

INTERVIEW

The set is white and impersonal.
Two subway stairs are at the back of the stage. On the sides there is one entrance for Applicants and another entrance for Interviewers.

The only furniture or props needed are eight grey blocks. The actors, four men and four women, are dressed in black and white street clothes. During the employment agency session only, Interviewers wear translucent plastic masks. There is intermittent harpsichord accompaniment; dance variations (minuet, Virginia reel, twist) on a familiar American tune, but much of the music - singing, whistling, humming - is provided by the actors on stage. It is suggested, moreover, that as a company of actors and a director approach the play they find their own variations in rhythmic expression. The successful transition from one setting to the next depends on the actors' ability to play together as a company and to drop character instantaneously and completely in order to assume another character, or for a group effect.

(The First Interviewer for an employment agency, a young woman, sits on stage as the First Applicant, a Housepainter, a man, enters.)

FIRST INTERVIEWER. (Standing.) How do you do?

FIRST APPLICANT. (Sitting.) Thank you, I said, not knowing where to sit. (The characters will often include the audience in what they say; as if the characters were being interviewed by the audience.)

FIRST INTERVIEWER. (Pointedly.) Won't you sit down?

FIRST APPLICANT. (Standing again quickly, afraid to dis-please.) I'm sorry.

FIRST INTERVIEWER. (Busy with imaginary papers, pointing to a particular seat.) There. Name please? ^{Jumps up}

FIRST APPLICANT. Jack Smith.

FIRST INTERVIEWER. Jack What Smith?

FIRST APPLICANT. Beg pardon?

FIRST INTERVIEWER. Fill in the blank space, please.

Jack blank space Smith.

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FIRST APPLICANT. I don't have any.

FIRST INTERVIEWER. I asked you to sit down. (Pointing.) There.

FIRST APPLICANT. (Sitting.) I'm sorry.

FIRST INTERVIEWER. Name, please?

FIRST APPLICANT. Jack Smith.

FIRST INTERVIEWER. You haven't told me your middle name.

FIRST APPLICANT. I haven't got one.

FIRST INTERVIEWER. (Suspicious but writing it down.)

No middle name. (Second Applicant, a Floorwasher, a woman enters.) How do you do?

SECOND APPLICANT. (Sitting.) Thank you, I said, not knowing what.

FIRST INTERVIEWER. Won't you sit down?

SECOND APPLICANT. (Standing.) I'm sorry.

FIRST APPLICANT. I am sitting.

FIRST INTERVIEWER. (Pointing.) There. Name, please?

SECOND APPLICANT. (Sitting.) Jane Smith.

FIRST APPLICANT. Jack Smith.

FIRST INTERVIEWER. What blank space Smith?

SECOND APPLICANT. Ellen.

FIRST APPLICANT. Haven't got one.

FIRST INTERVIEWER. What job are you applying for?

FIRST APPLICANT. Housepainter.

SECOND APPLICANT. Floorwasher.

FIRST INTERVIEWER. We haven't many vacancies in that.

What experience have you had?

FIRST APPLICANT. A lot.

SECOND APPLICANT. Who needs experience for floorwashing?

FIRST INTERVIEWER. You will help me by making your answers clear.

FIRST APPLICANT. Eight years.

SECOND APPLICANT. Twenty years. (Third Applicant, a Banker, enters.)

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Charles Boyle

FIRST INTERVIEWER. How do you do?
SECOND APPLICANT. I'm good at it.
FIRST APPLICANT. Very well.
THIRD APPLICANT. (Sitting.) Thank you, I said, as casually as I could.
FIRST INTERVIEWER. Won't you sit down?
THIRD APPLICANT. (Standing again.) I'm sorry.
SECOND APPLICANT. I am sitting.
FIRST APPLICANT. (Standing again.) I'm sorry.
FIRST INTERVIEWER. (Pointing to a particular seat.) There. Name, please?
FIRST APPLICANT. Jack Smith.
SECOND APPLICANT. Jane Smith.
THIRD APPLICANT. Richard Smith.
FIRST INTERVIEWER. What exactly Smith, please?
THIRD APPLICANT. Richard F.
SECOND APPLICANT. Jane Ellen.
FIRST APPLICANT. Jack None.
FIRST INTERVIEWER. What are you applying for?
FIRST APPLICANT. Housepainter.
SECOND APPLICANT. I need money.
THIRD APPLICANT. Bank president.
FIRST INTERVIEWER. How many years have you been in your present job?
THIRD APPLICANT. Three.
SECOND APPLICANT. Twenty.
FIRST APPLICANT. Eight. (Fourth Applicant, a Lady's Maid, enters.)
FIRST INTERVIEWER. How do you do?
FOURTH APPLICANT. I said, thank you, not knowing where to sit.
THIRD APPLICANT. I'm fine.
SECOND APPLICANT. Do I have to tell you?
FIRST APPLICANT. Very well.
FIRST INTERVIEWER. Won't you sit down?
FOURTH APPLICANT. I'm sorry.
THIRD APPLICANT. (Sitting again.) Thank you.

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SECOND APPLICANT. (Standing again.) I'm sorry.
FIRST APPLICANT. (Sitting.) Thanks.
FIRST INTERVIEWER. (Pointing to a particular seat.) There. Name, please? (Fourth Applicant sits.)
ALL APPLICANTS. Smith.
FIRST INTERVIEWER. What Smith?
FOURTH APPLICANT. Mary Victoria.
THIRD APPLICANT. Richard F.
SECOND APPLICANT. Jane Ellen.
FIRST APPLICANT. Jack None.
FIRST INTERVIEWER. How many years experience have you had?
FOURTH APPLICANT. Eight years.
SECOND APPLICANT. Twenty years.
FIRST APPLICANT. Eight years.
THIRD APPLICANT. Three years, four months and nine days not counting vacations and sick leave and the time both my daughters and my wife had the whooping cough.
FIRST INTERVIEWER. Just answer the questions please.
FOURTH APPLICANT. Yes, sir.
THIRD APPLICANT. Sure.
SECOND APPLICANT. I'm sorry.
FIRST APPLICANT. That's what I'm doing.
(Second Interviewer, a young man, enters and goes to inspect Applicants. With the entrance of each Interviewer, the speed of the action accelerates.)
SECOND INTERVIEWER. How do you do?
FIRST APPLICANT. (Standing.) I'm sorry.
SECOND APPLICANT. (Sitting.) Thank you.
THIRD APPLICANT. (Standing.) I'm sorry.
FOURTH APPLICANT. (Sitting.) Thank you.
SECOND INTERVIEWER. What's your name?
FIRST INTERVIEWER. Your middle name, please.
FIRST APPLICANT. Smith.
SECOND APPLICANT. Ellen.
THIRD APPLICANT. Smith, Richard F.
FOURTH APPLICANT. Mary Victoria Smith.

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FIRST INTERVIEWER. What is your exact age?
 SECOND INTERVIEWER. Have you any children?
 FIRST APPLICANT. I'm thirty-two years old.
 SECOND APPLICANT. One son.
 THIRD APPLICANT. I have two daughters.
 FOURTH APPLICANT. Do I have to tell you that?
 FIRST INTERVIEWER. Are you married, single or other?
 SECOND INTERVIEWER. Have you ever earned more than that?
 FIRST APPLICANT. No.
 SECOND APPLICANT. Never.
 THIRD APPLICANT. Married.
 FOURTH APPLICANT. Single, now. (*Third Interviewer, a woman, enters.*)
 THIRD INTERVIEWER. How do you do?
 FIRST APPLICANT. (*Sitting.*) Thank you.
 SECOND APPLICANT. (*Standing.*) I'm sorry.
 THIRD APPLICANT. (*Sitting.*) Thank you.
 FOURTH APPLICANT. (*Sitting.*) Thank you.
 FOURTH APPLICANT. (*Standing.*) I'm sorry. (*Fourth Interviewer, a man, appears on the heels of Third Interviewer.*)
 FOURTH INTERVIEWER. How do you do?
 FIRST APPLICANT. (*Standing.*) I'm sorry.
 SECOND APPLICANT. (*Sitting.*) Thank you.
 THIRD APPLICANT. (*Sitting.*) I'm sorry.
 FOURTH APPLICANT. (*Sitting.*) Thank you.
 ALL INTERVIEWERS. What is your social security number, please? (*Applicants do the next four speeches simultaneously.*)
 FIRST APPLICANT. 333 dash 6598 dash 5590765439 dash 3.
 SECOND APPLICANT. 999 dash 5733 dash 699075432 dash 11.
 THIRD APPLICANT. (*Sitting.*) I'm sorry. I left it home. I can call home if you let me use the phone.
 FOURTH APPLICANT. I always get it confused with my checking account number. (*Interviewers do the next four*

speeches in a round.
 FIRST INTERVIEWER. Will you be so kind as to tell me a little about yourself?
 SECOND INTERVIEWER. Can you fill me in on something about your background please?
 THIRD INTERVIEWER. It'd be a help to our employers if you'd give me a little for our files.
 FOURTH INTERVIEWER. Now what would you say, say, to a prospective employer about yourself? (*Applicants address parts of the following four speeches in particular, directly to the audience.*)

FIRST APPLICANT. I've been a Union member twenty years, I said to them, if that's the kind of thing you want to know. Good health, I said. Veteran of two wars. Three kids. Wife's dead. Wife's sister, she takes care of them. I don't know why I'm telling you this, I said, smiling. (*Sits.*)
 SECOND APPLICANT. (*Standing.*) So what do you want to know, I told the guy. I've been washin' floors for twenty years. Nobody's ever complained. I don't loiter after hours, I said to him. Just because my boy's been in trouble is no reason, I said, no reason - I go right home, I said to him. Right home. (*Sits.*)
 THIRD APPLICANT. (*Standing.*) I said that I was a Republican and we could start right there. And then I said that I spend most of my free time watching television or playing in the garden of my four-bedroom house with our lovely daughters, aged nine and eleven. I mentioned that my wife plays with us, too, and that her name is Katherine, although, I said, casually, her good friends call her Kitty. I wasn't at all nervous. (*Sits.*)
 FOURTH APPLICANT. (*Standing.*) Just because I'm here, sir, I told him, is no reason for you to patronize me. I've been a lady's maid, I said, in houses you would not be allowed into. My father was a gentleman of leisure, and, what's more, I said, my references are unimpeachable.
 FIRST INTERVIEWER. I see.
 SECOND INTERVIEWER. All right.

Interviewer's
 Speeches
 overlap
 close breaks
 on wife
 in interview

SECOND INTERVIEWER. (Stepping around and speaking to Third Applicant.) It goes without saying, I suppose, that you could stand an FBI security test?

THIRD INTERVIEWER. (Stepping around and speaking to Fourth Applicant.) I suppose there are no records of minor thefts, or shall we say, borrowings, from your late employer?

FOURTH INTERVIEWER. (Stepping around and speaking to First Applicant.) Nothing political in your Union dealings? Nothing leftist, I suppose? Nothing rightist either, I hope. (Applicants and Interviewers line up for a square dance. Music under the following.)

FIRST APPLICANT. (Bowing to First Interviewer.) What's it to you, buddy?

SECOND APPLICANT. (Bowing to Second Interviewer.) Eleanor Roosevelt wasn't more honest.

THIRD APPLICANT. (Bowing to Third Interviewer.) My record is hly-white, sir!

FOURTH APPLICANT. (Bowing to Fourth Interviewer.) Mrs. Thumblewat used to take me to the Bank and I'd watch her open her box! (Each Interviewer, during his next speech, goes U. to form another line.)

FIRST INTERVIEWER. Good!

SECOND INTERVIEWER. Fine!

THIRD INTERVIEWER. Swell!

FOURTH INTERVIEWER. Fine! (Applicants come D. together. They do the next four speeches simultaneously and directly to the audience.)

FIRST APPLICANT. I know my rights. As a veteran. And a citizen. I know my rights. And my cousin is very well known in certain circles, if you get what I mean. In the backroom of a certain candy store in the Italian district of this city my cousin is very well known, if you get what I mean. I know my rights. And I know my cousin.

SECOND APPLICANT. (Putting on a pious act, looking up to Heaven) Holy Mary mother of God, must I endure all the sinners of this earth? Must I go on a poor washerwoman

Simultaneous

Moving to positions

Applicant positions

THIRD INTERVIEWER. That's fine.
FOURTH INTERVIEWER. Of course. (Applicants do the following four speeches simultaneously.)

FIRST APPLICANT. Just you call anybody at the Union and ask them. They'll hand me a clean bill of health.
SECOND APPLICANT. I haven't been to jail if that's what you mean. Not me. I'm clean.

THIRD APPLICANT. My record is impeccable. There's not a stain on it.
FOURTH APPLICANT. My references would permit me to be a governess, that's what.

FIRST INTERVIEWER. (Going to First Applicant and inspecting under his arms.) When did you last have a job housepainting?

SECOND INTERVIEWER. (Going to Second Applicant and inspecting her teeth.) Where was the last place you worked?

THIRD INTERVIEWER. (Going to Third Applicant and inspecting him.) What was your last position in a bank?

FOURTH INTERVIEWER. (Going to Fourth Applicant and inspecting her.) Have you got your references with you? (Applicants do the following four speeches simultaneously, with music under.)

FIRST APPLICANT. I've already told you I worked right along 'til I quit.

SECOND APPLICANT. Howard Johnson's on Fifty-First Street all last month.

THIRD APPLICANT. First Greenfield International and Franklin Banking Corporation Banking and Stone Incorporated.

FOURTH APPLICANT. I've got a letter right here in my bag. Mrs. Muggintwat only let me go because she died. (Interviewers do the next four speeches in a round.)

FIRST INTERVIEWER. (Stepping around and speaking to Second Applicant.) Nothing terminated your job at Howard Johnson's? No franks, say, missing at the end of the day, I suppose?

All set
Cin character
Slewer back
SUSPICIOUS
MURDER
APPLICANTS

OPERATING

ONE
APPAS

AM

in this City of Sim? Help me, oh my God, to leave this earthly crust, and damn your silly impudence, young man, if you think you can treat an old woman like this. You've got another thought coming, you have.

THIRD APPLICANT. I have an excellent notion to report you to the Junior Chamber of Commerce of this City of which I am the Secretary and was in line to be elected Vice President and still will be if you are able to find me gainful and respectable employ!

FOURTH APPLICANT. Miss Thumblebottom married in to the Twiths and if you start insulting me, young man, you'll have to start in insulting the Twiths as well. A Twith isn't a nobody, you know, as good as a Thumbletwat, and they all call me their loving Mary, you know.

ALL INTERVIEWERS. (In loud raucous voices.) Do you smoke? (Each Applicant, during his next speech, turns U.)

FIRST APPLICANT. No thanks.

SECOND APPLICANT. Not now.

THIRD APPLICANT. No thanks.

FOURTH APPLICANT. Not now.

ALL INTERVIEWERS. (Again in harsh voice and bowing or curtsying.) Do you mind if I do?

FIRST APPLICANT. I don't care.

SECOND APPLICANT. Who cares?

THIRD APPLICANT. Course not.

FOURTH APPLICANT. Go ahead. (Interviewers form a little group off to themselves.)

FIRST INTERVIEWER. I tried to quit but couldn't manage.

SECOND INTERVIEWER. I'm a three pack-a-day man, I guess.

THIRD INTERVIEWER. If I'm gonna go I'd rather go smoking.

FOURTH INTERVIEWER. I'm down to five a day. (Applicants all start to sneeze.)

FIRST APPLICANT. Excuse me, I'm gonna sneeze.

SECOND APPLICANT. Have you got a hanky?

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THIRD APPLICANT. I have a cold coming on.
FOURTH APPLICANT. I thought I had some tissues in my bag. (Applicants all sneeze.)

FIRST INTERVIEWER. Gezundheit.

SECOND INTERVIEWER. God bless you.

THIRD INTERVIEWER. Gezundheit.

FOURTH INTERVIEWER. God Bless You. (Applicants all sneeze simultaneously.)

FIRST INTERVIEWER. God Bless You.

SECOND INTERVIEWER. Gezundheit.

THIRD INTERVIEWER. God Bless You.

FOURTH INTERVIEWER. Gezundheit. (Applicants return to their seats.)

FIRST APPLICANT. Thanks, I said.

SECOND APPLICANT. I said thanks.

THIRD APPLICANT. Thank you, I said.

FOURTH APPLICANT. I said thank you. (Interviewers stand on their seats and say the following words of some person were speaking.)

FIRST INTERVIEWER. Do you

SECOND INTERVIEWER. speak any

THIRD INTERVIEWER. foreign

FOURTH INTERVIEWER. languages?

FIRST INTERVIEWER. Have you

SECOND INTERVIEWER. got a

THIRD INTERVIEWER. college

FOURTH INTERVIEWER. education?

FIRST INTERVIEWER. Do you

SECOND INTERVIEWER. take

THIRD INTERVIEWER. shorthand?

FOURTH INTERVIEWER. Have you

FIRST INTERVIEWER. any

SECOND INTERVIEWER. special

THIRD INTERVIEWER. qualifications?

FIRST INTERVIEWER. Yes? ALL

FIRST APPLICANT. (Stepping up to Interviewers) Sure, I can speak Italian, I said. My whole family is Italian so I

And I know my cousin (Giles) end.

Applicants also sneeze

would up to sneeze

EXPERIENCES

brother / left

P

oughta be able to, and I can match colours, like green to green, so that even your own mother couldn't tell the difference, begging your pardon, I said, I went through the eighth grade. (Steps back.) *turn to the right*
SECOND INTERVIEWER. Next.
SECOND APPLICANT. (Stepping up to Interviewers) My grandmother taught me some Gaelic, I told the guy. And my old man could rattle off in Yiddish when he had a load on. I never went to school at all excepting church school, but I can write my name good and clear. Also, I said, I can smell an Irishman or a Yid a hundred miles off. (Steps back.) *one chair*

THIRD INTERVIEWER. Next.
THIRD APPLICANT. (Stepping up to Interviewers) I've never had any need to take shorthand in my position, I said to him. I've a Z.A. in business administration from Philadelphia, and a Z.Z.A. from M.Y.U. night school. I mentioned that I speak a little Spanish of course, and that I'm a whiz at model frigates and warships. (Steps back.)
FOURTH INTERVIEWER. Next.

FOURTH APPLICANT. (Stepping up to Interviewers.) I can sew a straight seam I said, hand or machine, and I have been exclusively a lady's maid although I can cook and will too if I have someone to assist me I said. Unfortunately aside from self-education, grammar school is as far as I have progressed. (Steps back. Each Interviewer, during his next speech, bows or curtsies to the Applicant nearest him.)
FIRST INTERVIEWER. Good.

SECOND INTERVIEWER. Fine.
THIRD INTERVIEWER. Very helpful.
FOURTH INTERVIEWER. Thank you. (Each Applicant, during his next speech, jumps on the back of the Interviewer nearest him.)

FOURTH APPLICANT. You're welcome, I'm sure. *on*
THIRD APPLICANT. Anything you want to know.
SECOND APPLICANT. Just ask me.

FIRST APPLICANT. Fire away, fire away. (The next eight

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SIM.
speeches are spoken simultaneously, with Applicants on Interviewers' backs.

FIRST INTERVIEWER. Well unless there's anything special you want to tell me, I think -

SECOND INTERVIEWER. Is there anything more you think I should know about before you -

THIRD INTERVIEWER. I wonder if we've left anything out of this questionnaire or if you -

FOURTH INTERVIEWER. I suppose I've got all the information down here unless you can -

FIRST APPLICANT. I've got kids to support, you know, and I need a job real quick -

SECOND APPLICANT. Do you think you could try and get me something today because I -

THIRD APPLICANT. How soon do you suppose I can expect to hear from your agency? Do you -?

FOURTH APPLICANT. I don't like to sound pressureful, but you know I'm currently on unemployment - (Each Applicant, during his next speech, jumps off Interviewer's back.)

FIRST APPLICANT. Beggin' your pardon. *off backs*

SECOND APPLICANT. So sorry.

THIRD APPLICANT. Excuse me.

FOURTH APPLICANT. Go ahead. (Each Interviewer, during his next speech bows and remains in that position.)

FIRST INTERVIEWER. That's quite all right.

SECOND INTERVIEWER. I'm sorry. *Bend*

THIRD INTERVIEWER. I'm sorry.

FOURTH INTERVIEWER. My fault. (Each Applicant, during his next speech, begins leap-frogging over Interviewers' backs. *over*)

FIRST APPLICANT. My fault.

SECOND APPLICANT. My fault. *over*

THIRD APPLICANT. I'm sorry.

FOURTH APPLICANT. My fault. (Each Interviewer, during his next speech, begins leapfrogging too.)

FIRST INTERVIEWER. That's all right.

SECOND INTERVIEWER. My fault. *over*

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full circle then on to chair

Backs

aps jump twice

THIRD INTERVIEWER. I'm sorry.

FOURTH INTERVIEWER. Excuse me.

(The leappfrogging continues as the preceding eight lines are repeated simultaneously. Then the Interviewers confer in a huddle and come out of it.)

~~FIRST INTERVIEWER.~~ Do you enjoy your work?

FIRST APPLICANT. Sure, I said, I'm proud. Why not?

Sure I know I'm no Rembrandt, I said, but I'm proud of my work, I said to him.

SECOND APPLICANT. I told him it stinks. But what am I supposed to do, sit home and rot?

THIRD APPLICANT. /Do I like my work, he asked me. ^{slight pause}

Well, I said, to gain time, do I like my work? Well, I said, I don't know.

FOURTH APPLICANT. I told him right straight out: for a sensible person, a lady's maid is the *only possible* way of life.

~~SECOND-INTERVIEWER.~~ Do you think you're irreplace-
able?

ALL APPLICANTS. Oh, yes indeed. ^{turn}

ALL INTERVIEWERS. Irreplaceable? ^{over}

ALL APPLICANTS. Yes, yes indeed. ^{shoulder again}

~~THIRD-INTERVIEWER.~~ Do you like me? ^{turn to audience}

FIRST APPLICANT. You're a nice man. ^{as saying line}

SECOND APPLICANT. Huh?

THIRD APPLICANT. Why do you ask?

FOURTH APPLICANT. It's not a question of "like."

FIRST INTERVIEWER. Well, we'll be in touch with you.

This is the beginning of leaving the agency. Soft music

under. Applicants and Interviewers push their seats into

two masses of four boxes on either side of the stage. Appli-

cants leave first, joining hands to form a revolving door.)

FOURTH INTERVIEWER. What sort of day will it be?

FIRST APPLICANT. I bet we'll have rain.

SECOND APPLICANT. Cloudy, clearing in the afternoon.

THIRD APPLICANT. Mild, I think, with some snow. ^{clearly}

FOURTH APPLICANT. Precisely the same as yesterday. ^{in rain}

(All are now leaving the agency, not in any orderly fashion. Interviewers start down one of the subway stairs at the back of the stage and Applicants start down the other. The following speeches overlap and are heard indistinctly as crowd noise.)

SECOND APPLICANT. Can you get me one?

FIRST INTERVIEWER. See you tomorrow.

THIRD APPLICANT. When will I hear from you?

SECOND INTERVIEWER. We'll let you know.

FOURTH APPLICANT. Where's my umbrella?

THIRD INTERVIEWER. I'm going to a movie.

FIRST APPLICANT. So how about it?

FOURTH INTERVIEWER. Good night.

THIRD APPLICANT. Can you help me, Doctor, I asked.

(When all of the actors are offstage, the Four Interviewer

makes a siren sound and the following speeches continue

from downstairs as a loud crowd noise for a few moments;

they overlap so that the stage is empty only briefly.)

FIRST INTERVIEWER. It'll take a lot of work on your part.

SECOND INTERVIEWER. I'll do what I can for you.

THIRD INTERVIEWER. Of course I'll do my best.

FIRST INTERVIEWER. God helps those who help them-

selves.

FIRST APPLICANT. I have sinned deeply, Father, I said.

FIRST INTERVIEWER. You certainly have. I hope you

truly repent.

SECOND INTERVIEWER. In the name of the Father, et-

cetera and the Holy Ghost.

THIRD INTERVIEWER. Jesus saves.

FOURTH APPLICANT. I said, can you direct me to four-

teenth street, please?

FIRST INTERVIEWER. Just walk down that way a bit

and then turn left.

SECOND INTERVIEWER. Just walk down that way a bit

and then turn right.

THIRD INTERVIEWER. Take a cab!

X B leap 2.0

Backs to Audience Applicants of chair

over left shoulder

turn to audience as saying line

Step off chairs

ALL
FOURTH APPLICANT. Do you hear a siren?

~~INTERVIEWER~~ FIRST APPLICANT. What time is it?

SECOND APPLICANT. Half past three.

THIRD APPLICANT. It must be about four.

FOURTH APPLICANT. Half past five.

FIRST INTERVIEWER. My watch has stopped.

SECOND INTERVIEWER. Do you enjoy your work?
able?

THIRD INTERVIEWER. Do you like me? (*The actor who played the Fourth Interviewer comes on stage while continuing to make the loud siren noise. The actress who played the Fourth Applicant comes on stage and speaks to the audience.*)

FOURTH APPLICANT. Can you direct me to Fourteenth Street, please, I said. I seem to have lost my - I started to say, and then I was nearly run down. (*The remaining actors return to the stage to play various people on Fourteenth Street - ladies shopping, a panhandler, a man in a sandwich board, a peddler of "franks and orange", a snooty German couple, a lecher, a pair of sighing lovers, and so on. Each time the actors approach the audience, they do so as a different character. The actor will need to find the essential vocal and physical mannerisms of each character, play them, and drop them immediately to assume another character. The Fourth Applicant continues to address the audience directly, to involve them in her hysteria, going up one aisle and back. I haven't got my social security - I started to say, I saw someone right in front of me and I said, could you direct me please to Fourteenth Street, I have to get to Fourteenth Street, please, to get a bargain, I explained, although I could hardly remember what it was I wanted to buy. I read about it in the paper today, I said, only they weren't listening and I said to myself, my purpose for today is to get to - and I couldn't remember, I've set myself the task of - I've got to have - it's that I can save, I remembered where it was so I started to look for my wallet which*)

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I seem to have mislaid in my purse, and a man - please watch where you're going. I shouted with my purse half-open, and I seemed to forget - Fourteenth Street, I remembered, and you'd think with all these numbered streets and avenues a person wouldn't get lost - you'd think a person would help a person, you'd think so. So I asked the most respectable-looking man I could find, I asked him, please can you direct me to Fourteenth Street. He wouldn't answer. Just wouldn't. I'm lost, I said to myself. The paper said - the television said - they said, I couldn't remember what they had said. I turned for help: 'Jesus Saves,' the sign said, and a man was carrying it, both sides of his body, staring straight ahead. 'Jesus Saves,' the sign said. (*The passers-by jostle her more and more.*) I couldn't remember where I was going. 'Come and be saved,' it said, so I asked the man with the sign, please, sir, won't you tell me how to, dear lord, I thought, anywhere, please sir, won't you tell me how to, how to - can you direct me to Fourteenth Street, please! (*The passers-by have covered the Fourth Applicant. All actors mill about until they reached designated positions on the stage where they face the audience, a line of women and a line of men, students in a gym class; the Second Interviewer has stayed coolly out of the crowd during this last; now he is the Gym Instructor.*)

GYM INSTRUCTOR. I took my last drag and strode manfully into the room. Okay, men, I said brightly. Let's see the basic step. And breathe it in and two and three and four. And breathe it in and stick it out and three and four. Keep it nice. You want to radiate don't you? You want to radiate that charm and confidence they have in the movies, don't you, I told them. Now Ladies. And breathe it in and stick 'em out and step right out and four. And breathe it in and stick them out. Strick them out. That's what you got them for isn't it? I told them. And keep it nice, all of you. You're selling. Selling all the time. That's right, isn't it Miss? Right, I said. And stick it out and step right out and smile, I shouted. And breathe it in and stick it out, step right out

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Move forward until
Men enter Then curb

and smile. Keep it nice. Keep it nice for the other fellow and you'll see how nice it can be for you. Smile. Only don't smile so big, I told them. You look like a bunch of creeps when you smile that big, I told them. Smile like you're holding something back, I said, something big, a secret, I said. That's the ticket. Now lets see it. And breathe it in and stick it out. Step on out and nod. Step on out and shake. And tuck in your butts, I yelled. Step on out and smile. Faster, I told them, to see how fast they would go. And breathe it in and stick it out. Step right out and smile. And breathe it in and stick it out. Step right out and smile. And (The rapid movement of the gym class become the vibrations of passengers on a moving subway train. The actors rush to the boxes L., continuing to vibrate. Two of the actors stand on the boxes and smile like subway advertisements while the others directly in front of them, are pushed against each other on the crowded train. They make an appropriate soft subway noise, a kind of rhythmic hiss, and, as the subway passengers, form their faces into froze masks of indifference.)

SECOND APPLICANT. (Squeezing her way to an uncomfortable front seat and speaking half to herself.) God forgive me . . . You no-good chump, I said to him, I used to love you . . . not now, Not now . . . God forgive me . . . God forgive me for being old. Not now, I said. I wouldn't wipe the smell off your uncle's bottom now, not for turnips, no. God forgive me . . . Remember how we used to ride the roller coaster out at Coney Island, you and me? Remember? Holding hands in the cold and I'd get so scared and you'd get so scared and we'd hug each other and buy another ticket . . . Remember . . . ? Look now, I said. Look at me, now! God forgive you for leaving me with nothing. . . . God forgive you for being dead. . . . God forgive me for being alive. . . . (The actress who played the Third Interviewer slips out of the subway as though it were her stop and sits on a box, R., as a Telephone Operator. The other actors form a telephone circuit by holding hands in two concentric

X - Claps:

tric circles around the boxes, L.; they change the hissing sound of the subway into the whistling of telephone circuits.)

TELEPHONE OPERATOR. Just one moment and I will connect you with Information. (The Telephone Operator alternates her official voice with her ordinary voice; she uses the latter when she talks to her friend Roberta, another operator whom she reaches by flipping a switch. When she is talking to Roberta, the whistling of the telephone circuit changes into a different rhythm and the arms of the actors, which are forming the circuit, move into a different position.) Just one moment and I will connect you with Information. Ow! Listen, Roberta, I said, I've got this terrible cramp. Hang up and dial again please; we find nothing wrong with that number at all. You know what I ate, I said to her, you were there. Baked macaroni, Wednesday special, maplenut fudge, I said. I'm sorry but the number you have reached is not - I can feel it gnawing at me at the bottom of my belly, I told her. Do you think it's serious, Roberta? Appendicitis, I asked. Thank you for giving us the area code but the number you have reached is not in this area. Roberta, I asked her, do you think I have cancer? One moment please, I'm sorry the number you have reached - ow! Well, if it's lunch, Roberta, I said to her, you know what they can do with it tomorrow. Ow! One moment please; I said. Ow, I said, Roberta, I said, it really hurts. (The Telephone Operator falls off her seat in pain. The whistling of the telephone circuit becomes a siren. Three actors carry the Telephone Operator over to the boxes, L., which now serve as an operating table. Three actors imitate the Telephone Operator's breathing pattern while four actors behind her make stylized sounds and movements as surgeons and nurses in the midst of an operation. The Telephone Operator's breathing accelerates, then stops. After a moment the actors begin spreading over the stage and making the muted sounds of a cocktail party - music, laughter, talk. The actors find a position and remain there, playing

come down

come on

others move

train slows change

SLOW

* - Move round

various aspects of a party in slow motion and muted tones. They completely ignore the First Interviewer who, as a Girl at the Party, goes from person to person as if she were in a garden of living statues.)

During Party NOISE
from other
Over lap

GIRL AT THE PARTY. And then after the ambulance took off I went up in the elevator and into the party. Did you see the accident, I asked, and they said they did and what did he look like and I said he wore a brown coat and had straight brown hair. He stepped off the curb right in front of me. We had been walking up the same block, he a few feet ahead of me, this block right here, I said, but she wasn't listening. Jill, my name is Jill, I said to somebody sitting down and they looked at me and smiled so I said his arm was torn out of its socket and his face was on the pavement gasping but I didn't touch him and she smiled and walked away and I said after her, you aren't supposed to touch someone before - I wanted to help. I said, but she wasn't listening. When a man came up and said, was it someone you knew and I said, yes, it was someone I knew slightly, someone I knew, yes, and he offered me a drink and I said no thanks, I didn't want one, and he said well how well did I know him, and I said I knew him well, yes, I knew him very well. You were coming together to the party, he said. Yes, I said, excuse me. Hi, my name is Jill, did you hear a siren and they said, oh you're the one who saw it, was he killed? (She has been speaking rapidly and excitedly, but now she begins to be resigned to the fact that no one is listening.) And I said, yes I was, excuse me, and went back across the room but couldn't find another face to talk to until I deliberately bumped into somebody because I had to tell them one of us couldn't come because of the accident. It was Jill. Jill couldn't come. I'm awfully sorry, I said, because of the accident. She had straight brown hair, I said, and was wearing a brown coat, and two or three people looked at me strangely and moved off. I'm sorry I said to a man, and I laughed, and moved off. I'm dead I said to several people and started to push them over. I'm dead, thank you, I said,

MOVE ROUND

NO SOUND
EXCUSE ME -
NOISE
MOVE
ROUND

thank you, please, I said I'm dead until two of three of them got hold of my arms and hustled me out. I'm sorry, I said, I couldn't come because of the accident. I'm sorry. Excuse me. (The Girl at the Party is lowered to the floor by two of the men and then all fall down except the actor who played the Fourth Interviewer. He remains seated as a Psychiatrist. The Third Applicant, on the floor, props his head up on his elbow and speaks to the audience.) THIRD APPLICANT. Can you help me, Doctor, I ask him. (The Psychiatrist crosses his legs and assumes a professional expression.) Well, it started, well it started, I said, when I was sitting in front of the television set with my feet on the coffee table. Now I've sat there hundreds of times, thousands maybe, with a can of beer in my hand. I like to have a can of beer in my hand when I watch the beer ads. But now for no reason I can think of, the ad was making me sick. So I used the remote control to get to another channel, but each channel made me just as sick. The television was one thing and I was a person, and I was going to be sick. So I turned it off and had a panicky moment. I smelled the beer in my hand and as I vomited I looked around the livingroom for something to grab on to, something to look at, but there was just our new furniture. I tried to get a hold of myself. I tried to stare straight ahead above the television set, at a little spot on the wall I know. I've had little moments like that before, Doctor, I said, panicky little moments like that when the earth seems to slip out from under, and everything whirls around and you try to hold onto something, some objects, some thought, but I couldn't think of anything. Later the panic went away. I told him, it went away, and I'm much better now. But I don't feel like doing anything anymore, except sit and stare at the wall. I've lost my job. Katherine thought I should come and see you. Can you help me, Doctor, I asked him. PSYCHIATRIST.

Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, hostiles
Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, penits.

Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, mother.
(Holding out his hand.)

Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, money.

(The Third Applicant takes the Psychiatrist's hand and gets up, extending his left hand to the next actor. This begins a grand right and left with all the actors all over the stage.) ALL. (Chanting as they do the grand right and left.)

Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, hostile, ^{blat - Jo}

Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, penis. ^{hostile penis - penis}

Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, mother. ^{blat - Jo}

Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, money.

(They form couples and lock hands with arms crossed, continuing to move, but in a smaller circle.)

Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. ^{UP - MORE}

Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, hostile. ^{blat - Jo}

Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, penis. ^{blat - Jo}

Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, mother. ^{blat - Jo}

(Now they slow down to the speed of a church procession.

The women bow their heads, letting their hair fall forward

over their faces. The "blah, blah, blah" continues, but much

more slowly while some of the women accompany it with a

descant of Kyrie Eleison. After they have gone around in a

circle once they way, the actor who played the Fourth In-

terviewer sits with his back to the audience as a Priest. The

First Applicant kneels next to him, facing the audience as

if in a confessional booth. The other six actors are at the

back of the stage in two lines, swaying slightly, heads down.

The women are in front with their hair still down over their

faces.)

FIRST APPLICANT. (Crossing himself perfunctorily and

starting to speak, his manner is not impassioned; it is clear

that he comes regularly to repeat his always fruitless ritual.)

Can you help me, Father, I said, as I usually do, and he

said, as usual, nothing. I'm your friend, the housepainter, I

said, the good housepainter. Remember me, Father? He

continued as usual to say nothing. Almost the only colour

continued as usual to say nothing. Almost the only colour

you get to paint these days, Father, I said, is white. Only white, Father, I said not expecting any more from him than usual, but going on anyway. The colour I really like to paint, Father, is red, I said. Pure brick red. Now there's a confession, Father. He said nothing. I'd like to take a trip to the country, Father, I said, and paint a barn door red, thinking that would get a rise out of him, but it didn't. God, I said then, deliberately taking the Lord's name in vain, the result of taking a three-inch brush and lightly kissing a t of red paint on a barn door is something stunning and beautiful to behold. He still said nothing. Father, I said, springing it on him, Father, I'd like to join a monastery. My wife's sister, she could take care of the kids. Still nothing. Father, I said again, I'd like to join a monastery. Can you help me, Father? Nothing. Father, I said, I've tried lots of things in my life, I've gone in a lot of different directions, Father, and none of them seems any better than any other, Father, I said. Can you help me, Father, I said. But he said nothing as usual, and then, as usual, I went away. (The First Applicant and the Fourth Interviewer, who hasn't moved at all during the confession, move U. to join the others as the music starts up violently in a rock beat. The actors do a rock version of the Virginia reel.)

SECOND INTERVIEWER. (Loudly.) My (All bow to partners.)

FOURTH APPLICANT. (loudly.) fault. (All dos-a-dos.)

SECOND APPLICANT. (Loudly.) Excuse me. (All cir around.)

FOURTH INTERVIEWER. (Loudly.) me. (All peel off.)

FIRST INTERVIEWER. (Loudly.) Can you

SECOND APPLICANT. (Loudly.) help

FIRST APPLICANT. (Loudly.) me? FOURTH INTERVIEWER. (Loudly.) Next. (All continue dancing, joining hands at C. to form a revolving door again. They repeat the preceding eight speeches. Then the Second

stand

WLD
SONG

carry
an
get
need
action
Box in
place - start
humming

BLAH IS POSITION
AT CLICKING

Interviewer speaks rapidly as a Square Dance Caller.)
SECOND INTERVIEWER. Step right up, Ladies and Gents, and shake the hand of the next governor of this state. Shake his hand and say hello. Tell your friends you shook the hand of the next governor of this state. Step right up and shake his hand. Ask him questions. Tell him problems. Say hello. Step right up, shake his hand, shake the hand, ladies and gents, of the next governor of the state. Tell your folks: I shook his hand. When he's famous you'll be proud. Step right up, Ladies and Gents, and shake his hand. Ask him questions. Tell him problems. Say hello. Step right up, Ladies and Gents. Don't be shy. Shake the hand of the next governor of this state. (The actors have formed a crowd, D.R., facing the audience. They give the impression of being but a few of a great number of people, all trying to squeeze to the front to see and speak to the political candidate. The Fourth Interviewer, now playing a Politician, stands on a box, L., facing the audience. The Second Interviewer stands by the crowd and keeps it in order.)
POLITICIAN. Thank you very much, I said cheerfully, and good luck to you, I said, turning my smile to the next one (The First Interviewer, panting as the Girl at the Party squeezes out of the crowd and rushes up to the Politician who smiles at her benignly.)
POLITICIAN. Our children are our most important asset, I agreed earnestly. Yes they are, I said solemnly. Children, I said, with a long pause, are our most important asset. I only wish I could, madame, I said earnestly, standing tall, but rats, I said regretfully, are a city matter. (The First Interviewer returns to the crowd while the Third Interviewer as the Telephone Operator, rushes up to the Politician. She appeals to him, making the same noise she made when her stomach hurt her.)

Shake hand move round up in a circle

Nobody knows more about red tape than I do, I said knowingly, and I wish you luck, I said, turning my smile to the next one. (The Third Interviewer returns to the crowd and the Fourth Applicant goes up to the Poli-

move onto next box

gives sit on block
POLITICIAN. I certainly will, I said, with my eyes sparkling, taking a pencil out of my pocket. And what's your name, I said, looking at her sweetly and signing my name at the same time. That's a lovely name, I said. (The Fourth Applicant returns to the crowd while the Third Applicant, as an Older Man, shakes the Politician's hand.)

POLITICIAN. Yes sir, I said, those were the days. And good luck to you, sir, I said respectfully but heartily, and look out for the curb, I said, turning my smile to the next one. (The Third Applicant returns to the crowd and the Second Applicant approaches the Politician.)
POLITICIAN. Indeed yes, the air we breathe is foul, I said indignantly. I agree with you entirely, I said wholeheartedly. And if my opponent wins it's going to get worse, I said with conviction. We'd all die within ten years, I said. And good luck to you, madame, I said politely, and turning my smile to the next one. (The First Applicant approaches him, his cap in his hand.)

POLITICIAN. Well, I said confidingly, getting a bill through the legislature is easier said than done, but answer-ly, is not the answer, and how do you do I said, turning my smile to the next one! (Next Two Sighing Lovers, we saw them on Fourteenth Street played by the First and Second Interviewers, approach the Politician.)
POLITICIAN. No, I said, I never said my opponent would kill us all. No, I said, I never said that. May the best man win, I said manfully. (Half-hearted cheers. The First and Second Interviewers return to the crowd.)

POLITICIAN. Do you want us shaking hands, I asked the photographer, turning my profile to the left. Goodbye, I said cheerfully, and good luck to you too. I do feel, I said without false modesty, that I'm better qualified in the field of foreign affairs than my opponents are, yes, I said. I said, with a pause for emphasis, foreign policy is the business of the President, not the Governor, therefore I will say

get up
gives
Rob
Balance
3rd
Barker
Wagon
Photographer

Change

nothing about the war, I said with finality. (The crowd makes a restive sound, then freezes.)

POLITICIAN. I'm sorry, I said seriously, but I'll have to study the question a good deal more before I can answer it. (The crowd makes a louder protest, then freezes.)

POLITICIAN. Of course, I said frowning, one thing is certain, we must all support the President, I said as I turned concernedly to the next one. (The crowd makes a very angry sound, then freezes.)

POLITICIAN. I'm sorry about the war, I said. Nobody could be sorer than I am, I said sorrowfully. But I'm afraid, I said gravely, that there are no easy answers.

(Smiles, pleased with himself.) Good luck to you too, I said cheerfully, and turned my smile to the next one. (The Politician topples from his box, beginning his speech all over again. Simultaneously, all the other characters lurch about the stage, speaking again in character - the Shopper on Fourteenth Street, the Gym Instructor, the Subway Rider, and the Telephone Operator, the Girl at the Party, the Analyst and the Housepainter. Simultaneously they all stop and freeze, continue again, freeze again, then continue with music under. The Second Interviewer, acting as policeman, begins to line them up in a diagonal line, like marching dolls, one behind the other. As they are put into line they begin to move their mouths without sound, like fish in a tank. The music stops. When all are in line the Second Interviewer joins them.)

SECOND INTERVIEWER. My

FOURTH APPLICANT. fault.

SECOND APPLICANT. Excuse

FOURTH INTERVIEWER. me.

FIRST INTERVIEWER. Can you

SECOND APPLICANT. help

FIRST APPLICANT. me?

FOURTH INTERVIEWER. Next. (All continue marching in line, moving their mouths, and shouting their lines as the lights come slowly down.)

Comrades

grumble

Grumbles aggressive

NOISE
forward
falls

Attention

getting more & more
MECHANICAL

SECOND INTERVIEWER. My

FOURTH APPLICANT. fault.

SECOND APPLICANT. Excuse

FOURTH INTERVIEWER. me.

FIRST INTERVIEWER. Can you

SECOND APPLICANT. help

FIRST APPLICANT. me?

FOURTH INTERVIEWER. Next.

(cut out sound, MURKIN
Back to starting positions)

huddle. Back audience

finish where started.