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The Interview

by

REBECCA RYLAND

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The Interview
by
REBECCA RYLAND

2 Women/1 Man

Setting:

An Outer Office

Characters:

The Interviewer
The Applicant
The Stenographer (Male)
THE INTERVIEW
by Rebecca Ryland

(AT RISE: THE APPLICANT seated in a straight-backed wooden chair; THE INTERVIEWER nearby. THE STENOGRAPHER sits at a small typing table left recording the interview as directed. There is a small trashcan next to the typing table and a door up. Otherwise, the stage is bare.)

Begin with your name.

THE INTERVIEWER

Tonya Thompson.

THE INTERVIEWER

Good. State your objective.

THE APPLICANT

In life?

THE INTERVIEWER

No. Why do you want this position? What do you hope to accomplish?

THE APPLICANT

I need work.

THE INTERVIEWER

Wrong.

THE APPLICANT

Wrong?

THE INTERVIEWER

You want the position?

THE APPLICANT

Yes.

THE INTERVIEWER

Why do you want to work here? Why should I hire you over say, any other unemployed, non-thinking, resource-consuming parasite? Why?

THE APPLICANT

I have a mind. I think.
No. You do not.

I don’t?

Not if you want the job.

Why?

This is a Level Two position.

I tested at a Level Five.

There are no openings at Level Five. Do you want to work?

Yes.

Then understand right now, right up front, Level Two’s do not think, are not permitted to think, and you will not be hired under any circumstances if there is an inkling the size of an ant’s ass that you have any intention now or ever to think. Is that clear?

Yes. Then what do I say when you ask why I want this position if I have nothing creative to contribute?

No one mentioned “creative.” You will answer in the interview that you are available to carry out in whatever manner deemed necessary the mission of the organization. That you play by the rules and know the fuck how to keep your mouth shut. (To THE STENOGRAPHER.) Strike “fuck.”

(THE STENOGRAPHER nods.)

I can’t remember all that.
THE INTERVIEWER
Your final interview is tomorrow at ten. You have plenty of time to study. Tell me about yourself.

THE APPLICANT
Well, I tend to be early. I hope that’s not a problem. I contribute it to the fact I was born early. Plucked from my mother’s womb, you know, before I was ripe. So I guess I have extra time so to speak. Time I really wasn’t supposed to have. So I have time to sit and wait.

THE INTERVIEWER
You will get nowhere if you sit and wait. However, punctuality plays well in an interview.  (To THE STENOGRAPHER.) Punctuality.  P. U. N. C. T. U. A. L. I. T. Y.  (To THE APPLICANT.) What else?

THE APPLICANT
What? My education? My experience?

THE INTERVIEWER
Non-consequential. You have a résumé don’t you?

APPLICANT
Of course. Here.

THE INTERVIEWER
Throw it out.

THE APPLICANT
Now?

THE INTERVIEWER
In the trash.  (Motioning to THE STENOGRAPHER who stops typing and brings the trashcan over to THE APPLICANT.) Nothing you have done until now will get you through that door.

THE APPLICANT  
(Throwing her résumé into the trashcan.) I didn’t know.

THE INTERVIEWER
Of course not. That is why you’re here. Do you have a hobby?

THE APPLICANT
No. Not that I’m aware.

THE INTERVIEWER
I like my employees to have hobbies.
THE APPLICANT
Should I lie?

THE INTERVIEWER
If necessary.

THE APPLICANT
When will I know when it’s necessary.

THE INTERVIEWER
Follow the transcript.

THE APPLICANT
So if you tell me to lie, I lie?

THE INTERVIEWER
If I ask you a question and what you respond isn’t true, I have neither asked you to lie nor discouraged it. Your response is neither true nor false.

THE APPLICANT
(Unclear) I see.

THE INTERVIEWER
If you take this position you will have to relocate.

THE APPLICANT
I know.

THE INTERVIEWER
I know you know! That is not the point! I ask you a question. Give me the answer. The Stenographer records exactly what I say and the correct response. Do you understand?

THE APPLICANT
Yes.

THE INTERVIEWER
Good. Have you taken the time to look about the city?

THE APPLICANT
Yes.

THE INTERVIEWER
And?
THE APPLICANT
It’s scary, you know? It’s a big move. I looked through the yellow pages to see if, you know, if there are things here I might find of interest. A bookstore. Outdoor cafés. That sort of thing.

THE INTERVIEWER
No.

THE APPLICANT
No? Why?

THE INTERVIEWER
I’ve lived here all my life and I’ve never had need for a bookstore or a café. Do you think you’re better than me? (To THE STENOGRAPHER.) Strike “think.”

(THE STENOGRAPHER nods.)

THE APPLICANT
It’s a lovely city. I can’t wait to live here.

THE INTERVIEWER
Good. (To THE STENOGRAPHER.) Change that to “dynamic” city. (THE STENOGRAPHER nods. THE INTERVIEWER returns attention to THE APPLICANT.) You do realize don’t you that reading is a hobby?

THE APPLICANT
I thought reading was a means to stimulate the intellect? Joining a horticulture club is a hobby.

THE INTERVIEWER
Did I ask you to think?

THE APPLICANT
I forgot.

THE INTERVIEWER
(To THE STENOGRAPHER.) Strike any reference to intellect. (THE STENOGRAPHER nods.) However, I like plants. Plants are wholesome. Plants are a definite possibility. Question: You plan to join the local Horticulture Club? Response: Yes. (THE STENOGRAPHER types the question and answer into the transcript.) (To THE APPLICANT.) What kind of plants do you like?

THE APPLICANT
I raised a little hemp while I was in college. In the closet under a grow light.
THE INTERVIEWER
(To THE STENOGRAPHER.) Question: Do you have a hobby? Response: I love to read.

THE APPLICANT
If that will make you happy.

THE INTERVIEWER
Yes it will make me happy. Why else are you here? I can give you a hand or I can cut it off. It’s neither here nor there.

THE APPLICANT
I don’t understand.

THE INTERVIEWER
(To THE STENOGRAPHER.) Will you demonstrate? (THE STENOGRAPHER nods and stands. THE INTERVIEWER returns attention to THE APPLICANT.) Lie down.

THE APPLICANT
What?

THE INTERVIEWER
Lie down on the floor.

THE APPLICANT
Why? (THE INTERVIEWER frowns.) Oh, all right. (Acquiescing) Like this?

THE INTERVIEWER
Exactly like that. (To THE STENOGRAPHER.) Sit on her.

THE APPLICANT
Wait a minute. No offense but he’s got good fifty or sixty pounds on me.

THE INTERVIEWER
Exactly. (To THE STENOGRAPHER.) Sit.

THE APPLICANT
(As THE STENOGRAPHER sits) Oh!

Get up.

THE INTERVIEWER

THE APPLICANT
Get off!
THE INTERVIEWER

Get up!

THE APPLICANT

(To THE STENOGRAPHER.) Are you deaf? She said to get off!

THE INTERVIEWER

(To THE APPLICANT.) I told you to get up.

(Struggling) I can’t.

THE INTERVIEWER

And you never will. Not unless I let you. Do you understand?

Yes.

THE INTERVIEWER

Good. (To THE STENOGRAPHER.) You may return to your seat. (He does.)

THE APPLICANT

(Slowly rising to her feet and straightening her clothes.) So what I am to understand is that it doesn’t matter how intelligent I am. Not how creative; my history, my experience, my passion, my commitment. It only matters whether I say to you whatever it is that leads you to believe I am able to do the job?!

THE INTERVIEWER

Don’t flatter yourself. A Level Two is the heart of mediocrity. Anyone can fill a Level Two position. Are you finished?

THE APPLICANT

I— Yeah, sure.

THE INTERVIEWER

Good. (Taking finished transcript from THE STENOGRAPHER and handing it to THE APPLICANT.) Then take this script and memorize it word for word. Add nothing. Take nothing away. Be back here at 10 A.M. Do exactly what I say and I guarantee you’ll get the position. Is that clear?

This is Not the End of the Play
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes