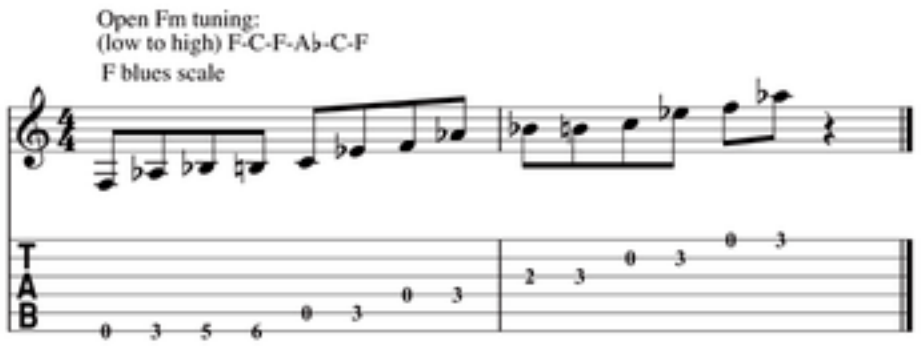
"If You Love Me Like You Say" Albert Collins

By Jason Shadrick

There is a long lineage of Texas bluesmen that have influenced nearly every string-bender today. From Johnny Winter to Stevie Ray Vaughan and his brother Jimmie, many Texas-bred guitar slingers have made a name for themselves and introduced the whole world to the sound of Lone Star blues. Growing up in Houston, Albert Collins developed one of the most unique playing styles around. Guitarists such as Jonny Lang and Gary Moore count Collins as an important influence. During a European tour in 1993 Collins fell ill and was diagnosed with lung cancer—he passed away shortly afterwards.

Albert Collins capos his open-tuned Fender Telecaster at the ninth fret.
Photo by Dean Messina / Frank White Photo Agency.

Fig. 1



TUNING AND CAPO

Albert Collins had a stinging, biting tone—one reason why he was nicknamed "The Iceman"—and played in an unusual tuning, especially for a Texas bluesman. Collins tuned his guitar in open F minor (F–C–F–A♭–C–F) and it gave him a unique view of the fretboard (one we will get into later). In addition to the open tuning, he employed a capo, usually at the seventh fret. This was likely a technique Collins picked up during his formative years—many of the Gulf Coast guitar players he listened to while growing up made use of capos.

Gtr. 1 in the transcription is written in open E minor tuning, up a half step. This was done largely for readability since the names of the 6th, 3rd, 2nd, and 1st strings are the same as standard tuning. The chord symbols in parentheses indicate the chord shapes used relative to the capo while the symbols above show the actual harmony of the tune.

A NEW VIEW OF THE FRETBOARD

Once you have your guitar tuned up to open F minor, it quickly becomes clear that you will need to throw out all of your old chord shapes and licks. Let's begin by looking at a simple fingering for a blues scale as shown in **Fig. 1**. The fingering shown is for the F blues scale, but you can easily transpose this to other keys by using a capo. For example, with the capo on the seventh fret (just like Albert), this same fingering becomes a C blues scale. To really get your fingers—and ears—around this new scale fingering, I would recommend creating a simple loop of a C blues progression and beginning to explore the scale. In no time you will be creating new ways to play your normal "go-to" licks in addition to finding new phrases and sounds.

Now that we have some basic blues guitar vocabulary in this new tuning, it's time to get our rhythm chops together. Collins didn't play a lot of traditional chord voicings; he preferred to use partial chords and figures to fill out the harmony. A great example of this begins on

DIAL TONE

What He Used

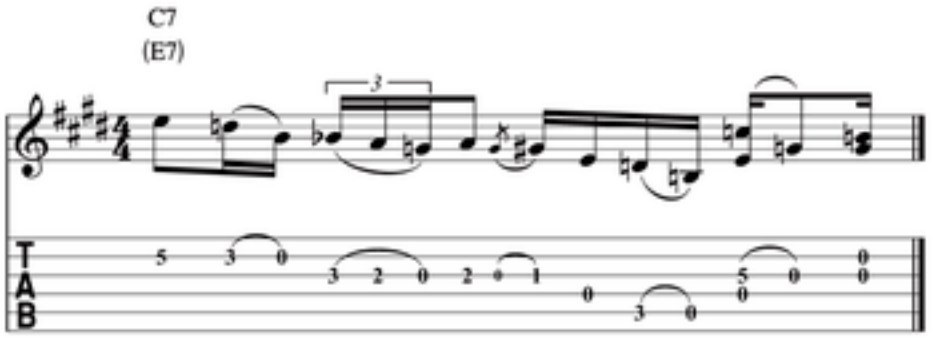
For most of his career, Collins used his trusty '66 Fender Telecaster. His Tele had a stock pickup in the bridge and a humbucker in the neck position. When it came to effects and amps, he was a bare-bones type of player and plugged directly into two Fender Quad Reverb 4x12 combo amps.

How to Get the Sound

To cop Collins' tone, there are a few essential items: a Tele-style guitar, a loud amp and your fingers. The most important part of the sound is the attack that Collins used. Not being a fan of picks, he plucked, pushed and snapped his strings onto the fretboard in order to create his "icy" tone. For the guitar, any solidbody with a single-coil in the bridge will work. Try looking for a guitar with a maple fretboard, as this will also help get you close to the tone. Fender amps are loud and clean, and Collins cranked them to the point that they began to break up. Plug into a Super Reverb or Twin Reverb for the best results.

Fig. 2

Open Em tuning, up 1/2 step, Capo VII:
(low to high) F-C-F-A♭ -C-F



the sixth page of the transcription during the Saxophone Solo. When deciding what notes to play in a partial voicing, the most essential notes are the third and seventh of the chord. These two notes most accurately describe the type and quality of the chord.

In the blues, you mainly deal with 7th-type chords, which means that the distance between the major third and dominant seventh is a *tritone*, or flatted fifth interval. This mysterious, and sometimes "devilish" interval allows for some easy chord changes when it comes to the blues. As you can see in the example, the shapes for the I, IV and V chords are all within a three-fret span. Simply slide the grip for the I chord down a fret and you have the dominant seventh and major third of the IV chord. Move up one fret from the I chord and it functions as a V chord. Once these two notes are in place, experiment with adding extensions (9th, 11th or 13th) above them.

THE GUITAR SOLO

Collins' begins his first solo with some *hammer-ons from nowhere*. This technique is where you hammer-on a note with your fretting hand without striking the string with your picking hand. This adds to the percussive feel of Collins' style and gives the notes some bite. When the IV chord comes around, Collins lays on a series of whole-step bends and really squeezes everything he can out of these notes. One thing to watch out for when bending with a capo is that your string doesn't slip underneath the capo and throw your guitar out of tune.

At the beginning of the second chorus, there are some double stops played on the first and second strings separated rhythmically by a B note played on the third string. Moving some of the notes on top keeps the excitement going. Collins goes back for more juicy bends over the IV chord before playing a cool chromatic blues scale phrase, shown in **Fig. 2**. Notice the use of the B♭ (the "blue" note) in beat two and the minor third to major third grace note hammer-on at the start of beat three.

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- Get Albert Collins tab at guitarinstructor.com
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If You Love Me Like You Say

Words and Music by Little Johnny Taylor

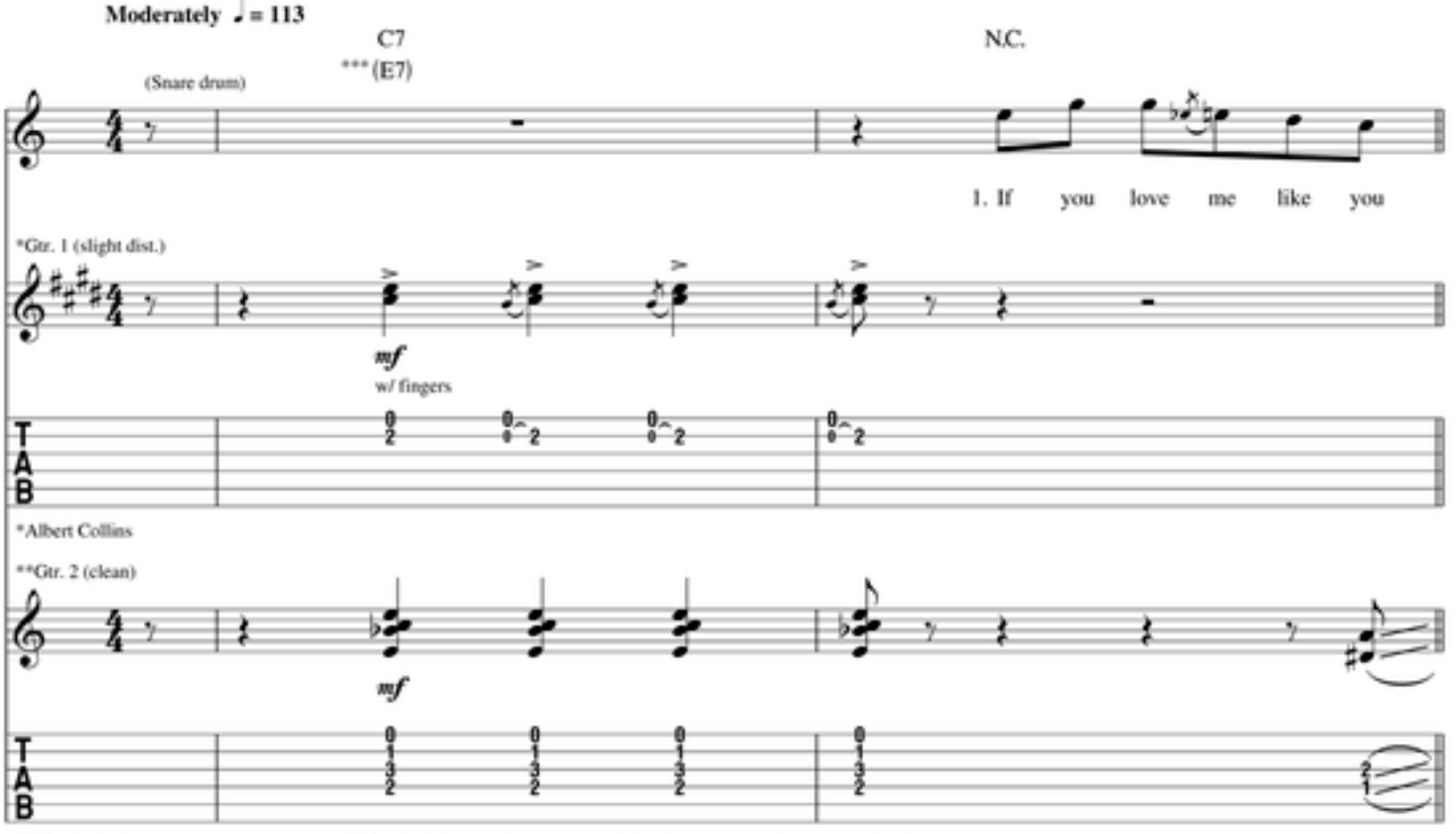
from Albert Collins - *Frostbite*

Transcribed by Pete Billmann
Guitars: Albert Collins
Marvin Jackson

Gtrs. 1 & 3: Open Em tuning, up 1/2 step, Capo VII:
(low to high) F-C-F-A♭-C-F

Intro

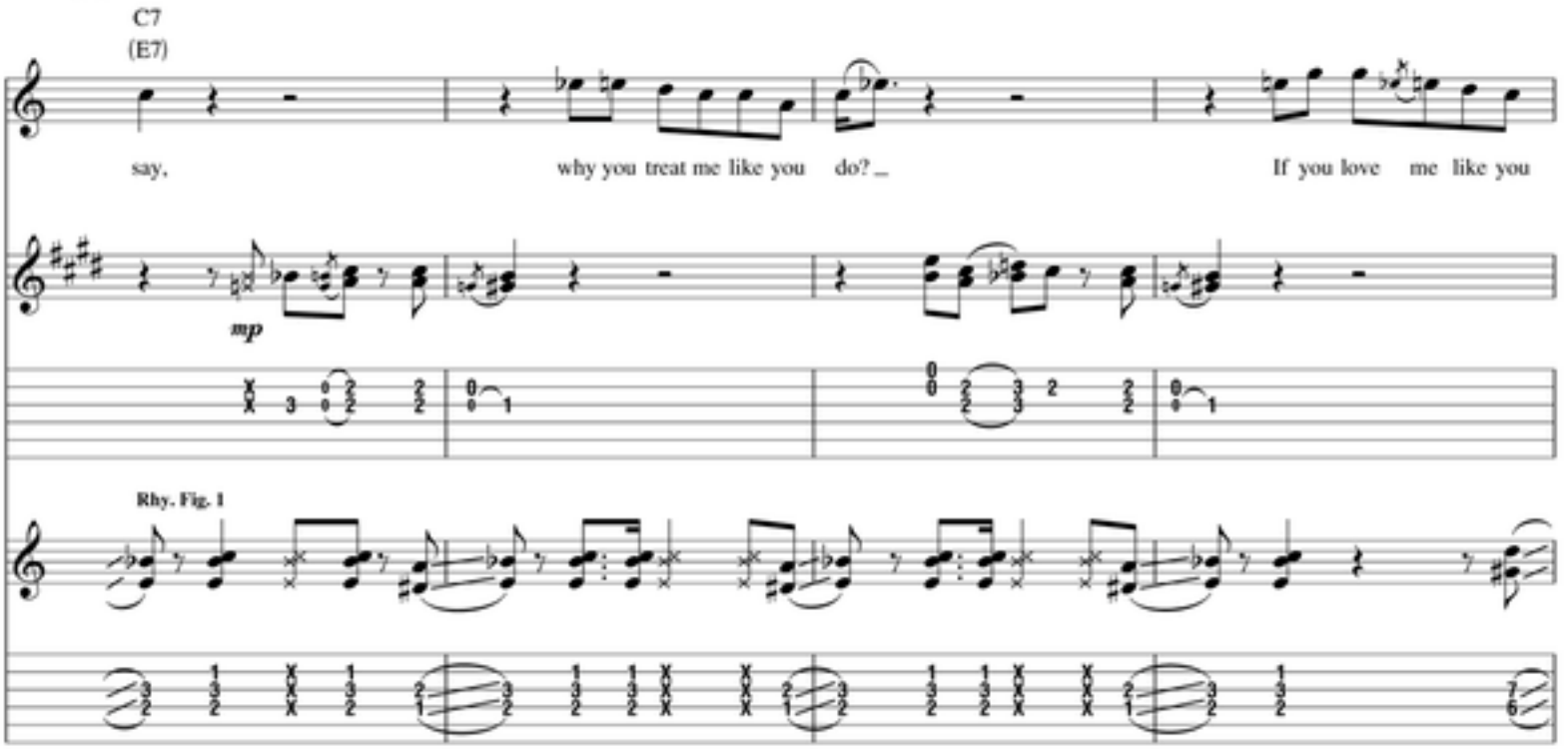
Moderately ♩ = 113



**Marvin Jackson

***Symbols in parentheses represent chord names respective to capoed guitar.
Symbols above reflect actual sounding chords. Capoed fret is "0" in tab.
Chord symbols reflect overall harmony.

Verse



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F7
(A7)

C7
(E7)

say, ba - by, why you treat me like you do? _ Well, I ain't no fool. _

G13
(B13)

G♭13
(B♭13)

F13
(A13)

C7
(E7)

N.C.

___ I'm cool _ I know the rule. _ 2. Said you'd nev - er run a -

End Rhy. Fig. 1

Verse

Gtr. 2: w/ Rhy. Fig. 1

C7
(E7)

round, said you'd nev - er stay out late. Said you'd nev - er run a -

Gtr. 1

IF YOU LOVE ME LIKE YOU SAY

F7 (A7) | C7 (E7)

round, ba - by. | Said you'd nev-er stay out late. | Let me tell you, pret-ty

G13 (B13) | G♭13 (B♭13) | F13 (A13) | C7 (E7) | N.C.

babe, | I got__ to set you straight. | 3. If you love me like you

let ring - - - - - - - - - - -|

Verse

Gtr. 2: w/ Rhy. Fig. 1

C7 (E7)

say, yeah, _ yeah, yeah, | why you treat me like you do? | If you love me like you

F7 (A7) | C7 (E7)

say, ba - by, | why you treat me like you do? _ | Well, I ain't no fool. _

G13 (B13) | G♭13 (B♭13) | F13 (A13) | C7 (E7) | N.C.

I'm cool, I know the rule.

Gtr. 1

*Gtr. 3 (slight dist.)

w/ fingers

*Albert Collins

Guitar Solo

Gtr. 1 tacet
Gtr. 2: w/ Rhy. Fig. 1 (1st 10 meas.)

C7
(E7)

Gtr. 3

1/4

F7
(A7)

IF YOU LOVE ME LIKE YOU SAY

C7
(E7)

1/2

P.M.

G13
(B13)

G♭13
(B♭13)

F13
(A13)

C7
(E7)

Gtr. 3

Gtr. 2

Gtr. 2: w/ Rhy. Fig. 1

C7
(E7)

Gtr. 3

F7
(A7)

C7
(E7)

G13
(B13)

G♭13
(B♭13)

F13
(A13)

C7
(E7)

N.C.

Saxophone Solo

Gtr. 2: w/ Rhy. Fig. 1 (2 times)

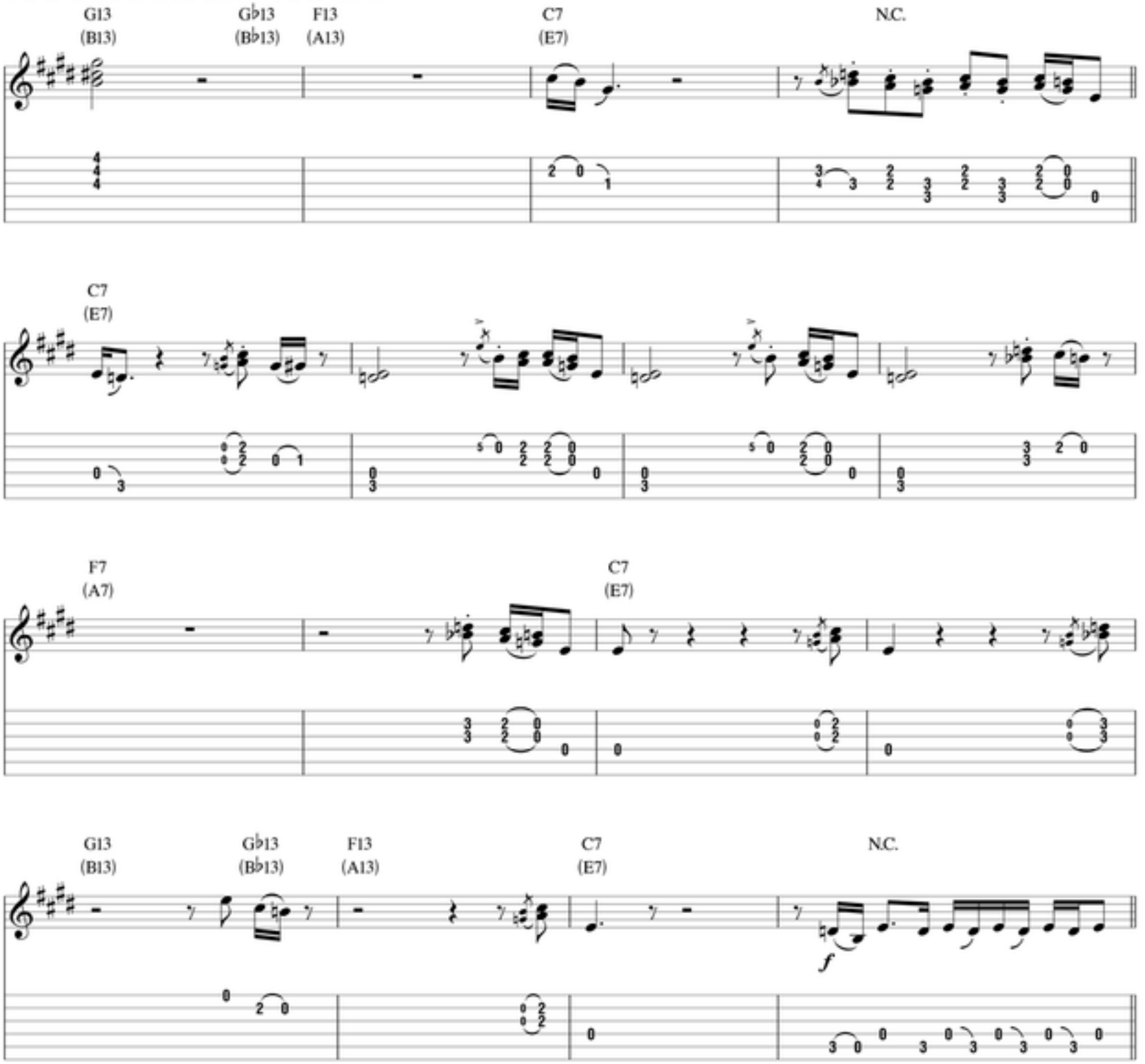
C7
(E7)

mf

F7
(A7)

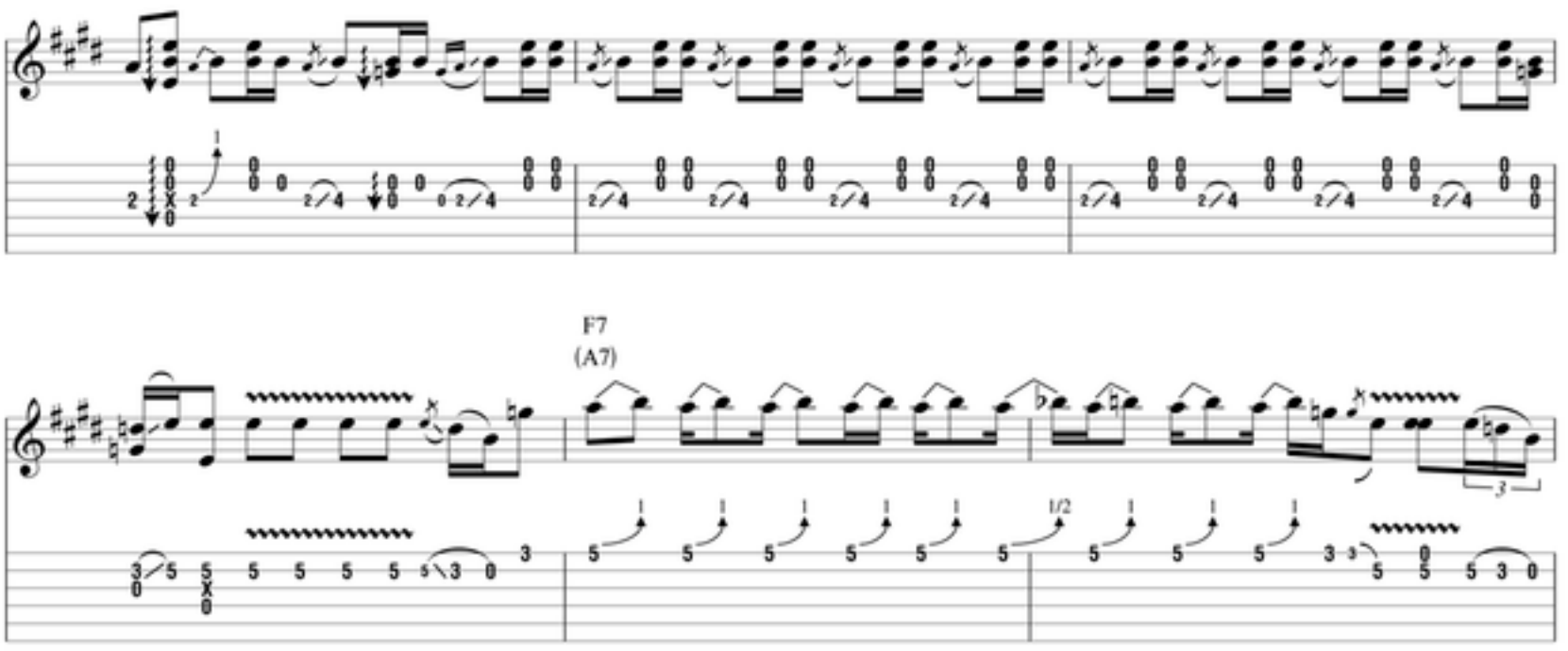
C7
(E7)

IF YOU LOVE ME LIKE YOU SAY



Guitar Solo

Gtr. 2: w/ Rhy. Fig. 1



C7
(E7)

G13
(B13)

G♭13
(B♭13)

F13
(A13)

C7
(E7)

N.C.

4. If you love me like you

Verse

Gtr. 2: w/ Rhy. Fig. 1 (1st 8 meas.)
Gtr. 3 tacet

C7
(E7)

say, yeah, yeah, yeah, why you treat me like you do? If you love me like you

Gtr. 1

mp

F7
(A7)

C7
(E7)

say, ba - by, why you treat me like you do? Well, I ain't no fool.

let ring -

IF YOU LOVE ME LIKE YOU SAY

G13 (B13) | G♭13 (B♭13) | F13 (A13) | C7 (E7) | N.C.

I'm cool, I know the rule. Well, yeah, yeah,

Gtr. 1

let ring - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

Gtr. 2

Rhy. Fig. 2 **End Rhy. Fig. 2**

Outro Tag

Gtr. 2: w/ Rhy. Fig. 2

G13 (B13) | G♭13 (B♭13) | F13 (A13) | C7 (E7) | N.C.

yeah, I'm cool, I know the rule. Well, yeah, yeah,

Gtr. 3

let ring -|

G13 (B13) | G♭13 (B♭13) | F13 (A13) | C7 (E7) | N.C.

yeah, I'm cool, I know the rule. Yeah!

Gtr. 1

p

Gtr. 2