

## John Lee Hooker: Cook with the Hook – Live In 1974

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By: Rick J Bowen

### John Lee Hooker Cook with the Hook – Live In 1974 (MVD Visual)

A real treat for serious blues fans, "Cook with the Hook Live In 1974" has made its way to DVD. Unearthed from the archives is black and white footage of blues master John Lee Hooker backed by the four-piece Coast To Coast blues band performing the headliner spot at a mini festival called "Down In The Dumps" in the Boston suburb of Garner, Massachusetts, July 6th, 1974. The concert was the first of what was supposed to be a series of events held on the city's reclaimed landfill and was filmed for local **cable** access by Robert Boyd, a pioneer of the genre.

The short set of only six songs by Hooker, including an encore medley, was shot on three cameras with creative flair for the time, including rhythmic camera switches, fisheye shots and dramatic zooms. The grainy footage gives us a glimpse back in time to a simpler era when outdoor festivals were more like a backyard party with the band playing on a flatbed truck with the amps cranked up and the crowd jumping and shouting for more.

Hooker humbly takes the stage and performs the first four songs seated in a folding chair, slowly coaxing the band along with his Gibson guitar, signature sunglasses and soul man hat. It begins with "It Serves You Right to Suffer" and builds to classics "Boom Boom" and "Whiskey & Women," a mixture of heavy shuffle and stomping rock. Hooker then takes the mic in hand and steps up to lead the band in a frenetic and powerful "Boogie Chilin," featuring the riff that ZZ Top would later turn into "La Grange." Hooker declares "nothing but the best, and later for the rest," then improvises lines from a half dozen other songs over the relentless pulse of the band. Sadly, the band is not credited anywhere on the film, and we are left only to guess who these early monster **shredders** were.

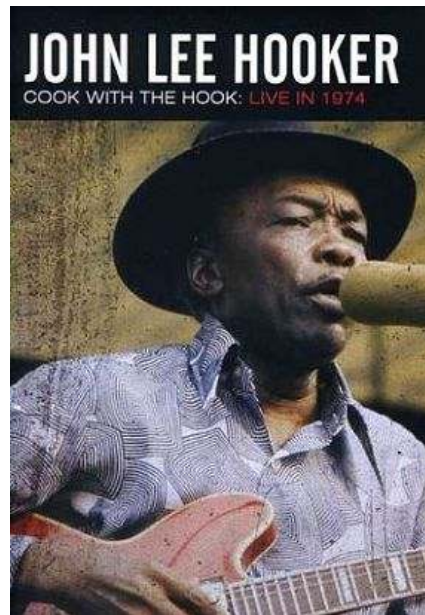
What this footage lacks in audio and video quality is made up for with the ability for us to see such a seminal performer at a time when he was influencing would-be superstars worldwide with his sheer presence and personification of cool.

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