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| |  | | --- | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | Page 1 | | |  | | --- | | [**SUBMIT YOUR OWN COMMENT**](http://docs.google.com/submit-comments.htm) | | **Pages** [**2**](http://docs.google.com/user_feedback2.htm) **|** [**3**](http://docs.google.com/user_feedback3.htm) **>** | |  |  | | --- | | **Can Films Help Train Lawyers?** |   Recently, PJ heard from a lawyer who was searching for a film to use in training his interns. Here is the question the lawyer posed:  I am at a non-profit public interest law firm. Many of our interns come expecting to do some glamorous work or spend their time researching really interesting legal points. They view with disdain having to review boxes of documents. I am looking for a film to show our interns at the beginning of the summer—a film that will emphasize the role of careful fact development in a case.Your suggestion will be appreciated.  **Some of the PJ editors put on their thinking caps and responded as follows:**  My personal favorite is the Costa-Gavras film, "*Z*". It shows how careful fact development can lead to the highest levels of government. [Rob Waring]  I think *A Civil Action* makes some good use of the importance of developing facts and the use of documents. [Paul Joseph]  The lawyer’s question got us to thinking about the question of whether there were films which could be used to help train lawyers and whether there are any films which every lawyer should see?  We invite the readers of PJ to post their own suggestions for films that lawyers ought to see. Tell us the name of the film and why it should be "required" viewing for lawyers. Please post your comments here.  **Reader responses for films that lawyers ought to see:**  **From: Christine Corcos** <ccorcos at lsu.edu>  On my list of must-see films for lawyers and law students are thefollowing: *Anatomy of a Murder*, valuable for the ethical questions and for the development of the defense. *Witness for the Prosecution*, a lawyer with what looks like a losing case manages to come up with a convincing story to sell the jury (at least that's what he thinks he has done). *Inherit the Wind*, useful for how an attorney approaches a "no-win" case.  **From: Ioana R. Mondescu:** This is a comment on the comment: "Movies a lawyer should see" and it goes like this: *Devil's Advocate* -every lawyer should see this one. This movie is a vivid depiction of the danger inherent in identifying yourself with your profession; it makes you think about your personal life in relation to the ractice of law, a thing that law school doesn't teach you and law firms never mention. This film forces you to realize and accept that you can't have brilliance in both.  **From: K. Eaton** (mahjongg at att.net)  There are a lot of fine suggestions...I would add these for your consideration: I was shown "Gideon's Trumpet" w/Henry Fonda in my crim. proc. class. It's got all sides in their, the client, the judges, and attorneys. The interactions remain timely and of course, it is about the Gideon Case, from whence all public interest grew. Most people haven't seen it. Also "Presumed Innocent" and "The Witness," both w/Harrison Ford, and any of the John Grisham books on film. "The Client" with Susan Sarandon's Reggie Love is my personal favorite.These all bring the audience into the film and leaves them talking, too.The drawback is here, most people have seen these.There don't seem to be many with an ethnic star or voice yet, that isn't about police or investigators. I guess we'll just have to wait for those, but no doubt, they'll be as well done.   |  | | --- | | **Comments on Picturing Justice** |   **From: william wohl** <commandoz at aol.com>  Question: I thought your site would have more on the interaction between the law (courts & cases) and the media as in news T.V and print news. Do you have any articles on the above?  **Paul Joseph's Response:** A complete list of articles can be found in the archives (see the list on the home page). If the article you seek is not there----write it. PJ is always looking for submissions. See the submission guidelines on the home page.  **From: James R. Elkins** <jelkinsa at labs.net> Professor of Law, West Virginia University  Judith Grant (USC) referred me to the new web-site and I'm delighted to learn of its existence. The site is timely, wonderfully simple and the graphics a perfect fit to the subject. You'll have done a good job and I hope to visit often. I am teaching a course on Lawyers and Film (for the first time) in the Spring semester and look forward to having the students in the course visit the site and participate in the on-going discussion your reviews and commentary (and ours in the course) may generate.**From: Caroline Van Howe** <cvh at synon.com>  Great to see this kind of serious stuff on the web. I also like the graphics - clear, clean and simple. Maybe, one day, we'll be able to use those adjectives about Justice Itself! (or Herself).**From: Christine Corcos** <ccorcos at unix1.sncc.lsu.edu>  Very nice site, easy to navigate. I hope to see more essays and cites to recent publications. This will be a helpful site for people doing research and trying to get a handle on the exciting but unwieldy area of law and film.**From: Denis Le May** <Denis.Lemay at bibl.ulaval.ca> University Laval, Quebec  Graphical representations of the law and critical appraisals of same are scarce indeed and that seems perfectly all right considering the fact that law is primarily a written medium in our civilization.  This being said, the rest of the world still exists and it is with no surprise that we often see representations of the law, justice and the legal world in graphical form (paintings, cartoons, posters etc.).  In the videosphere, the corresponding arts are of course, movies and television. It is thus entirely fitting and of the utmost interest to collect many representations of justice in these media.  Congratulations to these inspired web creators, they're the ones who prove beyond doubt that on a clear net, you can SEE forever!**From: John Brigham** <brigham at polsci.umass.edu>  I enjoyed Picturing Justice and believe I might spend a good deal of time with it. I did some research a few years ago on images of civil liberties because I believe that with many of our liberties we have a picture in our mind, like the segregated lunch counter or the burning flag.**From: Anne Phillips** <Anne.Phillips at vuw.ac.nz>  I liked the web site for its witty commentary and critical analysis of the Hollywood version of the North American legal system. Despite being a senior member of the Bar in New Zealand I suspended disbelief and viewed the U.S. particularly as offering a shonky criminal justice legal system where rules were made to be broken. Just shows the power of the silver screen and O J Simpson.  John Grisham's novels have spawned a film industry and the comments of the reviewers on *A Time To Kill* and *The Rainmaker* deserve wider distribution. *A Time To Kill* contained a tangled message indeed and used a one-dimensional and stereotypical lawyer as the defense attorney. *The Rainmaker* has not yet been released here probably because *The Devil's Advocate* is playing and it is bad business to have too many lawyers as protagonists in films. Lawyers are unpopular here too.**From: Richard B. Bernstein** <rbernstein at nyls.edu> Professor, New York Law School and Brooklyn College/CUNY I'm impressed with PICTURING JUSTICE and I will be sending my students to visit this website.**From: Deborah B. Luyster** <brumback at aol.com>  An outstanding idea and opportunity for us to share our ideas about justice and to question our assumptions about the concept of law in society. Thank you.**From: Abbie Eales** <abbie at cats5.demon.co.uk>  I'm an undergraduate student at the University of Portsmouth in the UK. I was hoping to write my dissertation on the device of using courtroom dramas as an examination of prejudice. I was daunted by the lack of research that had been done into the topic, but now this web page has given me some fresh ideas.**From: Carlos Aparicio** <caparici at chasque.apc.org> Associate Professor, Universidad de la República, Montevideo, Uruguay  One of the best pages I saw on law and people. I'm professor of Law at Montevideo Law School Uruguay, and I cited your page and opinions to my classes.**From: John Wendt** <jtwendt at stthomas.edu>  This is absolutely amazing!!!! It will be fabulous for the classes I teach! Thanks!!!**From: John Morgan**  Greetings, I was wondering how I could acquire a copy of Khaled Abou El Fadl's piece on *The Siege*. I couldn't find it on the Picturing Justice website anywhere, but it notes he wrote one in the sidebar to the joint piece on *Rules of Engagement*. Thank you, John Morgan**From: tamara** (ts3904 at albany.edu)  I am searching for the article *What, if any one thing is a lawyer*. I was hoping you could give me the exact web address for the article. thank you.**From: Kent Anderson** (AndersonK at law.anu.edu.au) found us through: World of mouth.  Greetings. I am a senior lecturer in law (i.e., associate professor in American English) at Australian National University. I am planning to introduce a Law and Cinema component to the faculty; first, informally and later academically. Earlier I had a lot of fun teaching a Law and  Society through Popular Media course while I was an associate professor at Hokkaido University in Japan (see <http://www.cmmi.gr.jp/jalo4/pdf/anderson.pdf>).  I am writing to try to locate video copies of the old Paper Chase television series-THE PAPER CHASE (20 Century Fox; television program, 1978, 1983, 1985). I would greatly appreciate any suggestions of where I might find copies or even offers to lend old copies if someone has some. NTSC tapes are fine as most players here now allow playback on our PAL system. I would also love to see the new First Monday series, but imagine it will probably make its way over eventually. Thanks. Best regards. Kent  **From: Nina Rosenstand**, Professor of Philosophy, San Diego Mesa College (nrosenst at sdccd.net), found us through: Random surfing.  What a delightful website. I have been using films to teach my college students ethics and other topics in philosophy for many years, and have included movie summaries in my philosophy textbooks. In the upcoming 5th edition of my ethics textbook, *The Moral of the Story*, I will include a reference to this website as an example of the didactic value of films in various professional contexts.   |  | | --- | | **Comments on John Denvir's article: *Ally McBeal*** |   **From: Elisabeth Friedman** <elisabeth.friedman at wmich.edu> Department of Political Science  Subject: Ally the dimwit  I agree with your characterization of Ally McBeal as a "relationship" show and am also distressed that this is the way a woman lawyer who is finally worthy of her own show is presented. But I found even more to object to in at least the first episode. Not only is Ally more concerned with her relationships than her law practice and cynical about her job, but also she is portrayed as shallow, silly and easy to take advantage of. Sexual harassment, which is a workplace-related hazard that many young women face when moving into spheres of action that have been constructed and are still largely maintained by men, is introduced almost immediately in Ally's case—only to be resolved by a) her departure from her first job and b) having her clever, cynical, greedy new boss bring the perpetrator to justice—not Ally. Ally gets into ridiculous situations in the bathroom of her firm. And of course (of course!) she wears miniskirt-based suits. Sigh. Another opportunity wasted.**From: Michael Asimow**, UCLA Law School <asimow at law.ucla.edu>  In his review of *Ally McBeal*, John Denvir appropriately calls attention to the gross sexual stereotyping of the storyline. Interestingly, however, sexual stereotyping of female lawyers is far worse in film than on television.  In film, with the single exception of Adam's Rib, female lawyers are invariably portrayed in a negative light. Some are merely incompetent (Philadelphia, A Few Good Men). Some can't control their emotions (*In the Name of the Father*.) Most have appalling ethics; who could forget Maggie Ward in *Class Action* betraying her client by going over to the other side or Laura Fischer in *The Verdict* who functions as a sexual spy. Many female lawyers have disastrous taste in selecting sexual partners; *Jagged Edge* is one of numerous examples of female lawyers sleeping with their clients. Most have disastrous personal lives. In short, filmmakers invariably portray female lawyers in film in a shockingly negative light.  In television, however, the picture is far more balanced. *Ally McBeal* is somewhat exceptional, I think. Many (though not all) of the female lawyers on *L. A. Law* were admirable lawyers and human beings. Female lawyers are presented favorably on *The Practice* and *Law and Order*.  What accounts for the differences between female lawyers on film and TV? One difference, I believe, is that television is character-driven. People won't tune into a series every week to see repulsive characters; they need to identify with and like the people they invite into their living rooms. Film, however, is more plot-driven; viewers don't mind seeing repulsive people on the screen if they are part of a good story.  In addition, television has to be acceptable to commercial sponsors. Sponsors don't like too much stereotyping in entertainment products with which they're associated; it could trigger protests. My prediction is that *Ally McBeal* won't last long, but then it's often a mistake to overestimate the taste of TV viewers.   |  | | --- | | **Comment on Rob Waring's article: *The People vs. Larry Flynt*** |   **From: Jeanne F. Stott** <smclaims at well.com>  The First Amendment to Larry Flynt was the cost of doing business. A Nazi has the right to speak. Why not Larry Flynt? The film confused Flynt's motive with our right to speak freely. His lawyers made their best legal arguments. It is to our benefit that he won the case. He has the right to speak and make a living. Isn't the question why Hustler sells? (i.e. woman in meat grinder on cover) Why did Milos Foreman & Oliver Stone portray Larry Flynt as a hero? Because he paid his lawyers?  **From: Jerry Goldman** <j-goldman at nwu.edu> Northwestern University, Department of Political Science  I found your site engaging and thought-provoking. And I appreciate the link to The OYEZ Project! Might be interesting to compare *The People v. Larry Flynt* with the actual argument in Hustler v. Falwell. But you have plenty of good ideas on your own. Count on me to visit again. I'll be sure to alert my students to your work.   |  | | --- | | **Comments on Wilda White's article: *Imagine ... Justice (A Time to Kill)*** |   **From: M. Jane Lawhon** <MJaneLawhon at compuserve.com>  Excellent article. I wondered what ever happened to Wilda L. White. I used to read her incisive commentary when she wrote for the Miami Herald.  **From: David Fielding** <dhfielding at aol.com>  All well said, but not long after I read Ms. White's comments, I was visited in my daydreams by an apparition who said, "yeah, but they got what they deserved." As for Ms. White's whereabouts, I too would like to hear more from her. She's really a straight shooter.   |  | | --- | | **Comments on Michael Asimow's article: *The Practice*** |   **From: Shelley Johnson** <sjohnson at mfi.com>  *The Practice* is one my my favorite shows of all time. I have been paying attention to the credits on episodes I've seen, and usually the episodes have been written by the excellent David E. Kelley. The episode where Ellenor is sued by a hapless podiatrist for emotional distress when she refuses to go out with him was riveting.  The man playing the black lawyer (right now I can't think of his name) is one of the best actors on TV. I've seen him in guest shots on other shows, and he is always phenomenal. I'm so glad that the show is not being cancelled. I hear that folks love *Ally McBeal*,and I find it incredibly tiresome...  **From: John Denvir** <denvirj at usfca.edu>  I wholeheartedly agree with Michael Asimow's suggestion that *The Practice* episode on the death penalty deserves an Emmy. I'd say it was more effective than *Dead Man Walking*. While Jimmy was great in that episode, I think his sweet shyness is starting to get a bit cloying. I would suggest the best character is Lara  Flynn Boyle as the sexually predatory acid-tongued prosecutor, a girl not at all like dear old mom.**From: Stacy Caplow** <scaplow at brooklaw.edu>  My biggest dilemma this semester is how to get home from my Monday night class in time to watch *The Practice*. Almost every show raises an ethical issue which is worth chewing over. Although it is almost impossible to raise such issues without resorting to excesses in order to enhance the dramatic conflict, the core issues are always provocative. I also think Eugene is the most skillful trial attorney ever depicted on T.V. His cross-exam of an eyewitness in a mugging was masterful and succinct. His United States of America summations are brilliant, and all the more so because the viewer is on to his trick. Finally, while the show was still on Saturdays at 10 PM, when those of us with no social life were first hooked, Eugene handled the case of a one-legged mugger who lied on the stand. This episode was a terrific example of how storytelling can be persuasive. Since the client told Euegene in mid-trial that his previous story had been a lie, Eugene had to put on a "narrative" direct. The defendant told a wonderful story about how people (the victim) refuse to look at homeless, one-legged beggars so naturally she wouldn't be able to tell him from his friend, the other one-legged beggar down the street. Catch it in reruns if you missed it.  PS I have my 11-year old son tape *Ally McBeal*. I am a shameless fan.   |  | | --- | | **Comments on Stan Ross' article: *Brilliant Lies*** |   **From: Jo Flack** <jflack at labyrinth.net.au>  The film *Brilliant Lies* was based on the play of the same name and is, in fact, very close to the original play being very "stagey" in its approach and almost word for word the same as the original. The only additions are the flashbacks which the audience is left to construct in the stage version. The characterizations, issues and  point of view are mostly accurate reflections of an Australian understanding of the problem.Your site is very good and as a teacher of media studies in Victoria, Australia I shall be recommending it to my students. BTW *Brilliant Lies* is currently being studied by final year high school students as a set text in English.   |  | | --- | | **Comments on Paul Joseph's article: *Ultima Online*** |   **From: Colin Glassey** <cglassey at teleologic.com>  I commend Mr. Joseph for his willingness to treat *Ultima Online* (UO) seriously. I think *UO* raises even more interesting questions than Mr. Joseph mentions. For example: many player created "guilds" have come into existence. Are these guilds any less "real" than the "Elks Lodge" of Albany? Some players have acknowledged  another player as the "Mayor" of one city in the game (Ponfar the Mayor of Yew). Is he in fact the "Mayor" of this city? Things exist in many ways (from administrative boundaries all the way to money itself) simply because a large group of people agree that they exist. Is it not possible that elements within this "virtual reality" could take on a meaning beyond that of the game? John Perry Barlow argued a year and a half ago that the Internet was "independent" from current governments. I can see a time when "citizens" of a virtual world based on the Internet will hold more allegiance to their virtual world, than they do to their current "physical" residence. Will they be right in some meaningful sense?  **From: Theodore Fritz** <janfritz at mail.bright.net>  I am an avid *UO* player, who has been seriously disappointed with the apparent and complete dishonesty with almost every other player in the game. I am thrilled that someone else has noticed this... believe me I wish that there was some way to enforce better conduct besides just asking people to help "gang" up on the more infamous of killers. I have had several bad experiences on *UO* and am considering canceling my account because they (unethical players) are getting so far out of hand. So far I have encountered con men, thieves, liars, and killers. I am disgusted with the lack of consequence that these actions have...  Ted apprentice miner (GL) from Minoc**From: Lee Marrs** <LEEMARRS at aol.com>  Another older game to check online is Meridian 59, which faced related violent behavior to *UO*. The guardians merely removed rampant killers from playing the game rather than dealing with their avatars inside game play. The same held for other types of persistent hassling. The good vigilante groups popped up immediately at M59, as well as a tendency for male players to choose female avatars. This came from an observed pattern that females were less likely to be instantly attacked - conversation was almost always the initial behavior. This protected "good behavior" newbies & provided "bad behavior" vets with a disarming moment to attack them! Don't know M59's current state 'cause I'm in the Mac universe now & it's PC.   |  | | --- | | **Comment on Rob Waring's article: *Amistad*** |   **From: Lizette Arana** <110214.637 at compuserve.com>  Entertaining, maybe a bit long but the whole concept of picture justice makes it unique and is not that true of law creeping inside all of us in one way or another. Then again, one can practically sue someone for anything even for a cup of coffee that is hotter than it's supposed to be. txs!  **From: Paul Romaine** <romaine at gilderlehrman.com>  Nice site. Rob Waring says that Justice Joseph Story doesn't include JQA's arguments before the court because "he failed to submit it." JQA did publish them separately. (Reprinted in 1968 or 1969 by Arco.)  Howard Jones in his definitive study of the *Amistad* case (Oxford, 1989; rev. 1997), writes that Story dismissed JQA's arguments (as irrelevant, per Jones) and used Baldwin's strictly legal arguments to arrive at his decision. It's hard to believe that justices like Taney would [have] accept[ed] Story's decision if he had used JQA's arguments. Read Jones, who used Story's diary.**From: Lauren Gilbert** <gilbert at wcl.american.edu>  Just a small comment regarding the discussion of *Amistad*. At several points, the commentator refers to the film as having a "happy ending". It is important to recall that when the main character returned to his village in Sierra Leone, he found that it had been destroyed and his family killed in an internal conflict. I thought *Amistad* was a great movie about slavery and about the legal system, but it certainly didn't have a happy ending.**From: Bill and Joan Coleman** <wpc at wpcmath.com>  We liked the review of *Amistad* very much, and were impressed by its thoughtfulness. However, on the main issue, we would like to respectfully disagree. We have posted a review on our site  http://www.wpcmath.com/films/amistad/amistad.html that discusses yours extensively, and would like to hear your comments. We hope we have made it clear, both here and in our review, that this is much more of a fan letter than a flame. | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | [Top of page](#gjdgxs) | |  | | --- | | [**SUBMIT YOUR OWN COMMENT**](http://docs.google.com/submit-comments.htm) | | **Pages** [**2**](http://docs.google.com/user_feedback2.htm) **|** [**3**](http://docs.google.com/user_feedback3.htm) **>** |  |  | | --- | | [Home](http://docs.google.com/index.html) | [Silver Screen](http://docs.google.com/silver_screen.htm) | [Small Screen](http://docs.google.com/smallscreen/small_screen.htm) | [News & Views](http://docs.google.com/newsnviews.htm) | | |