The Interview  
By Michael Somes

Characters:  
CANDIDATE  
FISCHER  
SECRETARY  
VICE PRESIDENT

Note: A spot of light could abstract the elevator during scene changes, during floor changes stage should be dark except for the spot of light that is the “elevator” in which the candidate will stand. Other means of abstracting the elevator can be used provided they offer an unobstructed view of CANDIDATE while he/she is in it.

The Elevator is in an office building. Dress is formal. CANDIDATE is on the bottom floor; she calls the elevator, and rides it to the top. FISCHER waits at a desk there. VICE PRESIDENT is a floor below; the SECRETARY is another floor down. On each floor there must be an abstraction of stairs, three small platforms, making a stairwell shape. FISCHER is leafing through a book. The elevator arrives and the candidate enters. The Elevator gets called away after the CANDIDATE leaves.

CANDIDATE  
I’m looking for Mr. Fischer.

FISCHER  
That would be me.

CANDIDATE  
I’m here for the interview.

FISCHER  
Yes.

CANDIDATE  
I have an interview with Mr. Fischer.

FISCHER  
Oh!

CANDIDATE  
And you said that was you.

FISCHER  
Sorry. There’s some confusion. I am Mr. Fischer, but you are looking for President Fischer.

CANDIDATE  
Can you tell me where to find him?

FISCHER  
I’m afraid not. I have no authority on the whereabouts of President Fischer. Or really any authority for that matter.

CANDIDATE  
How’d you get this office on the top floor?

FISCHER  
Are you suggesting some sort of link between my spatial relationship with the other employees and authority?

CANDIDATE  
I guess so.

FISCHER  
What an interesting idea...  
			Awkward beat.

FISCHER  
I’ll have to put that in the suggestion box. (He produces the suggestion box from under his desk.)

CANDIDATE  
You hold the suggestion box?

FISCHER  
Of course, it’s my job to read the suggestions.

CANDIDATE  
But, why should you see the suggestions?

FISCHER  
I have authority over the suggestion box.

CANDIDATE  
Why would you put your own suggestions in the box?
FISCHER
It gives me something to do. You'll want to go see the chief of security, one floor down. She'll get you to the president.

CANDIDATE moves towards the stairs.

FISCHER
Take the elevator, the stairs are out of order.

CANDIDATE calls the elevator. Beat.

CANDIDATE
How are the stairs out of order?

FISCHER
I take the elevator up here, and at the end of the day I take the elevator down.

CANDIDATE
It seems like an impossibility for an entire stairwell to be out of order.

FISCHER:
Well it is.

CANDIDATE:
There isn't a sign.

FISCHER
I have been given the duty of informing people.

CANDIDATE
Why have the person on the top floor tell people they can't take the stairs?

FISCHER
It gives me something to do.

CANDIDATE
Suppose someone took the stairs all the way up here, only to find out they were out of order?

FISCHER
That would be difficult.

CANDIDATE
If they didn't know what would stop them?

FISCHER
In that case they would have a thoroughly subpar stairs experience.

CANDIDATE
But...

FISCHER
Good day.

VICE PRESIDENT
You're here to see Mr. Fischer?

CANDIDATE
Yes.

VICE PRESIDENT
Take a guest pass.

CANDIDATE takes it.

Now if you head down stairs the secretary can make you an appointment.

CANDIDATE
I already made an appointment. I'm supposed to be meeting him now.

VICE PRESIDENT
If you are late to an appointment, there is a cancellation fee, and you can reschedule with the secretary downstairs.

The VICE PRESIDENT says this, and will repeat it mechanically until the CANDIDATE leaves. In between the CANDIDATE's lines VICE PRESIDENT starts this mantra and is interrupted by the CANDIDATE.

CANDIDATE
I'm not late. Five minutes late. Only because you haven't let me see him. Where is he? Do you know where he is? Can't you tell me?
I can still be on time if you help me get to him.
At least fashionably late.
I can't really reschedule.
I have other interviews.
Other offers.
Are you serious?
Is this how you treat a potential coworker?
Come on.

VICE PRESIDENT calls the elevator.

I don't need to talk to the secretary.
I know his schedule is free right now.
HIS SCHEDULE IS FREE BECAUSE YOU ARE MAKING HIM MISS MY APPOINTMENT!

CANDIDATE storms into the elevator, and takes it one floor down to the SECRETARY.

SECRETARY
You need an appointment?

CANDIDATE
I have one, thank you.

SECRETARY
Wait please.

CANDIDATE
I have the appointment right now. I need to find President Fischer!

SECRETARY
I am not responsible for the whereabouts of the President. One floor up is his office manager.

CANDIDATE
I've been one floor up there's only.

SECRETARY
(Interrupting) That's the office manager.

CANDIDATE
I thought she was chief of security.

SECRETARY
She's both. We don't have a lot of staff.

CANDIDATE
She's been extremely unhelpful; can I try the chap on the top floor again? Does one of his responsibilities include knowing where President Fischer is?

SECRETARY
You've been to the top floor?

CANDIDATE
Yes.

SECRETARY
You didn't see President Fischer?

CANDIDATE
Nope.

SECRETARY
He's the sole occupant of the top floor.

CANDIDATE
I saw a Mr. Fischer who claimed to have no real authority.

SECRETARY
Yes, that's him. He doubles as the receptionist.

CANDIDATE
Why do both?

SECRETARY
I'll not guess at the motives of President Fischer.
He makes a terrible receptionist, but he's a wonderful president.

Half Beat.

As for you, I'd go see the vice president.

CANDIDATE
That's not you by any chance...

SECRETARY
One floor up.

CANDIDATE
Damn it. (Calls elevator. Goes to VICE PRESIDENT)
CANDIDATE
I need to see President Fischer.

VICE PRESIDENT
Here's a guest pass, go to the secretary to make an-

CANDIDATE
(Interrupting) We've done that. I need to talk to the Vice President.

VICE PRESIDENT
In that case I'll need you to make an appointment with my secretary downstairs.

CANDIDATE
Come on.

VICE PRESIDENT
Then cleared for security threats by my personal bodyguard upstairs.

CANDIDATE
Really?

VICE PRESIDENT
And then back downstairs to get buzzed in.

CANDIDATE
What will it take for you to assume that I did that?

VICE PRESIDENT
You going and doing that.

CANDIDATE
How about twenty-five bucks?

VICE PRESIDENT
Done. He's upstairs.

CANDIDATE
I know.

FISCHER
There you are! Well done!

CANDIDATE
Sorry I'm late.

FISCHER
That's alright. I got to read some more pages in this new management handbook. (He shows The Castle) How do you do one of these again? I haven't in so long.

CANDIDATE
Is that an interview question?
FISCHER
Good question!

Awkward beat.

CANDIDATE
Would you like to continue?

FISCHER
I'm really not sure... things get so stressful, and although the money is good I never really get to spend time with my family and...

CANDIDATE
Yeah, I mean, but...

FISCHER
But you're right, we do good work here, help a lot of people out. Is it worth it though?

CANDIDATE
That's for you to decide isn't it?

FISCHER
Yeah, I think it is though. I don't know. I mean when I was a kid I certainly didn't dream of becoming this, but...

CANDIDATE
What did you dream of?

FISCHER
I don't know, an astronaut or something. I mean that's gone but the future here looks kind of...

CANDIDATE
But where do you see yourself in five years?

FISCHER
Probably doing this whether I like it or not...

CANDIDATE
I'm sorry...

FISCHER
Don't sweat it. Wait a minute who are you?

CANDIDATE
I'm here for an interview.

FISCHER
In HR, bottom floor.

CANDIDATE
I was told specifically it was with you.

FISCHER
Impossible, all interviews are handled by HR. Company policy.

CANDIDATE
When did that happen? I scheduled it with you!

FISCHER
New policy, it took effect five minutes ago. Sorry.

CANDIDATE
I made the appointment before.

FISCHER
It's retroactive. Bottom floor.

CANDIDATE
Forget it. I'm done. (She storms to the elevator, presses the button and nothing happens.)

CANDIDATE
No, no, no, no! (Frantically presses the button.)

FISCHER
It's probably out of order. I'll have the receptionist put a sign up.

CANDIDATE
Isn't that you?

FISCHER
I beg your pardon, I am the president of a major architectural firm!

CANDIDATE
An architectural firm that can't even manage an elevator?

FISCHER
Architects, not engineers.
CANDIDATE storms out the stairs have her head from the top of the abstracted "stairs" to the bottom. However, do not have her change floors the stairs work exactly like how they appear that is, not at all.

CANDIDATE
What? How is this possible?

FISCHER
The stairs are out of order.

CANDIDATE
You're an architectural firm and you can't fix your own stairs?

FISCHER
We haven't had a client make us fix the stairs. We work for the client.

CANDIDATE
You won't help yourselves?

FISCHER
I didn't get into architecture to help myself. I did it to help others.

CANDIDATE
Suppose I hired you to fix your stairs.

FISCHER
I think we can do that. Go down a floor to talk to our quotes and contracts department.

CANDIDATE
How?

FISCHER
Pardon?

CANDIDATE
There is no elevator, there are no stairs. There are no windows. How?

FISCHER
Let me see... (He opens the book, revealing it is hollowed out. He produces a watch.) Here we are! 9:53 on the dot. (He begins to make his way to the elevator.)

FISCHER:
Oh dear.

Like before, FISCHER will repeat this line like a mantra, restarting each time CANDIDATE speaks. He says this in between the CANDIDATE's lines. CANDIDATE is frantically trying the elevator racing to the stairs trying anything to get out speed of lines accelerates throughout.

CANDIDATE
Come on, you can fix the stairs. Nobody is stopping you but yourself! It's a stairwell, ancient people figured it out! How hard can it be? It might even predate the wheel! Just do it? I'll pay for it. Approve it! Aren't you the president? What about your dreams? What about you as a little kid? (Gradually slowing down.) What about... What about... What about... (She collapses from exhaustion.)

CANDIDATE
What? NO! YOU CAN CHANGE THIS! (She shakes FISCHER)

FISCHER
I'm sorry but company policy dictates clients process their orders on the second floor...

We hear the elevator ding. FISCHER walks over to it. He turns out the lights in the room. Dark stage, the only illumination that of the elevator. FISCHER steps in. Blackout.

End Scene