

12-1-2007

The Potential of Erin Brokovitch to Introduce Organizational Behavior Topics

J. Benjamin Forbes
John Carroll University

Jonathan E. Smith
John Carroll University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarship.shu.edu/omj>



Part of the [Organizational Behavior and Theory Commons](#), and the [Organizational Communication Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Forbes, J. Benjamin and Smith, Jonathan E. (2007) "The Potential of Erin Brokovitch to Introduce Organizational Behavior Topics," *Organization Management Journal*: Vol. 4 : Iss. 3 , Article 3.
Available at: <https://scholarship.shu.edu/omj/vol4/iss3/3>

The Potential of *Erin Brockovich* to Introduce Organizational Behavior Topics

J. BENJAMIN FORBES

John Carroll University

JONATHAN E. SMITH

John Carroll University

Real organizational behavior is rich, and messy, and emotional, and at times painful, but at other times immensely rewarding. The movie, *Erin Brockovich*, captures this richness and provides an exciting means to introduce a variety of individual or micro-organizational behavior concepts (such as perception, personality, and motivation) typically covered at the beginning of the Organizational Behavior course. In this paper, we describe the use of the film, including a take-home viewing assignment, an in-class assignment, a description of clips and comments for in-class use, and suggestions for the types of issues to discuss in relation to the major topics and in relation to other potentially relevant areas. The richness of this film and the issues raised also provide the potential for more critical analyses of management and organizational practices.

Keywords: management education; teaching organizational behavior; teaching with film; perception; personality; motivation

There are many challenges in teaching a topic such as Organizational Behavior. One of the more interesting is the need to develop student appreciation of the complexity and relevance of the subject. Most of our textbooks are very research oriented and carefully document all statements with reference to supporting studies. They can be cognitively engaging and are consistent with calls for “evidence-based management” (Rousseau, 2006). However, emotional engagement and appreciation of the relevance of the material is often lacking. Hunt (2001) has noted that when viewing a well-done drama, students become engaged both emotionally and intellectually and are more likely to appreciate the importance of course concepts. Videos have also been suggested as one means to improve communication with the current generation of traditional age students (Payne & Holmes, 1998).

Many students also have the legitimate expectation that this course will teach them about “real” organizational behavior, as it occurs in the workplace, and prepare them to manage it. Real organizational behavior is rich and messy, and emotional, and at times painful, but at other times, immensely rewarding. It would be great to present this type of OB to our students, especially early in the course. We believe that the film *Erin Brockovich* accomplishes exactly that.

Our original intentions in using this material were to simply provide realistic examples of several micro-organizational topics such as personality, perception, and motivation

through observation of the title character. However, this unique individual can only be truly understood within the context of her background and her challenges and opportunities on the job. While the basic behavioral concepts are very nicely illustrated; the richness of the story allows the instructor to go well beyond that. *Erin Brockovich* has the potential to stimulate questioning of some fundamental management practices, thus supporting an approach to management education in which we question our own content and context (Cohen, 1998).

Cohen (1998) has reviewed and discussed the use of fiction in management education. Although based on a real character and a true story, this film accomplishes many of the same objectives as does the use of fiction. The arguments for using such material include the rich vicarious knowledge of organizational life which is offered. This helps the student to “understand the nuances, the variety ... the complex and interwoven narratives of organizations” (p. 168). Historically, the notion that fiction is “good for us” was based on the belief that it can help us to understand our fellow humans. It can “...help the manager to step outside the narrowness of self, to understand the issues that affect others” (Cohen, 1998, p. 172). The cultural, socioeconomic, and gender differences illustrated in this film will certainly help those who choose to emphasize these ethical/social justice teaching objectives.

For those not familiar with the story line, the film is a dramatization of a true incident which combines elements of both the David and Goliath and the Cinderella stories. It immerses the viewer in the very difficult but ultimately successful defense of a poor rural community from poisoning of their water by a billion dollar corporation. The defender is a small law firm energized by the brash determination and innate ability of a newly hired legal assistant. The new assistant, Erin, transforms the firm and is afforded the opportunity to transform herself. The movie begins with Erin as a poorly educated, unemployed single mother, barely able to feed her three kids, and it ends with her, well-dressed, in a brand new office, being handed a bonus check for \$2 million. The movie has a very effective balance of drama, comedy, and suspense. Although this is not a typical management situation and Erin Brockovich is not a typical employee, it is a true story and topics such as individual development and motivation, personality, perception, etc. are vividly portrayed. The more ambitious instructor may wish to pursue other complex organizational issues which will also be briefly mentioned in our discussion.

Other reasons to choose this film include the need for women as strong leading characters in the work environment. Our school, like many others, now has a majority of women as undergraduate students. Unfortunately, few management cases or readings showcase effective women in business situations (Bilamoria, 1999). In our experience, both male and female students find the lead character somewhat shocking but also inspirational.

Others have discussed the rationale for, and the effective use of, films in the OB classroom. For example, Lawrence Roth, “an ex-manager and consultant turned professor,” has noted the difficulty that traditional undergraduate business students have with learning how business organizations really function. In contrast, nontraditional students with business experience “get so much more” from business classes (Roth, 2001,

p. 22). We have noticed the same phenomenon in comparing the responses of part-time working MBA students to OB material with those of our traditional undergraduates. One solution is to use realistic films to close the reality gap.

Our review of reported uses of film from the management education literature suggests that there have been many excellent films recommended that focus on group or organizational issues such as leadership, power, influence, and culture. For example, *The Magnificent Seven* (Huczynski, 1994; Michaelson & Scultheiss, 1988), *Aliens* (Harrington & Griffin, 1990), *The Karate Kid* (Baker, 1993), *The Lion King* (Comer, 2001), *Contact* and *Elizabeth* (Huczynski & Buchanan (2004), and *A Soldier's Story* (Bumpus, 2005) all provide illustrations of leadership, power and/or influence. We can also see organizational and national culture in movies such as *Gung Ho* (Mallinger & Rossy, 2003; Roth, 2001), *The Efficiency Expert* (Roth, 2001), and several of the *cinema verite* films of Frederick Wiseman (Scherer & Baker, 1999). Others have pointed out that many of the films recommended for use are not set in a business or professional environment (Ferris & Fanelli, 2002). When the focus is on individual behavior and development (perception, personality, growth within the needs hierarchy), this is particularly true. Relatively few films focus on such individual behavior and also take place within a work environment, as does *Erin Brockovich*.

For readers seeking more information on instructional resources for film use in the OB classroom, we recommend textbooks by Marx, Jick, & Frost (1991) and Champoux (2001b); two articles by Champoux: the 1999 paper on "Film as a teaching resource," and the comprehensive article on animated films (2001a); and the catalogue of films with teaching notes from the Hartwick Institute (www.HartwickInstitute.org).

The Use of *Erin Brockovich* in the OB Class

We have used this film both as an out-of-class assignment to view the entire movie, requiring a reflection paper and then in-class discussion, and as an in-class discussion of only selected clips. The students are assigned the relevant chapters in the textbook before viewing, and the instructor may wish to review key concepts with students before the movie. The topics that we cover will be discussed followed by the actual assignments. A more detailed note identifying and explaining the clips and further comments for the use of *Erin Brockovich* in the classroom is included as an Appendix.

TOPICS FOR REFLECTION AND IN-CLASS DISCUSSION

Please note, some of the references cited here would require viewing the entire film (Take Home Assignment), not just the clips described later (in-class assignment).

Perception. One of the most obvious observations in the movie is how the perception of Erin's brash, foul-mouthed behavior causes others to turn against her. She loses a legitimate accident claim and is initially unable to gain the acceptance of her colleagues at the law firm. Ed, her boss, tolerates her behavior but no one believes she has any relevant abilities. Topics from the typical OB textbook chapter on Perception (e.g. Robbins & Judge, 2007, Chapter 5) such as stereotyping, selective perception, and the halo effect can be discussed here.

Attribution theory can also be illustrated through discussion of Erin's firing soon after she begins working on the PG&E case. Erin is asked to do something with the files for an ignored pro bono real estate case. She becomes so interested in this case that she leaves town for a week to do research (leaving only one message about this). Of course she is fired. Apparently inappropriate behavior is blamed on the person (an irresponsible employee) not the situation (the demands of the job)—an example of the Fundamental Attribution Error. The impact of the informational cues of Consensus, Consistency, and Distinctiveness can also be discussed. Since she is so different from all the other "good" employees of the firm, the cause of the absence is assumed to be internal (and inappropriate)—Consensus cue. The Consistency cue might suggest that since she has never disappeared before on this job, the cause is situational. However, she has not been on the job for very long, so this information cue is rather weak. Instead, her background, dress, language, and confrontational behavior have probably led everyone to assume that she has had problems with attendance on previous jobs (different situations) and therefore the absence is again perceived to be internal—the Distinctiveness cue.

Other examples of perceptual issues include her own initial stereotyped negative perception of George, the motorcycle guy, who later becomes her lover and devoted child care provider. Stereotyped perceptions of lawyers are referred to throughout the film and in fact, Erin's ability to communicate with the working class people of Hinckley hinges on not being a lawyer but instead an empathetic person with much in common with the plaintiffs. A very powerful scene which illustrates misperception occurs when the new legal firm is brought in to support the case. These attorneys immediately dismiss Erin's ability until she dramatically demonstrates her mastery of all of the relevant and very detailed facts of the case. (This scene also illustrates the dramatically different appearances of Erin and Theresa, relating to feminist issues discussed later.)

Personality. Erin Brockovich clearly illustrates the existence of "personality" as an enduring set of traits and behaviors that distinguishes her from others. Students easily recognize her extraversion, self confidence, and refusal to conform. Discussion could expand this to the dimensions of models such as the Big Five and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. Her personality can be compared to that of Ed, her boss, the other major character in the film. It can also be noted that although she has had a long run of hard times, Erin still seems to possess strong core self-evaluation (high self-esteem and an internal locus of control) after all, she was Miss Wichita! In addition, Erin does not hesitate to use her charms to manipulate others and defensively maintains emotional distance, so she could also be described as Machiavellian. (These topics are covered in Chapter 4 of Robbins & Judge, 2007.)

If students have completed self-assessments of their own personalities, they might do a similar assessment for Erin. The instructor could then discuss the level of agreement in the class for her scores.

Motivation. It is interesting to note that Erin is a very highly motivated person throughout the movie. What changes are the sources of the motivation, the unfulfilled needs, and the hierarchical levels. Early in the film, the existence or physiological and

safety needs of her family and herself are threatened and she behaves accordingly. Moving up Maslow's hierarchy, it is not clear that social or relatedness needs are really ever satisfied. Her relationships with George and with her children are secondary to her obsession with the job. The devotion to the job that is observed late in the film is clearly the result of her very strong esteem needs, as reflected in her comment that finally people respect her.

There is also a strong identification with, and attachment to, the lower socio-economic families she is representing and an urge to use her talents to serve others less fortunate than she. The movie ends with Erin receiving a very impressive bonus and we can discuss whether her motivation was extrinsic or intrinsic, and has she realized her human potential?

Meaning of work and career/family conflicts. Issues that can be discussed here include the transition, from work that is merely instrumental in providing for the survival of Erin and her children, to work that is both intrinsically and extrinsically rewarding. Erin is an extremely capable woman who would probably never have had a chance to prove herself if it were not for a car accident, which led to a clerical job, which led to the opportunity to really make a difference for herself, her family, and others. Her work towards the end of the movie takes on the all-absorbing characteristics of Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) flow. Unfortunately, the work demands place severe strains on Erin's relationships with her children and her boyfriend, leading into possible discussions of career priority issues.

Managing an Erin Brockovich. Many people have strong negative reactions to Erin and her behavior. She is not an ideal role model for anyone entering the work force. However, she proved to be an outstanding contributor to the law firm. How well did Ed manage her? It is interesting to discuss how many students would have fired her, and the negative effects of her presence on the other employees. Can a firm afford an Erin Brockovich? Can we afford *not* to have some rebels or mavericks like her? And if we keep them, how do we manage them?

Additional Possible Topics to Discuss

These are not the primary topics for which we have chosen to use the film; however, to illustrate the richness of this material, we will briefly discuss other areas that an instructor or students may wish to pursue.

Business ethics. Students react strongly to the irresponsibility of PG&E, their cover-up tactics, and their refusal to acknowledge their role and make appropriate restitution for the pollution. There is a beautiful scene during a preliminary meeting between PG&E legal staff and Ed and his "staff" (none of whom are actually lawyers) in which a corporate representative who has been denying any problems with the water is about to take a sip from a glass in Ed's office. She is told that the water was brought in from Hinckley and, of course, reacts with strong aversion. The illnesses and deaths in the community are portrayed in a much more serious and respectful light and students see the consequences of corporate utilitarian decision making.

Career stages. Ed is nearing retirement and would never have taken on the case were it not for Erin's persistence and passion. There is a discussion between the two in which Ed is trying to disengage, noting how long and hard he has worked, and how difficult and expensive this case will be. Erin will not give up and soon we see a rejuvenated Ed excited to be back in the fight.

Organizational change and cultures. The two law firms with different cultures and expectations have difficulty working together. The larger, much more powerful and professional firm was brought in to help handle the immense class action suit. Ed and his local personal liability practice are clearly out of their league, but in many ways are more effective in working with the community members.

Socioeconomic diversity. Class differences and communication problems may be discussed. Erin was culturally and economically similar to the people of Hinckley and could empathize and communicate much better than Ed or the representative of the larger firm, Theresa. In one scene we see Theresa trudging around a dirt farm in high heels and her business suit, attempting to coldly question community members. In contrast, when asked if she were a lawyer, Erin responded "Hell no, I hate lawyers!"

Feminist issues. Susan Bordo (1993) has argued that there are pressures to "neutralize" the female body in today's professional work world. Theresa, in the scene where they discuss the holes in Erin's research, could be seen as someone who "With her body and dress ...declares symbolic allegiance to the professional, white, male world" (p. 208). Erin, on the other hand, throughout the movie, clearly refuses to declare such an allegiance.

ASSIGNMENT SHEETS

The assignments used to prepare for discussing *Erin Brockovich* are included below:

Figure 1

Take Home Viewing Assignment

Organizational Behavior Reflection Paper #1

On your own, view the film *Erin Brockovich*.
(The library has one DVD copy and it is in many video stores. The language of the film reflects the nature of the characters both good and bad. It should be viewed in that light and the offensive language should be seen as part of the realistic depiction of some aspects of work life.)

Write a reflection paper (2-3 pages) covering these questions.

- 1) How is Erin perceived and misperceived by others in the movie? Why is she not perceived correctly? What other characters are misperceived? Identify as many examples as you can.
 - 2) Describe Erin's personality as well as her level and sources of motivation. Do these change during the movie? How?
 - 3) Reflect on how the meaning of work changes for her; as well as on the career/family conflicts in the film.
-

Figure 2 In-class Viewing Assignment

Organizational Behavior

Discussion Questions on *Erin Brockovich*

- 1) How is Erin perceived and misperceived by others in the movie? Why is she not perceived correctly? Refer to concepts from Attribution Theory that influence Internal versus External attributions as well as Shortcuts in Judging Others.
 - 2) What other characters are misperceived?
 - 3) Describe Erin's personality as well as her level and sources of motivation. Do these change during the movie? How?
 - 4) Reflect on how the meaning of work changes for her; as well as on the career/family conflicts in the film.
 - 5) Discuss other issues related to behavior at work.
-

Assessment of the Assignment

As a take-home assignment, our students have viewed the entire film and written 2 to 3 page reflection papers. Their insights are typically impressive, often making relevant observations that were previously not noticed by the instructors. They clearly see the importance of perception, personality, and motivation in the workplace. Discussion in class is usually lively and well-informed.

Showing selected clips in class also works very well. Observation of facial expressions and body language among both undergraduate students and among a group of OB instructors has indicated that a high level of engagement is often present among many of the viewers. One section of undergraduate Organizational Behavior students was asked to evaluate the in-class exercise. Twenty-five students responded anonymously on a 5 point scale to the following evaluation:

Viewing and discussing clips from *Erin Brockovich* helped me to better understand the following workplace behavioral concepts:

1. How people may be inaccurately perceived;
2. How the concept of personality affects behavior;
3. How motivation affects behavior and how it may change over time;
4. Overall, this was a very effective exercise and should be used again.

The percentages indicating “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” for each question were: 1) 96%, 2) 84%, 3) 84%, and 4) (Overall) 96%.

CONCLUSIONS

In addition to following our approach, we encourage other OB instructors to view this film and discover their own examples of relevant organizational behavior, e.g., other cases of misperception and miscommunication, additional personality dimensions shown by Erin and others, other theories of motivation, etc.

Although she is the heroine, we can critique some basic themes of the story. For instance, from a traditional management perspective, Erin’s abrasive behaviors and her style of dress could be used as examples of how to kill a promising professional career. A lively discussion could focus on whether such an employee should conform to get ahead or be true to herself. From the management side, the techniques used by Erin’s boss, Ed, can be questioned. He allows Erin to continue to dress and behave in ways which are not generally acceptable in a law firm. How might students interpret this? Is it weak, inconsistent, and unjust leader behavior which could destroy the morale of the office, or “individualized consideration,” or motivated by a special relationship between the two characters, or the flexibility needed to handle an idiosyncratic “star” in the firm? We recommend allowing students to freely offer their assessments of such issues. As Cohen (1998) has noted, the absence of a “metanarrative, or ... ‘one best interpretation’” with such rich material, may make your class a success.

This article adds to the literature on the use of films in the Organizational Behavior classroom. Many powerful films focus on areas such as leadership, power, culture, and organizational change, however, *Erin Brockovich* fills a relative void in the area of individual, micro-organizational behavior. This engaging movie may be used early in the OB course to clearly illustrate the relevance of concepts such as perception, personality, and individual motivation, and to engage students in the importance and excitement of management and organizational behavior. Or it may be used later in the course to stimulate discussion of more controversial organizational issues.

REFERENCES

- Baker, III, H. E. (1993). “Wax on—wax off”: French and Raven in the movies. *Journal of Management Education*, 17 (4), 517-519.
- Bilamoria, D. (1999). Upgrading management education’s service to women. *Journal of Management Education*, 23 (2), 118-122.
- Bordo, S. (1993). Reading the slender body. In S. Bordo, *Unbearable weight: Feminism, western culture, and the body* (pp. 185-212). Berkeley: University of California Press.

- Bumpus, M. A. (2005). Using motion pictures to teach management: Refocusing the camera lens through the infusion approach to diversity. *Journal of Management Education*, 29 (6), 792-815.
- Champoux, J. E. (1999). Film as a teaching resource. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 8 (2), 206-217.
- Champoux, J. E. (2001a). Animated films as a teaching resource. *Journal of Management Education*, 25 (1), 79-100.
- Champoux, J. E. (2001b). *Organizational behavior: Using film to visualize principles and practices*. Cincinnati, OH: South-Western College.
- Cohen, C. (1998) Using narrative fiction within management education. *Management Learning*, 29 (2), 165-181.
- Comer, D. R. (2001). Not just a Mickey Mouse exercise: Using Disney's The Lion King to teach leadership. *Journal of Management Education*, 25 (4), 430-436.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience*. New York: Harper.
- Ferris, W. F., & Fanelli, R. (2002). [Review of the books *Management: Using film to visualize principles and practices* and *Organizational Behavior: Using film to visualize principles and practices*]. *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, 1 (1), 126-127.
- Harrington, K. V., & Griffin, R. W. (1990). Ripley, Burke, Gorma, and friends: Using the film *Aliens* to teach leadership and power. *Organizational Behavior Teaching Review*, 14 (3), 79-86.
- Huczynski, A. (1994). Teaching motivation and influencing strategies using *The Magnificent Seven*. *Journal of Management Education*, 18 (2), 273-278.
- Huczynski, A., & Buchanan, D. (2004). Theory from fiction: A narrative process perspective on the pedagogical use of feature film. *Journal of Management Education*, 28 (6), 702-726.
- Hunt, S. H. (2001). Must see TV: The timelessness of television as a teaching tool. *Journal of Management Education*, 25 (6), 631-647.
- Mallinger, M., & Rossy, G. (2003). Films as a lens for teaching culture: Balancing concepts, ambiguity, and paradox. *Journal of Management Education*, 27 (5), 608-624.
- Marx, R. D., Frost, P. J., & Jick, T. (1991). *Management live! The video workbook*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Michaelsen, L. K., & Schultheiss, E. E. (1988). Bronson, Brenner, and McQueen: Do they have something to teach us about influencing others? *Organizational Behavior Teaching Review*, 12 (4), 144-154.
- Payne, S. L., & Holmes, B. (1998). Communication challenges for management faculty involving younger "Generation X" students in their classes. *Journal of Management Education*, 22 (3), 344-367.
- Robbins, S. P., & Judge, T. A. (2007) *Organizational Behavior* (12th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Roth, L. (2001). Introducing students to "the big picture." *Journal of Management Education*, 25 (1), 21-31.

Rousseau, D. M. (2006). Is there such a thing as “evidence-based management?” *The Academy of Management Review*, 31 (2), 256-269.

Scherer, R. F., & Baker, B. (1999). Exploring social institutions through the films of Frederick Wiseman. *Journal of Management Education*, 23 (2), 143-153.

Appendix

SUGGESTIONS FOR CLIPS AND COMMENTS TO USE FOR IN-CLASS VIEWING OF ERIN BROCKOVICH

We begin with some introductory comments to indicate that this is a dramatization of a true story and that Julia Roberts won the Best Actress Academy Award for the film. Also, a warning about the language may be appropriate. Then talk about Erin, her situation, and that Ed had represented her in an unsuccessful lawsuit over an automobile accident. The scenes we used with the in-class assignment are listed below.

I. We begin with **Chapter 6** (from the DVD Chapter List): Erin is persistently looking through want ads and making calls, and continue through **Chapter 9**—Where Erin is excluded from lunch because she is “not one of the girls.” There is also discussion with Ed of her inappropriate dress and her counter comment about Ed’s ties. This entertaining segment also includes key background information such as Erin getting the job with the law firm; her first confrontation with George, the biker; and the introduction of the all-important, but overlooked, pro bono file. This clip provides the initial material relating to the perception of Erin by other employees as well as her inaccurate perception of George. We also see her personality and motivation in her refusal to take “no” for an answer from Ed about the job and her unwillingness to conform. This section runs about **nine minutes**.

We then explain that Erin went off to investigate the pro bono case (she thought with Ed’s approval) and say a little about all that she accomplished (interviewing residents, learning about hexavalent chromium, and obtaining water records). However, she did not check in very often and when she returns she has been fired.

II. Continue viewing with **Chapter 15**—Erin discovers all her stuff is gone from the office; **Chapter 16**: With George, she expresses her discouragement over not amounting to anything, after all, she “was Miss Wichita!” and a mild bedroom scene that you could skip, then continue into the **beginning of Chapter 17**, where Ed comes over and admits he fired her because he assumed she was off having fun—“You look like someone who has a lot of fun.” Stop after he agrees to rehire her. This runs about **eight minutes**.

As discussed in the earlier section, stereotyping and attribution theory concepts can help explain the assumption that she was just being irresponsible while she was actually working hard discovering a major injustice and opportunity for the firm. That her

identity is still bolstered by the achievement of having been a beauty queen is an interesting indicator of her strong self esteem.

Continue with some comments about how the investigation was going, family strains, George watching her kids, and Ed deciding to bring in a much larger firm.

III. Next view **Chapter 29**—Ed, Erin, and their “staff” meet with PG&E lawyers, and Erin is a very forceful advocate for the people of Hinckley; and **Chapter 30**—George asks her to change jobs but Erin refuses, saying this is the “first time in my life I got people respecting me.” Stop as George leaves. This clip shows how Erin’s status in the firm has risen, how important this work has become to her, and the salience of esteem and self actualization over affective needs. **Five minutes** run time for this clip.

IV. Then go to **Chapter 34**—The first meeting with the other supporting law firm where the stiff attorney, Theresa, assumes that there are “holes in Erin’s research,” and Erin demonstrates her extensive knowledge of all 600 plaintiffs. This is a very rich and entertaining scene, which illustrates differences in organizational culture, status, power, and credibility in organizations, and glaring misperception of Erin’s ability and accomplishments, which she forcefully and impressively corrects. One could discuss how Erin’s expert power with the other firm’s staff skyrockets during this scene. It also provides a stark visual contrast between the way Erin and Theresa choose to play their roles as legal professionals. **Four minutes** run time.

V. Chapter 36—Erin has been sick and walks into the office during a meeting being held without her. She and Ed have a very powerful discussion about taking work “personal,” and how much the case needs her. Here we see the depth of Erin’s commitment and personal involvement in the job. **Three minutes** run time.

VI. Finally, they win the case, mention the \$300M+ settlement, and go to **Chapter 43**—As they are moving into a new, very upscale office; Ed brings in Erin’s bonus check. They argue over its size, with Erin assuming she is being cheated, until she actually sees the amount (\$2 million). We allow students to then read the facts about the actual case which run over the screen and then stop. **Three minutes** run time.

This scene provides closure, allowing the viewer to see how far Erin has come. It could also be used to discuss the reasons for Erin’s erroneous assumptions about the size of the check. Is it dispositional, Erin’s distrustful personality, or situational? Equity theory might provide a situational explanation: Few employees would imagine that the size of the reward, even in a case like this, would be so large.

The **total film time** with brief instructor comments is **35-40 minutes**. We then follow with in-class discussion as described in the paper.

J. Benjamin Forbes is a Professor of Management at John Carroll University. He holds a Ph.D. in Industrial/Organizational Psychology from the University of Akron and a B.S. and M.M.S. from Stevens Institute of Technology. His current research interests include management education, leadership, spirituality and ethics in the workplace, and workplace abuse. J. Benjamin Forbes can be reached at forbes@jcu.edu.

Jonathan E. Smith is a Professor of Management and an Executive Assistant to the President at John Carroll University. He holds a Ph.D. in Industrial/Organizational Psychology from the University of Georgia and a M.Div. from Emory University. His current research interests include leadership skills, management education, and citizenship behavior. He has also been an active case writer. Jonathan E. Smith can be reached at jsmith@jcu.edu.