

Bernard Herrmann's Score for

Cape Fear

and its Continued Relevance for

Young Film Composers

A Master's Thesis in Scoring for Film, Television

and Video Games

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Thesis Goal

Bernard Herrmann was an innovator in writing music to picture as an emotional narrative. He employed many techniques, in common usage today, that were not being used by the film composers of his day. His music was ahead of its time and is still relevant to the art and evolution of film music. My goal is to show what today's young film composer can learn from this master composer's approach to the score of *Cape Fear*.

About the Film

Cape Fear was released on April 12, 1962 and directed by J. Lee Thompson. This film is based on a novel called *The Executioners* written by John D. MacDonald. The story is about an attorney named Sam Bowden (Gregory Peck) whose family is stalked and terrorized by a criminal named Max Cady (Robert Mitchum) who was just released from jail. Cady holds Bowden personally responsible for his conviction of eight years after witnessing Cady in a crime of violence and testifying against him in court.

Bernard Herrmann's Film Scoring Innovations

A staple of Herrmann's style of composition was his use of unorthodox ensembles. "He frequently used unusual instruments or unique combinations of instruments, sometimes adding to or eliminating whole orchestra sections, and was among the first film composers to utilize electronic instruments".¹ Herrmann used a very unconventional ensemble to perform this score of *Cape Fear*. Four flutes (doubling on two piccolos, two alto flutes in G and two bass flutes in C), 8 French horns and a forty-six piece string section, a larger section than the usual film scoring orchestras at the time. Another example of unusual instrumentation is his score from *Journey to the Center of the Earth*, where he used no strings, only clarinets and bassoons in the woodwinds, four harps and two vibraphones in the percussion section.² This is in contrast to most of his contemporaries who used a typical symphony orchestra for the great movies of the 60's.

For *The Manchurian Candidate*, David Amram scored for a typical Hollywood full orchestra with solos by the trumpet section. Elmer Bernstein, a lifelong friend of Herrmann's, wrote the score for *To Kill a Mockingbird* using an orchestra composed of a small string section with horns and solos for piano, flute, accordion and celeste.³ Released in 1962, Maurice Jarre scored the film, *Lawrence of Arabia* using the entire London Symphony Orchestra. Also in contrast to Herrmann, Jarre mainly only used the harmonic minor scale for his score to *Lawrence of Arabia*.

Although Herrmann was primarily a tonal composer, some techniques of bitonality and atonality can be found throughout the score, for instance, in the cues "Cape Fear" and part of "Final Confrontation". It was unusual for the time to experiment with this kind of

¹ <http://www.yourdictionary.com/bernard-herrmann>

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<http://www.filmscoremonthly.com/board/posts.cfm?pageID=1&forumID=1&threadID=62814&archive=0>

³ <http://www.frankwbaker.com/MUSIC.htm>

forward thinking, but worked perfectly for a thriller movie such as this. For the acclaimed thriller, *The Manchurian Candidate*, of the year 1962, not only was Amram's style was very tonal and straightforward, but used grand, overarching themes for the film.

The "cell motif", as first used by Bernard Herrmann, was a departure from the long phrases and leitmotifs that were commonly employed at the time. The leitmotif comes from opera and concert music and it is a musical phrase that is tied to a person or place and it is performed whenever that character or place are shown. Herrmann used phrases no longer than a second or two, which is too short to be considered a leitmotif. He used this because the musical phrases were attached to the emotions of the characters rather than the characters themselves and they were performed whenever a certain emotion was being portrayed in the film. He has said in an interview, "I think a short phrase has got certain advantages. Because I don't like the leitmotif system. The short phrase is easier to follow for an audience, who listen with only half an ear. Don't forget that the best they do is half an ear. You know, the reason I don't like this tune business is that a tune has to have eight or sixteen bars, which limits you as a composer. Once you start, you've got to finish eight or sixteen bars. Otherwise, the audience doesn't know what the hell it's all about. It's putting handcuffs on yourself."⁴

Bernard Herrmann did whatever it took to be able to express the emotional content of the film as he felt it. This is something that young composers of today can learn from. Although it is a fine line to walk when working with directors, writing with one's own musical conviction can lead to new sounds and approaches, possibly adding to the lexicon of film music.

⁴ <http://www.bernardherrmann.org/articles/an-interview-with-bernard-herrmann>

The Motifs

Here are transcriptions in piano reduction form for the main two motifs that Herrmann utilized in this score. While not officially named, I have taken the liberty to name these myself according to what kind of emotions they portray when used throughout the film.

Revenge Motif



The Revenge Motif is presented in piano reduction form. It consists of three measures in 4/4 time. The treble clef staff contains a sequence of chords: a G4 half note, a G4-A4-B4 triad, a G4-A4-B4-C5 triad, and a G4-A4-B4-C5 triad. The bass clef staff contains a whole rest in each measure. The key signature has one flat (B-flat).

Malice Motif



The Malice Motif is presented in piano reduction form. It consists of five measures in 4/4 time. The treble clef staff contains a sequence of chords: a G4-A4-B4-C5 triad, a G4-A4-B4-C5 triad, a G4-A4-B4-C5 triad, a G4-A4-B4-C5 triad, and a G4-A4-B4-C5 triad. The bass clef staff contains a sequence of notes: a G3 half note, an A3 quarter note, a B3 quarter note, a C4 quarter note, a D4 quarter note, an E4 quarter note, a F4 quarter note, and a G4 quarter note. The key signature has one flat (B-flat).

Score Analysis

The titles of each cue are from the official soundtrack and were named by Herrmann himself. Some of the cues in the soundtrack were cut from the final film and replaced by source music or silence. I have listed these cues as “unused” and note their corresponding times in which they would have been heard in the picture.

“Main Title”: [0:00:00]

The Revenge cell emerges right in the beginning with a strong entrance. The horns start off this motif alone in the mid-low register for a more sinister sound. This descending four-note pattern is the motif that is used as the theme for the emotion of revenge. The Malice cell of this theme uses a descending chromatic line in the violins with a counter-line in the horns and low strings. This cue follows Max Cady as he makes his way to the courthouse and into the courtroom where Sam Bowden is.

“The Courtroom”: [0:03:23]

This cue starts with some high strings to give an eerie feeling that Max is watching Sam in the background. When Max stands up, there is a stinger in the music that accents his intention to follow Sam out of the building. The tension mounts with tremolo strings as Sam walks to his car outside, as Max is not far behind. Another sharp accent is played when Max pulls the keys out of Sam’s car. This figure is very reminiscent of the ending of the famous shower scene cue from Alfred Hitchcock’s *Psycho*, which was also scored by Herrmann. In the body of Herrmann’s work, he is known to have recycled some ideas from his previous compositions. For example, he reused music from his score to *The Ghost and Mrs. Muir* in his piece *Wuthering Heights*⁵. This figure when Max pulls the keys out of Sam’s car may be one

⁵ From “Bernard Herrmann’s *The Ghost and Mrs. Muir*: A Film Score Guide”, pg. 76

of those re-used ideas.

“Car Keys/The House”: [0:05:27]

The “Car Keys” cue begins as Sam is driving away from Max. It is very short at only five seconds, but it acts as a bridge between the unpleasant conversation that Max and Sam had to the next cue, “The House”. This cue is quite different from the rest, as it attempts to capture the ideal innocence of Sam’s family and home. Staccato flutes carry the main melody here, creating a happy, cheerful mood while the strings underneath are still quite dark in their harmony. This is to show that even though nothing seems to be troubling in this particular scene, there is still danger and darkness lurking out of their awareness.

“Bowling Alley”: [0:07:47]

This cue starts off when Sam is about to bowl, when he looks up and sees Max sitting there. This theme is a variation of the Malice cell in the Main Tiles of the film. The downward moving chromatic line is ornamented by an angular motif on the low strings of the violins. As Sam turns to face away from Max, the violins go up an octave and replace the staccato line with a more expressive, legato line. This creates a sense of the uneasiness and worry that Sam is feeling for his family at that moment. Once Sam sits back down, Max gets up and starts walking toward Sam. This is when the staccato line comes back, as the sense of danger is heightened.

“The Barking Dog”: [0:17:19]

This cue acts as a bridge between when Sam is interrogating Max about stalking him, and a scene where Sam is in his office at home. Muted horns are the main instruments in this cue, which are doing a repeated ostinato in close harmony while the string section is

providing an eerie texture with some counter lines. The mood is very dark and sinister, which is a contrast from the cue that was previously used at Sam's home earlier in the film. This is because in the previous scene, Sam tells Max to stay off his property and Max just simply laughs. This cue reflects the realization that Max will not give up on his dangerous obsession of Sam and his family.

“The Dog is Poisoned”: [0:18:57]

After Sam's wife, Peggy Bowden, calls his name twice (funny how the same sample was edited one right after the other), this cue starts with high strings in a brisker tempo that evokes danger and panic. This motif uses a similar downward-moving chromatic pattern like the one used in the theme for Max. This subconsciously implies that he had something to do with the dog becoming poisoned.

“The Dream/After the Dream”: [0:21:54]

The start of this cue sounds like it fades in from some place in the middle rather than having a clean beginning. The flutes have a mysterious and dark quality with their arpeggios that reflects the thoughts and dreams of Peggy as she is sleeping in her bed late at night. These consist of her worrying about her family because of the threat of Max. After this, Peggy wakes up and the music crossfades into the next cue, “After the Dream” at [0:22:47]. This starts again with the malice cell of the Main Title theme. This theme appears because of Peggy's feeling of worry that Sam is not in bed and that she is alone. It created a feeling of uneasiness similar to when Max is present in a scene. When Peggy opens the door to her room, the music changes to become quiet and suspenseful to evoke Peggy's feelings about her fear of what's around the corner. As she moves down the staircase, the music gets a bit more intense and louder, adding more instruments like clarinet. When Peggy sees what

looks like a person at the bottom of the stairs, she gasps and the music gets cut off abruptly by an edit in the middle of a chord.

“Sam Talks to the Police”: [0:24:37]

This short cue acts as a bridge between when Sam walks back to his house after talking to the police, and the next day in the courtroom. Again, it utilizes the malice cell from the Main Title theme, but this time it is twice as fast in order to create a smooth music phrase in the short time Herrmann had to score this scene.

“An Evening With Max Cady”: [0:31:41]

This simple short cue acts as a bridge between when Sam is talking to Police Chief Mark Dutton and a shot of the interior of Max’s car with Diane Taylor, a girl he supposedly met that night (it was hinted they would meet earlier in the movie). The low strings are playing loud staccato eighth notes in a half-step ostinato, while the violins are sustaining a half-step trill. This evokes the danger that Diane is in for getting close to Max. This cue sounds like it goes on longer than what is in the film. It is a longer duration in the soundtrack release, with an additional section that was meant for the scene inside the interior of the car. Instead it is cut off abruptly by an edit and is replaced by jazz source music coming from the car radio.

“The Pick-Up”: [0:33:34]

Some strings in the lower register start this cue off by slowly alternating between two chords that have a creepy and brooding sound as Max walks slowly across the room to the bed where Diane is laying down. The music changes as Diane opens her eyes to see Max standing at the side of the bed. The tones of the low strings are elongated and become lower

and more bass heavy. As Diane becomes more aware of what is going on and becomes more frightened, the basses start playing heavy quarter notes to raise the tension of the scene. The tension mounts even further as the camera cuts between Diane and Max. The whole string section starts an accelerando and ends on a low sustained bass note when Diane attempts to escape, but is caught by Max.

At [0:34:51] the second part of the cue begins with a cut to outside of the apartment with Private Detective Charles Sievers and two police officers. The intensity doesn't let up as the strings play a repeated figure that captures the sense of urgency in the officers to catch and arrest Max. When the officers enter the house, muted horns (from "The Barking Dog" cue) take over for the violins on the same rhythmic pattern. When they open the door, the rhythmic movement stops and music turns much more suspenseful with held out tremolo chords by the strings and the melody taken by the muted horns. A strong harmonic change signals the police officer's reaction to finding Diane (off camera) in the room. When he comes around to the other side of the bed, the music ends with an accented staccato chord by the strings with the tail of the chord being held out by the muted horns.

"The Girl is Found": [0:35:46] 36:19 (extra cue)

The start of this very short cue accents the surprise the audience has when Diane turns her head suddenly to reveal bruises on her face. It is a bit over the top with the high romantic tragedy-sounding strings as if to highlight something big in an opera. This cue is short, as it begins at the reveal of her face to becoming a bridge to a scene outside of the room with the police officers and Charles.

"The Girl Refuses to Testify": [0:41:31]

This cue starts the same way as "The Girl is Found" except that instead of being

loud and bombastic to create shock value, this is soft and slowly creeps into the background after Charles asks Diane one last time if she will testify in court. This is the same until Diane gets halfway down the stairs and turns around. The music is extended at this point and takes on a tragic, somber tone to reflect Diane's sad apology to Sam for not testifying. The scene switches back to Sam and Charles, but the cue still keeps going. It finally ends when Sam and Charles are talking and we hear Diane close the front door. It sounds like the music was cut off at this point in an edit, but it works fine because Diane left, so there is no need for the music to be present any longer.

“Cady at the Boat Dock”: [0:44:28]

When Sam walks out of the building and spots Max, muted horns are the first thing we hear, accompanied by violin trills and movement in the lower strings and brass. This evokes a sense of danger as Sam is walking up to Max to confront him. When Sam stops next to Max and starts talking to him, the music also stops moving and just holds on one chord to add suspense and intrigue of what is going to happen next.

“At the School”: [0:46:01]

The strong beginning of this cue indicates Nancy Bowden's realization that the man her father was talking to was in fact Max Cady. Whole note trills in the violins start off the cascade of whole note trills in the violas next, and then the cellos and the basses. When the film switches scenes to Nancy's school, low basses introduce a brooding atmosphere to mirror Nancy's fear of Max. A new theme is introduced in the strings and creates a suspenseful atmosphere as Nancy gets into the car. When the film shows Max walking past the park fountain, the same whole note trill figure in the strings is re-introduced before the new theme comes back to reinforce the nervousness that Nancy feels. The cue is cut off at

[0:47:21] when Nancy turns on the car radio in an attempt to calm her nerves and jazz source music starts playing. This source music continues until Nancy gets out of the car.

“Cady Stalks the Daughter”: [0:48:04]

Nancy’s fear and panic of Max stalking her is what inspires this fast paced and intense cue. This interesting rhythm in 9/8 switches back and forth between the horns and tremolo strings and, like all of the motifs related to the fear of Max Cady, is highly chromatic. As Nancy tries to get inside the front door of the school, the rhythm switches between high strings and low strings. When Nancy does not succeed in opening the door, she runs away from Max towards the rear of the school. Here is when the motif switches between strings and flutes. At [0:48:44] there is an obvious post-production edit in the music where it is cut off and the cue starts again using the same rhythmic pattern as before, only this time it switches between violins and a combination of low strings and horns. When Nancy runs into the building, she hides behind a piece of machinery. This is when the motion in the music stops and a slow, creepy version of the malice cell of the main theme comes back to add suspense to the situation. When Nancy hears someone coming, she panics and starts running away again. This is when the music goes back to the 9/8 pattern, switching between horns and strings with flutes. As she hides behind the lockers, the slow section comes back with only strings. A strange edit happens here when the film switches back to Nancy after showing the man walk down the stairs. Only a portion of the 9/8 pattern with horns is played for only a second to enhance her increasing panic. This time when Nancy starts running again, the music does not change and stays on the slow, creepy section. It is only once she starts opening the window that the odd pattern comes back, alternating between horns and horns with flutes. A low note in the cellos and basses accent the reveal of the man who was walking down the stairs. It is only the janitor and not Max Cady. The film switches to Nancy

running outside and the strings come back playing the rhythm, but only part of it. A high note in the flutes reflects how startled Nancy is when she accidentally runs right into Max Cady.

This is edited to fade out for some reason. I suppose it is because they wanted silence there for the shock of the situation. Nancy starts running again with the same pattern in the string before a car almost hits her. Here the muted horns play one last shocking tone that leaves the audience wondering if she is going to be all right.

“Sam Gets a Gun”: [0:51:20]

Sam runs through the front door of his house and the music starts in an intense way with the strings. Another downward moving chromatic line is utilized to suggest that the panic that Sam is feeling is related to Max. Flutes enter when Sam is in the room to bring out the character of Nancy and to give the music a softer touch to show that she is alright. When Sam starts to leave the room, the music takes a darker tone and the violins hold out an ominous chord to reflect Sam’s feeling of anger towards Max for stalking his daughter. Flutes enter again to show Peggy Bowden’s concern for her husband. Sam enters his office and the music becomes much more ominous with the addition of low basses and muted horns. The horns accent the moment when Sam puts the gun under his belt and the figure with the basses and horns continue until the moment when Peggy stops Sam to persuade him not to leave. The way the music fades out is very subtle and the typical viewer may not even notice that the music faded away at this point.

“Sam Returns Home”: [0:52:42]

This cue starts the same way as the last one with strings only and then goes into the rhythmic pattern of the “ “ cue, but a little bit faster. The line modulates up chromatically a few times while Peggy is taking on the phone to create a sensation of high tension. When

Sam walks through the door. The volume of the music is noticeably raised in post-production to accent that moment and because Peggy is not talking anymore. A variation of the malice cell of Max's theme is played by the string section while Sam slowly walks over to Peggy this continues until Sam hugs his wife.

“Cady is Attacked/Cady Calls Sam”: [1:02:40] (unused, jazz source music instead)

“Sam Leaves the Case to the Judge”: [1:07:19]

A four note motif is played that is similar to the one played in the very beginning of the film. The first time, the muted horns play the first two notes and then the cellos and basses play the next two notes. The second time the motif plays the flutes play the first two notes and the violins play the next two. The final time the motif plays, it is played by all of the strings doing tremolo.

“Cape Fear”: [1:10:09]

When the camera pans to show the sign that reads “Cape Fear River”, muted horns accent the sign that is the namesake of the film and alludes to a dark mood that will be happening there later in the film. Intense spiccato strings in eighth notes give a forward moving motion to the boat moving across the river. Moving up and down in half steps, this adds a sense of danger to the area that Sam and his family are in. Muted horns come in before the shot of the houseboat and play a figure that is similar to the one at the start of “The Barking Dog”. As the camera pans up towards the houseboat, violins hold out a note while the flutes play a tonal cluster and the low strings come in with the underlying harmony after that. I especially like the choice of low string harmony here. It really gives the scene a chilling and brooding atmosphere. When the film cuts to Sam's family unpacking their things

inside the houseboat, the cue fades out a bit prematurely because of a post-production edit.

“Farewell”: [1:11:48]

This cue begins with a sweet sounding melody in the violins to show the love between Sam and Peggy. The melody and harmony with the rest of the strings also have a bit of sadness to it as Sam is driving his boat away from the houseboat because Sam’s wife and daughter are worried about their safety with Sam gone. When the film cuts to the plane that Sam is pretending to go on, the strings accents this cut and changes the mood to dark and suspenseful because there is a chance that Sam’s plan will not work.

“Sound of a Boat at Night”: (unused)

“Sam Arrives at the Houseboat”: [1:15:25]

The cue starts out with soft, creepy, suspenseful chords in the low register of the violins and flue section. It attempts to reflect the fear that Peggy and Nancy have that the boat that just docked at the houseboat might be Max Cady. The music rises in intensity as Peggy opens the door, adding the low basses and bass flutes. As a man gets out of the boat, muted horns enter the atmosphere, alluding to the option that Max Cady might be this man. As Peggy and Nancy realize that the man is Sam, the muted horns release the tension by going down in half steps and adding the basses playing a final held out note.

“The River at Night”: (unused)

“Cady Spies on the House”: [1:18:01]

The flutes enter when Sam gives his instructions to Charlie over the phone. This is

a reverse of the four-note pattern at the beginning of the film. When the film switches over to Charlie's house, we see Max there behind a tree spying on Charlie. The music uses the malice cell of the main theme with the strings, but this time it is soft and mysterious and also uses the same rhythmic pattern as "The Barking Dog". When the film shows the case that Charlie is holding, the music changes a bit to match the scene. The violins have the main melody now and the flutes are doing the rhythmic pattern. As Charlie drives away, the rhythmic pattern is now played on the violins using the pizzicato technique and the melody is handed over to the cellos and basses. The film fades to a scene where Charlie is driving up to a gas station and there is a post-production edit here. The music cuts to the strings holding a tutti whole tone trill and does some additional tutti hits afterwards to add tension to the scene because Charlie is worried that Max may be following him to where Sam is hiding out. The film cuts to Sam and his daughter playing ping-pong and the music goes back to the beginning of this cue where the flutes are playing the four-note pattern in reverse. The cue ends after Sam picks up the phone. I feel like this last section was added on in post-production by re-using the start of this cue.

"Cady on the River": [1:20:45]

Muted horns start this cue off with the rhythm of the last cue while the cellos play the main theme when Max is shown on screen. The rhythmic aspect of the music starts to switch between the muted horns and pizzicato violins in the low register as Max watches Charlie sail down the river. When the film fades to the boathouse, flutes enter with a close-harmony chord and violins start a melody for the girls' fear of Max. This scene ends with the cellos doing the four-note motif in the beginning of the film. The film switches to Charlie sailing down the river after coming back from the boathouse. The violins have a sixteenth-note ostinato pattern that repeats after each chord played by the low strings. The muted horns

have a counter-line that repeats rhythmically after each chord change. It seems this was conducted in free time, possibly with punches and streamers to picture. This pattern keeps repeating as Max starts to move with his boat down the river and it get more intense and louder as the flutes enter with trills and more counter-lines and harmonies. At [1:23:09] some source jazz music starts playing from the small phonograph in Nancy's room in the shack near the houseboat.

At [1:23:26] the second entrance of this cue begins. Violins and violas start off with slow sustained chords that set the mood of unease and suspense. When Max is shown on screen, muted horns enter with a downward chromatic moving line, relating to the main theme's malice cell. The harmony changes slightly for when Max's binoculars zoom in on Peggy. It is interesting to note that when Max moves his view over to where Nancy is, the jazz source music is still playing over the cue written for the scene. They are both written in different keys, so it creates a rather interesting dissonance that I think only adds to the suspense and creepiness of the atmosphere. The flutes come in with the melody while the cellos and basses play the harmony when Max's view turns back to Peggy. When the film goes back to Sam, the violins enter with the same line that the muted horns were playing near the beginning of the cue. At [1:25:43] when Max starts getting into the water, there is a small edit where the previous violin phrase is extended for a second time. Nancy kicks the can by accident and the flute section with pizzicato basses start playing the malice cell from the main theme again. As Max starts getting closer to the houseboat, the melody is handed to the violas and cellos while the violins give a slight rhythmic pulse in the background. As Max is looking at Nancy through her window the rhythmic pizzicato moves to the violas and cellos and the melody is moved to the basses. Once Max starts reaching for the rope above him, the basses hold a low note and it immediately gets cut off when Deputy Kersek slaps himself to get rid of a mosquito. This makes a loud sound that gets Max's attention, and so it disperses

the tense atmosphere for a moment.

“Final Confrontation”: [1:28:21]

This cue is quite a bit longer than all of the others because it encompasses the entire end sequence of the film, so I will describe this cue in multiple parts according to their start and end times.

Part 1 [1:28:21]: As Max surprises Kersek from behind, there is a strong upwards glissando from the horn section that really captures the shock that Kersek feels. Some odd-metered accents from the cello and bass sections give this scene a forward moving motion that adds to the intense action. As Max pulls Kersek underwater, muted horns let the audience know that this is an act of evil from Max. Kersek starts drowning, and the accents from the strings and the horns start getting slower and slower, because Kersek is slowly losing his strength against Max. A chromatically ascending three-note pattern is played three times. The first time, the strings and horns play it loud because Max is about to push Kersek into the water for the final time. The second time, muted horns play it a bit softer because Kersek is now underwater and completely loses his strength. The third time, tremolo strings play the figure to create a more chilling sound because Kersek is finally dead and Max has won and is about to go after Sam’s family. When the film cuts to Max detaching the houseboat from the dock, flutes come in with a figure from the main titles cue. This figure is handed off to the strings when Max finally succeeds in detaching the rope, because it is more intense and shows that everything is going according to plan for Max. It is handed back to the flutes when the film switches to Peggy noticing that something is wrong, and back to the strings when the film shows Sam also noticing that something is not right. Cellos then play another downward moving figure while the violins tremolo to create suspense once Sam runs to the houseboat and it starts moving. When Sam shouts “Kersek!” the horns come in to

show that what Sam is going to see when he finds Kersek is the work of Max. Sam shouts his name a second time and the music goes back to the start of this cue, with the horns playing the upward moving glissando. This is because Sam is at the exact place where Max killed Kersek, but the emotion is at the same level of panic. When Sam discovers that Kersek is dead, the horns and flutes play a strange chord that is meant to be shocking, while the strings accent this with pizzicatos. Once Sam sees that the houseboat is moving away from him, tremolo strings create a sense of dread as he puts Kersek's body back on the shore and goes after the houseboat. The cue is cut off at [1:30:23] when the film cuts to the houseboat's front doorknob turning slowly. I feel that this scene where Max confronts Peggy was left without music in post-production because it creates a much more tense atmosphere.

Part 2 [1:30:44]: Fast spiccato strings start this cue off because Sam is in a panic and is trying to get Nancy's attention. This continues as Sam is telling Nancy his instructions. When Nancy goes back inside her room to call the police, the door closes and the basses start playing a very ominous ostinato pattern. The film cuts to Sam running and the music also cuts with it as an edit back to the spiccato string pattern to move with the action and suspense. The cue ends with a low, ominous note from the basses at [1:31:29] when the film cuts to Peggy face to face with Max.

Part 3 [1:34:15]: This cue starts with strings playing a sixteenth-note ostinato pattern to raise the intensity of the action as Sam busts through the door of the houseboat to save Peggy. Muted horns enter with a fast passage when Sam tries to get a door open inside, while basses play a counterline melody that is dark sounding. The whole thing modulates up as Sam explores more of the houseboat in his desperate attempt to find Peggy. When Sam stops to look around slowly, the fast music keeps going, which I think may be an editing mistake because the fast passage stops shortly after that to go into a slow and brooding passage in the low strings. I think that this slow passage should have come earlier when Sam

stops in his tracks, instead of after that happens. This cue fades out and ends at [1:35:15] when Peggy realizes that the man who is holding her is not Max, but Sam.

Part 4 [1:35:33]: A brooding bassline in the low strings enters as Nancy is trying to contact the police. This continues as Max approaches her locked door and tries to open it to get to her. When Nancy gets up to try and run away, there is a post-production edit, and the music of “Cady Stalks the Daughter” starts to play because there is a similar situation going on in this scene that is like the one at Nancy’s school earlier in the film. This music continues as Max makes his way into Nancy’s room and when he enters and stops to look around for her, a low note in the strings is held out to signal that he made his way in and bad things are about to happen. This note is held until it fades out at [1:36:26] when the cue ends.

Part 5 [1:37:25]: When Max walks over and grabs Nancy, the same music of “Cady Stalks the Daughter” plays again because this is the theme of Nancy’s fear. This plays all the way through when Max carries Nancy out of the shack and takes her somewhere else. The music is abruptly cut off by a bad edit at [1:38:04] and the film cuts to Sam swimming to save his daughter. Intense tremolo strings enhance the fear and desperation of Sam as he runs ashore. Max takes him by surprise and grabs him and the strings and horns perform an exciting rhythmic ostinato that reflects Sam’s struggle to break out of Max’s chokehold on him. When they both start fighting in the water, the upward glissando of the horns comes back because the same motif is used when Max and Kersek were struggling in the water. When Sam is held underwater, the open horns start playing muted to give Sam’s perspective that all sounds to him are now muffled because he is being held underwater. The violins do a very interesting improvisational-like tremolo and staccato pattern that sound as if they are like Sam struggling to breathe. Max throws Sam into the water once he thinks he is dead and the low strings do a final, grim note that implies that the struggle is over.

Part 6 [1:39:49]: Sam picks up a rock from the riverbed and hits Max in the head

with it. The moment this happens, the malice cell of the main theme is played, but in an intense rhythmic style to enhance the emotion of anger and desperation that Sam is experiencing in that moment. This pattern continues as Sam runs ashore to guide his daughter out of there and away from danger. The horns play the melody in the legato style over the rhythmic strings as he tells Nancy to run and hide. The camera cuts to Max, and muted horns are heard to re-enforce the character of Max. Whole note trills are played in the strings like in “At the School”, and a low dissonant note is played in the basses as Max gets out of the water to enhance his evil ambition.

Part 7 [1:40:42]: As Max picks up a wooden pole with a spike on it, he slams it down in anger on the rock next to him and the next cue starts. The familiar muted horns return, as well as a chromatic ostinato pattern in the low strings to fuel Max’s desire to murder Sam. This continues as Max looks around in an attempt to find Sam and when he finally does, the music slows down to add tension to the situation until Max attempts to swing and hit Sam. The spike hits a tree instead and the violins come in with a sixteenth note ostinato pattern that is similar to the one used when Sam hit Max with the rock. It also utilizes the malice cell of the main theme as well. At the point where they stop chasing each other, heavy notes in the bass play slower than the previous tempo to raise the tension if Sam is going to be found or not. The malice cell of the main theme is played slowly and softly and mirrors Max when he decides to sneak around to surprise Sam. This continues as Sam crawls through the tall grass in an attempt to grab his gun and Max tries to follow his movements. When Max tries to hit Sam’s hand with the spike, Sam grabs the gun first and shoots Max. The music fades out here at [1:43:07] and the only accent of this moment is that of the sound of the gun.

“Finale”: [1:44:40]

As the camera pans out from Max and Sam, the malice cell from the main theme is heard yet again. The theme is played just how it was in the beginning of the film as the film switches to Sam and his family riding on a boat back to their home. The violins present the main theme here as the credits show up on screen. After this, the horns play the “struggle” theme that was present when Max was fighting both Kersek and Sam in the water at those points in the film. Three huge chords play at the end of the film when the words “The End” show up on screen. The last chord is a unison tonic with the full ensemble, so it is clear that this is the very end of the film.

Adaption of the Score

Even in modern adaptations, Herrmann's music still works and has the power to perfectly support and enhance the emotions of the characters in the film and the emotions of the audience. For the remake of *Cape Fear* released in 1991, Martin Scorsese, the director, wanted to use Herrmann's original score for his film. Elmer Bernstein was hired to arrange and orchestrate it. "Bernstein needed to choose where he could move cues to complementary places in the new film, compose cues for new sequences, and do all of that without harming the integrity of Herrmann's highly distinct sound".⁶ The adaptation uses the "Revenge" motif often in the film during the action scenes, as there is action in this version. His perfect capture of Herrmann's instrumentation makes this film have the sound as if Herrmann wrote it himself. Decades later, in a completely different context, the score was adapted again, this time for an episode of *The Simpsons*. This episode, entitled *Cape Feare*, was originally aired on October 7, 1993. Using elements of the Cape Fear score from 1991, as arranged by Elmer Bernstein, it was a spoof of the original Cape Fear story with the character "Sideshow Bob" replacing Max Cady as the villain. In this episode, the four-note "revenge" motif is used as Sideshow Bob's theme. It continued to be his theme in future episodes of the series.⁷

⁶ http://www.filmtracks.com/titles/cape_fear.html

⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cape_Feare

Final Thoughts

Bernard Herrmann's personality and attitude towards the music that he wrote for the film he worked on was extremely passionate. He had a definitive and clear vision of every work that he produced and was also a difficult person to work and collaborate with to alter that vision.⁸ Even though following this attitude may not be such a good idea in the world of the film industry today, young film composers can learn something from Herrmann's passion for his work. Whenever a film director hires a composer to score their film, they are inadvertently hiring them to put their own personal touch and feeling into the film to enhance it. Herrmann was extremely confident in his own work and I think that film composers today should look at his life and become inspired to reach the same amount of passion and confidence in their own work. For the perfect example of this, you need to look no further than the classic score of *Cape Fear*.

⁸ <http://www.bernardherrmann.org/articles/bio-troublewithbenny>

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