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## The Interview

Michael Somes  
*Denison University*

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## 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.

*The elevator has arrived and the CANDIDATE hurries out. He takes the elevator one floor down, to the VICE PRESIDENT.*

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.

You need to see President Fischer?

CANDIDATE

Yes.

VICE PRESIDENT

He's in an interview with a candidate for hire.

CANDIDATE

That would be me.



VICE PRESIDENT

Unlikely, because you are here.

CANDIDATE

I'm only here because you are keeping me.

VICE PRESIDENT

Go talk to his personal assistant, one floor down.

CANDIDATE

NO! I know he's on the top floor, and I am going to see him! Tell him I'm coming.

VICE PRESIDENT

It doesn't work that way. Look. *(Produces an org-chart. It has the three floors The line starts at the top, runs down, and then back up several times. Several other confusing lines and end around exist. It's a mess.)*

CANDIDATE

What can I do to avoid that and see President Fischer?

VICE PRESIDENT

Nothing I'm afraid.

CANDIDATE

My last 25 bucks.

VICE PRESIDENT

Done. He's upstairs.

CANDIDATE

I know. *(He goes to call the elevator.)*

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.

*Beat.*

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.)*

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...

*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.)*

FISCHER:

Oh dear.

*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