

Folsom Prison Blues

Words and music by Johnny Cash, from *Johnny Cash with His Hot and Blue Guitar*



For many people, "Folsom Prison Blues" is the face of Johnny Cash the outlaw. Cash's ability to make the listener sympathize with a convicted murderer is a remarkable feat, but Cash in real life was never the kind of outlaw he portrayed in the song.

Strap a capo on the first fret and try strumming pattern 1, below, to sound

like Cash did on his original recording. For variety, Cash occasionally hit an E7 chord at the end of the second line to lead into the A chord. To add Al Casey's bass note highlights, try the alternate-bass strums in pattern 2, below.

Chords, Capo I



Strum Patterns

1.

2.

1. **E**
I hear the train a-comin', it's rollin' down the bend

And I ain't seen the sunshine since I don't know when

A **E**
I'm stuck in Folsom Prison and time keeps draggin' on

B7 **E**
But that train keeps a-rollin' on down to San Antone

2. **E**
When I was just a baby, my mama told me, "Son,

Always be a good boy, don't ever play with guns"

A **E**
But I shot a man in Reno just to watch him die

B7 **E**
When I hear that whistle blowin', I hang my head and cry

3. **E**
I bet there's rich folks eatin' in a fancy dining car

They're probably drinkin' coffee and smokin' big cigars

A **E**
Well I know I had it comin', I know I can't be free

B7 **E**
But those people keep a-movin' and that's what tortures me

4. **E**
Well if they freed me from this prison, if that railroad train was mine

I bet I'd move it on a little farther down the line

A **E**
Far from Folsom Prison, that's where I want to stay

B7 **E**
And I'd let that lonesome whistle blow my blues away