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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.)

THE INTERVIEWER

Begin with your name.

THE APPLICANT

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.

THE INTERVIEWER

No. You do not.

THE APPLICANT

I don't?

THE INTERVIEWER

Not if you want the job.

THE APPLICANT

Why?

THE INTERVIEWER

This is a Level Two position.

THE APPLICANT

I tested at a Level Five.

THE INTERVIEWER

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

THE APPLICANT

Yes.

THE INTERVIEWER

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?

THE APPLICANT

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

THE INTERVIEWER

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.*)

THE APPLICANT

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!

THE INTERVIEWER

Get up.

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.

THE APPLICANT

(*Struggling*) I can't.

THE INTERVIEWER

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

THE APPLICANT

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?

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