

# Class Action takes the courtroom battle home

## Strained relationship provides emotional edge

by Jon Flick  
The Collegian

The setting is a courtroom completely enclosed in oak, which provides for warmth. Don't get too comfortable, a battle is taking place between lawyers.

The plaintiff is requesting a list of names and addresses for employees of Argo Motors, an automaker accused of producing a defective car, the Meridian.

The defense declares this list should not be given, and tries to prove that it is irrelevant to the impending case.

Experience triumphs over youth, however, as the plaintiff handles the courtroom with ease, and wins the list.

Under ordinary circumstances, this would appear normal. But suppose the plaintiff and defendant, respectively, are father and daughter?

Class Action bases itself upon this father-daughter conflict. I liked the film a lot, because it's not just a good courtroom drama, but also a classic David and Goliath confrontation.

Gene Hackman is the "David", a no-nonsense, cocky lawyer in a small firm. He portrays a man named Mr. Ward with compassion for victims, and he works for them by any means he can.

"Goliath" is represented by Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio (*The Abyss*), who plays Maggie, an attorney in a huge law firm that handles cases for the upper echelon in society.

She is trained to think

primarily about the firm's bottom line, not the people she represents. She is learned in the ways of legal manipulation, and uses this power in her quest for a partnership in the firm.

Here's the scenario. Argo Motors produced a car years ago which explodes in certain collisions. A man who was injured (and whose family was killed) in one of those collisions brings his problem to Mr. Ward, who files a class action lawsuit against Argo.

Maggie also wants the case

forces Maggie to reconsider her relationship with her father. Many tense moments manifest themselves in this critical point in the film.

The rest of the film centers around some new evidence that could help Mr. Ward's side of the case. Maggie has possession of it, and she must face a moral dilemma: should she give the evidence to her father and lose her partnership, or disclose it and violate the ethics of the legal profession in her ascent?

Direction is handled nicely by Michael Apted (*Gorillas in the Mist*). He provides a sense of drama throughout the film, but retains the characters' human qualities as well. This is very important in buffering Mastrantonio's character, because of her inhumane courtroom tactics.

The only goal the film fails to accomplish is the display of conflict between Hackman's and Mastrantonio's characters.

The script would indicate that a sense of tension between Maggie and her father should be sensed right from the beginning of the movie. What is portrayed is a mere rivalry between them, with not nearly as much conflict as there should be.

Viewers might not get an indication of how much deep-rooted hatred Maggie feels for her father until the "explosion" shortly after the death of her mother.

All in all, this is a very good film. The moral dilemma was well executed, the actors performed marvelously, and I felt I got my money's worth.

## Review

in order to give herself a chance at the partnership, so her mentors concede and give her the case.

As if it weren't enough that she and her father are going at it in the courtroom, they have deep-rooted conflict in their relationship as well.

Mr. Ward was a "save the world" flower child in the 60's, so he wasn't there for his daughter much of the time. She became attached to her mother, and rarely spoke a kind word to her father.

Now Mr. Ward wants reconciliation with his daughter, but she isn't willing to accept. She shows how badly she wants to "beat him" in her earnest to win her case.

The death of her mother

## Up close with...



Ted Hacker

Name: Ted Hacker

Birthdate: August 26, 1967

Birthplace: Perkasio, PA.

Current job position: President of Student Government Association.

Very first job: Painting houses with my Dad.

Secret vice: Purple pens (pilot medium point).

Three things that can always be found in your refrigerator: Miller Genuine Draft, near empty milk carton, pizza box.

Movie you could see again any time: FX

Book you could read again any time: "On a Pale Horse" by Piers Anthony

Whom you would most like to have dinner with: Billy Joel

Your ultimate dream vacation: A month on a tropical island.

What actor would you have portray yourself in a movie based on your life?: Dan Aykroyd

Behrend's best kept secret: The accomplishments students have made in and outside of the classroom through their involvement in Student Organizations.

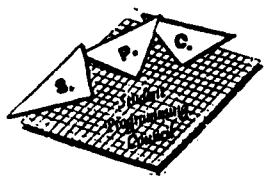
Accomplishment you are proudest: My roles in Student Government and other organizations.

People may be surprised to know... what I learned as a Boy Scout.

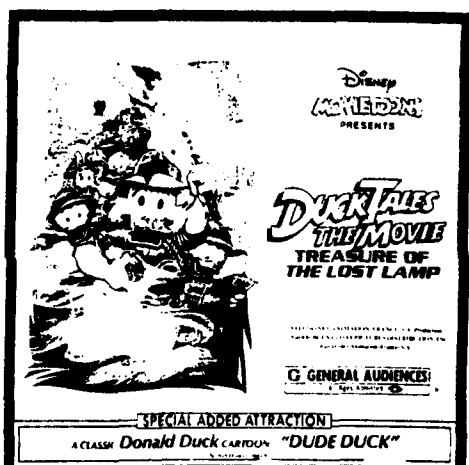
Things you could do without: Mushrooms, lima beans, and shoulder pads.

## Hey Business Majors!

Why not include some practical experience in your schedule for next semester? Put your coursework to the test and gain hands-on experience by working with *The Collegian* business staff.



THURS 10:30PM FRI 8PM  
SAT 12MID SUN 8PM



ADMISSION: \$1.00  
w/ACT CARD: FREE

## ALUMNI CAREER DAYS

MARCH 14, 1991  
School Of Business

MARCH 21, 1991  
Humanities & Social Sciences

MARCH 28, 1991  
Science Engineering & Technology

Come to a special panel discussion with alumni from your major. Find out about the world of work, how you will fit in, job and career advice, and much more!



EVERYBODY WELCOME!  
ALL SESSIONS: REED 116

7:00 P.M.

Co-sponsored by the Career Development Office and The Penn State Behrend Alumni Society

## MONEY FOR COLLEGE!

Guaranteed.  
Details Send \$2 to:  
Lillian Kasto  
886 Center Rd.  
Conneaut, OH 44030

\*\* A LAST STRAW \*\*  
Fresh Flowers for all your floral needs.  
Behrend Students - 10% Off  
\*\*898-1879\*\*

## CRUISE CONNECTIONS

K-Mart Plaza - East Buffalo Road

Let us help you with your Travel/Vacation Plans...

Airline Tickets Available...

Check Our Connections

899-9195