

# Stop Putting Him on There

“You’ll do great, babe. I know you will,” I shouted to Danny as he pulled a dress shoe onto one foot while hopping on the other.

“Yeah, sure. Like every other interview I’ve had recently, right?” Danny retorted. It was true; his track record up to that point wasn’t so good. But having a defeatist attitude never helped anyone.

“Just be yourself and they won’t be able to resist,” I insisted.

“Yeah, yeah,” Danny muttered dismissively as he pulled on his other shoe.

I paused. “I love you, Danny,” I told him with an extra dose of earnestness.

Danny paused and looked up at me. “I know. I love you too.” And then he was out the door.

“Please don’t let this one blow up in his face,” I said aloud to anything that could possibly hear me in the now empty apartment.

Carl Griss of Midwest Automotive Group alternated between studying Danny’s resume and glancing at Danny from over top of it. Danny filled the time by fidgeting with his tie and running his hand over his smoothly shaven chin. He’d been clean-shaven for a couple weeks at this point, but it was still new and strange to feel the sleek skin of his cheek on his hand, and the rough skin of his hand on his smooth face.

“The only work history here says that you were a dog-faced boy at a freak show. Is that right?” the interviewer asked.

“Uh, yes sir. That’s right,” Danny fumbled nervously.

“Can you explain how that’s applicable to a sales administration position here at Midwest Automotive?” pressed Carl.

“Well, I had a lot of face-to-face time with customers. And when the barker missed a shift, I would fill in selling tickets. So I have experience in sales and handling money,” Danny explained. He was getting used to tying together life in a sideshow with life in an office.

“Uh huh,” the interviewer grunted dismissively. “Is that the extent of your relevant experience?”

“Well, no, I, uh, well...” Danny was stumbling now. Usually, the interview would have either moved on or ended at this point, so he improvised. “I ran profit simulations and financial forecasts, as well.”

The interviewer incredulously raised an eyebrow. “Is that right?”

“Yeah,” said Danny, trying to sound natural and casual, and not at all like he was lying through his teeth about something he had no knowledge of. “I did it with, you know, accounting software and stuff.”

“I see. Very impressive,” the interviewer said without meaning a word of it. “Would you mind if I called your reference right now to check on this? The Mr. Ed Callan listed on your resume as your employer at the, er, freak show. Would that be alright?”

“Oh, about that. I’m sorry to say he’s passed away. So you won’t be able to contact him.” Danny never was very good at concealing the relief in his voice when he informed an interviewer that his only professional contact was not available to disprove all of his flimsily false claims about his past employment. Even if it never seemed to work.

“I’m sorry to hear that. But all the same, I think I’d like to give him a quick call,” Carl responded coolly, reaching for his phone.

“No, please!” Danny burst out. “He really is dead! You don’t need to waste your time with—” But Carl raised his hand to silence Danny as the receiver emitted a distant, beckoning tone. Danny slumped back into his chair. This scene had played out plenty of times before, and he knew how this would end. He hated to have to sit through it again.

“Yes, hello. Am I speaking to Mr. Ed Callan? This is Carl Griss of Midwest Automotive Group. I have a Danny Feldman here who has you listed as his previous employer. Can you verify that for me?” After a few moments of thoughtful listening Carl’s eyebrows darted toward his hairline, and Danny knew exactly what was coming next. “You say he left you and everyone else at the sideshow to die in a freak accident? Hm, no, not very professional at all. I agree. And did he run profit simulations for you? No, not once. Yes, I see.” Carl was looking at Danny with a reprimanding expression as Danny glared back at him, a brooding specter in a lopsided necktie.

“Uh huh... Mm hm... OK,” Carl nodded along as Ed apparently unloaded his grievances with Danny. “So, the main takeaways are he was often late, he never touched the financial side of

things, and left everyone—including yourself—to die a horrible death. Yes, thank you very much, sir. This was very, er, enlightening. I hope you are able to rest in peace. Thank you, goodbye.”

“So do I get the job?” asked Danny acridly while rolling his eyes so hard he’d have lost his balance had he not been sitting down.

Carl smiled with painfully insincere politeness. “I’m afraid not, Mr. Feldman. The ghost of your former employer was not able to verify your duties as you claimed them to be. But thank you for your time. Good luck on your continued search for-”

“Yeah, great. Thanks,” Danny snarked back, cutting off Carl as he catapulted himself out of the chair and stomped to the door. He hated to return home and have to admit to another failure.

“How did it go?” I said as brightly as I could manage, given that by Danny’s face and body language it seemed to have been the worst interview yet.

“He called Ed,” Danny growled without looking up from roughly untying his shoes. “How do you think it went?”

I sighed. “I’m sorry, honey. That sucks.”

“Yeah, tell me about it.” Danny threw his dress shoes into the closet in the hall and slammed it shut, resting his head against it for a few moments afterward.

“Babe, you’ve got to stop listing your dead freak show manager on your resume. He ruins your chances every time!” I tried not to sound scolding, but this wasn’t the first time I’d offered this fairly obvious bit of advice.

“He’s my only professional reference!” Danny shouted back.

“But he’s also a vengeful spirit with a vendetta against you!” I countered.

“Can we not get into this right now?!” Danny shouted and stormed into the bedroom, slamming the door behind him.

I could hear him in there, tearing into his favorite chew toy. He was really letting that thing have it today. I smiled to myself as I pictured him. We would take a walk and have dinner later, and maybe do a little more job hunting before bed, if he felt up to it. But for the time being, he just needed to rip something apart with his teeth.

I do love that boy.



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