

Philadelphia

(Drama) (1993)

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Major Characters

Andy Beckett.....Tom Hanks

A gay lawyer practicing business law in Philadelphia, who loses his job after he begins to get sick with AIDS.

Joe Miller.....Denzel Washington

A young black attorney who agrees to represent Andy in a lawsuit against Andy's former employers, for illegally firing him.

Charles Wheeler.....Jason Robards

Head of the law firm which fires Andy.

Walter Kenton.....Charles Glenn

Another important lawyer at Andy's firm, who is clearly prejudiced against homosexuals.

Miguel Alvarez.....Antonio Banderas

Andy's long time lover who continues to take care of him.

Belinda Conine.....Mary Steenberger

Attorney for Charles' law firm.

Plot Summary

This is the first major movie to deal with the subject of AIDS. It is about a Philadelphia lawyer, Andy Beckett, who is fired from his job after he starts to become sick. The law firm where he works claims that they fired Andy because he was no longer a good lawyer, but Andy is convinced that the real reason he was fired is because his bosses found out that he had AIDS.

In the United States, it is illegal to fire somebody simply because they have a disease. Andy therefore decides to sue (file a lawsuit) against his former bosses for illegally firing him. For Andy and his family, the lawsuit will come to represent a major fight against prejudice, and thus a fight for justice.

In many ways, this film is as much about Joe Miller, Andy's African-American lawyer, as it is about Andy himself. At first, Joe refuses to work for Andy, in large part because he is himself prejudiced against both homosexuals and people with AIDS. But eventually Joe comes to realize that the discrimination Andy faces is both illegal and unethical, just as it is with

discrimination against blacks. He agrees to take Andy's case, and over the course of an exhausting trial, sets out to prove that Andy was fired not because he was a bad lawyer, but because he was a victim of illegal discrimination.

Words and Expressions that You may not Know

Andy and Joe battle in court, and Andy's boss assigns him the most important case that his law firm has.

This petulant dust.

This means very irritating, but it is rarely used.

Messy but innocuous.

A useful word for not harmful.

It's defined by Webster's as harmless.

The name of a standard dictionary used by many English speakers.

I will grant a restraining order.

"To grant" is to officially give or approve something. A "restraining order" is an official decree by a judge telling one or more people that they may not continue with a given action (in this case, constructing a building), until a trial has settled the legal issues involved

A contemptible and groundless nuisance suit.

"Contemptible" is a very strong word for hateful.

If an argument is "groundless," it has no logical foundation.

A "nuisance suit," which is unfortunately very common in the US, is a law suit filed by one party to intimidate another, even though the party bringing the suit has no legal justification to do so.

Lets not go off the deep end!

A colloquial way to say "let's not get so emotional that we lose control of ourselves."

Excuse me, Yo! [Rhymes with 'go']:

When said with a certain determination, this is a fairly common way to yell for somebody's attention.

Sugar or sweet and low?

A well known sugar substitute for those who are trying to lose weight.

Your blood work came back.

In a medical context, "blood work" refers to the analysis of a patient's blood to see how healthy it is in terms of its various cells.

Terrific job on the Kendall situation.

Here, the "Kendall situation" refers to a particular lawsuit that Andy had been working on.

You're just the paralegal extraordinaire that I'd like to see

A "paralegal" is a person who assists a lawyer (They're often as knowledgeable as the lawyers themselves, but make much less money).

The word "extraordinaire" after any noun means excellent.

Compelling briefs that need proofing.

If something is "compelling," it is persuasive or strong. In a legal context, "briefs" are official agreements presented to a judge.

"To proof" is a lawyer's way to say edit, or review.

This is the settlement agreement.

A legal term for an official agreement between two parties that will make a civil suit and trial unnecessary.

My T-cells are steady and even my platelets are good.

Two medical terms referring to cells in blood.

They are widely discussed among people with AIDS/HIV.

Andy has expressed a keen interest in Sander Systems.

"To have a keen interest" in something is a good way to say that a person is very interested in it. In this case, Sander's Systems is the name of a company that Andy's law firm had defended.

An anti-trust action.

"Anti-trust" is the very important area of law that deals with monopoly conditions in business. If a company is believed to control the market place, the government may take an anti-trust action in order to promote more competition.

The legal principle is copyright infringement.

A "copyright" is the legal ownership of an artistic work such as a song or book. An "infringement" is the use of a person's work without being paid or compensated for it.

Don't allow my close relationship with Sander's assistant CEO to interfere.

A "CEO" is the Chief Executive Officer of a company (In this case, the Sander's company).

The laws were enacted to prevent the kind of bullshit that they are trying to pull.

"To pull off some bullshit" is a very colloquial way of saying to manipulate or treat unfairly, without being held responsible.

And who reps Sanders Systems?

"To rep" is a short way to say represent.

Roger Bailey couldn't find his way around copyright law with a map.

"Mr. Baily doesn't know anything about copyright law."

The Statute of Limitations.

An important legal principle that says that a lawsuit or criminal prosecution cannot take place after a certain period of time has passed.

I'm right on it!

Colloquial for "I'm taking care of it."

A partner in the firm notices Andy's lesions, and soon papers from his a critical case disappear from his office just minutes before he's due in Court.

What's that on your forehead, Pal?

Literally "friend," but the use of "pal" when said to a person who is not a friend often implies hostility.

Faith is the belief in something for which we have no evidence, and here that doesn't apply.

Here, a poetic way for Charles Wheeler to tell Andy that the firm believes in his talents.

Thanks Charles :: No sweat, Buddy.

Colloquial way to say "you're welcome" after going out of your way to do a favor. A "buddy" is a friend.

The Highlight complaint is on my desk.

In a legal context, a "complaint" refers to the papers filed in a lawsuit ("Highlight" is the name of the company that is suing).

Apply the foundation as evenly as you can.

A foundation can be skin coloring that goes underneath other cosmetics (the goal is to apply it "evenly," so the entire face looks like it has the same amount of cosmetic).

Bronze grows best on these lesions.

"Bronze" is a brownish color. "Lesions" are the open sores on skin that people with AIDS often develop (and a very important word in this movie).

Thanks for driving like a bat out of hell.

A colloquial way to say "thanks for driving very fast"

He took a day off.

To not work for that one day.

I want to prep you for a colonoscopy.

"To prep" somebody for an exam or procedure is to prepare them.

A "colonoscopy" is a painful medical process used to look at the colon.

If the KS is causing the diarrhea, we need to know that right away.

KS is short for Karpis Sacoma, a type of cancer that people with AIDS often develop.

It could be a reaction to the AZT.

A very well known and controversial drug that many people with AIDS began to take in the 1980s.

I could have you removed from the ER.

"Emergency room" of a hospital (It is also now the name of a very popular television show).

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

"To get on" somebody is to keep talking to them until they agree to do what you want them to.

Jamie is going absolutely ballistic.

"To go ballistic" is a very colloquial way of saying to go crazy, usually by shouting and screaming in great anger.

We can't find the revisions to the Highland complaint.

In the movie, the Highland Complaint is the document that Andy was working on that has now mysteriously disappeared (most likely because a law firm boss hid them).

The hard drive on my computer.

The part of the computer that stores most of the information.

We're up against the statute of limitations and it runs out in 75 minutes.

If the statute "runs out," it is no longer possible to file a lawsuit.

Andy returns to Joe's office looking for a lawyer, but Joe declines the case, claiming that Andy can't win. The real reason is probably different.

You want to sue the city for negligence?

A legal term meaning that a person acted irresponsibly, and thus caused harm to another person.

Do we have a case?

When asked of a lawyer, this often means "Can we convince a jury that I deserve money?"

I'm filing a wrongful termination suit against Wheeler.

A legal way to say a law suit for the illegal firing of someone (Wheeler is Charles' last name, and the first name of the law firm).

I'm seeking legal counsel.

This is a fancy expression for a lawyer.

The next day, I was summoned to a conference.

A very official verb meaning "asked to attend."

I apologize for the Highline mishap yesterday.

Another good word for "mistake" (or more colloquially, "screw-up").

Something has come over you.

An interesting way to say "You no longer seem like yourself."

Stupor. Fogginess.

Both words refer to a state of mental fatigue or lack of alertness.

We feel it isn't fair to keep you here when your prospects are limited.

A dishonest way to say "you're fired" ("prospects" are potential).

With all due respect, this is **preposterous**.

"With all due respect" is an interesting way to start a sentence when you're about to disagree with someone who still has power or authority. "Preposterous" is a great word for outrageous or perhaps totally ridiculous.

You nearly blew the entire case.

"To blow" something is a common and excellent verb meaning to do something badly, or more colloquially, to screw it up.

For Christ's sake, that alone is inexcusable.

An interesting way to start a sentence when wishing to express anger or frustration.

This deadly, dreaded, infectious disease.

A strong word for greatly feared.

They made you look incompetent, and thus the mystery of the lost files.

---Andy's belief on why the files disappeared (ie...to give the law firm an excuse to fire Andy).

Correct. I was sabotaged.

If someone has been "sabotaged," they may have been victimized by a secret action designed to harm them. A great word, often used in military or spying contexts.

I'm sorry about what happened to you. It's a bitch.

A general crude and colloquial expression meaning "that's too bad."

A "bitch," of course, is a vulgar term for a mean or unpleasant woman.

What the hell is the matter with this guy?

Common colloquial addition added after "Wh questions" to show emotion such as anger or frustration.

The HIV virus can only be transmitted through bodily fluids. Mainly blood and semen.

"The Human Immunodeficiency Virus:" The virus that causes AIDS.

I don't care a wit about your private life.

A very unusual way to say "I don't care at all."

You have a problems with gays?

A key adjective; Since the 1960s, "gay" is the most widely used word for homosexual.

That beautiful voluptuous woman is a lesbian?

A great adjective for sexy and sensual.

They're trying to be macho and manly at the same time. I can't stand that shit.

A crude but common way to say "I hate that."

Joe runs into Andy at the law library, and after reflecting a little more on the nature of discrimination, decides to represent him.

This is the supplement. There is a section on HIV-related discrimination.
 In a legal context, a "supplement" is a book
 that gives the most current version of the law.

Counselor!

A very formal and respectful way to address a lawyer.

Whatever.

An often powerful word that in the right context, cynically
 expresses agreement about what was just previously said
 ("So you think that you made a tragic mistake?--->Whatever").

One of the partners saw a lesion on my forehead.

In a law firm, a "partner" is a lawyer who is co-owner of the firm.

How do you go from the partner seeing a lesion
 to them deducing that you have AIDS.

"To deduce" is an educated word meaning to logically conclude.

The partner who fired me knew lesions were a common sign of AIDS.

Note that a "sign" is often used as another word for symptom.

The Federal Anti-Discrimination ACT OF 1973.

The law that Andy and Joe believe was broken when Andy's law firm
 fired him (Laws such as this one are written to protect people from all
 types of discrimination, including against people with certain diseases).

The prejudice surrounding AIDS exacts a social
 death well before the actual physical one.

A powerful and educated verb meaning to demand by force.

This is the essence of discrimination: Framing opinion of others not on their
 merits, but their membership in a group with the same characteristic.

"Essence" is a powerful word which means "the fundamental nature
 of" something (Here, a judge's rationale for extending the 1973 law to
 people with AIDS, which of course, was only discovered in the '80s).

I got a summons for you.

In a legal context, an official notice demanding a person appear in court.

Does he frequent those pathetic bars?

"To frequent" is an interesting verb meaning to often attend or
 go to. "Pathetic" is a strong and very useful word which means
 deserving of contempt or pity.

Did he say he wouldn't be able to fulfill his job to the best of his ability?

Another way to say finish, or bring into effect.

Andy Beckett proposes to haul me into court and sling accusations at me in full view of the entire Philadelphia judicial establishment?

"To haul into court" is to forcibly drag the person into a lawsuit.

"To sling accusations" is to accuse someone of horrible things, in front of many people. The "judicial establishment" is likely a reference to the most powerful lawyers and judges in the city.

Holy shit, Bob, did you know he was sick?

A truly interesting obscenity expressing anger or surprise.

He was fired for incompetence, not because of AIDS!

"Incompetence" is a powerful word meaning poor or unsatisfactory performance.

I once slammed this finger in the front door and I broke it.

"To slam" a door is to shut it with great force

(Here, the finger got in the way, and that really hurts!!).

A snow blower.

A machine that blows snow off streets.

Andy prepares his family for the exhausting trial that is soon to come, and soon Joe is presenting his first arguments to a jury.

It's great that you're asking, but this is your call.

A colloquial way to say "your decision."

You're my kid brother.

In this context, an affectionate adjective for younger.

I didn't raise my kids to sit in the back of the bus.

"To accept injustice" (Until the 1950's, blacks in the Southern United States were often forced to sit in the back of the bus).

Get in there and fight for your rights!

This could refer to the right to say what you wish or buy what you want (Here, it is the right to not be discriminated against just because you are gay or have AIDS).

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury.

The formal way a lawyer usually addresses the jury during a trial.

There will be no last minute surprise witnesses,
no witnesses who **break down**.

"To break down" is a powerful phrasal verb meaning to begin crying or sobbing . A reference to the fact that in many well publicized trials, people often have begun to cry while testifying.

You will have to sift through layer upon layer of truth.

A good verb meaning to examine and look at carefully.

He made the legal and personal choice to keep the disease to himself.

If you "keep something to yourself," you don't tell anybody else.

The fact of the matter is that when they found out he had AIDS, they broke the law.

A very definitive way to assert something is absolutely true.

The lawyers for Andy's bosses present their case: Andy was fired because he was incompetent, not because he had AIDS.

He was mediocre to sometimes flagrantly incompetent.

"Mediocre" is a pejorative adjective that means average, or perhaps a bit below average. "Flagrant" is a powerful adverb which means overtly, completely or conspicuously.

He claims he was the victim of lies and deceit.

"Deceit" means deception, falsehoods and lies.

He was successful in his duplicity.

"Duplicity" is deliberately deceptive or misleading behavior.

His reckless lifestyle.

A powerful adjective which means extremely careless and dangerous (This is an expression often used by very conservative people in the United States to describe the lives of gays).

In his anger and rage, he is lashing out, and he wants someone to pay.

"To lash out" at someone is to suddenly and violently attack them.

We were satisfied with the outcome of the litigation.

Another legal term for a lawsuit.

You gave sworn testimony in a deposition.

"Sworn testimony" is testimony that is legally binding, in which it is actually illegal to lie. A "deposition" is written testimony that is used by lawyers in a trial.

You were delighted with the quality of his work.

A nice little word that is used for someone who is very happy about something in particular.

I found the work to be merely satisfactory.

An interesting little word that means "only."

Before he was caviar, and now he's a balony sandwich.

A type of cheap sandwich meat popular among school kids.

Objection sustained.

In a trial, an "objection" is made by one lawyer to prevent the questions of the other side's lawyer. If it is "sustained," the judge agrees with the lawyer making the objection, and if it is "overruled," the judge disagrees and decides to let the questioning continue.

Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve.

A ridiculous statement that a person hostile to gays would make. In the Christian bible, Adam and Eve were the first people on earth.

As Joe deals with his own prejudices, he and Ms. Conine battle in court over the real reason that Andy was fired.

We're here in Philadelphia, the city of brotherly love.

Philadelphia's nickname.

That glowing document doesn't say that all straight men are created equal.

This is a reference to the Declaration of Independence. If something "glows," it shines brightly. A "straight" man is one who is not gay.

You're not getting a little light in the sneakers, are you, pal?

A reference to gays, though I have never heard this expression. Note the use of "pal" (friend) at the end of a sentence can often have a slightly hostile connotation. "Sneakers" are a type of shoe.

Yeah, I'm looking for a hunk like you.

A colloquial term for a muscular and sexy man.

Want to play sailor?

Silly way to ask if someone is interested in having sex.

At least we agree. Tutee fruitties make me sick.

A ridiculous and insulting way to refer to gay men.

Walter Kenton always got the "oh god" expression.

Here, implying a facial expression that has fear on it.

There was no behavior on your part that caused you to contract the virus.

In English, you "contract" a disease (i.e....you get or catch it).

Have you ever felt discriminated against at Wyman, Wheeler?

The first two names of the law firm Andy worked for.

Apparently, Mr. Wheeler thought they were too ethnic.

An interesting word that refers to other cultures,
but to some people it can mean "un-American."

He wanted something less garish, smaller, and a little more American.

An interesting adjective which means excessively loud and marked by
flashy or bright colors. As in the Las Vegas strip!

I'm in charge of paralegals.

Assistants to lawyers, who often know as much as
the lawyers do, but generally earn a lot less money!

Congratulations on your unfettered ascendancy at Wyman, Wheeler.

If something is "unfettered," it is has been done without obstruction
or interference. "To ascend" is to rise, and ascendancy is the noun.

How do you explain the promotion, at a firm
that actively and wantonly practices discrimination?

"Wantonly" is an educated adverb which
means immorally, or without self-restraint.

Could it be that these alleged instances of
discrimination are blown way out of proportion?

"To blow something out of proportion" is to exaggerate its importance.

I don't pick up people in drug stores everyday

A classic colloquial phrasal verb: "To pick up" someone is to
approach them with the intention of possibly starting a sexual
or romantic relationship.

I ought to kick your faggety little ass.

"To kick someone's ass" is a crude way to say beat up or physically attack. A "fag" is an insulting and crude word for a gay man, and "faggoty" is an even cruder (and rarely used) adjective.

Asshole! :: You're the asshole, buddy!

A crude and classic insult. Note the use of the word "buddy" (friend) at the end of a sentence can often mean exactly the opposite of its literal meaning.

We were going crazy looking for the complaint.

In this case, the legal document that Andy needed to file in court before the statute of limitations ran out.

I felt like I was in The Twilight Zone.

A great science-fiction TV show from the 1960s in which very strange things were always happening to people.

Mr. Beckett was screaming at everybody. He looked so freaky.

A strong adjective meaning very strange or bizarre.

He said it was in central files, which is where papers go when cases are closed.

The place where many companies place their old records.

How would you characterize his work as an attorney?

"To characterize" is a good verb meaning to describe.

Excuse me, your honor, but is this for the record?

"Your honor" is the only way you should address a judge in court. If something in court is "for the record," it is considered an official part of the trial that is written down and kept.

Were you aware of any problems that the senior partners had with Andy prior to this episode?

The most important lawyers in any law firm.

We've had lawyers with heart attacks, ulcers, prostate cancer, leukemia. Nobody's sandbagged them.

An "ulcer" is a painful lesion inside the stomach. "Leukemia" is a type of cancer of the blood. "To sandbag" somebody is a rare colloquial expression meaning to mistreat and abuse someone by lying to them.

Joe focuses in on the true subject of this law suit...

Faggot, queen, fairy, coffee roaster.

All are crude insulting words describing gays
(though I've never heard the last expression).

Counselor, kindly approach the bench.

What a judge will tell a lawyer when he wants to talk in private.

Sexual orientation: Who does what to whom and how they do it.

The term used when discussing whether somebody is straight or gay.

Let's get it out of the closet!

"Let's discuss this openly" (Homosexuals who admit
that they are gay are said to "come out of the closet").

This case is about our hatred, loathing and fear of homosexuals.

A very strong word for hatred and contempt.

In this courtroom, justice is blind to matters
of race, creed and sexual orientation.

"Creed" is a very official word for religious beliefs.

I'm going to sustain the objection.

As mentioned earlier, a judge can either "sustain" (accept) or
"overrule" (not accept) an objection made by one of the lawyers.

During the long voyage out to sea, you saw hundreds of
young robust men in their prime. Anything going on?

"Robust" is a poetic word for strong and muscular.
If someone is "in their prime," they are at the height
of their physical or mental abilities.

Two sailors down below making flippy flop?

Colloquial way to say having sex, but a
stupid expression that I've never heard before.

He strutted around trying to get everyone's attention. It made everyone sick.

"To strut around" is to walk in an exaggerated
manner that people are likely to notice.

Are you aware of the difference between a bruise and a lesion?

A "bruise" is a sore or injury on the skin, but unlike a lesion,
the skin isn't broken if it's only bruised.

I have compassion for people like Melissa who contracted this terrible disease through no fault of their own

---Mr. Kenton's way of saying that homosexuals are more "guilty" of getting AIDS than people who only got it through a blood transfusion.

I may have to flush it out again.

In this context, "to flush out" something is wash it or force it out.

Tell you what I'm going to do.

A common way to say what you're planning, often used when you know that the listener will be pleased with what you say.

I'm going to start preparing for the inevitable.

A gentle way for Andy to say that he is preparing to die. If something is "inevitable," it is certain to happen.

Joe sees a new side of the "gay Lifestyle."

I had a blood transfusion and I feel great.

The medical transfer of blood from one person to another.

We have to do this Q and A sometime tonight.

Short for "question and answer."

I'm a lawsuit. Get it?

A very common way to ask "Do you understand?"

You survived what I assume to be your first gay party in tact.

"To survive in tact" is to survive without major injury or damage.

As a kid, you're taught queers are fairies,
and all they want to do is get into your pants.

"Queers and fairies" are crude insults referring to gay men.

"To get into somebody's pants" is a colloquial expression meaning to have sex with them (Or at least something getting close to that).

That pretty much sums up the general public.

A good phrasal verb meaning "summarizes."

I pray that my wife made it through the delivery
and that the Phillies win the pennant.

In this context, "delivery" is the act of giving birth.

The "Phillies" are Philadelphia's baseball team and the "pennant" is the championship of a baseball division.

I know a good probate lawyer.

The area of law dealing with the passing of property after a person dies.

Do you like opera? This is my favorite aria.

A vocal piece sung alone in an opera.

The place that cradled me is burning.

A "cradle" is the little bed where a baby sleeps, and thus "to cradle" is to protect and nurture.

Do you hear the heartache in her voice?

This is a strong word for sadness.

Oh, that single cello!

A type of very large violin.

I am divine, oblivion.

"Divine" is an interesting adjective meaning "god-like"

"Oblivion" is the condition of being completely forgotten.

Jeez, I better get out of here

"Jeez" at the beginning of a sentence is a gentle way to express surprise or other emotion.

The entire sentence simply means "I better leave."

***Andy takes the stand to tell his side of the story,
as well as his views on justice and the law.***

Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth
and nothing but the truth, so help you god?

The standard question that every witness
must answer before testifying in court.

They were the most prestigious firm in Philadelphia

"Prestigious" is an important word meaning
greatly esteemed, or well respected by others.

A razor-sharp litigator, and an awesome ability to
illustrate the most complex legal concepts.

Someone who is "razor-sharp" is very intelligent, and a
"litigator" is a lawyer who works on law-suits. "Awesome"
is a very popular adjective which basically means amazing.

Underneath an elegant surface, an adventurous spirit.

"Elegant" is a useful adjective meaning refined and tasteful.

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

"PMS" is "premenstrual syndrome" (Symptoms such as irritability that women get before their menstrual periods). "ESP" is "extra sensory perception" (the ability to read minds, tell the future, etc.).

How does a faggot fake an orgasm? He throws a quart of yogurt on your back.

A crude, but not very funny joke (A "faggot" is an insult for a gay man).

Every now and again, you get to be a part of justice being done and that really is quite a thrill.

A "thrill" is a good word for great fun or excitement.

Yes, I take calculated risks.

A good expression for risks that are well thought out before taken.

Have you ever been to the Stallion Showcase Cinema on 21st street?

Gay pornographic theater which Andy visited in the early 1980s.

This line of questioning is vital to the issue of credibility.

"Credibility" is a word that refers to the believability of someone.

I had heard of something. The Gay Plague, Gay Cancer.

Terms used to describe AIDS in the early 1980s, before the HIV virus was discovered.

As a homosexual, one is forced to conceal your sexuality.

To conceal" is a useful verb meaning to hide from others.

Were you living with Michael Alvarez when you had your anonymous adventure?

If you do something anonymously, you try to do it without anyone knowing that it is you who is doing it.

It's your contention that when the partners were made aware of your lesions, they leapt to the conclusion that you had AIDS.

"To leap" is to jump, and if you "leap to conclusions," you are deciding what you think before carefully reflecting on all the facts.

As reprehensible as it is, it is the conclusion that I came to.

This is a strong word for deplorable or shameful.

Remembering that you're under oath,
can you see the lesions from three feet away?

An "oath" is a legal promise to tell the truth, often made while putting your hand on a bible (whether you're a Christian or not!).

Can we have 5 minutes in redirect?

A legal term meaning additional questioning of a witness.

If it please **the court**..

Interestingly, lawyers and others must refer to the judge as "the court."

Yes, I have lesions on my torso.

The main part of the human body, excluding head and limbs.

It would unduly prejudice the jury.

A legal term meaning to unfairly effect the thinking of a person, or in this case, of the entire jury.

Come on, were talking about AIDS, lesions. Let's see what were talking about!

The most versatile phrasal verb in English: Here, meaning, "lets be serious about what we're doing"

Joe goes after Charles Wheeler, exposing the real issue to be Andy's disease, and not his performance.

Can you explain why you promoted him
and then eventually asked him to leave?

"To promote" someone at a job is to raise them to a higher level
(This usually implies a corresponding raise in salary).

You promote the rookie fresh out of Penn.

A "rookie" is a newcomer or beginner. "Penn" is the nickname of a prestigious university in Pennsylvania.

He was tremendously promising.

"He had a lot of potential."

You groom somebody that way.

In this context, "to groom" someone is to take care of and train them for a particular job or position.

We lavished him with all kinds of special treatment.

"To lavish" somebody is to treat them extremely well
(As an adjective, "lavish" is rich and extravagant).

We were waiting for the promise to kick in and deliver.

When something "kicks in," it starts to work well. Here, Charles is saying that they were waiting for Andy to become a great lawyer.

Are you gay? :: How dare you!

A classic response by somebody who has been greatly insulted.

Your golden boy.

Colloquial for "the most promising person" (or the one with the most potential)."

It drove a stake of fear right through your heterosexual heart!

A "stake" is a piece of wood or metal that is pointed at one end.

The handshake, the intimate moments, the pats on the backside.

Another word for butt, ass, or derriere.

You may tap-dance around me all you wish with your innuendo and locker room fantasies, but the truth remains.

"Innuendo" is an indirect & subtle word implying something negative. The "locker room" is where athletes go to shower after a sports event and is often a place where crude sexual jokes are told.

Read your Bible. Old and New testament.

What some people will say to insist that they are morally right in an argument.

For Christ's sake, somebody get a doctor.

Said at the beginning of a sentence to express any strong emotion (Used by all, and not just Christians).

Did you share your suspensions with anyone?

An important word for personal beliefs that you can't prove.

The jury weighs the evidence: Why would they fire Andy for incompetence if they just promoted him for excellence?

They say they gave him their most important case to test him.

Note that you can test somebody in a very general sense, in this case by seeing if he can handle a particular legal case.

A carrot, to see if he would rise to the occasion.

"Carrots" are seen as little rewards. "To rise to the occasion" is a common expression implying that a person of limited abilities, with enough motivation, can do a job he may not be qualified for.

With a \$350,000,000 dollar plane, am I going to put on someone who will rise to the challenge, or my best pilot, my top gun?

A military term, popularized by the movie "Top Gun," which now means the very best person for the job.

For back-pay and loss of benefits.

Legal terms referring to the money and other benefits a person has to give up because he can no longer work.

For mental anguish.

"Anguish" is a very strong word for pain or suffering, and an important legal concept when a jury decides how much money should be awarded in a lawsuit.

Punitive damages.

A very important legal term referring to the money awarded a person in order to punish the wrongdoer for their actions.

Counselor, I'll see you at the appeal.

In American law, cases are "appealed," which means that lawyers can go to a higher court to see if they agree with the outcome of the trial (most cases are "upheld," but some are "reversed on appeal").

What do you call 1,000 lawyers chained together at the bottom of the ocean? A good start.

An anti-lawyer joke, and not a bad one!

Sure thing.

A common way to say "Yes, I promise."

He's a fighter.

In this case, one who fights for his rights.

God bless you.

Depending on the context, it can be a very strong and emotional way to tell somebody how much you care about them.

Philadelphia

Some Possible ESL Questions for Class Discussion

1. What did Joe agree to take Andy's case after first refusing to do so?
2. Why was it fairly obvious that Andy's law firm fired him because he had AIDS, and not because he was incompetent, as they claimed in the trial?
3. Were there subjects that were brought up in the trial that did not seem relevant to the main issue, which was why Andy was fired?
4. Is discrimination against people with AIDS as bad a problem now as it was a few years ago? What about in your country?
5. Should it be illegal to discriminate against homosexuals? Blacks? People with AIDS? Any ethnic, religious or linguistic minority? Is it? What about in your country?