Cirque du So Lame

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Global big-topper Cirque du Soleil has been flying without a legal safety net since firing HIV positive acrobat Matthew Cusick in March 2003. Citing “hazardous conditions” for Cusick’s fellow performers, Cirque grounded Cusick days before his debut. The company suggested such daredevil roles for HIVers as “dishwashers...ushers...positions that do not involve a high degree of potential injury with possible bodily fluid exposure.” In January, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) sided with Cusick, reaffirming his entitlement to perform under the Americans with Disabilities Act. “I was quite offended to have worked so hard and know I have the ability to perform with Cirque but be told I might be able to collect tickets or wash dishes,” says Cusick, who disclosed his status more than four months before the brouhaha. At press time, the company was swaying toward soon offering Cusick a performance position, adding “medical experts demonstrated [to us] that the risks are so infinitesimal, we shouldn’t worry about HIV anymore.” What’s the French word for “duh”?

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