

OPERATOR (Jim Croce)

Written by Jim Croce in the key of G in 4/4 time
Released on the album: You Don't Mess Around with Jim (1972)
Released as a single in 1972
Fingerstyle version for single acoustic guitar
Operator on [Wikipedia](#) | [YouTube](#)

thumb: x	Hammer on: h	Bend up:)	Break: p
index: a	Pull off: p	Bend down: (Downward stroke: (~)↑
dirty: b	Slide up: /	Grab but don't pick: !	Upward stroke: (~)↓
ring: c	Slide down: \	Staccato: :	
pinky: d	Arpeggio: ~~~	Mute: m	

Picking patterns that fit for most Croce songs: x - a - bc - x - a - bc - x - a
x - a - b - [x]c - b - a - x - a
x - a - b - x - c - b - x - a

INTRO (G - Bm - Am - C - G/B - Am - Dsus2/F#)

```
e-----|-----2a-----| picking pattern:
b-----3a-----3a-----|-----3b-----3b-----| x - a - b - x - a - b - x - x
g-----4b-----4b-----|-----4d-----4d-----| x - a - b - xc - b - a - x - a
D---!-----5d-----|---!-----4c-----4d-----|
A---!-----5c---0---|---2a-----2a-----| !: grab 5c, 5d, 4c
E---3a-----|-----| Hint
<----- full barrés ----->
```

```
e-----0-----|---0-----0-----| picking pattern:
b-----1a-----1a-----|-----4d---1a-----3d-----| x - a - bc - x - a - bc - x - a
g-----2c-----2c-----|-----0-----2c-----| xc - xb - xb - x - a - bc
D-----2b-----|-----|
A---0-----|---3c---2b---0-----| Hint
E-----|-----2b-----/---|
           ¼   ¼
```

```
e-----3c-----3c-----|-----2a-----| picking pattern:
b-----0-----0-----|-----3b-----3b-----| x - a - b - xc - b - a - x - a
g-----0-----0-----|-----4d-----4d-----| x - a - bc - x - a - bc - x - a
D-----0-----|-----4c-----|
A---2a-----|-----2a-----|
E---3b-----3b-----|
<----- full barré ----->
```

```
e-----0-----|---0-----0-----| picking pattern:
b-----1a-----1a-----|-----4d---1a-----3d-----| x - a - b - xc - b - a - x - a
g-----2c-----2c-----|-----0-----2c-----| xc - xb - xb - x - a - bc
D-----2b-----|-----|
A---0-----|---3c---2b---0-----|
E-----|-----2b-----/---|
           ¼   ¼
```

1ST VERSE

||:

1 ... Operator, well could you ...

```
e-----3c-----3c-----|-----2a-----2a-----| picking pattern:
b-----0-----0-----|-----3b-----3b-----| x - a - bc - x - a - bc - x - a ( 2x )
g-----0-----0-----|-----4d-----4d-----|
D-----0-----|-----4c-----|
A---2a-----|-----2a-----|
E---3b-----3b-----|
<----- full barré ----->
```

2 ... She's living in L.A. with my ...

```
e-----3d-----3d-----|-----2a-----2a-----| picking pattern:
b-----0-----0-----|-----3b-----3b-----| x - a - bc - x - a - bc - x - a ( 2x )
g-----0-----0-----|-----4d-----4d-----|
D-----0-----|-----4c-----|
A---2a-----|-----2a-----|
E---3c-----3c-----|
<----- full barré ----->
```

... help me place this call? ...

... .. best old ex-friend Ray ...

```
e---0-----|-----0-----| picking pattern:
b-----4d-----1a-----|-----1a-----0-----| xc - a - xb - a - xb - a - xb - a
g-----0-----0-----|-----0-----0-----| x - a - bc - x - a - bc - x - a
D-----|-----0-----|
A---3c-----2b-----|---3d-----| !: keep 3c pressed
E-----3c-----|---!-----3c-----|
```

alternative pattern

```
---0-----|-----| picking pattern:
---4d---1a---0-----|-----| xc - a - xb - a - xb - a - xb - a
---|-----0-----|-----| xc - xb - xb - xb - x - x - x
---3c---2b---0-----0h2b---2b---| Hint
---3c-----|-----|
           ¼
```

... see, the number on the matchbook is old and ...

... a guy she said she knew well and sometimes ...

```
e-----0-----|-----0-----| picking pattern:
b-----1a-----1a-----|-----3d-----3d-----| x - a - b - xc - b - a - x - a ( 2x )
g-----2c-----2c-----|-----2c-----2c-----|
D-----2b-----|-----0-----|
A---0-----|-----| Hint
E-----2b-----|-----2b-----|
```

... faded ...
... hated ...

```
e-----0-----|-----|-----|-----|
b-----0-----0-----|-----3d-----3d-----3d-----3d-----|
g-----0-----0-----0-----0-----|-----2b-----2b-----2b-----2b-----|
D-----2c-----|-----0-----|-----2a-----0-----|
A---!-----|-----3c-----|-----|
E---0-----|-----|-----|
```

picking pattern:
x - a - b - xc - b - a - x - a
x - ab (4x)
!: grab 2b

<----- Hint ----->

alternative pattern

```
e-----0-----|-----0-----|
b-----1a-----1a-----|-----3d-----3d-----|
g-----2c-----2c-----|-----2c-----2c-----|
D-----2b-----|-----0-----|
A---0-----|-----|
E-----2b-----|-----2b-----|
```

picking pattern:
x - a - b - x - c - b - x - a (2x)

```
e-----0-----|-----|-----|-----|
b-----0-----0-----|-----3d-----3d-----3d-----3d-----|
g-----0-----0-----0-----0-----|-----2b-----2b-----2b-----2b-----|
D-----2c-----|-----0-----|
A---!-----|-----3c-----2a-----0-----|
E---0-----|-----|-----|
```

picking pattern:
x - a - b - x - c - b - x - a
xb - a - xb - a - xb - a - xb - a

<----- Hint ----->

||

CHORUS

... Isn't that the way they say it ...

```
e-----3d-----3d-----|-----0-----0-----|
b-----0-----0-----|-----1a-----1a-----|
g-----0-----0-----0-----0-----|-----0-----0-----0-----0-----|
D-----0-----0-----|-----2b-----|
A---!-----|-----3d-----3d-----|
E---3c-----3c-----|-----!-----3c-----|
```

picking pattern:
x - a - bc - x - a - bc - x - a (2x)
!: grab 2b and keep 3c pressed

alternative pattern (actually the way Croce plays it)

```
-----3d-----3d-----|
-----1a-----1a-----|
-----0-----0-----0-----0-----|
-----2b-----|
-----3c-----3c-----|
```

... goes? ... well, let's forget all that ... and ...

```
e-----3d-----3d-----|-----0-----0-----|
b-----0-----0-----|-----1a-----3d-----|
g-----0-----0-----0-----0-----|-----0-----2b-----2b-----|
D-----0-----|-----0-----|
A---!-----|-----3d-----0-----|
E---3c-----3c-----|-----!-----3c-----|
```

picking pattern:
x - a - bc - x - a - bc - x - a (2x)

... give me the number if you can find it ... so ...

```
e-----3d-----3d-----|-----0-----0-----|
b-----0-----0-----|-----1a-----1a-----|
g-----0-----0-----0-----0-----|-----2c-----2c-----0-----|
D-----0-----|-----2b-----|
A---!-----|-----0-----0-----|
E---3c-----3c-----|-----3c-----|
```

picking pattern:
x - a - bc - x - a - bc - x - a (2x)

... I can call just to tell 'em I'm fine and to ...

```
e-----|-----2a-----|
b---1a-----0-----|-----3b-----3b-----|
g-----0-----0-----0-----0-----|-----4d-----4d-----0-----|
D-----2b-----0-----|-----4c-----|
A---3c-----!-----|-----2a-----2a-----|
E-----3c-----|-----|
```

picking pattern:
xb - a - x - a (2x)
x - a - b - xc - b - a - x - a
!: grab 2b

<----- full barré ----->

<----- Hint ----->

... show ... I've overcome the ...

```
e-----0-----|-----|
b-----1a-----1a-----|-----3d-----|
g-----2c-----2c-----0-----|-----2b-----p-----p-----p-----|
D-----2b-----|-----0-----|
A---0-----|-----|
E-----|-----|
```

picking pattern:
x - a - bc - x - a - bc - x - a
a ~| (let ring)

¼ ¼ ¼ ¼

... blow, I've learned to take it well ... I only wish my ...

```
e-----0-----|-----0-----|
b-----1a-----1a-----|-----3d-----3d-----|
g-----0-----0-----0-----0-----|-----0-----0-----0-----0-----|
D-----2b-----|-----0-----|
A---3c-----3c-----|-----2b-----2b-----|
E-----|-----|
```

picking pattern:
x - a - b - xc - b - a - x - a (2x)

... words could just convince myself ... that it just wasn't ...

```
e-----0-----|-----0-----|
b-----1a-----1a-----|-----1a-----1a-----|
g-----2c-----2c-----2c-----|-----0-----0-----0-----|
D-----2b-----|-----2b-----|
A---0-----|-----|
E-----3d-----3d-----|
```

picking pattern:
x - a - b - xc - b - a - x - a (2x)

```

... real ... but that's not the way it ...
e-----0-----0-----|---0-----| picking pattern:
b-----3d-----3d-----|---1a-----| x - a - bc - x - a - bc - x - a
g-----2b-----2b-----0-----|---0-----p-----p-----| a ~† ( let ring )
D-----0-----0-----0-----|---2b-----|
A-----0-----0-----|---!-----| !: grab 3c
E-----|-----|

```

¼ ¼ ¼ ¼

INTERLUDE

```

... feels ...
e-----3d-----3d-----|-----2a-----| picking pattern:
b-----0-----0-----0-----|-----3b-----3b-----| x - a - bc - x - a - bc - x - a
g-----0-----0-----0-----|-----4d-----4d-----4d-----| x - a - b - xc - b - a - x - a
D-----0-----0-----0-----|-----4c-----4c-----|
A-----|-----2a-----2a-----|
E---3c-----3c-----|-----|

```

<----- full barré ----->

```

e-----0-----0-----|---0-----0-----| picking pattern:
b-----1a-----1a-----|-----4d:---1a-----3d-----| x - a - bc - x - a - bc - x - a
g-----2c-----2c-----0-----|-----2c-----| xc - xb - xb - x - a - bc
D-----2b-----2b-----|-----|
A---0-----0-----|---3c---2b:---0-----| Hint
E-----|-----2b-----/-----|

```

¼ ¼

2ND VERSE (same tab as 1st verse)

... Operator, well could you ...
 ... help me place this call? ...
 ... well, I can't read the number that you just ...
 ... gave me ...
 ... there's something in my eyes, you know it ...
 ... happens every time ...
 ... I think about a love that I thought would ...
 ... save me ...

CHORUS (same tab as above)

... Isn't that the way they say it ...
 ... goes? Well, let's forget all that ... and ...
 ... give me the number if you can find it ... so ...
 ... I can call just to tell 'em I'm fine and to ...
 ... show ... I've overcome the ...
 ... blow, I've learned to take it well ... I only wish my ...
 ... words could just convince myself ... that it just wasn't
 ... real, but that's not the way it ...

INTERLUDE (same tab as above)

... feels ... No, no, no, no ...
 ... that's not the way it ...

3RD VERSE (same tab as above)

... feels ...
 ... Operator, well let's for- ...
 ... get about this call ...
 ... there's no one there I really wanted to ...
 ... talk to ...
 ... thank you for your time, ah, you've been ...
 ... so much more than kind ...
 ... and you can keep the dime ...

CHORUS (same tab as above)

... Isn't that the way they say it ...
 ... goes? Well, let's forget all that ... and ...
 ... give me the number if you can find it ... so ...
 ... I can call just to tell 'em I'm fine and to ...
 ... show ... I've overcome the ...
 ... blow, I've learned to take it well ... I only wish my ...
 ... words could just convince myself ... that it just wasn't
 ... real, but that's not the way it ...

OUTRO (same tab as Intro)

... feels ...
 Finish the song with a G chord