

Does the film "erin
brockovich" reinforce
the view that the usa



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Hollywood-type film. That is, it portrays the classic underdog (Erin Brockovich) who manages to talk and flirt her ways up in 'the system' as she rises through the ranks. She over comes the difficulties and challenges that fate throws at her. The film does represent the idea that the USA is the land of opportunities to a certain extent, but not perfectly. It does in the sense that the underachieving, mother, when she gets her 'big break', she works hard and makes millions and achieves her goals.

However, in another different aspect of the film, it doesn't show this at all because her entire success is down to great amounts of luck and also she is very rude to most people whom she feels threatens by. I. e. she just happens to get a job from Ed, just by being upset at loosing her court case (against the doctor). This highlights the discrepancies in the belief that the USA is the land of opportunities. In reality, lawyers would be likely to get grief from most people who's cases are lost, but not many of them give them a job in their office as a result.

This gains the audience sympathy for her and clearly identifies whom the audience can identify with as the 'good guy' throughout the film. Erin being the underdog also makes the audience support/sympathise with her throughout the film as the underdogs are always thought to be mistreated or disrespected. The film begins by essentially telling the audience about her background and her struggle as a mother of 2, with 2 ex-husbands, with \$74 in the bank and being \$7000 in debt. The director tells us this in an interview form where she is being interviewed for a job.

She has not proper qualifications, but she remains smiley and positive, even though the interviewer does not look highly impressed. This reinforces the audience's sympathy for her. She is dressed inappropriately for a job interview. This shows to the audience she is meant to be in the relatively lower status (lower class) because she is not dressed very respectably. the character of Erin Brockovich without which she wouldn't have succeeded. And she is also independent, shown by the fact that she is raising 2 children who, throughout the film, appear to be well brought up.

The interviewer turns her down for the job. Her reaction when he only says the word " look" shows that she it used to being turned down by interviewers. Her smile immediately drops and her disappointment shows. This job interview is basically a tool used by the director to give the audience a brief insight into the background of the main character. The camera angle of the interview is from the interviewers point of view, giving the audience a sense of: 1. She is talking directly to the audience. 2.

It makes the audience see and make an opinion of her from the interviewers point of view. In the court she is talked down to by the judge and lawyers and she is compared to the doctor who hit her car, which is the main reason she looses the case. The fact that she looses a fair case which in theory she should win, to a doctor, who is presumably upper class because of the well paid and highly respected job. This highlights again, the faults and discrepancies in the USA system, and indeed most societies systems. She pleads with the judge and ends up swearing at him.

This is because her emotions get in the way of her attempted professionalism in court. This is an ongoing theme throughout the film where her emotions affect her work. The character of Erin is portrayed as lower class. She lives in a run-down house, illustrated by the cockroaches in the sink, and the lack of food. However, she gives great care for her children and shows a lot of love towards them. This is shown when she loses her court case, but tells her children that she had won, so she doesn't worry them about her financial situation. She takes them out to a cafe and buys them food, but she herself doesn't eat anything, she only has coffee because I think she would rather spend her money on her children (showing her affection). She is very maternal towards her children. I think her rudeness is showing that perhaps she has had a difficult life with people and she is very defensive towards people because of it. The children are first seen playing in the sprinkler in the small, back garden. This suggests to the audience that they are poor, because it's quite a primitive form of enjoyment, instead of playing on a Playstation for example.

Ed is a bit of a push over when manipulated by Erin. I think at first he acts differently in the presence of her. I. e. when he sees her in his office, his tone changes from angry to inquisitive about her, he straightens his tie out also and tries to make himself generally more presentable to her. He is clumsy around her also, suggesting he might be slightly nervous or feel intimidated by her sex appeal (i. e. cleavage). Ed is nice however, as he gives her the job. He even offers her some money too, but she declines.

This reinforces the idea that she is strong willed and at the same time she is trying to maintain some dignity. In many ways, Erin is the white trash
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employee from hell. She wears garish outfits. She badgers the other employees and Ed with ripping insults. There may be truth in her jibes, but they are so hostile that she becomes more a liability than an asset. When she is introduced to George, she is very aggressive towards him and doesn't let him really talk much. She shows experience with handling men and she obviously doesn't want to be hurt by another man.

On her desk in the office are pictures of her children reinforcing her love for her children. Ed asks her why she isn't out with lunch with 'the girls', she replies "im not the right kind of girl". Therefore, she knows that she doesn't fit in with the other girls in the office, and that she is independent and reinforces the idea that she may be a bit of an outcast, however, she doesn't mind because they are not like her at all. Throughout her struggle, she gets a lot of help from other people, so in a way, its not all her sheer effort that makes her achieve her dream. I. e.

George looking after the children, Ed helping with the case. So therefore, she doesn't achieve it entirely on her own. However, it is her own work that begins the investigation and she does follow up her works showing persistence and initiative in her knew job. Her work methods are understandably questioned by Ed when she disappears for a week without informing Ed about what she is doing and where she is going. Ed fires her, without hearing her side of the story first. It seems like nothing is going right for Erin, but in the end she gets her job back. From now on, she is more and more successful.

Her unorthodox methods are compared to the textbook methods used by the other female lawyer, who is defeated by Erin's vast knowledge. Her clothes are occasionally becoming more conservative, suggesting that she is slowly rising through the ranks of the social ladder, because now she has a relatively respectable job, and a boyfriend. She also commands more power now because she is now in the 'interviewing boots' and she may feel more respectable and have more power. However, her work interferes with the relationship with her children, which I find surprising because we saw at the beginning her bond between them.

But in the long run, her work will obviously benefit the children. Although the local citizens are initially leery of becoming involved, Erin's persistence and the personal interest she takes in their lives makes them listen. A kindred spirit, Erin is one of them, and her ability to connect with them on their level makes them comfortable, ultimately earning their trust. This is a quality, which seems to be lacking from the other women in the film, i. e. the representatives of PG & E. The company PG & E are clearly identified as the enemy or the 'bady' in the film.

The audience, even from the beginning know that Erin will win, because the underdogs in Hollywood films always do (i. e. Rocky I). The name PG & E gives the impression to the audience that the company is huge, showing the odds against Erin's case winning. But the fact that she does win just shows how much determination and hard work she does to achieve her fortune. In the settlement case, 2 people, Erin and Ed, represent the underdogs but PG ; E are represented by 3 candidates to show that they have a stronger force, but still a weaker case.

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Her lack of experience and unprofessionalism shows in certain situations in formal situations. I. e. her wanting to add a comment when the judge asks, Ed is forced to stop her. In the courtroom, the woman's hair is tied up and she is wearing very conservative clothing, whereas Erin is wearing the complete opposite, with her hair down, and a low cut top on. This shows her character to have her own strong beliefs and tastes, which aid her to succeed. Erin seems more human, and not so cold as the other ladies in the film. I. e. she looks different from everyone else, and independent.

Whereas the other women seem to look all the same. The opening scene is important because it basically sets her against the system, which makes her achievements seem even more amazing. This ending with them wining is a recurring theme in Hollywood-type films, (to leave the audience with positive feelings, and happy felling that the film ended nicely) but this film was based on a true story, so it doesn't really apply to this film. But I think what they have done, is to illustrate the point very clearly (that she has come out successful).

The ' true story' label gives the film some degree of credibility over other, Hollywood films. I think it might be trying to differentiate itself with other made-up, fairy tale Hollywood films. However, it's still a classic, Small vs. Big and Good vs. Evil. And some of the story elements of Erin's success seem like a Hollywood fairy tale. Although the underdogs won, harm was still done to the affected families, so in some ways, she didn't fully succeed, because the case took so long, that more harm would have been caused to the residents.

In conclusion this film does mostly support the idea of the American dream being possible, because she does work hard, and is therefore rewarded with a boyfriend, well played job, lots of money and happiness etc. This new life style after the court case, is a great contrast with her earlier life. We see her success in the work place when she has her own, big, office at the end of the film, (and her getting \$2000000). Erin Brockovich is an inspirational reminder of the power of the human spirit, her victory made even sweeter by the fact that while helping others, she in turn helped herself.