

INTERVIEW

Written by

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Based on a true story

BLACK SCREEN.

Super: Every line of dialogue is excerpted from real interviews conducted with prospective candidates.

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Toplit with fluorescents. Bare wall behind. Hint of a white desk lower frame.

The full faces of the SPEAKERS are never seen on camera, but inserts of mouths, hands, ECU of eyes are. The camera is focussed in the main on the INTERVIEWEE. Camera is a zoom lens, and the shooting style is the 70s-inflected voyeurism of William Friedkin/John Cassavetes.

Camera on empty chair.

FIRST SPEAKER

Do we -

SECOND SPEAKER

Uh

FIRST SPEAKER

I think...

SECOND SPEAKER

Yeah

FIRST SPEAKER

Got a couple minutes though.

SECOND SPEAKER

Mmm.

(beat)

I'll do it.

We hear but do not see a door open to the right. INTERVIEWEE enters (Black man, late 20s, cheap suit, big smile).

INTERVIEWEE

(smile in his voice)

Hi there. Thanks for seeing me.

He pauses right of frame, leans over out of our viewing to shake hands.

SECOND SPEAKER

Oh, thanks.

FIRST SPEAKER
(leaning across frame to
shake hand)
Yeah, thanks for coming in.

INTERVIEWEE sits down. Camera is tight on his face. Close enough to record micromovements of the face. This, and the texture of the voice, is where the drama lies.

SECOND SPEAKER
So uh. Oh shall we get some water -
would you like some water?

INTERVIEWEE
Yes, yes. Sure thanks.

Hold for beat as door opens. Then closes. Then a hand places a carafe of water and empty glass on the table. The INTERVIEWEE smooths his tie.

INTERVIEWEE (CONT'D)
(nodding to person who
just put the jug down)
Thank you.

FIRST SPEAKER
Right then. Thank you [bleep] for
coming in today. Bit of a wet one.

SECOND SPEAKER
Mm.

FIRST SPEAKER
So. My name is [bleep] and I joined
the company... gosh, when was it?

SECOND SPEAKER
You? Dunno, what four five years
ago now.

FIRST SPEAKER
Yeah, fourfive, give or take. So I
have moved around a few of the
divisions, but I started where
you're looking to start now. If you
get the job haha.

SECOND SPEAKER
Haha.

INTERVIEWEE effects a laugh.

SECOND SPEAKER (CONT'D)
I'm seven years into my sentence.
[beep] here is a little more junior
than I am, but as I'm sure you've
been told by your recruiter, we
like to do things a little
differently here.

INTERVIEWEE
(nodding, which will come
to be a sign of nerves)
Different. Okay. Different is good.

FIRST SPEAKER
We have your CV in front of us
here, but I'm keen to hear a bit
more from you.

INTERVIEWEE
Okay.

SECOND SPEAKER
Ah, before we begin, you did sign
the waiver before coming in.

INTERVIEWEE
Uh, yes.

SECOND SPEAKER
Ah good, so you're completely okay
with being filmed.

INTERVIEWEE
Filmed?

FIRST SPEAKER
For management and training
purposes for our side.

INTERVIEWEE
Oh. I don't know if that was in
the...

SECOND SPEAKER
It's fine. You're fine.

INTERVIEWEE
Is that what the other guy is for?

FIRST SPEAKER
Who, Doug?

DOUG
I'm not here. Just sitting in.

SECOND SPEAKER
Doug's just sitting in.

INTERVIEWEE
For management and training
purposes.

FIRST SPEAKER
Sense of humour? We like that.
(beat)
So like I said, we have your CV in
front of us here, but we're really
excited to hear more about you. So,
why don't you start by telling us a
bit about yourself?

INTERVIEWEE straightens in their seat. Game time.

INTERVIEWEE
Of course. So I -

JUMP CUT.

SAME - LATER.

FIRST SPEAKER
And how's your search going.

INTERVIEWEE
My jobsearch?

SECOND SPEAKER
Yeah.

The INTERVIEWEE answers by affecting an ease which all present know isn't genuine. Zoom into face. Inserts of eyes and mouth delivering these lines, so we know they're meant to be sincere, but don't come all the way together as convincing.

INTERVIEWEE
It's going well.
(beat)
Yeah I think it's going well, you
know. With each round, each firm I
talk to, I really get the sense -
confirmed, I mean - that this is
the right next step for me to take.

SECOND SPEAKER
(unconvinced)
Uh huh. Yeah.

FIRST SPEAKER

Good answer.

Sound of papers shuffling and notes being scribbled.

INTERVIEWEE

And so this stage, the sev-

SECOND SPEAKER

Seventh yeah.

INTERVIEWEE (CONT'D)

Yeah. It's just this and then a decision, right. I mean, that's what the recruiter said.

SECOND SPEAKER

Well. Then that's what the recruiter said.

(beat)

But, we may... You know - the process is very delicate and we all want to get this right.

INTERVIEWEE

...Right.

SECOND SPEAKER

Because it's not good to waste your time. Or ours.

INTERVIEWEE

Of course, yeah yeah.

SECOND SPEAKER

(trailing off, as if talking to himself.)

Market so volatile.

INTERVIEWEE

Mm.

FIRST SPEAKER

Uhhh okay. Sorry just tallying up some notes here. We have the video but I like to -

INTERVIEWEE

Sure, of course. I'm the same, I often find it easier, you know, to recall.

FIRST SPEAKER

Right. Right.

INTERVIEWEE

Details.

FIRST SPEAKER

Yes. Details. We're very detail oriented here.

SECOND SPEAKER

Very. It's a big thing.

CAMERA slowly begins to dolly left, until the INTERVIEWEE is sandwiched between the shoulders of each SPEAKER.

INTERVIEWEE

Mm.

FIRST SPEAKER

And so, one of the details we take very seriously is our diversity and antiracist policy.

SECOND SPEAKER

Very seriously.

INTERVIEWEE

Of course. That's good to hear. I mean, so many places say "we really value diversity, it's important to us", but then it's just more about PR than anything else.

SECOND SPEAKER

Right. And for us you know, diversity, diversity of thought is really important to our business functions. And to our reputations with clients.

FIRST SPEAKER

Exactly. We value antiracism. So could you give us an example maybe from your professional experience, or maybe personal experience, where this has been in evidence for you.

INTERVIEWEE

From my...

FIRST SPEAKER

Yeah, you've got quite an eclectic working life so far. Really very interesting. Perhaps there's an example there from school maybe, or university. You went to a very competitive one; that must have been something.

SECOND SPEAKER

Do you, uh, you have any questions
for us?

INTERVIEWEE

Oh yes, I do have a couple.

FIRST SPEAKER

I think we might have gone over a
little.

INTERVIEWEE

Over?

FIRST SPEAKER

My fault. My fault. If you think of
anything else, on top of our couple
of questions, pop them across in an
email and we'll get back to you
that way with next steps.

The stand. Their backs bookend each side of the frame. This
forces the INTERVIEWEE to stand and smile awkwardly. They
shake hands.

INTERVIEWEE

Um. Thank you.

FIRST SPEAKER

Doug can show you out. Doug can you
show him out?

DOUG

Yeah I'll show him out.

DOUG crosses frame, back to us, and follows the INTERVIEWEE
out.

On DOUG closing the door, we cut to:

Medium shot of SPEAKERS - we observe them fully for the first
time.

FIRST SPEAKER and SECOND SPEAKER sit. Camera remains in
place. They pass notes to each other. Sip water.

FIRST SPEAKER

Pretty good.

SECOND SPEAKER

Pretty good, yeah.
(he nods his head)
But a bit...

FIRST SPEAKER

Yeah. Yeah he was.

(beat)

Experience is fine. Strong. Even against other applicants. Great grades.

SECOND SPEAKER

Yeah. He's smart. I think it's just a fit issue. You could tell from the beginning. Bit arrogant.

FIRST SPEAKER

That's the word, yeah. Full of himself I think. Not a good fit for morale.

Door opens. DOUG enters. Head taking up the left third of the frame.

DOUG

What's the verdict?

FIRST SPEAKER

What do you think?

DOUG

Mm. Nice lad; He seemed quite good. I liked him.

SECOND SPEAKER

Really? See, he is good. I did say that.

FIRST SPEAKER

Aggressive, I find.

(beat)

Anyway, we on for lunch?

SECOND SPEAKER

I'm famished, me.

FIRST SPEAKER

I could go for some. You're buying, though.

They get up and head to the door. Camera pans slowly left as they shuffle past it. They turn off the light. Camera frames them as they walk down the corridor, snatches of conversation floating to us sporadically.

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

INTERVIEWEE alone. He walks up the corridor, forlorn, as camera tracks back on the diagonal. The sounds of the city beyond the building are muffled but present.

EXT. STREET - DAY

INTERVIEWEE walks alone, purposeful. Camera watches him in wide from the other side of the street. He has his phone at his ear.

INTERVIEWEE

Another washout.

(beat)

Yeah I dunno about this one. Seven rounds you know - seven - and they don't have time to answer any questions I have?

He spots a news agents, moves to duck inside.

INTERVIEWEE (CONT'D)

Nah it wasn't the worst, just tiring. Inane.

(beat)

C'est la vie.

INT. NEWSAGENT - CONTINUOUS

Eyes scanning the fridge. He grabs a sandwich.

INTERVIEWEE

I'm just in the shop now; I'll be home by eightish.

His eye alights on the LOTTO table.

INTERVIEWEE (CONT'D)

Yeah cool. Text me when you get in. Love you man.

He ends the call.

He fills the lottery ticket out. Planar ECU of the numbers being filled out (think of D. W. Griffith's iris shots).

In line ahead of him, is DOUG, carrying an armful of food and drink.

One of the plastic bottles escapes his grasp, and INTERVIEWEE bends to pick it up immediately.

Now they recognise one another. Nods and warm smiles.

DOUG looks as if he'll speak, but the smiles tell all that needs be said.

DOUG
(eyes on the lotto ticket)
Good luck.

He nods and leaves.

INTERVIEWEE reaches the counter. Politely addresses unseen shopkeeper.

INTERVIEWEE
Just these, please.

INT. APARTMENT - EVENING

Medium/wide of apartment living room. We hear a shower in operation.

INTERVIEWEE opens door, slaps off shoes, loosens tie.

Deposits half eaten sandwich and lotto ticket on the coffee table.

CU: TV is on, but muted, showing the lottery draw.

INTERVIEWEE removes his jacket, dropping it on the couch. Walks frame right (to the shower sound) and to presumably continue undressing himself out of our sight.

Intercut between the TV and the lotto ticket. The hosts' gleeful faces, contrasted with the mundanity of the ticket.

CU: Ticket fluttering a little, while out of focus, the TV screen shows the word: "JACKPOT!!!" flashing over and over again.

The sole sound that persists is the shower.

FADE TO BLACK.