

A Job Interview

“Before we begin, do you have any questions for us, Mr. Reynolds?” the man in the middle asked, his hands sorting through a folder.

“Yeah, what’s the job?” Frank asked, eyeing all three of the interviewers, all of them barely visible courtesy of a glaringly bright light bulb hanging directly above their table. The bulb provided the only light in the room, and Frank was already nervous, more so than he normally was when going into an interview.

“A most pertinent question Mr. Reynolds, and one we will address in due time. Anything else?” The man in the middle finally looked up at Frank, not that this granted him a better view of the man’s face.

The man wore large glasses, and the light reflecting off them made the lenses appear white. A stern, yet somewhat amused smile lightly touched the man’s lips as he waited for Frank to respond. He wore a suit, fitting of the man’s clean cut and well-maintained appearance, and his hands were folded in front of him.

“I guess your names are the only thing I need to know right now. I like to know who I’m talkin’ to,” Frank finally said for lack of anything better.

“But of course, how discourteous of us. My name is Richard. The female associate to my left is Francine, and the gentleman to my right is Henry.”

Francine was a short, portly woman, just as well dressed as Richard, her hands folded in front of her as well. While attractive wasn’t a word Frank would use to define her, dignified was. Her brown hair was pulled back neatly behind her head, and just a hint of makeup could be seen. Her mouth lacked even the slight smile Richard’s contained,

and instead showed at least a small bit of what Frank thought was hostility. Something told him Francine had little interest in hiring him.

Aside from his height, which looked a few inches taller than Richard, and his weight, probably thirty pounds lighter than Richard, Henry appeared to be almost an exact copy of his co-interviewer, glasses included. If the circumstances were different, Frank would've thought the three of them looked almost comical, sitting from tallest to shortest, all so properly dressed and seated, but given the situation, Frank felt only a tightening in his stomach as his anxiety grew.

“Well, now that we have our introductions out of the way, let us begin with the interview.” Richard opened the folder in front of him and pulled out the top sheet, glanced at it briefly, then looked back up at Frank. “To begin, I'll ask a few simple questions, more for us than an assessment of you. How did you hear about the position?”

“Saw an ad in the newspaper. Ad said no experience was necessary. If it was wrong, I doubt I have the experience you guys are lookin' for, so I'll be on my way.” In truth, Frank just wanted to leave, but didn't have the guts to walk out. The fact that the door he'd entered through was located somewhere in the darkness behind him, and he was no longer quite sure where, didn't help things. Until they gave him some more light, leaving wasn't really something he could do unless he felt like fumbling around in the dark for a while.

“The ad was correct. No experience is needed for the job, so you can put your mind at ease. I would like to know, in which publication did you see the ad?”

“Not sure. Saw the business section lyin' on the floor of a subway train. I really didn't stop to look that closely.” All of which was the truth. Frank had only seen the

salary listed with the job, and that had been all the information he needed. He had assumed it was a scam, but given his current financial situation, saw no reason to pass it up. Worst case scenario, he'd waste a few hours of his time.

"That is perfectly fine. I was merely curious. Shall we move on to you then, Mr. Reynolds?" Richard took another sheet from the folder; presumably the application Frank had filled out right before they called him in.

"I see you worked construction for three years. Hard work I take it?"

"Wasn't too terrible. Summers got a little hot, but I managed."

"Why did you leave?"

"Wanted to try new things. I don't like stayin' in one place for too long. I like to move around a lot, you know?"

"I understand completely, Mr. Reynolds. I see you not only changed jobs but locations as well. If what I am reading is accurate, you have lived in over twenty states for at least a small period of time. Any place in particular you preferred?"

He wasn't sure if it was the questions being asked, or the tone Richard used, but Frank's anxiety continued to grow. He fidgeted just a little in the metal folding chair, but managed to control himself.

"Not really, I guess. I liked the cities over the small towns though, I can tell you that."

"Any particular reason why?"

"It's easier to mind your own business in a city. People don't really pay attention to you, and I like that. I hate people sayin' 'hi' to me all the time when I walk by."

Richard leaned forward in his seat and smiled broadly, the first time Frank had really seen him smile. “I understand exactly what you mean. Cities do grant a lovely degree of anonymity. I have always enjoyed this luxury myself.” He paused. “Moving on, how strong would you consider yourself to be, Mr. Reynolds?”

“Strong?” Any idea Frank had about the job he was applying for vanished at the question. Given the office building he’d entered, and the type of people interviewing him, he hadn’t the slightest idea what kind of grunt work they’d need him to do, especially the type that paid as much as they claimed.

“Yes, strong. According to this you have worked construction, warehouse work, and city work, all manual labor. These jobs must have granted you muscle. Whether you have chosen to maintain this muscle is another matter altogether, and I’m afraid from my current position, I cannot ascertain your strength from appearance alone.”

“Well, it’s been awhile since the last time I went to the gym, but I could probably bench press a good two hundred pounds I’d imagine, give or take a little.”

“Good,” Richard said with a smile. “I think I know enough about your work experience to be satisfied, but for a job such as the one we are hiring for, understanding who you are as a person is just as important. After all, experience in work is not the only kind of experience that defines who a person is and their work ethic. So the following questions will be a little more personal.”

“You gonna at least tell me what the job is first?”

“In due time Mr. Reynolds. You’ll have all the answers you want soon enough.”

Even with how polite they were trying to be, Frank was still nervous, and things weren’t getting any better. Curiosity had been sparked, but it just wasn’t enough to drive

away the nagging doubts in the back of Frank's mind. He had developed a good sense of when something looked like more trouble than it was worth some years back, and used this instinct to the best of his abilities over the years. Right now, it screamed at him to leave.

"I'm sorry, but I don't even know what the job is, and I don't really feel like sitting around wastin' my time if it ain't something I'm interested in. You understand?"

Richard smiled and nodded, then removed another sheet of paper from his folder before saying, "I understand completely, Mr. Reynolds."

"Frank. You can call me Frank if you want, that's what everyone calls me. Can't recall the last time someone called me Mr. Reynolds. I ain't a teacher or businessman or nothin' like that, you know."

"Your suggestion has been noted, Mr. Reynolds, and I will take it into consideration. For the moment, back to the matter at hand, I am afraid informing you of the job now might not be for the best. The job you are interviewing for is a very important one, and one you might not believe yourself capable of, but we believe otherwise. Past experience has shown that when a person is told the job right from the beginning, their natural instinct is to believe they are incapable, and because of this, fall into a negative mindset. However, by going over all of your qualifications first, you will understand why you are perfectly capable of accomplishing what we ask of you. Understand?"

The answer was no, but the curious part of Frank's mind did gain a little footing, enough so to keep him there. While his instincts were rarely wrong, they weren't perfect. So when he did speak, his answer was, "Okay, I'll hear you out."

Richard nodded before continuing on.

“Have you ever been married, Mr. Reynolds?”

“Yeah, I’ve been married twice. Neither lasted very long.”

“And what was the reason for this?”

“We couldn’t see eye to eye, I guess. Both of them left me, so I guess I don’t really know for sure why they ended.”

“Do you consider yourself a truthful man?”

“What do you mean?”

“Do you lie often?”

“I tell some little lies, yeah, but everyone does that.”

“Of course everyone does, Mr. Reynolds,” Richard said with a smile, one that quickly vanished as he continued. “But I would think the reason why your marriages did not last would be something a little more than a white lie. Would you agree?”

“What are you talking about?” Frank wanted the statement to sound angry, which he was, but all he could muster was a bewildered tone. He didn’t know what Richard was getting at, or how he could possibly know if he had lied or not, but Frank didn’t like it one bit.

“Your marriages, Mr. Reynolds, and the way they both ended. This interview will go much more smoothly if you are honest with us.” Any hint of a smile was gone from Richard’s face as he leaned forward just a little, one finger tapping the table.

“I told you, they both left me.”

“I’d hardly think that you killing them and them leaving you are one in the same, Mr. Reynolds, but that might just be a matter of personal opinion.”

Frank felt the color drain from his face, and his instincts screamed at him to run. Obviously this wasn't a job interview, but rather a trap set just for him, maybe by the FBI, or maybe the police. He wasn't sure and really didn't care. Given his current situation, denial seemed like the best approach.

"I don't know what you're talking about."

"But you do, Mr. Reynolds, and that is another lie. You have told us several lies already throughout this interview. The reason why you moved around so much was one of them. Most I can ignore, because I would do no different were I sitting in your place, but there comes a point when honesty is needed."

"I didn't kill them." Frank's hands gripped his legs so tightly he could feel his fingernails digging into the skin, but he didn't care. He'd managed this far without getting caught, and given how well he'd covered his tracks, he couldn't imagine they had any real evidence to back up their claims.

"They are not the only ones, are they, Mr. Reynolds? There was the little girl during your short stay in Maine. You killed one of your bosses and a coworker in Pennsylvania. Of course, you quickly topped that when you went to Michigan and slaughtered an entire family in their home. The things you did to that family would make even the healthiest of stomachs churn with disgust."

He could buy that the FBI would be able to connect his two wives' disappearances with him, but there was no way they could know about all the others. If they had this much on him, they would've caught him already. The little girl had been over fifteen years ago at least.

"Who the fuck are you people?"

“We will get to that soon enough, but for the moment, if you would please answer the question, is it true you are to blame for the crimes I have listed as well as numerous others?”

“You’re cops or something.”

“No, Mr. Reynolds, I can assure you we are in no way associated with the law, so put your mind at ease.”

“I’m not going to jail.” Normally Frank wasn’t a man prone to panic, but the shock of the moment tore away at his defenses, leaving him helpless before the panel interviewing him, if indeed that was what they were doing.

“And we have no intentions of sending you to jail. In jail you would be of no use to us. So if you would please stop babbling and answer my question, we might be able to get this interview over with.”

For a minute Frank said nothing, just staring at the three of them. He felt sweat trickle slowly down his face but made no motion to wipe it away. He considered his options, one of which included a dash for the door, hoping he’d find it quickly enough in the darkness, but something told him people would be waiting for him outside, ready to capture him. The game was over, and he knew it.

“Yes,” he finally answered, his voice just a whisper at first, eyes on the ground, before they rose to meet Richard’s. “Yes, I killed those people, and a whole lot more.”

“Does the number forty seven sound accurate to you, Mr. Reynolds?”

Frank wasn’t even sure, but the number sounded accurate enough, and so he answered, “Yeah, that sounds about right.”

“On some of the more specific crimes I would like you to tell me if what I am describing is accurate. Can you do that Mr. Reynolds?”

“Sure.” Frank said, almost in a daze.

“Did you rape then beat to death an eleven year old girl in North Carolina thirteen years ago?”

“Yeah.”

“Did you render unconscious and then drag into the middle of the woods a man who cut you off when you were driving through Michigan?”

“His name was Roger.”

“Indeed it was, Mr. Reynolds, a name you read off of his driver’s license shortly before you began cutting off his feet and hands with a hacksaw before moving on to other parts of his body. How long did it take him to die?”

“A little over three hours.”

“Very good. I would also like to know how long it took you to kill the Morgan family.”

“Not sure exactly. I started in the evening and I know it was still dark out when I left the house, but not for very long. Maybe eight hours or so, something like that.” Some of these Frank hadn’t thought about in years, but as soon as Richard mentioned them Frank remembered down to almost the last detail.

“And lastly, your second wife, just two years ago. Is it true you made her watch you kill her parents before you killed her?”

“They never liked me.”

Much to Frank's surprise, something else was coming over him. Listening to his crimes, referenced so nonchalantly, removed most of their horror. He felt a stir of confidence, almost all fear removed. These were his greatest achievements laid out before him, and something told him these people understood that.

"I am sure they did not Mr. Reynolds. Thank you, that is all I needed to know."

A smile once again returned to Richard's face and his body lost most of its tension as he rested back in his seat. "That is always the hardest part of the interview, Mr. Reynolds, and one of many reasons why we do not wish to talk about the job itself, or ourselves and the business we run, too early on. Many refuse to admit their past deeds, almost as if such things are wrong."

Francine snorted at this and lightly shook her head. Frank wasn't sure if she thought the comment was amusing or disgusting.

"What do you want with me?" Frank asked.

"I would think that would be obvious Mr. Reynolds. We want to hire you for a job, why else would you be here? You saw our ad and came in for an interview. There is nothing else to it. Of course, if you wish to leave, that is your decision, and we won't do a thing to stop you. You can walk out that door right now and never hear from us again, your indiscretions forgotten."

A light suddenly shined behind Frank, and he glanced back over his shoulder at the door illuminated in the darkness. The same voice that had been telling him to run from the beginning was suddenly silenced. He wasn't hiding from what he was. Here was his true self, and the everyday law-abiding citizen the rest of the world saw was the lie.

When given the choice, Frank looked away from the door, and decided he needed to know more.

“What’s the job?”

To this Richard smiled broadly, and behind Frank, the light turned off.