

Interviewer: Great. So can you tell me about how you found your job with Flex?

Interviewee: With Amazon?

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: It was advertisement back in 2016, 2017, over craigslist.

Interviewer: Oh really?

Interviewee: Yeah. So that's how I discovered them, was I answered a Craigslist advertisement. I downloaded the app and went that route. Even Postmates does this too, so it's not just one company or the other. They all do it.

Interviewer: Oh, on Craigslist specifically?

Interviewee: Yeah. Craigslist is where a lot of these companies' jobs are offered.

Interviewer: Oh, I see. Do you know, was that a new warehouse location for them?

Interviewee: No, actually. No it wasn't. You're not restricted to one warehouse with Flex. You can go to any of their warehouses at any given time. Because Flex doesn't just deliver packages, they deliver [inaudible 00:02:13] and Whole Foods. For a while there they were even giving out like Prime Now and literally picking up restaurant orders.

Interviewer: Yeah. So but-

Interviewee: So it was kinda similar to something like Postmates

Interviewer: Yeah, I missed what year did you say you started with them?

Interviewee: I started in 2017 [crosstalk 00:02:45] I believe it was November of 2017.

Interviewer: Oh, was it right before Black Friday and that rush?

Interviewee: Well, it was the first week of November, [inaudible 00:03:01] in the year 2017. I was with them for awhile. It's hard to imagine time going so fast.

Interviewer: Yeah. What kind of introduction did you have to the job?

Interviewee: What do you mean by what kind of introduction?

Interviewer: Did you have some kind of training? Did someone call you and say, "This is what the job is like."?

Interviewee: No, nobody called me. Basically, I had to go through the app, there's some videos, and complete that. (Inaudible over background noise) 0:04:00 You have to

understand, I used to be a truck driver before this. I did 100 scans and deliveries and all that's no problem. All right, so this isn't any problem. You know?

Interviewer: Yeah. Is any of the technology different between truck driving and this?

Interviewee: Well uh... compared to truck driving, you don't have DOT rules that you have to follow. In a way it is different. Because you have hours of service. With the Department of Transportation, there are federal rules and regulations to operate a commercial vehicle. In (Amazon) you are using your own vehicle. You're not using something that is 26,000 lbs. You know?

Interviewer: Yeah. Do you like this job better?

Interviewee: Uh... I do and I don't. Of all these jobs out there, Amazon is the best. And I would say... Uber and Lyft and Postmates are the worst. They drop their rates. Compared to these other ones, Amazon has actually raised their rates.

Interviewer: Oh really? Is that for the holiday or just in general?

Interviewee: In general. Let's put it this way, I turn around and I tell everybody. If you turn around and read my threads on the Amazon.com Facebook group or Amazon Flex, I tell people flat out: don't ever take a block offering (inaudible) because they're lowballing you. If you wait until close to the actual block start time, that's where you're going to get paid the highest. Because that's when their desperate. Because they still have a whole bunch of people that they need to try to get into their facilities to pick up routes and that's why they do it. They don't have their own people left to do it.

Interviewee: You get paid more for doing less if you do it that way. Instead of jumping on it and taking up blocks. You could book up your calendar for the entire week if you wanted to. But you'll end up getting paid the lowest if you do that.

Interviewer: How many shifts do you try to sign up for each week?

Interviewee: I try to sign up for two a day.

Interviewer: Do you usually end up getting that many?

Interviewee: Usually, yes. And I usually try and sign up for three hours shifts and I actually get paid more than what I would do if I were to [inaudible 00:07:18] sign up for four hour shifts.

Interviewer: Oh. Why is that?

Interviewee: Why is that? It's like I said. I sign up for one single block right before I want to start. And that's where they come out with like \$100-\$125 blocks. If you wait that long... and then you jump on it... you'll get it.

Interviewer: Have you noticed-

Interviewee: yeah, if you turn around and accept their first offer then you're only going to get \$57.

Interviewer: I've also seen some posts about how once people sign up for blocks, they can't see other ones. Has that happened to you?

Interviewee: That only happens when you.. they cannot have you work more than 40-hour weeks on Amazon. Otherwise they will have to start paying you benefits. To give you benefits like an employee. That's why they don't let you see more than 40 hours a week. So that means if you're only seeing one and you're not able to see anymore, that means you've hit your 40 hour mark.

Interviewer: Yeah, do you have a manager or somebody that you talk to if something goes wrong?

Interviewee: Uh, there is on road support, but ultimately you are an independent contractor. But on road support is who you would call. And they turn around and say, this is who you're supposed to call. But they broke that feature. They accidentally broke that in one of their updates and they never fixed that feature inside their app. So I actually am giving out on Facebook the correct number for on road support because now they're getting a whole bunch of new drivers and that is needed.

Interviewer: Yeah. Have there been other big feature updates in the app since you've been on it?

Interviewee: They... There's a new way they are labeling, so when you're loading the packages into your vehicle. Which really isn't being told, because they think.. oh just because I have these four digits on this little sticker... um... we should be able to find your packages right away. Well, they used to have them broken up into groups which is actually easier to then find them. But nah, as of yesterday, it was 4 digit codes. So it's taking me longer as I am looking for that package. Or looking for each package. It's like looking for a needle in a haystack. So they actually did kind of break something. I ended up ten... but the cool thing is that you can turn around and email Amazon and give them feedback.

Interviewer: That's cool.

Interviewee: Yeah you could. You could give all sorts of feedback. And if you go over on your clock, like say you were scheduled for a block that ran from, hypothetically, 3-6pm. And you ended up going over... let's say you ended up working until 7 o'clock. Well guess what? They will actually pay you as long as you request it.

Interviewer: Oh that's great. Have you had to do that?

Interviewee: Yes, I have because often times what happens is that [inaudible 00:11:33] checking people [inaudible 00:11:31]. You arrive anywhere between 15 to 20 minutes early, that's

the ideal. You can't check in any earlier than 15 minutes. Say if you were scheduled for three o'clock you can check in at 2:45. [inaudible 00:11:58] you arrived at 2:45. [inaudible 00:12:04] you arrive at your station, [inaudible 00:12:26]

Speaker 4: how many-

Interviewee: And sometimes you are waiting... you only get one route. Not two. Because there is anywhere between... um... depending on some sites, around like 36 and 48 packages. And now one crazy job gave me 123 and um and uh... yeah! And I said, there's no way I can do this. So, anyway, I ended up bringing most of those packages back. I couldn't fit them into my vehicle and I was like, are you guys really crazy? Or what?

Interviewer: That is crazy.

Interviewee: So I told them, what are you really crazy? How am I going to fit this into my little car? You know I can't fit that many. Where is the driver going to sit? Ok? And it's not like we can turn around and pick them up or anything.

No, we have to. I actually did that. I actually filed a grievance for that one. And then I forwarded it in the group. Because it's unrealistic that they think I could get 123 packages delivered in three hours. [inaudible 00:14:25]

Interviewer: So you had mentioned that you'd worked for a couple of different apps and platforms before. Which ones have you worked for?

Interviewee: I worked for Postmates. I worked for Uber. I worked for Lyft. Let's see. Oh, I did GrubHub [inaudible 00:14:50] and also did Caviar. So I've worked for a number of them, and Amazon is the best. I keep signing up for more. I'm still trying to find which ones I really like, but so far I like [inaudible 00:15:14] Amazon the best.

Interviewer: Did you do any of these while you were still driving trucks?

Interviewee: No. No actually. Believe it or not. All I got paid much more through this than when I was truck driving.

Interviewer: Oh, I didn't know that.

Interviewee: Yeah. That is a lot of discrimination against women in truck driving. As a woman, there is a real glass ceiling on you. I was only making \$1500 a month, being an open road truck driver. I was making \$50,000.

Interviewer: And how much, how much are you able to make?

Interviewee: [inaudible 00:16:01].

Interviewer: How much are you able to make a month from flex?

Interviewee: From Amazon? About four to five thousand dollars a month. And from Lyft.

Interviewer: Wow, that's great. That's way better.

Interviewee: Yes it is.

Interviewer: Do you end up needing to work every day or do you take days off during the week?

Interviewee: You can't get much more than within your 40 hours, you know? That's why some of these people in the group have other gigs that they do as well. There's a lot of Lyft and Uber drivers that do Flex as well.

Interviewer: yeah. Do you do another one as well?

Interviewee: yes I do. I do Uber and Lyft

Interviewer: Oh, so you do those when you're not working for Flex?

Interviewee: Yeah. Exactly.

Interviewer: So how many hours do you try to work per week?

Interviewee: Me? I try to work at least 60 hours a week.

Interviewer: Okay. Lots of work.

Interviewee: But I worked at the job driver for 70 hours a week. So I pretty much do that on this platform as well. Trying to work at least 60 hours a week.

Interviewer: So, do you think of yourself as an employee of Flex or like a contractor or do you feel like you're running a small business?

Interviewee: I don't really feel like I'm an employee because I do have more say. because I can turn around and say that that they need to review (inaudible) or they need to change how they do stuff. I think of myself as an independent contractor. Like if there are fewer packages leaving, obviously I'll get a reduced (inaudible) I don't want (inaudible) leaving my vehicle. [inaudible 00:18:39]

Interviewer: So you have some more independence than if you were an employee.

Interviewee: I like that independence. Like, if I need to take the day off I can do that.

Interviewer: Okay. Do you think you'll still be doing this in a couple of years?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: So I have a couple of questions left and they're sort of about the future of technology. How do you feel about self-driving cars?

Interviewee: I do not agree with those at all. Absolutely not, because I'll turn around and tell you, from being an open road truck driver, they have built in navigation system in my truck. But they could not perfect the collision mitigation. And if you get hit by a truck... and what you've got inside cars a really dangerous. I even tried driving a Tesla already. Taking 'em out... I don't know if you've driven any, but guess what? When you're hitting the turn signal on... it's not just going to catch a blind spot on autopilot! We're just immediately, we drove across over into that lane. Unsafe. We're taught to always look inside of your blind spot before moving over.

Interviewee: [crosstalk 00:20:33].

Interviewer: Sorry, lot's of background noise, sorry. Okay, could you imagine Amazon using them?

Interviewee: Yeah. I would not recommend it to them, but no. Honestly, I would not recommend them to anybody use an autonomous vehicle. At least until they correct the collision mitigation first. right now, the collision mitigation system. Right now the collision mitigation systems in place are dangerous. let's put it this way you know [inaudible 00:21:19] he actually collided with a truck. He merged when there was a water refraction off of the road. Because that reflection causes the vehicle locked up. You really feel safe until the communication systems that 9 times out of 10 don't do their jobs and you really want them to do their jobs! So do I really want something that is.. do I really want want a technology to be taking control of driving when they don't even give me control of the wheel. No, I want some kind of protection and right now there ain't no protection. no.

Interviewer: I understand. Thank you so much. I'm going to stop recording.

ADDED BY THE SPEAKER VIA EMAIL LATER:

There was something that came to mind right after getting off the phone with you that I could have kicked myself for not pointing out. When you asked about my feelings regarding autonomous vehicles doing deliveries? There's something else that I should have made known about how dangerous they could be. Because, like I know in **Nevada** was the first state to approve testing autonomous semi tractors hauling trailers. So, you're talking about 70' from front bumper to rear bumper on a single tractor/trailer combination, but in States that approve trucks pulling doubles or triples now you're talking about a length over 104'! Doubles and triples cannot back up under any circumstances because all it would become is one big jack knife snake. These gig apps have what I call their fatal flaws which involves their navigation systems. In every instance once when you complete one delivery it's like there's zero memory retention of which way your vehicle is pointing on the street. So, you're next delivery may require you to do a U-turn in such tight quarters that it's not feasible. Let's up the ante and add snow to that mix. Even on these big rigs that have the collision mitigation systems on board in snowy weather we have to stop and clean off the big black box sensor behind the front bumper or it's blind and it can create errors in our system. How is an autonomous vehicle going to ensure that their sensors remain clear of snow or mud? Plus, just like any electronics sensors can quit working and experience short circuiting and be utterly useless. Now, say it's a critical sensor that went out that it's specific job is to tell the other sensors to stop for that human, or stop for that red light, slow down to avoid collision with another object. Plus, just like all of these newer vehicles that have onboard ecm systems (computers), your car is actually hackable. Just imagine the devastation that could be caused if a cyber terrorist would flipping hack autonomous vehicle! Who would

you go after? Uber? Lyft? Or God only knows who else if that autonomous vehicle decides to plow through the main entrance of a shopping mall and run people over indiscriminately. I wish people would spend more time thinking about all of the what if's, before they even think about profiting from building these things.

Just think back once when Uber was doing testing with an autonomous vehicle recently. Their test evaluator was hired to monitor their car and make sure that it performs appropriately. Well, that person sitting in the passenger seat got lost into Facebook and wasn't paying attention to the self-driving car they were sitting in. The car seen a pedestrian in the crosswalk and still proceeded to run over the pedestrian. The evaluator was charged with reckless homicide, because that person failed to stop the car!

Imagine Uber getting hit with a ransom ware type of virus and if they don't pay the hackers hypothetically 8 Billion dollars in three hours. Then all of their fleet of self-driving cars will deliberately rake havoc on every single community that they've been approved to drive with passengers in. Say some of their fleet chooses to hit other vehicles head on, while others choose to go plowing through the jersey barrier that protects you from going off the bridge and into the water below and considering over 95% of the bridges in the United States have long since exceeded their bridge life and require replacement, but the money isn't there to replace them. That new cracks caused by plowing through the bridge deck barrier may be just enough to cause the entire bridge to collapse! Remember the 2011 or 2012 I-5 bridge collapse near Mount Vernon, WA. That collapse was caused by a Oversize Truck just barely tapping the top corner of the bridge and the whole thing dropped right into the river below. That's why you see pilot cars in action with some of your Oversize Loads. But imagine a ransom ware hijacked Uber self-driving car with passengers plummeting through the bridge and causing it to collapse during rush hour. What kind of devastation that could cause? What if some of them were just reprogrammed to overheat their batteries and explode the car with passengers in it? When you think of these things you have got to be willing and able to fully drop your mind into thinking about what others would define as the unimaginable disasters of every possible situation and on every scale. Then ask yourself do you really want to see this new technology come to fruition in your life time?! Or do you think that this has the potential of making those Terminator movies look real? Or even that movie Maximum Overdrive look real?! Rolling the welcome mat out for this new technology requires weighing the cons and addressing them first, before you even as much as look at the pros.