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Movie Review "The Rainmaker (1997)" Produced by American Zoetrope Constellations Films

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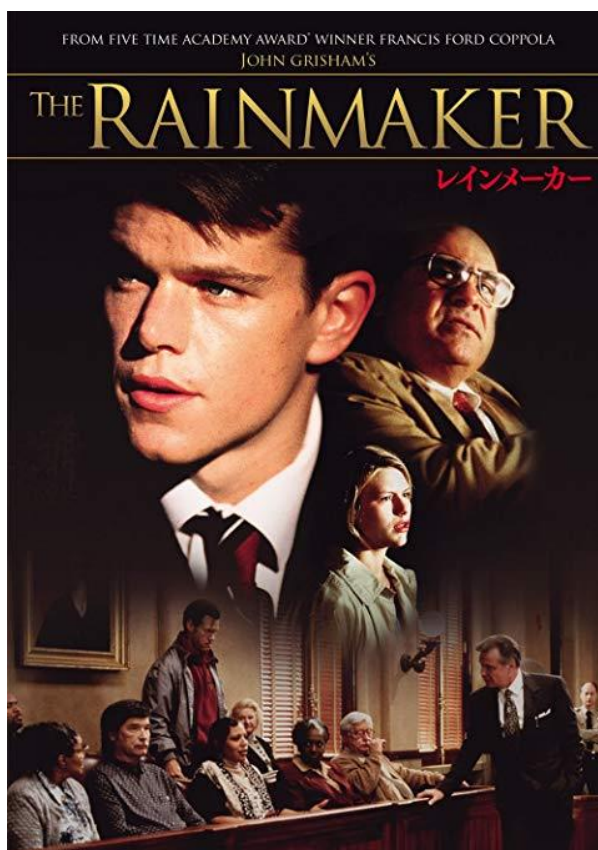
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ABSTRACT. The Rainmaker is a 1997 American legal drama film based on John Grisham's 1995 novel of the same name, and written and directed by Francis Ford Coppola. It stars Matt Damon, Danny DeVito, Danny Glover, Claire Danes, Jon Voight, Roy Scheider, Mickey Rourke, Virginia Madsen, Mary Kay Place and Teresa Wright in her final film role.

Differences from the novel. The film follows the book in most details, but changes the order of events: in the book, the confrontation ending with Rudy's self-defense killing of Kelly's abusive husband occurs after the end of the trial, not during. Also, the film leaves out an important piece of information from the book that was a central point of Rudy's case: the fact that the leukemia victim had an identical twin, which would have made a transplant virtually certain to work as it would have been a perfect genetic match.

KEYWORDS. *Movie Review, The Rainmaker, Criminal Sanction*



I. THE MOVIE REVIEW

The Rainmaker is a 1997 American legal drama film based on John Grisham's 1995 novel of the same name and written and directed by Francis Ford Coppola. It stars Matt Damon, Danny DeVito, Danny Glover, Claire Danes, Jon Voight, Roy Scheider, Mickey Rourke, Virginia Madsen, Mary Kay Place and Teresa Wright in her final film role. Differences from the novel. The film follows the book in most details but changes the order of events: in the book, the confrontation

ending with Rudy's self-defense killing of Kelly's abusive husband occurs after the end of the trial, not during. Also, the film leaves out an important piece of information from the book that was a central point of Rudy's case: the fact that the leukemia victim had an identical twin, which would have made a transplant virtually certain to work as it would have been a perfect genetic match.

John Grisham is one of the publishing phenomena of the late twentieth century. He is the highest-selling thriller writer of the 1990s: over fifty-five million copies of his novels have been sold, and they are available in thirty different languages. Grisham was born in 1955 in Arkansas, in the southern United States. His family were poor, and they moved several times when he was a child, staying wherever his father could find work. They eventually settled in Mississippi, where Grisham did well at school and went on to study law at university. When Grisham qualified in law in 1981, he set up his own office. He often represented workers against big companies or helped accident victims to get compensation for injuries. He also had a short career in politics, as a Democrat in local government. One day at the Desoto County courthouse, Grisham overheard the harrowing testimony of a 12-year-old rape victim. He decided to write a novel exploring what would have happened if the girl's father had murdered her attackers. He proceeded to get up every morning at 5 am to work on the novel, called *A Time to Kill*, which was published in 1988. Although the book was not a bestseller, Grisham was determined to succeed as a writer. He got advice from a *How to Write* course and spent three years on his second novel, *The Firm*. This time he had a best-seller. *The Firm* was one of the biggest hits of 1991, spending 47 weeks on *The New York Times* best-seller list. He earned enough money from *The Firm* to close down

his law office and become a full-time writer. Since then, he has written a string of best-sellers including *The Pelican Brief* (1992), *The Client* (1993), and *The Rainmaker* (1997)

The film portrays Rudy's decision to leave town with Kelly as being primarily out of a desire to remain low profile and protect Kelly, but the book depicts a much greater degree of disillusionment with the legal system and its ability to be manipulated for personal gain.

The book also highlights the questionable financial viability of Rudy's firm as the failure to extract any income from the Great Benefit case greatly undermines its earning ability. Leo F. Drummond, the defense lawyer, is a more manipulative character in the film. While his depiction in the book is of a stuffy big firm lawyer, in the movie he adopts a more predatory attitude toward Rudy.

The Rainmaker has a large cast of characters and not all of them are honest or decent. Grisham seems to be saying that the world we live in is often corrupt, selfish, and greedy. To this extent he is part of the school of tough detective writers in the US such as Raymond Chandler, James Ellroy, and Patricia Cornwell. Legal thriller: Most of John Grisham's novels are legal thrillers—exciting stories set in the world of the law. His novels are “page turners”, that is, books which people find very hard to put down once they have started reading them. They have a consistent theme: his heroes are ordinary people who fight the powerful institutions of society—and win. Grisham finds ideas for his stories in the cases he worked on as a lawyer. He often represented workers against big companies. One day he sat in a courtroom listening to a very young girl testify against a rapist. “I never felt such emotion and human drama in my life,” he told *People* magazine. “I became obsessed wondering what it would be like if the girl's

father killed that rapist and was put on trial. I had to write it down.” And this became his first novel.

Rudy Baylor has nearly finished law school but hasn't yet passed the bar examination. He secures a position with a Memphis law firm, which he loses when the firm is bought out by another larger firm. A poor couple, Dot and Buddy Black, ask for his help. Their son, Donny Ray, has leukemia and needs a bone marrow transplant, but their health insurance company won't pay for the operation. Rudy thinks they have a very strong case against the company, but he has no job and no money and isn't licensed as a lawyer.

Rudy Baylor (Matt Damon) was brought up in a slum. His father, who was a severe alcoholic, abused him and his mother. He wanted to be a lawyer since he read about civil rights lawyers of the 60's, and the amazing uses they found for the law. They did the impossible. They gave lawyers a good name. So he went to law school. It pissed his dad off, but he was pissed off anyway. In Rudy's first year, her dad got drunk and fell off a ladder made by his own company. He didn't know who to sue first. He died a couple of months after that.

After studying at Austin Peay State University, Rudy, who has an interest in social justice and civil rights, decides to attend law school. When he graduates from the University of Memphis State Law School, he, unlike most of his fellow grads, has no high-paying employment lined up. He is forced to apply for part-time positions while he serves drinks at a Memphis bar.

Some of her classmates knew they'd be going from school to top law firms, thanks mostly to family connections. Rudy's only connections were made in the bars. He worked in to pay her tuition. He still had plans to

shine the light of justice into every dark corner, but he needed a job, badly. But there's too many lawyers in Memphis. This city's infested with them.

Rudy gets a job in Jonathan Lake's law firm and passes the Black case to the lawyer, Barry Lancaster, who hired him. But Barry just uses him to get the case and then tells him that Lake doesn't want to hire him. Rudy is furious and goes to Lake's office to see him, but nobody is there. Later the office is burned down, and a security guard killed. Rudy is suspected of murder

and arson. Desperate for a job, Rudy reluctantly allows "Prince" Thomas, the crooked owner of a sleazy bar where he's been working part-time, to introduce him to J. Lyman "Bruiser" Stone, a ruthless but successful ambulancechasing lawyer, who makes him an associate. But to earn his fee, Rudy is required to hunt for potential clients at the local hospital where he must contact injury cases and get them to sign up for a court case with the firm. He is introduced to Deck Shifflet, a less-than-ethical former insurance assessor, now "paralawyer" (having failed to pass the Bar examination after six tries). Rudy works for Bruiser and files suit for the Black case.

Desperate for a job, her lecture brings rudy to he reluctantly goes to an interview with J. Lyman "Bruiser" Stone (Mickey Rourke), a ruthless and corrupt but successful personal injury lawyer, who makes him an associate. They made assignment. He can keep one third of the fees you generate. If Rudy can't cover his draw at the end of the month, he owe the balance.

Rudy has cases. One is a will he is drafting for an older woman. She's worth millions. Her other case is an insurance case. Great Benefit. And he already got these clients signed. On his way to see them now. Rudy them

before, at a workshop. So, I want you to talk to Deck Shifflet. He used to work with the big insurance firms. He handles the big stuff here.

To earn his fee, Rudy is turned into an ambulance chaser. (Ambulance chasing: Under the US legal system, a lawyer can take on a client for a percentage of the amount that the client wins from the court. It may be millions of dollars; it may be nothing. This is called “no win, no fee” and it allows people with little or no money to take out court cases. Many lawyers in the US find a lot of their clients by “ambulance chasing” —as Deck Shifflet does in *The Rainmaker*. This means that the lawyer visits victims)

of accidents in the hospital and offers to represent them required to hunt for potential clients at a local hospital. Soon he meets Deck Shifflet (Danny DeVito), a less-than-ethical former insurance assessor turned paralegal, who has gone to law school but failed the bar exam six times. He did his finish law school five years ago. But having a little trouble with the bar exam. And Rudy gonna take the bar exam in three weeks. Deck is resourceful in gathering information, and practically an expert on insurance lawsuits.

Rudy goes to Mrs. Black house. And asking about Buddy, but he ain't right in the head. War injury. Korea. He could walk through a metal detector buck naked, and the thing would go off. He's got a plate in his head, that's awful. Donny Ray who diagnosed acute myeloid leukemia (AML) is a type of blood cancer. AML usually develops from cells that would turn into white blood cells (other than lymphocytes). Sometimes, though, it can develop from other types of blood-forming cells. Here is basic information about the symptoms, risk factors, survival rates, and treatments for AML. Acute myeloid leukemia starts in the bone marrow. This is the soft inner parts of bones. With acute types of leukemia such as AML, bone marrow cells don't mature the way they're

supposed to. These immature cells, often called blast cells, just keep building up. Without treatment, AML can quickly be fatal. Because it's "acute," this type of leukemia can spread quickly to the blood and to other parts of the body such as the following organs : Lymph nodes, Liver, Spleen, Brain and spinal cord, Testicles.

Treatment with certain chemotherapy drugs used to treat other cancers, such as mechlorethamine, procarbazine, and chlorambucil especially when combined with radiation therapy

Great Benefit first denied her claim last August. when Donny Ray was diagnosed. But Mrs. Black wait till now to consult a lawyer. Because she just kept writing them, and they kept writing her back. (Insurance polis is an insurance or agreement that is consensual (agreement), in general, must be made in writing in a deed between the parties to the agreement. In a written deed was called "polis". So, the polis is proof of the insurance agreement is written evidence.)

This here's the latest one.

"On seven prior occasions we have denied your claim in writing."

"We now deny it for the eighth time. You must be stupid, stupid, stupid."

"Sincerely.....Everett Lufkin, vice-president of Claims."

Rudy manages to get just one case, concerning insurance bad faith. It may be worth several million dollars in damages, which appeals to him because he is about to declare himself bankrupt. He rents an apartment above the garage in the home of elderly Miss Birdsong (Teresa Wright), a client whose will he has been drafting.

Before they can file the claim all three of them need to sign the paper. Bruiser is suspected of racketeering, and his offices are raided by the police and FBI. Not knowing what else to do, Rudy and Deck set up, without so much as a secretary for help, a two-man practice. They file a bad faith suit on behalf of a middle-aged couple, Dot and Buddy Black, whose 22-year-old son Donny Ray (Johnny Whitworth) is going to die from leukemia. Donny Ray would most likely have been saved by a bone marrow transplant had his medical claim not been denied by Great Benefit, the family's insurance carrier.

Rudy goes Ms. Birdie to talk about her will. But she wants to cut her children out. Rudy had trouble sleeping last night. He was worried about Ms. Birdie estate. If she's not careful, the government is gonna get a big chunk of this. A lot of these taxes can be avoided with careful estate planning. All that legal gobbledegook. Ms. Birdie suppose Rudy want her name in the will? But Rudy's doesn't want to. There are all kinds of lawyers. But I do need to know where the money is.

She wants it all to go to the Reverend Kenneth Chandler. He's on television, out of Dallas. He's got curly grey hair, premature. He wouldn't dream of touching it up. She wants him to have the money. But Rudy has a real problem drafting a will gonna cut out family and convey the bulk of the estateto a TV personality. He's a man of God. She realises that. Is there any way we could... Rudy asks Ms. Birdie to have to give him everything? Could it be 25%? He's got a lot of overhead.

Ms. Birdie just wan Rudy draws it up the way she asked and bring it back so she can review it. Rudy studying on his own time. The bar exam is next week. He's scared. Mr. Bruiser come to see Rudy and tel him to run over to the hospital and study with Deck. Because he got a police report here. Kelly Riker was admitted three days ago, midnight, I might add, with

assorted injuries. The cops found her on the sofa, beat to hell, wrapped in a blanket, naked. Cliff Riker, her spouse, was intoxicated and highly agitated. He wanted to dish out to the cops what he was giving his wife, which was, by the way, a severe beating with a baseball bat. Evidently his weapon of choice.

In his first year of law school, everybody loved everybody else. They are studying the law, and the law was a noble thing. By his third year, she was lucky if her wasn't murdered in her sleep. People stole exams, hid research from the library and lied to the professors. Such is the nature of the profession.

Half an hour ago, her husband threw a bowl of soup at her, because she won't get it through her head how much he loves her. Pregnant at 18, married. A miscarriage, probably because he beat her up. And still, she can't leave him. Rudy gonna have to help her. Everything tells me she's a loser. Scarred, broken, maybe dangerous. But I've never seen anyone like her, and all I want to do is protect her.

Rudy will try to help Kelly any way he can, but she has to file for divorce. Now, while she is in hospital. It'll sail through. What better proof is there than that? She can't file for divorce. Because he'll kill me. He tells me so all the time.

Having passed the bar examination, Rudy prepares to fight the team of lawyers employed by Great Benefit Insurance. It is a daunting task. He has never argued a case before a judge and jury – but he now finds himself up against a group of experienced and ruthless lawyers from a large firm, headed by Leo F. Drummond. But the judge, Harvey Hale, is the old friend of Great

Benefit's lead lawyer. Things do not go smoothly. Meanwhile, Bruiser gets into trouble and Judge Hale dies. Rudy and Deck Shifflet then set up

their own firm of lawyers. The newly appointed judge, Kipler, gives Rudy a ray of hope as he shows more understanding toward victims. Before the trial commences, however, the Blacks' son dies.

Although Rudy passes the Tennessee bar exam, he has never argued a case before a judge and jury. He finds himself up against a group of experienced and devious lawyers from a large firm that is headed by Leo F. Drummond (Jon Voight), a showman attorney who uses unscrupulous tactics to win his cases.

The original judge assigned to the case, Harvey Hale (Dean Stockwell), is set to dismiss it because he sees it as one of many so-called "lottery" cases that slow the judicial process. But after Hale suffers a fatal heart attack, a far more sympathetic judge, Tyrone Kipler (Danny Glover), takes over the case. Kipler, a former civil rights attorney, immediately denies the insurance company's petition for dismissal.

While preparing his case, Rudy gets to know a young woman whom he met at the hospital, Kelly Riker (Claire Danes), a battered wife whose husband, Cliff (Andrew Shue), has beaten her so savagely with a baseball bat that she must be hospitalized. After a particularly violent attack, Rudy persuades Kelly, to whom he is attracted, to file for divorce.

Going to Kelly's home to pack her belongings, Rudy and Kelly are violently confronted by a bat-wielding Cliff. After Cliff injures Rudy then pulls a gun on him, Rudy grabs the bat and incapacitates him. Kelly insists Rudy leave, then finishes Cliff with the baseball bat. To prevent Rudy from being implicated, Kelly tells the police she was alone and killed her husband in self-defense. Rudy promises to defend Kelly if the case goes to trial, but the district attorney declines to prosecute, knowing Kelly would never be convicted.

Donny Ray dies, but not before giving a video deposition. The case goes to trial, where Drummond capitalizes on Rudy's inexperience. He gets vital testimony by Rudy's key witness, former Great Benefit employee Jackie Lemanczyk (Virginia Madsen), stricken from the record, and attempts to discredit Donny Ray's mother (Mary Kay Place). Due to Rudy's single-minded determination and skillful cross-examination of Great Benefit's unctuous president Wilfred Keeley (Roy Scheider), the jury finds for the plaintiff with a monetary award far exceeding all expectations.

It is a great triumph for Rudy and Deck, at least until Keeley attempts to flee the country and Great Benefit declares itself bankrupt, making it unable to pay the Blacks or any other claimant. Despite no payout for the grieving parents, nor fees for Rudy or Deck, Dot Black is relieved that Great Benefit is out of business and unable to hurt other families like hers.

Convinced his success will create unrealistic expectations for future clients, Rudy abandons his practice to instead teach law with a focus on ethical behavior. He leaves town with Kelly, wanting to retain a low profile and protect Kelly from any possible retribution by Cliff's vengeful relatives. He leaves the legal profession after just one successful case.

I'm hot. In fact, I'm so hot, there's no place for me to go but down. Every client I ever have will expect the same magic, nothing less. And I could probably give it to them, if it didn't matter how I did it. And then I'd wake up one morning and find that I'd become Leo Drummond. Give me a call when you pass the bar exam. Yeah, piece of cake. Every lawyer, in every case, crosses a line he didn't mean to cross. It just happens. And if you cross it enough times, it disappears forever. Then you're nothing but a lawyer joke. Just another shark in the dirty water.

I'm asking you, the jury... Just do what you think is right, in your hearts. If you don't punish Great Benefit, you could be their next victim.

That's it. Don't be nervous. Has the jury reached a verdict? - Yes, we have. Is it written on paper, according to my instructions? Please read the verdict. We, the jury, find for the plaintiff and award actual damages in the amount of \$150,000. And we, the jury, find for the plaintiff and award punitive damages in the amount of \$50 million. All rises.

These people were trying to hide things, and they got caught at it. The lead attorney on the case, Rudy Baylor, was trying his first case. That's a staggering verdict. Not bad for a yard boy. It wasn't difficult. We had a great jury, and the facts just fell into place. \$50 million? How much do you get. You get right to the point. Stop it, that's not what I meant. We get one third, but the money's not in the bank yet. I'll see you later. - You're gonna leave her all alone? Not for long.

Rudy, I've decided I'm gonna put your name in my will. You are just too kind to me. Hot off the news wire: "*Wilfred Keeley, CEO of Great Benefit, was detained yesterday at JFK, - just after boarding a flight bound for Heathrow.*"

"He claimed he was sneaking away for a holiday but couldn't name a hotel..."

... at which he was expected. Today Great Benefit filed for bankruptcy. Great Benefit is under investigation. A number of lawsuits have been filed.

II. LEGAL ISSUE ON THE MOVIE

1. Sanctions

Against the violation committed and Tetanggung undertaking may be penalized in the form of:

- a. Administrative sanctions, (applies only to the insurance company and not to the insured); and

b. Criminal sanctions.

Administrative Sanctions

Each Insurance Company does not comply with the provisions in Government Regulation No. 73 of 1992 dated October 30, 1992 concerning the Implementation of Insurance Business (PP 73/1992) and its implementing regulations with regard to:

- 1) Licensing business;
- 2) Financial soundness;
- 3) Implementation of business;
- 4) Submission of the report;
- 5) Announcement of the balance sheet and statement of income or on direct examination;
- 6) warning sanction, sanction restrictions on business activities and revoke their business license (Article 37 of Regulation 73/1992).

Without prejudice to the provisions of Article 37, then towards:

Insurance or Reinsurance Company does not submit annual financial statements and annual operational report, and or not to announce the balance sheet and statement of income, in accordance with a defined time period, subject to an administrative fine of Rp. 1,000,000,000 (one million Rupiah) for each day of delay; Insurance Broker, or Reinsurance Broker Company that do not submit annual operational report in accordance with a stipulated period imposed administrative fines of Rp. 500,000 (five hundred thousand rupiah) for each day of delay (Article 38 of Regulation 73/1992).

Criminal Sanctions

Criminal sanctions imposed on insurance crimes stipulated in Article 21 of the Insurance Act, the following:

1) Against the main actors

People who run or in order to run an insurance company without a business license, embezzling insurance premiums, embezzled by transferring, pledging, and or mortgages without property rights Companies Insurance or Life Insurance or Reinsurance company, threatened with imprisonment for a period of 15 (fifteen) years and a maximum fine of Rp. 2,500,000,000 (two billion five hundred million Rupiah).

2) Against perpetrators of maid

People who receive, receives, buying, or mortgages or menjal richness of the company resulting from embezzlement in such a manner that knows or should know that the goods are assets of the Company Insurance or Life Insurance or Reinsurance Company, dianjam with maximum imprisonment of 5 (five) years and a maximum fine of Rp. 500,000,000 (five hundred million Rupiah).

3) Against the document forgers'

People who individually or jointly falsification of documents or the Insurance Company Life Insurance or Reinsurance Company, is threatened with a maximum imprisonment of five years and a maximum fine of Rp. 250,000,000 (two hundred and fifty million Rupiah).

2. The cancellation insurance

An insurance or insurance because in essence is an agreement then it can also be threatened by the risk of void or may be canceled if it does not qualify syahnya agreement as specified in Article 1320 of the Civil Code.

In addition to businesses set about threats canceled if the insurance agreement:

- a. Loading description of false or incorrect or if the insured does not reveal things he knows that when it is submitted to the insurer would not result in the closure of the insurance agreement (Article 251 Commercial code);
- b. Loading an existing damages before the insurance agreement is signed (Article 269 Commercial code);
- c. contains a provision that the insured with a notice by the court frees the insurer from its obligations to come (Article 272 of the Commercial code);
- d. There is an artifice, deception, or fraud of the insured (Article 282 of the Commercial code);
- e. If the insured object by legislation and should not be traded either on a boat or ship Indonesian foreign ships used to transport the object insured according to the legislation should not be traded (Article 599 Commercial code).

All invitations from friends we do not have to accept, when friends who invite to actions that do not have benefits we must dare to refuse.

1. Apologizing to each other.

Whatever it is that makes us disappointed and makes us hurt does not have to be harbored constantly because it will be a liver disease for us, the only way to get rid of the heartache that exists is to forgive! Because to cure this liver disease only by forgiving those who disappoint us and solving existing problems so that we recover from this liver disease.

2. Never give up.

When we are faced with the problem of the step we need to take is to deal with the problem. Success and achievement of goals begins with the mind. If you believe in victory, you will get that victory.

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All authors declared that this work is original and has never been published in any form and in any media, nor is it under consideration for publication in any journal, and all sources cited in this work refer to the basic standards of scientific citation.