

# King of California

Words and music by Dave Alvin



"King of California" was the title track of Dave Alvin's 1994 release. "When I first started writing 'King of California,' I had the title, and that was all I had," says Alvin. "Then I came up with this clawhammer thing ... and I just started writing the verses. I didn't know the guy was gonna kill a guy and then be shot at the same time at the end."

To play the clawhammer pattern, try using your thumb for the bass notes, then brushing down and up quickly with your fingers on the higher strings. Alvin employs walking bass lines throughout the song. For instance, whenever he moves from C to C/G (as in measure 9), he walks through A, following the vocal melody (as writ-

ten out in the intro in measure 2). Alvin occasionally stretches out measures like a blues singer, especially on the final verse, where he pauses at the ends of phrases for dramatic effect. Alvin's part lies in the center of the mix, while Greg Leisz's wonderfully melodic Weissenborn and mandolin lines fill out the mix, panned hard left and right, respectively.

—ANDREW DUBROCK

## Capo III Intro

**G<sup>sus2(sus4)</sup>** 300014 **C** x32014

♩ = 130 play four times

## Verse

**A<sup>m7</sup>** x02014

1 2

**C** x32014

5 1. Well, I left my home and my  
2, 3. See additional lyrics.

continue simile

**C/G** 3x2014 **C** x32014 **G<sup>add4/B</sup>** x20014 **A<sup>m7</sup>** x02014 **C** x32014

9 one true love east of the O-hi-o Riv-er Your fa-ther said we'd nev-er

**C/G** 3x2014 **C** x32014 **Gadd4/B** x20014 **Am7** x02014

16 wed for I had nei - ther gold nor sil - ver. But my

**\* Chorus**

**Em** 023000 **Fadd9** xx3214 **C** x32014 **Gadd4/B** x20014 **Am7** x02014

21 dar - ling dear please shed no tears for I think that it's fair to warn you that

\* Instrumental on first D.S.

**Fadd9** xx3214 **C** x32014 **Gadd4/B** x20014 **Am7** x02014 **Em** 023000 **Fadd9** xx3214 **C** x32014

27 I'll re - turn to claim your hand as the King of Cal - i - for - nia.

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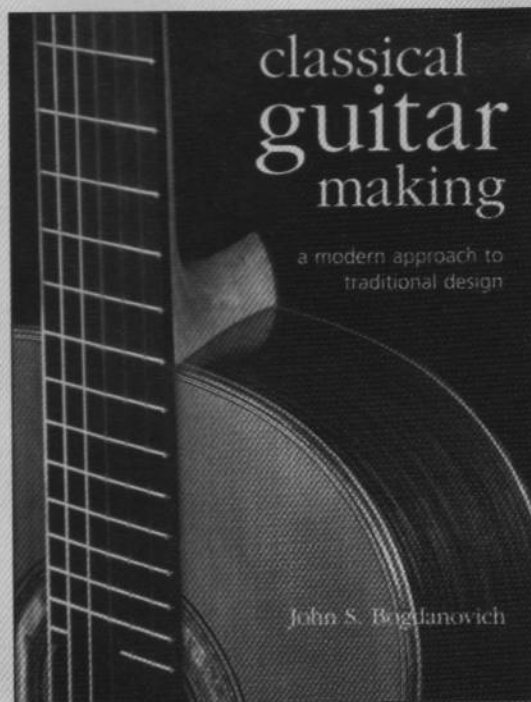
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*\*Gsus2(sus4) on instrumental.*

*\*Am7*  
x02014

To Coda

*D.S. (after third chorus)*  
*D.S.S. al Coda*  
(after instrumental)

**Coda**

play three times

33

2. O-ver

37

But I'll...

38

re - turn to claim your hand as the

*Em*  
023000

*Fadd9*  
xx3214

*C*  
x32014

*Gadd4/B*  
x20014

*Am7*  
x02014

*Gsus2(sus4)*  
300014

play seven times

42

King of Cal - i - for - nia.

**Chorus**

*C* *C/G C* *Gadd4/B Am7*  
1. Well I left my home and my one true love east of the Ohio River

*C* *C/G C* *Gadd4/B Am7*  
Your father said we'd never wed for I had neither gold nor silver

*Em* *Fadd9* *C*  
But my darling dear please shed no tears for I think

*Gadd4/B Am7*  
that it's fair to warn you

*Fadd9* *C Gadd4/B Am7* *Em* *Fadd9 C*  
That I'll return to claim your hand as the King of California

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2. **C** **C/G C** **Gadd4/B Am7**  
Over deserts hot and mountains cold, I travelled the Indian country  
**C** **C/G**  
Whispering your name under lonesome skies,  
**C** **Gadd4/B Am7**  
your memory my only company

*Chorus*

**Em** **Fadd9** **C**  
But my darling dear please have no fears for I think  
**Gadd4/B Am7**  
that it's fair to warn you  
**Fadd9 C Gadd4/B Am7 Em Fadd9 C**  
That I'll return to claim your hand as the King of California

3. **C** **C/G C** **Gadd4/B Am7**  
I went up from Sacramento town to the Sierra gold fields  
**C** **C/G C** **Gadd4/B**  
And I worked my stake on a river bank, dreaming just how  
**Am7**  
a rich man feels

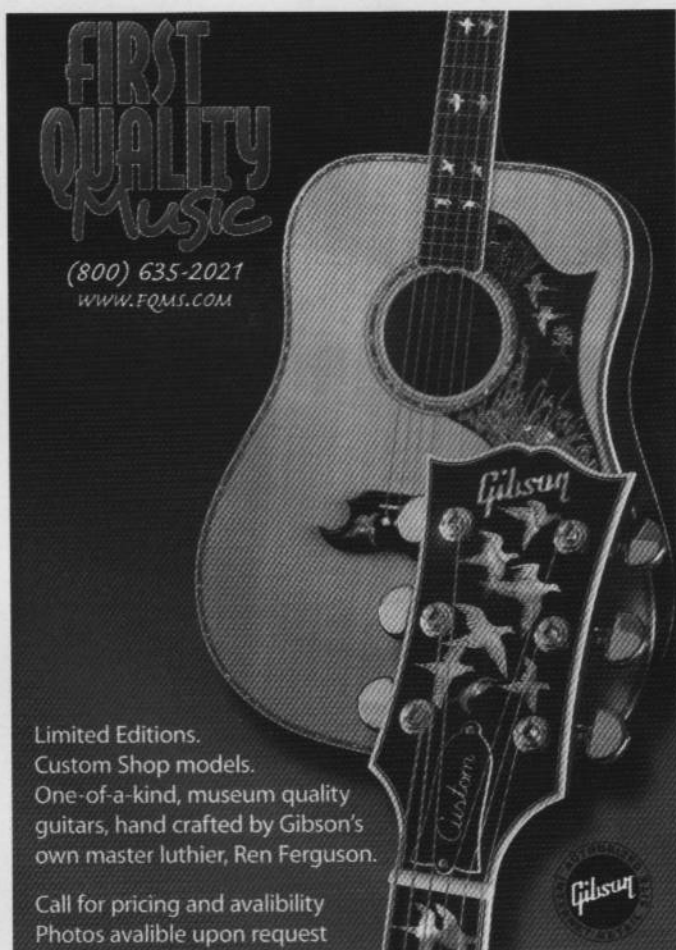
*Chorus*

**Em** **Fadd9** **C**  
Now my darling dear, listen here, for I think that it's  
**Gadd4/B Am7**  
fair to warn you  
**Fadd9 C Gadd4/B Am7 Em Fadd9 C**  
That I'll return to claim your hand as the King of California

4. **C** **C/G C** **Gadd4/B Am7**  
Now a dead man's lying at my feet, tried to steal my earnings  
**C** **C/G** **C**  
Yet I still recall your tender kiss though his bullet  
**Gadd4/B Am7**  
in my chest is burning

*Repeat Chorus 1*

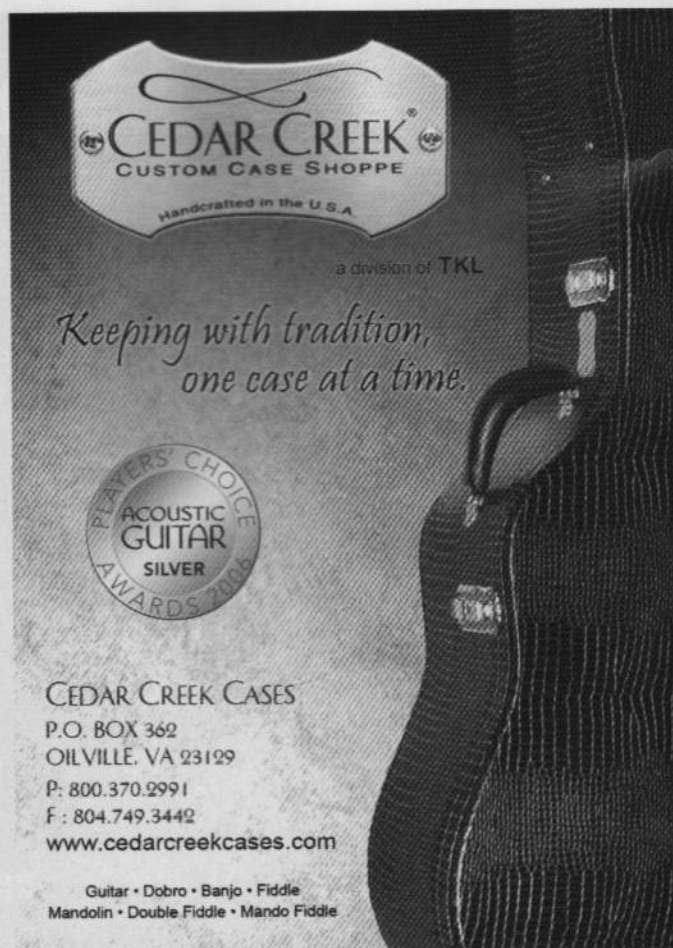
**Fadd9 C Gadd4/B Am7 Em Fadd9 C**  
But I'll return to claim your hand as the King of California



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