

Philadelphia (1993) - Reading Notes

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Content Notes:

- Begins with happy introduction to life in Philadelphia (showing examples of everyday people)
 - Represents innocent, happy society and those unaffected by the AIDS epidemic
- Begins in court with discussion of drugs
 - Debating lawyers over restraining order against construction site (likely for supposed drugs)
 - Mr. Miller (against construction company) loses case for having not proven obvious harm
- Transitions to scene in hospital where lawyer fighting for construction company gets bloodwork done
 - Nervously awaits results
 - Skips to scene in law firm where Andy (Hanks) speaks with friends at firm, starts on work
 - On conversation w/ mother, reveals bloodwork is supposedly excellent
- Later, while working, Andy is called up by "Charles" (presumed to be boss), with others there to discuss copyright case
 - Andrew receives commendation from Charles, made to be senior associate on big case
 - Important people with whom he discusses begin to notice lesion on forehead
 - * Andy claims source to be racquetball on head
 - Nine days later, lesion shown to have grown increasingly larger
 - * Receives foundation to cover up lesions
 - * Seen to have immense pain, runs to bathroom
 - Rushes to hospital, warned of potential colonoscopy
 - * While in hospital, disaster where complaint for case (which he had worked on) cannot be found
 - * Receives "every problem has a solution" while rushing back to office; perhaps symbolic of AIDS' lack of a solution
- Fired for lost complaint; visits previous attorney (Mr. Miller) to discuss
 - Andy wants to make case that he was sabotaged for his AIDS (despite having kept it secret)
 - Miller denies case (potentially due to later revealed homophobia, also due to fear of contagion)
- Receives multiple stares and hints to leave in library (due to fear of contagiousness), reencounters Miller
 - Miller approaches, begins to show interest in case
 - * Pair begin to discuss key pieces of evidence and questions
 - Miller takes on case, gives to former law firm at basketball game
- Andy returns to family home, speaks with family members (met with utmost support for case)
- Scene jumps to prosecutor comments
 - Miller sympathizes with jury by sympathizing with them: fear of AIDS
 - Trial continues with initial strong comments from defendant
- Miller mocked in bar for allegiance with gay man, continually emphasizes homophobia

- Responds to altercation in drug store after being hit on by man w/ violence
- Numerous witness testimonies are taken
 - Ms. Burton (Andy's assistant)
 - * Emphasizes discrimination as African-American (for ethnic earrings)
 - Andy's subordinate emphasizes his ability as good boss
- Andy's partner fears his life will end soon
- With Miller, Andy listens to opera aria which perfectly relates to his own emotions
 - Interrupts preparation for Q&A
- Following day, Andrew gives testimony
 - Makes clear legal abilities of Charles (intelligent, perseverant)
 - Describes experience where Charles made numerous homophobic jokes in front of him
 - * Influenced choice to keep secret
 - Defendant lawyer emphasizes lack of lesion visibility; Miller shows Andrew's chest to all
- Charles' testimony reveals homophobia
 - Andrew's condition gets progressively worse until he is sent to hospital
 - While in hospital, trial is won with *significant* results

Thematic Notes:

In the greater context of Chapter 32, *Philadelphia* centers around the AIDS crisis of the 1980s and 1990s, especially starting in the homosexual community. The film also depicts the state of gay rights and the social stigma of homosexuality in the 1990s: the ruling in favor of Andy Beckett does represent significant progress for the gay rights movements; however, numerous parts of society had still clearly not progressed (for example, when another man suggests that lawyer Joe Miller is gay, he immediately gets angry and repulsed; furthermore, scenes are shown with the use of anti-gay slurs and jokes). Although the spread of AIDS further expanded the stigma of homosexuality, the United States has certainly progressed significantly in the last 30 years.