

## ▣ ABOUT THE MOVIE ▣

<b>TITLE</b>	The Rainmaker
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Francis Ford Coppola
<b>YEAR AND COUNTRY</b>	1997 USA
<b>GENRE</b>	Legal drama
<b>ACTORS</b>	Matt Damon (Rudy Baylor), Danny De Vito (Deck, the para-lawyer), Claire Danes (Kelly Riker) Mary Kay Place (Mrs Black), Teresa Wright (Birdy), John Voight (Attorney Drummond), Mickey Rourke (Bruiser Stone), Johnny Whitworth (Donny Rae Black).

### PLOT

Rudy Baylor is a newly qualified lawyer without any good contacts, who ends up working for a rather doubtful law office, run by “Bruiser” Stone (also a night club owner). He has two cases he picked up during a free counselling session. One of them is an old lady’s will, and the other a bad faith case against a giant insurance company, which could have saved a young man’s life (Donny Rae Black), but has refused to pay until it is too late. Rudy goes to live in the old lady’s apartment and, after Bruiser leaves the country, he sets up his own office together with Deck, a para-lawyer who can’t pass the law exams. He thus has to argue the big case without ever having been in court before. The film shows how he achieves a brilliant and almost impossible victory over the cheating team of top lawyers acting for the insurance company, thanks to skilful jury selection and luck with the judge. It also follows the love story between Rudy and Kelly Riker, a battered wife he meets while studying and looking for clients in the hospital...

### LANGUAGE

The language and accent are typically southern, and more specifically Memphis, Tennessee. As can be expected, the poorer members of the community (e.g. Mrs Black and the foreman of the jury), have a more pronounced accent. As the story centres around a court case, there is a lot of legal vocabulary, but also a certain amount of very colloquial and “colourful” language - especially from the para-lawyer, Deck, who tends to be funny – and some plays on words.

### VOCABULARY

(don’t want it) clogging up my docket: taking up too much space on my case list	scrambling around for an edge: trying hard to get into a better position than the others
(grant) a motion to dismiss: (agree to) a request to send the case away/not to hear it	subpoena: a command to appear in court
bond has to be set: the sum of money required to let a person out of prison until the case is heard must be established	the Feds: the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation)
find for the plaintiff: declare that the plaintiff wins	to backdoor someone: to get into a position or do something important without telling people who (think they) should know about it
gag reel: a collection of comedy sketches, or a comic film	to be (seriously) outgunned: faced with people who have (many) more weapons than you
jury tampering: illegitimately influencing the (identity of) people on the jury	to be downsized: to lose your job because the company are reducing staff
leading a witness: trying to influence the witness’s answer by the words you use	to buy someone off: give him money so he doesn’t do what he had planned
manslaughter: killing someone unintentionally	to file a suit: to leave an application to have a case heard with the court
money-skimming: illegally taking part of a sum of money passing through your hands.	to knock (a woman) up: to make a woman pregnant
nice run, kid: a good series of successes, boy	to operate on a shoestring: to work at the lowest possible cost, with only the essentials
party pooper: (US) somebody who spoils other people’s fun	to see fit: to consider (sth) to be the right thing to do
pre-trial discovery: producing facts, documents and objects to be used in a court case so that the other party can inspect them before the case is heard	to spring something on someone: to surprise someone with a sudden proposal or news
rebuttal: testimony produced to contrast the other party’s evidence	