

El Presidente

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EXT. - STREETS OF BARCELONA - DAY

TOM, 43, dressed in an elegant but inexpensive suit, notably stressed, is sitting in a taxi, stuck in traffic. Downtown Barcelona is completely gridlocked, every single inhabitant seems to have taken to the streets. Thousands of people, with binoculars, telescopes, cameras, etc, are looking at the sky.

TOM, although curious himself, checks his watch impatiently, tapping his fingers on the armrest and trying to see past the traffic. He pays the driver, gets out, and taking a glance at the sky continues on foot, threading his way through the crowd.

EXT. - CONGRESS BUILDING - DAY - CONTINUOUS

TOM arrives at the Congress Building, leaving the crowd behind. He is late. Without hesitation, he shows his credentials to a security guard, who lets him in.

INT. - CONGRESS BUILDING - DAY - CONTINUOUS

TOM rushes through the corridors, following the signs to the Conference Room. We hear someone giving a speech.

THE PRESIDENT (O.S.; IN SPANISH)

..and in order to honor those Spaniards who deposited their trust in this party, thanks to which we are in charge of districts, communities, as well as the nation's government.

Tom passes the main entrance to the Conference Room to enter the translator booths.

INT. - CONGRESS BUILDING - TRANSLATOR'S BOOTH - DAY

Inside the booth, a Chinese translator is translating the speaker's Spanish speech into English, with a strong accent.

TRANSLATOR

..I feel obliged to bring clarity to all those questions that led to the issue at hand.

INT. - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

PRESIDENT (IN SPANISH)

In accordance with the policy of maximum transparency which the party has maintained since the very first instances of its existence, the Spanish people well deserve that, at all times,

INT. - TRANSLATOR'S BOOTH - DAY - CONTINUOUS

TRANSLATOR

...the behaviour of their leaders be justified, and that at all times, this behaviour be free of even the slightest shadow of doubt.

Without interrupting the TRANSLATOR, TOM apologizes with gestures, and takes over the translation.

TOM

...and all Spaniards, whether they voted for us or not, have the right to be certain they are governed with integrity by honorable individuals...

INT. - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

ROMANIAN JOURNALIST

(swift, determined)

Mr. President, not only Spain, but all of Europe wants to know when and how you are going to respond to all those felonies and crimes, you and your party is being accused of, in relation to the 'Barcenas' case. Will it be before the Parliament, or before a judge, when the latter asks you to, or will it be in occasion of a conference, like the one you held last February..? Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT puts his finger on his ear plug, and listens carefully to the translation. He halts, caught by surprise. He's having a hard time disguising his embarrassment.

THE PRESIDENT (IN SPANISH)

Every citizen must be able to have trust in the most strict honorability and integrity of those governing him, and even more so in times like these our country is living in, in which especially hard sacrifices are expected from every citizen...

JOURNALIST

(aggressive, but educated)

Mr. President, with all due respect, you are not answering the question!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOURNALIST (CONT'D)

We want to know, what is your position in relation to aforementioned accusations of corruption, towards you and the other members of the Government? Thank you!

PRESIDENT

(uncomfortable, but in control; in Spanish)

As I already said on occasion of the last National Executive Committee, never has this party, nor any of its members, ever received nor accepted or handed out any kind of 'under the table' payment, nor any so-called 'envelope' of any kind. Any, I repeat, ANY accusation done in this matter, only deserves two words as an answer: it's false. I repeat: it's false!

Roaring and heckling among the JOURNALISTS, they don't believe any of it.

INT. - TRANSLATOR'S BOOTH - DAY - CONTINUOUS

TOM, who is waiting for the President to speak again, looks at his companion, raising his eyebrows and sniggering, like saying "yeah right.."

PRESIDENT (O.S.; IN SPANISH)

(through Tom's headphones)

And this is the reason why our party...

INT. - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

PRESIDENT (IN SPANISH)

...and I will personally guarantee, in the issue at hand, absolute transparency..

INT. - TRANSLATOR'S BOOTH - DAY - CONTINUOUS

TOM

... absolute 'transparency', so that the 'truth' may blossom again..

Tom looks away from the PRESIDENT and through the nearby window to the sky outside.

EXT. - SKY AND AERIAL CITY VIEW - DAY

A large crowd is gazing into sky.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

An aerial view of Barcelona and the sea, shows a light, snowflake like meteor shower. Hundreds of meteor particles enter the atmosphere, glowing from the heat, offering an amazing show. Some of the meteors are big enough to reach the ground, but do not do any visible damage. Thousands of people are enjoying the show, picking up little meteors, laughing, yelling, having a great time.

We see 'something' - a vapour/particles - being released from the meteor rain into the air, onto the people, who suddenly become elated with joy and happiness.

The 'substance' is carried by the wind to the congress building, enters through its ventilation system, and into the conference room.

INT. - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The PRESIDENT inhales the substance, and coughs slightly. Clearing his throat, he continues.

PRESIDENT (IN SPANISH)  
 ..and in order to eliminate  
 even the slightest doubt about the  
 integrity of the members of this  
 government..

INT. - TRANSLATOR'S BOOTH - DAY - CONTINUOUS

TOM is routinely translating, when something suddenly makes him shiver. He looks around, sees nothing.

Then he notices changes in the PRESIDENT's behaviour - his voice changes, and his speech becomes more aggressive.

INT. - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

THE PRESIDENT is surprised as he realizes his speech is out of character but is compelled to continue.

PRESIDENT (IN SPANISH)  
 (loudly)  
 I will not allow...

(struggling to control himself)

...them to discredit us this way. I will not permit anyone or anybody keeping me from exercising my function for which I was given the leadership of this nation.

(loudly)  
 I will fight...  
 (trying to control  
 himself)  
 ... to pull Spain out of the  
 crisis, to grow, to create  
 employment, and to give Spain back  
 its hope in the future..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Most of the journalists react with surprise and scandal. Somewhere, one journalist starts to laugh hysterically.

JOURNALIST 3

Presidente.. this is ridiculous!  
Are you taking a piss at the  
Spanish people.. is that it?!

PRESIDENT

(transformed, energetic,  
passionate)  
...And I also tell you this,  
I will not stay put with my arms  
crossed before such infamy. This  
party will not be intimidated by  
agitation techniques!

Roaring and protest among most of the journalists.

Some whistle, some yell things.

PRESIDENT (IN SPANISH) (CONT'D)

(shouting)  
And what if we accepted some  
gifts?? One or two suits, a trip  
here and there.. So what?? Well,  
don't we deserve them..??

Gradually more journalists move from showing surprise and disagreement with the President, to sudden expression of happiness, euphoria, and passion for what the President is saying: they are infected too. Only a few remain who show no symptoms of infection. These people are confused about what is happening.

INT. - TRANSLATOR'S BOOTH - DAY - CONTINUOUS

TOM

(translating, distracted)  
How does anyone dare to expect the  
President of the Government of  
Spain to justify himself before  
you? Is this how we waste the  
sacrifices and efforts of this  
sacred nation, by questioning its  
highest leader??..

TOM looks around amazed at how most journalists are now cheering for the PRESIDENT.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOM (O.S) (CONT'D)

...Just like Rome would never have become the Holy Roman Empire if Caesar had to justify each and every one of his actions, neither can this great Spanish nation allow itself the luxury of questioning his leaders, and its supreme leader even less so...

Distracted, TOM stops translating. After a moment, he comes to his senses and goes for the microphone button, but stalls. Most journalist or politicians who had headphones on for the translation had taken them off. Tom keeps on gazing at the 'show' inside the conference room.

INT. - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

PRESIDENT

(increasingly ecstatic,  
fanatic, dictatorial)

Did you, or did you not put me in charge of this nation? Then shut the hell up once and for all, and let me do my job. You want a prosperous future? Then let me work in peace, goddamit! Because, if you keep on bothering me hundred times a day, how in the world am I supposed to do my job..??

Let me do the job how I want it done! And I tell you another thing: You think things are bad in Spain? No..they are much worse than you think!! A Spain destroyed and wasted, looted miserably, full of children who are starving. If you want me to get you out of this misery, you have to give me free hand! And then I will change this nation into a magnificent Spain, up there among the stars, a clean fatherland, filled with happiness!

At the same time, everyone inside the conference room is going crazy. Most people are cheering fanatically for the President, but we also see: two are beating each other up, one man and one female politician are making out between the aisles without shame, three guys are stuffing their mouth full at the buffet like animals... A couple of bodyguards take up position close to the PRESIDENT.

INT. - TRANSLATORS' BOOTH - DAY - CONTINUOUS

TOM is frozen by fear at the deteriorating scene.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PRESIDENT (O.S; IN SPANISH)  
 And we will fight. We will fight  
 til death, if necessary! And if  
 Merkel or Obama or whoever wants a  
 piece of it, we'll be more than  
 happy to provide! And the world  
 will tremble, because the world's  
 greatest and most heroic men are  
 the sons of Spain! And we won't let  
 anything or anyone get in our way!!

The PRESIDENT's speech is greeted with a fanatical celebratory atmosphere, almost like that of a hard-core skinhead party. TOM's eyes express fear and terror. He looks at his colleague, who seems excited and happy about what she is hearing. Tom knows now something is seriously wrong, he feels in danger.

PRESIDENT (O.S.; IN SPANISH) (CONT'D)

In the name of our holy fatherland  
 and in the name of those who have  
 died, since the beginning of time,  
 for a great, one, free and  
 universal fatherland, I turn to you  
 and say: If, in order to protect  
 the interests of this our great  
 nation, there has to be war, war  
 there will be!

TOM

(to his friend) )  
 We got to get the hell out of  
 here!!

TRANSLATOR

(euphoric, annoyed)  
 What is wrong with you? You know,  
 you really shouldn't work so hard,  
 it drives you crazy. C'mon, this is  
 awesome! The President is so cool!

TOM grabs his stuff, grabs the TRANSLATOR'S arm, and literally drags her out of the booth.

INT. - CONGRESS BUILDING HALLWAYS - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The TRANSLATOR is still resisting, TOM dragging her along.

TRANSLATOR

Stop! Just.. stop! You're hurting  
 me!

TOM stops. His friend is not struggling now, so he lets go. The TRANSLATOR halts a second. Suddenly, she feels sexually aroused. Next thing, she jumps on TOM and starts kissing him wildly. Her hands go for his crotch.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

After an instant of 'Hell-why-not' attitude, TOM comes to his senses.

TOM  
 Stop! What are you doing?  
 Stop! This is not you!

The TRANSLATOR calms down a bit.

TOM (CONT'D)  
 Come on, let's go!!

TOM and the TRANSLATOR run towards the building exit. We hear the President yelling his speech as they run.

PRESIDENT (O.S.; IN SPANISH)  
 And what is this thing about  
 abortion? In a great and catholic  
 Spain, there cannot be any kind of  
 assassination of children, not even  
 before they are born! And if women  
 don't wanna get pregnant, they  
 shall not fuck so much! A war with  
 a taste of crusade is what we want,  
 one of historical greatness, of  
 transcendental battle between  
 people and civilizations. A war  
 that will put Spain, once again in  
 history, on the top of the Gods'  
 Olymp.

EXT. - CONGRESS BUILDING - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Tom and the TRANSLATOR storm out of the congress building. TOM stops, looking at the crowd, his eyes grow wide in disbelief at what he sees. Thousands of people move towards the building - all smiling, like on a sugar high, but otherwise silent, drawn to the building like metal to a magnet.

The PRESIDENT's speech is broadcast through all the car radios.

PRESIDENT (IN SPANISH)  
 This government has won, and it  
 will keep on winning! We are  
 catholic, apostolic, romans, and we  
 are liars!  
 LONG LIVE SPAIN!

TOM watches in horror as the ENTIRE CITY shouts at once.

THE ENTIRE CITY (IN SPANISH)  
 Long live Spain!!

The mass finishes its silent march at the building, while TOM and the TRANSLATOR run in the opposite direction.