

# Film REVIEWS...

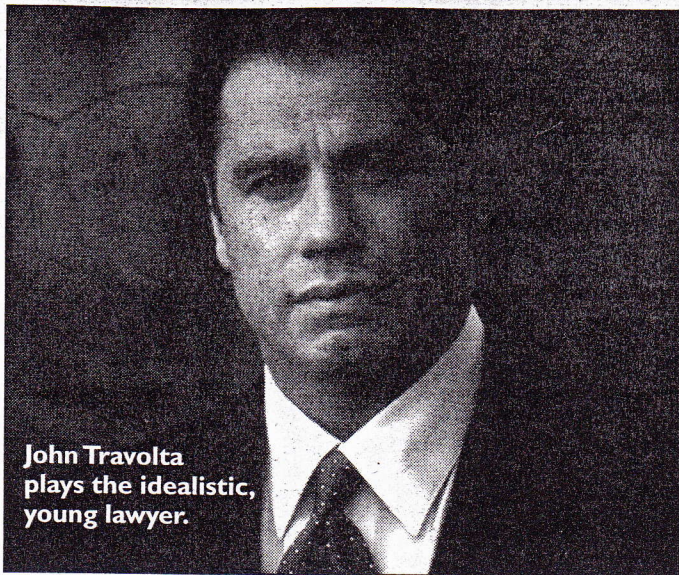
## A CIVIL ACTION (UIP) – Dir. Steve Zallian

A *Civil Action* is a classic piece of Hollywood hokum, pitting young, idealistic, defence lawyer, Jan Schlichtmann, (John Travolta) against cynical, wily, old prosecution lawyer, Jerome Facher (Robert Duvall). Travolta is determined to bring a case, involving water contamination causing leukemia, to trial, but his firm cannot afford the costs involved.

Madly, he turns down the chance to settle out of court, triggering the film's best and funniest scenes as the firm tries to scrape enough money together for the trial. They take to selling office furniture, buying lottery tickets and, eventually, selling the deeds to all the lawyers' houses.

The film is well-paced, slickly directed, funny and well-acted. However, the drama never transcends the formulaic or stereotypical and the ending is anti-climactic as the firm is finally forced to settle out of court.

The ending is arbitrary. It could have been the beginning of a more interesting film as we learn that the case is taken up by other lawyers and, years later, won, and Schlichtmann continues



**John Travolta**  
plays the idealistic,  
young lawyer.

fighting hopeless cases and ends up broke. **David Smith**  
★★★★★