

# Private Investigations

## DIRE STRAITS

**KIT MORGAN** transcribes the classical guitar part from this epic 1982 track, taken from the album *Love Over Gold*. Words: **JOE BENNETT**.

### On the CD

#### TRACK 34

*Private Investigations* as it appears on the Dire Straits album *Love Over Gold*

Classical guitar: Kit Morgan

#### TRACK 35

A complete Total Accuracy backing track, minus the classical parts

Total Accuracy: Stuart Bull – drums; Mick Ash – bass; Pete Adams – keyboards. Engineer – Steve Finch



Additional guitars and FX: Kit Morgan

### THE LYRICS

It's a mystery to me  
The game commences  
For the usual fee, plus expenses  
Confidential information  
It's in a diary  
This is my investigation  
It's not a public inquiry

I go checking out the reports  
Digging up the dirt  
You get to meet all sorts  
In this line of work  
Treachery and treason  
There's always an excuse for it  
And when I find the reason  
I still can't get used to it

And what have you got  
At the end of the day?  
What have you got to take away?  
A bottle of whisky  
And a new set of lies  
Blinds on the windows  
And a pain behind the eyes

Scared for life, no compensation  
Private... investigations

I

t's bizarre that *Private Investigations* is such a perennial acoustic guitar favourite. It's got no chorus, no recognisable vocal tune, and you absolutely never get asked to play it at parties. But one listen to Mark Knopfler's playing on the track is enough to convince anyone of the song's significance – so maybe I'm just going to the wrong sort of parties.

### STRUCTURE

The album version opens with a synth drone and 50 seconds of reverbed electric guitar and piano.



Mark Knopfler – although best known for electric playing, he's no slouch on a classical guitar.

### TIPS

#### Picking technique

**M**ark Knopfler always plays with fingers, even on distorted electric guitar parts. Here, he's using a combination of both flesh and nail from the picking hand for a really crisp, bright tone. Many of the lead phrases are picked across three strings, using the index, middle and ring fingers in a 'rolling' motion.

This crossfades into the main track (guitar and piano), which is where our transcription begins. The first thing you hear is the main theme, played once through the 12-bar chord sequence, which runs thus; Em, Bm/D (for 2 bars), A/C#, G/B, F/A, B7/A, Em/G, Gdim, F#m7b5, B7 and Em.

Next follows the first verse, over which he plays a fairly simple 8-to-the-bar arpeggio part which gives some space for the vocal. The arpeggios get more complex – and faster – after the vocal line has finished. Next, we're into verse two and the arpeggios move up a register, with subtle (classical)

vibrato added to the chord by moving the fretting hand from side to side. (In both verses, it's worth noting the unusual shape for F#m7b5 he uses – it's played as an inversion and covers five strings).

Verse two leads straight into the Middle 8 (or Middle 10, in this case), in which the guitar plays fairly rapid single-note runs in between the vocal phrases 'so what have you got?' etc.

The first guitar solo is really just an embellishment on the main theme, which gets gradually more complex as it progresses. These licks do sound fairly difficult, but they're all based on scale or arpeggio patterns which are related to the current chord, and several of them rely on the 'rolling' three-finger movement (see the picking technique box above).

The outro begins with those thudding bottom E bass notes, over which the guitar plays the song's most difficult solo, made even more so by the fact that Mark keeps shifting position to achieve changes of tone. From here on, the rest of the section features a two-bar fingerstyle picking riff between Em7 and A7, with occasional stab chords on C and Em7. **TG**



DIRE STRAITS: Private Investigations

CD TRACK 34 →

**Intro**  $\text{♩} = 84$

Em Bm/D A/C#

G/B F/A B7/A Em/G

Gdim F#min 7b5 B7 Em

**Verse:** 0:34

Em Bm/D A/C#

(vocals enter) *pp* NH

G/B F/A B7/A Em/G

*f* *p* *f*

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# technique: acoustic



» DIRE STRAITS: Private Investigations (cont...)

CD TRACK 34 »

Gdim F#min 7b5 B7 Em

2 3 2 3 2 3 0  
 3 4 5 5 5 5 5 4 5 3 2 2 4 4 5 4 5 4 7 4 5 4 2 H 0 H 0 0

Verse 2:

1:09 Em Bm/D

7 8 9 8 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 0 11 12 NH

A/C# G/B F/A

10 9 11 9 10 9 11 0 8 7 9 7 9 7 9 6 8 7 5 6 8 5 7

B7/A Em/G Gdim

4 4 4 4 4 4 4 5 x 3 5 4 5 4 5 4 0 2 3 2 3 2 3 0 3 3 3

F#min 7b5 B7/A Em D/F#

3 4 5 5 5 5 4 3 0 0 0 4 4 4 5 4 5 4 5 2 0 0 H 0 0 3 5 5 7 7 7

» DIRE STRAITS: Private Investigations (cont...)

CD TRACK 34 »

Middle:

1:43 **G** **D** **Am**

*f*

H H P

**Em** **D** **G** **D**

*pp*

**C** **B7**

H P S

Solo:

2:11 **Em** **Bm/D**

S

**A/C#** **G/B** **F/A**

*ff*

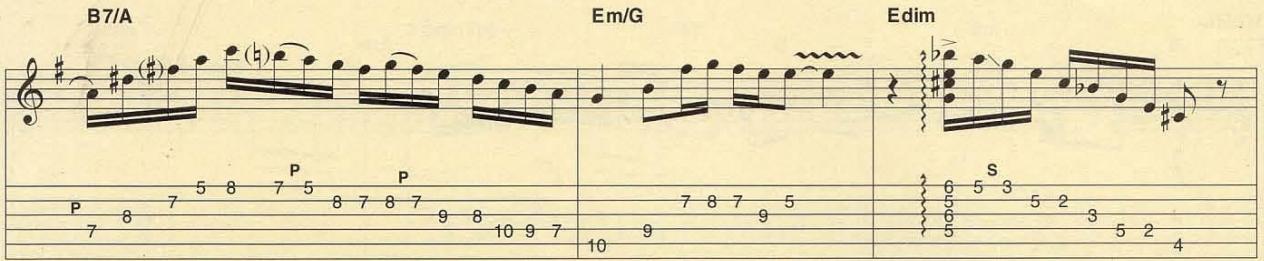
# technique: acoustic



» DIRE STRAITS: Private Investigations (cont...) »

CD TRACK 34 »

**B7/A** **Em/G** **Edim**



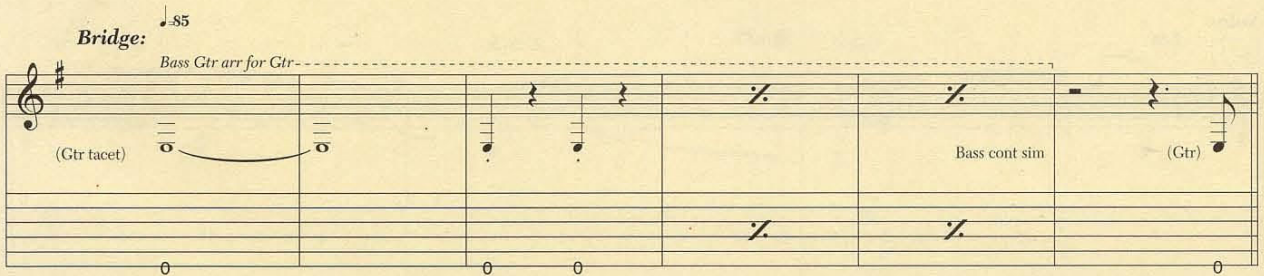
**Am6** **B7** **Em**



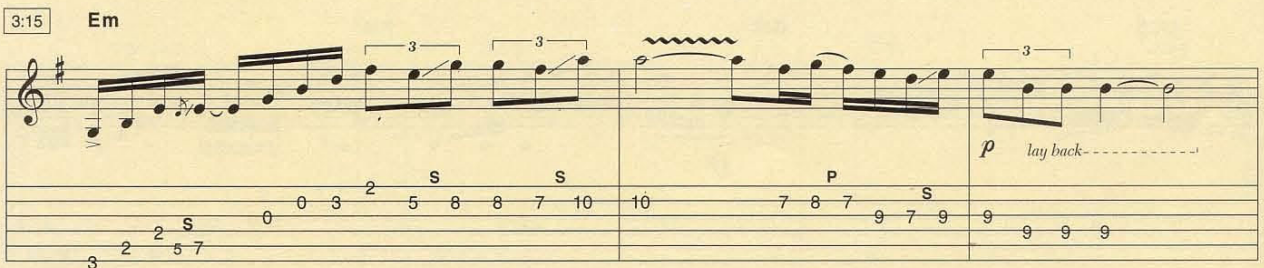
**Gdim** **F#min7b5** **B7**



**Bridge:**  $\downarrow$  -55  
Bass Gtr arr for Gtr



**3:15** **Em**





» DIRE STRAITS: Private Investigations (cont...) »

CD TRACK 34 »

*f*

9 8 7 5 8 8 3 5 2 0 2 4

S S H P S

*f*

5 4 5 8 7 10 12 12 12 10 8 8 12 12 5 6 5 8 5 8 5 5 8

S S H P H

*p*

**Outro:**  
3:47

**Em7**

*p*

5 3 0 5 2 3 2 0 2 2 2 3 2 0 3 2 0 3 3 3 0 2

P P H H P P P

**A7/E** **Em7** **A7/E**

*p*

0 2 4 2 4 2 2 0 2 0 2 3 4 3 0 3 0 3 0 2 3 4 2 4 2 0 2 0

3:58

**Em7** **A7/E**

(dist elec gtr enters here)

0 2 4 2 4 2 0 3 0 2 3 4 2 4 2 0 2 0 2 2 2 2 2



# technique: acoustic



» DIRE STRAITS: Private Investigations (cont...)

CD TRACK 34

Em7 C Em

Em7 A7/E NC

4:56 Em7 A7/E Em7

C Em Em7 Em C

Em