

Interview in a Stairwell

A job interview can be a frightening experience. If you really want the position, you'll feel pressure to make the best impression possible. If you're only going on the interview to placate your family, you'll be hoping not to be too appealing.

We've all heard about the typical interview questions: "What are your greatest weaknesses?" "Do you get along well with others?" "Why did you leave your job?" "Did you really have that affair your last boss told me about?" "How old is your sister and is she single?"

But what about the questions they *don't* tell you about? I'm referring to the psychological tests and IQ determinants that are taught in top-secret "Managerial Conferences" that take place in Maui, Hawaii, every June. You thought your boss was going on a trip to Idaho to see his grandmother last week? Ah, the joys of being naïve.

On a recent job interview, I became privy to these Super Secret Classified Intelligence Tests. How? Because I failed one. You see, I received an innocuous e-mail from my boss-to-be informing me of the time and location of my interview. Her only additional instructions were to "meet her on the fourth floor." Seems simple enough, right?

When I arrived for the interview, I proceeded to the closest elevator and hit button four. The button blinked off and the elevator didn't move. Thinking it was broken, I moved on to the next elevator. The same thing happened. Soon I discovered that *none* of the

elevators would take me to the fourth floor! So I did what any young enterprising woman would do: I went to the third floor instead. After quickly taking a flight of concrete stairs to the fourth floor (I had been training at the gym for such an emergency,) I discovered that I had made a grave miscalculation. The door to the fourth floor was locked! I could picture my future boss on the other side, laughing heartily. This was not good.

I took the stairs back down (thank goodness for that gym membership), and learned that the third floor exit was now locked, too! After several additional attempts on other floors, including the lowest level, I realized that I was **LOCKED IN THE STAIRWELL**.

Of course, the first thing I did was call the company and ask them to open the stairwell door. Sadly, **NO ONE IN THE ENTIRE COMPANY WAS ANSWERING THEIR PHONES**. I could only reach the annoyingly pleasant voicemail system. “Hello! This is J.D. Forest Company. If you’re trying to reach the president, please press 1. To speak to a sales associate, please press 2. If you’re stuck in a stairwell, please press 3 and we will forward you to our attorney, who will help you write your will.”

By this time, I had reached a conclusion: I was going to die. I could see the headlines: “Ace Reporter’s Body Found in Stairwell. Young Life Cut Tragically Short.” I couldn’t picture a more humiliating way to go, unless it was the man who died in his bathroom when he fell headfirst on a toilet plunger.

After sitting around for a few minutes feeling sorry for myself, I reached an epiphany moment. This stairwell was *not* going to win! I was smarter than this building, and I would prove it! I began devising an ingenious MacGyver-worthy plot to escape. I pounded on the locked door 10,000 times and screamed and cried like a baby.

When a security guard finally freed me from my concrete tomb, I hugged him ecstatically, not caring that he was laughing at me and calling me names in Spanish that I didn't understand. Needless to say, I didn't get the job. But I think we've all learned a valuable lesson from reading about my plight.

Never leave a toilet plunger in your bathroom.