

Legal Illegal

Ewan MacColl

Ewan MacColl & Peggy Seeger - Legal Illegal

C **G** **C**
Every time you pick up a newspaper
F **C** **G7**
Every time you turn on the TV
F **C** **F** **C**
You can bet your old boots that at some point you ll see
G **F** **G7**
A high ranking copper or else an MP
C **G** **F** **C**
Calling on all who are British and free
G7 **C**
To stand up and defend law and order

It s illegal to rip off a payroll
It s illegal to hold up a train
But it s legal to rip off a million or two
That comes from the labour that other folks do
To plunder the many on behalf of the few
Is a thing that is perfectly legal

It s illegal to kill off a landlord
Or to trespass upon his estate
But to charge a high rent for a slum is OK
To condemn 2 adults and 3 children to stay
In a hovel that s rotten with damp and decay
Is a thing that is perfectly legal

If your job turns you into a zombie
Then it s legal to feel some despair
But don t be aggressive that is if you re smart
And for Christ s sake don t upset the old apple cart
Remember the boss has your interests at heart
And it grieves him to see you unhappy

If you fashion a bomb in your kitchen
You re guilty of breaking the law
But a bloody great nuclear plant is OK
Though plutonium processing hastens the day
When this tiny little isle may be blasted away
Nonetheless it is perfectly legal

It s illegal if you are a Gypsy
To camp by the side of the road

But it s proper and right for the rich and the great
To live in a mansion or own an estate
That was got from the people by pillage and rape
That s what they call a tradition

It s illegal to carve up your missus
Or put poison in your old man s tea
But poison the rivers, the seas and the skies
And poison the mind of a nation with lies
If it s done in the interest of free enterprise
Then it s proper and perfectly legal

It s legal to join a trade union
And to picket is one of your rights
But don t be offensive when scabs cross the line
Be nice to the coppers and keep this in mind
To picket effectively that is a crime
Worse than if you had murdered your mother

C **G** **C**
It s legal to sing on the telly
F **C** **G7**
But they make bloody sure that you don t
F **C** **F** **C**
If you sing about racists and fascists and creeps
G **F** **G7**
And thieves in high places that live off the weak
C **G** **F** **C**
And those who are selling us right up the creek
C
The twisters, the takers, the comen, the fakers
G7 **C**
The whole bloody gang of exploiters!