

What is Wrong with Hiring
Hiring Horror Stories Replay (2023)
October 2024

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[00:00:00] **Laura:** Hello, and welcome to a special Halloween edition of what is wrong with hiring the podcast, where we talk about why hiring people and getting hired are both absolute nightmares. I'm Laura Klein, a once and future hiring manager.

[00:00:35] **Amy:** And I'm Amy Santee, a jaded, horrified, and pissed off career coach.

[00:00:43] Just feeling a little bit salty today, especially after reading these stories we're about to tell you.

[00:00:50] **Laura:** I'm really enjoying your descent into madness over the course of the podcast. I'm very much, I think that's great. Welcome to my world. Please be [00:01:00] advised that this podcast may contain drinking, swearing, and screaming into the abyss, pretty much like most podcasts.

[00:01:06] **Amy:** Yes, and today there may be a bit more of that than usual with the spine chilling tales we will be sharing.

[00:01:13] Mwahahaha.

[00:01:15] **Amy:** That was good.

[00:01:16] **Laura:** You're absolutely leaving all of that in. Okay.

[00:01:20] **Amy:** We asked listeners to share their worst experiences with the shadowy realm of interviewing and hiring. So thank you to those brave souls who did. And within just a matter of days, we received over 50 hellish stories from job seekers and hiring managers ranging from the pretty frustrating, but expected type of bullshit one is likely to come across, because humans are just that way.

[00:01:44] Sometimes. Or oftentimes. Or always. Yeah, always. Pretty much. This is all because of humans. To some pretty nightmarish encounters where things went horribly wrong. I

[00:01:57] **Laura:** have to say, okay, even we were surprised by some of
[00:02:00] these. But we've seen a lot as, job seekers. I've been looking for jobs since the 90s.

[00:02:04] And It's terrible, and, also I've been a hiring manager, and I've coached people, and Amy has coached people, and talks to people all the time about this. And I gotta say, a few of these were really something, and kinda wanna give all of y'all a big hug, and tell ya it's not your fault.

[00:02:26] But for the rest of you who are just here in it for the schadenfreude buckle up, because some of these you may find yourself questioning reality. All right, so there were definitely a lot of themes to the stories we got. We're gonna concentrate on ones from candidates today. If you don't hear yours, apology, we may do a second episode.

[00:02:43] There are way more of these. But we want to do one for hiring managers as well, because some of Those were some spooky stories. Yeah. Let's talk about our first theme cause we got a whole lot in this theme and we picked a few of our favorites. And this is, we're calling it ghosted [00:03:00] or turned down after doing a lot of work.

[00:03:02] Pero Like

[00:03:06] **Laura:** Amy, do you want to, do you want to read this

[00:03:08] **Amy:** first one? Yeah, absolutely. I'm a senior level IC and I was looking for work after a layoff and had a string of very good interviews with digital agencies. Three times in a row, after four to five rounds of interviews, I was told, we loved you. We're just not hiring right now.

[00:03:26] So baffling behavior, honestly, because usually a company will wait till there's a job open to start interviewing instead of wasting weeks of everyone's time. I may have burned some bridges pointing out the 16 to 20 wasted hours on my end prepping for this farce.

[00:03:45] **Laura:** Oh my god, Amy, I would have stabbed somebody.

[00:03:47] I, like, all I can say is if you are an agent, hell, if you're anybody, don't do this. It's fine to have general talks with folks who might be interesting, but if you are making anybody do [00:04:00] an actual interview, at much less 16 to 28, Hours of work? This is not okay! Even if you're just lying, that, because you actually hired somebody else, Stop it!

[00:04:12] You're it's terrible!

[00:04:14] **Amy:** Yeah look, things happen, right? Things change whatever, but... I think it's easier than we might expect to prevent this sort of thing from happening in the first place. And I will never fully understand why this is so common because I have several clients right now and over the course of my coaching work who have gone through this and honestly, I have to say it seems even worse now during this downturn.

[00:04:41] Yeah

[00:04:41] **Laura:** and the real question is, as a hiring manager, who's got that kind of time? All I will say is, and I don't, I want to offer some useful advice, perhaps, to folks who find themselves in a position, sometimes, if you can clarify ahead of time with the [00:05:00] company, not in a weird way, but the first call with the recruiter so tell me about the open role that you have, right?

[00:05:06] You shouldn't have to, but you might want to consider it. I don't know if there's any other good advice there.

[00:05:10] **Amy:** And, I think it's just cathartic. To share and hear these stories because this is happening to a lot of people and folks out there, you're not alone.

[00:05:22] **Laura:** Not at all. We this was not the only story we heard like this.

[00:05:25] Alright, next one. I did seven interviews over several months with a company for a junior UX design role. I did a whole essay answering a list of questions about my marks and excellent achievements in high school and the like. Two different psychometric assessments, one on IQ like qualities, one on personality.

[00:05:43] Two different take home exercises, quite complex, which I presented to them. For the final three interviews, I was on vacation, by the way, and I took time away from it to do this. I got to the very last round, and after all of this, they rejected me with a template email. No feedback, no in person conversation, [00:06:00] nothing.

[00:06:00] Disappointment is an understatement. I literally cried. Maybe I should have seen the signs. The glass door was also pretty clear on this company, and I shouldn't have wasted so much of my own time, but as a junior candidate, I just wanted to do all I could to find my entry into the industry. Ugh, what the fuck?

[00:06:17] God, that makes me sad. First of all, the idea that you need an essay about somebody's achievements in high school and an IQ test for a junior UX design role, much less Seven interviews for, again, I just want to be clear, a junior UX design role. I'm sorry that is, I can't deal with that. That's that is so unrealistic.

[00:06:46] And those people have no idea what they're doing. They have no idea how to hire.

[00:06:49] **Amy:** That's my only takeaway here is they literally just are incompetent at interviewing people. Maybe they're being too picky. Yeah.

[00:06:57] **Laura:** Good point though, about checking [00:07:00] Glassdoor. I think everybody should try to back channel or figure out, if they've got any hints.

[00:07:04] So just not so much to like completely leave a company out if, one or two bad reviews, but just so that you know how to contextualize it if you

[00:07:12] **Amy:** get a bad experience. Yeah. And the whole IQ test, the personality tests, just run away. If you ever see that run away.

[00:07:21] **Laura:** It's, yeah, those are bullshit and racist and biased and also just terrible. And again, have very little to nothing to do with what you would actually be doing. Alright, next story.

[00:07:32] **Amy:** Yes, it all began in late February. On from a layoff, On from a layoff, my former manager introduced me to a head of design at a company that shall not be named.

[00:07:46] Nothing was open then, but a position that perfectly matched my skills and experience might be approved and I would be told when it did. I got an email alert from LinkedIn where I spotted the position in April. I waited two to three days for a [00:08:00] message letting me know I could apply, but nothing appeared.

[00:08:03] I decided... Not to read too much into it and apply it anyway. In May, I finally had a conversation with Talent Acquisition. I'd been selected for the shortlist from my CV and portfolio. I told them I had already met the hiring manager.

[00:08:18] But this was new information for them. Almost a month later, I was to meet a panel of two designers to show my work and talk about my skills and past experiences. Only one of them showed up, but I made nothing of it. Even though these red flags were harder to ignore at this point I spent one hour with a great person with whom I shared more than our profession I presented one of the prepared case studies and then got asked to show more practical design system work I'm normally ready to show actual work files in these interviews, so I happily obliged until the other side was convinced about my ability to do the job.

[00:08:55] Another green light. The Last Step of the Process was a culture interview that came [00:09:00] only in late June after the first date was cancelled. I met two more great humans and was then told they would come back to me soon. After 10 days without news, I asked if there was any information missing or anything I could help with to help them reach a decision.

[00:09:15] Their reply was, We are collecting the feedback from the panel as we speak and will soon be in touch with you. 10 more days go by and I message the hiring manager to get some news. This was a month ago and I am still awaiting a reply. I rarely complain about being ghosted, but getting the silent treatment after 6 months of interviews, For a position I'm a strong match for and have a reference for is a new experience.

[00:09:39] Still no answer two more months later.

[00:09:43] **Laura:** Yeah, this one was actually shared as a LinkedIn post from the person who had written it. And that two more months later is the follow up. Yeah, eight months of, Going through this process and just nothing like no communication from the hiring manager that they originally talked to [00:10:00] And it just it's so frustrating because it feels like the writer did everything, right?

[00:10:04] Like everything there was correct. They weren't above and beyond yeah rolled with the kind of shitty interview experience, but it's fine. Talk to people made a good connection you know followed up but not in a weird stalkery way like Really did the only thing I might have suggested would have been reaching out directly to the hiring manager as soon as they saw the job go up, instead of waiting.

[00:10:27] And I will tell you why. Having been that hiring manager, like you have a bunch of conversations about it and two months later you don't always

remember all the people you had conversations with to send it to them. Sometimes you do and sometimes you don't or, you're on vacation or whatever.

[00:10:40] Pinging them to just make sure you get in. But this person got selected based on their resume anyway, clearly qualified for the role to just not follow up with that person. Man, what a shitty taste that

[00:10:52] **Amy:** leaves in your mouth. It really does. And I think a lot of people are willing to move forward [00:11:00] with a process that is really just taking way too long.

[00:11:03] It's unfair. It's not helpful to a person who's, trying to find a position for their livelihoods to make someone wait so long to not really give any feedback or timely updates. So this person was being very patient. And I would say, if this is happening, take a pause and go, does this organization seem like a place that I want to work at based on what I'm experiencing as a candidate?

[00:11:31] What is this going to say about the internal politics or bureaucracy? And I hate to say it, but this could keep going on. It could. Be that they learned that they don't get the job. And then what was this all for?

[00:11:46] **Laura:** And you just got to keep interviewing, keep going out there, keep starting new. Processes, you can't wait on these folks. They have proven themselves to be unreliable. If something comes through, maybe, but I like [00:12:00] your point about, hell, if it takes us long to hire somebody, how long is it going to.

[00:12:02] Take to make a change to their design system.

[00:12:06] **Amy:** Do they even have a design system? Yes.

[00:12:09] **Laura:** They've been talking about it for five years, they'll get around to it. Anyway, I want to move on to our next section and Some of these last ones could have fit into here But there were some that were just the worst scheduling and disorganization On the part of I think probably the recruiting team, although maybe a little bit from the hiring managers.

[00:12:28] Just terrible. And these are incredibly frustrating because again, often these don't reflect the rest of the organization,

[00:12:35] **Amy:** if it's just the recruiter,

[00:12:37] **Laura:** but also. Man, if you're interviewing in a lot of places, you're running into a lot of this these days. Here's our first one in this category.

[00:12:46]

[00:12:48] **Laura:** Years ago, I applied for an on site contractor position at a large government organization, which was being hired through a staffing agency. I had responded to a specific job description and I'd had a phone interview with the staffing [00:13:00] agency. For the next round, I was invited to do an in person presentation for a panel of the organization's staff.

[00:13:05] I spent All weekend preparing my slides and practicing my presentation. When I got to the interview, one of the interviewers said, thank you for interviewing for the role of X, Y, Z, which was not the job for which I had applied or the job for which I had phone interviewed, I looked at the staffing agency contact who was in the room with me and expected her to jump in and address this confusion.

[00:13:29] She did not. I reluctantly explained that I was under the impression I was being considered for the ABC position, not the XYZ position. They said, no, this interview is for XYZ position, and asked me to proceed with my presentation. I did give the presentation, but it didn't land well. Because it was for the wrong role, and for a role I wasn't qualified for.

[00:13:51] The staffing agency had clearly given me the wrong information and just didn't want to own up to it in front of their client. They never apologized to

[00:13:57] **Amy:** me. Oh yeah I've actually [00:14:00] been here. I think a common one is confusing UX researcher and UX designer. And so I've, Applied for roles and, I got there and they were like tell me about your UX design skills and in the moment, it's like what do I say, if you're maybe not as experienced or you're really trying to get this position, how do you answer that?

[00:14:22] Is it what are their expectations and why is there that misalignment?

[00:14:27] **Laura:** I got to tell you, it is so hard. I think it's so hard to do this in the moment. Just know that this is going to happen. Especially as you say, like the researcher content designer. And often like this happens in engineering as well.

[00:14:38] You'll have a, Oh, you're looking for back in engineer. Yeah. I am a react person. Like I don't, I am not the person to optimize your database queries.

Sorry. And I think here's, one of the ways to do it. Which would be extremely satisfying, but takes a lot of guts, is to just turn to the staffing agency person and ask them to weigh in.

[00:14:58] Oh, I thought we were talking about this [00:15:00] other role. Just, to make it clear that you weren't, and you weren't at fault, because then if they have a different role open, maybe you can apply for it in the future. And other than that it's not going to, Save you the time of preparing the slides, I get it.

[00:15:12] But you can just end the interview. At any point, if you're uncomfortable, if it turns out they're looking for something different, you can just be like, I'm so sorry. I was under the impression it was for this other thing. I do not believe I am qualified for this role. If you would like to tell me about it for five minutes, that's great.

[00:15:26] And we'll see. And if it is, then I can present. And if it's not something I can do, I'll... I will go and you can have an hour of your day back and I can go get a snack and complain

[00:15:36] **Amy:** about the staffing agency. Yeah, and I agree with this person's take, which is that the staffing agency fucked up it could be that the recruiter wasn't aware of the nuances between different roles and they didn't want to look bad. So it was easier to just stay silent and perhaps make it look like the candidate was, in the wrong here that the candidate messed it up.

[00:15:57] But I totally agree. Just, [00:16:00] pause and end the interview. Yeah. I think people feel a lot of pressure in these situations to somehow make sense of and move forward in a conversation like this so that they don't look bad or so that they don't ruin any kind of opportunity that might come out of this.

[00:16:17] **Laura:** Yeah, it's, and it's just incredible. I just want to, once again, I just want to reiterate, you can end. Any interview, at any time, for any reason. Yes. And I know it can feel really weird and uncomfortable, but 90 percent of the time, if you end it for the reason Wow, I was given the wrong information, and I apologize, and I'm gonna go.

[00:16:36] The people who are interviewing you will be thrilled, because they don't want to sit there and listen to it either. Alright. I've got another one. You want to

[00:16:45] **Amy:** read this one?

[00:16:45] Yes. All right. I'm an experienced product designer with some experience in both hiring and interviewing. I just received a template rejection at 8. 30 p. m. last night after five rounds of interviews. The timing is inconsiderate [00:17:00] to say the least. The role was senior product designer. The process dragged on for seven weeks during which the recruiter has repeatedly communicated an inaccurate format and duration of the interviews.

[00:17:11] In retrospect, there was a total lack of clarity and transparency on both the process and progress during the hiring process. The fifth round was a second round of case study with two additional people. When I asked explicitly whether there were specific aspects of the initial case study that prompted feeling an additional case study was required, it was simply ignored. After that interview, I did not hear from them for more than one week till I followed up and offered to address any remaining questions and concerns.

[00:17:42] Again, I received a non answer and a false signal that it looked positive. Among all the miscommunication, lack of communication, and confusion, as a candidate, I did not feel my work and my time were respected, nor was I set up for success. And yeah that's one of the running themes [00:18:00] here is a disrespect for the candidates time the fact that they have a life the fact that they're not getting paid for any of this, that they're taking a risk and putting a lot of effort in, and it does not feel reciprocal.

[00:18:15] Candidates have to be respectful, and there's that power dynamic there. Yeah, it's,

[00:18:22] **Laura:** Honestly, we all get bad recruiters sometimes you gotta realize a lot of times they are incentivized to find a person to fill the job, and they are not at all incentivized to give anybody else a good experience that's, it is frustrating, and Man, that just getting told the wrong thing over and over is bad.

[00:18:40] If you are a hiring manager listening to this work with your recruiters and just make sure that they've, that they're giving people the right answers and, give them a little slack if it seems like they're coming in unprepared and fighting. It might not be their

[00:18:51] **Amy:** fault.

[00:18:51] Yeah, and this isn't to say that, recruiters across the board are inconsiderate. Like we know that's not true. They [00:19:00] do get a bad rap. I

think because there are a lot of bad recruiters, frankly, but there's a lot of people who are just bad at their job in general. This takes a lot of human touch.

[00:19:11] It takes empathy. You have to be highly organized. There's a lot going on. And so some people aren't good at that. Some people in recruiting roles are facing a lot of internal pressure to get things done in a quick amount of time to manage lots of conversations, to work with different stakeholders, whether it's the hiring manager, the candidates, other people on the team.

[00:19:32] Decision makers who feel like they have to like swoop and poop and be involved in, hiring every candidate that comes through. There's a lot going on there too. So it's good to have empathy for the other side as well. I

[00:19:46] **Laura:** agree. And I, it's funny 'cause I complain about bad recruiters mostly because I have worked with a few really good ones.

[00:19:51] And differences night and day. Alright next story. I get contacted by a recruiter for a company associated with technology [00:20:00] for the Internet of Things. They work with major manufacturers across multiple industries, including consumer products and goods. This was for a UX researcher role.

[00:20:08] I scheduled the interview with them. Then I wait on a Friday morning for the call, only to hear from said recruiter that the hiring manager was on vacation, so they would need to reschedule the interview. Okay, I get it, it happens. I reschedule again for next week, wait near my phone when the interview day comes, all prepared and dressed up, never get a call.

[00:20:24] Send an email to the recruiter who claimed they could not reach me. I decided to reschedule again, show up about two or three days later for the interview, and... Ghosted again. Emailed this person one more time and got the same explanation. Then I checked my call log and of course there's no sign of the number from the recruiter.

[00:20:41] Now, why would you contact someone for an interview, jerk them around, and then not even call them? If I'm not who you're really looking for, don't waste my time. I

[00:20:50] **Amy:** had been through job searches

[00:20:51] **Laura:** before, but this was the first time where I had a recruiter straight up just not even show up for the interview. Can I just and multiple

[00:20:59] **Amy:** times. [00:21:00] I just want to clarify one thing, which, they actually said, if I'm not who you're really looking for, then don't waste my fucking time.

[00:21:10] **Laura:** Yeah, you skipped the curse. Oh, that's true. Oh my God. I did. I'm so sorry. Yes. Don't waste my fucking time. Okay. They did. I skipped over the effing time. All right. Look, first of all, cursing is required on this podcast. Second of all, I hate this so much because that recruiter is trying to make it.

[00:21:33] It's Oh, I tried to get ahold of you and I get it. Phones are weird. And sometimes my phone doesn't ring and it's frustrating and, but not three, like after three times, no, they're just lying to you. Like they're getting some

[00:21:43] **Amy:** sick, they're in pleasure and gaslighting. That's like gaslighting.

[00:21:48] **Laura:** It is. And it's very bad. And I had a similar story for myself. I had a weird thing where an interview that I was doing wasn't moving forward. And I happened to actually know the hiring manager and had been recruited directly by her. So I pinged her [00:22:00] and I was like, Hey, what are the next steps?

[00:22:01] You said you wanted to keep talking. And she was surprised that we hadn't set up the next steps yet. And she was like, Oh, the recruiter says he's waiting for your resume. The recruiter was not waiting for my resume. He had it. He just told her he was waiting for it because he had dropped the ball.

[00:22:14] That was fine. I was like, Oh, sure. I'll just make sure that he has it. He had it. But so this kind of stuff happens all the time, and sometimes the candidate can get made to look like the person who's the problem. And you just have to know that you've dotted your I's and crossed your T's and just, move on with it.

[00:22:32] It sucks, but that's gonna happen.

[00:22:34] **Amy:** It's, again, there's a lot going on internally that recruiters have to deal with. And I get it, we all make mistakes. And it's hard for people to own up to mistakes, especially in competitive environments, especially if it means that they're maybe not meeting their targets on time, or not getting things done in a timely manner, or if it causes a lot of grief for other [00:23:00] people but I

also think if people have a pattern of making mistakes like this it could be worth a discussion for how to lighten that load a bit.

[00:23:08] Or be upfront about what's broken in the process that's causing these kind of snafus. And then of course the, personal responsibility of owning up to making mistakes. Because it happens.

[00:23:22] **Laura:** All right, I want to talk about a few problems after the offer.

[00:23:25] These will actually make you cringe. These are terrifying for anybody who is in the process of searching for a role. I am sorry, but it is spooky season and this is what you get.

[00:23:37]

[00:23:40] **Amy:** I went through nine interviews to work at a company, including a case study and presentation.

[00:23:46] They offered me the role after a ton of work and effort. The recruiter called me the next day and asked me for my salary range. It seemed she had neglected to ask in the beginning. I told her my expectations and that I was flexible about compensation. She called me the next day [00:24:00] to say they were no longer considering me because I didn't have media Which I told them from the start.

[00:24:06] I'm just glad I hadn't quit my job at that point. They also cancelled on my references last minute, which was embarrassing. Ugh.

[00:24:16] **Laura:** Yeah. Oh my god. Yeah. First of all, nine interviews? Fuck you. There is no world in which nine people need to talk to me to decide whether or not I can do a job.

[00:24:26] Especially not separately. Also. Just remember, if somebody asks you for your salary range, verbally, you are free to push back on them and say, oh, I'm interested in knowing what the range is, just to make sure you're not wildly out of the scope. But Man, what a good example of, don't quit your job until you've got a signed offer in hand.

[00:24:48] **Amy:** Exactly. And it's not even signed offer.

[00:24:51] Don't quit your job until you have a signed offer. But, these days we're seeing all kinds of stuff where people get offers rescinded for [00:25:00]

reasons that have nothing to do with them. And this excuse about not having experience in a particular domain, that's such bullshit.

[00:25:09] Obviously, they knew that from the start. And I had the same thing happen to me I don't know, back in 2014, I interviewed locally here at a company that makes software for I. T. Automation. Software used by back end developer types, highly technical.

[00:25:27] I went through the process and the feedback was, Oh, you don't have experience with our highly technical software that you never would have actually had a reason to use in your entire life. And I think it's just a way to hide some other rationale, which in this case, it sounds like it might have been something related to the compensation.

[00:25:51] **Laura:** It certainly is pointing in that direction. But yeah, that's even if it wasn't, that feels a little weird that you were told you're getting an offer.

[00:26:00] What are your, what's your comp and then, Oh, you're not getting an offer now. Like the, it feels like that's, that was the problem. Even if it wasn't, that was badly

[00:26:07] **Amy:** handled.

[00:26:08] One thing I will say though, is. This needs to be discussed up front and if the recruiter doesn't bring it up, it, I think, is the responsibility of the job seeker to bring it up. Someone needs to bring it up. This discussion really does need to happen at the beginning of the process because otherwise people are making assumptions about the pay and the total compensation.

[00:26:34] You don't want to waste your time. Recruiters don't want to waste their time. So I think it's just. Better for the whole process. It's healthier to discuss that up front.

[00:26:45] **Laura:** I agree I will also say that is a new thing Yeah, so if this was like if this story is from five years ago, that was not necessarily that was looked well upon for the stupidest reasons.

[00:26:56] But that's just the way people are. People would often say, Oh

[00:27:00] no, this, Oh, they asked about money. Clearly they don't care about working for us. No, they care about working for you and also the money. That's why we do jobs. So I get why people don't, we've been taught not to.

[00:27:12] And I think that, I think that corner has finally been turned and it is perfectly normal and expected. To ask now, and I encourage all of you to

[00:27:21] **Amy:** do it. I agree. Yeah, and hopefully they just put the salary range on the damn job description.

[00:27:28] **Laura:** Please. Can we just all do that? Can we just all do that? Yes, I agree.

[00:27:32] Here's another good one, and this is, this one actually is a cautionary tale, and I've had this happen to me, and it can be fixed, but you need to fix it before you quit your job. Alright, here we go. The written offer was different than the verbal one.

[00:27:47] I pointed this out. The RSUs were different. I was told the language was standard, and they'd sort it out later. Also, they refused to budge on any salary negotiation, and that just feels odd to me. The recruiter suggested I [00:28:00] talk to the hiring manager. I said sure, but when I did, Wow! Had the tone changed.

[00:28:04] I was informed that they expect people to be team players in this role. Was I no longer one because I tried to negotiate? I pulled out after that call. Oh, good. Okay, fucking good for you. That was the correct choice. I just want to be real clear. Team player does not mean I will accept less money than I was offered.

[00:28:22] That is some bullshit. Also, if they offer it to you. Your acceptance is contingent on that

[00:28:30] **Amy:** actually being what they pay you.

[00:28:32] **Laura:** Look, if the hiring manager's pulling this, Oh, are you not a team player? Shit, before you even join? You can't imagine what fuckery they will get up to after you're part of their team.

[00:28:42] Do not report to that person. They sound like a nightmare. But also, read your offer letters. This was a good example of somebody I think showing

[00:28:50] **Amy:** good judgment. Yeah. They can tell you something verbally on the phone Hey, here's what we're offering for your salary range.

[00:28:57] There's, this bonus, or these are the healthcare [00:29:00] benefits or whatever it might be, but absolutely getting that in writing. And don't, commit to anything on the phone until you're able to see that and actually scrutinize. Every detail you want to pay attention and compare it to what was discussed.

[00:29:15] And be able to have some decent amount of time to think through it, especially if you're looking at more than one offer. So , I'm really glad that they decided to end this. And , there's a lot of pressure on folks, especially these days when there's fewer jobs and more people looking to take Offers without trying to negotiate, and it's a good idea to still do that.

[00:29:40] Feeling pressured to take something because there's a fear that they might not be able to find something else. And yeah, there are trade offs with accepting a role or not. But I think it's important to stick with the things that we really care about and to really pay attention to those red flags if

[00:29:58] they come [00:30:00] up.

[00:30:00] **Laura:** Also we are seeing now some jobs where they really do offer you the best that they're gonna offer you and they won't negotiate and often they'll tell you that up front and You can still try like you should still be able to try and they may come back and say no I'm not gonna like I can't do that the reason hopefully that they do that is because it does take some of the bias out of the the compensation process and they're just like no we have decided that we are gonna pay you X and the fact like whether or not you're a good negotiator shouldn't affect that we think we can afford X We think you're worth X and that's what we're going to pay you and that's fine.

[00:30:32] I got no problem with that generally. All that other stuff though about it being different from, that is not okay.

[00:30:41] **Amy:** Alright, next story. I had a fantastic job and was just promoted to a principal designer role with a 7 percent pay increase.

[00:30:49] A recruiter reached out from a company I'd worked for previously asking if I'd be willing to chat with a director familiar with my work at that company who was very eager to talk. We set up a [00:31:00] call and they shared how impressed they were with the results of an initiative I had led and asked me if I'd consider coming back.

[00:31:06] I agreed to an interview loop which consisted of 12 hours of interviews with a number of

[00:31:13] **Laura:** at a company where this person had already worked.

[00:31:15] **Amy:** Wow. Okay. So the hours are just increasing at this point. Feedback came back almost immediately with a written offer from the recruiter for more than a 50 percent pay raise from my current salary. An assigning bonus that would have paid off our mortgage. Wow, okay, sounds good so far. It was an offer I couldn't reject despite being happy in my current role, so I accepted with a four week runway to give plenty of notice to my current employer at the time.

[00:31:43] I resigned from my role, starting the onboarding training for the new role. I got my laptop in the mail along with a welcome package two days before the actual start date. On the Sunday night before my start date, I got a call from the recruiter. She said unfortunately they were going to have to rescind my offer, [00:32:00] and she had no further details she could share.

[00:32:02] I got an email with the same info and didn't hear back from the recruiter again. Someone I had interviewed with messaged me on LinkedIn to tell me the manager I previously had at the company placed me on a do not hire list after my exit. She said it was unusual because there wasn't an explanation which is normally required.

[00:32:21] Okay, this is the worst thing I've ever heard.

[00:32:24] **Laura:** I would hire a lawyer. I swear to god. Here's the horrifying thing. As a hiring manager in the, at least in the ATS I was working with the whether or not To let them be rehired is often like a checkbox, and it's not real clear in some cases.

[00:32:38] So this could absolutely have been an accident, or it could have just been an ex manager who got pissed because somebody quit and was real vindictive. And that sucks too. Like it depends on what your relationship was with that manager. But man, everything about this sounds [00:33:00] horrible. I, it feels like this, they were specifically trying to harm this person.

[00:33:07] This is, you were cursed. You pissed off a witch. I don't know what to tell you.

[00:33:11] Also as a hiring manager. I know this can sound embarrassing.

[00:33:13] This could feel embarrassing to you if this had happened to somebody who reported to me if I had not already filled their job and I liked the

person I would a hundred percent be like, yep Come back. I would do everything I could to get them back because you can't penalize somebody for taking a job that pays 50 percent more, right?

[00:33:32] That's just business. As a hiring manager, if somebody who reports to you is Hey, I just got this job. That fell into my lap. Somebody reached out to me. It's 50 percent more. I got to take it. I would be like, invite me on your yacht. Yeah, but that's

[00:33:47] **Amy:** you. That's you.

[00:33:48] **Laura:** I know.

[00:33:48] But it's, I think it's worth reaching back out. I know a lot of good hiring managers, a lot of hiring managers who would. I also know a lot of really petty. Assholes who wouldn't. But all I'm saying is, at least [00:34:00] check. Because it is so much easier to bring that person back than it is to go out and find a whole new person.

[00:34:04] Even if the person's feeling petty, they might be like it's easier just to bring you back and then I don't have to train a new person. Exactly.

[00:34:10] **Amy:** Yeah, this is a disaster. And I think when we first started seeing the layoffs year and a half ago year ago or so, I, we heard of a lot of people who were getting new offers and turning down other offers and then getting those new offers rescinded. And I had a couple people I worked with who experienced that, and that's exactly what I said.

[00:34:35] I said, go back to those other offers and say, look, here's the situation. Sometimes it worked, sometimes it didn't work, and they were left in the lurch. And I agree about talking to a lawyer for something like this because it does cause harm. It causes financial and psychological harm, and I don't know the viability of, bringing I, if it would, I dunno if it'd [00:35:00] work,

[00:35:00] **Laura:** but man I would at least get a, I would at least get a stern letter written to them on letterhead.

[00:35:04] **Amy:** Exactly. And share information within your network about these situations so other people can avoid these companies.

[00:35:14] **Laura:** Ugh, what a mess. Alright, I want to move on to our last category titled. Really weird shit. This is stuff that just shouldn't happen. This, I think this one was my very favorite story, honestly.

[00:35:27] And there were so many good ones, but this is my favorite, because it just reminds me of my days working in startups. All right, here we go.

[00:35:33]

[00:35:40] **Laura:** Four years ago, I interviewed for a lead UX designer role at a startup. The first round was at a dive bar at 4 p. m. Okay, not too bad. We had dinner and we did the second round at the rental house where the CEO lived.

[00:35:52] The interview happened in the hot tub at 11 p. m. All of the multiple co founders were fully naked discussing things [00:36:00] unrelated to design. One of the things they discussed were their biggest regrets in life. Ugh, my bad. Whoever submitted this, look, they did it completely anonymously. As was their right. All I am saying is I am begging you, please DM me on LinkedIn.

[00:36:16] I will keep you completely anonymous. I need to have more details and I need to know what company this was, or I will die. So please,

[00:36:27] **Amy:** and in case anybody

[00:36:28] **Laura:** is listening and saying, oh, that can't possibly be true, nobody would actually do that. I will just have to say, I worked for startups. I would bet money that this is true or at least very close to true.

[00:36:40] This is, yeah, that, that is a hundred percent something that very much could happen at a startup. That wouldn't even shock

[00:36:46] **Amy:** me. And it could be used for an episode of that show Silicon Valley. It seems great. Out of that show.

[00:36:55] There's just so many awful things about this. I don't [00:37:00] know the gender of this person. I don't know anything about their identity, but regardless of that, those power dynamics that are happening. Okay, what do I need to do to get this role? I'm just gonna go with the flow. But also this is a great example for the argument for culture fit except in the opposite direction where it's like if this is the culture you, if you don't like this then you are not going to fit into that culture and so yes.

[00:37:28] **Laura:** Yeah, no, they have done a fabulous job of showing you who they are and if you are an 11 p. m. naked in the hot tub talking about your regrets kind of person, more power to ya. I'm, I will not tell you that is wrong. I will just tell you that that's what that company's gonna be like.

[00:37:46] **Amy:** Alright, next up. I was doing an interview for a UX role and I got asked near the end, Tell me a PC joke. And I froze up. It was awkward before then, but I didn't get the role. [00:38:00] Yeah, I love this,

[00:38:02] **Laura:** because this is such a good example of just terrible interview questions that you're gonna run into. I do have a terrible PC joke that anybody can use.

[00:38:09] I just want so nobody ever gets stuck in this position. Okay Amy, what do you call a pig with three eyes? I don't know. Pig.

[00:38:19] **Amy:** Wah. Yeah. It's a terrible joke. It's a

[00:38:22] **Laura:** dad joke. That's fine.

[00:38:24] If you're an interviewer, unless this is going to be part of the job, don't ask people this question.

[00:38:32] Don't ask people questions like these. Don't ask people about how many ping pong balls they can fit into a bus. These are bad questions. Yeah.

[00:38:38] **Amy:** Move beyond them. And why did they have to say PC? Oh, I

[00:38:41] **Laura:** guarantee you that the reason that they said it had to be PC is because they had asked for one and they got something horrifying.

[00:38:47] Although that actually is a more interesting one. If you ask somebody to tell you a joke and they tell you something that is. Wildly inappropriate. Now you've actually learned something.

[00:38:55] **Amy:** Okay, my joke is, how do you make an octopus laugh?
[00:39:00] With ten tickles. Ah,

[00:39:04] **Laura:** I see. These are all great jokes, people. Alright, next story. I had been interviewing at a few places for a director of design role. At that time, I was a director and had been managing a small but mighty team of six.

[00:39:16] I was looking to jump to a higher company to build in skills, so naturally I was open to both manager and director levels. I had gotten to the final round for two pretty interesting roles. One at the director level and one at senior manager. They were fairly different in scales and culture, so it was hard for me to weigh my options.

[00:39:30] I got offers for both and decided to take the senior manager role as it matched what I was looking for just a bit better. The company I turned down scheduled a flow with me. I had assumed it was to get feedback as to what they could have done, their process, or maybe even try to sell me on their role.

[00:39:45] However, when I got on that call, they had the hiring manager there and he pretty much just screamed at me for 15 minutes. Told me I strung them along and wasted their time. Even said I was using their great company reputation to get a job I likely wasn't qualified [00:40:00] for.

[00:40:00] Needless to say, I made the right decision. Oof. Yikes! Look, here's the thing. I personally love it when I'm immediately proven right. When you turn down a job it's really easy to wonder, Did I just make a terrible decision? Should I have gone with the

[00:40:17] other one?

[00:40:17] It's, it's a hard

[00:40:18] choice. To just immediately get confirmation like this is... 100 percent worth 15 minutes of getting yelled at. You just dodged potentially years of working for this absolute monster. This would have been the person managing you, and they felt entitled to scream at you for 15 minutes and accuse you of things.

[00:40:41] Because you picked a different

[00:40:45] **Amy:** Right. And I'm sure this person would not have had a problem with stringing this candidate along and then telling them no at the end. Oh, of course not! It's That's the thing. It's personal and it's business. We're [00:41:00] expected to just accept not getting an offer after going through all of this.

[00:41:05] Oh, it's just business. And we take it personally, and it doesn't feel good. But then on the other end, if we decide, oh, we don't want this job, or we're going to pull out of the interview process, people take it personally. But again, we're also trying to find jobs to make money, and they are trying to hire

people, but they're also getting paid to do that, and they need it for a business purpose there's just so many...

[00:41:32] Unequal expectations. And, but yeah, this is just totally abusive.

[00:41:38] **Laura:** A hundred percent.

[00:41:40] Alright, that is all the time that we have for today. And we hope you haven't been frightened too much by these terrible tales. We will be back with another episode with even more horror stories that will make you want to crawl under your bed and never come out again.

[00:41:54] And seriously, thank you to everybody who wrote in with their stories. If we didn't get to yours, I [00:42:00] apologize. We might get to it in a future one. Take it from both Amy and me. We are sorry that this happens to you and I personally just want to give everybody a nice consensual hug and tell you again, it is not your fault.

[00:42:13] But thank you for listening to these terrible tales. I am Laura and I'm Amy, and we want to thank you again for listening and wish you all the best of luck with your search, no matter what you are looking for, we are rooting for you.

[00:42:25]

[00:42:25]

[00:42:26] **Laura:** Hello and welcome to a special and spooky Halloween edition of What is Wrong with Hiring, the podcast where we talk about why hiring people and getting hired are both absolute nightmares. I'm Laura Klein, a once and future hiring [00:43:00] manager and an extremely annoyed job seeker.

[00:43:03] **Amy:** And I'm Amy Santee, a once and never again, tech worker turned career coach, who instead of experiencing my own direct hiring horrors, gets to live vicariously through all of you.

[00:43:16] **Laura:** That sounds so much

[00:43:17] **Amy:** better, Amy.

[00:43:17] **Laura:** Please be advised that this podcast may contain drinking, swearing, haunting, and screaming into the abyss. Okay, I'm going to stop that. That's, I can't, I shouldn't do that. You can leave that part in. Pretty much like most podcasts.

[00:43:32] I promise that was my last.

[00:43:36] **Amy:** That's okay, do whatever, if you're in the mood, it's October. It's seasonally appropriate. Spooky season. Yes, we asked listeners to share their worst hiring experiences within the shadowy realm of interviewing and hiring. So thank you to those brave souls who submitted more than 50 hellish stories.

[00:43:55] And these range from the frustrating but exciting. Expected type of bullshit. [00:44:00] One is likely to come across to some pretty nightmarish encounters where things went horribly wrong. I have

[00:44:06] **Laura:** my own hiring horror story and it's new. Ooh, fabulous. So I left my job last month after a reorg that landed me into a group that was, not great for me.

[00:44:17] Self care, just decided that was enough. I've been casually looking for a new job. But I was really excited about one because it was working with an old boss who I had enjoyed working with and really wanted to work with her again.

[00:44:30] So I went through the process. I had a verbal offer. I negotiated it, of course, because that's what we do. And then I accepted verbally. And I was just waiting for, the paperwork to come through. I'm gonna be honest, I had this weird feeling while waiting for the paperwork based on nothing but vibes and the fact that, everything else is on fire, so I just, I don't know, it was, my spidey senses were tingling.

[00:44:56] The surprise, , the c e [00:45:00] o did not approve the offer and the offer when they came back was lowered to 78% of the original base salary. Amy, you actually did the math on that, so thank you. I just knew it was like much lower and. Irritatingly so now I have to decide do I still want this job?

[00:45:16] Like it's much lower rate. And also knowing that the CEO is the kind of guy who will just step in at the last minute and blow shit up, which is, not, if I had wanted that, I could have

[00:45:25] **Amy:** stayed at my old job. Exactly. It's too common. And yeah, definitely a red flag to watch for so do you think you'll take a leap and embrace the uncertain darkness or flee from the looming horrors that await you.

[00:45:40] **Laura:** Okay. Oh, I see we're both getting into the spirit. Okay, that's fine. If you're going to be that way, I'm just going to start witchcack. Look this whole podcast is fun. And this, I'm going to admit it now, it's an elaborate setup for me to get free career advice from you, Amy. As opposed to [00:46:00] actually paying for it, cause hey, it's free if my time has no value.

[00:46:03] You tell me what should I do? It is a much worse offer. There are still some good things about the job. I would get to work with my old boss, who was very apologetic, and she had gotten all the approvals from the people she thought she needed to get the approval for this job.

[00:46:16] It's just that, I don't know, it sounds like

[00:46:22] **Amy:** it does. I would have the same reaction. You got your expectations up and we're looking forward to joining this organization with people that you already know they made you an offer, and you said yes, and then they took it back, and to go that much lower in compensation that's awful in and of itself, but the fact as you pointed out, that the CEO jumped in and, prevented that initial offer from happening.

[00:46:51] Change is mine. I think it does probably reflect how things may go and internally in terms of other sorts of major [00:47:00] decisions. So that would definitely, I think, be a concern for me. And I'll be curious to know what you decide.

[00:47:09] **Laura:** You're supposed to just

[00:47:09] **Amy:** tell me what to do. Okay. Okay. Yeah. Don't take it. See, now

[00:47:15] **Laura:** I'm going to feel bad if I do take it. I don't know. It's a tough question. And I don't want to get too hung up on the whole but I deserve X. Like everybody's taking less now.

[00:47:22] I get that the market's garbage taking something now and then. I don't know, I'm switching in six months if I find something better.

[00:47:29] **Amy:** Yeah, I'm, yes. It's not the end of the world, it's not the end of the world, and there are definitely different conditions in today's job market. But

at the same time, you still do deserve something that's commensurate with what's involved in the role.

[00:47:46] And I think you also deserve to work with people who respect you and value you. Yes, that will be a personal decision, a very important one. But if you do decide to say no, I'm sure you will continue to [00:48:00] get other offers and find something that is really good for you and what you're looking for.

[00:48:05] **Laura:** Thank you. I appreciate that. All right. What do we have? Let's talk about some other

[00:48:10] **Amy:** people's horror stories. Yeah, so for today we got so many stories in our initial call So we decided to turn this into a three part series for the month of October So today for part two, we'll continue with another series of terrible tales from job candidates And next week for part three, we'll do another spooky episode about the trials and tribulations of hiring managers because they are human too.

[00:48:35] **Laura:** As an ex hiring manager, I'm going to say just

[00:48:37] barely, but sure.

[00:48:38] Alright, first story. Here we go.

[00:48:42] Yeah.

[00:48:47] **Laura:** I had to do a video interview for a UXR role, and the hiring manager was visibly in another meeting during my interview. I asked him if he needed to take it, and he said no, but at times during my interview, he stopped to hear what they were saying.[00:49:00]

[00:49:00] This told me how little he thinks of this process and role. Then he proceeded to clearly lay out what was definitely a visual design role. So I explained to him that he was really looking for a designer, not a researcher. But I soon realized there was no way I could be informative. In this scenario, he told me I was wrong and let me know he'd done research before.

[00:49:19] In telling me about the research, it wasn't with humans. It was all desk research. I was annoyed and typically would have just let the call end on a soft note, but it bothered me that this guy was going to walk away, possibly

thinking he was deciding something about my fate, especially with how rude he was.

[00:49:34] So I let him know again that this was indeed a designer role and that I would be moving on.

[00:49:39] **Amy:** First of all, why do people have to be so rude? That's so obvious. Like, how can you be in two meetings at the same time? The rudeness people exhibit is just it's too common for my preferences.

[00:49:51] But second of all, imagine having this person as your boss. I, think situations like this can be really discouraging and harmful when someone's [00:50:00] Outright telling you're wrong when you're actually right because you're literally an expert in something and I'm glad that this person asserted themselves because it can make people really second guess themselves.

[00:50:11] And this kind of thing can eat at someone's self confidence. And so of course, the sad thing is that this dude is probably just going to continue on thinking he knows what he's talking about.

[00:50:23] **Laura:** Yeah Mike. Okay. And I think my worry here, and this has nothing to do with the candidate who did, by the way, a hundred percent the correct thing and good for the candidate for just being like, thank you, know I'm out cause that's a success story right there.

[00:50:36] But what concerns me is that this hiring manager is going to go on and find somebody, Who is younger or who is desperate or who doesn't have the kind of self assurance to just be like, that's not this and they're going to have a really shitty job experience with this dude. I

[00:50:51] **Amy:** think this is an example of a success story in a way for the reason that you mentioned.

[00:50:56] And I think a lot of the stories we got are success [00:51:00] stories in the sense that the outcome is better for that individual in the long run. Yeah didn't you have an experience like this in recent times, Laura, where someone told you were not doing research correctly and you didn't know what you were talking about?

[00:51:18] **Laura:** It might have something to do with the fact. Why I'm not at my old job?

[00:51:23] **Amy:** I don't know. Yeah, maybe. Sounded familiar. It

[00:51:26] **Laura:** wasn't during a hiring thing, but it did incentivize. A hiring thing in that I am now looking for a new job. Anyway, what's our next

[00:51:35] **Amy:** story, Amy?

[00:51:36] Mhm.

[00:51:41] **Amy:** I have 20 years experience in software development, including seven years as an engineering manager. Because that time as a manager was at my own business, people tend to discredit it. I was interviewing for an individual contributor role at a well known fintech company, and the hiring manager said, you have a lot of management [00:52:00] experience.

[00:52:00] Are you interested in also interviewing for this other role, which was a management role? And I said, to be really honest, I found that people don't really value my time as a manager at my own company, despite the fact that I did all of the things a manager at a large company would do. And she said, that's just silly, it's the same experience.

[00:52:18] She convinced me to interview for the management position as well, telling me she felt that experience was valuable. I ended up getting rejected for both positions after going through the full interview process for both. But the kicker?

[00:52:31] The feedback for the engineering manager role was not enough management experience.

[00:52:38] **Laura:** This is so frustrating. And it is actually a weirdly good example of how little pull hiring managers can have sometimes. This is a bit of a weird tangent, but smaller companies there are fewer people making that final decision.

[00:52:53] So it's useful to know that what you can run into is the [00:53:00] hiring manager or often the recruiter who maybe doesn't know the role that well, or, whatever, like they could be giving you the wrong advice and it's tricky, right? Like if I, as a hiring manager in a big organization say what I value is X and there's somebody who can veto it, who value something else that's going to hurt you.

[00:53:22] And I don't really know what the right. I actually run into this a lot this particular problem because I, my, my jobs tend to veer wildly in terms of the titles. Like it's, product role, research role, design role yes, I've done all of these things. So people look at it and go, I don't really know what you do.

[00:53:42] So you have to be really good about telling that story. And getting ahead of it, and really being very clear that I know it looks... It's weird, but here's how it relates. Now this person may have done all of that and it didn't matter because somebody [00:54:00] was looking for something very specific. That happens too.

[00:54:02] Like I said, that can happen a lot at these big companies, but just the best thing you can do is if you know that you have something, something on your resume that people tend to go like, Oh, that doesn't count. You have to tell a really good story about not just why it counts, but why it's incredibly important and makes you an even better candidate.

[00:54:19] **Amy:** Yeah I think this could be a case of making sure to tell the story effectively to connect the dots for people.

[00:54:26] And we should always keep in mind the questions and perspectives of the people who are reading our resume or looking at our LinkedIn. And it's hard to address every possible interpretation of things, but thinking about, what most likely is this person's perspective or what biases or assumptions might I need to get ahead of especially in today's market.

[00:54:50] **Laura:** Our next story is another success story, I think. I'm just going to ruin it for everybody by telling you that ahead of time.

[00:54:58] [00:55:00]

[00:55:01] **Laura:** I was looking for my first full time content design role, and I'd been through a weird panel interview at a startup style company that had been around for a few years.

[00:55:09] I asked a question about how much vacation people tend to take, given that the policy was, quote, unlimited. But I wanted to understand if that translated to good work life balance. An employee answered that she had recently gone on a trip to Paris, but that she took her laptop. So she could do work while in Paris.

[00:55:26] They didn't answer my question about what unlimited meant. When I was rejected, it was because it seemed like I wouldn't be committed to the company. Oof. Yeah, again, really good example here, I think on the candidate side of asking questions around the things that matter to you. And honestly, Accepting the consequences that come with that, but having the right attitude of, I don't want to do work on my vacation in Paris because I will be too busy eating, I don't know, cheese and crisps.

[00:55:55] Or whatever, doing whatever you enjoy doing. I enjoy eating my way through [00:56:00] Paris. So that's, bring your good questions. Make sure that you are asking about things that matter to you. And understand that if they're saying bullshit you're not gonna be a committed team player because you're not willing to work on your vacation.

[00:56:14] Fuck them. Seriously. That's what

[00:56:17] **Amy:** vacation is. Exactly. That list of questions is so important, and in order to formulate your questions or know what to look for throughout the interview process, you need a list of requirements for jobs. You want to be really clear on the things that are non negotiable for you, and the things you're willing to compromise on, ranging from, workplace style to Team culture, stuff to manager, the type of work compensation, all of that and be able to ask corresponding questions or collect data along the way.

[00:56:47] So you can be assessing whether or not this is a good opportunity. But more importantly, is sticking to the list because it can be easy to make exceptions that we may not be happy with later [00:57:00] on. And do that due diligence if we are making any kind of assumptions about how things will be and this person didn't make assumptions, they wanted to clarify what this policy actually looks like in practice, right?

[00:57:14] Does the company support people taking time off? And how much time do people typically take? And the answer was right there in front of them, which is that it would be unappreciated by the business if people were to do that. I do think too, that unlimited vacation policies are pretty much a scam.

[00:57:35] For the most part they can basically be a way for companies to make you feel bad about taking time off from work. Not wanting to put the burden on your coworkers or, wanting to finish up a project according to a deadline. And so the policy is one thing, but again, how it's.

[00:57:53] supported and facilitated by the organization is another thing. And it can also be a really sketchy way for companies to not [00:58:00] have to pay out as much in unused paid time off if there is a layoff or if someone quits.

[00:58:06] **Laura:** Yeah, absolutely. We should do a whole future podcast on that particular thing.

[00:58:10] Cause I happen to like unlimited vacation, but that comes with a lot of caveats. I'll just put it that way. You're gonna do this next story, but I want to, we wanted to give a content warning for knife violence, which is not a statement I thought I was gonna have to make. I'm gonna be perfectly honest when we decide to do hiring horror stories.

[00:58:29] Just to reassure anybody, nobody actually gets hurt in this story. Physically, nobody is physically harmed. But if you have any issue with knives or knife violence please skip forward four or five minutes and you will not miss

[00:58:42] **Amy:** anything. Yeah or unwanted physical touch, unwanted, entrance into your personal space.

[00:58:48] Okay, here's the story.

[00:58:50] 🎵

[00:58:56] **Amy:** I applied for an internal role, a level above mine, on another [00:59:00] team at a company I had been with for three I ultimately lost out to an external candidate, let's call him Barry, who was overqualified for the role, and I took it in stride because he looked amazing on paper.

[00:59:12] A few months later at the company Christmas party, oh, company Christmas party. Oh, how about it? ominous words. Barry had a bit too much to drink. As the night went on, some of us grew more and more concerned about his behavior, which included hitting on a lot of women. At one point, I was talking with a group of my female colleagues, and Barry came up behind the most soft spoken woman on our team and put her in a loose headlock.

[00:59:37] We all laughed and cringed for a moment, as she was clearly uncomfortable, and then Barry said something along the lines of, I'm going to teach you ladies to defend yourself if you ever get held up by someone with a knife. All right Barry then proceeded to get out an actual switchblade knife and hold it to her neck and slowly walk her through the steps to get out of a headlock.

[00:59:59] We all saw [01:00:00] how uncomfortable she was, but we didn't know how to intervene. Barry finished his unsolicited demonstration and wandered off to go hit on more women. He was fired the next day after about three short months with the company.

[01:00:12] Oddly enough, the knife incident was not reported to HR and was not what he was fired for. It was because he hit on the wrong woman. Barry's role was not backfilled.

[01:00:22] **Laura:** I wanted to include this, because it gives me personally a little bit of schadenfreude when to hear about somebody if you get rejected for something, and then that person turns out to be an absolute bozo I just, I really enjoy that sort of little, that, that little oh.

[01:00:39] See what you get for not going with the obviously better candidate, which was me, obviously. I think there's only really two good scenarios for losing out to somebody specific. One is that one, where it turns out that they're just an absolute nightmare and a clown show, and you can just be like, Oh, the people deciding had.

[01:00:56] Just were idiots and they had no idea. Or if that other person is [01:01:00] so good that you were like, Yeah, I would have picked them too. Which, I just lost out to people. I was like, Oh no, they're far more qualified than I. I guess this is a great example of Sometimes, you apply for something, you don't get it.

[01:01:09] And then three months later, you do see it posted again.

[01:01:13] **Amy:** I don't know. Maybe it was Barry. Yeah, it could be Barry and Barry, if you're listening to this, you suck. That's all I got to say. But yeah, no, the challenge is that it can be hard to know when people are going to be this egregiously horrible and inappropriate or if they're going to be.

[01:01:31] sexual harassers or sexist or racist or any of the other things people can hide when they're interviewing.

[01:01:37] **Laura:** All right, next interviewing horror story.

[01:01:41]

[01:01:46] **Laura:** I was interviewing at a company for a senior UXR role.

[01:01:49] I had done most of the interviews locally in NYC and a few by video. They still decided I needed to fly out to SF to meet the hiring manager and a few final people. Everything was amazing until meeting the hiring manager. [01:02:00] She gave me an assignment, which I had to plow through something like a hundred to two hundred pages of confusing and technical material on an unfamiliar product.

[01:02:08] in about 45 minutes. I then had to have an awkward conversation with someone else who pretended to be a specific person on the team in which we discussed my research approach. And as someone on the autism spectrum, the conversation was a disaster because the role play was fake and awkward. I explained to the manager, look, I just can't work this way.

[01:02:26] I need time to think and process information in real life. I would never be having this conversation after 45 minutes. To look at this much material. She got really annoyed and said, but I need you to work this way, explaining that I needed to have opinions on demand. Even though as a deep thinker, I tend to need time, so I can function.

[01:02:44] At that point, I should have just walked out. But I continued with the awkward interview. Of course, they declined me for the role. I didn't particularly mind given the obnoxious toxic manager alert. But it was disappointing to have wasted so much time and energy on the job interview, only to be burnt in that fashion.

[01:02:58] And really, they should have [01:03:00] instead declined the hiring manager for being competent to interview for the role.

[01:03:03] **Amy:** Ugh, geez. I kid you not, I have a client right now. who just had a pretty much the exact same experience as this. They were put on the spot in an interview and asked to whiteboard how they would approach a UX research study, and they didn't do so well for precisely this reason.

[01:03:21] And unfortunately, most Hiring processes are not inclusive with regard to neurodivergence, and so many people have to put up with awful crap like this just to find a decent job. I'm very sorry, dear listener, that you had to go through this experience, and unfortunately, it's probably not the first time it happened, and it's probably not going to be the last time.

[01:03:43] I have ... Seen a lot more conversation around making hiring practices more inclusive, especially with regard to neurodivergence, disability, other types of, variations that we have within humanity, but it shouldn't. be up to

[01:04:00] candidates to ask for the things that they need because those things may be seen as a poor reflection of their abilities by people who are crappy and biased and just awful.

[01:04:12] But I do know that some people are taking this approach to ask to do things. say asynchronously or get extra time for exercises like this. So that self advocacy is important, but it's again, totally unfair to put that burden on people.

[01:04:27] **Laura:** So I have a slightly different take on this. I 100%, I 100 percent agree with you that we need to advocate.

[01:04:33] More for having different ways of interviewing we need to get better justice hiring when we're hiring for people who do think differently or people who need time. I've managed people who are, who have just straight out told me, I'm not gonna be able to answer questions in the minute I need time.

[01:04:48] I'm like, okay we'll just build that in. And the fact that she said, but I need you to work this way. Now I'm going to say that's a shitty way to work. And I do not want to work at a [01:05:00] place that makes me do that.

[01:05:02] On the other hand, if

[01:05:03] **Amy:** that's actually the kind of way

[01:05:05] **Laura:** that they do work, that hiring manager was appropriately screening out people. Who can't work that way? No, I would argue nobody works real well that way, which is a different thing. Yeah, but that's a question of That's not a hiring question.

[01:05:24] That's a you have a shitty work environment question That's just a statement. You have a shitty work environment That's not a great way to get things done but if that's the way that they get things done,

[01:05:34] Now, the one thing is I do wish that there were a way early on in that process before they fucking fly you out to San Francisco and make you go through, all the hoops where you could get them to tell you what the actual job would be like. So you can make that decision before.

[01:05:50] interviewing for something that you would suck at because it's unreasonable to expect people to do that. But I definitely think this is a shitty way to interview if that's [01:06:00] not the way you work. But if that's really a

thing that you're going to expect of people, okay. I just ask them to do it earlier in the process so they

[01:06:08] **Amy:** don't waste a lot of time.

[01:06:09] Yeah, and don't make people feel bad about it. Think about the other person and put yourself in their shoes and, yeah, address specific needs and requirements up front.

[01:06:20] Yeah, let's go to the next one.

[01:06:22]

[01:06:24]

[01:06:24] **Amy:** I once interned in the realm of UX and marketing under a startup founder, the role was unpaid for a year, despite the company making a profit. And then for the next three to six months, it was agreed the role would be paid, I think 500 for three to six months.

[01:06:38] However, there was no official contract signed. And eventually this founder ghosted me after my term was done. I ended up having to chase up this person, a senior level member at multiple big names. And only months later was a small payment received. Jobs like this should come with a warning. It was a very disappointing experience and no recommendation was received despite my [01:07:00] impact in multiple areas.

[01:07:01] I also heard that someone who was on a sponsor visa who lost their job was in talks with this company but did not end up being sponsored by them despite being offered Or accepting the role.

[01:07:13] **Laura:** Okay, there are so many red flags here, it's just a quilt of red flags. Oof. This is 100 percent red flags, some of them literally illegal if they were in the U.

[01:07:22] S. Mhmm. First of all, internships are not unpaid unless they are only for the benefit

[01:07:32] **Amy:** of the intern. Being

[01:07:34] **Laura:** paid 500 for three to six months of work. I'm assuming part time or full even five full time that is so far under the minimum wage that this startup founder should be in jail for wage theft.

[01:07:51] It's awful that this shit happens to interns. Because it can because interns are the ones who are the most desperate and who have [01:08:00] the least experience to be able to push back on this shit. Which I even think makes it worse! Pull that on me. Fucking pull that on me. Come on.

[01:08:07] Don't. Try it. Try it. Leave the interns

[01:08:13] **Amy:** alone, all right? Try it and see what happens because Laura has a black belt in karate. At this

[01:08:20] **Laura:** point, I will just broadcast your name that you did this shit. Look, it's This is awful, I feel terrible for this person, I in no way blame this person for any of the things that happened, I just, if you find yourself in a position like this please, I know you want the experience, I know you want the recommendation, but this is a bad person who's going to take advantage of you, and you can tell, and you're not going to get anything you

[01:08:49] **Amy:** want out of it.

[01:08:50] Absolutely. Yeah, this person was obviously in a very vulnerable situation, and I don't want to blame them for it. I think that we can all [01:09:00] learn some lessons from this person's experience, which is not the first time it this happens all the time with interns. And if you look at the amount of pay, they're probably making 50 cents an hour just based on some initial quick calculation.

[01:09:14] So it's Of course way below what they should be making but there was no contract signed they got ghosted, they had to chase people up. I think at a certain point it's like is it time for me to get out of this situation, even though I might be leaving behind some kind of opportunity for my career.

[01:09:35] But to try and get those things figured out ahead of time. Again, I don't want to blame this person, there is a lot of desperation sometimes to get into fields that are difficult to enter. And yeah, I just. People just need to do the right thing. On the other hand, you gotta watch your back.

[01:09:53] **Laura:** Absolutely. All right next story.

[01:09:56] [01:10:00] Okay.

[01:10:00] **Laura:** I interviewed for a contract UX research role, which had an automated video screen as part of the process. You record your responses to prompts, play memory games, and the computer gives you a score from 0 to 100 based on your performance. Humans do not have any role in the grading process.

[01:10:14] I passed the screen, but was terrified about the experience. This was scary and laden with bias. I am skeptical about a computer's ability to evaluate videos. The questions did not pertain to the role and the memory games are completely irrelevant. God, these things are showing up more and I hate them and they're biased and they're terrible.

[01:10:32] And I I get why companies do them. They're just constantly trying to find a fucking way to hire fewer people but friends, this ain't it.

[01:10:40] **Amy:** I don't I shouldn't.

[01:10:42] **Laura:** Get penalized or any benefit from oh, I'm really good

[01:10:46] **Amy:** at playing Memory,

[01:10:48] **Laura:** like

[01:10:49] this is not useful. And if you feel like you're bad on video or If you have any one of a number of totally normal reactions to this It's just gonna tank your [01:11:00] ability to get the job and it's I just I hate it. I hate it. I hate it and more and more companies are doing it and I wish they would stop

[01:11:05] **Amy:** yeah, and there's it's one thing if You have to record some videos or responses or answer questions asynchronously and a human being looks at it.

[01:11:15] And that's uncomfortable and weird in and of itself. But if you were to do that and then the software is going to use what I assume to be natural language processing or some kind of AI tools to assess what you said and make decisions about your qualifications, obviously, that's not a great idea either.

[01:11:35] And I really don't understand it businesses today and pretty much historically are run in a way that I wouldn't do it, first of all and it just doesn't make sense I know people want to save money and make things more efficient

and there are all kinds of problems with the concept of work that relate to that, but it ends up happening.

[01:11:57] Causing these kind of situations where the [01:12:00] technology actually doesn't solve anything. It probably kicks people out of consideration who are totally capable of doing these jobs. And then you have things like IQ tests and personality quizzes and all of this crap. And yeah, I hate it too.

[01:12:17] **Laura:** I actually have a hypothesis about why they're doing this.

[01:12:21] Let's read the next one because it's in a similar vein. And I think I want to share my. My idea about why companies pull this shit.

[01:12:28] **Amy:** Okay. Next story.

[01:12:30] Yeah.

[01:12:32] **Amy:** I applied to a director of UX design role back in July, 2023. They did not have an ATS. They had a simple form on their website and I never got a confirmation of my application being received. As it was a reactionary application due to being laid off.

[01:12:47] I didn't hold out much hope for that role. Beginning of October 2023, I get two emails, one asking me to take a behavioral assessment, the other email asking me to complete a one way interview where I record myself answering 10 [01:13:00] questions for the company to review, with no context for the role or anything.

[01:13:04] It was horrendous. No multiple takes on recording any of the questions, a time limit of one to three minutes on each question. I just said fuck it. If you can't follow up with me about receiving my application and then months later asked me to jump through these hoops without the decency of a real fucking interview so I canceled the interview and moved on. The company then texted me asking why I hadn't completed the one way interview as they noticed that I had canceled it I told them why I'm no longer interested and was pretty honest about my experience.

[01:13:35] They then told me that it was a required step in the process and if I didn't complete it, I wouldn't go forward. I said that's fine and that I would like to withdraw my application. This TA specialist texting then had the fucking balls to text me and say, Thanks for wasting our time.

[01:13:50] Fuck em.

[01:13:52] **Laura:** I love this person's attitude by the way. Me too. I swear to god I did not write this one anonymously, but whoever you are, I love you. But this is another [01:14:00] one of those awful examples of we've put a bunch of stupid hoops in front of you to see if you'll jump through them.

[01:14:05] And here's my idea of why people do them. I, yes, I get it. You've been told, you have been sold shit by the manufacturers of these products that these are gonna save you time and revolutionize and disrupt and blah, blah, blah, whatever. I get that somebody in your organization, I don't know, got taken out to a steak dinner and fed a bunch of whiskey and signed a contract.

[01:14:29] I get that. That sucks. So that's one reason why these things happen. The other reason that these things happen, I think, is because these are really good if you want to screen out anybody who has another option. Because the people, like this person, who are like, you're wasting my time. They're not going to

[01:14:49] **Amy:** put up with it.

[01:14:50] And

[01:14:51] **Laura:** you then don't hire this person. Who might, I don't know, in that role, speak up about bad things happening at the [01:15:00] company. I don't want to get all conspiracy theorist on this, but if your goal is to hire people who desperately need a job so they won't leave, or because they can't leave, or because you're going to treat them poorly, or because, whatever reason you might want to hire somebody desperate as opposed to the best person.

[01:15:17] This is exactly the kind of shit you would put in their way, right? Who wants this job bad enough to do all of these terrible things? And the answer is maybe not the best person, but if you don't have any respect for the actual role, then that's fine. You're not looking for the best person, you're looking for the person who needs it the most.

[01:15:37] And I don't know, I think

[01:15:38] **Amy:** that's gross. Yeah, it is gross, and I have nothing to add.

[01:15:45] **Laura:** All right, we're just going to accept that my hypothesis is correct and and move on. All right. Last story. This is an awkward one, but I love it.

[01:15:55] I was being hired for a [01:16:00] role and the whole day had gone really well. I reached the last interviewer who was really morose. It was supposed to be an open chance to see how I would work with my peers.

[01:16:08] Turns out this person was really down and I wasn't sure why.

[01:16:11] **Amy:** So I asked them, is everything okay?

[01:16:14] **Laura:** They said, no, fuck this company. Don't work here. They're backstabbing sons of bitches. I said, what? They said, yeah, I actually got fired, but they didn't cut off my access to my computer. And I saw this on my calendar to tell you not to join.

[01:16:30] I said, oh, okay. Thanks. Click afterwards, I reached out to the recruiter and the hiring manager who apologized profusely, but in the end, it didn't matter. It wasn't a good

[01:16:41] **Amy:** fit. Sometimes there are allies. Yes

[01:16:46] **Laura:** Look, I who amongst us us has not fantasized about being the person who's just no Get out. Don't do it like just blinking Run in Morse code over and [01:17:00] over to the Person that you're supposed to be, like, encouraging to come join the company, right?

[01:17:06] More than anything, this is about cyber security and cutting off access to people that you fire almost immediately. But, holy shit. Good for that person for just, taking a shot

[01:17:18] **Amy:** and warning them. Yeah, and if that person's listening, thank you. I really appreciate what you did here.

[01:17:25] And, it can feel really good. It can be cathartic to prevent folks from walking into a trap. And I gotta say, that's definitely something I have done. several times in the past for toxic work environments and I am proud to say that I have prevented several people from going to work at them by sharing my experiences.

[01:17:45] And of course it's a personal decision. I did hear about some people who did decide to go work at this place and then fucking hated it. And they had to learn on their own,

[01:17:54] **Laura:** once again, is there anything better than being right about things? Oof, yeah, no. I'm gonna say no. No, but what, no, what that person [01:18:00] did was a gift.

[01:18:00] It was a gift. And yeah, I I encourage more people to, you know what, honestly, I encourage more people, if you are on the hiring panel and Amy like Amy said earlier, we're going to do some some hiring manager horror stories next time. But if you are on the hiring panel. And if you are interviewing somebody, I actually encourage you, maybe don't be this honest, but answer

[01:18:21] **Amy:** these questions honestly,

[01:18:22] **Laura:** give people a true vision of what it's like to work at the company and on the team.

[01:18:29] I think that's important just because you don't actually want, if your idea of something horrifying might be somebody else's idea of perfect. So just be honest with them and let them make the decision for themselves. Don't just, try to sell. And if the people are really backstabbing sons of bitches, then I don't know,

[01:18:49] **Amy:** maybe just

[01:18:49] **Laura:** Give it, give them the gift of honesty.

[01:18:51] Yes. All right, that is all the time that we have today and we hope you haven't been too frightened by much of the awfulness of these [01:19:00] ghastly anecdotes and even ghastlier

[01:19:01] **Amy:** people. And if you are you can thank us for giving you a taste of the horrors you will encounter in your next job search or hiring process.

[01:19:10] So sorry about that. But yeah, next time we'll be back with our third and final episode with even more horror stories that will make you want to crawl under your bed and never come out

[01:19:19] **Laura:** again. I am Laura. and I'm Amy. We want to thank you all for listening and wish you all the best of luck with your search.

[01:19:26] No matter what you're looking for, we're rooting for you.

[01:19:28]

[01:19:28]

[01:19:48] **Laura:** Hello, and welcome to a special spooky Halloween edition of What is Wrong with Hiring, the podcast where we talk about why hiring people and getting hired are both absolute nightmares. I'm [01:20:00] Laura Klein, a once and future hiring manager and currently extremely annoyed job seeker.

[01:20:05] **Amy:** And I'm Amy Santee, a once and never again tech worker turned career coach who, instead of experiencing my own direct hiring horrors,

[01:20:14] gets to live vicariously through all of you.

[01:20:17] **Laura:** Please be advised that this podcast may contain drinking, swearing, and screaming into the abyss. So pretty much like most podcasts.

[01:20:24] **Amy:** Yes, this is our third and final episode of our Horror Stories mini series for October. We ask listeners to share their worst experiences within the shadowy realm of interviewing and hiring.

[01:20:37] So thank you once again to everyone who submitted a story. Not only do these stories make for great podcast content and provide us with a reason to curse and groan more than usual, but hopefully it lets people know that they are not alone in this messed up world of job seeking and hiring, which really only seems to be getting worse.

[01:20:58] **Laura:** It's gotta get better, right? It's gonna get [01:21:00] better. I can feel it. Things are gonna change, Amy.

[01:21:02] **Amy:** You can have hope if you don't have optimism, right? I think those are different. I feel hopeful, but I don't know if I'm so optimistic just given humanity in general.

[01:21:13] **Laura:** Yeah, you make a great point.

[01:21:15] Alright, I hate it when you do that. Alright, let's jump right into our stories. These, again, these are stories. from hiring managers this time just so

that y'all know it's not just the candidates, sometimes those of us on the other end are having our own troubles. Here we go.

[01:21:33]

[01:21:37] **Laura:** We were hiring for a lead UX position.

[01:21:39] We were down to our last two candidates, both awesome, and finally made the offer to one who had slightly more related industry experience. The candidate requested time to think about it as he had other opportunities in progress. Fair enough. Except that he requested six weeks. My company offered him ten days to make a decision, still a very long time, but eventually he accepted the offer and we turned down the other [01:22:00] candidate.

[01:22:00] Fast forward nearly six weeks to the day of when he'd asked for it, and of course here comes his two weeks notice. He'd accepted another opportunity. Now come the shenanigans. Oh, now come the shenanigans. Here's what happened over the course of the next five weeks. The company went back to the other candidate that they'd already turned down and asked if they wanted the job after all.

[01:22:20] Except the company changed it to a junior level designer, part time, and no benefits. Way below this person's qualifications. And definitely not what we needed. I should have seen this for the 800 red flags that it was, but instead I went to leadership to make the case that we didn't need another junior designer.

[01:22:35] We needed someone to chart a path and establish a practice. They agreed to change the position back, but I now wish that they hadn't. The company returned to the candidate and offered them the Lead UX position, as it had originally been advertised, and a day later, my company decided they didn't actually have the funding for this position.

[01:22:54] Maybe they would soon? They

[01:22:56] asked the candidate, who they had offered the lead position to yesterday, [01:23:00] if they could wait three weeks to learn whether or not they might have a job with us. The company's financial situation only got worse, and the company ended up laying off 40 to 50 people over the next month.

[01:23:09] As far as I know, they never let that candidate know that they didn't have a job with us. To this day, I feel terrible I was part of a company that jerked

someone around like this. This is a person's life that we're messing with, and all because of utter incompetence and mismanagement on our side.

[01:23:23] Nothing to do with the candidate at all, who was literally so awesome.

[01:23:26] **Amy:** Ugh, that's quite the clusterfuck there.

[01:23:29] **Laura:** That is, that's if you look up clusterfuck in the dictionary, it's just this story. That's so many people did shitty things here.

[01:23:38] It's real bad. And I so here, the guy who requested six weeks, I get it. We've all wanted to do that because we want to keep our options open and we've got that thing that's coming up. And sometimes like things have really long lead times, but it sucks.

[01:23:52] You have to understand that there are people on the other end making decisions. Now, as it turns out, the people on the other end making those decisions [01:24:00] were also terrible. Not this one person who wrote in, but the people who were like, yes,

[01:24:04] we have the funding. No, we don't have the funding. Wait, why did they have the funding to hire

[01:24:07] this guy, but not the other?

[01:24:09] Like, how did this all go down in the course of three months?

[01:24:14] **Amy:** Yeah, I think this is also a good example of why it's important to have empathy for hiring managers and recruiters who really are doing their best to hire someone to interview the best candidates while they're having to also deal with incompetent management and business practices.

[01:24:33] And that's going to be a running theme through the rest of the episode today. I definitely see just over the course of my work and even my own career, a lot of candidates get jerked around in the interview process. They're made to wait for long periods of time for news and updates and feedback and offers, right?

[01:24:56] Rescinding offers seems to be more commonplace [01:25:00] these days and all kinds of other shenanigans as this listener said. And none of that is

fair, but what strikes me is that companies hold job seekers to different standards than businesses seem to think is okay for themselves.

[01:25:15] **Laura:** Yeah, this was it is it does suck when companies are you know saying oh we can't let you have six weeks to make a Decision but then they turn around and they do this bullshit to the other candidate You know where it's three weeks maybe yes No, I don't know and then just never tell the person whether or not they have a job. I wish the best for that other person I really hope they got the other job or another job that you know, just offered it to them and then Let them come to work, I, that would be delightful.

[01:25:43] Are you ready for, with our next story? Yes, ready.

[01:25:46] Um.

[01:25:51] **Amy:** I was working in New York City and hiring for a second user researcher. I was the first one. The recruiter decided that she could decide on her own, [01:26:00] without any researcher talking with her, who was worth putting up in a hotel and flying across the country for a full day of interviews.

[01:26:07] She gives the green light to bring a UXR candidate out. This candidate had virtually no qualitative research experience whatsoever and was more of a quant analyst. Of course, she was completely unqualified. It was a waste of a day for every hiring manager, but it would have been even more unprofessional on our end to fly someone

[01:26:26] cross country and then dump them after the first interview of the morning. Bonkers company.

[01:26:32] **Laura:** You know if I'm always saying that like good recruiters and like good recruiting partners can make a really big impact. I don't know if I've ever, if I've said that a lot to you. But I do say it a lot in my everyday life.

[01:26:40] Especially when I'm working with a terrible one. Because terrible ones can make an even bigger impact and not in a good way. I just, the thing that upsets me even more here is I'm curious as to what system this recruiter was working in that they imagined that this was appropriate, had they made these decisions before?

[01:26:59] I have never [01:27:00] worked with a recruiter who Would even think about flying somebody cross country for a full day of interviews without at least, I don't know, a conversation or, a hiring manager interview, like one

hiring manager call, half an hour would have been Made it clear that this was not the right candidate and

[01:27:20] **Amy:** you could have moved on.

[01:27:22] Exactly. I'm curious about several things because this was a clearly a very broken hiring process all around. So I wonder, how were these folks communicating? Were they working in any kind of applicant tracking software where they could see the same information? What was the process for reviewing resumes?

[01:27:43] Did the recruiter do it and have a screener and then the hiring manager and at what point did this person make this decision to bring this person out? I wonder if this recruiter, because I hate to think that there's a recruiter like this out there who [01:28:00] is Just is this way and does this sort of thing all the time.

[01:28:03] So I wonder, was it a repeated pattern from this recruiter? And if so, why wasn't it brought up or why wasn't it brought to other people's attention if it had caused problems? Was there some kind of, relationship issue between this recruiter and the hiring manager? I also wonder if this person could have Maybe gotten someone to intervene like a director or some other decision maker.

[01:28:28] So who knows? Again, very broken hiring process. All around. And I do think the hiring manager knows best what they are looking for and that a partnership and mutual understanding between that person and a recruiter is definitely ideal.

[01:28:46] **Laura:** Yeah, and a great, just a great warning, especially to new folks who I know we don't get a lot of training in how to hire and what the process is and all of that, but really good reminder if you're a brand new.

[01:28:57] It's a hiring manager and you gotta hire your first [01:29:00] person or if you're just working with a new recruiter or a new TA, anybody in that space, have that conversation with them ahead of time before you even send them over the, the job rec, just Hey, here's our process. This is what we want to go through.

[01:29:13] What do you normally do? Okay, fantastic. This is how we do it. Cause I wouldn't have hired, I wouldn't have organized a remote loop without that first manager call, much less.

[01:29:25] **Amy:** Yeah, exactly. This reminds me of something I heard about from someone once, which was that when they were a hiring manager at a company for UX research, I think they had a fairly small team of maybe two or three researchers under them, and they wanted to hire someone else.

[01:29:43] And I was talking about applicant tracking systems and reviewing resumes and how to You Make that process more efficient. And they said that they were having to spend hours and hours reviewing hundreds of resumes. And I thought [01:30:00] that's really not necessary. So what could be fixed in that process so that the recruiter can do the initial screening?

[01:30:08] And the hiring manager can look at a smaller number of resumes. And they even had a similar experience where the recruiter was making more of those decisions around qualified applicants. And not really consulting with that hiring manager. Didn't sound quite as bad as this where they made big decisions about who to bring out.

[01:30:31] But yeah, maybe this is more common than I realized.

[01:30:35] **Laura:** I have actually asked in the past under certain circumstances to see all the resumes because I didn't know. I wanted often for the first time we went through them, I wanted to be the one to go through quickly and at least say, send me more like this, don't send me any like this and just to make sure that we weren't.

[01:30:54] Screening out anybody who might have a non traditional resume that I might recognize as somebody who might [01:31:00] do really well at the job, but wasn't somebody that I could explain to a recruiter. Generally once I had a good rapport with the person, I would let them go through and do it. So it depends.

[01:31:09] This is why, that's, this is why they're, this is why they're your partner. This is, that is what being a partner means and having somebody that you can work with repeatedly is

[01:31:16] fantastic.

[01:31:18] All right, on to our next horror story.

[01:31:22]

[01:31:26] **Laura:** When I was a new manager, I had headcount to fill one position.

[01:31:29] I posted a content strategy role to oversee the SEO strategy of a major travel e commerce website. I got through the interview process and made a verbal offer to a great candidate. Then, the Chief Commercial Officer decided that he would approve all new hires. Fine. I coached my candidate on what to expect.

[01:31:45] The interview went okay, except being basically impossible to schedule. And the CCO came back and said, No new hires will just, quote, Do less content. The last straw for me was I had a contractor who had been with the team for seven years. I'd been trying to [01:32:00] convert her to a permanent employee and was told by my director that we didn't have a business case for it, despite having had consistently enough work for seven years.

[01:32:08] I quit the next day.

[01:32:10] **Amy:** I think that was a good call.

[01:32:13] **Laura:** Yeah, I think, yeah, no, I think that was the appropriate response that I get, God I really get tired of companies that decide halfway through the process to completely change things. And I get it. Occasionally it happens, economic downturn, sudden change in finances.

[01:32:28] New management, but man, like just get your shit together. Once you've approved a, a rate and everything, having that all change, change it for the next one, right? Don't change it retroactively. It just sucks. These are people's lives.

[01:32:43] **Amy:** Yeah, it goes back to a couple stories ago where we were talking about the difference between businesses jerking people around, taking forever, changing their mind at the last minute, and then candidates who are trying to find gainful employment at a place that's [01:33:00] decent enough and hopefully not toxic with snoop and poop decision makers, as in this example and if they decide that they want something else, it's like a personal offense.

[01:33:12]

[01:33:12] **Laura:** You know what? Take the time that you need as a candidate, because they are not going to return you any favors.

[01:33:18] **Amy:** No. And when I work with people who, get multiple offers or they accept something, and then another offer comes in a few weeks later, that's just like way more money or more aligned with what they want to do.

[01:33:30] There's a lot of internal turmoil that happens because people feel bad about changing their minds. And it is a business relationship first and foremost, but individuals still feel like it is also a personal relationship, but, I encourage people to make the decisions that they want to make based on what feels good, but I also try to get them to think about the fact that this. Decision should ultimately be to [01:34:00] benefit themselves and their careers. But yeah the running theme here of incompetence in business and product strategy and planning and not really having a good rationale for staffing decisions, all of these things get in the way of getting the work done.

[01:34:19] **Laura:** Yeah. All right. Let's move on to our next horror story. This one really Made me feel not so happy inside, Amy.

[01:34:26] **Amy:** Indeed.

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[01:34:27] Rrrzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz
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[01:34:34] **Amy:** I was on the hiring committee for a role on my team where we had two excellent candidates in the final round, a man and a woman. The man showed a lot of promise, and during the process, we learned he went to the same church as the hiring manager.

[01:34:46] When googling the candidates, I found a social media post of his that was disparaging Muslims. I raised a concern about this with the hiring manager, and he brushed it off and kept him in the running. The final round was a project that the [01:35:00] candidates would present on site on separate days.

[01:35:02] The female candidate did an excellent project, but was very nervous while presenting. I had no concerns about her candidacy. The male candidate did not read the instructions and went rogue, presenting a project that was completely off base and of poor quality. Despite this, the hiring manager held a meeting with the hiring committee under the guise of getting alignment on the decision, where instead he spent upwards of an hour not so subtly trying to get permission to give the male candidate a do-over, he did not succeed.

[01:35:32] Woo-hoo. And we ended up hiring the female candidate, but it was very clear he would've preferred the male candidate before the project day even happened.

[01:35:43] **Laura:** Okay. I think the most frustrating thing here for me, and there are a lot of them if the woman hadn't gotten that job. I guarantee you she would have assumed that it was because she was nervous while presenting, and that the person who got it was just clearly better.

[01:35:57] This is a thing, you go in and I [01:36:00] hear so many candidates who do this and, afterwards they're like, Oh, what could I have done better? How could I have made them like me? What did I screw up? What, was I just be like, Oh, I was just, I was I was shaky or I, sweaty or what, whatever the hell it is, right?

[01:36:12] I didn't do this thing perfectly. And that's why I very rightly didn't get the job and it's never Oh no, they just, had a pre existing relationship with some dude who's, I mean if he's gonna go rogue during the hiring process and needs a fucking do over, what's he gonna be like as an employee?

[01:36:33] I, all I can say is. The only thing that makes me happy about this is that there was a person, the writer here, who cared enough about the correct outcome to shut that shit down. All of it, like the ignoring, the fact that this person is racist, the fact that you are just giving... Extra tries to some dude cuz you know oh, but we have this thing in [01:37:00] common

[01:37:00] **Amy:** oh, and I wonder this guy who was trying to get his buddy the job. Of course that would be nice to get someone you know a job, but that person really didn't have a conscience,

[01:37:13] it was a very obvious bias and all too common, of course. I really appreciate the person who submitted this story for having the integrity to several things. First of all, hiring the person who is clearly the best candidate and looking past the interview nervousness to her actual skills and experience.

[01:37:34] Because like you were saying, so many people, when they get a rejection, they. We pick apart every possible thing that could have gone wrong, and that also puts a lot of pressure on people to prepare or over prepare and to try and perform in a perfect way, basically. So yeah, being nervous during an interview is common, and it's not really a good reason to put someone out of the running.[01:38:00]

[01:38:00] And also calling out these problematic behaviors like this guy's Islamophobia and trying to get ahead of the other person's bias towards their acquaintance. I think these are all really clear examples of why diversity in hiring is still such an issue.

[01:38:17] **Laura:** Yeah, absolutely. That, and it can be hard to be the one to stand up and say yeah, I'm not actually comfortable. Working with somebody who's might make other people that he's working with really uncomfortable and yeah

[01:38:29] **Amy:** good for you.

[01:38:30] Yeah. That can be a risky move to do something like that.

[01:38:34] **Laura:** All right. Onto our next story.

[01:38:36]

[01:38:39] **Laura:** I was hiring for a senior role, a designer who would be working independently with some of our ventures overseas.

[01:38:44] I was a new manager, and this was probably my third or fourth hire ever. I interviewed a guy who would have been a great fit on paper, but I felt he was a bit too full of himself. I told the recruiter to reject him and tell him that we didn't think he'd be the right culture fit, and gave a few examples.

[01:38:57] Once the guy got the message, he reached out to me directly on
[01:39:00] Skype, this was over ten years ago, and told me how he looked me up on LinkedIn, how inexperienced I was compared to him, and what a bad decision I've made by not hiring him. I was shocked and shaking. It was a rude and disrespectful message, but the young, female, inexperienced manager that I was, I immediately started to question myself and my decision.

[01:39:18] Fortunately, my manager was super supportive and helped me understand that this was not my issue at all. So I replied to the guy, Thanks for reaching out. This message is exactly the reason why I did not consider you for the role. Before blocking him. Yes. This is what makes me feel better. Oh, yes. I'm going to file this one under lucky escape from this dude.

[01:39:38] Isn't it great when we make a decision and we're like, Oh man, was that the right decision? I don't know. And then to just have something happen that just makes it suddenly very clear. Oh, you were not just right. You were like extra super right. Like your vibes on this guy were just spot

[01:39:55] on.

[01:39:56] **Amy:** Exactly. And note that, again, just like other [01:40:00] stories we've shared the initial reaction that she had is like questioning herself and did I make the right decision?

[01:40:07] That is the impact of these kinds of messages towards women and towards people of color, like to, instill in you that it must be something wrong with you or that you are less experienced or you don't know what you're doing.

[01:40:22] **Laura:** Yeah, it's, and it's, kudos for this person too, for actually giving the person examples of why he wouldn't be a good culture fit in the first place.

[01:40:29] Hopefully those were, constructive and unreasonable. And, what he could have done was responded with, Thank you for the feedback and learned something from it and moved on and done better next time. But he didn't. Instead, he was an entitled asshole who just decided that he would say, look, I, and I get it.

[01:40:47] I am also an entitled asshole. I get it. There is a place to say, what is this idiot doing? I am wildly more experienced than they are. How could they possibly turn down somebody as marvelous as myself? The [01:41:00] place. To say that is in the group chat with your supportive friends or at the bar, like the place to say

[01:41:07] this is

[01:41:08] not to the person.

[01:41:10] You say, thank you so much for the feedback. I really appreciate it and wish you the best of luck. That's be a professional.

[01:41:19] **Amy:** And, yeah, Obviously, this person really lacked self awareness to, first of all, know what they don't know, potentially or to think about how their message would affect someone else I think it was probably also an immediate And reaction, you open up an email, it's an awful email.

[01:41:41] You want to write a response right away. It's full of anger and frustration and you send it and that's never a good idea. So I imagine there was something going on like that where of course he didn't appreciate the rejection that he got, personal growth is really important. We all have things to work on.

[01:41:58] And we have to do [01:42:00] that, and hopefully this taught him something and I don't know, maybe he did tell his support group or friends, and they were like, dude, you just gotta face it, this is how you are, and who knows, now he's on a journey to self improvement and totally self aware.

[01:42:16] **Laura:** I thought you said you weren't optimistic. I fully expect that this dude learned absolutely nothing and never will.

[01:42:23] **Amy:** Every now and then, I think there's a dude that does learn from these sorts of things. Oh, sure. Oh, there's absolutely.

[01:42:29] **Laura:** People of all genders learn all the time. I just don't feel good about this particular guy.

[01:42:34] I don't know why. I just, I have that, got that feeling. All right. We're going to move on to our next one. Again, This is not a thing that I expected to have to say, but we're going to issue another content warning. This one involves some gun violence. I want to reassure everybody. Nobody actually gets physically harmed in this scenario.

[01:42:52] But if guns or anything like that are a sensitive topic for you, please skip forward a few minutes so that you miss it. We don't want to [01:43:00] upset folks but we really did want to include this story because it's... It's a doozy.

[01:43:06] music

[01:43:11] **Amy:** I was the manager and a partner team had someone interviewing my candidate.

[01:43:16] The candidate came out sobbing from the interview and I asked what happened. She said that the interviewer put her under so much stress that she needed to leave. She left and then I asked the interviewer what question they used.

[01:43:27] The interviewer had posed a question about Russian roulette probability. It turns out they asked the candidate the following. If you had a gun to your own head, what is the likelihood that you would die if you pulled the trigger? After one successive pull of the trigger and not getting shot, what would be the likelihood you would die?

[01:43:46] He continued like this for a few minutes. Yikes. Yeah, yikes

[01:43:51] **Laura:** indeed. All I have to say is, if you're ever interviewing somebody and they start crying, you're doing it wrong. And maybe you should see that [01:44:00] ahead of time. And also, if you're looking for an example of something with a 1 in 6 probability, I don't know, dice

[01:44:06] are right there.

[01:44:07] You could, there are just other options. You could, you go with drawing straws, all sorts of things that do not involve death or gun violence that, might have affected a human being's life. actual life in the past, or might be traumatic. I just don't, come on, just be like the slightest bit aware of other humans.

[01:44:28] **Amy:** But also, wouldn't you need to know, like, How guns work, or what Russian roulette even is, or how many bullets go in a gun I don't even, this question sucks. It's, oh, it's a, oh,

[01:44:41] **Laura:** it's a terrible question, and like I said, really way more people know about dice.

[01:44:47] And even

[01:44:47] if they don't like I said you there are lots of ways to present that question that are just not

[01:44:52] that

[01:44:53] anyway, let's move on to something a little less violent.

[01:44:57] [01:45:00] Oh.

[01:45:01] **Laura:** It was three years ago, and I was hiring a quantitative UX researcher for my team I interviewed a candidate that everyone loved and his credentials were amazing. He had a PhD in neuropsychology Long story short, the candidate considered it was his duty to lecture the research participants on what they were doing wrong from the NP perspective while he was conducting research.

[01:45:21] Huge red flag for the position, and I had to let him go.

[01:45:24] **Amy:** Geez. Come on. Honestly, to me, again, lack of self awareness, but also lack of an understanding of perhaps practicing research in a business setting and what is user research and the point of it and yeah just sounds very, like a very pompous person.

[01:45:45] **Laura:** The funny thing for me is, I'm often complaining about terrible exercises given during interviews, right? I like, again, hate design exercises that you have to take home and do in eight hours. I think they're dumb. But this is a really good [01:46:00] example of when doing a good, applicable exercise during the interview process might have surfaced this issue.

[01:46:11] It sounds like they actually hired the guy and then had to fire him. And I'm not blaming anybody for this. I think it's really easy to make a bad hire, especially when they look so good on paper and oh, he's got a PhD. It's so fantastic. But then sometimes running that exercise where you actually.

[01:46:26] Have them do a sample and you can observe them doing the work that they would really be doing. Something like that is really applicable and can help you make a better decision. Sometimes you can suss out whether they're going to do something really yeah, no, he understands all about neuropsych.

[01:46:41] What he doesn't understand about is how to actually interview humans, which is,

[01:46:44] **Amy:** absolutely a thing that could happen. And one thing I noticed here is if this person was a quant researcher, typically that means you're not really interacting with research participants

[01:46:57] **Laura:** That's a great point. Maybe this person should never have been in the position [01:47:00] where they were interviewing people. Yeah, that may, might've just been a mismatch, but there are definitely quant, qual researchers that do

[01:47:08] **Amy:** both true. Yeah. I totally agree and we've talked previously about what is the best way to assess a person's qualifications, beyond the resume, beyond talking with them and asking them about examples, and what is appropriate in terms of giving people things to do asynchronously. on their own to prepare and bring back.

[01:47:31] Or the benefits of sitting down and whiteboarding and having a conversation and just seeing how they interact with you and how they would approach doing this work. I think that's a great idea.

[01:47:43]

[01:47:43] **Amy:** As a hiring manager over the years, I remember three separate instances of extreme arrogance.

[01:47:54] Number one, I greeted a design candidate at the front desk. It was winter, but he was [01:48:00] wearing a t shirt and had absolutely nothing in his hand, not even a laptop to show his work. He looked like he just went outside to take his garbage out. Later in the interview, he proceeded to say, Speak poorly about his current employer saying he didn't know what he was doing with the business and that he was the only quote adult in the room giving vivid examples of how he had to manage everybody.

[01:48:24] Number two. The level of arrogance was similar, but this time I was interviewing a fairly young looking guy for an entry level manager role. He was acting like he knew everything and thought management is all about him being right all the time. Very toxic guy.

[01:48:40] And number three, I was interviewing a guy for a manager role, and as I was asking him probing questions when he stopped me mid sentence and said, I'm You know, you were really good at this. My jaw just dropped.

[01:48:53] **Laura:** Okay. The funny thing is that some of these things I absolutely think could be done in a way that would not come across as terribly [01:49:00] arrogant, but maybe that's because I'm incredibly arrogant and often come across that way.

[01:49:03] I, but sometimes this stuff is true, right? Sometimes you are the only adult in the room. We've actually read stories here that I think the person who's writing in kind of sounds like the only adult in the room who's saying, Oh, maybe this isn't such a good idea. The thing is, when you are a candidate, you have to have a way of explaining that without explaining that, right?

[01:49:25] You have to have a way to get it to come across where it's this was a thing that I did in response to some of these other things that happened. And sometimes passive voices. Is a good thing here, that's, it's on your side that Oh, somebody may have made a bad decision here and this was how we addressed it.

[01:49:43] It's just gonna, it's actually gonna make you look more like the adult in the room if you don't come in and try to act like you know absolutely everything and you're always right. The funniest one to me though is the, you're

really good at this. Cause again, a way to say that, that doesn't come across as [01:50:00] weird, but if you stop somebody in mid sentence, and compliment them on something that they are literally hired to do, the only appropriate response from the interviewers to say, Yeah, I know.

[01:50:17] That's why they hired me to do it. It's a weird move. It's just, it's a weird move.

[01:50:23] **Amy:** Yeah, and, if I were in that person's seat I don't know, it depends on what mood I'm in, but maybe I would say something like that, or maybe I would, revert back into what society expects, which is, oh, thank you, that's the easiest response to provide and it doesn't make it even more awkward than it already is.

[01:50:42] Just this, again, lack of self awareness and... I have coached a lot of people on this same situation where perhaps you did have a toxic work environment, an abusive boss, like racism, sexism, like all of these horrible things that [01:51:00] are not uncommon in workplaces, and the discussion I like to have is think about how to best approach it, and sometimes How to best.

[01:51:09] Sometimes it's not worth sharing certain things. You can live your own truth and know that something happened. But you also have to prepare a story or a response that doesn't make you look bad, even though what happened to you was bad. So thinking about how to share that kind of information and go, What do I really need to share in this moment?

[01:51:34] And honestly, it's okay to lie, because sometimes we quit really crappy work environments, and if we were to sit there and tell the reasons, it's... Might just make us look like the bad guy here. And so I think it's okay to just make something up and make it easier on yourself to get through that question.

[01:51:51] **Laura:** Yeah, absolutely. Alright next story.

[01:51:56] [01:52:00] music

[01:52:03] **Laura:** Some candidates lack self awareness during the interview and the nerves get the best of them. I was doing a phone screen with a design candidate. After my brief introduction, I asked her my first question. She was a fast talker and went on a long winded answer that lasted 20 minutes.

[01:52:16] She repeated her answer backwards and summarized it yet again for the third time before I just had to brutally cut her off. I tried earlier, but she

didn't hear me trying to cut her off. I literally had to yell, please stop. It was a 30 minute screen call, and I had a dilemma. Only 10 minutes left, and so many more questions unanswered.

[01:52:33] I asked her to be brief and went with my second question. The same thing happened. This was a river of words, monotonous staccato of pretty much the same story from question one. Not only did she talk for a long time, but ended the second question repeating what she said in the first.

[01:52:47] There was one minute left in the meeting and I did not ask the third question. The candidate was referred to me by a colleague who assured me she was great, but very nervous during the call. Unfortunately, we did have to end the conversations there. I just want to say, [01:53:00] Amy look, if you're going to talk about me, just fucking call me out by name, because nobody is a bigger rambler than I am, and I get it, and I am working on it, and I'm sorry, but, it's going to happen.

[01:53:11] Don't assume it's nerves. Sometimes, some of us just like hearing ourselves talk.

[01:53:16] **Amy:** Yeah, I feel bad for this candidate, who knows what was going on in their head. And unlike the previous story we told where the hiring manager. realize that a person's nervousness doesn't reflect on their skills or qualifications. I don't know. There's just something about this one. And the fact that they also weren't paying enough attention and were perhaps just stuck in their own head. So they didn't hear the person interviewing them, ask them to take a pause.

[01:53:47] So yeah, I don't know. It sounds like that person needs to do some practice. What would you do? In this kind of situation as someone who's been a hiring manager.

[01:53:56] **Laura:** Oh, yeah. Oh, as the hiring manager, I would [01:54:00] have tried to cut her off sooner. But yeah, it's tough because it's very hard to assess what the person actually knows if they're not responding to your questions. I might suggest to the person who had referred her Okay, great.

[01:54:13] Why don't y'all do a little bit of practice? I might have been willing to talk to her again just because I don't like to penalize people for being real nervous, but also I'd be very careful if this were the kind of job where she'd have to answer questions and...

[01:54:29] speak off the cuff, if it's not that kind of job, I'm willing to let that slide, but if she's going to have to do this in, day to day, that's a real good indication that maybe it's not the

[01:54:40] **Amy:** job for her. Yeah. And I like what you said about coaching someone. an interview prep, it could be this person's co worker or maybe if you don't decide to hire that person, providing feedback on that in a coach like manner.

[01:54:55] I've definitely heard of people doing that just to help that person better [01:55:00] prepare for their next

[01:55:01] **Laura:** interview. Yeah. All right. So we're going to move on to the next one. I, this one actually makes me quite happy. I think this one's fun. It's the opposite of what we just heard.

[01:55:10]

[01:55:12]

[01:55:12] **Amy:** It happened years ago, early in my management career.

[01:55:15] I was phone screening a female candidate who happened to have a very pleasant, soothing voice. She was giving me a response, and while she was telling her scenario with such a soothing voice, I was almost hypnotized. Maybe actually hypnotized. When she finished, I couldn't snap out of it fast enough. I fumbled through the rest of the interview.

[01:55:34] Lesson for me, I always prepare a detailed script for all of my Interviews and try not to improvise. I

[01:55:42] **Laura:** love this and I feel like I would hire this person just because they'd be so soothing to have on the team. You know what I mean? Just okay, your job is going to be emotional support person and I'm gonna get ranty and weird and your whole job is just to hypnotize me And get me to calm the fuck down. I think this would be fantastic [01:56:00] Although I do think that she's wasting her life if she's not going and like just making money doing voiceovers for Calm or headspace or some other meditation app or like doing asmr videos on youtube, right?

[01:56:11] I think this person has a great future ahead of her. It's just you know, very soothing voice person

[01:56:17] **Amy:** Yes, should I do a nice? Soothing voice for the rest of the podcast.

[01:56:23] **Laura:** That would be delightful. I would, I'm just, I will take a nap for the rest of it. Anyway, I, like I said, I think that this is, I think this is fantastic.

[01:56:31] Great takeaway here though, of just in case the person starts to hypnotize you, have a list of questions you want to ask, never bad advice.

[01:56:40] **Amy:** All right. We have one more story.

[01:56:42]

[01:56:46] **Laura:** I was one of a few interviewers, but not in charge of the process. One, they insisted on asking the candidates for their salary expectations, a decision supported by HR, in case a candidate would accept less than we were offering.

[01:56:59] I [01:57:00] expressed my objection repeatedly and was overruled. Two, they even planned to ask salary expectations during the interview with me present, until I explained that salary conversations should not happen with me a potential future colleague there. Three, they decided to make the shortlisting easier for us by requiring candidates to submit a video introduction of themselves so we could get a feel for them.

[01:57:23] We lost three good candidates this stage because who wants to record a video introduction? Four, there was no set interview process or sequence of interviews. When I asked about the process and number of interviews I was told we would make it up as we go depending on the candidate with a complete disregard for evaluating everyone evenly.

[01:57:39] Five, my manager Joked during the process that we should add a project to Canada to get some help doing work for free Six once we hired someone they were invited to a team call to meet the team Before their start date all of these just seemed like total no brainers of what not to do in hiring and made me feel Embarrassed during [01:58:00] the entire process.

[01:58:01] Oh,

[01:58:03] **Amy:** I wonder was do you think this was a startup?

[01:58:06] **Laura:** Yes, yeah, I don't think any company beyond 30 people can get away with no, we'll just wing it. Maybe they can. If they can, fuck them. That's, this is bad. And, do you remember what we were saying earlier about sometimes you are the only adult in the room and this person was clearly the only adult in the room?

[01:58:24] And, Jesus, this is good for this writer for, Trying to make it a better process, but wow, what was the hiring process like when they got hired,

[01:58:35] **Amy:** right? Oh, no, this is too much to deal with and again It's like how much impact can you actually have on the hiring? process as a manager.

[01:58:45] It's nice when you're able to design what that looks like with different collaborators, get input from different people, actually put something in place that assesses people in an equal way to know which. Types [01:59:00] of questions and conversations should happen at which point and with whom, right? These are all pretty, I don't know, straightforward, fairly obvious things.

[01:59:09] But again, different organizations have I don't know, different levels of clusterfuckery going on that can have an impact.

[01:59:18] **Laura:** That is all the time that we have for today, and frankly, I can't take any more horror. We hope you haven't been too frightened by the awfulness of these ghastly anecdotes.

[01:59:30] **Amy:** Yes, and if you are scared you can thank us for giving you a taste of all the horrors you will encounter in your next job search or hiring process. Maybe not. Maybe people listening to this will do things differently. We can only hope. So thank you again for all of the people who submitted stories and you really have, I think, made other people feel a little less alone in all of this.

[01:59:55] I'm Laura. And I'm Amy.

[01:59:58] **Laura:** And we want to thank you all for listening and [02:00:00] wish you all the best of luck with your search, no matter what you're looking for. We're rooting for you.

[02:00:05]