

The Interview

a short play

by

Malcolm D. Broun

**Sydney
July, 2002**

e-mail: abroun@bigpond.net.au

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Cast

HE **mid 30s to mid 40s**

SHE **mid 20s to early 30s**

Setting

A modern office.

Time

Present, on a work day during business hours

THE INTERVIEW

Scene: A modern office, expensively furnished, windows, paintings, etc. He is at the desk dressed in a business suit. She enters dressed appropriately for an employment interview. He does not stand as she enters.

He: Thank you for coming. Please sit down.

She: Thanks for interviewing me.

He: May I call you Monica?

She: Sure, but no one else does. Everyone calls me Noni. *[Pause]* I realise the position as the personal assistant to the top executive is a very important job, but I have never heard of a full health check and spending most of the day with a psychologist doing all sorts of psychological tests. The position must be very important.

He: A full health check costs a few hundred dollars, but my experience is with key employees it saves money in the long run to know what their health risks are. I hope you found the out of pocket expenses for the day and a half you spent with these various tests acceptable.

She: It was very reasonable. I have never been compensated for the time I have spent on interviews before. You obviously take the appointment very seriously, as I do too.

He: As a result of your original interview with my Human Resources Manager, and the health check and personality profile and report, I do wish to offer you a contract but not as a personal assistant.

She: Personal assistant was the job that I applied for, but of course I would be interested in any equivalent position.

He produces a contract document and puts it in front of her.

She: I don't understand. This is a cohabitation pre-marital agreement. What has that to do with me?

He: You have probably seen in various magazines that I am described as one of Australia's richest men. There is a schedule of my assets attached at the end of that document in front of you.

She turns to the end, looks at it quickly, and gives a little gasp.

She: Business Review Weekly underestimated you. I thought they always over-estimated.

He: Well, they didn't know the full facts. But I am advised that for an agreement of this kind the disclosure of the financial position must be complete and accurate.

She appears to read more of the page in front of her briefly.

He: You are also probably aware that I have been described in a number of magazines as the nation's most eligible bachelor.

She: My grandmother used to describe men like you as "a good catch". Now men in your position are spoken of as "eligible". Being a bachelor seems to merely make the process a bit simpler. There is no wife to be got out of the way first.

He: I am constantly meeting women of a marriageable age who are obviously out to try to interest me. If they know that I am going to be at any function they wear a neckline that is at least 5 cm lower than usual. I cannot meet an eligible woman without getting the strong sense that she is a baited hook. It is impossible to form a relationship with someone who makes it obvious from the beginning that she is out to get you and who is not going to say a word about herself that is not calculated to attract. I don't think I have heard an honest word from a woman in years, other than my mother and sister. What they say is usually crap anyway. I have given up.

She: Money is always attractive. I once dropped a fine fellow with a Ford Falcon for a fiend with a Ferrari.

He: Of course. Any girl would drop the most macho man with a Mazda for any monster with a Masserati. Money is the male equivalent to perfume.

She: It would certainly make life easier if men could wear a statement of their financial position on their forehead.

He: But we can't so we do it by cars, clothes and expensive restaurants we take girls to.

She: But surely in your position you want to establish a relationship, have children, have a regular sexual companion, and a regular person in your life.

He: The sex has never been a problem. All I have to do is pick up a telephone and within a half an hour I have a particularly beautiful woman who devotes as long as I like to enthusiastic efforts to provide an enjoyable evening. It is much cheaper than marriage. I have been certainly tempted to make one of those girls permanent, but if I married one of them it would provide such a big opportunity to some elements of the press, that I don't think I could live with it and certainly any

He: (CONT) children I had could not live with it. But I would like to have a wife and children.

She has been looking at the document in front of her.

She: *[Astonished]* But this document refers to me.

He: Yes.

She: Why me?

He: Some time ago I asked the psychologist to do a personality profile on me. I spent a day with her. I asked her if she ever struck a personality profile of a woman in her early to mid twenties that fitted well with mine to let me know. Yours is the only one she has given me in two years. Apparently we are a good fit, psychologically.

She: But you don't even know me.

He: From what I have seen of my friends and employees, they date and go out for a year or so, then they get married and discover that it was all a terrible mistake and an expensive mess to untangle. Dating seems to be a very unsuccessful method of doing job interviews. They spend all their time trying to find out things about each other but if she thinks he is a good catch she baits her line all the time, and if he thinks she would be good in bed he is phrasing every sentence and taking every step so as not to injure his chances.

She: I know what you mean about dates as a job interview. With some dates I have been I could not find out a thing about the boy.

He: As one example, my personality profile shows that I have a distinct tendency to try to control those around me.

She: Don't all men?

He: Yes, I suppose so, but I am said to be worse than most. You, on the other hand, are said to be more amenable to fitting in with others than most. You could live with a control freak like me.

She: I had a lot of training with my father.

He: We also seem to have a lot in common in the way we think and the way we react. Your CV shows that we have a lot of similar experiences in life and that we would start off with a reasonable understanding of each other.

He reaches into the drawer of his desk.

He: I have also had a full health check.

He passes it across the table.

He: We both seem to be extremely healthy. As my farm manager would say, we are good breeding stock.

She: Normally you don't find out anything about the guy's health problems until the fourth or fifth date and sometimes not even then. What you find out anyway is at most only what he knows.

He: So with health, education, background and personality, we appear to have a much better chance of getting on on the long-term than most couples.

He pauses while she appears to quickly flip through some of the pages of the agreement.

She: This is certainly a very generous deal. What is the \$10,000 initial deposit for?

He: It is to give you an immediate escape hatch. If you don't like the deal after a day, a week, a month or whenever, the \$10,000 is there for you as an escape hatch so that you have always got something to go away with and put down a deposit on a rental or otherwise look after yourself until you are back on your feet.

She: Even after day?

He: \$10,000 is cheap for me to discover that it wouldn't work.

She: And on the birth of each child a \$1,000,000?

He: Yes, that's an immediate settlement upon each child when born so that the child has a secure future financially whatever happens between us.

She: How many children did you have in mind?

He: I thought three was a good number, but I need two boys – an heir and a spare.

She: You have put in six months for a period of living together before marriage is thought of.

He: I am flexible about that. If everything is working well it can be less. If either of us has doubts we can extend the time.

She: The provision for me looks very generous. How is the qualifying period worked out? We would have to be together for three years of have a child before I got anything more than the escape hatch \$10,000. Why three years?

He: I got one of the regular family law firms to draft the agreement for me. They tell me that relationships tend to break up after 3 years, 7 years or 21 years. So three years is a usual sort of provision. Again, it is negotiable.

She: So if it lasts for three years or I have child, I have a minimum of \$1,000,000 in addition to the child's settlement, and it goes up from there?

He: That's right.

Pause. She gets out a pen.

She: Where do I sign?

He: At the office of a solicitor whom you have selected and then only after he has explained it to you and signed a certificate.

She: Great. I'm on.

He stands up and comes towards her.

He: They say that money doesn't bring happiness.

She: I don't believe it. Every woman deep down is looking for commitment and security. This deal sure does that.

He: I think we will be very happy together.

She throws her arms around his neck, and he puts his arms around her.

She: Darling.

Curtains.