

PHILADELPHIA

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FADE IN:

VARIOUS SHOTS OF PHILADELPHIA EXTERIORS (EXT./DAY) ...

which may include the Liberty Bell, the Italian Market, scenes along the Delaware and Schuylkill Rivers, Independence Square, the Russian Orthodox neighborhood, the ghettos of North Philly.

MAIN TITLES PLAY OVER THIS SEQUENCE which culminates in a SHOT OF...

CUT TO:

PHILADELPHIA'S GLORIOUSLY ORNATE CITY HALL (EXT./DAY) ...

TITLE: "Philadelphia City Hall."

CITY EMPLOYEES, JUDGES, COPS, LAWYERS, CRIMINALS, TOURISTS pour into City Hall, into...

TO:

TWO STORY HIGH CORRIDORS THAT REEK OF HISTORY (INT-DAY).

Young lawyer JAMEY COLLINS darts through the crowd, carrying an accordion file under his arm like a football.

Jamey elbows his way through a JAPANESE TOUR GROUP.

Jamey trots up a marble staircase, two steps at a time

TO:

JAMEY RUNS LIKE HELL DOWN A THIRD FLOOR CORRIDOR, FOOTSTEPS making a racket...

Jamey rushes toward a door marked "JUDGE TATE."

RAISED VOICES from inside Judge Tate's chambers:

JOSEPH MILLER (OS)

This construction site is causing mortal and irreparable harm to an unsuspecting public!

ANDREW BECKETT (OS)

My client has one of the finest and most respected safety records in the business, Your Honor!

Jamey shoves open the door, REVEALING TWO LAWYERS (BACKS TO CAMERA) STANDING BEFORE JUDGE EUNICE TATE: ANDREW BECKETT (in conservative gray) and JOSEPH MILLER (in pinstripes).

JUDGE TATE

One at a time. Mr. Miller?

JOE

Your Honor, since Rockwell Corp. began construction, the surrounding residential neighborhood has been enshrouded in a cloud of foul-smelling, germ-carrying, pestilent dust. My client is being forced to breathe known carcinogens daily! Other residents are coming forth on a daily basis to add their voices of outrage!

ANDREW

Your Honor, I submit there were no complaints until Counselor began knocking on doors, drumming up business. And the dust, which Counselor refers to, has appeared on only three occasions. Each time it has been examined and the results...

Behind his back, Andrew wiggles his fingers. Jamey stuffs

a document into Andrew's hand.

ANDREW (CONT.)

Limestone. Messy, but innocuous.

Andrew submits the report to the Judge.

JOE

Innocuous?

ANDREW

Defined by Webster's as harmless.

JOE

I know what it means. Your Honor, imagine how the children in this neighborhood have been made to feel. The pounding of construction ringing in their ears as this skyscraper, a tribute to mankind's greed, grows daily, casting an ominous shadow over their lives, filling them with dread even as they are surrounded in a black, toxic fog, blocking out the sun while poisoning their lungs! And Counselor calls it harmless?!

His back turned momentarily to the JUDGE, Andrew mouths to Jamey: "Not bad." But he whips around, serious again:

ANDREW

Your Honor, Counselor is attempting to portray my client as a hideous manifestation of evil and corruption. But nothing could be further from the truth. Rockwell has generously contributed ten thousand dollars to this neighborhood's schools, clinics and youth centers! Granting a restraining order on the construction site will throw hundreds of Philadelphians out of work, and will lend validation to this contemptible and groundless nuisance suit, which speaks directly to the kind of greed and treachery that

today is threatening the very
fabric of our society.

Judge Tate looks skeptically at both lawyers.

JUDGE TATE

Let's not go off the deep end,
gentlemen. I thought we were
talking about some dust.

CUT TO:

A MAN ON CRUTCHES HOBBOLES INTO A COURTHOUSE ELEVATOR AND IS
joined by Andrew and Joe, crowding inside (INT./DAY) ...

As soon as the doors close, Andrew whips out a micro-
cassette recorder, making notes, and Joe, in the opposite
corner of the elevator, does exactly the same thing.

ANDREW

... plaintiff seeks to re-
strain defendants from con-
tinued improper use of trade
name without...

JOE

... whereas decedent had
pre-existing asthmatic
condition and ride on
Ultra Loop caused sub-
sequent death...

Andrew and Joe stop at the same time, look at each other...

And turn toward the corner, seeking privacy.

ANDREW (CONT.)

... plaintiff's permission or
authorization...

JOE (CONT.)

... complainant seeks
relief...

There's a PERSISTENT BEEPING, Andrew and Joe pull out their
portable telephones at the same time.

They look at each other: which phone is ringing?

ANDREW

You.

Andrew resumes his telephone conversation.

JOE

Right.
(into phone)
Miller.

The ELEVATOR OPENS: Andrew breezes past the MAN ON
CRUTCHES, saying to Joe:

ANDREW
Client of yours?

JOE
Funny.

Andrew hurries down the corridor. Joe waits a moment... then pursues the MAN ON CRUTCHES.

JOE (CONT.)
Excuse me..? Sir? Yo!

CUT TO:

ANDREW EKERGES FROM CITY HALL, ONTO DILWORTH PLAZA BUSTLING with PEDESTRIANS (EXT./DAY) ...

... DARTS into the street, hailing a cab.

CUT TO:

THE CAB PULLS UP TO A BROWNSTONE ON A RESIDENTIAL STREET, Andrew hopping out, stuffing papers into his briefcase (EXT./DAY) ...

RUSHING to the door marked "Dr. Roberta Gillman, Internal Medicine."

Coming out is a YOUNG ASIAN MAN with a cotton ball taped to the inside of his elbow.

CUT TO:

CLASSICAL MUSIC (INT./DAY) ... AS CAMERA PANS PATIENTS (MOSTLY YOUNG MEN) in a cheerful room... some, like a UPS DELIVERY MAN, are attached to IV's, some sit with arms extended, waiting to be hooked to an IV by TYRONE, a BLACK PHYSICIAN'S AID.

CAMERA FINDS ANDREW sitting quietly, with an IV drip running into his arm. Andrew is wearing a Walkman, the source of the CLASSICAL MUSIC, and he's reading a legal brief. Most of the people in the room look SICKER than Andrew.

DIALOGUE CAN BE HEARD under the CLASSICAL MUSIC (although MUSIC dominates the SOUNDTRACK).

TYRONE
(slapping a thin
PATIENT'S wrist)

Gonna have to start looking for
veins in your feet, sweetheart.

DR. ROBERTA GILLMAN, passes through, speaking to Andrew:

DR. GILLMAN

Andy. Can you stop at my office
on your way out?

ANDREW

Sure.

Andrew is distracted by A HISPANIC MAN across the room,
rolling up his sleeve for an IV -- his bare arms, hands,
face and neck are marked with PURPLE BLOTCHES.

Andrew closes his eyes, concentrating for a moment on the
CLASSICAL MUSIC... then goes back to work.

CUT TO:

ANDREW HURRIES OUT OF THE DOCTOR'S OFFICE, HAILING A CAB
(EXT./DAY) ...

CUT TO:

ANDREW HOPS OUT OF THE CAB, IN FRONT OF AN IMPRESSIVE
skyscraper in downtown Philly, at the end of the work day
(EXT./DAY) ...

Andrew pushes through glass doors into the plush "Wheeler
Building," pressing through the tide of WORKERS headed home.

CUT TO:

A BLACK PARALEGAL, ANTHEA BURTON, LEADS A YOUNG, BLACK LAW
CLERK (in suit and tie) to the elevators, at the sedate,
expensively appointed offices of Wyant Wheeler Hellerman
Tetlow and Brown (INT./DAY) ...

ANTHEA

... up to Tax, on fourteen, and
get right back, I need you.

Andrew BLASTS out of the elevator, flashing Anthea a four-
star smile. They stride down the corridor together.

ANDREW

Just the dazzling paralegal I
wanted to see.

ANTHEA

(friendly)

I know what that means, and the answer is no. I have a class tonight. Exploit someone else. And since you've asked ...

They pass a silver-haired partner, KENNETH KILLCOYNE.

KILLCOYNE

Solid work on the Rockwell situation, Andy. Top-notch.

ANDREW

Thanks, Kenneth.
(to Anthea)
Your exam!

ANTHEA

Thank you. 98. I gotta go...

ANDREW

Ninety-eight?! Ninety-eight!

Andrew reaches the secretaries' station. A cheerful secretary, SHELBY, shoves documents at him.

SHELBY

Conference call's up. They just started the roll call. Here's the settlement agreement, the red-lined copy's on your desk. Need me in there?

ANDREW

No. Great. Thanks, Shelby.
(checking his watch)
It's 6:30, go home.

Andrew passes a colleague on her way out, RACHEL SMILOW:

ANDREW (CONT.)

Rach.

RACHEL

I'm late, I have to pick up Amy from her afterschool but I want to talk to you about that Hansen thing.

ANDREW

Catch me later, I'll be here.
And tell Amy, I love her
painting, it's on my wall.

Andrew SAILS toward his office.

CONTINUOUS CUT TO:

ANDREW ENTERS HIS OFFICE, KICKING THE DOOR SHUT (INT./DAY).

... DROPPING the documents on his desk, SCANNING them.

... ADMIRING a child's painting taped to the wall.

... PUNCHING into the speaker phone on his desk.

The SCREEN SPLITS, REVEALING A TELECONFERENCE OPERATOR:

OPERATOR

... Karen Hargreave, representing
Lloyd Management Corporation?

The SCREEN SPLITS INTO THIRDS: Andrew, the OPERATOR, and
HARGREAVE (a sharp, California lawyer.)

HARGREAVE

Present.

As the OPERATOR continues the roll call, the SCREEN
CONTINUES TO SPLIT and HARGREAVE is replaced by a SERIES OF
LAWYERS in offices around the country, (MOSTLY WHITE MALES)
saying "Present" while in Andrew's section of the screen...

... Andrew dials a number on another telephone line,

OPERATOR

Andrew Beckett, representing
Saunders International?

Andrew punches into the conference call

ANDREW

Present.

The MULTI-IMAGE SCREEN is now joined by SARAH BECKETT, a
suburban, 60ish American MOM, in her backyard garden,
answering a portable phone.

SARAH

Hello?

ANDREW
Hi, Mom. It's me.

The LAWYERS are into the conference, in their portions of the screen, (their VOICES HEARD underneath Andrew's conversation with his mother).

SARAH
Andy! This is a nice surprise.
How are you, hon?

ANDREW
I'm fine.

SARAH
What's Dr. Gillman say?

ANDREW
Hold on, Mom.
(punching into the
conference call)
There's no way my client will go
along with that.

HARGREAVE
Who's this?

ANDREW
Andrew Beckett. Hi, Karen. I'm
sorry I interrupted...

He punches out of the conference, back to his Mom (glancing over his shoulder to make sure the door is shut).

ANDREW (CONT.)
Gillman says I'm fine. My blood
work is excellent. T-cells are up.
Just a sec ...
(conference call)
Yes, I think that would alleviate
most of our concerns.
(back to Mom)
My platelets look good too.

SARAH
Are you on one of those conference
calls? I hate when you put me on
hold.

CUT ON ANDREW'S LAUGHTER TO:

THE MOON ABOVE THE WHEELER BUILDING LATE AT NIGHT (EXT.)

TITLE: "One-thirty a.m."

CUT TO:

ANDREW AT WORK IN THE FIRM'S LIBRARY (INT./NIGHT) ...

Andrew's fingers FLY across the keys of a notebook computer.

Needing a reference, he shoves his rolling chair away from the computer... opens a reference book... grabs a carton of Chinese food... (NOTE: The library may be equipped with a computer terminal which Andrew uses for reference, rather than a book.)

Andrew eats sauteed string beans with chopsticks, finding a relevant citation:

ANDREW

Ah hah! Yes!

(chewing a string bean)

Rentworth v. Pennsylvania...
court of appeals affirms jury
award of punitive damages for
wrongful interference with
prospective economic
relations...

A SHADOW falls across Andrew. He IGNORES IT.

ANGLE: TWO MEN IN SILHOUETTE. WALTER KENTON says:

KENTON

Look at this fucking guy. He's
an animal.

Andrew's hands DO NOT LEAVE the keyboard.

ANDREW

Walter.

The SECOND MAN steps forward, a silhouette becoming visible
This is BOB SEIDMAN. He and Kenton wear tuxedos.

SEIDMAN

Are we interrupting, Andy?

ANDREW

In a word, Bob...

SEIDMAN

Charles is right behind me.

ANOTHER SILHOUETTED FIGURE APPEARS. This image has a horror-film feeling to it.

Andrew WHIPS AROUND to face them.

ANDREW

I was just about to take a break. Good evening, Charles.

CHARLES WHEELER, also in tuxedo, remains in shadow.

WHEELER

Andy? Could you step into my office for a sec?

(deadpan)

I feel like firing someone tonight.

Andrew throws an arm over Seidman's shoulder.

ANDREW

We're gonna miss you around here, Bob...

CUT ON LAUGHTER TO:

THE RECEPTION AREA (INT./NIGHT): A DOMINO'S PIZZA DELIVERY MAN, waiting for clearance from a SECURITY GUARD, on Andrew's dim and quiet floor, WATCHES AS...

Seidman, Kenton and Andrew follow Charles Wheeler up a wide, carpeted staircase. Wheeler finishes a story and everyone LAUGHS...

CUT TO:

A BOX OF CIGARS BEING HANDED AROUND (INT./NIGHT) ...

SEIDMAN

Andy's expressed a keen interest in the Kronos Inc. situation, Charles. Is that correct, Andy?

The lawyers have gathered in Wheeler's spacious office, with its floor-to-ceiling view of the Philadelphia skyline.

ANDREW

The fate of the participants

interests me, yes sir.

Wheeler, Kenton and Seidman proceed with the male ritual of preparing cigars to be smoked: snipping the ends with a brass clip, rolling them over their tongues to wet them, sliding the cigars in and out of their rounded mouths.

Andrew, holding a cigar but NOT preparing to light it, watches with a not completely concealed twinkle in his eye.

Wheeler leans back in his chair, swirling a brandy snifter. He exhales cigar smoke with a great deal of pleasure.

KENTON

It's good to be King, hey Charles?

WHEELER

Kings are out of fashion. I'd rather be thought of as a benevolent tyrant.

(prompting Andrew)

It's an anti-trust action.

ANDREW

It is, and it isn't, Charles. MacroSystem's new software copies all the best-known elements of Kronos' spreadsheet program. If they're allowed to sell it, Kronos will get undersold right out of business. For me, the legal principle, involved is copyright infringement.

WHEELER

Bearing in mind that Bill Wright, the chairman of MacroSystems, is a close, personal friend of mine... which side of this mess would you desire to be on, Andy? And don't allow my very tight, personal relationship with Bill to influence your answer in any way.

Andrew knows this is a test. And he loves it.

ANDREW

Sorry, Charles, but...

Andrew is distracted -- BY A LIGHT FALLING ACROSS HIS FACE.

ANDREW (CONT.)

I'd like to see Kronos win.

Walter Kenton has shifted a lamp, so that its LIGHT FALLS ACROSS ANDREW'S FACE, REVEALING: a faint purple blotch about the size of a quarter, much like the blotches we saw on the HISPANIC PATIENT in Andrew's doctor's office.

KENTON

Why, Beckett?

ANDREW

Because they deserve to, Walter.

Andrew lifts his hand, finding that his hair has been pushed back, revealing the blotch.

He stands, nonchalantly running a hand through his hair to cover the blotch.

ANDREW (CONT.)

If MacroSystems wins, an energetic, young company will be destroyed, five thousand Americans will be out of work. Moreover, the laws of copyright and anti-trust were enacted to prevent exactly the kind of bullshit MacroSystems is trying to pull.

SEIDMAN

Andy, do you know who reps Kronos Inc.?

ANDREW

Bailey, Brackman.

WHEELER

Get with the program, Andy. As of this evening, about 8:05 this evening, right after the soup course... Kronos Incorporated is represented by Wyant Wheeler Hellerman Tetlow and Brown. Or, more specifically, senior associate Andrew Beckett.

A moment before it sinks in, then: Andrew clenches his fist in a victory salute.

ANDREW

Yes!

SEIDMAN

You'll have to get right on it,
Andy, we're up against the
statute of limitations.

An ASSOCIATE LAWYER in shirtsleeves taps on the office door.

ASSOCIATE LAWYER

Tokyo on four, Bob.

SEIDMAN

Great. Excuse me, fellas.
(picking up a phone,
speaking Japanese)
Connichiwa. Itsumo osewa ni nari
mashita. Arigato gozaimasu.

Andrew offers his hand to Walter Kenton.

ANDREW

Thanks, Walter.

KENTON

What's that on your forehead,
pal?

ANDREW

Whacked with a racquetball.
(taking Wheeler's hand)
I appreciate your faith in my
abilities.

WHEELER

Faith, Andy, is the belief in
something for which we have no
evidence. It doesn't apply to
this situation.
(slapping his shoulder)
Go home. I mean, get back to
work.

Andrew and Wheeler are eye-to-eye, an intimate moment.

ANDREW

(warmly, softly)
Thanks, Charles.

WHEELER
(with a father's
affection)
No sweat, buddy.

Smiling, Andrew exits the office.

CLOSE ON WALTER KENTON, THINKING...

CONTINUOUS CUT TO:

ANDREW STEPPING INTO THE EMPTY CORRIDOR, TAKING A FEW STEPS
away from Wheeler's office (INT./NIGHT), then...

... DOING a JOYFUL END ZONE DANCE, running in place the way
football players do when they score a touch down, saying
"Yes! Yes! Yes!" to himself, soundlessly.

The SOUND OF CLANGING METAL interrupts Andrew: HELENA, a
maintenance worker is emptying a trash can. She's seen his
little dance and starts to laugh.

Smiling, Andrew puts the unlit cigar into his mouth, WINKS
at Helena and says:

ANDREW
(in a funny, kind of
medieval way)
It's good to be King.

CUT TO:

ESTABLISHING: ANDREW'S LOFT BUILDING (EXT. DAY)

TITLE: "Ten days later."

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON ANDREW'S FACE MARKED WITH FOUR BLOTCHES (WE'RE IN
Andrew's loft -- INT./DAY)

It's a mirror image. The BLOTCHES vary from the size of a
dime, to the size of a half-dollar. He looks awful.

A YOUNG, BLACK WOMAN'S FINGER applies makeup to Andrew's
face, trying to cover the blotches. This is his friend
CHANDRA.

CHANDRA (O.S.)
You want to apply the foundation
as evenly as you can, Andy. You

don't want to look like you've
thrown it on with a spoon.

ANDREW (O.S.)

Uh huh.

CAMERA PULLS BACK REVEALING Andrew sitting at a table in his loft, a towel around his neck, protecting his shirt from makeup. Chandra applies the makeup gently, supervised by another friend named ALAN. (Andrew's loft has been turned into a lawyer's command post: stacks of books, documents, etc.). A third friend, BRUNO, sits in the corner, flipping through channels on the TV.

CHANDRA

Okay. You try.

Andrew tries applying makeup to his face.

ANDREW

Chandra? Don't you think this
color's a little... orange for me?

CHANDRA

Tahitian Bronze works best on
lesions.

ALAN

Think of it as the "I just back
from Aruba" look.

IN THE BACKGROUND: Andrew's fax machine receives a fax in Andrew's "work area": desk, personal computer, etc.).

BRUNO

I got it.

Bruno removes the fax from the machine, walking it over to Andrew, handing Andrew the fax, while munching an apple.

ANDREW

(giving the fax
a quick scan)

Thanks, Bruno.

(to Alan and Chandra)

I've been out of the office four
days. I don't want them to
think I've been to the beach.

(searching for something)

Okay. Check this out.

Andrew puts on a pair of big glasses with tortoise shell

frames, meant to help conceal the blotches.

ANDREW (CONT.)

Hides everything, right? What do you think?

CHANDRA

You know who you look like, Andy? That actor, in that movie. Not the one where he was autistic, the one where he dressed up like a lady on a soap opera...

ALAN

Dustin Hoffman.

ANDREW

(horrorified)

Tootsie!

BRUNO

Right.

CHANDRA

You want to try Light Egyptian?

Suddenly, Andrew winces, gripping his gut.

CHANDRA (CONT.)

What?

ANDREW

(clearly in pain)

Excuse me a sec...

Andrew starts out of the room -- suddenly HAVING TO RUN.

CHANDRA

Just like my cousin Fredo.

CAMERA HOLDS ON Chandra, Alan and Bruno. SOUND OF BATHROOM DOOR slamming shut.

Bruno saunters across the room and knocks on the bathroom door.

BRUNO

You okay, Andy?

CONTINUOUS CUT TO:

TIGHT SHOT ON ANDREW, FACE TWISTED IN PAIN (INT./DAY) ...

Andrew rests his head against the wall, sweat covering his face. A storm of fire has passed through him, and he's hoping it's over for now.

ANDREW

I think I need to go to the hospital.

CUT TO:

MIGUEL ALVAREZ RUNS URGENTLY DOWN SPRUCE STREET, DODGING traffic as he crosses Eleventh Street, toward Jefferson Hospital (EXT./DAY). He hustles up the ramp toward the Emergency Entrance...

CUT TO:

MIGUEL SHOVES THROUGH GLASS DOORS, INTO THE BUSTLING Emergency Room (INT./DAY), FINDING

ANDREW sitting on a gurney, holding a cotton ball against his arm, where blood has been drawn, wearing a blanket over his shoulders, fighting chills.

Chandra and Bruno are waiting with Andrew. They exchange quick hugs with Miguel and Andrew, ad libbing greetings and goodbyes.

ANDREW

Thanks, you guys.

MIGUEL

Yeah. Thanks, guys.

Miguel puts his arms around Andrew.

ANDREW

Gillman's out of her office today. I told her to take a day off, and she did, can you believe it? Did you get someone to cover your class?

Miguel touches Andrew's face, checking for fever.

MIGUEL

Don't worry about it. They took blood? A specimen?

Andrew holds an empty specimen cup.

ANDREW

Aren't you giving an exam?

MIGUEL

I said, don't worry about it.

Miguel places a gentle kiss on Andrew's sweaty forehead.

MIGUEL (CONT.)

You got a fever, baby.

Suddenly, the facade cracks and TEARS STING Andrew's eyes.

ANDREW

I almost didn't make it to the bathroom, Miguel. I almost lost control right in front of everybody.

MIGUEL

(holding him)

So what? It's nothing to be ashamed of. You have nothing to be ashamed of, okay?

Andrew pulls himself together, brushing aside tears, in control of his emotions once more.

ANDREW

Wait, here's my guy... Hey!

Andrew catches the attention of a harried INTERN, whose surgeon's greens are covered with blood.

INTERN

Mr. Beckett, I'm sorry...

ANDREW

About my blood work?

INTERN

We're waiting...

Miguel opens a small notebook, making notes.

INTERN

... meanwhile, I'd like to prepare you for a colonoscopy,

so we can take a look inside.

ANDREW
Sounds delightful.

MIGUEL
Why do you need to do this?

INTERN
Who are you?

MIGUEL
Who are you? Doctor... ?

ANDREW
This is my partner. We keep
records of hospital visits.
Nothing personal.

INTERN
Dr. Klenstein.
(to Andrew)
It's not a pleasant procedure,
but if the KS is causing the
diarrhea, we ought to know right
away.

MIGUEL
It could be parasites, an
infection...

ANDREW
A reaction to AZT...

KLENSTEIN
That's possible, but.

MIGUEL
He's not going through some
painful procedure until we've
cancelled out everything else.

INTERN
I'm trying to help your
"partner." You're not a member
of his immediate family, I could
have you removed from the ER.

ANDREW
(to the Intern)
He's upset, he's sorry.

MIGUEL

Don't apologize for me.

ANDREW

He's not sorry, okay, fine.

(the diplomat)

Why don't we see what we find out from the blood work? I'll work on getting a specimen, I'm sure hospital food could help in that direction. Maybe, by then, we'll hear from my doctor, and we'll go from there. Okay? Everybody happy?

INTERN

Allright. I'll get on the lab about the blood work.

MIGUEL

(to the Intern)

I'm sorry.

The INTERN walks away. Andrew's BEEPER BEEPS.

ANDREW

That's the third time. I better call the office.

(smiling at Miguel)

Would you relax, please?

MIGUEL

I am relaxed.

Andrew HOBLES toward a pay phone, outside a VISITOR LOUNGE, where weary relatives are watching TV.

Andrew drops a quarter into the phone.

JOE MILLER'S VOICE

"If you or someone you know..."

ANDREW'S POV ON TELEVISION: Joe Miller on the screen, with the words "Negligence... Malpractice... Auto accidents"... and in the background, PHOTOS of MAIMED, BURNED, INJURED CLIENTS.

JOE (CONT.)

"... has been injured through the fault of others, you may be entitled to legal remedy..."

Andrew LAUGHS. Then, his call is answered:

ANDREW

Shelby? It's me. Jamey's been
beeping me, I... Okay, okay,
calm down. Put Jamey on.

INTERCUT WITH:

FIRST YEAR ASSOCIATE JAMEY COLLINS, SITTING AT ANDREW'S DESK
(INT/DAY), GRABS THE PHONE when Andrew's intercom BUZZES...

JAMEY

(frantic)

Andy?! This is a disaster! We
can't find your revisions on
the Kronos complaint!

ANDREW

Slow down, Jamey, for Christ's
sake!

JAMEY

I went down to Word Processing
to pick up the corrected copy,
but they said you haven't
delivered the corrections.
I told them you've been working on
it at home, and...

Andrew forgets his physical pain, this is more important.

ANDREW

I brought it in last night, around
midnight. It's in my computer.

JAMEY

What did you file it under?

Jamey puts his hands on Andrew's computer keyboard.

ANDREW

K-R-O-one.

Jamey types the file name.

ANDREW (CONT.)

Jamey, I don't have to mention,
do I, that we're up against a
statute of limitations on this

complaint which runs out in...
(checks his watch)
Seventy-five minutes.

Jamey stares dumbfounded at the computer monitor.

JAMEY
It's not here, Andy.

Andrew closes his eyes. He can't believe this.

ANDREW
You go down to Word Processing
and tell those motherfuckers
they better come up with that
complaint, now! Or they are
fucking dead! You tell them that
comes from me!

Andrew SLAMS the phone into its cradle.

He pauses, takes a deep breath, and says to himself:

ANDREW (CONT.)
Every problem has a solution.
Every problem... has... a...
solution.

Calmer, Andrew returns to the gurney, putting on his shirt.

ANDREW (CONT.)
Every problem has a solution...

Miguel approaches with tea purchased at the canteen.

MIGUEL
Why are you getting dressed?

ANDREW
You're not going to like this.
Please try to smile...

Andrew puts his arms around Miguel.

ANDREW (CONT.)
Thanks for leaving school, and
coming here, and...
(pulling back, putting
on his jacket)
I will be back. An hour, tops.

MIGUEL

You're going to the office?!

ANDREW

You're not smiling.

Andrew rushes toward the exit doors.

MIGUEL

You're leaving the hospital?
You're going into the office
looking like that? Are you
insane?

ANDREW

One hour!

MIGUEL

Drew!

ANDREW

I promise!

CONTINUOUS CUT TO:

ANDREW RUSHES TO THE STREET, HAILING A CAB (EXT./DAY) ...

CUT TO:

ANDREW STEPS OUT OF THE TAXI IN FRONT OF THE WHEELER
Building, heading for the entrance (EXT./DAY) ...

But he changes his mind, darting to the corner of the block.

Andrew stops to buy a baseball cap from a VENDOR.

He trots down an alley, past bags of garbage, entering the
building through a garage door.

CUT TO:

FROM A HIGH FLOOR, ANDREW CAN BE SEEN CLIMBING THE STEPS OF
an emergency stairwell (INT./DAY) ...

Andrew passes CAMERA, out of breath. He's wearing the ball cap
PULLED TO HIS EYEBROWS to hide blotches on his forehead.

CUT TO:

ANDREW OPENS THE FIRE DOOR ON HIS FLOOR AT WYANT WHEELER, removing
the ball cap, baring the purple blotches. (INT./DAY)

He walks quickly down the hall. Passing a COLLEAGUE, Andrew pretends to scratch his face, attempting to hide the blotches as nonchalantly as possible.

He dashes past an office, ignoring Anthea.

ANTHEA

Didn't expect to see you... ?

He ducks into his office.

CONTINUOUS CUT TO:

SECRETARY SHELBY AT ANDREW'S DESK, FRANTICALLY SEARCHING through papers (INT./DAY) ...

Startled when he sees Shelby, Andrew spins toward the wall.

SHELBY

I'm looking through the files but...

ANDREW

Call the messenger service, have someone standing by...

(she reaches for the phone)

Your phone.

SHELBY

Sure.

Andrew keeps his face averted, until she's out of the room. He goes to his computer, the monitor already glowing.

ANDREW

Think. You brought the discs in, you transferred...

Rachel comes into his office.

RACHEL

I thought I was supposed to be covering for you.

(blurts out)

God, Andy, you look awful.

ANDREW

Fucking Word Processing lost my Kronos complaint. Which must be filed by fucking five o'clock!
If it's late, there's no case...

(the mantra)
Every problem has a solution.

RACHEL
What can I do?

ANDREW
Get down to Word Processing.
Help Jamey look.

She rushes out.

Andrew begins shoving floppy discs into the slots on his computer, bringing up each disc's directory.

ANDREW (CONT.)
No.

He throws the disc to the floor. Shoves in another.

Shoves in another, bending it in half.

ANDREW (CONT.)
No, goddammit!

He pulls open a file drawer, dumping legal briefs onto the floor, frantically spreading them around with his foot.

Andrew THROWS a document across the room, takes a breath.

He picks up the telephone.

ANDREW (CONT.)
Bob? Something's come up. With
Kronos. I don't want to
upset Charles, but...
(letting down his guard)
Oh, shit, Bob, the complaint's
due in forty minutes and I can't
find it.
(suddenly)
No, you don't have to come...
(hanging up the phone)
Great. Fucking great.

Andrew rubs his eyes, this is a nightmare.

He switches off the overhead light. He slants the window blinds, filling the room with shadow

Bob Seidman comes into the office, typically cheerful.

SEIDMAN

C'mon, Andy, you didn't lose anything...

Seidman is struck by the mess in the office, and Andrew's disheveled appearance.

SEIDMAN (CONT.)

Jesus.

ANDREW

I don't know what to do, Bob.

SEIDMAN

You'll never find it in the dark.

Seidman FLIPS ON the overhead light. Andrew flinches.

Seidman approaches. Andrew gives up trying to hide the purple blotches, facing his mentor straight on.

SEIDMAN (CONT.)

What in God's name... ?

ANDREW

Bob...

SEIDMAN

What's wrong with your face?

ANDREW

What's wrong with my face? You want to know what's wrong with my face? I've got a skin condition. Next question, Bob? No more questions? Fine. Now can you help me find the complaint?

SEIDMAN

Allright. Calm down.

ANDREW

Sorry...

Seidman sits in front of Andy's computer.

SEIDMAN

What was the file name?

ANDREW

K-R-O-one.

SEIDMAN

Maybe you mistyped the name when you were saving it. We'll try combinations of those letters...

Seidman goes to work. Andrew leans over his shoulder.

ANDREW

You're right, I probably just misfiled...

KENTON (O.S.)

Andy?

Walter Kenton is standing at Andrew's door. His demeanor is casual. So casual it seems a little forced.

KENTON (CONT.)

Some sort of problem?

Andrew has kept his face averted. But now he TURNS DIRECTLY TOWARD CAMERA, showing his face to Kenton.

ANDREW

Yeah, Walter. Yeah. Some sort of major problem.

HOLD ON THIS CLOSE UP OF ANDREW...

SOUND OF A BABY CRYING CROSSES THE CUT TO:

A NEWBORN BEING LIFTED INTO A DOCTOR'S HANDS (INT./DAY) ...

DOCTOR

There she is, okay. You can relax now, Lisa.

LISA MILLER has just given birth to a baby girl. She collapses on her pillow, gasping for breath, moaning in pain, quietly crying a little.

TITLE: "One month later."

The NURSES and the (FEMALE) DOCTOR move professionally around the bed, doing their jobs.

At Lisa's side, Joe fumbles with a camera while darting amazed looks back and forth between Lisa and the baby.

JOE

Oh my god... a girl... oh my
god... Lisa... oh my god...

He's frantic.

JOE (CONT.)

You load the film... ? No, on
this side... or this side?
Don't move the baby!

LISA

Give me the camera, Joe.

Lisa pops the film into the camera, hands it back.

JOE

Thanks, hon. Oh my god...

With wildly trembling hands, Joe begins SNAPPING PHOTOS.

JOE (CONT.)

Oh my god... oh my god, look at
her... oh my god...

CUT TO:

JOE, WALKING THE HOSPITAL CORRIDOR, STILL WEARING SURGEON'S
greens, SPEAKING INTO HIS PORTABLE PHONE (INT./DAY) ...

JOE

Go to Famous Fourth Street and
buy a pound of Nova. No! She
likes Scotch salmon better. Ah
heck, get a pound of both! Get
a dozen onion rolls. Get some
bagels. Get a dozen. Get a
bottle of champagne. Dom
Perignon... A hundred bucks a
bottle?! Better get a good
California...

Passing a PATIENT IN TRACTION, ROLLING BY ON A GURNEY, Joe
drops a business card into the PATIENT'S broken hand.

JOE (CONT.)

(to the PATIENT)

Give me a call.

(into the phone)

Get everything over here as soon
as you can, she's starved. No,

not the baby! Lisa! ... Iris,
listen: any calls I should know
about? ... Uh huh... Uh huh...
Beckett? Who's Andrew Beckett?

Turning a corner, Joe comes face to face with HIS RELATIVES,
who charge at him joyfully:

JOE'S MOTHER/AUNTS/UNCLES, ETC.
Congratulations! How is Lisa?!
When can we see the baby?!

CUT TO:

QUIET... JOE, LISA AND THEIR BABY CUDDLED TOGETHER IN
Lisa's hospital bed, surrounded by debris from a party,
paper plates, empty champagne bottle (INT./NIGHT) ...

The relatives have gone. It's late at night.

Lisa holds the baby. Joe holds them both.

CUT TO:

AN INTERSECTION IN THE HEART OF OLD, DOWNTOWN PHILLY: A
movie palace (now a six-plex) across the street from the
Peter Pan Coffee Shop, PHILADELPHIA WORKERS going about the
business of the day (EXT./DAY) ...

TITLE: "One week later."

Above the Peter Pan Coffee Shop is a string of large
windows, each of which is painted with a question:

HEART ATTACK? ACCIDENT? MEDICAL MALPRACTICE? DOG BITE?

In bigger letters, across several windows:

D I A L 1 8 0 0 A - L A W Y E R

We hear JOE MILLER'S VOICE-OVER:

JOE (OS)
How big was this hole you fell
into?

CONTINUOUS CUT TO:

A HALLWAY BULLETIN BOARD ANNOUNCING THE VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS of
"Macready and Shilts Legal Services" (INT./DAY), including
"Auto/DUI/Collisions with Deer... Product liability... Medical

malpractice... Pet bites..."

The bulletin board stands at the entrance to a warehouse of lawyers' cubicles formed by office dividers and plastic ferns...

PHONES JANGLING... INJURED CLIENTS LIMPING ABOUT...

JOE (OS) (CONT.)

And this hole was right in the middle of the street?

CONTINUOUS CUT TO:

JOE IS IN HIS OFFICE, A BOX OF CIGARS ON THE DESK WITH PINK bands announcing "It's a girl!" (INT./DAY). On the walls are photos of INJURED CLIENTS (the same photos we saw in the background of Joe's TV commercial)...

A FEMALE CLIENT (MRS. FINLEY) faces Joe, her arm in a sling.

MRS. FINLEY

Right.

JOE

Why didn't you cross at the crosswalk?

MRS. FINLEY

Why should I?

CONTINUOUS CUT TO:

ANDREW IS SEEN FROM BEHIND, SITTING ON A SOFA IN THE WAITING area. Very little hair shows beneath a Phillies ballcap...

A MAN WEARING A NECKBRACE, sitting next to Andrew, RISES, MOVING to a seat opposite Andrew. From this new position the MAN WITH THE NECKBRACE STARES at Andrew.

MAN WITH NECKBRACE'S POV:

The PURPLE BLOTCHES on Andrew's face are beginning to recede, not as angry looking as before, thanks to chemo therapy. Andrew is dressed casually, in jeans and a softball jacket (from the Wyant Wheeler team) with "Andy" embroidered over the heart.

Joe's assistant, IRIS, approaches.

IRIS

Mr. Beckett?

Andrew rises, following Iris past office dividers, HARRIED SECRETARIES and overflowing file cabinets.

Iris cannot look at Andrew as she walks beside him.

(Outside Joe's door is a sign: "Beware Mad Dog" with "Mad" written by hand.)

IRIS (CONT.)

In here.

ANDREW

Thank you.

CONTINUOUS CUT TO:

ANDREW STEPS INTO JOE'S OFFICE (INT./DAY). ANDREW GLANCES at the photos while Joe wraps up...

JOE

(to the FEMALE CLIENT)

Explain this to me like I'm a six year old, okay? The entire street is clear except for one small area under construction, with a huge hole that is clearly marked and blocked off, and you decide you must cross the street at this spot. You fall into the hole and you want to sue the city for negligence? ...

MRS. FINLEY

Yeah. Do I have a case?

JOE

Of course you have a case! Now, I want you to go with my assistant, Iris, and fill out some forms. She'll tell you about our fee arrangement.

(as they're leaving)

Mrs. Finley? Any back pain since the accident? Dizziness? Nightmares?

MRS. FINLEY

Now that you mention it...

JOE

Tell Iris all about it.
(leading her out)
Take good care of Mrs. Finley,
Iris.
(to Andrew)
Beckett, come in.

Joe offers his hand, getting a look at Andrew's face.

JOE (CONT.)
Jesus Christ, what happened to you?

ANDREW
I have AIDS.

Joe WITHDRAWS his hand, before it touches Andrew's.

JOE
Whoa-oh!
(beat)
Sorry, I...

ANDREW
It's okay. Can I sit down?

JOE
Uh, yeah.

Andrew hesitates. Joe doesn't sound sure.

JOE (CONT.)
Go ahead.

Andrew sits, Joe returns to his desk. (Joe finds himself acutely aware of where Andrew places his hands.)

ANDREW
(the cigars)
New baby?

JOE
One week old.

ANDREW
Congratulations.

JOE
Little baby girl.

ANDREW
Kids are great.

JOE

Thanks, Beckett. I'm real excited about it.

(glances at his watch)

What can I do for you?

ANDREW

I was fired by Wyant Wheeler. I plan to bring a wrongful termination suit against Charles Wheeler and his partners.

JOE

You want to sue Wyant Wheeler Hellerman Tetlow and Brown?

ANDREW

Correct. I'm seeking representation.

JOE

Continue.

ANDREW

I misplaced an important complaint. That's their story. Want to hear mine?

JOE

How many lawyers did you go to, before you called me?

ANDREW

Nine.

JOE

Continue.

ANDREW

I was diagnosed with AIDS eight months ago. During a bout of pneumonia. I recovered quickly and was back at work in ten days. Since I was doing so well on the AZT, we decided against telling anyone about it.

JOE

We?

ANDREW
My lover and I.

JOE
Your... lover?

ANDREW
Miguel Alvarez. We've lived
together for nine years.

JOE
Continue.

ANDREW
I dove back into work,
everything was fine. Until the
lesions started...

SUDDENLY PICTURE CUTS TO:

TIGHT ON ANDREW WAUKING THROUGH THE LOBBY OF THE WHEELER
Building (INT./DAY). He's wearing MAKEUP, which sort of
covers the blotches. (NOTE: PICTURE and ANDREW'S VOICE OVER
do NOT match up. This is no ordinary flashback) ...

ANDREW (VO) (CONT.)
First on my leg. Then my
forearm, my back. Then... my
face. For a short period, I
avoided the office during the
day, waiting for the chemo
therapy to clear up the
lesions...

IMAGE: ANDREW RIDING THE CROWDED ELEVATOR ON A WORKDAY.

ANDREW (VO) (CONT.)
But I never let anything slide.
I made all my calls from home.
I worked sixteen hour days on a
complaint for a 350 million
dollar copyright infringement
suit.

IMAGE: JOE IN HIS OFFICE, ABSORBED IN ANDREW'S STORY.

ANDREW (OS) (CONT.)
But the day the complaint was
due, it disappeared. Erased
from my computer. I thought I
was losing it, mentally...

IMAGE: ELEVATOR DOORS OPENING, ANDREW STEPPING INTO WYANT WHEELER OFFICES. NOW HE SPEAKS DIRECTLY TO CAMERA:

ANDREW (CONT.)

That can happen, it's called AIDS dementia when it gets into your brain. But miraculously, a copy of the complaint was located at the last minute, and we got it to court on time...

IMAGE: ANDREW'S POV OF COLLEAGUES, STAFF IN THE OFFICES, GIVING HIM LOOKS, WHISPERING. ANTHEA BURTON NODS HELLO.

ANDREW (OS) (CONT.)

The next morning, I was called to the office for a meeting with the managing partners. Walking down that corridor was strange. Felt like everyone was staring.

REVERSE ANGLE ON ANDREW AND JOE WALKING AT ANDREW'S SIDE.

JOE

Hell, they are staring. What's that shit on your face?

ANDREW

Makeup.

ANDREW'S POV: RACHEL OUTSIDE HER OFFICE, SAYS "GOOD LUCK."

ANDREW (CONT.)

The partners were waiting for me in the main conference room.

CONTINUOUS CUT TO:

CAMERA TRACKS INTO THE CONFERENCE ROOM, GIVING US ANDREW'S POV as he enters the room where Wheeler, Kenton, Killcoyne, Bob Seidman are waiting (INT./DAY) ...

WHEELER

Sit down, Andy.

Wheeler's secretary, LYDIA, takes notes.

WHEELER (CONT.)

Thanks for coming in.

ANDREW

Of course.

Bob Seidman CANNOT look directly at Andrew.

WHEELER

Andy. Before we begin, I'd just like to say: everyone in this room is your friend.

JOE

You're in trouble.

(NOTE: Joe IS SEEN IN HIS OFFICE, or LEANING AGAINST A WINDOW IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM whenever he speaks.)

ANDREW

I know that, Charles.

WHEELER

More than your friend. Family.

JOE

Big trouble.

ANDREW

Charles, I must apologize again, for the Kronos mishap.

(smiling)

It was a scary few minutes around here. Wow. But thank God, the complaint was found. And no damage was done.

KENTON

This time. What about next time?

ANDREW

There won't be a next time, I guarantee it.

WHEELER

Andy. It seems that something has come over you, lately: A kind of... stupor, a fogginess, a lack of focus... Earth to Andy. Anybody home?

KENTON

Helloooo...

KILLCOYNE

That's right, Andy. The last four, five months you've seemed really out of it...

SEIDMAN

At least... different, somehow.

ANDREW

(keeping it positive)
Perhaps... you're right. I've certainly been busy. With the Kronos complaint, a preliminary injunction hearing and the Saunders trial all falling at the same time...

KENTON

Some people think you have an attitude problem, Beckett.

ANDREW

Really? Who thinks that, sir?

WHEELER

I do.

Wheeler seems very grave.

ANDREW

I had no idea there was a concern in that area. Hey:
(a smile)
I'll get to work on it right away.

NO ONE else smiles.

WHEELER

We've been talking it over, Andy. Your future that is... We feel that, because we respect you so much, we have to be honest with you.

ANDREW

Honesty is always best.

SEIDMAN

Do you really think so, Andy?

ANDREW

Yes, Bob, I do.

(to the group)
Excuse me? Am I being fired?

WHEELER
Let's put it this way, Andy:
your place in the future of this
firm is no longer secure.

JOE
In a word, yes.

WHEELER
We don't think it's fair to keep
you here, where your future is
limited. But we wish you luck,
Andy, all the luck in the world.

Wheeler rises, wearing a friendly smile.

WHEELER (CONT.)
And I hate to rush you out of
here, but...

JOE
But he's got lots of other
people's lives to ruin...

WHEELER
... we've got a committee meeting.

ANDREW
Excuse me, Charles. With all
due respect... this is...
preposterous! It doesn't make
any sense, it sounds as if we're
talking about someone else.
Pardon the lack of humility, but
I've had the distinct impression
I was kind of... one of the
rising stars around here. And I
feel that wasn't just my
imagination. And I also think I
deserve to know what's really
going on here, Charles.

KENTON
Oh, you're right, Beckett, you
don't have an attitude problem.

WHEELER
Take it easy, Walter.

ANDREW

If you'd lost confidence in me,
why did you give me the Kronos suit?

WHEELER

I hoped the challenge would
improve your performance. You
could say it was a carrot.

ANDREW

A carrot?!

JOE

I buy that.

ANDREW

As in, the vegetable?

SEIDMAN

(suddenly emotional)

Andy, you nearly blew the case,
for God's sake! That alone is
inexcusable. It would have been
catastrophic for us. Put
yourself in our shoes, Andy.
There's no coming back from an
error like that, regardless of
who you are!

(softer)

I'm sorry, Andy.

Andrew FREEZES -- the full nature of this situation hitting home. He looks each of the PARTNERS in the eye...

ANDREW

Uh huh... Okay... I see...

... at last LOOKING DIRECTLY AT Wheeler's secretary Lydia,
whose pen is poised above her notebook, waiting for someone
to say something.

Wheeler breaks the silence.

WHEELER

Good luck, Andy.

Wheeler, Kenton, Killcoyne, Seidman and Lydia file out.

Andrew doesn't move.

A SECURITY GUARD enters the room.

ANDREW

Who are you?

SECURITY GUARD

I'm here to escort you to your office so you can organize your belongings.

CUT TO:

CAMERA PULLS BACK FROM ANDREW, WE'RE IN JOE'S OFFICE (DAY) ...

JOE

Okay. Explain to me like I'm a two year old, because there's an element to this I can't get through my thick head: Didn't you have an obligation to inform your employer you had this dreaded, deadly, infectious disease?

Andrew removes his ballcap -- his hair is cut short, to disguise the effects of chemo.

ANDREW

The law says people with disabilities cannot be terminated, so long as they can perform the duties required by their position...

JOE

Okay, okay... They discover you have this horrible, disgusting, terminal illness, and they panic, for any number of perfectly valid reasons. They're frightened for themselves, their families... Maybe it's the homo angle. Maybe they don't want to rub elbows with someone who's just popped out of the closet with a terminal case of acne. And how do they explain your status to the client for Chrissake?

ANDREW

Joe, from the day I arrived to the day they fired me, I performed consistently, thoroughly and with absolute excellence. And if they hadn't fired me, that's what I'd be doing today.

JOE

Okay... They want you out. It's against the law to fire you for having AIDS, so they make you look like a fuck up. Which leads us to the mysterious, lost file.

ANDREW

They sabotaged me.

JOE

I knew you were going to say that. I don't buy it, and I don't see a case.

ANDREW

Look. I know I have a case. If you don't want to take it for personal reasons...

JOE

Correct. I don't.

Andrew rises, thoroughly business-like.

ANDREW

Thanks for your time.

JOE

Beckett? I'm sorry about... what's happened to you. It's a fucking kick in the head.

ANDREW

(a smile)

Don't send flowers, Joe. I'm not dead yet.

Andrew exits.

CONTINUOUS CUT TO:

ANDREW LEAVES JOE'S OFFICE, MOVING DOWN THE CORRIDOR
(DAY) ...

IRIS
(still uncomfortable,
as Andrew's leaving)
Have a nice day.

Andrew nods, passing one of Joe's colleagues, a hustler
named FILKO, who STARES SHAMELESSLY.

Joe approaches Iris's desk.

JOE
Find out if Armbruster can see
me this afternoon.

FILKO
(still staring)
What the hell's wrong with him?

CUT TO:

THE STREET: ANDREW EMERGES FROM THE LAWYER'S BUILDING
(EXT./DAY). CLOSE ON ANDREW, standing there as an endless flow of
people passes by. He watches them go, thinking...

CUT TO:

A SUBURBAN DOCTOR'S OFFICE IN A MIDDLE-CLASS NEIGHBORHOOD
(EXT./DAY) ...

DR. ARMBRUSTER (OS)
You had contact with someone who
has AIDS, and you're worried.

CONTINUOUS CUT TO:

A DOCTOR UNRAVELLING A BLOOD PRESSURE GAUGE (INT./DAY)

JOE
I'm not worried. What are you doing?

Joe sits in his shirtsleeves on the examining table.

DR. ARMBRUSTER
Checking your blood pressure,
relax.

The DOCTOR wraps the blood pressure unit around Joe's arm.

JOE

I didn't have contact. What do you consider "contact?" We were sitting in the same room, three, four feet... What if you shake hands? Wait. I know the answer. Only sex, or sharing needles. I know that. We didn't shake hands, anyway.

Dr. Armbruster squeezes the blood pressure pump,

DR. ARMBRUSTER

The HIV virus can only be transmitted through the exchange of bodily fluids, namely blood and semen.

JOE

Right.

Joe begins rolling down his sleeve.

DR. ARMBRUSTER

Leave that.

JOE

Yeah, but Doc, isn't it true they keep finding out new things about this disease? So you tell me, today, there's no danger, and I go home, and I hold my baby, and six months from now I hear on the news: "whoops! We were wrong.' You can carry it on your clothes, your skin, and now I've got to worry about my kid. What are you doing?

Dr. Armbruster has been preparing a syringe.

DR. ARMBRUSTER

We're going to draw blood.

JOE

Why are we going to do that?

DR. ARMBRUSTER

Joe. I don't care a whit about your private life.

JOE

You want to give me an AIDS test?!

Joe HOPS off the table.

JOE (CONT.)

The guy sat in my office! You can't get AIDS that way, right?

DR. ARMBRUSTER

Right.

JOE

It doesn't travel through the air, by breathing, or touching, right?

DR. ARMBRUSTER

Not by touching, or shaking hands, or hugging, using the same toilet... Even kissing someone with AIDS is safe. But it there's something in your past you're worried about...

JOE

Thanks, Doc, but I don't need an AIDS test. Are you crazy? But thanks for the information. Really.

Joe throws on his jacket, opens the door... then TURNS BACK:

JOE (CONT.)

In my past?

ARMBRUSTER

IV drug use.

Joe shakes his head.

DR. ARMBRUSTER (CONT.)

A homosexual encounter.

JOE

Get real.

DR. ARMBRUSTER

Unprotected sex with a prostitute.

JOE

(thinking it over)
Uh.... No. Not really.

DR. ARMBRUSTER

Or unprotected sex with someone you didn't know very well, any time during the last twelve years.

A MOMENT.

Joe returns to the examining table, and rolls up his sleeve.

CUT TO:

ESTABLISHING: JOE'S HOUSE IN THE SUBURBS (EXT./NIGHT) ...

LISA (VOICE OVER)
You have a problem with gays,
Joe.

CONTINUOUS CUT TO:

JOE CRADLES HIS BABY AGAINST HIS CHEST (INT./NIGHT) ...

JOE
Not especially.

Lisa eats standing up, at the stove, while Joe walks the BABY in their modern kitchen.

LISA
How many gays do you know?

JOE
How many do you know?

LISA
Lots.

JOE
Who?

LISA
Karen Berman. Aunt Teresa. My cousin Tommy who lives in Rochester. Eddie Meyers from the office. Joe Cantwell, he's one of the partners. His lover, Greg. Stanley, the guy who's putting in our kitchen cabinets.

For a moment, Joe is struck dumb. Then he says:

JOE
Your Aunt Teresa is gay? That

beautiful, sensuous woman is a...
lesbian?

LISA

Duh...

JOE

Since when?

LISA

Probably since she was born.

JOE

Allright. I admit it: I'm prejudiced. I don't want to work with a homosexual. You got me.

LISA

Okay, Joe...

JOE

I mean, two guys, doing the horizontal thing? I don't get it. Don't they get confused? "Is that mine? I thought it was yours." Hey, call me old fashioned, call me conservative... I think maybe you have to be a man to get just how nauseating the whole basic idea really is.

LISA

Fine, Joe.

JOE

And the way they work out, pumping up, so they can be macho and faggot at the same time... I can't stand that shit. Now I'm being totally honest with you.

LISA

That's perfectly clear.

CLOSE ON JOE, LOOKING DIRECTLY INTO CAMERA:

JOE

Would you take a client if you were constantly thinking: "I hope this guy doesn't touch me.

I don't even want him to breathe
on me?"

CUT TO:

THE STREETS OF PHILLY ARE DUSTED WITH SNOW, STORE WINDOWS decorated for Christmas. Joe steps out of the Famous 4th St. Deli, with a package (EXT./DAY) ...

TITLE: "Two weeks later."

CUT TO:

JOE SITS AT A TABLE IN THE PUBLIC LAW LIBRARY, SURROUNDED BY books and legal pads, hard at work. He's eating a pastrami sandwich which he hides behind a reference book when a LIBRARIAN saunters by (INT./DAY) ...

A CHAIR SQUEAKS and Joe LOOKS UP TO SEE:

Andrew taking a seat across the room (the blotches have been reduced by chemo, but he's struggling with a cold). Andrew removes notepads and pens from his briefcase. He takes out a package of tissues, blowing his nose.

JOE
(under his breath)
Shit...

Joe slides to the far end of his table, stacking seven or eight HUGE REFERENCE BOOKS in front of him.

JOE'S POV, PEERING THROUGH THE REFERENCE BOOKS:

Andrew opens a book, taking notes. Rubs his eyes. Writes something. Sneezes.

A LIBRARIAN delivers a book to Andrew.

LIBRARIAN
This is the supplement. You're right, there is a section on...
(lowers her voice)
... HIV related discrimination.

ANDREW
Thank you.

Andrew takes the book from her -- but she remains.

LIBRARIAN

We have a private research room available.

ANDREW
I'm fine, thanks.

Andrew BLOWS HIS NOSE. Now other PATRONS are watching.

LIBRARIAN
Wouldn't you be more comfortable in a research room?

ANDREW
(pleasantly)
No. But would it make you more comfortable?

LIBRARIAN
Whatever, sir.

The LIBRARIAN turns away, shrugging to a PATRON, indicating she's done all she can do.

As Joe continues to watch: one of Andrew's NEIGHBORS picks up his books and moves away.

Joe rises, gliding down an aisle of books, keeping one eye on Andrew, who concentrates on his work.

Joe approaches, nonchalantly, as if he just happens to be sauntering by. Suddenly he "notices" Andrew.

JOE
Oh, Beckett. How's it goin'?

ANDREW
Fine.

Andrew goes back to his work.

JOE
Who'd you get?

ANDREW
What?

JOE
Find a lawyer?

ANDREW
I'm a lawyer. How's your baby?

JOE

Huh? Oh. Great. She's great.

ANDREW

What's her name?

JOE

Rayisha.

ANDREW

Rayisha. Very nice.

Andrew focuses on his work. Joe steps away.

Joe comes back.

JOE

How did they find out?

ANDREW

(a second, then:)

One of the partners spotted a
lesion on my forehead.

Nearby, a CHINESE PROFESSOR looks up, startled, when she
hears the word "lesion."

JOE

Uh huh...

Andrew concentrates on his work once more.

JOE (CONT.)

How do you get from one lawyer
spotting a lesion, which could
have been a bruise, to the
partners deducing you had AIDS
and basing a decision to
terminate you on that
conclusion?

The CHINESE PROFESSOR moves away.

ANDREW

Good point.

Andrew removes a legal pad with "KENTON" written in big
letters across the top, and lots of notes underneath.

ANDREW (CONT.)

The partner who spotted the lesion, Walter Kenton, used to work for Benton, Myers, in D.C. There's a paralegal there, Maria Torres. She's had lesions on and off for three years. She says it was common knowledge around the office that her lesions were caused by AIDS.

JOE

They didn't fire her?

ANDREW

No. They didn't fire her.

Andrew goes back to his work. Joe stands there.

JOE

So Kenton connected the... lesion, and whatever suspicions he had about your personal life... to this woman, Maria... and blew the whistle on you. Suddenly you're losing files, and it's time to let you go. But, up to this point, you've been their Golden Boy, their rising star... Their behavior is... inconsistent.

ANDREW

Thank you.

Andrew goes back to work.

JOE

There is no relevant precedent.

ANDREW

(not looking up)

Arline decision. Supreme Court.

JOE

Arline?

Andrew **SHOVES** the legal book toward Joe.

CLOSE ON ANDREW'S HANDS (with one blotch) on the book's white pages.

The book is still facing Andrew. If Joe wants to read it,

he'll have to turn it around.

Joe looks at Andrew's hands. A MOMENT.

Joe turns the book around, begins to read:

JOE

"The Federal Vocational
Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits
discrimination..."

CAMERA CRANES UP, TOWARD THE CEILING... JOE CONTINUES
READING IN VOICE-OVER:

JOE (VO) (CONT.)

"... against otherwise qualified
handicapped persons who are able
to perform the duties required by
their employment..."

CAMERA GOES HIGHER, LOOKING DOWN ON THE ROWS OF BOOKS AND THE
LONG TABLES DOTTED WITH PEOPLE...

JOE (VO) (CONT.)

"Although the ruling did not
address the specific issue of
HIV and AIDS discrimination..."

DISSOLVE TO SAME ANGLE AN HOUR LATER: Andrew and Joe face each
other at their table, but NO ONE ELSE remains at that table,
or at the table next to it...

ANDREW (VO)

"Subsequent decisions have held
that AIDS is protected as a
handicap under law, not only
because of the physical
limitations it imposes..."

DISSOLVE TO A SAME ANGLE AN HOUR LATER (DAY IS TURNING INTO
NIGHT): Joe pacing, Andrew reading. Their section of the
library is COMPLETELY EMPTY but for Andrew and Joe.

ANDREW (VO) (CONT.)

"But because the prejudice
surrounding AIDS exacts a social
death which precedes the actual,
physical one..."

DISSOLVE TO SAME ANGLE, LATER: Andrew and Joe sit on the
same side of the table, reading the same book.

JOE (VO)

"This is the essence of
discrimination: formulating
opinions about others not based
on their individual merits but,
rather, on their membership in a
group with assumed characteristics...

The library is QUIET. Andrew SNEEZES.

Joe scoots his chair away from Andrew by eight inches.

DISCO MUSIC RISES ACCOMPANIED BY THE SOUNDS OF GRUNTING,
HEAVY BREATHING AND SLAPPING FLESH AS WE...

CUT TO:

MUSCULAR, SWEATY MALE BODIES SLAMMING INTO EACH OTHER, sounds of
GRUNTS, skin SLAPPING against skin (INT./NIGHT) ...

... Hand SLAPPING a butt under satin shorts

... Sweaty armpits... the ROAR OF A CROWD...

... BASKETBALL PLAYERS embracing, twirling each other around, high
fiving...

WIDE ANGLE REVEALS: A basketball game in progress, Sixers
versus the Celtics in Philly's Spectrum Arena.

ON CLOSED CIRCUIT TV: ROBERT PARISH going for a lay-up...

WHEELER/KENTON/OTHERS

Watch this guy! Nail him! Ouch!

Charles Wheeler, Walter Kenton, Kenneth Killcoyne, Bob Seidman
and SEVERAL LAWYERS and SPOUSES watch the game from a plush,
private box, complete with TV, bar, snack table. The lawyers wear
Ralph Lauren polos, chinos and ball caps. The place reeks of
cigar smoke. Walter Kenton has a twentyfive year old WIFE.

Charles Wheeler's nine year old GRANDSON sits nearby.
Wheeler turns the GRANDSON'S ballcap around, smiling
lovingly at the boy.

JUST BEYOND WHEELER: The door to the box is opened by a SECURITY
GUARD and a well-dressed, charismatic MAN looks in.

WHEELER

(spotting him)

Julius!

KENTON

Dr. J.!

DR. J.

Gentlemen... Ladies...

JULIUS ERVING enters, greeted by the LAWYERS.

LAWYERS

How's it goin', Doctor?/This is
an honor!/etc ...

The door is opened again, by the SECURITY GUARD, REVEALING
Joe Miller (in jeans and basketball jacket) and a MARSHALL.

JOE

Excuse me. Charles Wheeler?

Wheeler turns. Joe SLAPS a document into Wheeler's hand.

JOE (CONT.)

Summons. For you.

NOW the box is QUIET.

DR. J.

Say. What's up, Chuck?

CUT TO:

THE BRIGHTLY LIT, RESTRICTED, INNER CORRIDOR OF SPECTRUM
Stadium (INT./NIGHT) where Wheeler walks beside Bob Seidman,
with Walter Kenton and Kenneth Killcoyne just behind. SOUNDS
OF THE GAME STILL IN PROGRESS can be heard, but FAR AWAY.
Occasionally the lawyers are passed by FOOD SERVICE or LAUNDRY
SERVICE EMPLOYEES...

WHEELER

... interview every employee,
support staff, associates, partners.
Did any of them know Andy was sick?
How did they know? Did he tell them?
Did they notice something was wrong
with his appearance? None of this
information got to the managing
partners. We know that. Make sure
everyone else does too... And
Beckett: I want to know everything
about his personal life. Did he

frequent those pathetic bars on
Camac Street?

SEIDMAN

Jesus.

WHEELER

(ignoring Seidman)

What about other homosexual
facilities, whatever they are?

SEIDMAN

Charles...

WHEELER

What deviant groups or
organizations did he secretly
belong to?

(with irritation)

What is it, Bob?!

SEIDMAN

Let's settle with Andy and put
this whole tragic mess behind
us.

They arrive at a quiet, semi-private cul de sac.

WHEELER

Andrew brought AIDS into our
offices, into our men's room.
He brought AIDS to our annual
goddamn family picnic.

KENTON

We ought to be suing him.

SEIDMAN

For Christ's sake, where's your
compassion?

KENTON

Compassion? Andy sucks cocks,
Bob. He takes it up the ass.
He's a pervert.

Only Seidman shows any kind of REACTION.

SEIDMAN

That's kind of... extreme, Walt.
Andy's private life is none of

our business.

WHEELER

Bob. You're trying my patience. Andrew Beckett is making his private life our business. We gave him Kronos. Did he say, "I'm sick. I might not be able to see this through?"

SEIDMAN

He was doing a great job.

WHEELER

Bob. I must ask you to shut the fuck up. Did Andrew Beckett say "I might not be able to serve our clients to the best of my ability?" He said nothing. And now, Andrew Beckett proposes to haul me into a court of law, to sling accusations at me, in full view of the entire, Philadelphia, judicial establishment. My God.

KILLCOYNE

Beckett doesn't want to go to court, he's hoping for a quick tasty settlement.

SEIDMAN

A jury might decide that Andy has a case.

WHEELER

Wait a minute. The man was fired for incompetence, not because he has AIDS. You didn't know he was sick, did you, Bob?

KENTON

Holy Shit. Did you, Bob?

SEIDMAN

(after a moment)

No. Not really.

Wheeler walks away, followed by Kenton and Killcoyne.

Bob Seidman stands alone in this dark place.

CITY SOUNDS ON A WORK DAY AS WE CUT TO:

EXTERIOR, JOE'S OFFICE BUILDING, ON A THURSDAY MORNING.

CONTINUOUS CUT TO:

JOB'S COLLEAGUE, FILKO, LOOKING DIRECTLY INTO CAMERA (in Joe's offices, INT./DAY):

FILKO

Charles Fucking Wyant Wheeler?!

Joe sweeps by, just arriving for work.

JOE

Morning, Filko.

Filko keeps pace with Joe down the corridor. ANOTHER COLLEAGUE calls out from an office as Joe passes:

COLLEAGUE

Hey, it's the local chapter of the ACLU!

FILKO

You're a Republican, Joe! You belong to the NRA!

JOE

How many toilet stalls are there in the women's restroom on this floor, Filko?

FILKO

How many... what?!

Filko follows Joe into Joe's office.

JOE

Two. How many toilet stalls are there in the men's room? Two, plus four urinals. How many wheelchair accessible toilets in either of those restrooms? Zero. In this entire building? Zero. Get the picture, Filko? Discrimination! You find yourself a female, paraplegic, legal assistant who is qualified to work here, except she can't take a leak... and you've got

yourself a sex discrimination suit and a handicapped discrimination suit. Not handicapped. What do you call someone who can't use a normal restroom? "Gastro-intestinally challenged!"

Behind Joe, out a large window: PAINTERS on a scaffold.

Iris comes into the office and says:

IRIS

Wyant Wheeler's asking for a postponement on the prelim, Joe.

Joe is dialing the phone.

JOE

Low-life, sleazy scumbags. Of course they want a postponement, I've got a client with a terminal disease. They're going to drag their heels every step of the way, the rotten bastards.

(tapping on the window, to the PAINTERS)

Is that spelled right?

CONTINUOUS CUT TO:

EXTERIOR, JOE'S OFFICE BUILDING, WHERE PAINTERS ARE ADDING A new question to the line of windows (DAY):

D I S C R I M I N A T E D A G A I N S T ?

JOE (VO)

Hey, Beckett. This is Miller.

CONTINUOUS CUT TO:

JOE'S VOICE COMES THROUGH, ON THE ANSWERING MACHINE IN Andrew and Miguel's loft (INT./DAY)

JOE (VO) (CONT.)

I just wanted to tell you...

CAMERA DRIFTS THROUGH the loft, finding Andrew in the rooftop solarium, sitting crosslegged in front of a candle.

JOE (VO) (CONT.)

... we're trying to set a date for
the prelim. Hang in there.

Andrew's eyes are closed. Next to him rests a tape player. A
WOMAN'S VOICE IS HEARD, accompanied by NEW AGE MUSIC:

WOMAN'S VOICE

I can heal myself.

ANDREW

I can heal myself.

WOMAN'S VOICE

I can heal myself.

ANDREW

I can heal myself.

CUT TO:

ANDREW AND MIGUEL IN THEIR BEDROOM AT NIGHT, LYING CLOSE TO
each other in bed (INT./NIGHT) ...

MIGUEL

I was coming out of the gym
today, and I ran into Jimmy. Do
you know what he asked me?
"What's it like knowing your
boyfriend's going to die?"

ANDREW

Jerk... What did you say?

MIGUEL

I said, "Everyone's going to
die, Jimmy. But Drew's not
going to die of AIDS. There's a
cure around the corner, and he
plans to be around to take
advantage of it."

Miguel strokes Andrew's hair.

ANDREW

You got that right, Mikey...
(beat)
You still believe that, don't
you?

MIGUEL

Yes. I think it will be a

simple solution. They'll put it in a syringe, inject it into your bloodstream. It'll neutralize the virus. It'll revitalize the immune system, and people with AIDS will become healthy again.

HOLD ON MIGUEL AND ANDREW, ON THIS QUIET MOMENT.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN: ESTABLISHING, EXT. PHILADELPHIA COURT HOUSE (DAY) ...

TITLE: "Three months later."

CUT TO:

A LONG CORRIDOR IN A CITY COURT BUILDING -- FAR DOWN THE corridor TWO FIGURES WALK TOWARD CAMERA (INT./DAY) ...

The figures APPROACHING CAMERA are Andrew and Joe, stepping into and out of sunlight falling through tall windows.

TITLE: "Pre-trial settlement conference."

REVERSE ANGLE -- DOWN AN OPPOSITE CORRIDOR:

A PHALANX OF LAWYERS -- at least ten -- APPROACHING CAMERA, a bulwark of white shirts and dark ties.

ON ANDREW AND JOE:

Andrew's hair is short, but growing back, the blotches have receded, his weight is up. He's in a stage of recovery.

ON THE OTHER LAWYERS:

Charles Wheeler (seeming ironic) and Walter Kenton (he's pissed) lead the battalion.

Behind them, walk young lawyers BELINDA CONINE and JEROME GREEN. Belinda is white, Jerome is black.

CUT TO:

HUSHED VOICES (INT./DAY) ...

A JUDGE'S CHAMBERS, with couches, soft chairs scattered in a loose circle, like a casual living room.

Joe and Andrew whisper to each other. The Wyant Wheeler team takes up several chairs. Belinda Conine and Jerome Green sit next to Wheeler and Kenton. Some of their ASSISTANTS stand.

Wheeler is looking across the room at...

Andrew, who catches Wheeler's stare.

WHEELER

You're looking better, Andy.
How do you feel?

SILENCE. Everyone watches Andrew for his reaction.

ANDREW

Fine, thanks, Charles.

JUDGE LUCAS GARNETT enters his chambers (not wearing a Judge's robe). He shakes hands with Wheeler and Kenton.

JUDGE GARNETT

Charles, Walter...

WHEELER

Congratulations on the new
grandson.

JUDGE GARNETT

Thank you. We're very happy.

The Judge brushes by Joe and Andrew without a word. The room becomes SILENT as the Judge takes a seat.

JUDGE GARNETT

Attorney for the plaintiff?

JOE

Joseph Miller, Your Honor.
Macready and Shilts Legal Services.

JUDGE GARNETT

I've seen your television commercials.
"If you or anyone you know has
been injured through the fault of
others... It should say, "through
the negligence of others."

JOE

I'll take that under consideration,
Your Honor.

JUDGE GARNETT

On behalf of the defendants?

BELINDA CONINE

Belinda Conine. Of Petersen,
Lehigh, Monroe and Smith.

JEROME GREEN

And Jerome Green.

And a WASPISH lawyer wearing round glasses:

DEXTER SMITH

Dexter Smith.

A white-haired lawyer next to Belinda:

RALPH PETERSEN

Ralph Petersen.

JUDGE GARNETT

(to Joe)

You're outnumbered four to one.

(to the others)

Whom do I address?

I can't talk to four lawyers at
once.

BELINDA

I'm chief litigator, Your Honor.

JUDGE GARNETT

Fine. I've asked the litigants to be
present for this conference, in the
hope we can settle this matter
today, among ourselves... There is
nothing I hate more, than to see
lawyers suing each other. If you
look at the opinion polls, when Mr.
John Q. Citizen is asked to rank
professions according to the
respect he holds for them... Where
are the lawyers? Somewhere below
personal fitness trainers and only
slightly above child pornographers.
If we keep suing each other, if we
fail to settle the smallest
difference among ourselves with
mutual respect, if we continue to
scrap like bucks in heat, we'll

fall lower on that list. And when people lose respect for lawyers, they lose respect for the law. And when this society loses all respect for the law, we'll be murdered in our beds, my friends, our cherished institutions will be burned to the ground and our children and our grandchildren will live like savages.

JOE

If it please Your Honor, we hope to settle this matter.

JUDGE GARNETT

By God you will settle it! If you force this case to trial, young man, you'll regret it for the rest of your natural-born days... Now, Joseph. What would you require to settle this matter today?

JOE

Reinstatement at full salary. Back pay covering the period of unemployment and...

JUDGE GARNETT

Hold it, Joe.

(to Wheeler)

He wants to come back to work, Chuck.

WHEELER

That's impossible, Your Honor.

JUDGE GARNETT

That's impossible, Joe.

BELINDA CONINE

If it please Your Honor, we're prepared to offer a cash settlement of twenty-five thousand dollars.

JOE

Your generosity overwhelms me, Belinda, considering my client was earning over a hundred thou

when he was terminated almost six months ago.

JUDGE GARNETT

Give me a break, Joe. Let's cut through these false attitudes. Give them a figure. How much do you want?

ANDREW

I want to go back to work, Your Honor.

JUDGE GARNETT

You're here at my indulgence, young man. I'm waiting for a figure, Joe.

Andrew and Joe confer with each other.

JOE

Based on what my client would have earned over the next three years, including benefits and projected raises, and the extraordinary cost of medical care for someone with Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome... We would settle today for the very fair amount of one million five hundred thousand dollars.

JUDGE GARNETT

Very good, Joe. Now, Belinda, I've got a figure over here, of one million, five. I...

Andrew WHISPERS to Joe, who interrupts the Judge:

JOE

One more thing, Your Honor...

ANDREW

(jumping in)

Any settlement agreement must include, and this is critical, a letter of exoneration, making clear my termination had nothing to do with the quality of my work.

Charles Wheeler WHISPERS to Belinda Conine.

BELINDA CONINE

Your Honor, Mr. Beckett's
incompetence nearly sabotaged a
350 million dollar suit.

ANDREW

I was the one who was sabotaged.

BELINDA CONINE

We have complaints about Mr.
Beckett's lack of preparation,
his disorganization, his
arrogant, defensive attitude...
The list goes on.

JEROME GREEN

We have letters.

JOE

Why haven't you produced these
letters?

JUDGE GARNETT

Take it easy.

(to Wheeler)

What's the big deal, Chuck? The
boy wants a letter, to show to
his mother, for her to keep after
he's gone. Why are you being hard-
ass-ed about this?

WHEELER

I wish I could exonerate you, Andy.
But I'd have to lie to do it.

ANDREW

(very calm)

You can save it for the jury,
Charles. I want to hear you say,
under oath, in front of a judge and
a jury, I'm a bad lawyer.

(rises)

Gentlemen.

(to Belinda)

Counselor.

WHEELER

Don't do this, Andy.

JOE

Whoa, whoa...

(to Andrew)

What do you expect them to say,
you're Alan Dershowitz?

KENTON

A trial takes time, Beckett. Do
you know what I'm saying?

ANDREW

I think I catch your subtle drift,
Walter.

Andrew saunters out.

KENTON

You'll be sorry, Beckett.

WHEELER

Andy, you don't want this.

Joe scans the room, all eyes are on him. His frown turns into
a grin. He faces the Judge.

JOE

With all due respect, Your Honor,
my client chooses to pursue his
constitutionally guaranteed
right to a trial.

Joe exits.

CUT TO:

HAND HELD CAMERA SHOT OF: THE FRONT YARD OF A TWO-STORY
Colonial house in Downingtown, Pennsylvania (EXT./DAY) ...

Andrew walks toward the house, TALKING DIRECTLY TO CAMERA.

ANDREW

This is the house where I grew up.
In Downingtown, Pennsylvania.
(pointing to the ground)
See this... ?

The CAMERA POINTS to SEVERAL PAIRS OF CHILD'S HAND PRINTS in the
sidewalk, then, BACK TO ANDREW IN CLOSE UP, SMILING.

ANDREW (CONT.)

Those are my cute little hand
prints. And my brother's and my

sister's.

MIGUEL'S VOICE
(BEHIND CAMERA)
And today is... ?

ANDREW
Today is my parents' fortieth
wedding anniversary.

Andrew goes inside, speaking to the CAMERA:

ANDREW (CONT.)
This is the front door. I caught a
finger in this door, once...
(holds it up)
This one. Broke it.
(stepping inside)
This is the hallway, my mother
calls it a foyer...

INSIDE THE HOUSE (INT./DAY):

CHILDREN are running through the house, while WOMEN sporting
corsages confer in the kitchen. A SIX YEAR OLD GIRL jumps into
Andrew's arms.

ALEXIS
Uncle Andrew!

ANDREW
(to CAMERA)
This is my niece, Alexis. Say
hello, Alexis.

ALEXIS
Mommy's pregnant again.

ANDREW
(doing Walter Cronkite)
You heard it here first, folks.
News as it happens.

Andrew's older and very down to earth sister JILL, puts her
arms around Andrew, squeezing tight.

JILL
Hello, darlin'.

ANDREW
This is my sister, Jill, the most

fertile woman on the planet. She's married to Reverend Jim.

JILL

You feel thin.
(over Andrew's shoulder)
Hello, Miguel.

As Jill leaves Andrew's arms, the CAMERA IS TRADED OFF TO ANDREW, who SHOOTS JILL GIVING MIGUEL A HUG.

MIGUEL

Hey, Jill. Nice to see you, sweetheart.

JILL

(hugging Miguel)
Handsome devil.
(referring to Andrew)
Is he eating?

MIGUEL

We don't discuss his weight.
(to Andrew, behind CAMERA)
Do we?

CAMERA MOVES DOWN THE CORRIDOR...

ANDREW (OS)

And what will we find in... da duh
da duh da duh... the KITCHEN!

A GROUP OF LADIES SCREAM when CAMERA ENTERS KITCHEN.

LADIES

There he is! Hi, Andrew! Don't point that thing at me! etc...

Andrew's mother Sarah wears an unpretentious flowery dress.

ANDREW

Hi, Mom. How do you feel on your fortieth anniversary?

SARAH

Ancient. How do you think I feel? Put that thing down and give me a hug.

(he keeps it pointed at her)
Andrew, stop! ... He still doesn't listen.

ANDREW

Where's Dad?

SARAH

He's out in his shed showing your
uncle his new riding mower.

One of Andrew's YOUNG NEPHEWS SHOVES HIS FACE into the
CAMERA, UNTIL SCREEN GOES BLACK.

CUT TO:

QUIET (INT./DAY) ...

Andrew and his immediate family are gathered in the den, sitting
quietly, facing each other. Andrew's father, BUD, with an
American flag pin in his lapel, sits next to Sarah. Jill holds
the hand of her husband, REVEREND JIM. Two of Andrew's brothers,
MATT and RANDY, (big, athletic guys with mustaches) are there.

Andrew sits next to Miguel.

ANDREW

Things might be said, at the
trial, that... are not going to
be easy for you to hear. Things
about me, about my private life.
And I want to make sure it's
okay with everybody.

MATT

I appreciate you asking, Andy,
but really, it's your call.

ANDREW

What do you think, Jill?

JILL

To be honest, I'm worried about
Mommy and Daddy. They've had to
go through so much already...
And, we all know...

(very difficult to say)

There's going to be even worse
things to deal with, eventually.
I wonder if it's fair to put
them through this.

Andrew's father STARES at his folded hands.

ANDREW

Mom?

SARAH

All I know is, you got through your diagnosis fine, like a trooper. But when they fired you... you were so devastated, Andy... I don't expect any of my kids to sit in the back of the bus. Fight for your rights.

ANDREW

Thanks, Mom... Dad?

There's a pause before Bud Beckett speaks.

BUD

Supposedly, the Lord doesn't give you more trouble than you can handle. But I'm having a hard time believing that these days.

Andrew's construction worker brother, RANDY, wipes tears from his eyes. Clearly their father is in alot of pain.

BUD (CONT.)

Andy, the way you've faced this whole thing, you and Miguel, with so much courage... your mother and I have been so very impressed...

Andrew gazes at his father with incredible love. Miguel puts an arm around Andrew.

BUD (CONT.)

I can't imagine there is anything, that anyone could say, that would make us feel less proud of you.

ANDREW

(full of emotion)

Thanks, Dad. I love you guys. How about you, Randy?

RANDY

Hey. You're my kid brother, Andy. That's the bottom line. I mean, what are those bastards going to say? You're gay? Shit, I knew that when you were five years old.

Everyone LAUGHS. Andrew and Randy high five.

MIGUEL

Wait a minute...

(to Andrew)

You're gay?

More laughter. But Jill speaks seriously:

JILL

What about you, Andy? You're not a militant type. You've always been so private.

CLOSE ON ANDREW:

ANDREW

I guess... I don't have time for that any more.

SARAH

Jim? Will you lead us in a prayer?

Everyone bows heads, holding hands in a circle.

REVEREND JIM

Dear Lord. Sometimes it is difficult to remember to be grateful...

CAMERA PANS THE CIRCLE, THE PRAYING FACES.

REVEREND JIM (CONT.)

To remember, in our times of sorrow and confusion, that we have You to turn to, and each other. Bless and keep Andrew and Miguel, dear Lord, deepen and strengthen their love as they face the struggles that lay ahead. Bless and watch over all of us, fill us with Your love, Your light, and Your peace, which passeth all understanding. In Jesus' name, we pray...

EVERYONE

Amen.

ROMANTIC MUSIC CROSSES CUT TO:

BECKETTS' LIVINGROOM, SEEN THROUGH THE VIDEO CAMERA (DAY) ...

A local entertainer (GUIDO PAONESSA) launches into a standard, accompanied by a single guitar player, and Bud and Sarah begin to dance, surrounded by family and friends.

GUIDO

"After all the days of Spring
have flown..."

VIDEO CAMERA PANS: RELATIVES eating cake, KIDS chasing each other, a GRANDMOTHER in a wheelchair holding a NEWBORN, watching silent, video home movies.

CAMERA FINDS Andrew and Niguel eating anniversary cake (Andrew barely touches his). Playing for the camera, Miguel dips his finger into icing and smears it onto Andrew's nose. Andrew tries to reach the icing with his tongue.

CAMERA PANS WITH ANDREW as he comes forward to dance with his mother, while Jill dances with their father.

CAMERA RETURNS TO MIGUEL. MATT (behind the camera) says:

MATT (OS)

Hey, Miguel, can you imagine any
two people being together for forty
years?

ZOOM IN CLOSE ON NIGUEL (who's watching Andrew):

MIGUEL

Yes. I can.

VIDEO CAMERA PANS to Andrew dancing with his Mom, lingering on this IMAGE...

JOE (VOICE OVER)

Forget everything you've seen on
TV, and in the movies...

CUT TO:

HELICOPTER SHOT, REVEALING ALL OF PHILADELPHIA (DAY) ...

TITLE: "Eight months later."

JOE (OS) (CONT.)

There won't be any last minute,

surprise witnesses...

CUT TO:

A MAN LOOKING INTO CAMERA: HE'S YOUNG, CONFIDENT, ALL American, a Marine (INT./DAY) ...

TITLE: "Opening statements."

The MARINE is a JUROR. CAMERA PANS others: a BLACK LADY SCHOOLTEACHER, a POSTAL WORKER, an ASIAN COLLEGE STUDENT.

JOE (OS) (CONT.)

No one will break down on the stand with a tearful confession...

REVERSE ON JOE, ADDRESSING THE JURY.

JOE (CONT.)

You are presented with a simple fact: Andrew Beckett was fired. You will hear two explanations for why he was fired. Ours. And theirs...

Joe crosses the courtroom, coming to stand in front of...

ANDREW, whose appearance has changed: thinner, paler than we've ever seen him, some blisters on his lips. But the most disturbing thing about his appearance is the way he moves, slowly, like a much older man. He's taking notes (which he will do relentlessly throughout the trial.) And he has a cane at his side, which he'll use throughout the trial.

JOE (CONT.)

It's up to you, to sift through layer and layer of truth, and determine for yourselves the version that sounds the most true.

Charles Wheeler, Walter Kenton, Bob Seidman, Kenneth Killcoyne sit BEHIND their lawyers, Belinda Conine and Jerome Green, and SEVERAL ASSISTANTS at the defense table.

JUDGE GARNETT presides from his bench.

Among the spectators, Miguel sits next to Sarah, and Andrew's sister Jill. AIDS ACTIVISTS in the background.

JOE (CONT.)

There are certain points in our

version, that I must prove to you... Point number one: Andrew Beckett was... is a brilliant lawyer. A great lawyer. Point number two. Andrew Beckett, afflicted with a debilitating disease, made the legal, understandable, personal choice to keep the fact of his illness to himself... Point number three: His employers discovered his illness. And ladies and gentlemen, the illness I'm referring to, is AIDS...

Joe pauses, letting that sink in.

JOE (CONT.)

Point number four. They panicked. And, in their panic, they did what most of us would like to do with AIDS... Get it, and the people who have it, as far away from us as possible.

Joe walks away from Andrew.

JOE (CONT.)

The behavior of Andrew Beckett's employers may seem reasonable to you. It does to me. After all, AIDS is a deadly, incurable, disease...

CLOSE ON MEMBERS OF THE JURY.

JOE (CONT.)

But however you come to judge the behavior of Charles Wheeler and his partners in moral, ethical, human terms... When they fired Andrew Beckett because he had AIDS, they broke the law.

With a swift, direct glance at the Judge, Joe speaks with considerable power and emotion:

JOE (CONT.)

And, when lawyers break the law, when this society loses respect for the law, when that day comes, our cherished institutions will be

burned to the ground, and our children and grandchildren will live like savages.

CUT TO:

BELINDA CONINE ADDRESSING THE JURY (INT./DAY) ...

BELINDA

Fact. Andrew Beckett performed at a consistently mediocre level. Fact. He made a grievous error on a multi-million dollar lawsuit... Fact. He claims he is the victim of lies and deceit. Fact. Andrew Beckett lied to his employers, going to great efforts to conceal his disease from them. Fact. He was successful in his duplicity. The partners at Wyant Wheeler did not know Andrew Beckett had AIDS when they fired him...

Belinda pauses in front of the plaintiff's table

BELINDA (CONT.)

Fact. AIDS is a tragedy...

Andrew looks directly at Belinda.

BELINDA (CONT.)

Fact. Andrew Beckett is dying.

Joe watches Andrew for his reaction.

BELINDA (CONT.)

Fact. Andrew Beckett is angry. Because his "lifestyle," his reckless behavior, has cut short his life... And in his anger, his rage, he's lashing out. And he wants someone to pay.

CUT TO:

ON THE WITNESS STAND: A SOLIDLY BUILT EXECUTIVE FROM A large insurance company, MR. LAIRD (INT./DAY) ...

JOE

Andrew Beckett represented your

company in a lawsuit in 1990, is that correct?

LAIRD

Wyant Wheeler represented us.

Andrew glances toward the jury box: the MARINE JUROR writes in a tiny notebook.

JOE

But, Andrew Beckett was in charge of litigation for the suit.

LAIRD

That's correct.

JOE

Were you pleased with his work?

LAIRD

We were satisfied.

Joe and Andrew exchange a LOOK -- Laird's response surprises and disappoints them.

JOE

Were you satisfied, or were you pleased?

Laird glances toward Charles Wheeler before answering.

LAIRD

We were satisfied.

Joe refers to legal documents.

JOE

Mr. Laird, when I approached you about being a witness at this trial, and you agreed, you gave sworn testimony in a deposition. Is that correct?

LAIRD

That's correct.

JOE

According to the deposition, you said you were "thrilled, impressed, overwhelmed" by the quality of Andrew Beckett's work. Do you

remember saying that?

LAIRD

I may have said something like that. But that's not how I feel at this moment.

Joe takes on a street-tough tone:

JOE

Okay, Mr. Laird. Explain this to me like I'm a four year old: Did Andrew Beckett win your lawsuit for you or not?

LAIRD

We won.

JOE

Did that thrill, impress and overwhelm you?

LAIRD

It satisfied me.

Joe STARES at the guy.

JOE

It's a long way between being overwhelmed and being satisfied. A cheeseburger may be satisfying whereas caviar and champagne and roast duck and baked Alaska for dessert might be considered overwhelming. Do you agree?

LAIRD

I might.

JOE

Five months ago you characterized Andrew Beckett as caviar and now you're calling him a cheeseburger. Your standards have shifted a great deal, and I'd like to know why you've changed your mind.

LAIRD

Since that time I've devoted more thought to the subject, and that's how I feel now.

QUICK CUT TO:

JEROME GREEN CROSS-EXAMINING LAIRD (INT./DAY).

JEROME GREEN

Partner Robert Seidman was the supervising attorney for your lawsuit?

MR. LAIRD

That's right.

JEROME GREEN

Does the supervising attorney guide the litigating attorney during the trial?

MR. LAIRD

Often, he does.

JEROME GREEN

As far as you know, in the handling of your lawsuit, Andrew Beckett was simply following orders.

LAIRD

That's a fair assessment of the situation.

Andrew glances over his shoulder: at Robert Seidman, who meets his gaze.

CUT TO:

SPECTATORS STREAM OUT OF CITY HALL INTO THE HUBBUB OF TWO DISTINCT GROUPS SHOUTING AT EACH OTHER (EXT/DAY): GAY RIGHTS ACTIVISTS in T-shirts with pink triangles, denouncing discrimination; BORN AGAIN ACTIVISTS waving placards citing AIDS as God's punishment for homosexuality; POLICEMEN keeping them apart; A MEDIA CIRCUS getting it on videotape.

Joe and Miguel FLANK Andrew, who walks weakly. with a cane. Sarah and Jill follow close behind, running the gauntlet of ACTIVISTS and REPORTERS.

Andrew's POV on a placard: "We Die - They Do Nothing!"

Jill's POV on a placard: "AIDS Cures Homosexuality!"

A TV CREW shines HOT LIGHTS on Andrew.

TV REPORTER (ANGELA MEDINA)

Do you see this as a gay rights issue?

ANDREW

I'm not political. I just want compensation for being fired.

REPORTER MEDINA

But you are gay, aren't you?

IMAGE: ANDREW SEEN ON A TV SCREEN (INT./NIGHT):

ANDREW

"I don't see how that's any of your business...

(a smile)

But yes, I am."

WIDE ANGLE: WE'RE IN A SPORTS BAR WHERE JOE WATCHES THE SIX O'CLOCK NEWS WITH FILKO, A LOCAL COP, OTHERS (INT./NIGHT) ...

ON THE TV SCREEN: A microphone is shoved at Joe.

REPORTER MEDINA

"Do you believe that homosexuals deserve special treatment?"

FILKO

Hell, no!

JOE (on TV)

"Angela, we're standing in Philadelphia, the City of Brotherly Love, the birthplace of freedom, where our Founding Fathers authored the Declaration of Independence. And I don't remember that glorious document saying "All straight men are created equal." I could have sworn it says, "All men are created equal."

CHARLIE THE COP

Give me a goddamn break!

ON THE TV SCREEN: The REPORTER wraps up her story.

REPORTER MEDINA

"This case is sending a cold chill through the legal community. One of Wyant Wheeler's key clients, the Grace Foster Foundation, which supports several AIDS charities, has taken its business to another firm until this matter is resolved..."

As the TV DRONES ON, CHARLIE THE COP, OTHERS GLARE at Joe.

FILKO
(chuckles)
Hey, Joe.
(a wink to the COP)
You're not starting to get a little... light on your feet here on us, are you?

Joe does not laugh.

JOE
Yeah, Filko. I am.
(stepping toward Filko)
I'm on the prowl, Filko. I need a man. Not just any man. I need a hunk. A hunk like you. How about it, Filko? Want to play sailor? This time, I'll be first mate and you can be Columbus.

FILKO
Chill out, Joe.

JOE
(angry)
Those people make me sick, Filko! But a law's been broken, okay? The law. Remember the law?

CHARLIE THE COP has relaxed a bit.

CHARLIE THE COP
At least we agree on one thing, Joe... They make me sick too.

HOLD ON JOE, but WE HEAR THE TV REPORTER in the BACKGROUND:

TV REPORTER MEDINA
"... now the public knows that

your son has AIDS and he's gay.
How does that make you feel?"

All eyes turn to the TV: SARAH BECKETT IN CLOSE UP.

SARAH

"This is a world full of war,
famine, poverty, homelessness...
and people make a fuss because
two men or two women want to
live together, or make love.
Seems kind of silly, doesn't
it?"

The bar ERUPTS with a CHORUS OF BOOS AND CATCALLS.

CUT TO:

JOE ADDRESSING A WITNESS IN COURT (INT./DAY) ...

JOE

And Walter Kenton knew the
lesions on your face and arms
were caused by AIDS?

The witness: MARIA TORRES, Hispanic, 35, healthy-looking.

MARIA

Definitely. People were going
around, whispering things. I
figured I didn't have anything
to lose, so I told all the
partners.

JOE

How did Walter Kenton treat you,
after you told him you had AIDS?

CLOSE ON KENTON, looking confident.

MARIA

Every time he came into contact
with me, he'd get this look on
his face. I called it, the
"Oh God" expression. As in "Oh
God, here comes that woman with
AIDS."

Andrew LAUGHS.

JOE

Ms. Torres? Have your employers
fired you for having AIDS?

MARIA

No. When I need time off, for
medical reasons, we work it out.

JOE

Thank you. No more questions.

Jerome Green rises.

JEROME GREEN

Miss Torres. How did you contract
the AIDS virus?

MARIA

During a transfusion. I lost
a lot of blood giving birth to my
second child.

JEROME GREEN

In other words, in your case
you happen to be an innocent
victim of the AIDS tragedy.

MARIA

Look. I'm no different from
everyone else who has this
disease: I'm not guilty, I'm
not innocent. I'm just trying
to survive.

QUICK CUT TO:

JOE, APPROACHING A WITNESS (INT./DAY) ...

JOE

Beyond noticing the marks on
his face, were there other
things about his appearance
that made you suspect he had
AIDS?

THE WITNESS: Paralegal Anthea Burton.

ANTHEA

He was losing weight. He looked
kind of tired sometimes. But he
was working so hard... Still, I
felt something was wrong.

(looking at Wheeler)
And I can't believe they're
saying they didn't notice
anything.

BELINDA
Objection.

JUDGE GARNETT
Just answer the question.

ANTHEA
Sorry.

JOE
Ms. Burton. You're black.

ANTHEA
Is that a question?

JOE
No. Have you ever felt
discriminated against, at Wyant
Wheeler?

ANTHEA
Yes.

Wheeler shakes his head, disgusted. Kenton fumes, outraged.
Seidman looks surprised.

JOE
In what way?

ANTHEA
Well... One time, Mr. Wheeler's
secretary, Lydia, told me Mr.
Wheeler had a problem with my
earrings.

JOE
Your earrings?

Anthea is wearing large, dangling African-style earrings.

ANTHEA
Apparently, Mr. Wheeler felt
they were too... "ethnic" is the
word she used. She said he
would like it if I wore
something smaller, less garish,

and... more "American."

JOE

What did you say?

ANTHEA

I said my earrings are American.
They're African-American.

JOE

Thank you. No more questions.

Belinda Conine approaches Anthea.

BELINDA

Miss Burton? Do you still work at
Wyant Wheeler?

ANTHEA

Yes.

BELINDA

Were you recently promoted?

ANTHEA

Yes. I'm now in charge of the
paralegal department.

BELINDA

Thank you.

CUT TO:

A PHILADELPHIA EXTERIOR, A FALL AFTERNOON (LATE DAY) ...

CUT TO:

JOE COMES DOWN AN AISLE OF A DRUG STORE, EXAMINING THE BABY
cold medicines, carrying a box of Pampers (INT./DAY) ...

A YOUNG MAN in grass-stained sweats, carrying a football under
one arm, buying a tube of toothpaste, speaks to Joe:

YOUNG MAN

How's the trial going? It's
a great case.

Joe looks up surprised. The YOUNG MAN smiles.

YOUNG MAN (CONT.)

I saw you on television. I'm a

law student. At Penn.

Joe is flattered by the YOUNG MAN'S interest.

JOE

Good school. What year?

YOUNG MAN

Second.

JOE

Great.

YOUNG MAN

Would you like to have a drink with me? I just finished a game, I could use a beer.

(a smile)

I don't pick up people in drug stores every day.

JOE

Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa... do you think... ? You think I'm...

(low)

... gay?

YOUNG MAN

Aren't you?

JOE

What's the matter with you? Do I look gay to you?

YOUNG MAN

Do I look gay to you? Relax.

JOE

Relax? I ought to kick your faggoty little ass for you!

YOUNG MAN

Take it as a compliment. Geesh.

But Joe is really upset. People are watching.

JOE

Don't you know this is exactly the kind of bullshit that makes people hate you guys?

YOUNG MAN

Fuck you! You want to kick my
ass? You want to try?
(walking away)
Asshole.

JOE

You're the asshole, buddy.

YOUNG MAN

(going out)
Get a life.

Joe stands there, holding the Pampers, people STARING.

CUT TO:

LISA'S WORKING ON HER COMPUTER, AT HOME, WHILE JOE PACES
around her desk, really upset (One year-old Rayisha sits on
the desk playing with wooden salad spoons.) (INT./NIGHT) ...

JOE

But what was it?! What was this
guy thinking... ?!

LISA

Don't know, Joe.

JOE

Is there some kind of expression
I've picked up from Beckett?!
Some kind of fairy attitude I've
unconsciously adopted?! Am I
walking different?! Some kind
of vocal thing?! Have I picked
up some kind of homo vibe?!
vibe

LISA

Have you changed your aftershave?

JOE

Very funny. I had a box of
Pampers under my arm for
Chrissake!

CUT TO:

LISA AND JOE'S DARKENED BEDROOM, WHERE THEY LIE IN BED,
almost completely obscured by shadow (INT./NIGHT) ...

They speak softly, careful not to wake the baby.

LISA

Joe?

JOE

(sleepy)

Yeah... ?

LISA

Two men making love... ? Now tell me again... why is that disgusting?

JOE

(a tired sigh)

Lisa, c'mon. One guy sticking his dick in another guy's mouth? It's disgusting.

They lie in silence for a moment. Then:

LISA

Okay, so... help me with this one, Joe... Is it disgusting for someone to put his dick into someone's mouth? Or, is it disgusting for someone to take a dick into their mouth?

JOE

(after a beat)

Great, Lisa. Thank you.

TO:

EXTERIOR: CITY HALL, AN AUTUMN DAY...

JOE (VO)

"But, ultimately, the complaint was found, wasn't it?"

CONTINUOUS CUT TO:

WIDE ANGLE ON COURTROOM: JAMEY COLLINS ON THE STAND (DAY).

JAMEY

Yes. We found a copy. It been incorrectly filed...

TITLE: "Plaintiff's case, day ten."

JAMEY (CONT.)

We got it to court on time.

ANGLE ON THE JURY: Several JURORS write in notebooks like the Marine's; he's been handing them out...

Joe seems ill at ease today, a little off his game. When he glances at Andrew, it's with irritation.

JOE

Has a file ever disappeared like that before? Vanished into thin air, all of a sudden, only to reappear in the nick of time?

Jamey answers nervously:

JAMEY

I've never known that to happen before. No.

JOE

(fires this question)
Did you have something to do with this file being lost accidentally-on-purpose?

BELINDA

Objection!

JOE

I'll rephrase.
(to Jamey)
Did you have anything to do with this file being... misplaced?

JAMEY

Absolutely not.

Joe stands, staring at Jamey. Too long. Jamey squirms.

JOE

Are you a homosexual?

JAMEY

What?!

Joe pressing forward, toward Jamey.

JOE

C'mon, Mr. Collins. Are you

homosexual? You know, gay?

The COURTROOM ERUPTS: ACTIVISTS booing Joe, Wheeler's crowd expressing OUTRAGE, JURORS looking confused.

Andrew takes in the commotion, as the JUDGE BANGS HIS GAVEL.

JUDGE GARNETT

Hold it, hold it!

Andrew trains his attention on Joe.

BELINDA

Objection! Where has this come from?! Suddenly Counsel is attacking his own witness. Mr. Collins' sexual orientation has absolutely no relevance to this case.

JUDGE GARNETT

I said, HOLD IT!

(the courtroom QUIETS)

Mr. Miller. Could you kindly share with me exactly what's going on in your brain, because I don't have a clue at the moment.

Joe faces Andrew, also curious to know what Joe's up to.

JOE

Your Honor, everyone in this courtroom is thinking about sexual preference, sexual orientation, whatever you want to call it. They're looking at me, and wondering about it...

(looking at Andrew)

They're looking at Mr. Beckett, and wondering about it. They're looking at Mr. Wheeler and wondering about it. They might even be looking at you and wondering about it. So, let's get it out in the open. Let's talk about what this case is really about: the general public's hatred... our loathing, our fear of homosexuals.

DEAD SILENCE while the Judge thinks it over.

CLOSE ON ANDREW.

ANDREW
(to himself)
Very good.

CLOSE ON BELINDA CONINE.

CLOSE ON CHARLES WHEELER.

CLOSE ON MIGUEL.

CLOSE ON WALTER KENTON.

CLOSE ON BOB SEIDMAN.

CLOSE ON THE MARINE JUROR.

CLOSE ON JAMEY COLLINS, sweating bullets on the stand.

JUDGE GARNETT
In this courtroom, Mr. Miller,
justice is blind. To matters of
race, creed, color, religion.
And sexual orientation.

JOE
With all due respect, Your Honor...
We don't live in this courtroom,
do we?

JUDGE GARNETT
No. We don't... However, as
regards this witness, I'm going to
sustain the defense's objection.

CUT TO:

COURTHOUSE MEN'S ROOM, FIVE URINALS, THREE SINKS (INT./DAY).

The MARINE JUROR, the RETIRED POSTAL WORKER JUROR, and AN UPTIGHT BUSINESSMAN JUROR stand at the urinals, with an empty urinal between each of them. The MARINE JUROR whistles while he pees (a classic rock tune, like "Radar Love.") The BUSINESSMAN sighs, "Ahhhhhh."

The RETIRED POSTAL WORKER JUROR jingles change.

The ROCK MUSICIAN JUROR enters, stepping up to the urinal between the BUSINESSMAN and the MARINE. He unzips, and it seems to take him an incredibly long time to extricate his urinary

organ. This does not escape the MARINE'S notice.

ROCK MUSICIAN JUROR
(innocently, to Marine)
I have some gay friends. What's
the biggie?

The MARINE says nothing.

ROCK MUSICIAN JUROR (CONT.)
Everybody has a couple of gay
friends. Don't you?

MARINE
No, sir. I do not.

The MARINE moves closer to the urinal, so that no one can see
his private parts.

ROCK MUSICIAN JUROR
You might have them, and just
not know they're gay.

The MARINE shakes, zips, flushes, turns away. He pauses to look
directly at the ROCK MUSICIAN JUROR.

MARINE
I know.

CUT TO:

WALTER KENTON ON THE WITNESS STAND (INT./DAY) ...

JOE
And how many weeks at a time
would you be out to sea, without
stopping at port?

KENTON
Anywhere from two weeks, to
several months.

JOE
Any women on board?

Kenton glances at the MARINE JUROR.

KENTON
Not when I was in the Navy.

JOE

So during those long voyages,
months at a time, out to sea, no
women in sight, a hundred,
hardworking, robust, young men,
in the prime of their life, at
the peak of their natural
appetites, desires, their god-
given, hormonal instincts...
Anything going on?

KENTON

Going on... like...?

JOE

Like... two sailors playing hide
the salami.

Andrew covers his face with his hands.

BELINDA

Objection!

JUDGE GARNETT

Mr. Miller!

KENTON

(can't resist)

We had one guy like that.

BELINDA

You haven't ruled on my
objection, Your Honor.

Kenton seems eager to tell his story. Joe stands with
crossed arms, waiting.

JUDGE GARNETT

Let's continue.

JOE

(to Kenton)

You had one guy "like that?"

KENTON

Yeah. But we took care of him.

JOE

How did you do that?

KENTON

We stuck his head in the

latrine, after ten of us had used it.

LAUGHTER and SOME APPLAUSE from some SPECTATORS, and some JURORS. ACTIVISTS BOO and HISS.

The JUDGE POUNDS HIS GAVEL.

JOE

You taught him a lesson.

KENTON

Yes, we did.

JOE

Like firing Andrew Beckett taught him a lesson?

BELINDA

Objection!

JOE

I'll withdraw.

(moving on quickly)

You were aware, when you worked with Maria Torres, that she had AIDS, correct?

KENTON

She didn't try to conceal it.

JOE

So you are aware of the difference between a lesion and a bruise, is that correct?

KENTON

I know the difference. That doesn't mean I'm always able to recognize the difference.

JOE

But didn't you avoid contact with Ms. Torres, after you found out she had AIDS? She says you acted repulsed by her and you avoided her, is that correct?

KENTON

I felt, and still feel, nothing but the deepest sympathy and

compassion for people like
Maria, who have contracted this
terrible disease through no
fault of their own.

CUT TO LOUD CLASSICAL MUSIC:

IN THE KITCHEN OF THEIR APARTMENT, MIGUEL POURS MEDICINE
into an IV drip unit (INT./NIGHT) ...

LOUD CLASSICAL MUSIC IN THE BACKGROUND.

Miguel glances at a chart on the wall, in which a day is
broken into hours, with medical instructions for each hour

MIGUEL

(shouting over MUSIC)

Drew! Are you ready? If we
start at eight, we'll be done by
twelve.

Miguel taps the IV bag, getting the drip started.

A cat jumps onto the counter. Miguel holds it.

CUT TO:

ANDREW SITS AT THE DININGROOM TABLE, MAKING NOTES ON A LEGAL
pad, holding out his left arm (INT./NIGHT). A catheter is
imbedded into Andrew's arm, and Miguel is trying to get the
IV drip started through the catheter. The MUSIC is lower...

MIGUEL

It's not going through.

ANDREW

(focused on his work)

We'll have to flush it again.

Andrew reaches for a law book.

MIGUEL

Hold still. Shit.

(trying again)

The goddamn vein's clotted. We
have to go the goddamn hospital,
so they can change the goddamn
catheter.

ANDREW

I have too much work to do.

Skip the treatment.

MIGUEL

We're not skipping this treatment.

ANDREW

I said, skip it, Michael. It's my treatment.

MIGUEL

Fuck you.

ANDREW

Fuck you. This shit's probably not doing me any good anyway.

MIGUEL

That shit's saving your life, you asshole!

Miguel shoves away from the table.

ANDREW

What's wrong with you?

MIGUEL

Close the law book.

ANDREW

I'm not going to close the--

MIGUEL

CLOSE THE FUCKING LAW BOOK!

Andrew slams it SHUT.

ANDREW

ALLRIGHT IT'S CLOSED!

(beat)

Jesus!

MIGUEL

The least you can do is look at me, while I'm sticking this shit into your arm. Forget the fucking case, one hour a day, and give me a little of your time.

ANDREW

(very quiet)
You don't think there's much
time left, do you?

MIGUEL
That's not what I said.

ANDREW
You're scared. You think we're
near the end.

MIGUEL
No.

ANDREW
Maybe I should start making plans, is
that what you think? Start
planning my memorial service?
"Begin to prepare for the
inevitable."

MIGUEL
(low)
Maybe you should think about it.

ANDREW
What's that mean?!

MIGUEL
(very difficult)
Maybe you should think about it.

A MOMENT.

ANDREW
I'm not going to die.

MIGUEL
That's right. We're on the
Positive Plan. You
don't have a Fatal Disease, you
have Manageable Illness.

ANDREW
You want me to give up? Let this
thing turn us into victims?

MIGUEL
Then, what are we, Drew?! The
winners? "Ladies and gentlemen,
the first prize of AIDS goes to

Andrew Beckett and his lover Miguel..." Excuse me, I'm not your lover. I'm your Care Partner. FUCK!

ANDREW

I'm not ready to die.

MIGUEL

Do you think I'm ready for it?! I hate this shit. I'm not a fucking martyr! I hate every goddamn part of it!

Miguel slides down the wall, sitting in a heap.

Andrew goes to him. They hug. Miguel holds him tight.

MIGUEL (CONT.)

Please don't leave me. I love you so much. Don't die, don't leave me, please...

Miguel rocks in Andrew's arms. Andrew kisses the top of his head, holding tight.

ANDREW

I am so scared. I am so fucking, incredibly, fucking scared...

A MOMENT. Andrew stroking Miguel's hair, as he calms down.

ANDREW (CONT.)

You know, there's only one thing to do.

(beat)

We have to have a party.

CUT TO:

JOE AND LISA STAND OUTSIDE ANDREW'S APARTMENT -- IN COSTUME. DANCE MUSIC is playing inside (INT./NIGHT) ...

Lisa is dressed as a giant sandwich. Joe's costume looks quickly thrown together: he's wearing a suit, but has pages from a legal document stapled all over the suit.

JOE

Did I ever tell you, I hate costume parties?

LISA

My lettuce is wilting.

The DOOR IS OPENED -- by the LEAD SINGER OF WHITE SNAKE: big hair, leather, guitar.

ANDREW (AS ROCKER)

PARRTYYY!

JOE

We're friends of Beckett's.

ANDREW

It's me, you dork.

LISA

I'm Lisa Miller.

ANDREW

Glad to finally meet you. Come on in.

CONTINUOUS CUT TO:

JOE AND LISA FOLLOW ANDREW INTO THE APARTMENT (HE LIMPS, relying on his cane, but he's got A LOT OF ENERGY). The room is filled with two Madonnas, an M.C. Hammer, three nuns, a can of soup (INT./NIGHT) ...

ANDREW

(to Lisa)

I have to introduce you to the can of soup. You can enter the costume contest together as a lunch special.

Miguel approaches, dressed as a MEMBER OF MEGA-DEATH or ANTHRAX. He strikes a pose, contorts his face and hits an air guitar riff. Andrew crosses guitars with Miguel. Then:

ANDREW

This is Lisa Miller. Miguel Alvarez.

Miguel's sister MARIA is passing by with a GROUP OF FRIENDS. Everyone ad libs greetings.

MIGUEL

My sister, Maria.

(to Lisa)

Pastrami on rye?

LISA

Corned beef.

MIGUEL

Want to dance?

LISA

Sure!

Miguel leads Lisa away. Joe is reluctant to give her up.

JOE

Beckett. You seem... better.
Energized, more alive...

ANDREW

I had a blood transfusion today.
I feel great.

Andrew studies Joe, trying to figure out the costume.

JOE

I'm a law suit.

ANDREW

Not bad.

JOE

Get it?

ANDREW

Let's find you a drink.

Andrew leads Joe through the crowd, greeting Rachel, skin painted blue (SMURFETTE) her daughter AMY (BART SIMPSON), Anthea, TYRONE from Dr. Gillman's office (A COWBOY), and TYRONE'S LOVER (A HORSE) ... Some of Dr. Gillman's PATIENTS are here too, including the YOUNG ASIAN MAN who is now in a wheelchair. And, one or two of ANDREW'S SIBLINGS may be present as well. And Alan, Bruno and Chandra, and some arty friends and neighbors.

ANDREW (CONT.)

What do you want?

JOE

Beer.

(patting his briefcase)

We need to go over your Q and A.

ANDREW

Excuse me, I'm having a goddamn

party, is that alright with you?

JOE

Sure. It's fine.

ANDREW

No, we have to do it. But
later, alright?

JOE

Thank you.

A MAN dressed as LA TOYA JACKSON (with fake snake) squeezes past Joe, reaching for a beer.

LA TOYA

'Scuse me, darling.

Andrew is SMILING at Joe.

JOE

You think I'm uncomfortable...

ANDREW

Correct.

JOE

You're right.

Joe spills beer down his shirt.

ANDREW

Thank you.

CUT TO A SERIES OF PARTY MOMENTS OVER LOUD MUSIC:

--Andrew and Miguel ROCKING to HEAVY METAL MUSIC, playing a battle of the guitars. At one point, Andrew has to sit down, but he doesn't stop "playing," while Miguel jumps all around him.

--Joe talking to a MAN DRESSED AS MARIE ANTOINETTE:

MARIE ANTOINETTE

I'm an accountant. What do you do?

JOE

I'm a lawyer.
(points to Lisa)
That's my wife!

--Andrew's mother Sarah, as Marge Simpson, delivers a tray of hors d'oeuvres to Joe (standing next to a POLICEMAN):

SARAH

Have a cocktail wienie.

JOE

Thanks, Sarah.

(to the POLICEMAN)

Nice costume.

POLICEMAN

It's not a costume, I just got off work. You're cute.

JOE

(pointing to Lisa)

That's my wife. Want to see a picture of my baby?

POLICEMAN

(reaching for his wallet)

Absolutely. Want to see a picture of my baby?

--Everyone SLOW DANCES to the Talking Heads tune "Heaven" (Simply Red cover version): Joe and Lisa, Andrew and Miguel, Rachel with a sleepy Amy in her arms, the POLICEMAN and TYRONE, Sarah Beckett and MARIE ANTOINETTE, LA TOYA and her snake.

"HEAVEN" CONTINUES OVER:

A CAB IDLING IN THE STREET, LISA KISSING JOE (NIGHT).

JOE

I'll see you in an hour, max.

LISA

Night, honey.

Lisa climbs into the cab which she is sharing with the NUN and MARIE ANTOINETTE and LA TOYA.

NUN/MARIE ANTOINETTE/LA TOYA

Night, Joe!

"HEAVEN" CONTINUES OVER:

QUIET IN ANDREW'S CONDO, THE PARTY LONG OVER (INT/NIGHT).

Joe opens his briefcase, removing a legal pad with notes.

ANDREW

Congratulations, Miller.

Andrew clears away party debris from the table, making space for his legal work. He is attached to an IV line, which is connected to a drip bag on a rolling stand, that can move with him. He is no longer in costume.

ANDREW (CONT.)

You survived your first gay party intact.

JOE

Let me tell you something, okay? When you're brought up, like the rest of us, in a place like where I was brought up, there's not a whole lot of discussion about... homosexuals.

As a kid, you're taught right away that queers are weird, queers are funny, they're a danger to kids, they're afraid to fight, and they all want to cop your joint. And that pretty much sums up the general thinking out there, if you want to know the truth.

ANDREW

Thank you for sharing that with me, Joe.

JOE

Let's review these notes for your testimony. We have a big day on Monday.

Joe begins ticking off a list of courtroom reminders:

JOE (CONT.)

When you refer to Wheeler, call him Charles, to show how you'd been admitted to the inner circle, you were considered one of them.

ANDREW

(distracted)

Uh huh...

JOE (CONT.)

Beckett?

ANDREW

Charles. Okay. Miller?

JOE

What?

ANDREW

Do you... pray?

Joe hesitates. They're having a personal conversation?

JOE

Yeah. Sure.

Joe goes back to the notes:

JOE (CONT.)

Then we establish how Wheeler's boys recruited you after law school...

ANDREW

What have you prayed for?

JOE

For a healthy baby. For Lisa to make it through the delivery. For the Phillies to get into the playoffs.

ANDREW

(no self-pity)

There's a possibility I won't be around for the end of this trial.

JOE

I've considered that.

ANDREW

What happens?

JOE

We proceed, representing your estate.

ANDREW

I've made provisions in my will

for some charities. Miguel will need a lawyer. I know it's not your area...

JOE

I know a good probate lawyer.

ANDREW

Thanks.

(a beat)

Do you like opera?

Andrew moves to the stereo, pulling the IV line with him.

JOE

Opera?

ANDREW

Want to hear my favorite aria?

JOE

Opera?

SUDDENLY, AN ARIA BY MARIA CALLAS FILLS THE ROOM -- startling Joe with its VOLUME.

ANDREW

(over the MUSIC)

Andrea Chenier, by Giordano.
This is Madeleine. She's
telling how, during the French
revolution, a mob set
fire to her house. Her mother
died, saving her.

"I look...

The place that cradled me was
burning!"

Do you hear the heartache in her
voice? Then, here come the
strings. Everything changes.
The music fills with hope.
Madeleine says...

Andrew sways through the room to the music, pulling the IV at his side. He seems truly free and relaxed.

ANDREW (CONT.)

"It was during that sorrow that
love came to me!

A voice filled with harmony
That said...
Live still, I am Life!"

"I am the god that descends
From the heavens to the earth
To make of the earth
A heaven!"

ANGLE ON JOE: Shifting, uncomfortable.

ANDREW (CONT.)

"I am Oblivion!
I am Glory!
I am Love, Love, Love!"

The MUSIC ENDS.

Joe sits there, fidgeting. He reaches for his briefcase organizing his notes.

JOE

I think I'll... I told Lisa.

Andrew collects himself, as Joe rises from his chair.

ANDREW

Right.

Andrew follows Joe to the door.

ANDREW (CONT.)

(businesslike)
I'll look over the Q and A.

JOE

You're ready, don't worry.

An awkward moment, both men standing with their hands at their sides -- will one of them initiate a handshake?

Joe gives a little "salute," then leaves.

CONTINUOUS CUT TO:

JOE COMES DOWN THE HALLWAY OF THE MODERN CONDO BUILDING
(INT./NIGHT) ...

JOE

Jesus.

Suddenly, Joe HEARS: OPERA MUSIC PLAYING AGAIN.

He pauses, listening.

INTERCUT WITH:

ANDREW MOVES THROUGH THE ROOM, DRINKING IN THE BEAUTIFUL,
passionate MUSIC (INT./NIGHT) ...

The IV stand catches against the sofa, tugging the line.

Andrew pulls the line out of his arm. He moves, freer now.

INTERCUT WITH:

JOE STANDS OUTSIDE ANDREW'S DOOR, OPERA MUSIC PLAYING
(INT./NIGHT) ...

Joe lifts his hand to KNOCK.

He changes his mind.

JOE
Fucking guy...

Joe moves down the corridor, rings for the elevator.

INTERCUT WITH:

ANDREW MOVING THROUGH SHADOWS, IN THE APARTMENT, LETTING THE
MUSIC pull him along (INT./NIGHT) ...

INTERCUT WITH:

JOE STEPPING INTO THE ELEVATOR (INT./NIGHT).

The doors closing.

INTERCUT WITH:

ANDREW AND THE MUSIC (INT./NIGHT).

MUSIC FADING, CROSSES THE CUT TO:

EXTERIOR: JOE'S SUBURBAN HOUSE LATE AT NIGHT...

Joe crosses the yard to his dark house.

MUSIC DISTANT, CROSSES THE CUT TO:

JOE'S BABY LIES SLEEPING IN HER CRIB (INT./NIGHT).

Joe looks down on the baby, adjusting the blanket.

CONTINUOUS CUT TO:

LISA FACES CAMERA, ASLEEP IN THE DARK BEDROOM (INT./NIGHT).

Joe doffs his jacket, sinking quietly onto the edge of the bed, careful not to disturb Lisa.

With his BACK TO CAMERA, Joe puts his head into his hands...

And begins to weep.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN: PANORAMIC SHOT OF PHILADELPHIA EXTERIORS...

CUT TO:

HIGH, WIDE ANGLE ON THE COURTROOM, IN SILENCE (INT./DAY) ...

Andrew moves very slowly with his cane across the courtroom, toward the witness stand.

--JUDGE GARNETT crosses his arms, waiting.

--JOE glances at some notes.

--MIGUEL and SARAH BECKETT look on anxiously.

--WHEELER and the others observe in silence.

CAMERA HOLDS ON BIBLE BEING CARRIED IN GLOVED HANDS, ACROSS THE COURTROOM. OVER THIS SHOT IS A...

TITLE: "Plaintiff's case. day fourteen."

The BAILIFF places the Bible in front of Andrew (a purple blotch is showing in front of Andrew's ear.)

BAILIFF

Place your left hand on the
Bible and raise your right hand.

Andrew places his hand on the Bible.

BAILIFF

"Do you swear to tell the truth...

DIALOGUE OVERLAP AND DISSOLVE TO:

ANDREW ANSWERING A QUESTION AN HOUR OR SO LATER (INT./DAY).

ANDREW

Wyant Wheeler had aggressively recruited me. They were the most prestigious firm in Philadelphia, full of opportunity. And I was impressed by the partners.

JOE

Including Charles Wheeler?

(Andrew frequently wipes sweat from his forehead with a handkerchief. His voice is hoarse, raspy.)

ANDREW

Particularly, Charles.

ANGLE ON WHEELER.

JOE

What impressed you about him?

ANDREW

He was... the kind of person I thought I wanted to be.

JOE

What kind of person is that?

ANDREW

Possessed of an encyclopedic knowledge of the law. A razor sharp litigator, a genuine leader, gifted at bringing out the very best in others. An awesome ability to illuminate the most complex of legal concepts to colleagues, courtrooms, the person on the street.

(a smile)

The kind of person who plays three sets of tennis but doesn't sweat. But underneath the elegant surface, was an adventurous spirit.

Belinda Conine MAKES A NOTE ABOUT THAT.

JOE

Obviously, at this time, you weren't sick.

ANDREW

It's possible I was infected with the HIV virus at that time, but I wasn't diagnosed until several years later.

JOE

You didn't look then, the way you look now?

REVERSE -- ON ANDREW IN THE WITNESS STAND, BUT NOW HE LOOKS COMPLETELY DIFFERENT (The healthy. pre-AIDS Andrew.)

ANDREW

No. I was thirty pounds heavier. I was athletic.

JOE

A regular all-American guy?

ANDREW

I suppose you could say that.

JOE

Except... you were gay?

ANDREW

I still am.

SPECTATORS CHUCKLE.

JOE

In the years you worked at Wyant Wheeler, did you ever tell Charles Wheeler you were gay?

ANDREW

No. I didn't.

JOE

Can you explain why you didn't?

ANDREW

You don't bring your personal

life into a law firm. You're not supposed to have a personal life, really. Anyway, I did plan to tell Charles, eventually. But then, this thing happened at the tennis club...

IMAGE: WHEELER. ANDREW. SEIDMAN. OTHERS IN A LOCKER ROOM OF A TENNIS CLUB, WEARING TOWELS, ENTERING A SAUNA (INT./DAY).

WHEELER

Longstreet's interested in the Harrisburg deal.

ANDREW

I'm seeing him this afternoon.

INSIDE THE SAUNA: CAMERA PANS SEVERAL MEN.

ANDREW (VOICE OVER)

"Somebody started telling jokes."

FIRST MAN

What do you call a woman who has PMS and ESP at the same time?.

SECOND MAN

What?

FIRST MAN

A bitch who knows everything.

LAUGHTER. Andrew keeps his eyes closed, leaning against the wall of the sauna, next to Wheeler, relaxing.

CHARLES WHEELER

How does a faggot fake an orgasm?

Andrew opens one eye.

CHARLES WHEELER (CONT.)

He spits on your back.

SEIDMAN

Charles, that's revolting!

All the men LAUGH, and Wheeler LAUGHS THE HARDEST.

JOE (VOICE OVER)

How did that make you feel?

IMAGE: BACK TO THE COURTROOM. ANDREW IN THE WITNESS STAND (And it's the sick, thin Andrew with AIDS).

ANDREW

Relieved. That I'd never told him I was gay. Very relieved.

ANGLE ON CHARLES WHEELER: shakes his head, a denial.

JOE

Are you a good lawyer?

ANDREW

I'm an excellent lawyer.

JOE

What makes you an excellent lawyer?

ANDREW

I love the law. I know the law. I excel at practicing it. It's the only thing I've ever wanted to do.

JOE

What do you love about it?

ANDREW

Well... many things. But I think the thing I love the most, is that every once in a while, not that often, but occasionally... you get to be part of justice being done. It's really quite a thrill when that happens.

CUT TO:

BELINDA CONINE STANDS BEFORE ANDREW (INT./DAY).

BELINDA

You said earlier you aspired to be the kind of person who had "an adventurous spirit." Is that correct?

ANDREW

Something like that.

BELINDA
Do you take risks?

ANDREW
In my work? Yes. Calculated
risks. You have to.

BELINDA
In general. Do you take risks
in other areas of your life?

ANDREW
Not unnecessary ones.

BELINDA
Have you ever been to the Apollo
Cinema on Sansom Street?

Joe cringes a little with discomfort.

ANDREW
(looking Belinda right
in the eye)
A few times.

IMAGE: FLASHING LIGHTS AT THE "APOLLO" THEATER ENTRANCE
(EXT./NIGHT).

BELINDA (OS)
What kind of movies do they show
there?

ANDREW (OS)
Gay movies.

BACK IN COURT (INT./DAY):

BELINDA
Gay pornographic movies?

ANDREW
Yes.

BELINDA
Do men have sex with each other
in that theater?

ANDREW
Yes.

IMAGE: MOVING POV SHOT PAST ROWS OF GAY PORN MAGAZINES

(INT./NIGHT).

BELINDA (OS)
How about you, Mr. Beckett?

IMAGE: MOVING POV SHOT PAST FACES OF THE JURORS (INT./DAY)

BELINDA (OS) (CONT.)
... Have you ever had sex with
someone in that theater?

IMAGE: MOVING POV SHOT PAST A GLASS COUNTER HOLDING SEXUAL
DEVICES, LUBRICANTS, CONDOMS (INT./NIGHT).

ANDREW (OS)
Yes.

BACK IN COURT, ON ANDREW:

ANDREW (CONT.)
Once.

IMAGE: MEN LURKING OUTSIDE PRIVATE SCREENING BOOTHS (THEY
VARY IN AGE. TYPE. ETC. -- MOST LOOK PRETTY DAMN NORMAL)
(INT./NIGHT).

IMAGE: ANDREW (PRE-AIDS) SMILES AT A FRIENDLY YUPPIE, STANDING
INSIDE A PRIVATE BOOTH (INT./NIGHT).

YUPPIE
I'm Robert.

ANDREW
Andrew.

Andrew steps into the booth.

ANDREW (CONT.)
Now what do we do?

Robert laughs, closing the door of the booth.

ROBERT
I think we'll figure it out.

BACK TO THE COURTROOM (INT./DAY):

Joe sits with a stone-sober expression: this isn't easy.

BELINDA
When? Approximately what year did

this event take place?

ANDREW

I guess it was 1984, 85.

BELINDA

Were you aware in 1984 or 1985 that there was a fatal disease out there, called AIDS, and that you could contract it through sexual activity?

ANDREW

It's impossible to know exactly when or how I was infected with HIV.

BELINDA

But you were having anonymous sex in porno theaters in 1984 and 1985?

ANDREW

That happened once. People weren't talking about AIDS then, the way we are now. Or safe sex.

BELINDA

You'd heard of AIDS in 1984, 85?

ANDREW

I'd heard of something. The gay plague, gay cancer, but... we didn't know how you could get it, or that it could kill you.

CLOSE SHOT ON ANDREW -- losing strength.

BELINDA (OS)

(sounds far away)

Do you need a break?

ANDREW

No.

BELINDA

While you were employed at Wyant Wheeler, you did everything you could to make sure no one knew you were an active homosexual, correct?

ANDREW

That is not correct. I never lied about it.

BELINDA

Did you keep a picture of your lover on your desk?

ANDREW

No.

BELINDA

Do other lawyers at the firm keep pictures of their spouses or fiances on their desks?

IMAGE: ANDREW IN BOB SEIDMAN'S OFFICE, WORKING, SPOTTING A PHOTO ON THE WALL OF BOB'S WIFE AND CHILDREN (INT./DAY).

ANDREW

Some do. I didn't.

BELINDA

As a homosexual, one is often forced to conceal one's sexuality, is that right?

ANDREW

In some situations.

BELINDA

Isn't it true you have spent your life pretending to be something you're not, so much so that the art of concealment and dishonesty has become second nature to you?!

JOE

Objection!

BELINDA

I'll withdraw it. Mr. Beckett? Were you living with Miguel Alvarez in 1984 or 1985 when you had your anonymous sexual encounter in the porn theater?

ANGLE ON MIGUEL, sitting next to Sarah.

ANDREW

Yes.

BELINDA

You could have infected him, isn't that right?

ANDREW

Miguel has not been infected. As I said, we weren't aware of AIDS, then, or how it is spread.

BELINDA

Really?

ANDREW

Yes.

Andrew wipes sweat from his forehead.

BELINDA

You've testified the lesions on your face were visible to the people you worked with, correct?

ANDREW

That's right.

BELINDA

And it's your contention, that when the partners were made aware of the lesions, they jumped to the conclusion you had AIDS and fired you.

ANDREW

Absolutely.

BELINDA

Do you have any lesions on your face at this time?

ANDREW

One. Here, in front of my ear.

An ASSISTANT hands Conine a shaving mirror. She holds it before Andrew.

BELINDA

Remembering you are under oath, answering truthfully, can you see the lesion on your face, in

this mirror, three feet away?
Answering truthfully.

Andrew looks in the mirror: the lesion is NOT very visible.

ANDREW

By the time I was fired, there
were four lesions on my face,
much bigger...

BELINDA

Answer the question, please.

ANDREW

No. I can't really see it.

BELINDA

Thank you.

Andrew rubs his eyes.

JUDGE GARNETT (OS)

(far away)

This would be a good time to
break for the day...

JOE (OS)

(far away)

Your Honor? May I have ten
minutes in re-direct?

JUDGE GARNETT (OS)

(far away)

Beckett?

Andrew finds the Judge looking at him.

JUDGE GARNETT (CONT.)

Can you go on for ten minutes?

ANDREW

Yes sir.

Joe JUMPS UP from the plaintiff's table.

JOE

I only need five!
(to Belinda, reaching
for the mirror)
May I?

Joe approaches Andrew, with the mirror.

JOE (CONT.)

Do you have any lesions on any part of your body, at this time, that resemble the lesions that were on your face at the time you were fired?

ANDREW

Yes. On my torso.

JOE

If it please the court, I'd like to ask Mr. Beckett to remove his shirt, so that the jury can have an accurate idea of what we're talking about.

BELINDA

We object, Your Honor. It would unfairly influence the jury.

JOE

Your Honor, if Mr. Beckett was forced by his illness to use a wheelchair, would the defense ask him to park it outside? We're talking about AIDS, we're talking about lesions. Let's see what we're talking about.

ANGLE ON MEMBERS OF THE JURY -- LOOKING APPREHENSIVE.

JUDGE GARNETT

(a moment, then)

I'll allow it. Would you mind removing your shirt, Mr. Beckett?

ANGLE ON MIGUEL -- TENSE.

ANDREW

Allright.

The COURTROOM TURNS SILENT.

Andrew removes his suit jacket. He's weak, so the smallest gesture requires effort.

ANGLE ON BOB SEIDMAN -- WATCHING.

Andrew undoes his tie.

ANGLE ON THE MARINE JUROR -- WATCHING.

Andrew unbuttons his collar buttons, working his way down.

ANGLE ON SARAH BECKETT -- WATCHING.

Andrew stands, pulling his shirrtails out of his trousers.

ANGLE ON CHARLES WHEELER -- WATCHING.

Andrew removes his shirt -- THERE ARE PURPLE BLOTCHES
SPLAYED ACROSS HIS CHEST AND ABDOMEN AND ARMS.

The SCHOOLTEACHER JUROR GASPS.

Sarah Beckett is silently crying.

The LESBIAN JUROR closes her eyes.

JOE

Can you see the lesions on your
chest in this mirror?

ANDREW

Yes.

JOE

Thank you.

CAMERA MOVES IN ON CHARLES WHEELER...

CUT TO:

COURTHOUSE CORRIDOR, ACTIVITY (INT./DAY) ...

Charles Wheeler strides down the corridor, flanked by
Kenton, Killcoyne and Belinda, discussing strategy.

Bob Seidman steps to Wheeler's side, keeping pace.

SEIDMAN

I've discovered something
interesting, Charles.

WHEELER

(to Belinda)
... keep them from that area,
on grounds of relevancy.
(to Seidman)

What, Bob?

SEIDMAN

No matter how hard I try, I
can't lose a file in my
computer.

NOW he's got EVERYONE'S attention.

SEIDMAN (CONT.)

The system automatically makes a
backup.

Belinda holds up both hands, interrupting with:

BELINDA

I don't think I should hear this.

She walks away, giving a glance over her shoulder as:

SEIDMAN

You can erase the backup...
(a challenge to Wheeler)
But why would you?

KENTON

(venomous)
What's the point, Bob?

WHEELER

(calm)
Very interesting, Bob. Let's make a
note of that. Andy didn't lose the
complaint in his computer. He
never put it in. He lied about
that, too.

SEIDMAN

(weary)
Charles...

WHEELER

If you feel differently, Bob, you
should say so, when you're called
to the stand. After all, this
isn't a conspiracy.

Wheeler and the gang moves on, leaving Seidman alone in the
high-ceilinged corridor.

Belinda hesitates, before re-grouping with Wheeler and the

rest, casting a curious glance toward Bob Seidman.

CUT TO:

CAMERA PULLS BACK FROM CHARLES WHEELER -- ON THE STAND...

BELINDA

Why did you recruit Andrew Beckett
to your firm?

Andrew uses all his strength to concentrate.

Charles Wheeler speaks with great sincerity.

WHEELER

If you're the owner of a major
league ball club, you recruit the
hot rookie. And Andy was tremendously
promising as a young attorney.
That's why we went after him,
that's why we hired him, and
that's why we stuck with him,
year after year... waiting for
the promise to be fulfilled. But
it never was.

BELINDA

You kept giving him another chance?

WHEELER

Of course we did. When you've
groomed someone they way we groomed
Andy, nurturing him, lavishing all
kinds of special treatment on him...
you've made quite an investment.
We were waiting for his promise to
kick in, and deliver. But,
ultimately, we could no longer
ignore the gap between the promise
and the reality... This is one of
the saddest times in my life. To
sit in this court, testifying to
Andy's ultimate failure to make
the grade. To discover that he is
one of those people who wants to
benefit by the system, but doesn't
want to play by the system's
rules. To think you know someone,
only to find out... you don't know
them at all. It's heartbreaking.

BELINDA

Thank you. That's all for now,
Your Honor.

JUDGE GARNETT

Mr. Miller?

Joe rises. Adjusts his jacket. Wheeler waits.

JOE

(very gentle)

Explain to me, if you can, Mr. Wheeler, explain this to me like I'm a ten year-old. This trial is not about a disease, is that what you're saying? Not about your understandable, if unfounded, fear of catching AIDS through casual contact with someone who has it? You're saying, this trial is about Andrew Beckett's character. Am I getting this right?

WHEELER

Yes, character. To the extent that it affects a person's ability to do a great job.

Andrew looks away -- face shiny with sweat, breathing difficult. He takes in the rest of the court, while Wheeler's words THROB THROUGH THE AIR...

WHEELER (CONT.)

Andy worked when he wanted to work, telling us what he thought we needed to know about his lifestyle...

ANDREW'S POV -- ON RACHEL, sitting among the spectators. Rachel begins speaking, her WORDS OVERLAPPING Wheeler's (we should get the feeling she's giving her testimony).

RACHEL

I didn't mind covering for Andy, but I did wonder... when was he planning to deal with his problem?

Andrew blinks... what's going on?

Looking back to the court: Joe presses in on Wheeler.

Everything seems normal.

WHEELER

Sometimes it seems like society
is run by these kinds of people.

JOE

What kind of people?

WHEELER

People who want to bend the rules...

ANDREW'S POV -- KENNETH KILLCOYNE at the defense table:

KILLCOYNE

If you want to be a leader in this
society, you have to make
certain sacrifices.

Wheeler keeps speaking:

WHEELER

... to suit their personal desires,
and the rest of us have to live
with it.

ANDREW'S POV -- WALTER KENTON:

KENTON

You have to make a decision: is
this guy partner material?

JOE

Who makes the rules, Mr. Wheeler?
You?

ANDREW'S POV -- BOB SEIDMAN:

SEIDMAN

Yes, I did see the lesions. I
suspected he was sick...

CLOSE ON ANDREW: closing his eyes.

THE VOICES GET LOUDER, FIGHTING WITH EACH OTHER:

WHEELER

The everyday, common person with
decent values...

RACHEL

It seems like he wasn't willing to face the reality of his situation...

Andrew slowly rises, the VOICES GETTING LOUDER:

SEIDMAN

I didn't tell the others, I was afraid to...

WHEELER

... But now, we're standing up for ourselves...

SEIDMAN

... But we shouldn't have fired him...

WHEELER

... It's time to get this society back on track!

Andrew OPENS HIS EYES... WE SWITCH TO HIS POV:

The Judge, the Jury -- everyone silent, looking concerned.

ANDREW'S POV of the courtroom floor.

Andrew falls into his own POV SHOT. In slow motion.

He lies on the floor, looking up.

ANDREW'S POV -- Joe steps over him.

ANDREW

Could you call an ambulance, please?

CUT TO:

A CRISIS IN A HOSPITAL ROOM (INT./DAY) ... MEDICAL STAFF working frenetically, trying to intubate Andrew, who IS HAVING SERIOUS TROUBLE BREATHING, his body HEAVING. The tube they're trying to put in place seems to be making matters worse.

Miguel stands to the side, furious:

MIGUEL

It's making it worse. Take it out. Take it out!

Dr. Gillman RUSHES into the room, in street clothes, obviously having answered an emergency call. She tries assessing the situation, just as the tube is removed and Andrew GASPS for breath. A NURSE places an oxygen mask over Andrew's face and he drinks in the air. His eyes are wide open with fear, sweat covering his face.

CUT TO:

PHILADELPHIA CITY HALL, A BUSINESS DAY (EXT./DAY).

TITLE: "Two weeks later."

LESBIAN JUROR (VO)

If he was "mediocre," why did they gave him this major assignment three weeks before they fired him?

POSTAL WORKER JUROR (VO)

They were testing him.

CUT TO:

JURORS SITTING AROUND A LONG TABLE IN A ROOM WITH TALL, grimy windows (INT./DAY) ...

TITLE: "Jury deliberations."

WAITRESS JUROR

They wanted to see if he'd rise to the challenge.

An American flag hangs on the wall.

SCHOOLTEACHER JUROR

They wanted to give him a final chance.

POSTAL WORKER JUROR

Makes sense.

BUSINESSMAN JUROR

I'd still love to know what happened to that missing file.

HOMEMAKER JUROR

Wouldn't we all?

POSTAL WORKER JUROR

Ask the computer.

COLLEGE STUDENT JUROR

They say he wasn't competent. But,
you heard him on the stand.

ROCK MUSICIAN JUROR

He sounded pretty smart to me.

BUSINESSMAN JUROR

Why would they fire him? Why
not a medical leave, or...

COLLEGE STUDENT JUROR

They freaked out over the AIDS.

SCHOOLTEACHER JUROR

They hate homosexuals.

BUSINESSMAN JUROR

It's not against the law to
disapprove of homosexuals.

LESBIAN JUROR

It is against the law to fire someone
for having AIDS. That's why we're
here.

BUSINESSMAN JUROR

You're the foreman. You haven't said
anything. What do you think?

ANGLE ON -- THE MARINE, sitting at the head of the table.

CAMERA MOVES IN SLOWLY ON HIM:

MARINE JUROR

They're saying he wasn't a good
lawyer. He was mediocre. And the
fact that they gave him the most
important lawsuit they'd ever had,
for one of their most important
clients... they say that doesn't
prove anything, because that was
just a test. What did they call
it? A carrot. To see if he'd rise
to the occasion... Okay... Say
I've got to send a pilot into
enemy territory, and he's gonna
be flying a plane that cost 350
million dollars...
Who am I going to put into that

plane? A rookie who can't cut the grade, because I want to see if he'll rise to the challenge? Or am I going to give that assignment to my best pilot, my most experienced, my sharpest, my top gun... The very best I've got?

CLOSE ON THE MARINE:

MARINE JUROR (CONT.)

Could somebody please explain that to me... like I'm a six year old?

HOLD ON THE MARINE, AS THE JUDGE'S VOICE FADES IN:

JUDGE GARNETT (VO)

Members of the jury, have you reached a verdict?

AND CUT TO:

THE COURTROOM -- NO ONE STIRRING (INT./DAY).

Joe is utterly cool. Sitting beside Andrew's empty chair.

Among the spectators, Andrew's siblings, Jill, Matt, Randy, and his parents, Bud and Sarah... Rachel, Anthea and Miguel's sister Maria.

The Marine rises to his feet.

MARINE

We have, Your Honor...

Charles Wheeler looks the Marine in the eye.

MARINE (CONT.)

We find for the plaintiff,
Andrew Beckett.

Joe smiles, just barely, remaining calm.

Charles Wheeler whispers to Belinda Conine.

JUDGE GARNETT

Have you awarded any damages?

MARINE

Yes, we have, Your Honor.
(referring to a list)

For back pay and loss of benefits
... one hundred fortythree
thousand dollars.

Joe shakes his head, disappointed, writing down the amount.

Wheeler and his crew SMILE -- THIS IS THEIR VICTORY.

MARINE JUROR (CONT.)

For damages related to mental
anguish and humiliation... we give
no award.

Joe is extremely disappointed.

MARINE JUROR (CONT.)

And punitive damages we award...
Four million, eight hundred and
eighty two thousand dollars.

Joe throws his pen over his shoulder.

COURTROOM BURSTS INTO AN UPROAR.

Andrew's supporters, Joe's colleagues from his office rush
forward, pounding him on the back. Andrew's family members
hug each other...

CAMERA CRANES AWAY FROM THIS GROUP, RISING TOWARD THE
CEILING AS THE SOUNDS OF THE CROWD FADE...

OPERA MUSIC FADES IN, TAKING US TO...

ELEVATOR DOORS OPENING... JOE STEPPING INTO THE CORRIDOR OF
a hospital (INT./NIGHT), carrying two shopping bags from the
Famous 4th Street deli...

Joe moves down the corridor, looking for a particular room.

Dr. Gillman stands outside a hospital room, talking in a low
voice to Bud and Sarah Beckett. As Joe passes them,
entering Andrew's room, he hears:

DR. GILLMAN

... if he comes out of the
hospital this time, you mustn't
expect him to be like he was
before...

Joe steps into...

ANDREW'S HOSPITAL ROOM (INT./NIGHT) ...

A hand-painted banner is strung over Andrew's bed:
"Victory."

OPERA MUSIC plays on a portable CD player. ANDREW lies in a hospital bed, with a pressurized oxygen mask on his face.

JILL sits on the edge of Andrew's bed, holding his hand, smiling, speaking to Andrew in low tones. With his free hand, Andrew gently strokes Jill's forearm. (Andrew has an amazing assortment of tubes and IVs running into various parts of his body.)

Andrew's brothers MATT and RANDY are sipping beers with REV. JIM, MIGUEL, Miguel's sister MARIA, Bruno and Chandra, while Matt does a dramatic re-creation of the Marine Juror rendering the judgment. Matt's audience is loving it.

As Joe comes into the room, Jill rises to take the shopping bags from him. Joe exchanges nods and greetings with the others.

People KEEP THEIR VOICES LOW, but there's a certain energy, and happiness evident in the room.

ON ANDREW: Watching his friends and relatives with sparkling eyes and a weak, but grateful and peaceful smile.

ON JOE: Glancing across the room, catching Andrew's look.

Andrew smiles at Joe and pats his hospital bed, indicating he wants Joe to sit there.

Joe crosses the room, sits on the edge of the bed.

With some difficulty, Andrew removes his oxygen mask. His voice is raspy, weak:

ANDREW

What do you call a thousand lawyers
chained together at the bottom of the
ocean?

JOE

What?

ANDREW

A good start.

Joe smiles.

ANDREW (CONT.)

Excellent work, Joe. I thank
you.

JOE

It was good working with you, Andrew.
You're welcome.

(sees the oxygen mask)

Hey. Shouldn't you put
that thing back on?

Andrew begins fitting the mask back in place, but his hands are
weak. Joe helps adjust the straps behind Andrew's ears.

JOE (CONT.)

I better get home. Lisa and I
are having some friends over.

ANDREW

(muffled by the mask)
Sure thing.

Joe stands.

JOE

I'll see you, Beckett.

Andrew nods, weakly. But he's still smiling and his eyes
are dancing.

ANDREW

(through mask)
Thanks for coming by.

JOE

You bet. We'll see you later.

Joe heads for the door, meeting Miguel there.

JOE

(to Miguel)
He's looking good. I wouldn't
be surprised if he gets out of
here soon.

MIGUEL

We just want to get him home.
Thanks for stopping by, Joe.

Miguel puts his arms around Joe and hugs him. Joe slaps
Miguel's back.

JOE

Night.

Joe leaves.

Miguel begins circulating among the "guests," saying:

MIGUEL

He's tired. He ought to sleep.

CONTINUOUS CUT TO:

JOE STEPPING INTO THE HOSPITAL ELEVATOR (INT./NIGHT), AND saying to a GROUP OF DOCTORS and NURSES:

JOE

What do you call a thousand
lawyers chained together at
the bottom of the ocean?

The elevator doors close.

CONTINUOUS CUT TO:

ANDREW'S HOSPITAL ROOM...

Matt gives Andrew's hand a squeeze, before leaving.

MATT

Night, Andy. See you tomorrow,
buddy.

Rev. Jim pats Andrew's shoulder.

REV. JIM

God bless you, Andy.

Bud Beckett kisses Andrew on the cheek.

BUD

Goodnight, son.
Get some rest, okay?

Sarah Beckett is strong, kissing Andrew on the forehead.

SARAH

Goodnight angel, my sweet boy...

Randy Beckett loses control of his emotions as he bends to hug his brother. He begins to sob.

RANDY

Andy.

Andrew puts his weak arms, with the IV lines connected, around his brother Randy, to comfort him.

ANDREW

(through mask)

I'm okay, bro. I'll see you tomorrow.

Jill hugs Andrew, giving Miguel a kiss as she leaves the room. Maria waves goodnight from the doorway, closing the door.

Miguel sits on the edge of the bed, kicking off his shoes.

Miguel stretches onto the bed next to Andrew, picks up the remote control, and TURNS ON THE TV.

Andrew pulls aside the oxygen mask, to say:

ANDREW

I'm ready...

MIGUEL

Ready for what, baby?

ANDREW

Whatever.

MIGUEL

I hope you're ready for "Studs," because that's what's on.

Andrew replaces the oxygen mask.

They lie next to each other, watching television.

FADE OUT/FADE IN:

EXTERIOR: JOE'S HOUSE AT NIGHT, ESTABLISHING...

From inside the house: the phone rings.

CUT TO:

JOE AND LISA'S DARK BEDROOM, QUIET (INT./NIGHT) ...

Lisa is sitting up in bed, having answered the phone.

Joe is just waking up.

LISA
(to Joe)
It's Miguel.

Joe sits bolt upright.

JOE
Miguel?

CUT TO:

EXTERIOR: ANDREW AND MIGUEL'S LOFT BUILDING, DAY.

A TAXI ARRIVES and an elegant, well-dressed older COUPLE step out.

CUT TO:

RACHEL OPENS THE DOOR OF THE LOFT, FINDING MIGUEL'S FAMILY on the other side: very dignified, handsome people who have just arrived from Spain. They enter the apartment, where...

A wake is in progress. Lots of food. People sharing stories about Andrew. Some people laughing. one or two softly crying as they hug each other.

Someone has set up a "memento" table, with pictures of Andrew at various stages of his life, and things that meant something to him, like programs from the opera, a ballcap, photos of his favorite cat, etc.

THEME MUSIC PLAYS, but we hear BITS OF DIALOGUE under the music ("You're Miguel's parents?" "Do you remember when Andy..." "I went to college with Andy..." etc.)

Bud Beckett sits alone, very quiet.

Miguel leads his parents over to Bud. Bud looks up, rises, extending his hand to MIGUEL'S DAD. Miguel's father shakes his head in sadness, reaches for Bud and pulls him into his arms for an embrace.

CAMERA MOVES THROUGH THE CROWD, SEEMING TO SEARCH FOR SOMETHING...

CAMERA ZEROS IN ON THE TV SET, across the room, where BLACK AND WHITE IMAGES ARE FLICKERING, ignored by everyone...

AS CAMERA GETS CLOSER TO THE TV, it becomes apparent that the images are BLACK AND WHITE HOME MOVIES, converted to video...

THE HOME MOVIES FEATURE a bright-eyed LITTLE BOY...

Andrew...

Riding a bike with training wheels...

Swinging wildly at a wiffle ball...

AS CAMERA TRACKS INTO THE TV, PARTY SOUNDS AND THEME MUSIC
FADES... People are still talking, still laughing, still
crying, but we CAN'T HEAR THEM ANY LONGER. Instead...

We hear only the SOUNDTRACK from the HOME MOVIES...

Andrew SHOUTING GLEEFULLY as he chases a new puppy...

Andrew SQUEALING as he jumps into a tiny swimming pool...

Andrew on a swing, going higher and higher...

And laughing.

FADE TO BLACK.

ROLL END CREDITS.

May we never find space so vast,
planets so cold, heart
and mind so empty
that we cannot fill them
with love and warmth...