HOW TO INTERVIEW

# FROM THE **INTERVIEWER'S** PERSPECTIVE

LET ME TELL YOU A

STORY...

MY STORY IS A LOT LIKE

# THOMAS ANDERSON'S

I'D HAVE NIGHTMARES ABOUT
NOT KNOWING THE RIGHT ANSWERS

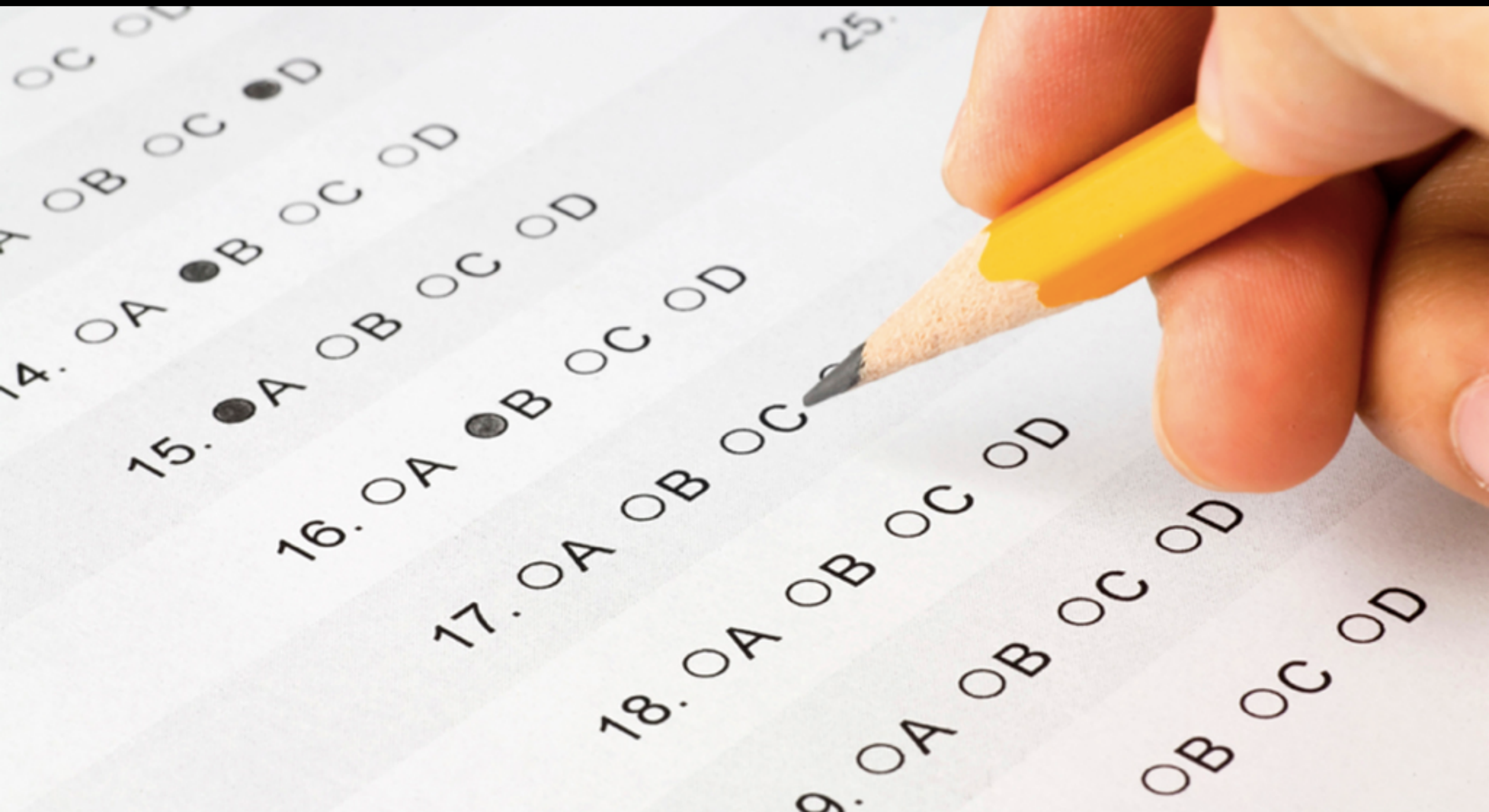
SO I DID WHAT EVERYONE ELSE WAS DOING...

# I CRAMMED.

| Amazon.com | |
|---|---|
| | *How would you price the Amazon Associates program (mini-case - very quantitative) |
| | Would you rather have a $50 toy making 10% margin or a $10 book making 50% margin? Why? (mini-case) |
| | What would your two previous managers say are your three areas for improvement? |
| | How would you price the Kindle? |
| | Why Amazon? Have a lot of reasons - 8-10 reasons. |
| | What are three things that you like about Amazon.com? What are three things you dislike? (be prepared to do a case about one of the three things you dislike) |
| | How would you determine which books are/are not textbooks? |
| | What new product categories should Amazon enter? |
| | We are thinking about entering the used DVD return/resale business. Is this a good idea? What is the market size? What price should we offer? |
| | How would you change the main page of Amazon? |
| | Amazon is considering getting into contact lenses. What are the pros and cons of doing that? Would you recommend we sell contact lenses? |
| | Since you recommend that we enter the contact lenses market, what metrics would you use to evaluate our success after we have entered? |
| | What is an example of a time when you were given meaningful feedback by a supervisor? |
| | Who did you interview with for the first round? Okay, imagine that a VP asks for your recommendation as to what project he should deploy her to next? |
| | Teach me something interesting. You have 5 minutes. |
| | Pearl Jam is rereleasing one of its albums. It's going to cost us $10, but we have decided to match Target's price of $6.99. How would you structure the negotiation with the Sony music label under these conditions? What would you offer them, and what would you ask in return? How would you stem our profit loss? |
| | Tell me about a time when you had to influence others who did not report to you. |
| | Be prepared to to answer questions about statistic analysis (i.e. regression) |
| | Disney wants to run an ad on the top right hand corner of Amazon.com homepage; at 20 CPM; Upon asking, you are given further information: Average # of hits to the website per day: 10000. Would you want to do it? What information will you need to make this decision?<br><br>Disney has another proposal: They want to change the font in the Amazon Logo on the top left hand corner to Disney's font (No Disney ads or anything) - Just for an instant (The font changes to Disney's font, and then back to the original Amazon logo in a few seconds). They are offering Amazon 200000 for this one time promotion. Would you do it? Why or why not? |
| | How would you price the Amazon Prime program? (What factors would you look into in coming up with your decision) |

BECAUSE AS SOMEONE WHO HAD NEVER HIRED BEFORE

# THIS WAS MY MENTAL MODEL



AND I FIGURED I NEEDED

# TO ACE EVERY QUESTION

| Competency Profile | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| COMPETENCY AREAS *(Circle one rating per area investigated.)* | Don't Know *(Not enough information.)* | *(See rating scale in Appendix 4 in Interview Guide.)* Does Not Achieve Expectations — Major Development Need | Partially Achieves Expectations — Development Need | Achieves Expectations — Neither Strength Nor Development Need | Exceeds Expectations — Strength | Greatly Exceeds Expectations — Major Strength |
| **Communication and Interpersonal Skills** | | | | | | |
| Oral Communication/Listening | ❑ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Documentation | ❑ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Co-Worker Relations/Teamwork | ❑ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Customer Relations | ❑ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| **Personal Effectiveness Skills and Traits** | | | | | | |
| Problem Solving | ❑ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Work Organization/Time Management | ❑ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Quality Orientation | ❑ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Initiative & Perseverance | ❑ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Personal Integrity | ❑ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Adaptability | ❑ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Stress Tolerance | ❑ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Self-Development | ❑ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Job/Organizational Commitment | ❑ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Safety Awareness | ❑ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

SAMPLE

BUT THEN I ACTUALLY STARTED HIRING...

AND I WOKE UP.

BECAUSE YEAH,

# WE DID USE FORMS LIKE THIS

| Competency Profile | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | *(See rating scale in Appendix 4 in Interview Guide.)* | | | | |
| | | **Does Not Achieve Expectations** | **Partially Achieves Expectations** | **Achieves Expectations** | **Exceeds Expectations** | **Greatly Exceeds Expectations** |
| **COMPETENCY AREAS**<br>*(Circle one rating per area investigated.)* | **Don't Know**<br>*(Not enough information.)* | **Major Development Need** | **Development Need** | **Neither Strength Nor Development Need** | **Strength** | **Major Strength** |
| **Communication and Interpersonal Skills** | | | | | | |
| Oral Communication/Listening | ❑ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
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| Safety Awareness | ❑ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

SAMPLE

IN FACT, WE'D ALL

# FILL OUT THIS BOX FIRST

| Hiring Recommendation | | |
|---|---|---|
| [X] Highly Recommend to Hire | ☐ Recommend to Hire | ☐ Do Not Recommend to Hire |

AND THEN RATIONALIZE IT

# AFTER THE FACT

**Competency Profile**

| COMPETENCY AREAS<br>*(Circle one rating per area investigated.)* | Don't Know<br>*(Not enough information.)* | *(See rating scale in Appendix 4 in Interview Guide.)* | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Does Not Achieve Expectations | Partially Achieves Expectations | Achieves Expectations | Exceeds Expectations | Greatly Exceeds Expectations |
| | | Major Development Need | Development Need | Neither Strength Nor Development Need | Strength | Major Strength |
| **Communication and Interpersonal Skills** | | | | | | |
| Oral Communication/Listening | ❑ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

# SAID NO INTERVIEWER, EVER:

- “Wow - she really did a nice job on her resume walk-through.”
- “Hmm… he just didn’t have a good framework for his mini-case.”

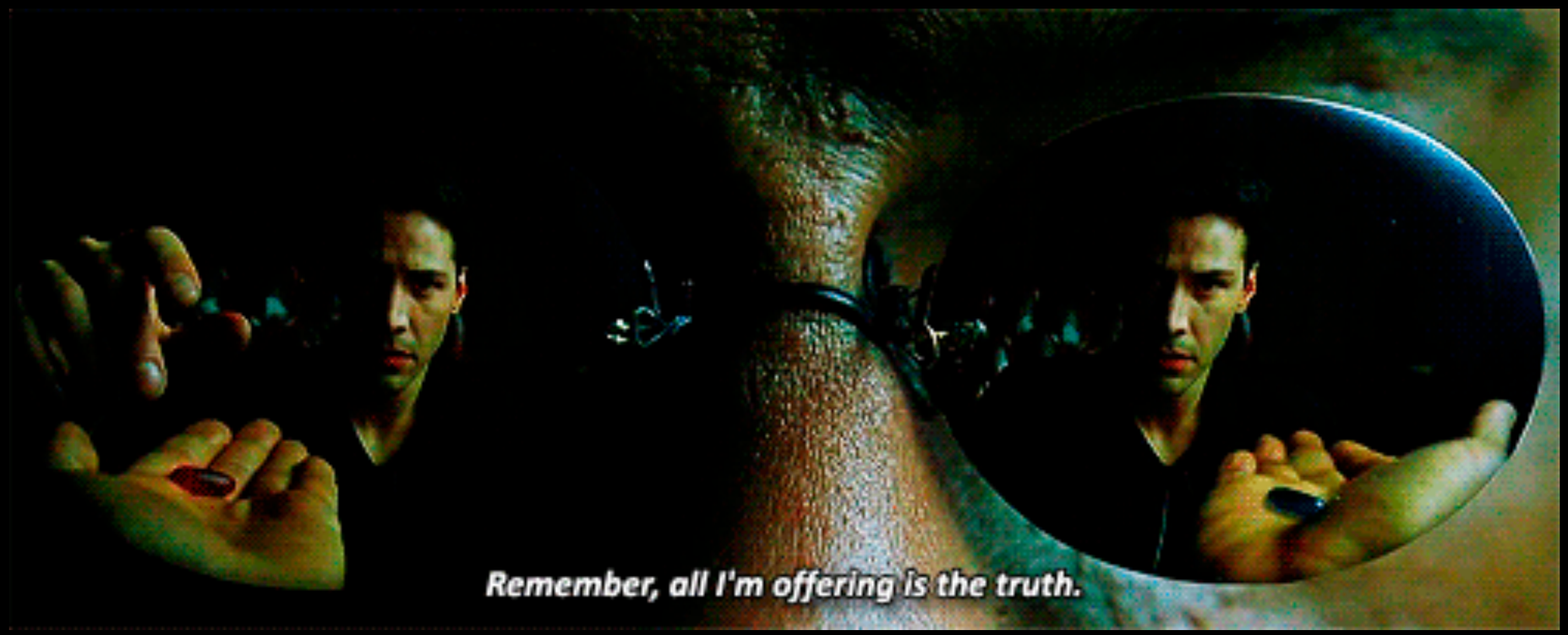
# THE ONLY TWO THINGS THAT MATTER TO INTERVIEWERS:

- “I really, really liked her!”
- “I don’t know, he just didn’t seem strong.”

"OK, SO WHAT DO I DO?"

TIME TO TAKE

# THE RED PILL



# I KNOW THESE ARE VAGUE:

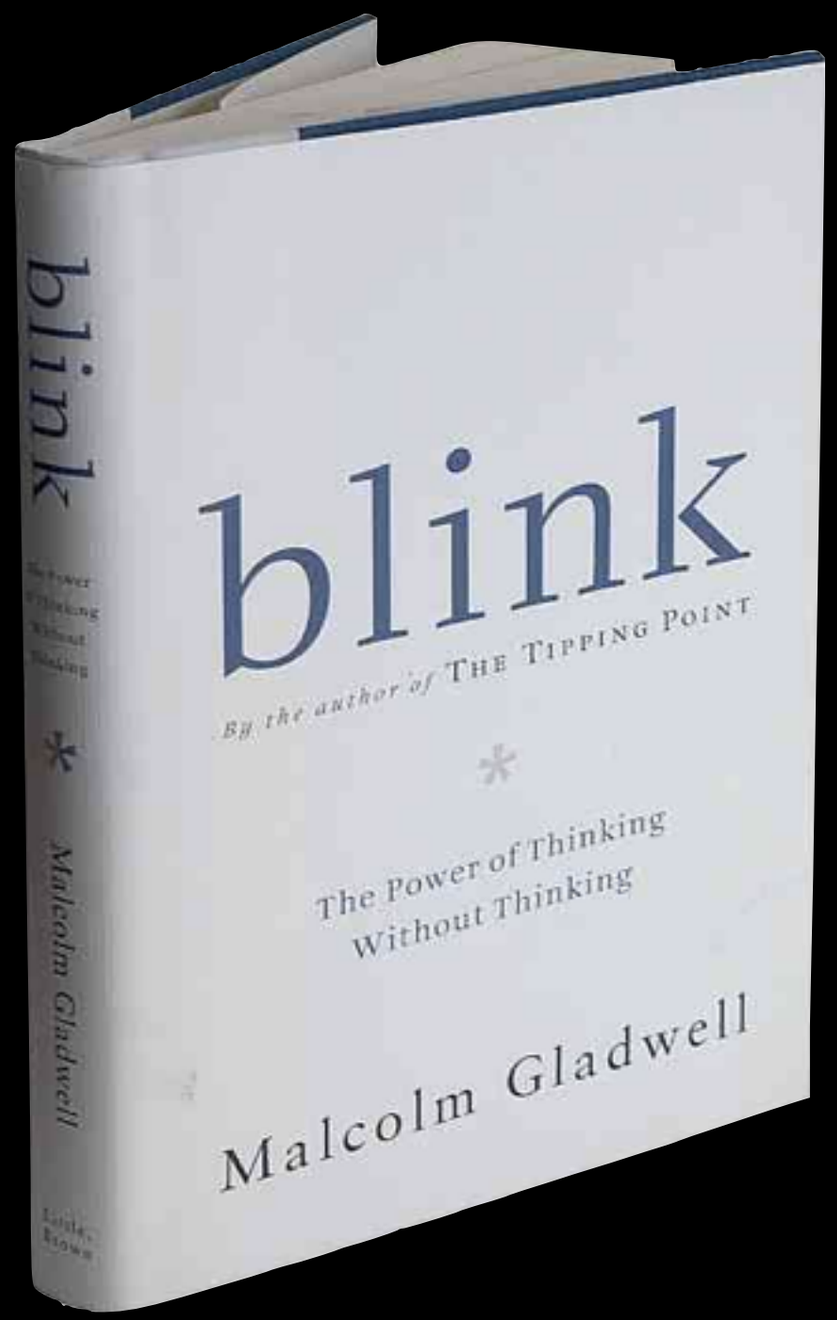
- “I really, really liked her!”
- “I don’t know, he just didn’t seem strong.”

# BUT THE TRUTH IS HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT:

- “I really, really liked her!”
- “I don’t know, he just didn’t seem strong.”

HERE'S WHAT I MEAN:

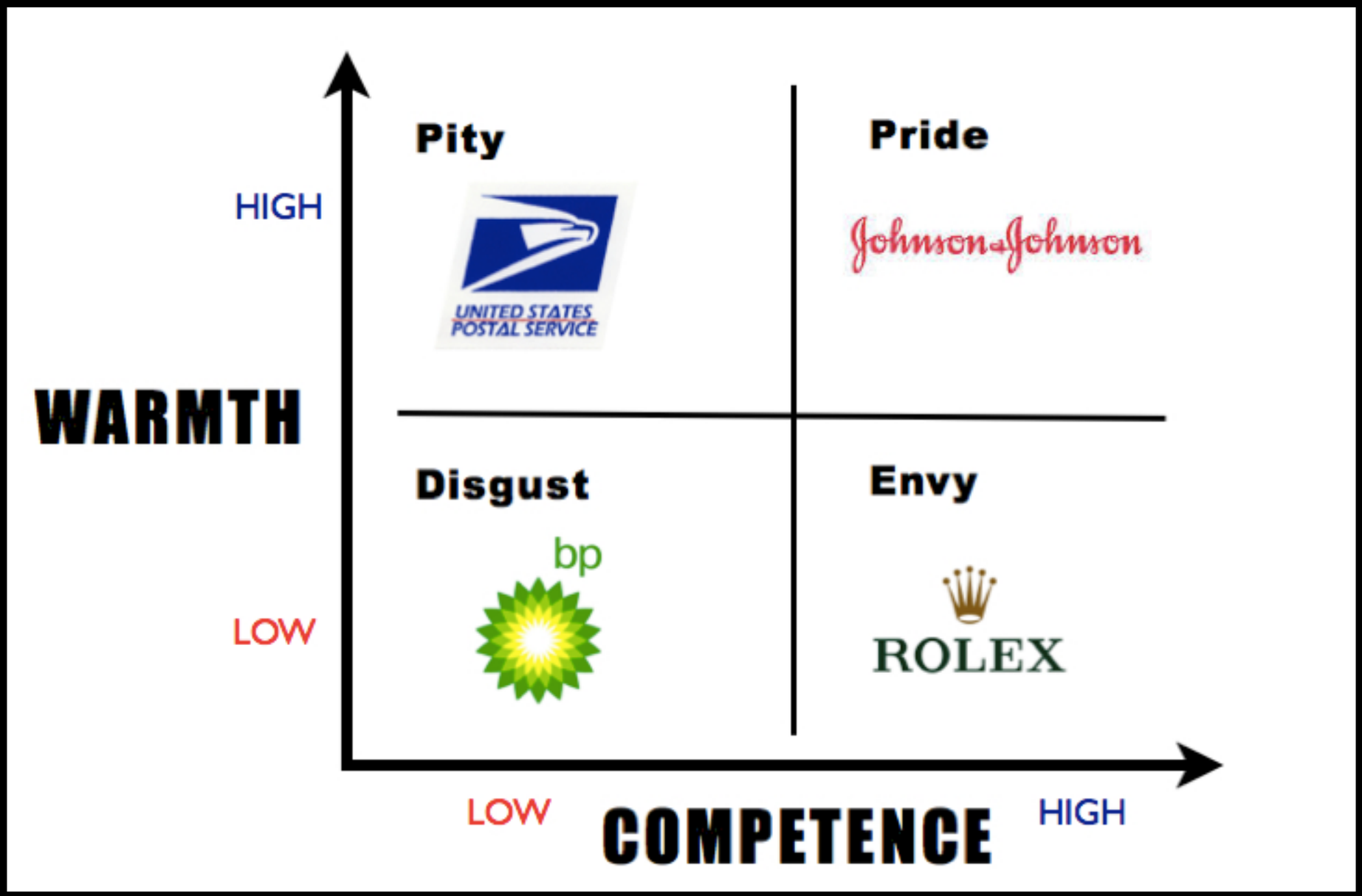
# WE ALL KNOW THAT PEOPLE MAKE SNAP JUDGMENTS



BUT HOW DO WE

ACTUALLY JUDGE?

# FOR THE FIRST TIME, WE HAVE THE ANSWER:



# IN OTHER WORDS:

- “I really, really liked her!” WARMTH
- “I don’t know, he just didn’t seem strong.” COMPETENCE

# SO YOUR GOAL SHOULDN'T BE TO:

- Prepare for as many questions as possible
- Try to get the right answer to those questions

# INSTEAD, IT SHOULD BE TO ANSWER ANY QUESTION!

- With warmth
- With competence

# HOW TO PROJECT WARMTH

# EMOTIONAL CONTAGION

# DUCHENNE SMILE

# STORYTELLING

# PRATFALL EFFECT

**Why is Anne Hathaway so unlikable? Oscar-winning actress doesn't get love from 'Hathahaters'**

# BENJAMIN FRANKLIN EFFECT

## IMPRESSIVE QUESTIONS TO ASK AN INTERVIEWER

1. Can you describe a typical day in this type of role?
2. How long have you been at the company and what makes you stay?
3. How would you describe the work environment and corporate culture?
4. What are some of the goals for the company in the short and longer term?
5. How would my performance be measured?
6. What types of career opportunities may open up down the road for a person starting out in this type of position, assuming they perform well?
7. What are some of the company's initiatives regarding learning and development?

# HOW TO PROJECT COMPETENCE

# COMPETENCE =
# CONTENT + COMMUNICATION

# CONTENT:
# KNOW THEIR BUSINESS

- Their past

WIKIPEDIA

LinkedIn derives its revenues from three business divisions:

Talent Solutions: Recruiters and corporations pay for:

- Branded corporate page on LinkedIn, complete with careers section.
- Pay per click-through Job ads that are targeted to LinkedIn users who match the job profile.
- Access to the database of LinkedIn users and resumes.

Marketing Solutions:

- LinkedIn advertisers pay for pay per click-through targeted ads.

Premium Subscriptions: LinkedIn users pay for:

- LinkedIn Business for business users
- LinkedIn Talent for recruiters
- LinkedIn JobSeeker for LinkedIn members looking for a job
- LinkedIn Sales for Sales Professionals.

- Their present

GOOGLE ALERTS

Erica Lockheimer / Official LinkedIn Blog:

**LinkedIn says it's sending 50% fewer emails, launches system for smarter, less frequent notifications** — Sending less email is just the beginning — As my colleague Aatif Awan shared a few months ago, we've made changes so that the emails you receive are more infrequent and more relevant.

Nov 10, 2015, 10:20 PM – In context

- Their future

10K

| | 2014 |
|---|---|
| **Net revenue by product:** | |
| Talent Solutions | $1,327,737 |
| Marketing Solutions | 454,500 |
| Premium Subscriptions | 436,530 |
| Total | $2,218,767 |

# CONTENT:
# KNOW YOURSELF

| *REQUIREMENT* | **BAD GUY** | **HEROIC ACTION** | **HAPPY ENDING** |
|---|---|---|---|
| LEADERSHIP | LOOMING DEADLINE | MADE CASE TO CEO | LAUNCHED ON-TIME |
| TEAMWORK | DISSENSION IN THE RANKS | LED TEAM SOCIAL OUTING | NO MORE ATTRITION |
| ANALYTICAL | MAD CUSTOMERS | REGRESSION ANALYSIS | 75% INCREASE IN RENEWAL RATE |
| TECHNICAL | NO MARKET AWARENESS | APPLIED 3 SEO TECHNIQUES | 125% M/M GROWTH IN TRAFFIC |

# COMMUNICATION:
# GET ORGANIZED

- Listen
  - How would you estimate the number of LinkedIn users in Ann Arbor?
- Ask for time
  - Do you mind if I take a moment to put together a plan?
- Sign-post
  - Here are the five steps I'd take to tackle this problem…

# LET’S PUT IT ALL TOGETHER

INTRO QUESTIONS

# "TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF"

# LOW WARMTH, LOW COMPETENCE

- I went to Swarthmore College for undergrad and studied education and political science.
- Then I taught for a couple of years but decided I wanted to try something else.
- So then I worked in the nonprofit sector and I realized I needed to gain more business skills, so I decided to go to business school.
- I chose Michigan because it's got a really good culture and so now I want to work in a big tech company that has a good culture.

**WARMTH:**
NO STORIES

**COMPETENCE:**
NO SIGN-POSTING

# HIGH WARMTH, HIGH COMPETENCE

- All my life, I've been passionate about using technology to improve kids' lives
- That's why, as a kindergarten teacher, I taught my kids in Bed-Stuy how to use Keynote - so they'd have the skills to access opportunities their parents couldn't
- And that's why I helped iMentor launch a new SaaS mentoring platform, enabling 300K kids from the Bronx to Botswana to have a great mentor for the first time
- Now, I'd like nothing more than to put that passion and experience to work for a company like LinkedIn that's using technology to improve millions of lives around the world

**WARMTH:** STORIES + DETAILS

**COMPETENCE:** STRUCTURE!

LET'S PRACTICE

# TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF

# YOUR TURN:
# TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF

- Warmth
  - How much do you like this person?
- Competence
  - Does this seem like the kind of person who could do their job well?

BEHAVIORAL QUESTIONS

# "TELL ME ABOUT A TIME YOU INFLUENCED A TEAM"

# LOW WARMTH, LOW COMPETENCE

- When I was at iMentor, our customers were initially dissatisfied with all of the bugs in our software.
- So I called up our off-shore developer and warned them that they were potentially in breach of our contract.
- I stayed on their case and made sure that they fixed everything.
- And that's how we got rid of the bugs and increased our satisfaction.

**WARMTH:** SEEMS LIKE A JERK!

**COMPETENCE:** DIDN'T LISTEN TO QUESTION!

# HIGH WARMTH, HIGH COMPETENCE

- When I was at iMentor, we had a big challenge: Our platform was too buggy for our customers but our developers were too overworked.
- At first, I felt like it was an impossible situation. But then I realized that I didn't really understand what our customers or developers were going through.
- So I made it a priority to spend 3 hours each week with both audiences, trying to understand what their biggest challenges were. From these conversations, I realized that there were only a handful of bugs that our customers actually cared about and that our developers were spending lots of time on things that didn't matter.
- Based on these conversations, I reprioritized our bug fixes, getting all blockers fixed in 1 month and retaining all customers in the midst of the Great Recession

**WARMTH:** PRATFALL EFFECT

**COMPETENCE:** LISTENED TO THE EXACT QUESTION!

LET'S PRACTICE

# TELL ME ABOUT A TIME YOU INFLUENCED A TEAM

YOUR TURN:
TELL ME ABOUT A TIME YOU INFLUENCED A TEAM

- Warmth
  - How much do you like this person?
- Competence
  - Does this seem like the kind of person who could do their job well?

CASE QUESTIONS

# "HOW WOULD YOU IMPROVE LINKEDIN'S MOBILE APP?"

# LOW WARMTH, LOW COMPETENCE

- So I've got a bunch of things that you could fix in the app:
- First, I don't like how the app takes so long to load, so I'd want to fix that.
- I also like to post stuff to Twitter and LinkedIn so I'd add that integration in.
- Yeah - those are the two things that come to mind right away.

**WARMTH:** FOCUSES ON SELF - NOT USERS

**COMPETENCE:** NO ORGANIZATION OR COMPANY KNOWLEDGE

# HIGH WARMTH, HIGH COMPETENCE

- Wow - great question. Do you mind if I take a second and put together a strategy?
- OK, I'd tackle this in five steps:
  - First, I'd want to define our goals for the app - are we trying to improve App Store reviews, increase usage, maximize revenue, etc.
  - Second, I'd want to understand who our target customers are - maybe mobile professionals like salespeople or future customers like students?
  - Third, I'd want to understand their needs - for example, maybe salespeople are often walking into meetings and so need to integrate their calendars with LinkedIn data
  - Fourth, once I understand their needs, I'll consider where those needs aren't being met by the current app
  - And fifth and finally, I'd propose solutions to meet these needs and then evaluate which ones are most likely to help us hit our goals
- Does that sound like a good plan before I dive in?

**WARMTH:**
SHOWS EMPATHY + BEN FRANKLIN EFFECT

**COMPETENCE:**
ASK FOR TIME + SIGN-POSTING + COMPANY KNOWLEDGE

LET'S PRACTICE

# WHAT'S A POORLY-DESIGNED PRODUCT + HOW WOULD YOU IMPROVE IT?

YOUR TURN:
WHAT'S A POORLY-DESIGNED PRODUCT + HOW WOULD YOU IMPROVE IT?

- Warmth
  - How much do you like this person?
- Competence
  - Does this seem like the kind of person who could do their job well?

PROBLEM-SOLVER QUESTIONS

# "HOW MANY WINDOWS ARE IN NYC?"

# LOW WARMTH, LOW COMPETENCE

- Wow - OK. I guess I'd want to start by figuring out how many buildings there are in New York.
- Let's say there are about 250K buildings give or take.
- Now every building is different so let's break it up into segments. Let's say they're divided evenly between residential, office and retail. And residential buildings have 100 windows on average, office buildings have 1,000 and retail have 50.
- So then I'd multiply 250K times 1/3 times 100 + 250K times 1/3 times 1,000. Wait, hold on a second while I do some math… Um, I think that's about 1 billion windows.

**WARMTH:** DOESN'T ENGAGE THE INTERVIEWER

**COMPETENCE:** NO SIGN-POSTING

"HOW MANY WINDOWS ARE IN NYC?"

# HIGH WARMTH, HIGH COMPETENCE

- Woah - this should be fun. Is it OK if I take 3 minutes to put together a good plan for you?
- Actually, now that I think about it. I've got a couple questions:
- Are you thinking only about building windows or are you including others like car windows and even computer screens?
- Do you want me to actually give you an answer or, in the interest of time, should I just give you my plan of attack?
- OK, since you only want building windows and a plan to estimate them, here are the steps I'd go through:
- First, I'd estimate the number of buildings by segment
- Second, I'd estimate the average number of windows per building segment
- Third, I'd combine those two answers to get a total
- Does that sound like a fair plan? If so, I'm happy to dig into the specifics:
- First, I'd want to know how many buildings are in NYC. I'd estimate that by estimating how many homes, offices, and stores are in New York. Even though that leaves out things like museums and libraries, it seems like those would be marginal compared to the first three categories…

**WARMTH:** EMOTIONAL CONTAGION + BEN FRANKLIN EFFECT

**COMPETENCE:** LISTENING + SIGN-POSTING

LET'S PRACTICE

# HOW MANY QUERIES PER SECOND DOES GMAIL GET?

YOUR TURN:
IF YOU HAD TO GET RID OF ONE STATE IN THE US, WHICH ONE WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

- Warmth
  - How much do you like this person?
- Competence
  - Does this seem like the kind of person who could do their job well?

# QUESTIONS?

- Be empathic
  - Interviewers are just people
  - People are hard-wired to make snap judgments
  - Snap judgments are based on warmth + competence
- Be warm
  - Emotional contagion + Duchenne smile
  - Tell stories (Bad Guy + Heroic Action + Happy Ending + Specifics)
  - Pratfall + Ben Franklin effects
- Be competent
  - Know the business (Past + Present + Future)
  - Know yourself (Job Description + Story)
  - Get organized (Listen + Time + Signpost)

WOAH.

GET MORE INTERVIEW TIPS AT
WWW.BREAKINTO.TECH

I KNOW B-SCHOOL

# CAN FEEL LIKE THIS

SO STOP AND

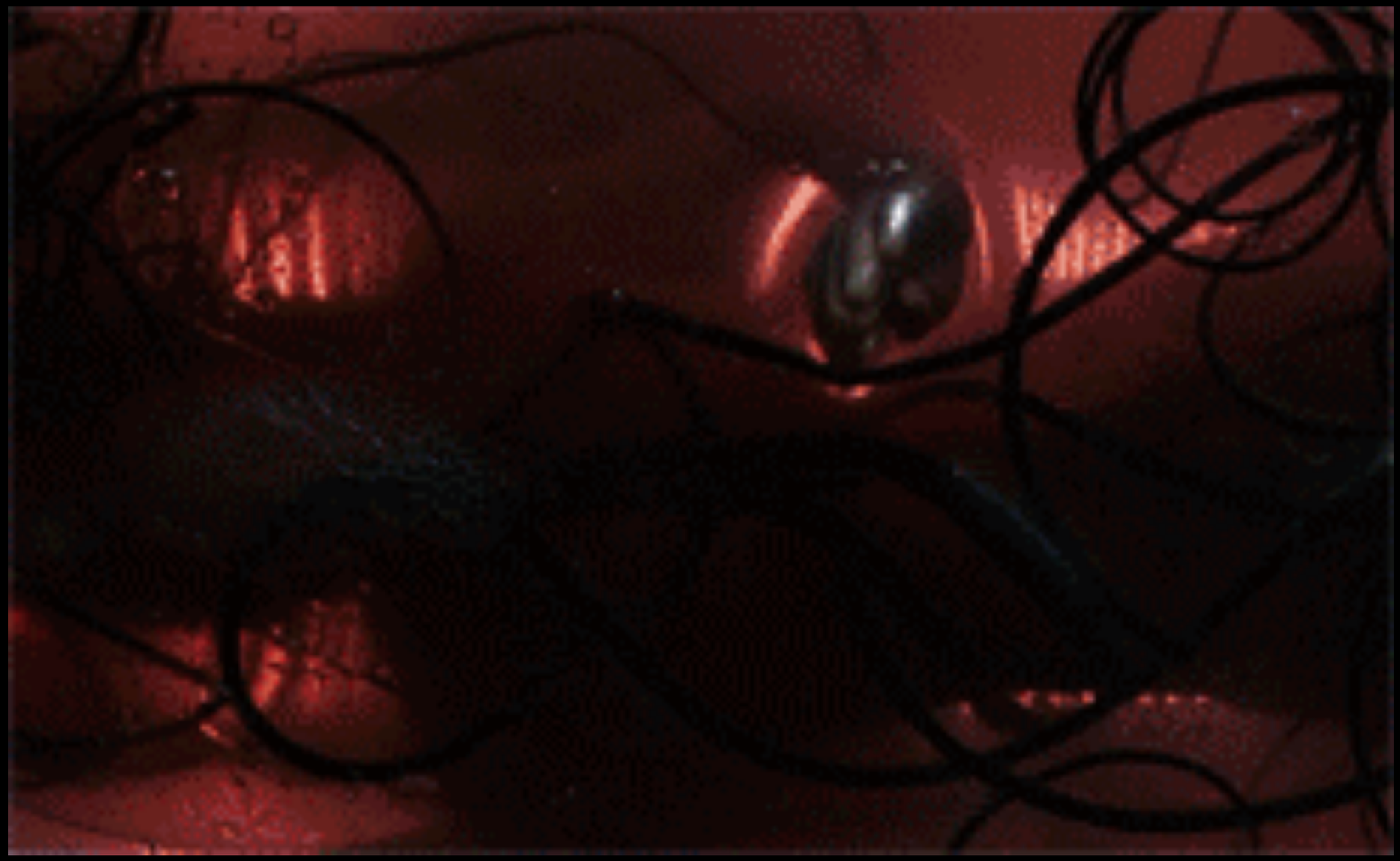
# FOCUS ON WHAT REALLY MATTERS

BECAUSE WE'RE

# ALL JUST HUMANS

SO BUST OUT

# OF THE MACHINE



AND

# ROCK YOUR INTERVIEWER'S WORLD