

ct

Subprime

de
Fernando Ramírez Baeza

traducción de
David Johnston

(fragmento en inglés)

Note: The translation of this play locates the action in Madrid. However, it can be readily and fully adapted to an English, American or other setting. The issues it deals with - economic crisis, corporate wheeling and dealing, government expediency and the onslaught of the surveillance society – are acute for us all. If you are interested in staging this translation, please contact David Johnston at d.johnston@qub.ac.uk to secure rights and to discuss the setting for your production. There will be no charge for undertaking the process of adaptation.

(An office, corridor and board room. TV screens and computers in the office and room. Printers and fax in the corridor).

(Board room. On the TV a couple making love in the shadows. Panting)

DAVID

Fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck!

PABLO

They don't need any encouragement, David.

DAVID

What time was this?

PABLO

Three o'clock in the morning.

DAVID

Talk about hammer and tongs.

PABLO

It must be the first time they've done it in ages.

DAVID

Look! Look! You can see him now. It's him.

PABLO

And his wife.

DAVID

You're sure?

PABLO

Absolutely, I've watched it a couple of times. Why are you whispering?

DAVID

We're in the office, it's eight o'clock in the morning. I don't know. Did you not realize...?

PABLO

I was half asleep. The driver came in for a coffee and just hung around. It happens. Look at them! Three o'clock in the morning it tends to be drunks or exhibitionists, not people dressed in suit and tie. Having said that, it's not that unusual either.

DAVID

So there's the driver having coffee while you watch the show?

PABLO

I didn't catch them in the act.

DAVID

Nicely put.

PABLO

The driver walked round to open the car door for them, all very formal, and that's when I saw who it was.

DAVID

Unbelievable.

PABLO

Off they went. I locked up, opened a packet of biscuits and pressed play. I thought to myself, the camera behind the door into the toilets, that's the one I'll catch them on. Something to tell your friends, you know. And then suddenly she pushes him against the wall, pulls down her knickers, takes him by the... you know... and I started coughing.

DAVID

Coughing? You started coughing?

PABLO

Yes, coughing.

DAVID

Why did you start coughing?

PABLO

I was choking. On a biscuit. It's not every day you see the Prime Minister and his wife fucking like rabbits.

DAVID

It's strong stuff. And on tape.

PABLO

Memory stick. Flash pen. How do you want it?

DAVID

This is extraordinary. I'm not sure what we should do.

PABLO

What do you mean I'm not sure what we should do?

DAVID
What is it you want?

PABLO
I don't mean that.

DAVID
Angel.

PABLO
Who's that?

DAVID
The CEO. *(He calls)*

PABLO
OK, great.

DAVID
Give me the memory stick.

PABLO
No.

DAVID
(To ANA, the Secretary) Get me Angel, would you? *(To PABLO)* Give it to me.

PABLO
It's mine.

DAVID
Pablo, the company owns all video content... *(To the Secretary)*. Well, get him out of the gym. Yes, OK... but this is very important.

PABLO
All right. *(He hands him the memory stick)*

DAVID
Thank you. Coffee?

PABLO
Please. I don't have the other copy here.

DAVID
Other copy?

PABLO

What do you think?

DAVID

Remember who got you the petrol station.

PABLO

That's why I'm here and not on the TV.

DAVID

Pablo, you owe me.

PABLO

It wasn't you got me anything. I made a mistake and you got the high-flyer job.

DAVID

What is it you want?

PABLO

Nobody has to know.

DAVID

What?

PABLO

Let me keep a copy. I'll lock it in a drawer, nobody'll be any the wiser.

DAVID

Are you kidding?

PABLO

How long's the Prime Minister been married? Ten years or so?

DAVID

Yeah, maybe.

PABLO

It's nice your wife hurling herself at you like that, like a young girl, do you not think?

DAVID

Not just nice, unlikely.

PABLO

That's love for you. Could I have a glass of water?

DAVID

Sure. So why tell me then?

PABLO

The tape's been with admin all morning. Most of them hate their jobs. Easy money.

DAVID (*On his mobile*): Ana! Get security. Tell them to confiscate all last night's cctv. Straight from the CEO. And check with IT. Have all the images emailed over. Everything, OK? Everything.

(*ANGEL SOLIS arrives*)

ANGEL

Good morning. This better be important.

PABLO

Morning, sir.

ANGEL

Are you Financial Services Authority?

PABLO

FSA? No, I'm from the services at junction 14 on the M-25. I was just leaving.

ANGEL

Who is this, David? I'm no mood. (*He looks at his Blackberry*). New York's through the floor. What are you watching?

PABLO

Porn.

ANGEL

Turn it off. How did he get in here? The JSB bank will be here any minute.

DAVID

You should go.

PABLO

Delighted to. I'm gone. With the tape of the Prime Minister fucking his wife.

ANGEL

What did he say?

PABLO

David's on top of it.

DAVID

There's more.... (*He puts on the video*)

ANGEL

Stay there.

PABLO
I'm in a hurry.

ANGEL
Fucking hell. Hold on. What station's this?

PABLO
Junction 14, M-25.

ANGEL
The images belongs to us. The franchise agreement is absolutely clear. *(On his mobile)* Ana, no calls.... OK, let me know when he gets here.

PABLO
Yes. The images do belong to the company. It's just a copy I've got. Any chance of another coffee?

ANGEL
What is it you want? *(Mobile)* Ana, get Armando... Yes, the lawyer.

PABLO
Nobody has to know.

ANGEL
Excuse us for one minute.

PABLO
Of course.

(ANGEL and DAVID go into ANGEL's office)

ANGEL
Nobody has to know? Who is this idiot?

DAVID
He's from the petrol station.

ANGEL
It 's definitely the Prime Minister?

DAVID
Yes.

ANGEL
Who with... his wife, or his secretary?

DAVID
His wife.

ANGEL

They've kept us dangling for four years - two different ministers - waiting for permission to start drilling in the Canaries.

DAVID

Just like that? You're going to blackmail the Prime Minister with a tape that's not even yours?

ANGEL

The bank'll be here any minute. Look, half the company's tied up with stock options that expire at the end of the year. What would you do?

DAVID

I really don't think so.

ANGEL

Listen: Company report from Suisse Bank (*He reads*) 'Petresa has no energy reserves... Petresa is carrying significant levels of debt in the wake of its acquisition of Luminex.... Petresa will have to renegotiate the guarantees it has lodged with the banks'. It's a vicious circle, David, I'm telling you. The share value falls, the guarantees are worth less, the banks call in the guarantees, they keep the shares and sell them on, and we keep sliding. There's oil in the Canaries, and by God do we need it. Water?

DAVID

I'll have a coke. I haven't slept all night.

ANGEL

Up working?

DAVID

My wife wants a divorce.

ANGEL

Oh. That'll have to wait. How much?

DAVID

She's only just said... we haven't even talked about....

ANGEL

The guy from the petrol station.

DAVID

Nobody has to know. That's what he said.

ANGEL

Idiot. He's just won the lottery and he thinks he has to fight his corner.

DAVID

He's more than capable.

ANGEL

How do you know?

DAVID

We were at University together. I've known him for ages.

ANGEL

Even better. Sit him down and convince him. Go up to 3 million euros. But try to settle for less. Who else has seen it?

DAVID

No one, as far as I know. (*Mobile*). No, I'm in a meeting.... Yes, sorry, I'll call you back.

ANGEL

Who has it, the tape?

DAVID

This is it.

ANGEL

Give it to me. (*David gives him the memory stick*). He's taken a copy, I assume.

DAVID

Yes. What happens if he goes and puts it online?

ANGEL

He won't. We'll put his money into an escrow account. So he won't be able to touch it for another three years. Until after the elections when that clown's been kicked out.

DAVID

How do we process the payment?

ANGEL

You're asking me?

DAVID

What about the FSA?

ANGEL

Come off it, David, none of us were born yesterday. Convince him. He can treat his wife to her dream home. Where's he from?

DAVID

Valladolid.

ANGEL

That's all you know?

DAVID

We did Business Studies together in the City University. He had a scholarship. He's clever. Bit of a do-gooder.

ANGEL

Do-gooder?

DAVID

You know, always talking about the Palestinians, immigrants rights, demonstrations...

ANGEL

A bleeding heart. Any family?

DAVID

A sister somewhere. That's all I know. What's this about?

ANGEL

How does a guy like that end up owning a petrol station?

DAVID

No idea.

ANGEL

What's the boss doing on the night shift?

DAVID

I don't know.

ANGEL

Try and beat him down.

DAVID

Leave it with me.

ANGEL

What was his name again?

DAVID

Pablo.

ANGEL

Lucky bastard. He's going to pocket in one night what it would take you two years to earn, without lifting a finger. Thanks to the Prime Minister. (*His mobile rings*) Yes. Armando, how are you? Listen I need you over here straight away... what do you mean why? I can't tell you over the

phone... Alone. It's urgent.

DAVID

It's the wife's fault.

ANGEL

If only it was his secretary he was screwing... Anyway. I've got Executive Board now. Keep me in the loop.

DAVID

You're sure about this. I mean we've always gone for the hearts and minds.

ANGEL

They owe it to us. They've kept us hanging around long enough. Forget the ecologists and the local councils and the newspapers and all the concerned citizens and the fucking rest of them. That tape is a surefire vote loser. God bless democracy. It's bread and butter for the press.

DAVID

You need to talk to him.

ANGEL

Come in, please. (*PABLO comes in*). Listen carefully: this tape is going to disappear. I hear what you said, but if a journalist gets his hands on it, nobody comes out of this well; not Petresa, not you, and certainly not the Prime Minister and his family.

PABLO

Fine by me. I don't want anyone to see it because he's not doing anything wrong. It's his wife he's making love to.

ANGEL

That's debatable. You can't go round having sex in public. He represents this country. It would be like Clinton.

PABLO

Except it's his wife, not an intern.

ANGEL

You think that makes it OK? Clinton apologised because what he did was wrong. This is different. He can apologise for being imprudent. But he looks an absolute wanker. You know what I mean. In any case, Pablo – Pablo? – nobody's going to be any the wiser.

DAVID

We're going to make you an offer for the tape.

ANGEL

Good to meet you.

(ANGEL leaves)

DAVID

Let's go into the board room *(DAVID and PABLO go into the board room)*

PABLO

Is it OK to smoke? *(DAVID hands him some mints)*. All right.

DAVID

Angel smokes and nobody says anything. Go out onto the roof if you want.

PABLO

So how are things?

DAVID

OK.

PABLO

You're a father now, aren't you?

DAVID

Yeah.

PABLO

How's Raquel?

DAVID

Good thanks. We don't see each other that much, work. you know, but she's fine.

PABLO

How much?

DAVID

Two million. We'll draw up a contract and put the money into an escrow account. Petresa chooses the bank.

PABLO

And the terms?

DAVID

The money can only be withdrawn with your agreement and ours. Two sets of signatures. After three years, providing nobody else knows. The money's yours but it's held for you until a particular time. The interest....

PABLO

... is mine, I know. It's not about the money. I said that already.

DAVID

OK, but whether we like it or not, it's the only way to make it binding. Money and in writing.

PABLO

Two now and eight in three years time.

DAVID

What?

PABLO

If that's the way Petresa wants it.

DAVID

The way we want it?

PABLO

Two now and eight in three years time. I choose the bank.

DAVID

Look, what is this? I got you the job. And I got you the petrol station.

PABLO

My sister had just divorced, I was on the dole. She had four kids, remember. It was no favour. You choose to do a favour. There was no choice with this. This was about guilt. Or maybe you never feel any guilt...

DAVID

I'd been analyzing the acquisition of Luminex for months. Just like you. I'll tell you something for nothing, if a classmate came up to me tomorrow and said he was going for Luminex too, I'd be onto it like a bat out of hell. That's how it works.

PABLO

What about in confidence? Does that not work?