

ROBBEN FORD



BLUES

FOR GUITAR

music, tablature
and analysis



The first 48 bars (Hotlines 1-19) though broken up into lines of 2, 3 and 4 bars, are actually a series of four 12 bar Blues progressions and can be played that way. The idea is to give you some sense of flow, and also help learn the form of 12 bar Blues.

HOTLINE # 1

The opening line here is a classic blues line. Observe the jump from the first Bb eighth note on the E string to the second one on the B string. Subtle changes like this are very important in Blues playing.

Hotline #1 musical notation showing three measures of a blues line. The notation includes a treble clef staff and a guitar TAB staff. The key signature is Bb (one flat). The progression is Bb7, Eb7, Bb7. The measures are labeled (1), (2), and (3).

Measure (1) Bb7: Treble staff has notes Bb4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4. TAB has frets 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. Picking: 1 1 3 3 1.

Measure (2) Eb7: Treble staff has notes Eb4, D4, C4, Bb3, Ab3, Gb3. TAB has frets 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. Picking: 1 1 4 1 4 2 1 3 3 3 1.

Measure (3) Bb7: Treble staff has notes Bb4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4. TAB has frets 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. Picking: 1 1 3 3 1.

HOTLINE # 2

The first 2 eighth notes here are played first by pulling the G string from an Eb note to an F note, then hitting the 2nd eighth on the B string, similar to Hotline #1. The 2 notes in the 2nd bar are the 5th and 3rd of the IV chord (Eb7) of the Blues progression, spelling, or sounding out the key change.

Hotline #2 musical notation showing two measures of a blues line. The notation includes a treble clef staff and a guitar TAB staff. The key signature is Bb (one flat). The progression is Bb7, Eb7. The measures are labeled (4) and (5).

Measure (4) Bb7: Treble staff has notes Bb4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4. TAB has frets 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. Picking: 3 1 1 3 1 3 3 1 3.

Measure (5) Eb7: Treble staff has notes Eb4, D4, C4, Bb3, Ab3, Gb3. TAB has frets 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. Picking: 3 1 3 3 1 3.

HOTLINE # 3

The first note here (high F) should sound drawn out, like you are really pulling on it. This is a subtle phrasing technique which I hope you can hear on the tape. The point is to exaggerate the bend a little.

Hotline #3 musical notation. The staff shows a sequence of notes with bends (B, RB, PO) and fret numbers (13, 9, 11). The tablature below the staff shows the corresponding fret numbers (13, 9, 11) and string numbers (3, 2, 1). The key signature is Eb7 and Bb7.

HOTLINE # 4

In this line again the Bb eighth notes in the 1st bar are played first on the E string and then on the B string, creating a certain tension. The phrase in the 2nd bar plays right off the V chord (F7) spelling out the chord for the listener.

Hotline #4 musical notation. The staff shows a sequence of notes with bends (PO) and fret numbers (13, 9, 10, 8, 10). The tablature below the staff shows the corresponding fret numbers (13, 9, 10, 8, 10) and string numbers (3, 2, 1, 3). The key signature is Bb7 and F7.

HOTLINE # 5

This is the first line that introduces something predominant in my playing, which is the deliberate use of the minor 3rd (Db) and major 6th (G) juxtaposed against each other. Ordinarily the dominant 7th (G#) would probably be used. This sound creates a certain texture I've always liked.

Hotline #5 musical notation. The staff shows a sequence of notes with bends (PO) and fret numbers (13, 9, 10, 8, 10). The tablature below the staff shows the corresponding fret numbers (13, 9, 10, 8, 10) and string numbers (3, 2, 1, 3). The key signature is Eb7 and Bb7.

HOTLINE # 5 (cont.)

F7

Musical notation for Hotline #5 (cont.) in F7. The notation consists of two staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The bottom staff is a guitar TAB with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The TAB is labeled 'T A B' and has a '4' under the first fret. The notation includes a '4' under the first fret, a '1' under the second fret, and three '3's under the third, fourth, and fifth frets. A circled '12' is written below the TAB staff.

HOTLINE # 6

This is something Texas blues guitarist Albert Collins might play, and it should be played with real punch. Experiment and try playing it with just your fingers.

Bb7

Eb7

Musical notation for Hotline #6. The notation consists of two staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb). The bottom staff is a guitar TAB with a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb). The TAB is labeled 'T A B' and has a '3' under the third fret. The notation includes a '3' under the third fret, a '3' under the fourth fret, a '2' under the fifth fret, and a '1' under the sixth fret. A circled '1' is written below the TAB staff. The notation also includes a '3' under the third fret, a '2' under the fourth fret, and a '1' under the fifth fret. A circled '2' is written below the TAB staff.

Bb7

Musical notation for Hotline #6 (continued). The notation consists of two staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb). The bottom staff is a guitar TAB with a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb). The TAB is labeled 'T A B' and has a '3' under the third fret. The notation includes a '3' under the third fret, a '1' under the fourth fret, a '3' under the fifth fret, a '1' under the sixth fret, a '3' under the seventh fret, a '3' under the eighth fret, a '1' under the ninth fret, a '3' under the tenth fret, a '1' under the eleventh fret, a '4' under the twelfth fret, a '3' under the thirteenth fret, a '1' under the fourteenth fret, a '1' under the fifteenth fret, a '3' under the sixteenth fret, and a '1' under the seventeenth fret. A circled '3' is written below the TAB staff. The notation also includes a '3' under the third fret, a '2' under the fourth fret, and a '1' under the fifth fret. A circled '4' is written below the TAB staff.

HOTLINE # 7

Put a lot of 'grease' on the slide from the Ab note to the Bb. The quarter note triplet should sound exaggerated and drawn out here.

Eb7

HOTLINE # 8

The slide from the Fb (E) grace note to the Eb should be played real punchy. The slide up to the second Bb eighth note in bar two occurs here again.

Bb7

HOTLINE # 9

This line incorporates the use of "Theme Development" taking the phrase in bar one and developing it both rhythmically and tonally in bar two, stretching it out a bit.

F7

Eb7

HOTLINE #10

The first 2 triplets in bar one are interesting. The same leap occurs from the first Bb eighth note on the E string to the second Bb eighth on the B string, and the eighth note rest between them creates a gap, almost like a deliberate stumble. Once again a certain tension is created. The quick 16th notes in bar 2 create a little break from the basic triplet feel that's been pretty constant so far.

Staff notation for Hotline #10, measures 1 and 2. Measure 1 is marked with **Bb7** and contains two triplets of eighth notes. Measure 2 is marked with **F7** and contains a triplet of eighth notes followed by a quarter note. The guitar TAB staff below shows fret numbers and string numbers (T, A, B). Measure 1 has frets 6, 7, 6 on the T string and 6, 7, 6 on the A string. Measure 2 has frets 9, 10, 8 on the T string and 9, 10, 8 on the A string. There are also frets 11, 12, 10 on the B string in measure 2.

HOTLINE #11

This line uses Theme Development again, taking the phrase in the first bar and stretching it out (quite a bit this time) in bars three and four.

Staff notation for Hotline #11, measures 1 and 2. Measure 1 is marked with **Bb7** and contains a triplet of eighth notes. Measure 2 is marked with **Eb7** and contains a triplet of eighth notes. The guitar TAB staff below shows fret numbers and string numbers (T, A, B). Measure 1 has frets 11, 13, 13 on the T string and 11, 13, 13 on the A string. Measure 2 has frets 11, 9, 9 on the T string and 11, 9, 9 on the A string. There are also frets 11, 13, 13 on the B string in measure 2.

Staff notation for Hotline #11, measures 3 and 4. Measure 3 is marked with **Bb7** and contains a triplet of eighth notes. Measure 4 is marked with **Eb7** and contains a triplet of eighth notes. The guitar TAB staff below shows fret numbers and string numbers (T, A, B). Measure 3 has frets 11, 13, 13 on the T string and 11, 13, 13 on the A string. Measure 4 has frets 11, 9, 9 on the T string and 11, 9, 9 on the A string. There are also frets 11, 13, 13 on the B string in measure 4.

HOTLINE #12

Note the Hammer-On in bar one. The double stop (using 2 notes at once) in bar 2 puts the minor 3rd and major 6th flat against each other creating that sound and tension I mentioned earlier in the book.

Eb7

HOTLINE #13

The valuable part of this line is the position it's played in on the guitar neck. It is like playing in the relative minor key (Gm7 in this case), which is a good position for playing major Pentatonic lines in the tonic key (Bb in this case).

Bb7

HOTLINE #14

This is a four bar line, and a lot of the notes sort of jump around. The phrasing has the quality of stopping and starting, sort of a stumbling effect.

F7 **Eb7**

HOTLINE #14 (cont.)

Bb7 **F7**

Musical notation for Hotline #14 (cont.) showing a guitar line and a bass line. The guitar line is in treble clef with a key signature of two flats (Bb7, F7). The bass line is in bass clef. The guitar line has a melodic line with a 'HO' (harmonic) marking and a 'PO' (palm mute) marking. The bass line has a melodic line with a 'HO' (harmonic) marking and a 'PO' (palm mute) marking. The notation includes fingerings (1, 2, 3, 4) and a repeat sign.

HOTLINE #15

Double stops are used in this line a lot. The first bar I find to be very funky. It should be played with the fingers rather than the pick. I use my first and second fingers on the B and E strings and my thumb on the G string.

Bb7 **Eb7**

Musical notation for Hotline #15 showing a guitar line and a bass line. The guitar line is in treble clef with a key signature of two flats (Bb7, Eb7). The bass line is in bass clef. The guitar line has a melodic line with a '3' (triple) marking. The bass line has a melodic line with a '3' (triple) marking. The notation includes fingerings (1, 2, 3, 4) and a repeat sign.

HOTLINE #16

This line should be played with the fingers also (except for the last half of bar 2). The 2nd and 3rd fingers play the notes on the G and B strings, and the thumb plays the notes on the D string.

Bb7

Musical notation for Hotline #16 showing a guitar line and a bass line. The guitar line is in treble clef with a key signature of two flats (Bb7). The bass line is in bass clef. The guitar line has a melodic line with a '3' (triple) marking. The bass line has a melodic line with a '3' (triple) marking. The notation includes fingerings (1, 2, 3, 4) and a repeat sign.

HOTLINE #17

The 2nd bar of this line should be played with a slight crescendo of feeling (more so than volume).

Eb7

(5) (6)

Bb7

(7)

HOTLINE #18

Here again is the use of the minor 3rd and major 6th color. Also, the way the notes jump around in almost random fashion creates a certain tension.

Bb7 F7

(8) (9)

HOTLINE #19

The phrasing in this line should be very punchy as in the Texas blues style playing like Albert Collins.

Measures 1-11 of Hotline #19. The notation is in treble and bass staves. Chords Eb7 and Bb7 are indicated. Fingering numbers 1, 2, 3 are shown. A 'B' (bend) and 'PO' (pull-off) are marked. Measure numbers (10) and (11) are at the bottom.

Measure 12 of Hotline #19. The notation is in treble and bass staves. Chord F7 is indicated. Fingering numbers 1, 2, 3 are shown. Measure number (12) is at the bottom.

This ends the 12 bar Blues section.

HOTLINE #20

The first bar here is virtually a G7add9 arpeggio. Bar two uses a bend on the G string from C to D and then plays the 2nd D on the B string which is a classic blues style of playing.

Measures 1-8 of Hotline #20. The notation is in treble and bass staves. Chords G7 and G7(C7) are indicated. Fingering numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 are shown. A 'B' (bend) is marked. Measure numbers (12) and (11) are at the bottom.

HOTLINE #21

This line could be the opening line for a slow blues, but sounds good at an up tempo shuffle feel as well.

Hotline #21 musical notation. The guitar line (top staff) is in treble clef and features a C7 chord in the first bar, an F7 chord in the second bar, and a C7 chord in the third bar. The bass line (bottom staff) is in bass clef and features a T (thumb) in the first bar, an A (8th fret) in the second bar, and a B (10th fret) in the third bar. The notation includes various musical symbols such as triplets, slurs, and accidentals.

HOTLINE #22

This line sounds best when played as the last two bars of a slow blues progression.

Hotline #22 musical notation. The guitar line (top staff) is in treble clef and features a C7 chord in the first bar, an F7 chord in the second bar, a C7 chord in the third bar, and a G7 chord in the fourth bar. The bass line (bottom staff) is in bass clef and features a T (thumb) in the first bar, an A (8th fret) in the second bar, and a B (10th fret) in the third bar. The notation includes various musical symbols such as triplets, slurs, and accidentals.

HOTLINE #23

This line could be played in either the 3rd and 4th, or 6th and 7th bars of a blues progression. The 16th note triplet in the 2nd half of bar one sounds different than written, so check the phrasing with the tape.

Hotline #23 musical notation. The guitar line (top staff) is in treble clef and features a C7 chord in the first bar, an (F7) chord in the second bar, a C7 chord in the third bar, and a (G7) chord in the fourth bar. The bass line (bottom staff) is in bass clef and features a T (thumb) in the first bar, an A (8th fret) in the second bar, and a B (10th fret) in the third bar. The notation includes various musical symbols such as triplets, slurs, and accidentals.

HOTLINE #24

Again, here is the use of minor 3rd and major 6th tension. This line could be considered incomplete in that it shouldn't end on the C quarter note, but keep going. Maybe you could add to this line.

C7 (8VA)

3 3 1 3 3 1 4 1 4 1 1

PO 4 1 3 2 1 4 PO 2 4 2 PO PO 4 2 1 4 2

TAB: 14 13 11 13 11 13 10 11 13 10 10

PO 13 10 12 11 10 12 11 12 10 12 10 9 12 10

HOTLINE #25

This line works well as an opening 4 bars to a shuffle. The phrasing is tricky here in the first 16th note triplet, and sounds best when played with the fingers.

C7

4 3 4 3 4 3 4 3

PO 4 3 1 3 1 3 1

TAB: 8 6 8 6 8 6 8 6

PO 8 5 5 8 5 8 5

C7

3 1 3 3 1 3 1 3

HO PO 1 3 1 3 1 3

TAB: 8 5 8 7 5 7 5 8

HO PO 5 7 5 7 5 8

HOTLINE #26

This could be the opening 4 bars of a 12 bar blues. Watch the 16th note triplet in the 1st bar. This lick sounds best at a shuffle tempo.

8VA

A7 D7

T
A
B

A7

T
A
B

HOTLINE #27

This line works well played in the 3rd and 4th bars of a shuffle blues. The notes in the 1st bar basically outline a C major arpeggio and bar 2 starts with the same arpeggio down an octave. That's the stuff that gives your playing form.

C7 (F7)

T
A
B

HOTLINE #28

This is more of a 'Jazz' line. It begins by using 4th intervals in the 1st bar. The first 4 eighth notes of bar 2 basically spell a D chord (bending the F note allows it to be major or minor, or both).

Dm7 (D7#9)

HOTLINE #29

This line is based on a pattern using the A minor Pentatonic scale. The pattern is established with the first 4 notes after the pick-up, and descends in triadic intervals.

Am7

HOTLINE #30

This line basically just runs the C major scale (G Mixolydian mode) and is good in a static chord situation, or could resolve at the end of the 4 bars to a C7 chord.

G7

HOTLINE #30 (cont.)

Musical notation for Hotline #30 (cont.). The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The bottom staff is a bass clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The notation includes a treble staff with a treble clef and a bass staff with a bass clef. The treble staff has a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 4/4 time signature. The bass staff has a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 4/4 time signature. The notation includes a treble staff with a treble clef and a bass staff with a bass clef. The treble staff has a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 4/4 time signature. The bass staff has a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 4/4 time signature.

HOTLINE #31

This line is based on a Diminished scale and is a II V I chord change series. There is a diminished scale 4th pattern set up in the 2nd half of the 1st bar which continues through the 2nd bar.

Musical notation for Hotline #31. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The bottom staff is a bass clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The notation includes a treble staff with a treble clef and a bass staff with a bass clef. The treble staff has a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 4/4 time signature. The bass staff has a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 4/4 time signature. The notation includes a treble staff with a treble clef and a bass staff with a bass clef. The treble staff has a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 4/4 time signature. The bass staff has a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 4/4 time signature.

HOTLINE #32

This line is based on the same Diminished scale as #31 but in a different key, and is also a II V progression. The diminished scale is almost always resolving to the tonic note or chord. The scale is a series of half steps and whole steps: G Ab Bb Cb Db D E F G = Ab diminished (G7b9) resolving to C.

Musical notation for Hotline #32. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The bottom staff is a bass clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The notation includes a treble staff with a treble clef and a bass staff with a bass clef. The treble staff has a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 4/4 time signature. The bass staff has a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 4/4 time signature. The notation includes a treble staff with a treble clef and a bass staff with a bass clef. The treble staff has a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 4/4 time signature. The bass staff has a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 4/4 time signature.

HOTLINE #33

This line is based on the use of an Fmaj7 arpeggio against a G7 tonality (once again, the G Mixolydian mode or C scale). A 4 note pattern is set up in the last half of the 3rd bar continuing to the lines end.

G7

First system:

Treble clef staff: G7 chord symbol. Notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), D5 (quarter), E5 (quarter), F5 (quarter), G5 (quarter). Fingering: 1, 2, 1, 4, 3, 1, 3, 4, 1, 3, 1, 2, 4.

TAB staff: 12, 13, 12, 15, 14, 12, 14, 15, 12, 14, 12, 13, 15.

Second system:

Treble clef staff: Notes: G5 (quarter), A5 (quarter), B5 (quarter), C6 (quarter), D6 (quarter), E6 (quarter), F6 (quarter), G6 (quarter). Fingering: 1, 2, 3, 1, 4, 2, 3, 2, 1, 3, 4, 3, 1, 3, 4, 3, 1.

TAB staff: 12, 13, 14, 12, 15, 13, 14, 13, 12, 14, 15, 14, 12, 14, 15, 14, 12.

HOTLINE #34

This is a standard II V I chord progression. The scale is similar to the diminished scale presented earlier, but this one is half Diminished and half Whole Tone (Ab Melodic minor = G Ab Bb Cb Db Eb F G).

Dm7b5

G7#5

Cmaj7

First system:

Treble clef staff: Dm7b5 chord symbol. Notes: D4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), D5 (quarter). Fingering: 2, 1, 4, 4, 2, 1, 4.

TAB staff: 4, 4, 3, 6, 6, 4, 3, 6.

Second system:

Treble clef staff: G7#5 chord symbol. Notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), D5 (quarter), E5 (quarter), F5 (quarter), G5 (quarter). Fingering: 1, 1, 1, 4, 4, 2, 1, 4, 3.

TAB staff: 4, 4, 3, 6, 6, 4, 3, 6, 5.