

# Clapton Torn Down Part 2

## At The Crossroads

## Introduction To Part 2

While compiling the information for part two of Clapton Torn Down I was immediately struck by the fact that Clapton's approach to Crossroads is almost the exact opposite of what we encountered in Tore Down.

While almost every version of Tore Down is the same as far as the groove is concerned, Crossroads has undergone many different mutations through the years. If you listen to Crossroads from early Cream days you will find that the tempo is a bit on the brisk side. And the playing is out of control wildness with each member of the group totally going for it.

As the years went by the song started to be played at slower tempos and with different grooves. I found versions that were more on the funky side, like the original Crossroads but slower and versions that were somewhere in between. If you have a minute head on over to Youtube and check it out for yourself.

The biggest overall effect of this is what you are able to play as the tempo shifts. Sometimes even just the slightest increase in temp can take you over the threshold on a lick. In other words, you go from being able to play it to not being able to play it.

I made an effort to address that in part two and even played the same lick over different grooves a couple of times. I did this for a couple of reasons. One, to demonstrate the effect tempo has in an actual playing situation. And to illustrate the fact that these licks can and should be used in a variety of different musical situations.

Remember, improv is not some magical mysterious trick that only the fortunate few have access to. It is a skill to be learned. These licks are part of the process. Play them and internalize them. Make them a part of your vocabulary and you will find them popping out in your solos when you least expect it.

Some people think that improv is the spontaneous creation of melodies. The best definition I have ever heard is that improvisation is the spontaneous reorganization of melodies.

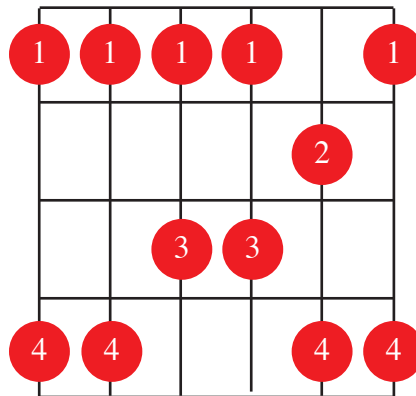
With that lets jump into Clapton At The Crossroads so you can add to your vocabulary.

The first lick from the Crossroads series was taken from one of the funky versions that I found.

### Lick 1.

This lick picks up where we left off in the Tore Down series as far as fingerings go. It's still minor pentatonic and it starts in fingering four and shifts down to fingering three.

#### Fingering Four



Here's the tab for this scale position. You can find fingering three in the last section.

The first thing to note about this lick is the the double bend at the beginning.

The image shows a musical staff in treble clef with a common time signature (C). The first measure contains three notes: a quarter note on the second line (G4), a quarter note on the second space (A4), and a quarter note on the second line (G4). A slur covers all three notes, with a double-bend symbol (two upward-pointing arrows) above it. Below the staff, a tablature line shows the fret numbers: '15' under the first note, '(15)' under the second note, and '15' under the third note. Two arrows labeled 'full' point from the first and third notes to the second note, indicating the double bend. The letters 'T', 'A', and 'B' are stacked vertically on the left side of the tablature line.

There are a couple of keys to execution here. Make sure you use good bending technique and keep the pressure on the string as you bend. If you don't you will lose the sound. And of course make sure you bend in tune.

The second half of this bending idea requires you to hold the bend at pitch and then release the bend. This pre-bend technique is something that you can use in your solos. It's a really cool sound once you can nail it. Do what you can to become aware of the pressure required to pre-bend a note in tune.

The image shows a musical staff in treble clef with a common time signature (C). The first measure contains three notes: a quarter note on the second line (G4), a quarter note on the second space (A4), and a quarter note on the second line (G4). A slur covers all three notes, with a pre-bend symbol (a downward-pointing arrow) above it. Below the staff, a tablature line shows the fret numbers: '17' under the first note, '(15)' under the second note, and '13' under the third note. A slur covers the first three notes, with a downward-pointing arrow labeled '3' above it, indicating a triplet. The letters 'T', 'A', and 'B' are stacked vertically on the left side of the tablature line.

Also take note of the pull-off at the end of the lick. Again, this requires that you keep the pressure on the string as you play. Any loss of pressure will result in a loss of sound.

The last thing I want to point out here is the position shift from fingering four down to fingering three.

Position Shift

This is about as straight ahead as a position shift can be. A simple change of position on the first finger.

### Lick 1 Crossroads Torn Down

We have been through enough times that I am sure you know this by now but...

Play the lick exactly as you learned. I really can't stress this enough. This is the one step that will really burn these licks into your fingers and your ear. This lick can be used anywhere in the blues progression and not really cause much trouble as far as notes clashing goes.

In the end, always trust your ear. If you thinks it's good it is, regardless of what others may think.

At 5:41 I play the first part of the lick only a couple of times. Remember, repetition is good. Don't be afraid to repeat yourself. It gives your solos continuity.

Notice the simplicity here. I play this at the 5:50 mark. This is the last part of the first measure that occurs on beat four. Here, I place it on beat one and then play it again on beat four. And observe the use of the quarter bends on the note C at the 13th fret. This hints at the minor to major sound that we have discussed before.

At the risk of repeating myself here, which is probably not a bad thing since it takes hearing the message several times before it sinks in. Do not feel like you have to reinvent the wheel. Keep it simple.

The one thing I notice constantly in beginning players is the need to over play. It's just not necessary. In many cases, less is more. Try it for yourself and see. Just pick three or four notes and see how much music you can get out of them.

At 6:06 I play this idea based on the four sixteenth notes at the end of measure two. Check out the cool rhythmic separation and the sound that gets created by the insertion of the eighth rests.

For some extra challenge and a picking workout try playing them without the rests in between.

I demo this at 6:24. Use a strict down/up alternate picking pattern on this.

Here is the idea at 7:54. Notice that it simple changes the order of the way the notes were originally played.

For the remainder of the track I followed that line of thinking a bit more. I want to stress that this is not rocket science and these are things that you should be able to do for yourself. Don't be afraid to try new things a mess up every now and then.

## Lick 1A Crossroads Torn Down

In this section I play the same lick over the original Crossroads lick. Take note of the sixteenth notes and how they become a bit trickier at this faster tempo. Here's the lick again for reference.

15 (15) 17 (15) 13 15 15 13

12 14 12 10

12 10 12 10

One of the ways to adapt a lick to a faster tempo is to change the note values. Everything is proportional so you can go either direction. Eight note can become quarters, sixteenth notes can become eights or the other way around.

15 (15) 17 (15) 13 15 15 13

12 14 12 10

12 10 12 10

At 1:52 I demonstrate this concept. It makes the lick easier to play and of course shifts things rhythmically. Take a second to compare the two ideas and see the shift and how it works.

At about 2:26 I try to play the sixteenth notes in a repeating fashion like I did on the previous track and...I fail miserably. And it's all the result of a change in tempo.

The speed at which something is played has a big impact on how it sounds and feels. In fact, it's easy to get locked into a few tempos that become your "comfort zone." Always practice at a variety of tempos. Sometimes it's harder to play slow than it is to play fast.

Musical notation for a guitar track at 2:26. The top staff shows a treble clef with a series of sixteenth notes. The bottom staff shows fret numbers for strings T, A, and B: 10, 12, 10, 12, 10, 12, 10, 12.

At 2:46 no problem with the eight notes however.

Musical notation for a guitar track at 2:46. The top staff shows a treble clef with eighth notes and quarter notes. The bottom staff shows fret numbers for strings T, A, and B: 10, 12, 14, 12, 15, 13, 15, 13, 15, 15, 13. Arrows indicate quarter notes.

At 3:42 I play the following. Here are the takeaways. I am using eight notes. I started on the and of one creating a nice rhythmic variation and some syncopation. It's basically the lick in reverse order.

Again, I am sure you can do these things on your own. If you stop and think about it for a minute, you have enough stuff between your ears to keep you soloing for a long time.

At about 4:35 I did manage to play the notes as sixteenth notes in tempo. Guess i finally got warmed up. I then started to get carried away just a bit.

This is at the 4:41 mark on the video. Check out the position shift with the slide on the third finger from the twelfth fret to the fourteenth fret on the third string.

It takes time to work up your speed. The key is to get lots of repetition. If you are willing to spend some time playing the same thing over and over you will get faster. Accuracy is the key.

How do you develop accuracy? Play slow.

There you have it, the big secret to playing fast. It's really not much of a secret. It just takes patience and time.

## Lick 2.

Lick two keeps us in fingering four and illustates a cool double stop idea with a bend.

This is a real common bending technique so take some time to nail this one. As I point out, the most difficult part is keeping your pinky in place while you bend with your ring finger.

Licks like these are especially cool when you match them up with the chords. This happens a lot in country music. In this example we are bending the D up to an E while holding the G on the first string. Those two notes, E and G are the fifth and seventh of an A7 chord. That's why this idea works well in the blues, it matches the one chord.

E and G are also the third and fifth of a C chord. Try playing this idea over a C and see how it sounds. I also point some possible trouble spots when using this lick over other chords.

The rest of the lick is pretty straight ahead and similar to some of the other techniques we have already talked about. It's really just a short and sweet idea.

## Lick 2 Crossroads Torn Down

Here's the lick again so you don't have to flip back and forth.

The image shows a musical score for a guitar lick. At the top, there are seven chord diagrams illustrating the fretting for each note. Below these is a treble clef staff with a common time signature (C). The notes are: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), D5 (quarter), E5 (quarter), D5 (quarter), C5 (quarter), and G4 (quarter). Below the staff is a guitar tab for strings T, A, and B. The tab shows the following fret numbers: T: 15, 15, 15, 15, 15, 15, 17(15), 13; A: 15, 15, 15, 15, 15, 15, 15, 14; B: (empty). Arrows labeled 'full' point to the 15th fret on the T string for the first six notes, and to the 15th fret on the B string for the final note. A slur covers the 17(15) and 13 frets on the T string.

Start off by playing it as is. Remember, even though the tab is slightly offset, the notes are played at the same time.

If you are having trouble with the bending check to see if your thumb is over the top of the neck. This really helps to add stability. And make sure to use your second finger along with the third to push the string up.

One last point here, to my ear the lick sounds fine against the one, four and five chords.

The first fragment I play at the 6:14 mark makes use of the pre-bend idea that I talked about in the last lick. The D is already bent up to the E when I play the first note so all you here is the descending portion of the bend.

I also changed the rhythm slightly by making the notes all eighth notes. I also start this sequence of notes on beat one instead of beat three.

At 6:14 there is another variation on the same idea. This time I am using the double stop at the beginning of the lick. The second measure just chops off the last note. Also listen to the way I cut the last note off.

Train your ear to start listening for the detail. Lock into the subtle nuances that define the “Clapton style.” Just for fun contrast it with a different guitar player. What sets them apart?

First system of musical notation. The top staff is a treble clef staff with four chords. The bottom staff is a guitar tablature staff with three strings labeled T, A, and B. It shows two double stops on the 15th fret of the second string, each labeled "full" with an upward arrow.

Second system of musical notation. The top staff is a treble clef staff with a sequence of notes. The bottom staff is a guitar tablature staff with three strings labeled T, A, and B. It shows a sequence of fret numbers: 15, 15, 15, 15, 17(15), 13, 14, and 15. The last 15 is labeled "full" with an upward arrow.

Here's the passage starting at 6:32. Even when there are just a few notes, you can create all sorts of rhythmic possibilities. Analyze this for yourself and keep developing the skill of listening. And don't get too caught up in trying to count the rhythms. Again, listen and just feel where the notes belong. Play with other rhythms that you come up with on your own.

Third system of musical notation. The top staff is a treble clef staff with four chords. The bottom staff is a guitar tablature staff with three strings labeled T, A, and B. It shows a sequence of fret numbers: 15, 15, 15, 15. The first and third 15s are labeled "full" with an upward arrow.

At 7:25 the bend is played on the second string followed by the note on the second string. A delayed double stop if you will.

You can also start with the note on the first string and then follow up with the note on the second string. Here is the lick at 7:45

The most important take away from lick number two is the ability to hold a note steady while bending a different note. If this is your first experience with that technique hang in there. Remember how hard it used to be to play a C chord?

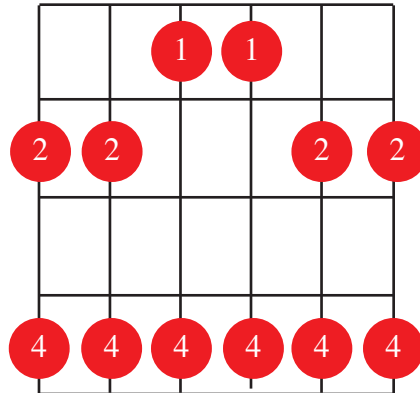
### Lick 3.

Lick number three takes us up into fingering five of the pentatonic scale. Since starting this series we have now covered all five fingerings of the pentatonic scale.

One of the things to think about is why choose one fingering over another? I don't think there is a right or wrong answer here, just food for thought. You really do have the freedom to start a solo anywhere you want and go anywhere you want on the fretboard.

I know this idea confuses some people but the thing to do is just pick a spot and go for it.

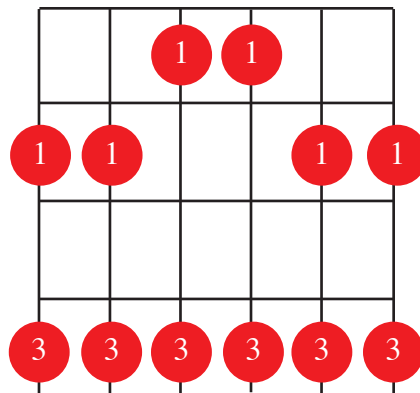
Here is fingering five of the pentatonic scale.



Here is is in tab and notation.

Musical notation and guitar tablature for the fifth fret of the pentatonic scale. The notation is in treble clef with a common time signature (C). The tablature shows the strings (T, A, B) and fret numbers (15, 17, 14, 17, 15, 17, 15, 17, 14, 17, 15, 17, 15).

One final note here...the fingerings in the diagram above are the preferred fingering lower on the neck. In this example up in the fourteenth fret are, I usually change fingerings to accommodate the fact that the frets are closer together.



The first thing that immediately jumps out on this lick is the step and a half bend.

The image shows a musical staff with a treble clef and a common time signature. The staff contains two notes on the same line, with a wide, shallow arch above them indicating a bend. Below the staff is a guitar tab with strings labeled T, A, B. The first string (T) has a '17' written above it. An arrow points from the '17' to a note on the first string, with '1 1/2' written above the arrow, indicating a one and a half fret bend.

Guitarists have a tendency to get stuck in the bend a whole step but. I chose this lick for a couple of reasons, one being the wider bend. The note we bend is often, but not always, determined by the scale.

In this example, if I want to stay in the pentatonic scale I have to bend from E up to G. The pentatonic scale encourages this type of bending because there are spots in the scale where this step and a half interval naturally occur. In the major scale you never get wider than a whole step.

The main challenge for the rest of the lick is to make sure you get the rhythms right. Again, you can count it out if you want to but I would focus on really listening. With the advent of tab I fear that listening is a skill that is falling to the wayside.

Pay attention to the little hammer-on, pull-off triplet lick in measure two. Focus on your technique and strive for crisp sounding notes.

From this point forward there really should not be anything new as far as technique is concerned. Now it's just a matter of refining things and increasing your speed. Focus on your weaknesses to get the most out of your practice time. I know we don't like to think about the things we can't do but it is the way forward.

Keep in mind that it's a journey with no end. There is always something new to learn and improve upon. It's what makes studying the guitar interesting.

## Lick 3 Crossroads Torn Down

1 1/2

1/4

T  
A  
B

17 17 15 17 14 14 17 15 17 15 17 15 17 15 17 14 14 17

Once again, start by playing the lick as you learned it.

T  
A  
B

17 15 17 14 14 17 15 17 14 17 15 17

This is the idea at 6:24. These are the notes from measure two and the beginning of measure three. Notice that the notes in measure two have been moved over one beat and the notes from measure three have been changed rhythmically and moved to the end of the measure.

T  
A  
B

15 17 15 17 15 17 15 17 15 17 15 17 15 17 15 17

At 6:42 you get this lick based on the sixteenth note triplet figure.

At 7:06 I play this. Compare this to the original lick. See how it was inspired by the original lick but take note of how it has been altered as well. I really encourage to do these kinds of things on your own. However your brain chooses to process the information is fine. It's subjective, there is no right or wrong. Drawing your own conclusions will make you into a better guitarist in the end.

And once more, take heed of the fact that I play this twice in a row. And I know I have said this more than once as well. Do not be afraid to repeat yourself. In fact, I want you to repeat yourself. And your listeners will appreciate it too.

This example from the 7:50 mark illustrates this concept again. I play this idea two times in a row. Right after that I repeat a previous idea a few times in succession.

Why does this work? Familiarity. It gives you something familiar to grab onto. Think about how it sounds when you try to overplay and randomly skip around in a scale. Give me repetition any day.

At 8:36 I start trying to move the above lick to different spots rhythmically. First I try beat number four which gives me this.

As you try this for yourself notice how it feels different. Sometimes it feels weird and you can't make it fit. It's all part of the learning process.

At 8:55 I managed to play it just find but when I tried it a second time this came out instead.

T  
A 14 17 15 17 15 17 15 17 14 14 17  
B

At the 9:00 minute mark when I made a second pass at it I changed the end of the figure rhythmically. It just felt better this way. The other way put the accents in a strange place and I found it hard to not alter the lick.

T  
A 14 17 15 17 15 17 15 17 15 17 14 14 17  
B

i experienced the same thing when I put the lick on beat number three at the 9:17 mark on the video. I ended up altering the rhythms at the end to make it feel good. It's just one of those things and ultimately, the feel goes a long way in determining how something sounds.

In the grand scheme of things you just have to go for it. Improvising is a risk reward kind of thing. Sometimes your mistakes end up being better than what you were going for in the first place.

No matter what, play it like you mean it and it will come across that way.

## Lick 4.

Picking

DDU DU U DU UDU U DU U D D D DU

Lick number four keeps us in fingering five of the pentatonic scale. This lick also makes us back to the funky groove and the slower tempo to make it a bit more manageable. The first three notes are the hardest part of this lick due to the speed.

I have added the picking on this lick to help you along. Notice that I start with two down strokes. This is sometimes referred to as economy picking and it is a faster way to cross strings. From there I just follow the rules of alternate picking.

I also refer to this as more of a “lick, lick” as opposed to a line. What I really mean by that is that it is mostly a repeated motif as opposed to something that moves around a lot.

The second measure is what I am referring to here. It’s just a four note fragment that gets repeated for the entire measure. Repeated little motifs like this played at a faster speed are a great tool to add intensity to your solos.

The lick ends up with consecutive quarter step bends that add an unusual flavor to this idea. In fact, one of the things that really caught my attention is the way Clapton approaches his bending.

He has a very unique way of bending that really helps define his style. This is one of the details that you can really focus in on when listening to Clapton. As I said, take you listening to a deeper level. Really zoom in on the details.

## Lick 4 Crossroads Torn Down

As usual start off by playing the lick as is. Take note that it starts on the end of four and you will have to really work to get those first three notes in.

At around 4:57 I start to play around with this lick to see what might be there. Here I chop off the first three notes and then get into some duplication again as I repeat the same basic idea three times.

At 5:27 I play another slight variation on the last part of the lick. Once again I make use of imitation and repeating an idea.

Here's the passage starting at 6:17. As I said in an earlier lick, when you don't have a lot of notes to choose from most of your ideas will have to be rhythmic in nature. That's exactly what I ended up doing for most of this track.

### Lick 4A Crossroads Torn Down

Lick 4A points out once again the effect that tempo can have on your ability to play or not play something from a technical perspective. It's also nice to have a target to shoot for and serve as a motivator. I'm sure you will see right away that this lick is just a bit tougher to play at this tempo.

At 2:02 I just played the first part of the lick. I thought it was pretty cool like that.

Or how about this repeated *ad nauseam* at 2:05.

T  
A 141714 141714 141714 15 17 14  
B 17 14

At 2:45 I chop the last note off the sixteenth note figure and space it out rhythmically. Make sure you understand that all of these ideas come from the original lick.

T  
A 14 17 14 14 17 14 14 17 14 14 17 14 17 14 17 14 17  
B 17 14 17

At 3:23 I changed the first three notes into quarter notes to make them easier to play.

As you have seen, with just a few simple devices it's possible to take these licks and get a lot of mileage out of them. As a recap here are a few of the ideas that we have covered:

1. Use smaller chunks of a lick.
2. Change the order of the notes in a lick.
3. Alter the licks rhythmically by changing the note values or what beat the lick starts on.
4. Use repetition as a device to give your solos continuity.

It does no good to just hear this or talk about. Start to apply these thoughts to your playing immediately so you can get maximum benefit from what you are learning.

## Lick 5.

8va-----

8vb-----

T 17 20 17 20 17 20 17 20 20 17 20 17 20

A

B

Lick five takes us back to the Cream Crossroads days with what I think is very typical Clapton from that time period. We are back in fingering one of the pentatonic scale and up an octave to the higher range of the guitar.

The use of the sixth note of the scale pops up right away here. If you recall from the Tore Down section Clapton really likes to make use of this note.

T 17 20 17 20

A

B

I also like this bending idea. The end result is the repeated note but it's get broken up with bend on the second string. You really hear this sound in a lot of rock and blues playing.

If this is giving you trouble technically make sure you pay attention the position of your thumb and use multiple fingers to bend.

8va-----

Here's another cool pentatonic riff that has been played by countless guitarists through the years. The first measure is what Clapton played in this lick which is a nice variation on what you usually hear.

The second measure is typical of what most guitarist play and is similar to the lick Jimmy Page played on Stairway To Heaven.

The last measure is another possible variation on the same idea.

### Lick 5A Crossroads Torn Down

8va-----

At this point you know what to do...play the lick as is and in time.

8<sup>va</sup>-----

T  
A  
B

17 19 17 20

full

At 5:05 I shorten the lick to this. At the end of the last section I mentioned this as one of the simple things you can do to start varying licks.

8<sup>va</sup>-----

T  
A  
B

17 19 17 20

full

At 5:08 I play the same idea again but start on the end of beat one instead of the end of beat three. This is two of the other concepts we talked about.

8<sup>va</sup>-----

T  
A  
B

20 17 20 20 17 20 20 17 20 17 20 20

full

Here we are a 5:26. Analyze this one for yourself.

8<sup>va</sup>-----

T  
A  
B

This one is at 5:43. It's really just the end of the original lick.

T  
A  
B

Another cool device is to move your ideas up or down an octave. You stay in the same fingering of the pentatonic scale and move either up or down twelve frets. This is at 6:30 on the video.

8<sup>va</sup>-----

T  
A  
B

Here are the first three notes changed rhythmically with a hammer on tossed in to make it easier to handle at this speed. You can hear this at 7:04.

For the remainder of the track I continue to alter the rhythms. If you find something that caught your ear work it out for yourself. You should be capable of doing that at this point. The notes are the same, only the rhythms have been changed.

## Lick 6.

The musical notation for Lick 6 consists of a single staff in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature. The lick is divided into two measures. The first measure starts with a quarter rest, followed by an eighth note F#, an eighth note G, and a quarter note A. The second measure begins with a triplet of eighth notes (G, A, B), followed by an eighth note C, a quarter note D, an eighth note E, and a quarter note F#. The fretboard diagram below shows the string positions: T (Treble) string has frets 5, 5, 5, 8, 5, 5; A (Middle) string has frets 5, 6, 5, 5, 8, 5, 5; B (Bass) string has frets 5, 8, 5, 8, 5, 8, 5, 8, 5, 7, 5, 7, 9, 9, 7, 5, 7. Pickings are indicated as U (up) and D (down) below the notes.

Picking                    U    UDU D DU DUD            D U D U D U D    D U D

We are up to the sixth and final lick in the Crossroads series and it's also the hardest of the licks. We are back to the funk track again so we can take advantage of the slower tempo. I have added the picking directions as well.

We are still in fingering one of the pentatonic scale but back down in the lower octave. There is a quick shift into fingering two for just a second but it's more of a phrasing thing instead of a true position shift.

There are a couple of key points about this lick and before we move on and break it down. It starts off right away moving from the minor sound to the major sound. We have talked about this plenty so I am not going to ramble on about it here.

Technically you have the "tweedy" at the start of the second measure. We have had those before as well so nothing new here. Last but not least we have the slide on the third string from the seventh to the ninth fret and back down again. We have done that before as well in the Tore Down series.

By now you have pretty much seen it all. As you move forward work on refining your technique and using the simple principles outlined here to create your own ideas and solos. I am convinced that you are perfectly capable of doing everything we have talked about.

## Lick 6 Crossroads Torn Down

I am not even going to say it this time.

In the last lick I talked about jumping octaves and repeating ideas as a way to create themes and variations. I demo that at the 6:35 mark of this video.

Here's a slight variation on the above lick played at 6:40.

Musical notation for a guitar solo. The top staff shows a treble clef with a series of eighth notes. The bottom staff shows fret numbers: 5 7 9 5 7 9 5 7 9 5 7 9 9 7 5 7.

At 7:02 I play this take off on the Chuck Berry type stuff. It was still inspired by the Clapton lick though.

Musical notation for a guitar solo. The top staff shows a treble clef with a series of notes, including a triplet and two notes with  $\frac{1}{4}$  note accents. The bottom staff shows fret numbers: 5 6 5 5 5 8 5 5 8 8 5.

At 7:11 I got a bit carried away. I started out with the Clapton lick and ended up somewhere else.

Musical notation for a guitar solo. The top staff shows a treble clef with a series of notes, including a triplet and a double triplet. The bottom staff shows fret numbers: 5 5 5 8 5 8 5 8 5 8 5 5 5 8 5 17 17 17 20 17.

At 7:21 this is what you hear. Once again, I want you do figure out what's going on here. It will make you more effective in your studies as you move on.

The image shows a musical score for a guitar lick. The top staff is a treble clef with a series of eighth notes and a final quarter note. The bottom staff shows fret numbers for the Treble (T), Acoustic (A), and Bass (B) strings. The fret numbers are: 5 8 5 7 5 7 9, 5 8 5 7 5 7 9, 5 8 5 7 5 7 9, 5 8 5 7 5 7 9, 9 7 5 7 7 5 7 5.

Here is the idea played at 8:16. Once again at the end I sort of slipped out of the Clapton lick and tossed in an extra note.

As you continue to study and play the same thing will happen for you. The lines between the licks and the scales will start to blur. You will start to draw on everything in your warehouse of collected knowledge and start to spin your own ideas out of what you know.

Just relax and enjoy the ride and know that there will be ups and downs along the way. And in the moments where it all starts to come together all I can say is...

There's nothing quite like it.