

# In-Person Interview Feedback

## Dusty Harrington Case, October 2025

This debrief is meant to highlight what worked well in a very difficult, high-friction interview and outline a few focused adjustments to make future faculty interviews with similarly defended grievance-driven subjects more effective. The goal is not to critique you as interviewers, but to refine strategy when you're sitting across from someone like Dusty, who is impulsive, hostile to perceived interruption, and quick to escalate.

### Strengths

In reviewing the interview, what stands out first is how well the team establishes rapport and keeps a very defensive subject talking. The interviewers consistently use open-ended questions that invite Dusty into his teacher identity rather than putting him on the witness stand. They validate his sense of passion, frustration, and moral urgency, and that empathy clearly keeps him engaged even when he's prickly or dismissive. There's also a repeated effort to circle back to impact and function. They ask what support would look like, how the conflict with colleagues is affecting him, and what he imagines doing if things don't change. Those are all solid moves from a threat-assessment standpoint.

Dawn, you start with solid, neutral prompts like "say more about what happened," which would typically give a subject space to expand without feeling boxed in. You also circle back thoughtfully when you realize he feels interrupted, to show you're tracking his process and trying to repair the rapport. Kelly, you come in with a respectful address ("Dr. Harrington") and then flex when he redirects you to "Dusty," which matches his desire to have you attend to his ego before shifting to a first-name basis. Kelly also offers clean, specific probes like "What did they tell you the reason was they were placing you on leave?" and "Can you give me an example of what those decisions could be?" These are good examples of questions that prompt concrete thought rather than vague grievances. Both of you also do some smart in-moment attending to behavior, like Kelly calling out the pen-throwing (at 13:45), which brings him back to mindful awareness of how he's perceived, and Dawn's later direct question, "Why do you want to teach students?," which goes right to the heart of role/identity in an elegant, straightforward way.

### Areas for Improvement

Most of the challenges are less about content and more about style matching and timing. Dusty reacts strongly to any perceived interruptions. "I was saying that before you interrupted me" (5:14), "hold on, hold on" (7:09), and "I don't like social situations where someone tries to talk over me" (10:04) are all red flags. The dynamic of "fighting over the mic" at 4:46 and around 29:02 shows that trying to talk faster, louder, or over him is almost guaranteed to fail. It feeds his sense of power, entitlement, and grievance, and keeps him in a performance/attack mode rather than a reflective one. With Dusty, any negative characterization (e.g., summarizing his experience as "overwhelming") is experienced as a barb. When Dawn offers a summary reflection at 30:21, he immediately pushes back, "It's not overwhelming for me." The lesson here is that with someone this defended, you have to treat negative emotional descriptors like sharp objects:

use them sparingly, always wrapped in soft qualifiers ("I might have this wrong, but..."), or avoid them altogether.

The conversation drifts for long stretches into unstructured venting about politics and academic culture. Dusty is allowed to monologue for quite a while without firm redirection back to specific classroom behavior or concrete incidents with colleagues. Clarification around violence and safety comes relatively late. Only after considerable discussion does the group move toward, "Are we talking about actually doing something?" and receive Dusty's explicit denial. That's an important learning point. With a grievance-driven subject, you need to surface questions about intent, planning, and limits earlier and more plainly. There is also a noticeable "therapy drift," where questions about grief, divorce, and social supports take on a counseling tone and trigger Dusty's pushback ("Is this a therapy session?"). That is a helpful reminder that a faculty threat interview is bounded; we're there to understand risk, not to provide a full clinical assessment.

Going forward, there are a few strategic shifts that will likely give you more traction. First, lean heavily into rule-setting and structure around turn-taking. Explicitly name that you will wait until he finishes, and that you need him to allow you to finish questions before he responds. If he continues to talk over you, consider a brief pause/timeout (stepping out together) or a deliberate pass to the other interviewer when one of you is "burned" by his anger. Second, time your big, high-stakes questions about hurting others or access to weapons for moments when defenses are lower, not when you're still jockeying for airtime (e.g., 34:41, 36:00). In this interview, questions like "Have you thought about hurting others?" and direct weapons access probes land when he is still highly defended, making non-answers, mockery, or aggressive deflection almost inevitable. Third, be prepared to abandon "normal connection moves" when they consistently escalate him. References to social work, invitations to vulnerability, or "therapeutic" language tend to pull arrogance and dominance from him rather than openness. He is resistant to many normal connection techniques. The key here is to notice that and choose a different approach... if he isn't going to shift, then you must shift. If you view him as someone who enjoys performing for one interviewer to "show up" the other (around 45:00), you can deliberately use that. Lean into Kelly when he's engaging with her more and let Dawn step back to observe and pick her moments.

## Overall

The interviewers show many of the right instincts: empathic engagement, open-ended questions, and a collaborative tone. The next level of skill involves tightening the frame to have less therapy, more structure, less unbounded venting, more behavioral anchoring, and moving explicit safety and limits questions closer to the beginning of the interview.

A brief set of shared team goals might look like:

- Ask clear, direct questions about violence, plans, and limits earlier in the interview, then circle back as needed.
- Contain long monologues by validating emotion and immediately funneling back to specific, scorable behavior.
- Close each interview with a concise summary and explicit next steps so the subject knows what will happen with their information.

## Team Feedback

Overall, the interview team managed a very difficult, grievance-driven subject and still gathered important information. Still, the transcript highlights several big-picture themes to keep in view for future cases. You generally held onto the interview frame under pressure, yet would benefit from a clearer, shared “roadmap” up front so Dusty understands what you’re doing and why. Your core questions were content-rich and appropriate, though timing, pacing, and frequent interruptions sometimes fed into a power struggle rather than diffusing it. You showed strong instincts around relational/process insight, really tracking his feelings of silencing and unfairness, but need to more consistently anchor those insights in specific, observable behaviors that plug cleanly into your rubric. You did eventually reach key risk content (weapons, “hard decisions,” anger toward colleagues), pointing to good clinical judgment, but you’ll want a more deliberate, early “risk spine” so these domains aren’t left to the chaotic end. Some of your most effective moments involved reflection and curiosity, and those would be even stronger with explicit accuracy check-ins (“Did I get that right?”) to reduce arguments and deepen disclosure. Finally, you showed promising team coordination under fire; formalizing roles and handoffs ahead of time will help you shape the interview more intentionally rather than just surviving a difficult encounter.

### **You held up under pressure, but you need a clearer “shared map.”**

The team did a solid job reminding Dusty that you’re not the ultimate decision-makers and that the goal is to understand his perspective. That frame matters in a mandated assessment, and you came back to it a few times when things got tense. Where you can tighten this is in the first few minutes: spell out the roadmap (“Here’s what we’ll cover, here’s why, here’s what we can and can’t decide today”) and confirm his understanding. When people like Dusty feel railroaded, a clear, collaborative map at the start lowers the sense of ambush and gives you something to point back to when he tests the process later.

### **Good questions; need for better timing and pacing**

Many of the questions you asked were exactly what a good threat-assessment interview needs: examples of classroom behavior, students’ reactions, weapon access, what happens if things don’t go his way, etc. The problem wasn’t *what* you asked but *when* and *how*. Frequent interruptions, long preambles, and stacking multiple questions created a tug-of-war over airtime with someone who is already hypersensitive to being “cut off.” Going forward, aim for shorter, cleaner moves: 1) one–two sentence reflection, 2) one targeted question, and 3) let him finish. When you notice a control battle over who gets to talk, it’s a signal to slow your speech, shrink your turns, and lean into curiosity rather than trying to regain control by talking more.

### **More Behavioral Anchors**

The team did a good job of picking up and naming important themes in Dusty’s sense of being silenced, his fixation on fairness, his identity as a teacher, and his feeling that colleagues and the administration “don’t get it.” Those are rich, clinically meaningful observations. What was thinner at times was the behavioral detail that lets you reliably score a rubric: exact language used in class, specific emails, frequency/duration of concerning comments, who was present, what happened next. You want to keep your strong process work and more often pivot to “walk me

through the last time that happened, step by step.” The mantra here is feelings tell you why; behavior tells you what to do.

## Applying a “Risk Spine”

By the end of the interview, you had covered a lot of key areas including access to firearms, range use, talk about death and “hard decisions,” intense anger toward colleagues, job threat, and his own coping (pacing, ruminating, lack of supports). That’s not nothing; those are high-value data points. The downside is that it took a long, bumpy road to get there, and some of the questions came after rapport had already frayed. In future interviews, it will help to have a simple “risk spine” you intentionally cover in the first half once basic rapport is in place: harm to others, harm to self, weapon access, fixation/identification with violence, containment/protective factors. You can still ask in his language and with his metaphors, but don’t leave those pillars until the very end.

## Double Down on Being Reflective and Curious

Some of the most productive stretches were when you reflected his experience (“You feel like people are misreading your intensity as dangerous” “Teaching is where you feel most yourself”) and then let that land. Dusty is exquisitely sensitive to being mischaracterized; when you summarized and almost checked if you had it right, you saw flashes of softening. The next step is to make that explicit: “Did I get that right?” “Tell me where I’m off.” That extra beat does three things. It reduces arguments over wording, it shows you’re genuinely trying to understand, and it often prompts more nuanced disclosure, all of which make the threat assessment more accurate.

## Formalize a Pre-Game Plan

You instinctively fell into some helpful patterns, one person pressing on risk content while the other managed relationships; one voice stepping back when things got heated with Dusty and letting the other step in. That’s good, and it probably prevented a full derailment. To level this up, make those roles explicit before you walk in. Decide who is the primary interviewer for rapport and narrative, who is the risk-spine lead, and who is watching the process/body language. Agree on how you’ll signal “let me take this” or “we need to move on” so you’re not negotiating that in front of the subject. With someone who weaponizes splits and triangulation, coordinated handoffs and agreed-upon roles are one of your best protective factors.

## Feedback for Dawn

You might consider focusing more on your strengths in setting tone and direction. You are at your best when you offer a clear, grounded explanation of why the interview is happening and what the boundaries are, and when you reflect on his emotions briefly ("I can hear how angry and sidelined you feel") before steering back to specific events. Your questions are strongest when they are tied to observable behavior, walking through a particular class session, specific emails, or concrete interactions, rather than staying in the abstract realm of values and ideology. Where you can grow is in tightening the structure: limiting long, unbroken stretches of venting, interrupting gently but firmly when necessary, and bringing safety-oriented questions (plans, thresholds, "what would you actually do?") to the front half of the conversation instead of leaving them until the end.

### Strengths

- **Warm introduction and humanizing frame.** Early on, you disclose that this is "a little bit more unique for me to do" and appreciate Dusty coming in. That normalizes the process, lowers shame, and aligns you with him rather than the nameless "administration."
- **Attempts to link past and present functioning.** You ask about whether others (family, friends, people he trusts) have noticed changes in his intensity, and later explore sleep, appetite, and late-night pacing/talking. That's good threat-assessment practice for determining whether there's a shift from baseline.
- **Insightful formulation about interruption and power.** You eventually name the parallel process, namely that interrupting him feels like what the administration (and perhaps his ex-wife) has done, and tie that back to why he's so reactive. This shows that you "get" the pattern, which is a relational strength even if the timing is messy.
- **Clear, direct safety questions once she gets there.** You explicitly ask about threats to others and access to weapons and get him to acknowledge gun ownership and range use while also denying intent to harm anyone, critical content that needed to be on the record.
- **Honest feedback about impact.** You eventually give him concrete feedback that his behavior feels intimidating, unpredictable, and anxiety-provoking, and explicitly link that to why students and colleagues might be scared. That's important data for both him and the administrative decision-makers.

### Areas for Improvement

- **Too much interrupting, leading to a power struggle you can't win.** You repeatedly jump in mid-answer ("I hate to interrupt you again...") in a way that mirrors the very dynamic Dusty is enraged about. He calls it out, escalates, and starts framing you as an agent of silencing. Once that pattern emerges, continuing to interrupt entrenches the power struggle. You needed a clean reset like one firm meta-comment ("I hear that interruptions feel silencing; here's why I may need to pause you at times...") and then far fewer interruptions.

- **Long, lecture-style monologues instead of short, targeted questions.** You often talk for 30–60 seconds before landing on the question, blending process reflections, psychoeducation, and your own emotional reactions. Dusty, a professor used to being the lecturer, reacts badly to being “taught” and repeatedly accuses you of monologuing. In a threat-assessment interview with a defended subject, you’d be better served by offering 1–2 sentence reflections, making use of one clear/concrete question, pausing and letting him answer, and adopting a delayed and somewhat tentative safety exploration.
- **Too much re-paraphrasing instead of anchoring to behavior.** You accurately sense and name emotional themes (not being heard, irritation, feeling judged), but spend a lot of time paraphrasing his experience and relatively less time pinning down specific classroom and email behaviors, sequences, and triggers. That leaves you with rich process insight but thinner behavioral data to plug into a rubric.
- **Feedback timing and consent.** Your core feedback, that his intensity and sudden, loud gestures feel intimidating and unpredictable, is clinically sound. But the way it’s delivered (embedded in long monologues, offered multiple times after he’s explicitly said he doesn’t want feedback) further erodes his buy-in. A more effective move would have been to get the data first, then summarize and ask permission (“Would it be alright if I share what I’m noticing from my side?”) before give succinct feedback once.

## Feedback for Kelly

You might emphasize your collaborative and normalizing stance. You do this well when you frame questions in a way that reduces shame ("A lot of faculty are struggling with this right now; help me understand how it's been for you") and use layered follow-ups that move from "what happened?" to "what did that look like in the room?" and "how did students respond?" This sequence keeps the focus on impact and makes it easier to score risk factors on a checklist later. Your growth area is in sharpening the edge of your risk questions. At times, the desire not to provoke defensiveness leads to long, softened lead-ins that dilute the core inquiry about threats, weapons, or imagined actions. You can also strengthen your closings by summarizing what you heard, naming any areas that remain unclear, and plainly outlining what happens next and who will see the information.

### Strengths

- **Clear, concrete, and behavior-focused questions.** Your questions tend to be short and specific: when the leave was put in place, what he was told about the reasons, whether he references suicide in lectures, and how colleagues/students have reacted. Those questions generate exactly the kind of factual content the team needs.
- **Keeps the frame on risk content (suicide, death, weapons, "fight," hard decisions).** You repeatedly bring him back to the core concern areas of repeated references to suicide/death, talk about "standing on the edge" and "the fight," pen-banging and aggressive gestures, and his colleagues' concerns. This is solid threat-assessment interviewing; you follow the threat-relevant breadcrumbs instead of getting lost in the grievance narrative.
- **Tolerates his intensity without joining the power struggle.** When Dusty redirects to you and explicitly excludes Dawn ("She's asking good questions"; "Put your hand down... I'm going to let her ask questions"), you largely stay calm, don't gloat, and don't get pulled into the triangulation. That helps keep at least one relational channel open.
- **Solid follow-through on themes.** You notice when he throws his pen and ask directly what brought that on, and later connect his talk about dying/notebooks to earlier suicide/death content. That kind of "you said X earlier, can we go back to that?" is exactly what we want our interviewers to do.

### Areas for Improvement

- **Sharpening and sequencing risk questions.** Some of your questions are strong but could be tightened to distinguish philosophical talk about death vs. personal preoccupation with death and abstract "fight/fascism" language vs. concrete plans, targets, or actions. For example, after "it will be decided by people on the edge making hard decisions," you ask what hard decisions look like, but don't quite land on: "Have you thought about doing anything drastic yourself to make that point?" or "Has anything you've written or said suggested you might act on these beliefs?"
- **Deeper weapon-access exploration and containment.** While we got the disclosure about gun ownership, you could have followed up with the operational details like the type and number of firearms, storage, recency of use, whether he's ever brought a

weapon to campus, what happens to the gun if he's angry at colleagues, etc. That would give the team clearer containment options.

- **More explicit empathy/validation to balance the challenge.** You are appropriately probing, but could sprinkle in a few more explicit validations ("I can hear how angry and sidelined you feel, especially given your tenure and reviews") to buy credit before asking harder questions. With a grievance-driven subject, brief empathetic statements often buy you more room to explore risk.
- **Stronger time and frame management at the end.** As things wind down, the interview slides into another round of Dawn–Dusty sparring. You briefly re-anchor ("Dawn and I will not be making formal recommendations..."), which is good, but you could have more firmly closed the loop by summarizing the main concerns and protective points, reiterating next steps, and thanking him while setting a clear boundary about time/ending.

# In-Person Dusty Harrington Interview

## Chronological Timestamped Feedback for Kelly & Dawn

### 1:00 First impressions (oh jeez, this guy)

Dusty's opening energy is both overly polite and noticeably intense. He stands to introduce himself, which is courteous but also a bit odd and high-energy in this context. Right away, he seems to struggle with listening versus talking. He interrupts quickly, leans toward an impulsive style, and fidgets constantly, behavior that clashes with his laid-back posture. All of this emerges in the first minute and gives you early data about his regulation and style.

### 1:50 Dusty establishes the rules of engagement

It becomes even clearer that Dusty is quick to answer and slow to listen. Kelly's comment about "my memory isn't as good..." while Dawn talks about taking notes is a nice, humanizing move. He doesn't really track the spirit of it, though; instead, he becomes defensive about taking his own notes. This is another sign that he's hyper-alert to perceived slights or control rather than attuned to relational cues.

### 2:40 The grievance monologue

Dawn directs him with, "Say more about what happened," which is a neutral, solid starting place. His response is critical. He doesn't answer the question directly; he escalates. This is one of the first big tells that broad, open-ended questions with lots of space are likely to invite a grievance monologue rather than focused information.

### 3:37 First impressions

Kelly has Dawn take the opening, which makes structural sense. Already, Dusty comes across as defensive and guarded. Kelly's use of "Dr. Harrington" shows respect, and he responds well, redirecting you to "Dusty." It's a small moment, but it fits a familiar pattern with some Ph.D. faculty. They often prefer first names once they feel their status has been acknowledged ("kissed the ring" first). Kelly then offers a great reframe of Dawn's question: "What did they tell you the reason was they were placing you on leave?" He responds well, giving more information and revealing how he talks when he feels slightly less threatened. Notably, Kelly's question is very similar in content to Dawn's, which highlights how much tone and timing matter.

### 4:46 Fighting over the microphone

This interruption and timing dynamic really comes to the surface here. Dusty talks over Dawn and rarely lets her speak. Dawn begins to learn that trying to talk over him in return, even though his interruptions are rude, does not work and only elevates the sense of struggle. We can see the basic rule of engagement forming: if he feels even slightly talked over, he reacts sharply.

### 5:14 More like Professor Passive-Aggressive, am I right?

You ask a great open-ended question with very low pressure and a respectful tone. He responds with the bright red flag: "I was saying that before you interrupted me." This line tells you that he's highly sensitive to conversational timing and will frame even minor overlaps as disrespectful.

## 6:10 Timing is everything

Dawn makes an excellent return to his interruption comment. It's clear you noticed this theme and are trying to address it. This might be one of those moments where, in a future interview, you weave his sensitivity directly into the process, e.g., explicitly stating that you'll wait until he finishes before you speak. He still doesn't answer your question directly; instead, he pivots to a larger "this is what the institution is doing to me" narrative. Dawn moves on to another topic, but this is also a spot where you could either gently push for clarity ("I want to be sure I understand what you mean") or offer an apology ("You're right, I cut you off there; thank you for pointing that out"). Either approach could have increased rapport. By this point, two things are clear. He does not respond well to open-ended questions with many options for how to answer, and he remains quite defensive and guarded.

## 7:09 Back and forth doesn't work

As the interviewer, this is the moment you'd likely feel very aware that some things aren't working. Specifically, any casual back-and-forth in timing is experienced by him as "interrupting," and broad, open-ended questions are fueling defensiveness. His "hold on, hold on" and the grudging "ask your question... go for it..." come from his growing agitation with both the question style and the interactional rhythm.

## 9:37 Think tag team: switch it up

As Dusty begins to pair off more aggressively against Dawn, Kelly attempts to step in with a question. This is a reasonable strategy shift. When one interviewer becomes the target of his hostility, it can help to change voices and cadence. Kelly is trying to interrupt an unproductive dyad and gently shift the energy. This is a good instinct when one interviewer is becoming the primary target of his anger.

## 10:04 Even when he talks, what is he even saying?

Dusty says, "I don't like social situations where someone tries to talk over me." This statement lacks insight, given how often he interrupts, and it functions as a power move. He's asserting control of the interaction and trying to set rules that favor his dominance.

## 11:40 Lack of insight/desire for control

Kelly asks a specific question about suicide risk. He turns the tables on her and, somewhat ironically, interrupts several times while complaining about being interrupted himself. This is another good example of his lack of insight and his need to control the interaction. Still, you are correctly moving toward core risk questions.

## 11:50 At the crossroads

Here, Dusty's sense of entitlement becomes clearer. He is unwilling to let you talk and seems offended by even normal conversational overlap. This is the point where you realistically have multiple options:

- Pass more of the direct questioning to Kelly

- Explicitly change the “rules of the road” (e.g., “I’ll wait until you’re fully done; I need you to allow me to finish a question”)
- Call for a brief pause and step out together to regroup

If you were alone with him, you might choose to sit directly in his anger; with two people, you could also opt for a tactical handoff.

### **13:04 Look for the teachable moments**

Dusty says, “I’m sorry... I didn’t mean to interrupt,” which is small but important. It suggests that in this case, he recognizes, at least on the surface, how his interruptions might be perceived. You also ask, “Your colleagues you’ve worked with for several years are concerned about you?” which is a helpful way of bringing in others’ concerns without sounding immediately accusatory. You can also feel his frustration building about having to repeat himself, which is worth tracking as a trigger.

### **13:45 Throwing a tantrum (or pen)**

You address his pen-throwing in the moment, which is excellent. Naming the behavior draws him back into mindful awareness of how he’s being perceived and communicates that this kind of non-verbal aggression is noticed and meaningful. It’s a subtle but important boundary-setting move.

### **14:22 On the offensive**

His attack on Dawn increases here. It’s an important turning point. At this stage, it would be entirely reasonable to consider stepping out to consult or to allow Kelly to take the lead for a while. It’s difficult in a live scenario, but it’s an option worth keeping in mind. You might also consider a quick, structured reset (“We’re going to pause for a moment and then come back to the conversation”).

### **17:34–17:58 Stay with your question**

Kelly asks, “Can you give me an example of what those decisions could be?” This is a strong, concrete probe that pulls him away from vague, global statements into specific thought processes. Your follow-up around 17:58 holds him to the original thread of your question, showing good persistence and structure. You’re not letting him fully hijack the narrative, but you’re also not confronting him in a way that escalates his defensiveness. This is one of your most effective sequences.

### **24:56 Ask, observe, adjust**

Later in the interview, Dawn attempts to reframe, but his anger still feels very present. He is hesitant to accept her question and becomes frustrated by what he experiences as an evasive or overly lengthy conversation. In this moment, a broader “sticky” question that lands in a comfort zone for him might work better. Moving to checklist-style items like sleep or appetite risks being experienced as beneath him or too clinical. It makes sense if Dawn was trying to ask something “easier,” but with someone like Dusty, “easy” is usually about letting him talk about areas where he feels expert or aggrieved, and then steering gently from there. Dawn does get some “juicy”

details about ex-partners and the ex-wife, using language like “exes can be bitches,” which echoes his own words. But the overall effect doesn’t draw him closer; instead, it falls flat. The key cycle to watch is to try a technique, observe how it lands, and keep only what’s working.

## 29:02 Attend to the red lights

Dawn takes a risky step by interrupting him again. He tolerates it this time, but his rules for the interview are now well-established. Working against those rules risks further shutdown. This could be a place for a 180-degree shift in technique, different types of questions, different pacing, or a more structured turn-taking frame. The tentative pushback at 29:19 is another red flashing light that a style change is needed. To be clear, he is arrogant, rude, and dismissive, likely especially toward women, but the interview focus is on gathering information, which becomes harder as he becomes more defensive.

## 30:21 He’s very sensitive to feedback

Dawn offers a summary reflection that, based on his facial expression, doesn’t fit how he sees things. He pushes back immediately with, “It’s not overwhelming for me.” With him, any negative description of his experience (“overwhelming,” “anxious,” “hurt”) is likely to be heard as a barb. That’s a useful lesson that negative emotional labels are high-risk, low-reward with this subject.

## 31:30 Time the approach to the response

Dawn returns to the social worker theme. Given the tentative alliance at this moment, it’s predictable that this question will escalate him, and it does. He is resistant to many “normal” connection techniques. The key is to recognize that resistance and pivot quickly rather than continuing to play the same card.

## 33:01 Professor Not So Passive Aggressive

He implies you “needed a time out,” which is a passive-aggressive jab. Comments like this should cue a shift in approach. He is trying to establish dominance and knock you off balance; the more you try to “win” the exchange, the more he feeds on it.

## 33:32–34:06 Game of chicken

Dawn offers another summary reflection, trying to connect to his feelings, but the cross-talk continues. At this point, if he isn’t going to shift, you have to. That might mean shorter, more structured questions, more reliance on Kelly’s voice, or a temporary step back.

## 34:41 Trigger questions

Dawn asks directly about hurting others. Clinically, this is an important question, but with someone so highly defended, a blunt ask at this level of tension is unlikely to be answered, and more likely to be dismissed, mocked, or met with anger. These questions are still necessary, but ideally saved for a moment when his defenses are somewhat lower.

## 36:00 Tread carefully with the triggering questions

Dawn poses another direct question about access to weapons. Again, content-wise, this is appropriate, but the timing is poor, as the two of you are still jockeying for attention and talking

over each other. A more subtle approach, or waiting until there is more cooperative energy, would increase the odds of a meaningful answer. “Knocking questions off the list” can work, but only when the relationship is strong enough to tolerate it. Passing the questions that he would likely cause an escalation in a defense response would be another option.

### **37:20–38:12 “Foot on the gas/foot on the brake”**

Your metaphor is a good, deep question. Metaphors and analogies, though, work best when there is a strong and forgiving connection. Under strain, simpler, more direct language may be safer. Interestingly, he actually asks you to slow down, and your rephrasing at 38:12 is clearer and more effective.

### **39:23 Deep questions**

“Why do you want to teach students?” is an excellent, simple question that goes right to the core of his professional identity. He tried to sidestep the earlier version of this by talking about faculty relationships; you bring it back to the heart of the matter, which is a strong move.

### **39:51 Faster doesn’t always work**

Even though his behavior is arrogant, annoying, and arguably misogynistic, trying to talk faster, louder, or over him is not effective. It feeds the power struggle rather than diffusing it.

### **40:56 Looking for feedback**

You ask for feedback about the interview, which is a reasonable move. The challenge is that once he answers, you push him to change his answer. If feedback is truly important, it may be better to simply give it rather than coax it out of someone this unresponsive. You start with some positives, but it’s clear he isn’t particularly interested in your feedback.

### **42:00–44:00 Don’t keep asking if he isn’t listening**

You offer more reflective statements, but the rapport simply isn’t there to hold them. He is fully disengaged from what you’re saying and focused on writing in his notes. Conceptually, you’re getting at the right issue, his desire to work with students despite his apparent disdain for them, but the hook with him isn’t quite set.

### **45:00: Switch it up**

He really focuses in again here, particularly when interacting with Kelly. This underlines how important coordination is when there are two interviewers. There’s a “good cop/bad cop” flavor to the dynamic in which he seems to enjoy sharing certain things with Kelly to “show you up.” It’s unpleasant and confirms some ugly traits, but if the main goal is information for risk assessment, you can deliberately use this dynamic by letting Kelly take the lead when he engages more with her, while Dawn steps back to observe, note patterns, and choose your moments.