
Tabset: **Movie Collection**

This demonstration tabset shows how a collection of items might be catalogued using the RecordsKeeper. In this case, it is a movie or video collection, and the information collected includes synopses and extensive background material on the movies themselves. The data is simply copied from public domain text on the internet and pasted into the datafields. Were this latter data more dynamic, it might be better to point to a website, but if the latter approach is taken, the information cannot be printed in the RecordsKeeper reports.

Tab: **Super VHS Movies**

Catalog and overviews of all Super VHS Movies

Genre: **Thriller** **Record #: 1**

Movie Title: Cape Fear

Year and Timing: 1991 (2 hours, 7 min.)

Directed by: Martin Scorsese

Starring: Robert De Niro, Nick Nolte, Juliette Lewis, Jessica Lange

Location: Bottom Drawer # 34

Rating: R

Plot Synopsis: Max Cady is released from prison after serving a sentence for assault and rape, and insidiously invades the family life of the attorney who failed to defend him, plotting brutal revenge.

Reviews and Notes: *Cape Fear* is a [1991 thriller](#) film, directed by [Martin Scorsese](#). It is a remake of the [1962 film of the same name](#) and tells the story of a family man, a former [public defender](#), whose family is threatened by a convicted rapist who wants vengeance for having been imprisoned for 14 years because of the lawyer's purposefully faulty [defense](#) tactics, prejudicing the accused. It received Academy Award nominations for Best Actor ([Robert De Niro](#)) and Best Supporting Actress ([Juliette Lewis](#)). The two were also nominated for Golden Globe Awards.

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Plot

Sam Bowden ([Nick Nolte](#)) is a former Atlanta public defender who is now in private practice in the quiet town of New Essex, North Carolina. [Max Cady](#) ([Robert De Niro](#)) is a client Sam defended 14 years prior to the setting of the movie. Cady, who was being tried for the rape and battery of a young woman, was illiterate at the time of the trial and was unable to read a report Sam kept hidden from him and the court that revealed the young woman Cady raped to have been promiscuous. The report might well have lightened Cady's sentence or even acquitted him had Sam brought it to light.

After his release from prison, Cady seeks out Sam, revealing to him that the once-illiterate ex-con learned to read in prison and even assumed his own defense, unsuccessfully appealing his conviction several times. Cady also hints strongly to Sam that he has learned about the buried report, noting that the judge and the prosecutor in his case were trying to do right by their jobs. Knowing that he has a major problem on his hand, Sam attempts to bribe Cady to make him go away, an offer Cady dismisses with laughter.

Several incidents involving Cady begin to impact the Bowden family, which consists of Sam's wife Leigh ([Jessica Lange](#)) and their teenage daughter Danielle ([Juliette Lewis](#)). The family dog is mysteriously poisoned and Sam sees Cady at night perched on the wall just outside his property limits. Sam attempts to have Cady arrested but has no real evidence to support charging Cady with a crime.

Before long, Cady ups the ante. While at a bar, he seduces a female colleague of Sam's, Lori Davis ([Illeana Douglas](#)) into having sex with him. After playfully toying with her, he breaks her arm and savagely bites the flesh off her cheek. He then proceeds to brutally beat and rape her. Sam meets a wounded Lori in a hospital, where she refuses to press charges against Cady out of fear. Cady also approaches Danielle at her school by pretending to be her new drama teacher and nearly seduces her, going so far as to kiss her. These incidents lead Sam to buy a gun and hire a private investigator named Kersak ([Joe Don Baker](#)) to follow Cady. Eventually, Kersak persuades Sam to hire three men to beat Cady in an effort to intimidate him but, as Sam watches the assault in horror from a hiding place, Cady turns the tide on his attackers and beats them into submission.

Before the assault, Sam approached Cady in a restaurant and warned him to leave town or suffer the consequences. Cady surreptitiously taped the conversation, and uses the recording (and an exaggerated display of his own injuries) to file for a restraining order against Sam. Cady's lawyer, Lee Heller ([Gregory Peck](#)) also files a complaint against Sam with the North Carolina State Bar. Sam and Kersak reason that Cady may try to enter the Bowden house during Sam's appearance at a Bar hearing out of town. They fake Sam's departure for the hearing and hole up at the house,

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hoping that Cady will break in so that Sam can shoot and kill him with impunity. As they wait, however, Sam suddenly realizes that Cady must have already been inside the house when he poisoned the dog. At that moment, Cady attacks and kills Kersak in the Bowden kitchen and Sam, Leigh and Dani discover his body together with that of the Bowdens' housekeeper. Horrified, they flee in a car to their boat, which is docked upstate along [Cape Fear](#). Cady follows them by literally tying himself to the underbelly of the Bowdens' car. That night, Cady attacks the family on the boat, beating and tying up Sam, and preparing to rape both Leigh and Dani while Sam watches. Dani manages to temporarily avert the nightmare by spraying Cady with lighter fluid while he lights a [cigar](#), causing the psychopath to jump off the boat into the water in order to put out the flames that are consuming him. Cady clings to a rope tied to the boat, however, and pulls himself back onboard. As the boat is being torn apart in a violent storm raging outside, Cady finally confronts Sam in a mock trial over Sam's actions while defending Cady. Sam admits to burying the potentially exculpatory report but counters that the woman's promiscuity was no justification for raping her and that Cady is a menace. Enraged, Cady prepares to kill Sam but the storm finally causes the boat to break up, allowing Sam to gain the upper hand once the women make it to shore. Sam and Cady fight furiously, both releasing their frustration all at once. Sam gains the upper hand, and is about to crush Cady's head with a large stone, when the tide drags Cady out to sea.

Sam washes Cady's blood off his hands, symbolically cleansing him of the crime of not giving Cady the proper assistance of counsel. At the movie's conclusion, Dani reads aloud from a chronicle she wrote of the family's ordeal that summer.

Cast

- [Nick Nolte](#) - Sam Bowden
- [Robert De Niro](#) - [Max Cady](#)
- [Jessica Lange](#) - Leigh Bowden
- [Juliette Lewis](#) - Danielle Bowden
- [Joe Don Baker](#) - Claude Kersek
- [Robert Mitchum](#) - Lieutenant Elgart
- [Gregory Peck](#) - Lee Heller
- [Martin Balsam](#) - Judge
- [Illeana Douglas](#) - Lori Davis
- [Fred Dalton Thompson](#) - Tom Broadbent

Mitchum, Peck, and Balsam all starred in the 1962 original but in different roles for the 1991 version. In the original, Mitchum was Cady and Peck was Bowden. This was also Gregory Peck's final theatrical film.

Background

The film was adapted by [Wesley Strick](#) from the original [screenplay](#) by [James R. Webb](#), which was an adaptation from the [novel](#) [The Executioners](#) by [John D. MacDonald](#).

It was nominated for [Academy Awards](#) for [Best Actor in a Leading Role](#) (Robert De Niro, lost to [Anthony Hopkins](#)) and [Best Actress in a Supporting Role](#) (Juliette Lewis, lost to [Mercedes Ruehl](#)). The film was a box-office success and received critical acclaim.

The film expands on the original's themes in some depth, changing relationships (the drifter Cady assaults is now a legal clerk who is in love with Nick Nolte's Bowden) and adding more complex background details. Nolte's Sam Bowden is morally flawed and, therefore, his resorting to violence is less surprising than in the original. Cady is presented as having a justified motive to pursue Bowden, because of Bowden's deliberate negligence of care during his original trial.

One of the major criticisms of the original film was that Gregory Peck, who played Sam Bowden, was clearly the physical superior of Robert Mitchum's Max Cady, particularly the fact that he was much taller. In this film, Nick Nolte was clearly taller than Robert DeNiro, but both respectively lost weight and developed their muscles until DeNiro was clearly the stronger man.

The film was parodied in [The Simpsons](#) episode [Cape Feare](#).

It was also parodied in the [Airplane!](#)-like comedy [Fatal Instinct](#).

Likewise, in South Park Season 8 Episode 810 *Pre - School*, the plot line of the cartoon closely resembles the movie with [Trent Boyett](#) the school bully closely resembling Max Cady with the tattoo "Vengeance is mine" on his body.

In the cartoon, the part when Stan, Eric, Kyle, and Kenny hire a group of 6th graders to deal with Boyett and all to be severely beaten as a result is another part that parodied the movie.

Although a remake of the original [Cape Fear](#), Scorsese's update is also greatly influenced by another Mitchum film, [The Night of the Hunter](#) (1955), and the work of [Alfred Hitchcock](#) (signaled by the opening credits by regular Hitchcock collaborator [Saul Bass](#) and its score by another, [Bernard Herrmann](#)).

This is also the first film Scorsese shot in the wider [2.39:1](#) aspect ratio, as opposed to the smaller [1.85:1](#) ratio in which he had filmed all his previous works.

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Ostensibly in a malicious nod, [Gregory Peck](#) and [Robert Mitchum](#) appear in supporting roles which a disingenuous interpretation would qualify as the logical evolution of their respective roles in the original film: Peck stars as a neurotic, [Christian fundamentalist](#) and reality-detached attorney who unwittingly defends a falsely impaired Cady, and Mitchum stars as the rather amoral police detective who suggests Bowden the possibility of using *alternative* means beyond legality to stop Cady.

Differences between the 1962 and 1991 versions

- In the 1962 version, Sam Bowden was a witness to the rape Max Cady committed and testified against Cady as opposed to being Cady's corrupt lawyer and suppressing evidence in his favor in the 1991 film.
- In the 1962 film, Cady was in prison for only eight years instead of 14.
- In the original version, Bowden was an upstanding husband and father in a perfect marriage with a housewife, Peggy, and an obedient 14 year old daughter named Nancy. In the 1991 version, he is morally corrupt and has possibly committed several infidelities, has a defiant daughter named Danielle and his wife, now named Leigh, has a career outside the household.
- Bowden's daughter Nancy is a pure innocent and completely terrified of Cady in the 1962 version. In contrast, Danielle is much more sexually aware, smokes marijuana, and is briefly intrigued by Cady. She is almost seduced by him. Also, she is 15 years old, a year older than Nancy.
- Bowden had his first physical altercation with Cady at the boat basin in 1962 while in 1991 it was at a parade.
- Diane, the woman Cady raped and battered in the 1962 version was a transient barfly, who habitually hung out at taverns and was unknown to Bowden. In contrast, she was a legal clerk at the courthouse and Sam possibly had an affair with her in the 1991 film. Also, Diane, in the 1962 version, refused to press charges on Cady in part because she knew the people in her home town would read about the sordid details of her attack in the papers. Rape shield laws concerning the sexual background of sexual assault victims did not exist in 1962 nor did the general agreement in the press not to publish the names of rape victims as it was by 1991.
- In 1962, Bowden did not watch the men the private detective, Charles Sheevers, hired (who was in turn hired by Bowden) with Bowden's consent to try to beat up Cady. Bowden did watch in 1991 and it was assumed that Cady was aware of that fact.
- The police learned of Bowden hiring thugs to beat up Cady from one of the attackers in a death bed declaration in 1962 while in 1991, Cady had taped their previous encounter and the threat of bodily harm Bowden made.
- The police were directly in on the plot to set Cady up to be killed in the 1962 version while in the 1991 version, the police hinted broadly what Bowden should do but were not involved.
- The Bowdens didn't try to set Cady up to kill him in their home but only the houseboat in 1962.
- In 1962, airline ticket agents freely gave out who was on which flight and when they would arrive. Cady simply asked for the information with a simple story to cover why he was asking. In the 1991 version, airlines no longer gave out that information to anyone who asked so Cady had to have a more sympathetic story to cause the airline ticket agent to break regulations.
- In 1962, the private detective was not at the houseboat. However, in the 1991 version, an undercover policeman, officer Kersack, was helping Bowden stake out the houseboat.
- Cady did not attack the Bowdens in their home in 1962 while in the 1991 version, Cady killed the housekeeper and the private detective in their kitchen. In the 1962 version, Cady surprised and killed officer Kersack in the river as he lay in wait.
- The Bowdens quickly left the murder scene at their house for their houseboat, becoming fugitives themselves in the 1991 version.
- The Bowdens thought they were completely safe on the houseboat in the 1991 version, unaware that Cady had followed them.
- Nancy didn't injure Cady in any way and was totally helpless in the original version. However, Danielle sprayed him in the 1991 version with lighter fluid. He was lit on fire because of his cigar.
- The Cape Fear river was calm in the 1962 version, while in the 1991 version, a severe rain squall developed.
- The houseboat wasn't wrecked in the 1962 version while in 1991, the boat smashed into a rock and broke apart into small pieces.
- Cady didn't die in the 1962 version but went back to prison for life. In the 1991 version, he was dragged out to sea, cuffed to a piece of houseboat wreckage, and presumably drowned.

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