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10 Horrific Ways to Fail a Job Interview

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In the spirit of the season, we've decided to share some job-interview horror stories we've uncovered. Here is a list of sure-fire ways to stand out for the wrong reasons.

There's no shortage of mistakes people wish they could take back after a job interview. With competition for open positions remaining high, the added pressure and stress may be causing some job seekers to make unnecessary errors during their interviews that could cost them the job.

The following job-interview anecdotes are so bizarre and horrific that they probably have no redeeming educational value other than for us to say, "DON'T DO ANY OF THESE. AVOID THEM AT ALL COSTS."

1) *Be overly committed and threatening.*

- Interviewee handcuffed himself to the desk during the interview. -[Robert Half International](#)
- Applicant refused to leave his chair unless he was hired. Police were eventually called in to remove him. -[ResumeBear.com](#)
 - Candidate challenged the interviewer to arm-wrestle. -[Fortune Magazine](#)
- Job seeker told interviewer that if she wasn't hired, she would have her grandmother put a curse on the interviewer. -[Fortune Magazine](#)

2) *Don't dress for the occasion.*

- Candidate arrived in a cowboy hat and refused to take it off, even when the interviewer offered to store it in the coat closet. -[Job Jenny](#)
- Candidate who forgot dark socks to wear with his suit colored in his ankles with a black felt-tip marker. -[Washingtonian](#)
- Job seeker wore a hat that read, "Take this job and shove it." -[CareerBuilder.com](#)
- "I wore the electric blue polyester Hillary Clinton power suit that my roommate and I shared for such occasions. The hour-long train ride and scramble to find the exact address had made me late, and by the time I got to the interview, I was sweating my roommate's BO out of the suit. The stench of every drink and every cigarette

she'd had the last time she wore it filled the high-end [law] office in which I interviewed." -Tina Fey in her book [Bossypants](#) (via [Chicago Sun-Times](#))

- Applicant arrived in a cat suit. -[Robert Half](#)

3) Feel right at home.

- Applicant removed her socks and placed them on her interviewer's desk, claiming she was "too hot." -[ResumeBear](#)
- The lead person on the three-person interview panel took off his shoes and put his feet on top of his desk right in the interviewee's face. -[Salary.com](#)
 - Candidate fell asleep during the interview. -[ResumeBear](#)
- Candidate answered cell phone and asked the interviewer to leave her own office because it was a "private" conversation. -[CareerBuilder](#)

4) Involve parents, siblings and spouses.

- Job seeker's mother called to find out why her son wasn't hired and why he was deemed unqualified. -[OfficeTeam](#)
 - Candidate sent his sister to interview in his place. -[ResumeBear](#)
- "I know you're only 22, but calling your mom to get advice on a job offer during the interview doesn't fill us with confidence." -[John Q. Recruiter](#)
- Halfway through a co-op placement interview at a small construction firm, a student said his interviewer suddenly flipped a family photo on his desk to face him. "Do you think my wife is hot?" the man demanded, pointing to the picture. -[Globe and Mail](#)
- "Using humor is fine, but you might want to watch the jokes about my wife's ethnic group." -[John Q. Recruiter](#)

5) Get angry.

- "My friend was racing to an interview. She flipped off another driver who blocked her car in the garage. The other driver ignored her, so she started honking and shouting obscenities. She finally got her car parked. She ran upstairs to the interview. The other driver was the owner of the company who was interviewing her." -
[Washingtonian](#)

- During an interview for a biology-related job, the interviewer's phone rang. When he saw the caller ID on his phone, he yelled, 'Oh for f#%\$ sake!' and picked up. After yelling at the person on the other end of the line in fluent Japanese, he hung up, smashed a vase on his table in his rage and ran out of the office. -[Reddit](#)

6) *Involve pets.*

- Applicant came in for an interview with a cockatoo on his shoulder. -[Robert Half](#)
- Candidate said he'd accept the job if he could bring his pet monkey to the workplace. -[CareerBuilder](#)
- "When I explained to a persistent applicant that his resume was all messy, he told me that this was because his cat had vomited on it. He told me not to worry because the cat had died." -[Poynter](#)

7) *Be honest to a fault.*

- Applicant told the hiring manager all of the reasons he shouldn't be hired. -[Robert Half](#)
- Candidate said she would really prefer a job offer from the company's competitor. -[Robert Half](#)
- "Telling me about the girl you're dating at work that you need to get away from isn't a good answer to why you want a new job." -[John Q. Recruiter](#)
- An individual applied for a customer service job, and when asked what he might not like about the job, he said, "Dealing with people." -[Robert Half](#)
- Candidate told the interviewer he wouldn't be able to stay with the job long because he thought he might get an inheritance if his uncle died — and his uncle "wasn't looking too good." -[CareerBuilder](#)
 - Employer to prospective employee: "In this job we need someone who is responsible." Potential employee: "I'm your man. On my last job, every time things went wrong, they said I was responsible." -[Bad Job Interviews](#)

8) *Get uncomfortably personal.*

- Candidate talked about how an affair cost him a previous job. -[CareerBuilder](#)

- Applicant took a brush out of the hiring manager's purse, brushed his hair with it and left. -[Fortune Magazine](#)
- Candidate asked the interviewer for a ride home after the interview. -[CareerBuilder](#)
- When interviewer brought up employee health benefits, candidate excitedly told interviewer about a tooth that was hurting him and really needed to come out because of the decay — and then showed the interviewer his tooth, opening his mouth wide and asking the interviewer to look inside as proof that he needed the dental insurance. -[Salary.com](#)
- Interviewer arrived late with shopping bags from a store. Then, while interviewing the candidate, she took panties from the bags and stuffed them in her purse. -[Reddit](#)
- Candidate hugged the hiring manager at the end of the interview. -[CareerBuilder](#)

9) Try to get a date out of it.

- "When I ask you why you want to work here, 'For one thing, the hot women' isn't really what I was looking for." -[John Q. Recruiter](#)
- Candidate asked if the interviewer wanted to meet for a drink after the interview. -[CareerBuilder](#)
- Candidate joined a group of people waiting for the elevator on the ground floor. He started to chat with an attractive woman, who responded politely and then chose to ignore him. He then yelled at her about how he was interviewing for a great job with a great salary and he could buy and sell her. The potential employer's president and CEO, who was among the group at the elevator, recognized the man's voice and told him his job interview was cancelled. -[MoneyWatch](#)
- "We're not a dating service, so no, I cannot set you up with the 'hot guy' that just interviewed you." -[John Q. Recruiter](#)

10) Leave a little bit of yourself behind.

- Candidate filed fingernails during interview. -[CareerBuilder](#)
- In an exit interview at the end of a summer internship, a communications intern showed up to the meeting ready to ask for a letter of recommendation and discuss future employment opportunities at the PR firm. Her superior removed his socks and

cleaned and clipped his toenails with his feet up on his desk. "Sorry about this," he said, "but I have these blasted corns." -[ABC News](#)

- Candidate blew his nose and lined up the used tissues on the table. -[CareerBuilder](#)
- Candidate entered interviewer's office holding a cup of water. He drank it all, then leaned over and spit it into the potted plant. -[Bloomberg BusinessWeek](#)
- Interviewer left the room for 1 min. and returned to a horrid stench. -[Business Insider](#)
- "I am a recruiter. One day a colleague of mine was interviewing a candidate — and the candidate peed in her chair!" -[MoneyWatch](#)

First impressions are not easy to repair, so try to get it right the first time. A good place to start would be avoiding any of these disastrous job-interview tactics.