

THE JOB INTERVIEW

Scene: an office, somewhere, anywhere

Time: the present (and no time like it, either)

Dramatis personae:

HRD: The Human Resources Director for Conglomerated Department Stores Inc.

JPM: John P. McBean, job applicant

HRD: (enters hurriedly, tosses attache case on empty chair)

Good morning, Mr McBean - sorry I'm a few minutes late. Traffic is worse than usual this morning, heh heh . . .

JPM (unsmiling):

Is it? I didn't notice. As you would have seen fifteen minutes ago, I was here on time.

HRD (opening case, spreading papers on desk)

Yes, of course . . . now, I understand that you've applied for a position in our Customer Relations department - is that right?

JPM:

Yes, it is, and by the way, you wouldn't have to "understand" anything if you had read my job application. I put the information right there on the line that says "Position Applied For". Should I have used a laundry marker instead of ballpoint pen? Maybe a crayon?

HRD:

. . . er . . .

JPM:

Don't feel too badly about it . . . lots of people have trouble reading English. But they're primarily illiterate dwilfs from godforsaken places, so I'm a little surprised at you, a genuine high-school graduate and all . . .

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HRD: (*coughing slightly*)

Can you tell me a little about your present job? I see your application mentions something about "quantum statistical analysis" . . .

JPM:

I'll tell you, but only if you say "please".

HRD:

. . . please?

JPM:

Certainly. Right now I'm a musician. I play in an Irish band here in town, the Sorry Bags o' Shite. We're sort of electro-traditional. Maybe you've heard of us?

HRD:

. . . uh . . . no, can't say I have. (*Brightly*) But I really like Irish music - I've seen "Riverdance" three times, and we . . . (*yells*) Hey, what the hell did you do that for? The desk set you just threw through the window was a gift from my wife!

JPM:

So sorry . . . it must have been that strange spasm I get in my throwing arm whenever somebody mentions "Riverdance". I mean, it's almost like a disability . . . damn near a syndrome, if you know what I mean.

HRD:

Oh . . . a disability? (*makes note on legal pad*) Oh well, no harm done. I never really liked that desk set anyway.

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JPM:

Yeah, right - then why are there tears in your eyes?

HRD:

Uh . . . I'm allergic to broken glass. Now tell me what you do in this Irish group you play with, the Sorry . . .?

JPM:

Bags o' Shite. Well, I do a little of everything. I sing, I say silly stuff, I insult patrons and waitresses, I pass gas onstage, I play bodhrán . . .

HRD: (*jotting notes furiously*)

You play . . . what was that last one again?

JPM:

A bodhrán. It's a big round goatskin drum, like a big tambourine with no bells. You smack the bejayzus out of it with a stick while the other guys are trying to play. If you do really good, sometimes they won't hit you or call you names. But that doesn't happen to me too much - the hitting, I mean. I took a course in kick-boxing in high school, and I go right for the nuts. No fancy preliminaries. The other guys in the band have learned to respect that.

HRD (*more scribbling*)

So the other band members. . . abuse you?

JPM:

Well, it's not really abuse, because they keep telling me they're doing it for my own good. And then they let me buy drinks for them. But sometimes when I go to the bar, they hide my bodhrán and won't tell me where it is until the gig is over. One night Mick

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the box player told me a badger ate it, but I didn't believe him. You wouldn't believe him either if you knew Mick.

HRD:

Hmmm . . . tell me about some of the other band members.

JPM:

I'd rather not. If I told you any more about the band, you might be tempted to say the "R" word again, and I don't know what I'd throw out the window next.

HRD:

Fine. I don't want to make you uncomfortable.

JPM:

I believe you. And by the way, don't say anything about "Danny Boy" or "The Butterfly" either, unless you have Wrecked Face Insurance and a claims agent you can get on the phone within minutes.

HRD (*taking deep breath*):

Look, Mr. McBean, I respect you for your . . . for . . . uh . . . for being straightforward about everything, but quite frankly I've never see anyone come in here for a job interview with an attitude even remotely like yours.

JPM:

Well, there's always a first time, right? But then again, a big homely loser like me, what more could I expect . . . (*sniffles insincerely*) I told them at the Institute that the syndrome would be a problem, but they kept saying I was wrong, that I should go ahead and apply . . . (*more sniffing*)

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HRD (*moved*):

Now hold on a minute. All I'm saying is that you might not be suitable for the job *here*. Sure, you're rude, abrasive, and opinionated, and quite full of yourself without I fear too much reason to be so, you're not especially bright, and sure, you lack any obvious talent, but I'm sure there's someone somewhere that might someday want to hire you for something . . . it's just a case of "not here, not now". It doesn't mean you're a bad human being. You're just not a Conglomerated kind of guy.

JPM (*recovering quickly from self-pity*):

All those things you said about me - would you put that in writing? Except you can leave out those "not a bad human being" and "Conglomerated" parts.

HRD (*with some surprise*):

In writing? What for?

JPM:

I'm trying to start a Irish session here in town and the guy that owns the pub was asking me about my qualifications. You've just listed most of them. Thanks!

HRD:

Uh . . . don't mention it. I'll write it up and email you a copy.

JPM:

That's very kind of you. I'll let you know what happens. By the way, the Sorry Bags play every Tuesday 8 pm at O'Flynn's Respectable Rest out on Farkle. If you're in the neighborhood some time, drop in and I'll buy you a drink. The Rest is the joint with all the shamrocks in the window, right between the strip club and the Mexican restaurant. Ask for Johnny Mac - that's what they call me.

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HRD:

Farkle? I don't think I've ever been out that way . . .

JPM:

Yeah, it's right off the House of Corrections exit from the freeway. The pub is to the right about three stoplights off the ramp. There's a big ladder sign that mentions a discount funeral parlor, but the government shut it down. O'Flynn owned that too.

HRD:

I'll . . . uh . . . I'll check with the Mrs. when she gets back from her stint with the Peace Corps in three or four years. She's Irish on her great-grand-mother's side - I'm sure she'd enjoy hearing you.

JPM:

Cool! Remember - Johnny McBean, the bodhrán machine, and his band, the . . . ?

HRD:

Sorry Bags . . . ?

JPM:

O' Shite! (*Rises, shakes hands*):

Well, see you around. I'd love to spend more time chatting but I have to meet Mick and Stinky and the lads and see if we can get our instruments out of pawn before the gig tonight. Bye!

[curtain]

Disclaimer (about damn time, too)

This is a work of fiction. Any resemblance, allusion, or sly innuendo relating to any musician living and/or deceased is more or less

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unintentional, and since that's the case why waste money on lawyers, you know what I'm saying?

IMPRIMATUR:

Nihil invenimus quod non ridendis pertinet.

+ *Zoukius Episcopus*

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