

The U Feeling Experience Fragment translated

Chapter I

Transcript of Momar Mbayé's statement before the State Police Lieutenant, Julia Gordon (badge number X-2347544), and the Department of Technological Crimes Agent, Angie Peña González (badge number Y-212336).

Down-town Police Station, Thursday, June 20, 9:12 p.m.

"Good evening, Momar. I'm Police Lieutenant Gordon from the State Police and this is Agent Peña, from the Department of Technological Crimes: I believe you've crossed paths with her in the past. I'm sorry I brought you back up again, but new clues have emerged in the investigation. Take a chair, please. If you want water, you can help yourself. The bottle and the glass are for you. Don't deprive yourself, because this can take some time. As I told you earlier, I'm the police lieutenant who was in the apartment you broke into in the neighborhood of Salamanca. I took statements from Mrs. Gallardo and her husband, and as a police lieutenant my duty is to present the most thorough report possible as to what happened. If we've brought you back up, it's because in this afternoon's statement you avoided talking about anything concerning the company You-Feeling. It's the document that you see on the table and to which we are going to stick to despite the gaps. I've been going over it with my partner, and in addition to the total omission of your relationship with You-Feeling there are details regarding the events that occurred in Mr. Gallardo's apartment that we would like to check with you. Do you have any inconvenience?"

"What does my attorney have to say?"

"Your court-appointed attorney was surprised to see that you left out so many blanks in your statement. She is on your side, but she does not intend to hinder our work."

"Then, I have no choice."

"Hi, as Police Lieutenant Gordon has said, I'm Agent Peña. I just need some clarification regarding your relationship with You-Feeling. The police lieutenant has told me that your Spanish is perfect. And yet on your file it says you were born in Senegal."

"I came to Spain when I was three years old. I grew up here."

"In Villaverde, where you live with your wife and son."

"I already said that in my previous statement."

"And now you're being kind enough to repeat it to me, and I'm grateful. You're very young to be married with a seven-year-old son."

"I'm twenty-eight years old. I'm a man."

"As a result of your first statement, Police Lieutenant Gordon sent agents to Villaverde. Your wife is already aware of your arrest and she will come to see you as soon as possible, although for the time being we've advised her to wait till tomorrow, when you'll be sent to court. I presume that your attorney has explained to you what the usual protocol is. At dawn one of the vans that make the rounds of the police stations picking up the day's detainees will take you to the police courts in Plaza de Castilla, where throughout the morning the judge will see you with your court-appointed attorney and the prosecutor for the visit. Given the seriousness of the events and the social context of the conflictive in which we find ourselves, the judge will surely dictate your pre-trial detention and you will be remanded for trial. From then on, he will be in charge of preparing the summary for the trial and, possibly, given the seriousness of the crimes you are accused of, they will take you to one of the maximum-security prisons in the Community. It can be a very rough few months before trial. You know that, right?"

"All of this was already explained to me by the Police Lieutenant. I know what I'm up against. As I said, I am a man."

"Then let's start with what you haven't told us. I am part of the Brigade that has been investigating the You-Feeling company for months, whose main headquarters are where most of the big companies that land in the capital are installed: the Gran Vía, right in the city center. It turns out that I was there seventeen days ago, exactly on Monday, June 3, and it just so happens that that morning I recognized you among a dozen people who stood in the waiting room. Do you remember talking to me?"

"Perhaps."

"Perhaps," is not an answer.

"I was among a bunch of strangers. You were the only person who came up to me. It would've never occurred to me, with that electric blue hair, ripped jeans and faded T-shirt, that you were a police officer."