

TUNE INTO ENGLISH

The Rolling Stones' (I Can't Get No) Satisfaction

Frutto della confusione onirica di Richards e dell'immaginario poetico ricco di doppi sensi e allusioni sessuali di Jagger, questo grande successo della band britannica è una critica deliberatamente ambigua alla cultura statunitense.

The distinctive guitar riff of what is arguably¹ The Rolling Stones' signature song², (*I Can't Get No*) *Satisfaction*, was written by the British band's guitarist Keith Richards in his sleep. He woke during the night with the idea in his head, quickly recording it on a portable cassette player. When he played it back the next day, he heard a further³ forty minutes of snoring⁴! He played the riff for singer Mick Jagger who fleshed it out⁵ in just ten minutes with lyrics that, as he later told *Rolling Stone* magazine, expressed his frustration with "America, its advertising syndrome, the constant barrage⁶." The band recorded the track while on tour in America, but in a folk style that Richards was unhappy with. Two days later they cut⁷ a rock version in a style that became synonymous with the Rolling Stones' music. Richards wanted to use a horn section⁸ for the riff, but instead settled⁹ for a fuzz¹⁰ guitar effect, pioneering a new sound. The title and hook¹¹ of the song is grammatically incorrect; the double negative would mean the line literally meant 'I can get satisfaction'. However, the double negative used to reiterate a negative is often used in English slang¹². Lyrically the verses are mostly in the present continuous, giving a sense of the singer's irritation. The line "tryin' to make some girl" caused



controversy, although a far more problematic reference is actually "on a losing streak¹³" (1960s slang for menstruation). The song was released in the US in June 1965 and ten weeks later in Britain when the band returned home. It became the band's first US number one (and fourth number one in the UK), propelling them to superstardom¹⁴. In the same interview with *Rolling Stone* magazine released in 1995, Jagger acknowledged that this song "made the Rolling Stones¹⁵" with its catchy¹⁶ title, catchy riff and great sound. As the veteran rock star stated, it "captures a spirit of the times... alienation." ☹



SCAN, READ & LISTEN   08

LOWER INTERMEDIATE 

GLOSSARY

- 1 **arguably:** probabilmente
- 2 **signature song:** canzone tipica
- 3 **further:** altri
- 4 **to snore:** russare
- 5 **to flesh out:** arricchire
- 6 **barrage:** sbarramento
- 7 **to cut:** incidere
- 8 **horn section:** sezione di fiati
- 9 **to settle:** accordare
- 10 **fuzz:** tipo di distorsione (*lett. peluria*)
- 11 **hook:** motivo
- 12 **slang:** gergo
- 13 **losing streak:** serie di sconfitte
- 14 **superstardom:** superpopolarità
- 15 **to make someone:** rendere famoso
- 16 **catchy:** orecchiabile

'cause: an abbreviation of 'because'.

to fire: to ignite, to become inspired with enthusiasm.

how white my shirts should be: Jagger is referring to an advert for a laundry product.

ridin' 'round: many songs not only omit the final 'g' in gerunds but also the initial 'a' in 'around' as it is easier to sing.

to make some girl: if one listens carefully it seems that Jagger actually sings 'plate some girl', 60s slang for oral sex.

I can't get no satisfaction
I can't get no satisfaction
'Cause I try, and I try, and I try, and I try

I can't get no, I can't get no
When I'm driving in my car
When a man comes on the radio
He's telling me more and more
About some useless information
Supposed to fire my imagination

I can't get no, oh, no, no, no, hey, hey, hey
That's what I say
I can't get no satisfaction
I can't get no satisfaction
'Cause I try, and I try, and I try, and I try

I can't get no, I can't get no
When I'm watchin' my TV
And a man comes on and tells me

How white my shirts can be
But, he can't be a man 'cause
he doesn't smoke
the same cigarettes as me

I can't get no, oh, no, no, no, hey, hey, hey
That's what I say
I can't get no satisfaction
I can't get no girl reaction
'Cause I try, and I try, and I try, and I try

I can't get no, I can't get no
When I'm ridin' 'round the world
And I'm doin' this and I'm signin' that

And I'm tryin' to make some girl, who tells me
Baby, better come back maybe next week
Can't you see I'm on a losing streak?

I can't get no, oh, no, no, no, hey, hey, hey
That's what I say
I can't get no, I can't get no

I can't get no satisfaction, no satisfaction
No satisfaction, no satisfaction
I can't get no

I can't get no satisfaction: a double negative, grammatically this means the opposite, 'I can get satisfaction'. Songs often use double negatives for the rhythm.

he doesn't smoke the same cigarettes as me: this is a reference to the Marlboro man, an image used to advertise cigarettes.

doin'/signin': songs often omit the final 'g' in gerunds, as it is easier to sing.

Scan this QR code with your smartphone or tablet and listen to the official song on YouTube while reading the lyrics.

SCAN & WATCH



Tune into English  Fergal Kavanagh runs the website www.tuneintoenglish.com, the web's largest free resource for learning English through pop music.