

ABASEMENT

LONG SYNOPSIS · FEATURE SCREENPLAY · 120 PAGES

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Humiliated by an AI-generated video at his office Christmas party, a meek archivist joins a radical faction that seizes power in Barcelona, and uses the secret files he has kept for nineteen years against everyone who laughed.

ACT ONE · THE BASEMENT

DECEMBER

Barcelona, in the near future. At dawn, in the basement of Valdemar Insurance, DANIEL MEDINA (41) seals forty boxes for certified destruction. Inside there is only blank paper. The real files, and a row of hard drives dating back to 2009, are hidden in a narrow room behind a sliding shelf. Daniel has not destroyed a single document since the day, years ago, his boss IRENE CASTELL blamed him in front of an auditor for a contract she had in her own drawer.

Upstairs, Daniel is the company's invisible man. The finance director, ANDRÉS BRAVO, mocks his First Communion shoes in the lift. Irene projects a spelling mistake from his quarterly report in front of the interns and sends him for coffees nobody pays back. MARTA LEDESMA, Head of Human Resources, turns down his promotion with a degree requirement she invented herself, then laughs about him on the phone: he can't even spell "archive". At night, in his untouched 1980s flat in L'Hospitalet, Daniel eats lentils from a can beneath the photos of his mother, CARMEN, who died six years ago. On TV, early elections are called for June.

In flashback we see the oncology ward where SAMIRA, a Muslim night nurse, prayed beside his dying mother, and the shop-unit prayer room in La Florida where the old SI MOHAMED offered him tea without asking where he came from. Daniel converted quietly. He prays in the back of his car, in clumsy Arabic. Now a new preacher, HAKIM, speaks there of humiliation and of the day "shame will change houses". Si Mohamed warns him: "That one isn't from here."

Only one person at Valdemar sees Daniel: NADIA HADDAD (30), a young analyst and practising Muslim, who guesses his Ramadan fast and gives him an Arabic primer. When Daniel uncovers 412 claims missing from a report by LUCÍA FERRER (33), the ambitious Risk team leader is humiliated in front of the board. She answers with an app that her colleague PAU uses to put anyone's face into any video. ELENA, the third member of the team, asks if they are going too far. Lucía: "It's Medina. That's why it's funny."

Daniel buys his first suit for the Christmas dinner. In front of two hundred colleagues, Lucía introduces the Risk department's tribute to "the soul of this company, our archive": a deepfake of Daniel copulating with a goat. The room explodes with laughter. Nobody turns it off. Through Daniel's eyes the ballroom becomes a nightmare of bleating mouths. He walks out into the rain. That night, in his kitchen, he turns his mother's photo to face the wall. At dawn he prays openly in his living room and, on his mother's bed, creates four folders on a hard drive: IRENE, MARTA, ANDRÉS, LUCÍA.

ACT TWO · THE COMPLAINT

JANUARY TO JUNE

Daniel asks Marta for disciplinary proceedings against the authors of the video. She has ten minutes before her son's Christmas show. It was a joke, she says; he has been very alone since his mother died; loneliness makes people see conspiracies. She offers him a psychological support link and texts Irene: "Archive guy here, throwing a tantrum." That same morning Daniel files a complaint with the Catalan Labour Inspectorate. The clerk warns him: think months, not weeks.

The video spreads: at Lucía's family Christmas lunch, to her cousin ÓSCAR, to the school parents' group of Marta's son POL. At Valdemar they bleat in the corridors and call him "the Shepherd". On the first day after Epiphany, Lucía and Pau come down to the basement with a gift: Lola, a plush goat with a red bow, "your girlfriend", and a battery-operated goat, "the mistress", that falls off the desk bleating. "Aren't you going to see to her? We'll call an ambulance. Or a vet!" Daniel switches it off, files both goats in a labelled box and carries it to the hidden room.

The company closes ranks. The lawyer demands he withdraw his complaint; Daniel refuses. Marta has the occupational health provider assess his "psychological fitness" and dictates a complaint for intimidation to Lucía: "He looks at me." Daniel is suspended for three days. The police officer who takes his report cannot keep a straight face: "There's a goat." Elena writes Daniel an apology and deletes it.

Meanwhile the neighbourhood mosque fills with new rugs, a flat screen and young men with expensive trainers. Hakim introduces Daniel to FARID and SAMIR of the Assembly, a radical party polling five percent. Daniel builds them a perfect census of the community. Samira, on the phone, warns him: "When I talked to you about God, I didn't talk to you about revenge." In March, Daniel joins the Assembly. His membership card carries the photo from his Valdemar badge: the same face that opened the video. He keeps both cards together in his wallet.

In May, five months late, the inspector arrives. Marta shows him a harassment protocol, Lucía's complaint and the health report's "self-referential ideation". Alone with Daniel, the inspector admits he believes him, but the dinner was outside working hours. In June the letter comes: case closed. Daniel scans Lucía's complaint into her folder. The Assembly wins seats in rigged elections and, with the support of JULIÁN ARCE's Federal Social Party, takes power.

ACT THREE • THE ARCHIVE

SUMMER

The changes come quickly: headscarves by decree, cafés without women, a beach patrolled in the sun. The regime's administrator, TARIQ MANSUR (50), elegant and courteous, arrives at Valdemar with only one question: "Who is Daniel Medina?" In the basement, Daniel opens the hidden room. Nineteen years of everything Valdemar ordered destroyed: medical records, private emails, and proof that the company paid commissions on public contracts to Arce's foundation. Tariq makes him his liaison.

The tables turn. The women are moved to a windowless floor under Daniel's supervision; Irene serves his coffee three times until she gets it right. Marta must ask Daniel's permission to collect her son from school, and waits two hours for his signature: "One has to know one's place, Marta." Andrés empties his wine cellar and learns the prayers from a video. Lucía's partner leaves for Lyon; she refuses to hide "from some loser from the basement". In a screening room, Daniel makes her watch the goat video on a loop.

Daniel confiscates every employee's phone and, with young YUSUF, erases the video from twenty-three devices, writing down a name for each one. Then he prepares his report for the purge committee: Marta's abortion invoice, Irene's love letters to CLARA, Lucía's old complaint against an imam. Andrés's folder he keeps for himself, under lock and key. "You are a very valuable man, Dawud," Tariq tells him. Arce secretly offers Daniel a ministry and a flat in Sarrià in exchange for the boxes. Daniel hands the offer to Tariq, who already knew. Loyalty, Tariq says, is the only qualification that matters now.

Before a tribunal set up in Valdemar's auditorium, Daniel testifies against Irene and Marta. Andrés testifies too, and Tariq stops Daniel from using the folder against him. Both women are sentenced to death. At dawn, in a police corridor, Marta falls to her knees and begs Daniel for her life, for her son. He brushes the hair from her face and returns her own words: "This is a matter for the police, Marta. Not Human

Resources." Days later the PA system announces the sentence has been carried out. In the basement, Daniel labels a new box: PERSONNEL - LEAVERS.

ACT FOUR · THE RATS

AUTUMN

Daniel does not let the committee try Lucía. He asks for her to be assigned to his home. In his dead mother's bedroom he makes her undress and gives her his mother's housecoat: "She knew how to serve a man." Lucía answers: "Your mother went to Mass on Sundays, Daniel." For weeks she cooks, serves and scratches lines on the inside of the wardrobe. She asks him why her and not the others. "They didn't see me. You looked at me. You searched for my face and thought about the worst thing that could be done to it." Starved and deprived of sleep, she finally gives him the names of everyone who spread the video, and begs on her knees. The next morning the militia take her away in the housecoat. A three-minute trial; a stoning in the square. Daniel listens from a side street, his face unmoving. He counts twenty-three lines on the wardrobe door and feels nothing.

The hunt begins, a war between two sides. Pau, about to become a father, disappears from his car at a fake checkpoint on the Arrabassada while his wife is still on the phone. Sergi vanishes on a dark staircase; Óscar answers a "routine" summons. Others flee like rats: they sell their cars for a quarter of their value, find trains to France cancelled and pay a skipper in Port Olímpic who sells them out. "These alive," Daniel orders. "People have to see it." They are sentenced in four minutes. Yusuf vomits; Daniel closes his fingers around an envelope of money.

When Arce starts telling the foreign press that the elections were rigged, Tariq asks for proof of his corruption, but nothing about the count. "The truth has to be managed, Dawud. Like an archive." A mob drags Arce from his house in Sarrià and hangs him from a lamppost. Daniel watches it on TV in the basement, finishes his sandwich and looks at his boxes as if for the first time.

A Valdemar employee is caught at the border with a payslip in her bag. Tariq wants the name of whoever is organising the escapes. Daniel knows it is Nadia. He spends the night in front of her file. Warned by an unnamed message, Nadia, her parents and Elena leave that same night, banknotes hidden inside the covers of a Quran that a militiaman opens and respectfully closes. At dawn, Daniel writes her name and address. At the same moment, Nadia crosses a stone marker into France. When the police kick in her door, Daniel finds only the empty Quran covers. In Perpignan, Nadia buys four tickets: "Far."

EPILOGUE · THE DIRECTOR

Tariq tells Doctor KHALIL why the convert is perfect: no family, no friends, no one but them. And in a locked drawer he keeps a USB stick found on Óscar's computer: the goat video. "He keeps everyone's secrets. We keep his." Daniel is named CEO of Valdemar. Andrés is the first to applaud; Daniel shakes his hand while squeezing, in his pocket, the key to the drawer with Andrés's folder. His first proposal: half-time for the female staff. No one objects.

He leaves his mother's flat and her half-finished crochet behind and eats a sandwich on the floor of an empty penthouse in Sarrià, the flat Arce once offered him, or one just like it. In the tenth-floor office, his mother's photo stands on the desk, turned to the wall. "Sugar on the side," he tells his assistant. He does not smile.

In the basement, a NEW BOY in a short-sleeved shirt buttoned to the collar scans the files: Castell, Irene. Ledesma, Marta. Ferrer, Lucía. Arce, Julián. A voice from the stairs: "Hey, basement boy! Go up for coffees. Seven." He writes the order on the palm of his hand. His shoes are worn at the toes. The fluorescent lights go out, one by one.