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Limbo

de
V́ctor Iriarte

traducci3n de
Chris Dolan

(fragmento en ingl3s)

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Characters:

Administrator. 60s. Old fashioned drk suit and tie. Tidy desk.

Angel. 40s. Smart jeans.

Barbara. 30s. Dressed in 1920s fashion.

Office. Desk in centre with two computers, one a laptop. Chairs. Shelves full of folders. One shelf empty except for statue of Sacred Heart of Jesus. Another high pile of folders lie stacked on the floor – scores of them, half of them pink, the other blue. The Administrator sits at his desk, transferring information from PC to the laptop.. Looks at his watch, decides to call it a day. Logs off PC. Barbara enters, checking her watch. She takes an armful of folders from the floor pile; takes them out, exits – she will do this constantly throughout the play. The Administrator separates desk papers into two piles. Throws one lot in the bin. Straightens the others. Stands up. Types a last command into the laptop. Reaches for his jacket while still looking at the computer. He doesn't notice Angel, nervous, entering. Angel doesn't dare to speak; carries a folder as though his life depended on it. The Administrator closes the lap-top and turns to find himself face to face with Angel

ADMINISTRATOR

(Sharply) When did you come in?

ANGEL

I'm sorry... The door was open and I ...

ADMINISTRATOR

Did reception send you ?

ANGEL

Yes.

ADMINISTRATOR

But it's late *(To himself)* Same old story.

(To Angel) I was about to leave.

ANGEL

I'll come back tomorrow.

ADMINISTRATOR

I don't think so.

You'd think that just for once we could get out of here on time. *(Looks at wrist-watch)* Perfect end to a perfect day.

(Glowering) At least tell me you've got the right papers.

Angel holds out his folder. The Administrator shakes his head and, finally, grudgingly, takes off his jacket, goes back to his desk.

ADMINISTRATOR

Sit. Let's see if we can get this over with quickly.

Get a move on. Sit down!

(Shouts) Barbara!

*Angel sits, knees together, tense. When Barbara enters he stands up in alarm.
Barbara is wearing her coat and has her bag.*

ADMINISTRATOR

Sit *down* for heaven's sake.

ADMINISTRATOR

(To Barbara) Don't shut down the network. Customer.

BARBARA

So we're not going then?

ADMINISTRATOR

Apparently not.

BARBARA

There should be a rule.

(To Angel) All right?.

ANGEL

'Evening.

ADMINISTRATOR

Did you bring everything ? Receipts, acknowledgements, personal documents...?

ANGEL

I'm not sure... This is my first time....

ADMINISTRATOR

Obviously. *(To Barbara)* You'd think that at least they'd check in reception. But oh no...

(To Angel:) Take your folder to Section 8. They'll deal with it.

ANGEL

Okay.

He gets up. Barbara takes off her coat

BARBARA

Section 8 *sent* him here.

Angel sits back down

ADMINISTRATOR

Right, right! Let's see the bl... the folder.

Angel hands over the folder. The Administrator empties it onto his desk – a few documents

ADMINISTRATOR

(Holds out hand) Identity card.

Angel fumbles for his wallet, nervously looks for the document. Finally hands it over.

ADMINISTRATOR

(Looking at card) Angel.

ANGEL

Yes. Sir.

ADMINISTRATOR

Tch! *(To himself:)* Angel!

Did you arrive today ?

He passes the card to Barbara who notes down the number

ANGEL

Yes.

BARBARA

Delivered to Reception 3.03PM yesterday afternoon. Sent up here an hour ago.

ANGEL

Nothing like this has ever happened to me before.

Administrator and Barbara share a laugh

ADMINISTRATOR

I hope not.

ADMINISTRATOR

(Tapping folder) Doesn't look enough to me.

ANGEL

That's all I had. At the time.

ADMINISTRATOR

Anyway, everything's on the computer whether you've got the paperwork or not.

Everything's on file. Everything.

Sometimes that's a good thing. Sometimes it's not.

ANGEL
I suppose.

ADMINISTRATOR
Barbara – be a doll and get me the code number.

Barbara looks hard at Angel, turns to go, then comes back, takes another armful of folders, exits.

The Administrator switches on his desk lamp, studies Angel's papers, theatrically, holding them up. Slowly he makes piles. Sometimes after looking at a document he stares at Angel

ADMINISTRATOR
If this comes out positive, you have to pay. Here and now.

ANGEL
Okay.

ADMINISTRATOR
If it comes out negative – which is really what you want – then it's happy ever after for you.

ANGEL
Here's hoping.

ADMINISTRATOR
According to this you've been self-employed up to yesterday.

ANGEL
Since I was 26. Is that good?

ADMINISTRATOR
Being self-employed indicates a willingness to take risks, courage, self motivation. Ability to take decisions. Free will, all that.

ANGEL
That's what I think.

ADMINISTRATOR
Of course, it's about how you *use* it.

ANGEL
Use what?

ADMINISTRATOR
Free will. Are you with me ?

ANGEL

Eh...

ADMINISTRATOR

Look at it the other way – being self-employed can mean not wanting to have a boss, unwilling to take orders.

The sin of pride. Get me now?

ANGEL

Loud and clear.

ADMINISTRATOR

Good. Because this system here predetermines the outcome.

All I do is process the figures, and the decision is made.

For, or Against.

ANGEL

(Mopping brow) Rightie-oh.

ADMINISTRATOR

We won't get a result until we've put in your deductible expenses, child discounts, capital expenditures... As well as all the other stuff.

Being self-employed there'll be no involvement with trades unions.

ANGEL

None.

ADMINISTRATOR

So what do you think ?

ANGEL

About what ?

ADMINISTRATOR

Unions.

ANGEL

Eh - they're a good thing?

ADMINISTRATOR

They don't think much of them here.

ANGEL

Oh.

ADMINISTRATOR

They're banned.

ANGEL
Are they?

Beat

ADMINISTRATOR
So who would *you* take a grievance to?

ANGEL
(*Nervous. Stands up*) Well I... Look if you're short of time,

ADMINISTRATOR
It – Is – Late.
(*Shouts, to Barbara:*) Barbara! Get me a file code!
(*To Angel:*) No, might as well get it done. Don't want to leave you in limbo.
(*Laughs.*) In limbo!

Angel laughs too, not knowing why

ADMINISTRATOR
In limbo. And lets hope it comes out negative. The other way round and the paperwork's a *nightmare*. So I'm on your side. Okay?

ANGEL
Okay. Thank you.

ADMINISTRATOR
(*Taps keyboard.*) There. See? Your files.
Told you – everything's on record.
Place of birth, Pamplona. Date May 20, 1962.

ANGEL
(*Sad:*) Would have been my birthday soon.

BARBARA
(*Shouts, off*) 12. 26. 23. 48. T.

ADMINISTRATOR
(*Shouts*) C or T?

BARBARA
T. For transgressor.

Angel gives a start

ADMINISTRATOR
(*To Angel*) Shall we begin.?

Angel swallows, nods

ADMINISTRATOR

Property: flat. Outstanding loan of 120,000 euros.
Two cars. Good schools for the daughters.
Quite the luxury life. Did the Revenue ever investigate you.?

ANGEL

No.

ADMINISTRATOR

Were you never tempted to defraud?

ANGEL

Sometimes. But I never did.

ADMINISTRATOR

No homers then?
Mind now, I can check here.

ANGEL

The odd one. Only with clients I knew well.

ADMINISTRATOR

And that's OK?

ANGEL

No, but what else could I do?

ADMINISTRATOR

The Right Thing. I think you should have done the Right Thing. Still, if that was the worst that happened in the world...
Let's continue. Married.
For love ?

ANGEL

Of course.

ADMINISTRATOR

Sure?

ANGEL

Yes!

ADMINISTRATOR

Not quite what it says here.
This software – hard to calculate sometimes.

Could mess up your net total.
Laura.

ANGEL
Yes. Laura.

ADMINISTRATOR
Twenty-one years together. Two daughters.

ANGEL
Penelope and Monica.

ADMINISTRATOR
Penelope?! Monica?
Not exactly traditional.

ANGEL
Laura chose them.

ADMINISTRATOR
And you have no paternal responsibility?

ANGEL
No. Yes. I mean... I wasn't going to start a fight over...

ADMINISTRATOR
(*Sharply*) No-one's fighting here... I key the data into the computer. If *it* has a problem with pagan names...
Tell me about... Penelope and Monica.

ANGEL
(*Happily*) Pen's the responsible one. Studies hard Takes after me. I'm incapable of leaving something half finished. Mon's 16. She's a different kettle of fish. She's the livewire. Puts on music when I get home and grabs me for a dance. Or, used to. But they get on well, the girls.

Barbara enters, to get more files. Looks Angel up and down

ANGEL
Last Christmas they put up the house decorations without being asked. Good kids.
(*Sad:*) This summer the wife and I were planning a trip abroad for the four of us. Italy. Or Greece. They'll decide, the girls I mean – we always do what they want.
(*Looks at the Administrator and at Barbara*)
Anyway *that's* unlikely to happen now.

Barbara approaches and gives him a gentle pat on the shoulder

BARBARA

Maybe they'll still go. They know it's what you wanted.
I had tickets all booked for Balleybofey.

ADMINISTRATOR

Baptismal certificates.

ANGEL

(Sad) Yes.

ADMINISTRATOR

Confirmation.

ANGEL

Yes.

ADMINISTRATOR

In Pamplona?

ANGEL

Local parish.

ADMINISTRATOR

By the Bishop?

ANGEL

His assistant. The Bishop was away on a trip.
Does it matter?

ADMINISTRATOR

You get more points for a Bishop.
They've got clout here.

BARBARA

The oul' bas –

ADMINISTRATOR

Barbara!

ANGEL

The assistant was made Bishop of... somewhere, just after.

ADMINISTRATOR

Excellent. Could influence the level of your threshold.

Beat.

ANGEL

Will I ever see them again ?

BARBARA

‘Course you will, love. But in a different way.

Not quite so... *corporeally*.

(She gathers more files; to Administrator:)

Any idea when we’ll get out of here? Michael wants to go and hear a lecture. ‘Fly-Fishing in the Empyrean Sea.’ Given by James himself.

ADMINISTRATOR

I’ll do my best to bring him out negative.

If it’s positive you can cancel the lecture – and anything else for the next two days.

She exits, displeased

ADMINISTRATOR

You did bible studies.

ANGEL

For three years.

ADMINISTRATOR

School trips...

ANGEL

Camping, hiking...

And, of course. Mass. RE. You know the scene.

ADMINISTRATOR

Married in the church.

ANGEL

That’s in my favour, yes?

ADMINISTRATOR

Not necessarily. If it was because of pressure from the wife, or her parents it doesn’t. count. So? Do I put it in?

ANGEL

Church wedding. Absolutely. Please.

ADMINISTRATOR

(Types. Pauses) Done.

You’re from Pamplona?

ANGEL

(Pleased) D'you know it?

ADMINISTRATOR

Bulls and all that.

ANGEL

That's the one.

ADMINISTRATOR

Your records say you liked football.

ANGEL

(Bright) Love it. 30 years season ticket holder.

Osasuna. Never missed a match. Until I got married. Away games. Cable TV on Sundays.

ADMINISTRATOR

So instead of family time at the weekends you were watching the football.

ANGEL

I also took her to the pictures.

ADMINISTRATOR

You 'd be one of those who pray for your team to win?

ANGEL

On bended knees. The year we were in the cup final

I was never off them. Even said prayers to St Jude.

ADMINISTRATOR

Oh dear.

ANGEL

Oh dear?

ADMINISTRATOR

Don't you have anything better to pray for? The starving world? Conversion of the infidel? The health of ... *him*.

ANGEL

The Bishop?

(Administrator shakes his head)

The Pope?

ADMINISTRATOR

Now *those* kind of prayers would have an effect on your final tally.

(Types)

Didn't one of their players sign for Glasgow Rangers?

ANGEL

Yes, but...

Does that count against me?

ADMINISTRATOR

Anything else? Brotherly love?

ANGEL

Loads. My three brothers and I are thick as thieves.

Re-phrase that!

ADMINISTRATOR

(Types and waits) Ok-ay... Lets see how it comes out.

Beat

ANGEL

I hope it's good.

Beat

ADMINISTRATOR

You should have seen me last winter.

See this area here? *(Points to shelves)* The forms went right up to the ceiling.

ANGEL

(Watching computer) Really.

ADMINISTRATOR

Four of us here sweating our guts out because someone had the bright idea of reorganising. For no good reason. After twenty centuries of doing things the tried and tested manner. Nightmare.

ANGEL

I'm sure.