

E: Mr. Beckett? Mr. Beckett, come in.

ANDREW: It's good to see you again counselor. Judge Tate? Kendall Construction?

JOE: Innocuous! Hahaha, how are ya? Jesus Christ, what happened to your face?

ANDREW: I have AIDS.

JOE: Oh! (beat) Oh I'm sorry, I...

ANDREW: Can I sit down?

JOE: Uh, yeah. Go ahead.

ANDREW: (*off the cigars*) Oh, look at this! You have a new baby.

JOE: Yeah. Yeah, little baby girl.

ANDREW: Oh, It's a girl, huh? Congratulations.

JOE: Yeah, one week old.

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've been 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. 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. 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. The night before it was due, I worked on the complaint in my office, and I left a copy of it in my desk. The next day, the complaint vanished. No hard copy. All traces of it mysteriously gone from my computer. Miraculously, a copy of the complaint was located at the last minute, and we got it to court on time. 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.

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

ANDREW: Makeup.

JOE: So you were concealing your illness?

ANDREW: That's correct.

JOE: Okay. Explain it 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: 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: That's not the point. From the day they hired me, to the day I was fired, I served my clients consistently, thoroughly and with absolute excellence. And if they hadn't fired me, that's what I'd be doing today.

JOE: And they don't want to fire you for having AIDS, so in spite of your brilliance, they'd make you look incompetent, thus the mysterious lost file? Is that what you're trying to tell me?

ANDREW: Correct, I was sabotaged.

JOE: I knew you were going to say that. I don't buy it counselor.

ANDREW: That's very disappointing.

JOE: I don't see a case.

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

JOE: Thank you, that's correct. I don't.

ANDREW: Well thank you for your time counselor.

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

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

*(Andrew exits.)*