

## ▣ ABOUT THE MOVIE ▣

<b>TITLE</b>	Erin Brockovich
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Steven Sonderbergh
<b>YEAR &amp; COUNTRY</b>	1999 USA
<b>GENRE</b>	Investigative and Legal Drama
<b>ACTORS</b>	Julia Roberts, Albert Finney

### PLOT

Erin Brockovich is a young divorced mother of three small children who finally finds a job in a lawyer's office. She convinces Ed Masry to hire her. When she finds evidence that PG&E, a huge energy utility, is polluting the countryside with its careless waste water elimination, she convinces her boss and all the people in the area to sue for damages. Based on a true story, the film shows how a woman with no money or power, but convinced of the righteousness' of her cause, manages to get the support and evidence needed to take on a powerful American company and win.

### LANGUAGE

Erin is not highly educated (although extremely intelligent and ethical), and she lives in lower class surroundings so her language reflects this. It is peppered throughout with four-letter words and epithets – some of which are supremely original and funny. Her language is always ironic, slangy and simple, like that of the people around her. The accents are Far West (the setting is California) and Midwest (Erin comes from Wotchita, Kansas).

There are numerous technical, medical, chemical and legal terms like “hexavalent chromium” which would not be familiar even to a native speaker untrained in the subjects, but they are explained in the context of the film. There are many colloquial, idiomatic expressions which are very colorful and amusing – American language at its most interesting!

### VOCABULARY

backstabbing, bloodsucking scumbag: a bag of waste who thrusts a dagger in your back, drinks your blood	injunction a writ granted by a court which requires someone to do or not do certain acts.
binding arbitration: a hearing and determination of a controversy by a judge which both parties have to accept.	miscarriage: a natural, uninduced expulsion of a fetus.
carcinogenic: causing cancer.	plaintiff: someone who starts a suit to obtain a remedy for an injury to his rights
county water board: a local government agency that inspects the quality of the water in the area.	pro bono case: a case argued by a lawyer without being paid for it when the client is poor.
demur or submit a demur: to plead that there are defects in the opponent's case so that he should not be allowed to proceed further.	punitive damages: monetary reparation for injury sustained which the payer is responsible for.
eviction: putting out a person or recovering property by legal process	statute of limitations: the rule which limits the time after which a claimant cannot sue in a court of law.
extortion: taking something from a person by the illegal use of fear	to file for bankruptcy: ask a court to recognize that a person or firm is insolvent.