**The Verdict (1982)**

Frank Galvin ([Paul Newman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Newman)), once a promising graduate of [Boston College Law School](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boston_College_Law_School) and a lawyer at an elite [Boston](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boston) law firm, is now an alcoholic ambulance chaser who has lost all of his four cases over the last three years. As a favor, his former partner and friend Mickey ([Jack Warden](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jack_Warden)) throws him a medical malpractice case where it's all but assured that the defense will settle for a large amount. The case involves a young mother who was possibly administered the wrong [anesthetic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anesthetic) and is now in a coma. Her sister and brother-in-law are hoping for a settlement to properly care for the victim, and Frank assures them they have a strong case. Meanwhile, Frank becomes romantically involved with a woman he meets at a local bar, Laura ([Charlotte Rampling](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charlotte_Rampling)).

Frank visits the comatose woman and is deeply affected. He then meets with the defendants: the [Archdiocese of Boston](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archdiocese_of_Boston), who run the Catholic [hospital](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hospital) where the incident took place. As expected, the archdiocese offers a fairly substantial amount of money to settle out of court, but Frank declines the offer, as he fears that this may be his last chance to do something right as a lawyer, and that merely taking the handout would render him "lost." Everyone, including the presiding judge and the victim's relatives, is stunned by Frank's decision.

Things quickly go wrong for Frank: his client's brother-in-law finds out from "the other side" that he has turned down a $210,000 settlement, and angrily confronts Frank; his star [medical expert](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expert_witness) disappears; a hastily arranged substitute's credentials and testimony are called into serious question on the [witness stand](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Witness_stand); his opponent—the high-priced attorney Ed Concannon ([James Mason](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Mason))—has at his disposal a large legal team that is masterful with the press; the presiding judge ([Milo O'Shea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milo_O%27Shea)) takes great strides to obstruct Frank's questioning; and any witnesses present in the operating room refuse to testify about what, if anything, went wrong.

While looking for cigarettes in Laura's handbag, Mickey discovers a cheque from Concannon—evidently she's a spy providing information on Frank's legal strategy to the opposition. An enraged Frank strikes Laura in the face with great force on their next meeting, knocking her to the floor. Even then, when he has the clear opportunity to have the case declared a mistrial, Frank decides to continue to trial.

Frank's big break comes when he discovers the whereabouts of a lone witness quickly hushed after the incident. Her shattering testimony—that she was asked to change her notes on the admitting form after the incident to hide an egregious error by one of the defendants—stuns the entire courtroom. A distressed Concannon's attempts at discrediting her serve only to further cement her veracity, even after the judge declares her testimony stricken from the record on legal technicalities. Frank delivers a brief but moving [closing argument](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Closing_argument), beseeching the jury to pursue "truth and justice." When the jury returns, they find for Frank's client and then ask whether they are limited to the amount sought by the plaintiffs. When the presiding judge resignedly replies they are not, it is implied the award will far exceed expectations.

As Frank is congratulated by his clients, Mickey, and colleagues and strangers alike, he catches a glimpse of Laura watching him from afar. The final shot is of Frank deeply contemplating his new and unfamiliarly bright lease on life as he sips on a coffee, ignoring his telephone's continuous ringing from a call from Laura.

## **Cast**

[Paul Newman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Newman) as Frank Galvin

[Charlotte Rampling](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charlotte_Rampling) as Laura Fischer

[Jack Warden](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jack_Warden) as Mickey Morrissey

[James Mason](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Mason) as Ed Concannon

[Milo O'Shea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milo_O%27Shea) as Judge Hoyle

[Lindsay Crouse](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lindsay_Crouse) as Kaitlin Costello

[Edward Binns](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Binns) as Bishop Brophy

[Julie Bovasso](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julie_Bovasso) as Maureen Rooney

[Roxanne Hart](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roxanne_Hart) as Sally Doneghy

[James Handy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Handy) as Kevin Doneghy

[Wesley Addy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wesley_Addy) as Dr. Towler

[Joe Seneca](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joe_Seneca) as Dr. Thompson

[Lewis J. Stadlen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lewis_J._Stadlen) as Dr. Gruber

[Kent Broadhurst](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kent_Broadhurst) as Joseph Alito

[Colin Stinton](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colin_Stinton) as Billy

[Tobin Bell](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tobin_Bell) as Courtroom Observer

[Bruce Willis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bruce_Willis) as Courtroom Observer (uncredited)

**Memorable quotes (with notes on difficult vocabulary)**

[Frank Galvin](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000056/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): [to the judge] **You** **couldn't** **hack** **it** **as a lawyer**. You were a bag man for the boys downtown and you still are, I know about you.

**You couldn’t hack it** **as a lawyer** = (AmE) non riuscivi a cavartela come avvocato

[Ed Concannon](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000051/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): Why wasn't she getting oxygen?

[Dr. Towler](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0011741/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): Well, many reasons, really...

[Ed Concannon](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000051/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): Tell me one.

[Dr. Towler](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0011741/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): She'd aspirated vomitus into her mask.

[Ed Concannon](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000051/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): She threw up in her mask. Now cut the bullshit, please. Just say it: She threw up in her mask.

**to throw up** = vomitare

[Judge Hoyle](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0642675/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): This case should never have come to trial. But you know better. You're mister independent. You want to be independent? Be independent now. I have no **sympathy** for you.

**sympathy** = (umana) comprensione

[Kevin Doneghy](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0359695/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): You guys... you guys are all the same! The doctors at the hospital, you... it's always what I'm going to do for you. And then you **screw up**, and it's, "Ah, we did the best that we could, I'm dreadfully sorry." And people like us live with your mistakes the rest of our lives.

**to screw up** = (informale) combinare un disastro

[Judge Hoyle](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0642675/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): It seems to me, a fellow's trying to come back, he'd take the **settlement**, get a record for himself. I, myself. would take it and run like a thief.

[Frank Galvin](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000056/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): I'm sure you would.

**settlement** = (in ambito legale) accordo che prevede il patteggiamento di una somma di denaro per chiudere una causa

[Kaitlin](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0001080/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): [testifying why she kept a copy of the admittance form] After the operation, when that poor girl she went into a coma, Dr. Towler called me in. He told me that he'd had five difficult **deliverie**s in a row and he was tired... and he never looked at the admittance form. And he told me to change the form. He told me to change the '1' to a '9'... **or else**... or else he said, he said he'd **fire** me. He said I'd never work again. Who were these men? Who were these men? I wanted to be a nurse!

**delivery** = (qui) parto; **or else** = o sarei stata nei guai; **to fire** = (qui) informale per licenziare

[Ed Concannon](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000051/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): I know how you feel. You don't believe me, but I do know. I'm going to tell you something that I learned when I was your age. I'd prepared a case and old man White said to me, "How did you do?" And, uh, I said, "Did my best." And he said, "You're not paid to do your best. You're paid to win." And that's what pays for this office... pays for the **pro bono** work that we do for the poor... pays for the type of law that you want to practice... pays for my whiskey... pays for your clothes... pays for the leisure we have to sit back and discuss philosophy as we're doing tonight. We're paid to win the case. You finished your marriage. You wanted to come back and practice the law. You wanted to come back to the world. Welcome back.

**pro bono work** = (qui) patrocinio gratuito

[Judge Hoyle is speaking with Concannon and Galvin about the case]

[Judge Hoyle](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0642675/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): Frank, what would you and your client take - right now, this very minute - to walk out of here, **let this damn thing drop**?

[Frank Galvin](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000056/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): My client can't walk, your honor.

[Judge Hoyle](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0642675/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): I know full well she can't, Frank. You see the padre on your way out; he'll punch your ticket... you follow me?

**let this damn thing drop** = lasciar perdere l’intera faccenda

[Frank is giving his summation to the jury]

[Frank Galvin](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000056/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): You know, so much of the time we're just lost. We say, "Please, God, tell us what is right; tell us what is true." And there is no justice: the rich win, the poor are powerless. We become tired of hearing people lie. And after a time, we become dead... a little dead. We think of ourselves as victims... and we become victims. We become... we become weak. We doubt ourselves, we doubt our beliefs. We doubt our institutions. And we doubt the law. But today you are the law. You ARE the law. Not some book... not the lawyers... not the, a marble statue... or the **trappings** of the court. See those are just symbols of our desire to be just. They are... they are, in fact, a prayer: a fervent and a frightened prayer. In my religion, they say, "Act as if ye had faith... and faith will be given to you." IF... if we are to have faith in justice, we need only to believe in ourselves. And ACT with justice. See, I believe there is justice in our hearts.

[he sits down]

**trappings =** ornamenti, decori (come simboli)

[Judge Hoyle is speaking with Concannon and Galvin about the case]

Judge Hoyle: Frank, what would you and your client take - right now, this very minute - to walk out of here, let this damn thing drop?

Frank Galvin: My client can’t walk, your honor.

Judge Hoyle: I know full well she can’t, Frank. You see the padre on your way out; **hell punch your ticket**... you follow me?

**hell punch your ticket**  = come guadagnarsi un biglietto per l’inferno

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Verdict>

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0084855/>

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