

FEATURE SCREENPLAY · PROJECT DOSSIER

ABASEMENT

ORIGINAL TITLE: HUMILLACIÓN

They laughed at him in front of two hundred people.

He remembered every one of them.

POLITICAL THRILLER · DYSTOPIAN DRAMA · 120 PAGES

WRITTEN BY

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CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENT

LOGLINE

THE STORY IN ONE SENTENCE

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.

SYNOPSIS

THE PREMISE

Barcelona, in the near future. Daniel Medina has spent nineteen years in the basement of Valdemar Insurance: invisible, mocked by his managers, passed over for every promotion. What no one knows is that he has never destroyed a single document he was ordered to shred. Payroll, medical records, internal complaints, private emails, the company's illegal payments to a political foundation: it is all hidden behind a shelf in the basement.

At the company Christmas dinner, his colleagues project a deepfake of Daniel having sex with a goat in front of two hundred people. He asks HR for an investigation and is told it was a joke. He reports it to the Labour Inspectorate, which takes months to answer, and to the police, who can barely keep a straight face. Instead of justice, he gets more ridicule, a false complaint against him and a three-day suspension.

Alone since his mother's death, Daniel finds a home in a small neighbourhood mosque where a new preacher speaks of dignity and of shame changing houses. When an extremist faction wins rigged elections, Daniel hands its leaders the one thing he has: the archive. Named liaison of the new regime at Valdemar, the man

nobody saw now decides who falls, while those who laughed at him try to flee like rats from a sinking ship.

But the regime knows exactly how to use a man with nothing but a grudge. And not everything Daniel loses can be filed away.

MAIN CHARACTERS

VICTIMS, EXECUTIONERS, AND THOSE WHO REFUSE TO BE EITHER

Daniel Medina 41 · PROTAGONIST

Records manager in the basement of Valdemar Insurance. Short-sleeved shirt buttoned to the collar, glasses mended with tape, a wallet full of coffee receipts nobody ever repaid. Methodical, invisible, endlessly patient. He has never thrown anything away. A convert since his mother's death, he finds in faith first comfort, then a language for his resentment. His tragedy is not that he becomes a monster, but how little it takes.

Nadia Haddad 30 · THE CONSCIENCE

A young analyst in the Risk department, daughter of Moroccan immigrants and a practising Muslim. The only colleague who treats Daniel as a person, and the one who sees through him first: "This isn't Islam, Daniel. It's your grudge with a beard." Her escape across the Pyrenees is the film's counterweight to Daniel's descent.

Tariq Mansur 50 · THE REGIME

Raised in the northern districts of Marseille, the son of a night cleaner who sat in the bosses' armchairs while his father emptied the bins. Elegant, patient, devastatingly polite. The new state administrator of Valdemar. He doesn't believe in revenge: "Revenge is for small men. We do this because we can."

Lucía Ferrer 33 · THE AUTHOR OF THE VIDEO

Ambitious Risk team leader, sharp and fearless. Daniel exposed the flaws in her report; she answered with the video. She refuses to flee or to hide "from some loser from the basement". She is the only one who truly looked at Daniel, and that is why he chooses a different fate for her.

Marta Ledesma 52 · HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Immaculate, maternal, impeccably cruel. She dismisses the video as a joke, suggests Daniel is losing his mind and engineers a false complaint against him. A devoted single mother to eight-year-old Pol. When the regime comes for her, she begs Daniel for her life, and he answers with her own words.

Irene Castell 45 · HEAD OF RECORDS

Daniel's direct superior for nineteen years. She blamed him for her own mistakes in front of auditors and never once looked him in the face. Behind her closed door, a ten-year relationship with another woman, Clara. The archive knows.

Andrés Bravo 58 · FINANCE DIRECTOR

Tanned, loud, a golfer who mocks Daniel's First Communion shoes in the lift. Architect of the commissions paid to a political foundation. When the regime arrives, he is the first to learn the prayers, empty his wine cellar and applaud. The ultimate survivor.

Hakim THE PREACHER

Arrives in the neighbourhood with tea, money from abroad and a word for every wound: dignity.

Si Mohamed THE OLD BELIEVER

Founder of the small prayer room. "There are no ballot boxes in the Quran. There is mercy."

Samira THE NURSE

She prayed beside Daniel's dying mother. "When I talked to you about God, I didn't talk to you about revenge."

Pau & Elena ACCOMPLICES

He made the video and is about to become a father. She chose the music and never stopped regretting it.

THEMES

WHAT THE FILM IS ABOUT

Humiliation as fuel

The film studies how everyday contempt (a joke in a lift, a spelling mistake projected in a meeting, coffees nobody pays for) accumulates into something no institution is prepared to stop. *ABASEMENT* does not ask the audience to forgive Daniel, but to understand how easily the forgotten become the instrument of something far worse.

The institutions that look away

An HR department that protects its own, a Labour Inspectorate that answers in months, a police officer who cannot keep a straight face, a court file that ends in a skip. The regime does not destroy a functioning democracy: it walks into the space left by institutions that had already stopped listening.

Information is power

Daniel's only weapon is paper. Medical records, private emails, a beneficiary on a life policy: in the wrong hands, an insurance archive becomes a list of victims. The film speaks directly to an age of data, deepfakes and surveillance.

Faith and its counterfeit

The regime is a radical faction, not a religion. Nadia, her father, Samira and Si Mohamed are Muslims who oppose it from the first scene to the last. Daniel's piety

is real comfort at first, and later a uniform. As Lucía tells him: "Your mother went to Mass on Sundays, Daniel."

tone & visual style

how it should feel

A slow-burn political thriller that turns into a dystopian nightmare without ever leaving everyday Barcelona. The first act is grounded, almost documentary: fluorescent light, open-plan offices, waiting rooms with plastic chairs. The horror arrives gradually, through notices on glass doors, headscarves knotted any old way, a beach empty in broad sunshine.

Violence is always offscreen: we hear the square, we see Daniel's face. The camera stays with him in long, fixed shots, so that the audience shares his stillness and, uncomfortably, his satisfaction. Visually, the film moves from the cold green fluorescence of the basement to the red sunsets of the tenth floor, and back down again.

Reference points

THE LIVES OF OTHERS	The archive as a weapon; a quiet functionary who holds everyone's secrets.
JOKER · FALLING DOWN	The ordinary humiliated man and the moment the city stops being able to contain him.
EL BUEN PATRÓN	The paternalistic cruelty of the company "family" and its human resources.
THE HANDMAID'S TALE	A theocratic order installed step by step inside a familiar modern city.
SUBMISSION (M. HOUELLEBECQ)	An extremist party reaching power through the ballot box, with the complicity of the old elites.

WRITER'S STATEMENT

WHY THIS STORY

This story was born from an uncomfortable question: what happens when a society pushes an invisible man to the very limit of humiliation? Daniel Medina is not a hero, nor simply a villain. He is the man in the basement nobody looks at, until the day everyone laughs at him.

ABASEMENT is about resentment and the institutions that fail to stop it: a company that protects its own, a bureaucracy that answers in months, a justice system that arrives too late. When a radical faction offers Daniel dignity, he takes it, and with it the power to repay every humiliation.

The regime in the film is a political faction that uses religion as a uniform, and the story is careful to show the Muslims who resist it. What interests me is not ideology but mechanism: how fear becomes routine, how quickly people learn new prayers, and how a man who was never seen can become the most dangerous person in the building simply because he kept the papers.

"The truth has to be managed, Dawud. Like an archive."

SPEC SHEET

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

TITLE	Abasement
ORIGINAL TITLE	Humillación
FORMAT	Feature film, approx. 120 minutes
GENRE	Political thriller · Dystopian drama
SCREENPLAY	120 pages, completed. Spanish original and English version

LANGUAGES	Spanish, with Catalan and Arabic
SETTING	Barcelona and L'Hospitalet de Llobregat, near future; the Pyrenees; Perpignan
TIME SPAN	From one December to the following autumn
PRODUCTION PROFILE	Contemporary urban locations, no VFX-dependent sequences. Crowd scenes (rally, tribunal, square) concentrated in a few days of shooting
RATING	Adult audiences. Violence implied and offscreen
WRITER	Fernando Gracia Ortuño (GAC, SGAE)
STATUS	Seeking production company and director

LOCATIONS

A RECOGNISABLE BARCELONA, SLOWLY CHANGING

VALDEMAR TOWER	A glass office tower on the Diagonal: the basement archive, open-plan floors, the tenth-floor boardroom with a sea view, the windowless interior floor.
L'HOSPITALET	Daniel's untouched 1980s flat in La Florida; the shop-unit mosque; the neighbourhood bar; the militia post in an old gym.
HOTEL ON THE DIAGONAL	The Christmas dinner ballroom; later, the regime's private dinners.
RAMBLA DE CATALUNYA	The old-school café where the culprits meet, before and after.

CIUTAT DE LA JUSTÍCIA	Its coloured blocks lose their signage letter by letter.
RAVAL	The Haddad family's flat; the old mosque whose imam is arrested.
SARRIÀ · PEDRALBES	Arce's house and the lamppost on the corner; Andrés's marble kitchen; the empty penthouse.
COLLSEROLA · PORT OLÍMPIC	The Arrabassada road at night; the last pontoon in the fog.
CERDANYA · PERPIGNAN	The mountain crossing to France and the station on the other side.

CASTING IDEAS

SUGGESTED PROFILES

DANIEL MEDINA	Antonio de la Torre · Javier Gutiérrez · Luis Bermejo. An everyman face capable of absolute stillness.
TARIQ MANSUR	Tahar Rahim. French-Maghrebi elegance and menace.
NADIA HADDAD	Mina El Hammani.
LUCÍA FERRER	Aura Garrido · Ingrid García-Jonsson.
MARTA LEDESMA	Nora Navas.
ANDRÉS BRAVO	Eduard Fernández.

Suggestions for tone and profile only; no actor is attached to the project.

DIRECTORS WHO FIT THE PROJECT

SENSIBILITIES CLOSE TO THE MATERIAL

Rodrigo Sorogoyen

El reino (2018), *Antidisturbios* (2020), *As bestas* (2022). The great Spanish director of slow-burn tension and institutional rot. His long takes and his ability to make violence feel inevitable rather than spectacular are exactly what Daniel's descent needs.

Alberto Rodríguez

La isla mínima (2014), *El hombre de las mil caras* (2016), *Modelo 77* (2022). Political thrillers rooted in Spanish history, with a precise eye for period, power and the grey functionaries who serve it.

Fernando León de Aranoa

Los lunes al sol (2002), *El buen patrón* (2021). No one has portrayed workplace humiliation and corporate paternalism with more irony and compassion. He would find the black humour hidden in the first act.

Álex de la Iglesia

El día de la bestia (1995), *La comunidad* (2000), *Balada triste de trompeta* (2010), *El bar* (2017). Black humour, social grotesque and violence breaking through everyday life. The Christmas dinner, the nightmare of bleating mouths and the society that rushes to bow to its new masters belong to his world.

Oriol Paulo

Contratiempo (2016), *Durante la tormenta* (2018). A Barcelona filmmaker with a strong command of genre, suspense and international reach.

PRODUCTION COMPANIES ALIGNED WITH THE PROJECT

PROFILES THAT FIT THE MATERIAL

ARCADIA MOTION PICTURES	Barcelona. Auteur cinema with international reach; co-producer of <i>As bestas</i> .
CABALLO FILMS	Rodrigo Sorogoyen's company: <i>El reino</i> , <i>As bestas</i> .
FILMAX	Barcelona. Genre cinema and thrillers with strong international sales.
ATÍPICA FILMS	Madrid. Producer of <i>La isla mínima</i> ; political and historical thrillers.
REPOSADO	Fernando León de Aranoa's company: <i>El buen patrón</i> .
THE MEDIAPRO STUDIO	Barcelona. Feature films and premium series with a global distribution network.

ABOUT THE WRITER

FERNANDO GRACIA ORTUÑO

Fernando Gracia Ortuño is a Spanish novelist and screenwriter based in Barcelona, a member of Guionistes Associats de Catalunya (GAC) and SGAE. He is the author of three novels and two short story collections, and his screenwriting career grew from adapting his own fiction for the screen. His work explores power, resentment and the people that institutions leave behind.

Hostages of the Abyss (Rehenes del Abismo)

- Finalist, Berlin International Screenplay Festival (BISF)
- Winner in five categories, Palma Film Festival (incl. Best Feature Screenplay)
- Winner in five categories, Gloucestershire Film Awards

- Winner, Calcutta International Film Carnival (Best Feature Screenplay, Best Unproduced Screenplay)
- Winner, Anatomy Crime & Horror International Film Festival
- Finalist, Cannes Script Festival · Official Selection, Swedish International Film Festival

The Call (La Llamada)

- Winner, Best Feature Screenplay and Best Poster, Art Film Awards
- First Prize, Dreamz Catcher International Film Festival
- Finalist, Cannes Screenplay Festival (autumn season)

Off the Menu (Fuera de menú)

- Best Feature Screenplay, 1st Monthly Film Festival · Semifinalist, Chicago Script Awards

ABASEMENT

A feature screenplay by Fernando Gracia Ortuño

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