

▣ ABOUT THE MOVIE ▣

TITLE	The Firm
DIRECTOR	Sydney Pollack
YEAR & COUNTRY	1993 USA
GENRE	thriller
ACTORS	Tom Cruise, Gene Hackman, Jeanne Tripplehorn, Ed Harris, Holly Hunter

PLOT

Mitch McDeere, an ambitious, brilliant young graduate of Harvard Law School, is driven by the desire to rise above his working class background and chooses to work for a small, but wealthy Memphis law firm which provides the wherewithal for him and Abby, his wife, to have a fabulous life style. When FBI agents reveal to him the corruption and murders committed by the firm, Mitch starts searching for the truth, under fire from the FBI, the Mafia and a firm ready to do anything to protect its interests.

LANGUAGE

Mitch and Abby use the everyday, fairly cultured language of Ivy League college graduates in the U.S.

When Mitch talks to the lawyers he works with, or to his clients, his language is sprinkled with legal terminology some of which will be explained below.

The language used by the Mafia members, by the private investigator who gets killed, by the FBI agent assigned to Mitch and by Mitch himself when he deals with these men is violent, sexual and vulgar.

Mitch's brother uses typical prison slang and talks about "doing time", being "busted", a "snitch".

Accents range from the fairly neutral ones of Mitch and Abby to the deep South accents of the wives of his colleagues in the Memphis firm and that of the private investigator's secretary.

VOCABULARY

affirmative action: here, an action done to avoid the accusation of prejudice for which the firm could be prosecuted. Thus they hired one woman they call "affirmative action on stilts" (due to her high heels)	draft: a tentative outline of a document.
bar: here used in the legal sense as a court: Mitch is studying for the <u>bar</u> exam. If he passes, he will be admitted to the <u>bar</u> . (he will be allowed to plead cases and practice law)..	felon: someone who has committed a crime punishable by prison and fines.
bid: to offer a price, e.g., Firms are <u>bidding</u> for Mitch's services.	fraud: an intentional perversion of the truth to get payment.
bill: to charge for services rendered. Mitch discovers that clients have been <u>billed</u> wrongly: they have been <u>overbilled</u> . (synonyms: to charge, overcharge).	indictment: a formal written statement by the state prosecutor charging someone with an offense
bribe: to corrupt a person by offering him a reward of money or favours.	loophole: a hole (here, in the law) that gives a means of escape from taxes, prosecution, etc.
counsellor: lawyer; formal term of address used in court.	withholding tax: a deduction levied as a tax on income at the source as on salaries, dividends, fees, etc