

---

## History of the concept of Dr. Richard Kimball

The history of the concept of Dr. Richard Kimball's attempts to solve the murder of his wife while evading the forces of Federal Deputy Marshal Gerard has been rich on television and on the big screen. Despite years (if not decades) of production toil, the famed fugitive's chase into the cinemas in 1993 earned the endeavor significant critical praise, with the film nominated for the top award (among many others) by AMPAS. Despite Harrison Ford's adequate return to the role of "scared, innocent family man," the better contributor to Andrew Davis' film was Tommy Lee Jones, whose performance as Gerard would itself garner winning Oscar recognition.

So overshadowing was Jones that the ill-advised 1998 sequel to *The Fugitive* would be centered solely on his character, an unsuccessful attempt to recapture to massive box office success that the previous film had been for Warner Brothers. In the long and illustrious career of composer James Newton Howard, *The Fugitive* is a score that does not compete with his best. It was his first mainstream blockbuster score, a sudden venture into the realm of large scale action that terrified the composer at first.

The arranging, recording, and original album for *The Fugitive* were nightmarish procedures full of performer unrest, crashed hard drives, and editing restrictions and blunders. But as the score was adequately decent for a highly popular film, Howard also received an Academy Award nomination for his efforts, and the composer would go on to tackle dozens of projects of similar status in the future. *The Fugitive* is one of the rare events when an (arguably soon-to-be) A-list composer receives a nomination for an average score while the vastly superior film could actually have used superior musical representation (the same phenomenon would happen to Howard much later with his nomination for *Michael Clayton*). Howard's approach to scoring *The Fugitive* involved the merging of electronic and orchestral elements, as well as the general avoidance of providing music that stands out strongly in the film.

Hence, the themes are rather underplayed and secondary in emphasis compared to the rhythmic devices that Howard provides for the chase scenes. Unsettling ambience and obtuse musical identities are littered with noir-like references to the original television show's music, and Howard has mentioned that the topic of expressly using the previous theme for the concept was unfortunately not discussed. A jagged and frightfully disjointed set of rhythms is performed by a modestly-sized orchestra and varied percussion section instead, augmented by a synthetic layer that was somewhat common to thrillers at the time (even if there was little technological in the story). Interestingly, the orchestral parts of the score, from the choppy action rhythms to the gracious harmonic exit at the end, are a distinct tip of the hat to Jerry Goldsmith. In fact, many of the mannerisms heard in *The Fugitive* sound like a Goldsmith score for a B-rate 1990's action

---

### Need help with the assignment?

Our professionals are ready to assist with any writing!

**GET HELP**

---

thriller, and perhaps there's less irony than one might think when remembering that Goldsmith himself was brought in to score the sequel five years later. The reality of this similarity, however, is that Howard was, like many ascending composers of that era, tremendously impressed by Goldsmith's action styles. With the action material firmly rooted in Goldsmith territory (resembling *Capricorn One* in the staggered, percussive moments)

Howard emulates hints of the more stylish tactics of Dave Grusin and John Barry for similar films at the time in other sequences. The intended, jazzy undercurrents in *The Fugitive* never really work themselves into the score well enough to be effective, a problem compounded by the absence of many of the saxophone performances in the film version of the score. The sax, bass, and piano still address the elegant lifestyle lost by Kimball, thus explaining why it only exists in faint hints.

On album, the specially recorded track "The Fugitive Theme" elaborates on this style, performing the title theme with a touch of jazz that cannot compete with like-minded alternatives from Goldsmith or Barry. That theme would only bparsely throughout the score, easily receiving its most complete and satisfying performance in the harmonically rewarding resolution cue and credits. It is a reminder of Howard's later *Dante's Peak* theme in terms of its somewhat generic personality. Outside of this "redemption theme," as it could be called, Howard's score uses rhythmic motifs as his secondary ideas to propel the score.

A four-note rhythmic motif squirms through the sequences representing the original crime and trial, as well as later connected elements; it's an effective tool, but rather anonymous after some good establishment in "Main Title." In "Helicopter Chase," "Subway Fight," and "Stairway Chase," a jagged, rising motif for full ensemble evolves out of this idea and represents Kimball's panic, and while efficient in furthering the thrill of the moment, these cues aren't particularly enjoyable when separated from the visuals. The most commonly praised cue in *The Fugitive* is "Helicopter Chase," and it's interesting to compare this dense material to the more mature and arguably more fluid style that Howard would provide for the highlighting chase in *Salt* many years later; the differences in technique and influences are fascinating, and anyone attracted to the undeniable flow of some of Howard's later chase cues may have difficulty finding as much enjoyment in the more frequently lurching predecessor from 1993.

---

## Need help with the assignment?

Our professionals are ready to assist with any writing!

[GET HELP](#)