIM 19:15)

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## Corroboration of the Record

**The primary witness in this report is Big Bill Broonzy himself,** speaking on tape to Alan Lomax in 1947 and 1952. His testimony is preserved in the Alan Lomax Collection at the Library of Congress American Folklife Center (AFC 2004/004) and the Association for Cultural Equity online archive. This is the most direct first-person testimony in the entire series. Two additional independent witnesses corroborate the broader pattern.

**WITNESS One:** *Big Bill Broonzy — direct oral testimony to Alan Lomax, 1947 (Library of Congress, Alan Lomax Collection AFC 2004/004) and 1952 (Association for Cultural Equity, Paris recordings): (1) 'I didn't get no royalties, because I didn't know nothing about trying to demand for no money.' (2) 'I gotta forget what I know, and try to do what he tells me.' (3) The record industry forced blues musicians to 'play as they are told to stay on the meal ticket.' These are primary source audio recordings archived by two independent institutions: the Library of Congress and the Association for Cultural Equity.*

**WITNESS Two:** *History.com, 'How Race Records Turned Black Music into Big Business' (sourcing HISTORY editorial team with academic review): 'Though [Broonzy] recorded*

*hundreds of songs in just a decade, responding to a national hunger for black voices and black music, he barely made any money.' Confirms the systemic exclusion of Black artists from ASCAP, the absence of enforceable royalty agreements, and the flat-fee extraction model applied uniformly across the race records era.*

**WITNESS Three:** Association for Cultural Equity ([culturalequity.org](http://culturalequity.org)) — the institution founded by Alan Lomax to preserve his archive: documents Broonzy's career spanning three decades; confirms he copyrighted more than 300 songs; confirms he was forced to relearn his own older songs in the 1950s from recordings because the industry had required him to abandon them; confirms he held a second job as a laborer because musical income was insufficient; confirms his 1938 Carnegie Hall appearance (filling in for Robert Johnson); confirms his role introducing the blues to European audiences whose musicians would create the British blues movement.

Additional corroboration: Encyclopedia Britannica, Encyclopedia.com, EBSCO Research Starters, Mississippi Encyclopedia (University of Mississippi Press), and Encyclopedia of Arkansas (University of Arkansas) all independently confirm the core biographical and career facts.

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## SECTION FOUR — THE COVENANT ANALYSIS: WHAT THE TORAH SAYS

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### The Torah Charges — Applied to Big Bill Broonzy

#### Charge One: Exploitation Through Manufactured Ignorance — Vayikra 19:14

***"You shall not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind, but you shall fear your Elohim: I am Yahweh."***

— Vayikra (Leviticus) 19:14

This verse extends the covenant's protection to those who cannot hear or see the obstacle being placed before them. Broonzy's own words define the mechanism of his exploitation: ***"I didn't know nothing about trying to demand for no money."*** He was not ignorant of music. He was not ignorant of life. He was ignorant of the legal and contractual mechanisms that entitled him to share in the commercial value of what he created. **The labels knew. They were staffed by lawyers and businessmen trained in copyright and contract law.** They relied on the musicians not knowing. The Torah calls placing an obstacle before the one who cannot see it a covenant violation. The music industry's deliberate withholding of information about royalties from artists who had no access to independent legal counsel is ***michshol lifnei iver*** — a stumbling block before the blind. Not metaphor. Mechanism. The same mechanism documented in every report in this series, from Joplin's one-cent contract to Holiday's \$11 royalty check.

#### Charge Two: Forced Suppression of the Gift — Devarim 25:4

***"You shall not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain."***

— Devarim (Deuteronomy) 25:4

Broonzy's direct testimony: ***"I gotta forget what I know, and try to do what he tells me."*** The producer's commercial preference overrode the artist's authentic creative expression. The covenant musician was required to suppress the genuine zamar to produce commercially palatable product. **This is the muzzled ox in the clearest possible form** — not merely underpaid while doing the work, but required to do a different work than the one the gift demanded. The ox is not just prevented from eating the grain. It is required to tread a different grain than the one it was bred to process. Broonzy was a blues musician of the first order forced to produce what the label thought would sell. ***I gotta forget what I know.*** The Torah names this. The covenant does not permit it.

### Charge Three: The Wages of the Son of Slaves — Vayikra 25:39–41

***"If your brother becomes poor beside you and sells himself to you, you shall not make him serve as a slave: he shall be with you as a hired worker and as a sojourner. He shall serve with you until the year of the jubilee. Then he shall go out from you, he and his children with him, and go back to his own clan and return to the possession of his fathers."***

— Vayikra (Leviticus) 25:39-41

Big Bill Broonzy's parents were born into slavery. He was one of seventeen children of sharecroppers on Delta soil. He moved to Chicago and worked a foundry while performing on the blues circuit. The Torah's covenant framework for economic relationships explicitly prohibits the reduction of the poor man to a condition of permanent bondage — and prescribes the Jubilee as the structural release from debt and dispossession. **The music industry had no Jubilee.** The flat fee contract that purchased Broonzy's songs in perpetuity was the opposite of the Jubilee principle: not the restoration of the worker's inheritance, but the permanent alienation of it. He recorded 260 songs. The labels owned them all. There was no year of release. No return to possession. The son of slaves had his creative inheritance captured by a contract he did not fully understand, in a language of law he had never been taught. **The Torah's economic structure was designed precisely to prevent this.** The music industry was designed precisely to enable it.

### Charge Four: The Suppressed Prophetic Song — Amos 5:10–12

***"They hate him who reproves in the gate, and they abhor him who speaks the truth. Therefore because you trample on the poor and you exact taxes of grain from him, you have built houses of hewn stone, but you shall not dwell in them... For I know how many are your transgressions and how great are your sins — you who afflict the righteous, who take a bribe, and turn aside the needy in the gate."***

— Amos (Amos) 5:10-12

Black, Brown, and White Blues was suppressed by the American recording industry for approximately ten years. Broonzy told Lomax he had tried nearly every company and none of them wanted it. **The prophetic song that named the truth about racial hierarchy in America was rejected by the gatekeepers of the very industry that profited from the labor of the people the song described.** The prophet Amos speaks directly to this: those who *hate the one who reproves in the gate* — who silence the truth-speaker at the point of public access — are in covenant violation. The record label that refused Black, Brown, and White Blues was not protecting its artists. It was protecting its relationships with the white audiences whose consumption it depended on. **It chose profit over truth. The Torah names this choice and condemns it.**

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## SECTION FIVE — THE LIVING WITNESS: KEPHA ARCEMONT, 2026

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### A Blues Guitarist Reads the Primary Record

**There is a moment in the 1947 Lomax sessions that has never left me since I encountered it.** Three blues musicians — Broonzy, Memphis Slim, Sonny Boy Williamson — sitting in a studio after a Town Hall concert, talking with Alan Lomax about the blues. And Lomax writes about what they described: the poverty of Black rural life, the Mississippi work camps, the penitentiary at the end of the road. The conversations were so dangerous that the album was delayed ten years. Lomax used pseudonyms when he finally released it in 1959 to protect the artists and their families. **The truth these men spoke was so dangerous it had to be hidden for a decade.** That is the covenant musician in the prophetic tradition: speaking what must be said, at personal risk, to whoever will record it for the permanent account.

◆ *I have been playing guitar since I was fourteen. I am a former New Orleans firefighter. I served my community with my body for years before an injury ended that service. Big Bill Broonzy served his community with his music for thirty years, worked a foundry to pay his bills, recorded hundreds of songs with no royalties, had his most important protest song refused for a decade, toured Europe to introduce American blues to the musicians who would make fortunes from it, and died in an ambulance on the way to a Chicago hospital. I carry his lineage every time I play. The Peace of Blues, The Kepha Arcemont Experiment — everything I do stands on the foundation that men like Broonzy built at personal cost. The covenant requires me to say that plainly.*

The detail that stops me every time is the foundry. He is one of the most respected blues artists in Chicago. He is performing at the clubs that are defining the urban blues sound that will produce Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf. He is the man Muddy Waters credits with giving him his first platform. And he is working a foundry to pay his bills. Because the music that generated commercial revenue for every label he recorded on did not generate enough income for him to live on. **The gap between what the gift created and what the creator received was so extreme that the foundry was**

**necessary.** This is not a biographical footnote. This is the covenant indictment in its most concrete form.

◆ *'I gotta forget what I know.' I have been asked to play things that are not what I carry. I have been in rooms where the commercial preference of the person holding the microphone conflicted with what the gift in me wanted to do. Every time I chose the gift over the commercial preference, I paid a price. I understand what Broonzy was describing. The difference is that I have enough legal awareness to protect my catalog. He didn't. They relied on that. The system was built on it.*

Black, Brown, and White Blues. *"If you's white, should be all right. If you's brown, stick around. But if you's black, well, brothers, get back."* He wrote that. He tried to record it in America for years. Every label refused it. He finally recorded it in Europe. **The covenant musician who carries the prophetic truth is always most unwelcome at the gate of the institution that profits from the community his truth describes.** Amos saw this. Yirmeyahu saw this. Broonzy lived it in 1945 America. The pattern does not change. The covenant indictment of those who hold the gate applies in every generation.

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## SECTION SIX — THE COVENANT VERDICT: THE JUDGMENT OF YAHWEH

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### Yahweh's Record on Big Bill Broonzy

**The charges in this report are established by the most powerful primary source in the entire series:** the artist's own sworn testimony, preserved on tape, in his own voice, in the Library of Congress. No intermediary. No interpretation required. Big Bill Broonzy told Alan Lomax in 1947 what the industry did to him. He told Lomax again in 1952 what the industry forced him to do to his music. The covenant research standard is not only satisfied — it is surpassed.

The charges:

**One:** Hundreds of recordings with no royalties — because he did not know he could demand them. Vayikra 19:14 — stumbling block before the one who cannot see. Vayikra 19:13 — wages withheld from the hired worker. Established by his own testimony.

**Two:** Forced to suppress authentic creative expression to satisfy producer's commercial preferences. Devarim 25:4 — the muzzled ox. Established by his own testimony: 'I gotta forget what I know.'

**Three:** Son of slaves, worked a foundry while performing, denied the inheritance his gift created. Vayikra 25:39–41 — the covenant prohibition on permanent economic bondage. Established.

**Four:** Prophetic song suppressed by the industry for a decade. Amos 5:10–12 — hatred of the one who reproves at the gate. Established.

**Five:** Introduced the blues to Europe, opening the door to the British blues movement that generated hundreds of millions in revenue — without compensation. Vayikra 19:13 — the fruit of the laborer's work captured by another. Established.

**YAHWEH'S COVENANT VERDICT ON THE TREATMENT OF BIG BILL BROONZY:** The son of slaves, one of seventeen children, who built the bridge between Delta and Chicago blues, who opened the door to the British blues movement that made fortunes for white musicians, who copyrighted more than 300 songs and received no royalties because he did not know to demand them, who was forced by producers to suppress his own authentic creative expression, who worked a foundry to feed his family while his recordings fed the labels, who had his prophetic protest song refused for a decade by the gatekeepers who profited from the people it described, who died of cancer in an ambulance — every one of these acts stands in violation of Vayikra 19:13, Vayikra 19:14, Devarim 25:4, Vayikra 25:39-41, and Amos 5:10-12. The covenant verdict is entered. It rests on primary testimony preserved in the Library of Congress. It does not expire.

His autobiography — *Big Bill Blues*, published 1955 — ends with his own words about how he wanted to be remembered: *"When you write about me please don't say I'm a jazz musician. Don't say I'm a musician or a guitar player — just write Big Bill was a well-known blues singer and player and has recorded 260 blues songs from 1925 up till 1952; he was a happy man when he was drunk and playing with women; he was liked by all the blues singers."*

**Yahweh's accounting is not constrained by what the industry wrote about him.**

The covenant record includes every song he was told to forget. Every royalty he did not know to demand. Every note of Black, Brown, and White Blues that every label refused. Every year he worked the foundry. Every European audience he introduced to the blues that produced fortunes for musicians who came after him. **He was liked by all the blues singers.** He should have been compensated by all the labels that held his work. He was not. The judgment stands.

***"Yahweh executes justice for the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry. Yahweh sets the prisoners free; Yahweh opens the eyes of the blind. Yahweh lifts up those who are bowed down; Yahweh loves the righteous. Yahweh watches over the sojourners; He upholds the widow and the fatherless, but the way of the wicked He brings to ruin."***

— Tehillim (Psalms) 146:7–9

**He was the sojourner** — the traveler who moved from the Delta to Chicago to the South Side clubs to Carnegie Hall to Paris, playing wherever the rooms would have him.

**Yahweh watches over the sojourner.** The contract men who held his catalog did not.

The covenant record of Big Bill Broonzy is complete. The judgment has been spoken.

**Selah.**

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#### SERIES NOTES

**Next in series:** Report No. 7 — Big Mama Thornton (1926–1984). The woman who wrote and recorded Hound Dog in 1952, received zero royalties when Elvis Presley

covered it in 1956, and died of a heart attack in a boarding house room with \$2,000 to her name after a career spanning three decades.

**The series roster:** Report 1: Scott Joplin. Report 2: Ma Rainey. Report 3: Bessie Smith. Report 4: Billie Holiday. Report 5: Robert Johnson. Report 6: Big Bill Broonzy. Report 7: Big Mama Thornton (pending). Continuing: Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Ruth Brown, Sam Cooke, Mary Wells, James Brown, Curtis Mayfield, Sam Moore, and the hip-hop era to 2026.

**Research standard:** All charges require a minimum of two to three independent authoritative sources per Devarim 19:15. The primary testimony of the artist is the highest quality source in the series.

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***Selah.***

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*Miqdash Bethel Covenant Assembly · Pearl River, Louisiana · March 2026  
miqdashbethel@gmail.com · Doctrinal Authority: The Tanakh Alone*