

The Untouchables (1987)

During Prohibition, Al Capone (De Niro) has nearly the whole city of Chicago under his control and supplies illegal liquor. Bureau of Prohibition agent Eliot Ness (Costner), summoned to stop Capone, conducts raids using a large squad of officers. After his efforts fail due to corrupt policemen tipping off Capone, he has a chance meeting with incorruptible Irish-American veteran officer Jim Malone (Connery). Knowing of the system's rampant corruption and appreciating Ness's efforts to bring Capone down, Malone decides to work with Ness. To combat corruption, Malone suggests that they enlist men from the police academy who have not yet come under Capone's influence. They recruit Italian-American trainee George Stone (Andy García) for his superior marksmanship and intelligence, and accountant Oscar Wallace (Charles Martin Smith), assigned to Ness from Washington, D.C., forming a small team that is soon dubbed by the press as "The Untouchables".

Wallace informs Ness that Capone has not filed an income tax return in four years; therefore, they can try Capone for tax evasion if nothing else. Ness is visited by an alderman who tries to bribe him into dropping the investigation but Ness throws him out. When Capone henchman Frank Nitti (Billy Drago) threatens his family, Ness has them moved to a safer place and then takes the team to the Canada – United States border for a raid on a liquor shipment. Ness chases one of the gangsters into an empty house and kills him in self-defense. Malone captures George (Brad Sullivan), a Capone bookkeeper, and brings him back to the house for interrogation. As George proves uncooperative, Malone grabs the dead man and shoots him to coerce George into cooperating, much to the dismay of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police who have assisted in the raid.

While Wallace takes George into protective custody, Nitti infiltrates the police station, killing Wallace and George in the service elevator; then writes "touchable" on the wall with blood. Ness angrily confronts Capone and his men, but Malone intervenes, as Capone mocks Ness over the death of his friend. Malone persuades Ness to stall the district attorney (Clifton James) from dropping the case, then corners police chief Mike Dorsett, who sold out Wallace to Capone. Malone learns about another Capone accountant, Walter Payne, and calls Ness with the news. A knife-wielding thug breaks into Malone's home; Malone forces him out of the backdoor with a shotgun, only to step into a Tommy gun ambush by Nitti. He lives long enough for Ness and Stone to find him, and advise which train Payne will take out of town before he dies.

Ness and Stone arrive at Union Station and find Payne guarded by several gangsters. After the fierce and epic shootout, the two succeed in killing the gangsters and taking Payne alive. He testifies in court about how untaxed cash flowed throughout Capone's organization. Ness notices that Capone seems unperturbed despite the probability of serving a long prison sentence, and also sees Nitti carrying a gun inside his jacket. He escorts Nitti out of the courtroom with the bailiff and discovers that Nitti has the mayor's permission to carry the weapon. Ness identifies Nitti as Malone's assassin after seeing Malone's address in Nitti's matchbook.

Nitti shoots the bailiff in a panic and flees to the roof of the courthouse, but Ness corners him. After fighting down his urge to take revenge for Malone, Ness plans to deliver Nitti to the authorities; but when Nitti insults the memory of Malone while also saying that he will never go to prison, Ness angrily pushes him off the roof. In the courtroom, Stone shows Ness a document from Nitti's jacket that reveals that the jury was bribed, explaining Capone's relaxed mood. The judge has no intention of using it as evidence until Ness bluffs that the judge's name is in Payne's ledger of payoffs. The judge decides to switch juries with a neighbouring courtroom and restart the trial. Upon hearing the judge's order to the bailiff to have the juries switched, Capone immediately realizes what has happened and, contrary to his earlier bored, relaxed mood, becomes

angry with his lawyer, telling him to "do something over here." The lawyer, presumably realizing that a fair trial will almost certainly result in Capone's conviction and attempting to mitigate the outcome, proceeds to announce to the judge - without Capone's consent - that they have decided to withdraw the plea of "not guilty," and enter a plea of "guilty." Shocked and infuriated, Capone flies into a hysterical rage, railing furiously first at the judge, and then at Ness, shouting angrily over and over again that he (Ness) is "nothing but a lot of talk and a badge." As the scene ends, Capone has utterly lost his cool, and is seen being dragged from the courtroom, screaming at Ness and struggling to get free of the courtroom bailiffs. In a following scene, back in his office some time later, Ness is seen clipping newspaper headlines announcing first Capone's conviction, and then his eleven-year prison sentence.

Cast

Kevin Costner	as	Eliot Ness
Sean Connery	as	Jimmy Malone
Charles Martin Smith	as	Oscar Wallace
Andy García	as	George Stone
Robert De Niro	as	Al Capone
Patricia Clarkson	as	Catherine Ness
Billy Drago	as	Frank Nitti
Richard Bradford	as	Chief Mike Dorsett
Jack Kehoe	as	Walter Payne
Brad Sullivan	as	George
Clifton James	as	District Attorney

Memorable quotes (with notes on difficult vocabulary)

Capone: People are gonna drink! You know that, I know that, we all know that, and all I do is **act on** that. And all this talk of **bootlegging** - what is bootlegging? On a boat, it's bootlegging. On Lake Shore Drive, it's hospitality. I'm a businessman!

To act on something: agire di conseguenza; **bootlegging:** contrabbando

Ness: We are a little in the dark here, but any ideas you may have...

Wallace: Well, actually, yes, sir, I do. And the one I want to try first...is this. He has not **filed a return** since 1926.

Ness: A return...?

Wallace: An income tax return.

Ness: Income tax.

Wallace: Yes, sir.

Ness: What do you do at the Bureau Mr. Wallace?

Wallace: Oh, I'm an accountant.

Ness: An accountant?

Wallace: Yes sir and the Bureau sent me here...

Ness: If you'll excuse me. Please.

Malone: Okay. Let's go.

Ness: Where are we going?

Malone: These walls have ears. You said you wanted to know how to get Capone. Do you really wanna get him? You see what I'm saying? What are you prepared to do?

Ness: Everything within the law.

Wallace: And then what are you prepared to do? If you **open the ball on these people**, Mr Ness you must be prepared to go all the way. Because they won't give up the fight until one of you is dead.

Ness: I want to get Capone! I don't know how to get him.

Malone: You wanna know how to get Capone? Here's how you get him: he **pulls** a knife, you pull a gun. He sends one of yours to the hospital, you send one of his to the **morgue**. That's the Chicago way! And that's how you get Capone. Now do you want to do that? Are you ready to do that? I'm making you a deal. Do you want this deal?

Ness: I have sworn to **put this man away** with any and all legal means at my disposal and I will do so.

Malone: Well, the Lord hates a **coward**. Do you know what a **blood oath** is, Mr. Ness?

Ness: Yes.

Malone: Good, 'cause you just took one.

To file a return: fare la dichiarazione dei redditi; **to open the ball on someone (fig.):** aprire le danze con qualcuno (fig.); **to pull:** (qui) estrarre; **morgue:** obitorio; **to put someone away:** mettere qualcuno in galera; **coward:** codardo; **blood oath:** giuramento di sangue

Malone: Alright, **stand easy** son, I wanna ask you something. Why do you want to join the force?

Williamson: To protect and...to protect and serve...to protect and...

Malone: Please don't search for **the yearbook answer** uh? Just tell me what you think!

Williamson: Well what I think?

Malone: Yeah

Williamson: I...you...could help the force.

Malone: Thank you. There goes the next Chief of Police.

Barry: Stone! Out here! This kid's a prodigy.

Malone: Why do you want to join the force?

Stone: To protect the property and citizenship...

Malone: Please don't waste my time with that bullshit. Where are you from, Stone?

Stone: From the south-side.

Malone: Stone. George Stone. That's your name? What's your real name?

George Stone: That is my real name.

Malone: Nah. What was it before you changed it?

George Stone: Giuseppe Petri.

Malone: Jeez I knew it. That's all you need, one **thieving wop** on the team.

George Stone: What's that you say?

Malone: I said that you're a lying member of a no good race.

George Stone: It's much better than you, you stinking Irish pig.

Malone: Oh, I like him.

Ness: Yeah I like him too.

Stand easy (qui): riposo; **the yearbook answer:** la risposta del libro di testo; **thieving wop (der.):** ladro italiano (spreg.)

Malone: Well, here we are.

Ness: What are we doing here?

Malone: **Liquor raid.**

Ness: Here?

Malone: Mr. Ness, everybody knows where the **booze** is. The problem isn't finding it, the problem is who wants to **cross** Capone. Let's go.

Liquor raid: sequestro di liquori; **booze (slang):** alcolici; **to cross:** (qui) sfidare

Ness: What is that? What is that?

Malone: God I'm with the **heathen**. That is my **callbox** key, and that... is my St. Jude.

Stone: Il Santo Jude. He's the patron saint of lost causes.

Malone: And policemen.

Ness: The patron saint of policemen?

Malone: Everybody needs a friend. Lost causes, policemen...which do you want to be?

Stone: I wanna be a cop.

Malone: You do?

Stone: Yeah

Malone: Why?

Stone: To protect the property and the citizenship...

Heathen: non credente, pagano; **callbox:** cabina telefonica;

Ness: We have several large operations **in the work**, we're rather busy, Alderman. What can we do for you?

Alderman: I came up to congratulate you on a job well done. Share your good fortune on such a lovely day.

Ness: What's that? What is that?

Alderman: Mr. Ness, you're an **educated** man. Let me **pay you the compliment** of being **blunt**. There's a large, a large and popular business which you are **causing dismay**. Why don't you just **cross the street** and let things take their course.

Ness: Can you come in here please? In Roman times, when a **fellow(1)** was convicted of trying to **bribe** a public official, they would cut off his nose, and **sew** him in a bag with a wild animal, and throw that bag in a river. You tell your master that we must agree to disagree!

Alderman: You're making a mistake.

Ness: Yeah I know, well I've made them before and I'm beginning to enjoy them.

Alderman: You fellows(2) are untouchable, is that the thing? No one can **get to you**? Hey, everyone can be gotten to.

Ness: You tell Capone, that I'll see him in hell.

In the works: in corso; **educated:** istruito; **to pay someone the compliment:** fare un complimento; **blunt:** (qui) franco; **to cause dismay:** (qui) creare disagio; **to cross the street:** (qui) chiudere un occhio; **fellow (1):** cittadino; **to bribe:** corrompere; **to saw:** cucire; **to get to someone:** (qui) riuscire a corrompere

Capone: I want you to get this fuck where he breathes! I want you to find this **nancy-boy** Eliot Ness, I want him dead! I want his family dead! I want his house burned to the ground! I wanna go there in the middle of the night and I wanna piss on his ashes!

Capone: I'm gonna tell you something. Somebody **messes** with me, I'm gonna mess with him. Somebody steals from me, I'm gonna say you stole. Not talk to him for spitting on the sidewalk. Do you understand? Now, I have done nothing to hurt these people but they are angered at me. So what do they do? **Doctor up** some **income tax**, for which they have got no case, to annoy me. To speak to me like men? No. To **harass** a peaceful man. I pray to God if I ever had a **grievance** I'd have just a little more self respect. I'll tell you one more thing: you have **an all out prize fight**, you wait until the fight is over, one guy is left standing. And that's how you know who won.

To mess with someone: dare fastidio/creare problemi; **to doctor up:** falsificare; **income tax:** dichiarazione dei redditi; **to harrass:** molestare; **grievance:** risentimento; **an all out prize fight:** lotta all'ultimo sangue

Sources

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http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Untouchables_%28film%29