



Interview with the writer Carlos Quílez ▶ The role of Andorra in the process of independence

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▶ Carlos Quílez, with the book "The counterattack" in his hand.



«Andorra has protected the Catalan bourgeoisie that aligned itself with independence»

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Anyone looking for information on the Catalan independence process will not be disappointed, and anyone looking for information on the country's role in this process, including the BPA crisis, will not be disappointed. Andorra and many economic and political representatives appear in many pages of Carlos Quílez's book *The counterattack* (Península), with names and surnames and all the luxury of details, and not exactly very well placed.

–How is the book selling?

–I have a good feeling because it's being talked about a lot and is being used in the media, although I don't have any specific data yet.

–Didn't anyone call you angry from Andorra?

–Well, no, neither angry nor grateful. A friend, even though they don't count, told me that I was very brave.

–What does Andorra seem in the Catalan process?

–It paints a lot, in fact, everything important from the beginning of the conflict, when the role of Andorra is fundamental. The first battle between the hardest independence and the most rancid Spanishness began to be played in Andorra shortly before the intervention of the BPA.

–Is it surprising that it paints so much with the historical spirit of neutrality that the country has had?

–Neutral and invisible. The Andorran government does not like to be talked about too much. Instead, I think transparency is good and things need to be known. This opacity of what is happening in Andorra is a fact that we journalists must fight against. The relationship between Andorra and the process stems from the will of the Spanish patriotic police, and we have the evidence of the policeman who interviewed Joan Pau Miquel. This is a revealing conversation, as he asks for information from pro-independence politicians and threatens to charge his bank if he does not. And that is now being resolved in the Court, one of the most reliable institutions in the country, as far as I understand.

–What surprised you most about the

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«The actions of the previous government were marked by personal and political cowardice, and that conditioned everything»

Andorran reality you discovered?

–The political quarrels, the personal quarrels of some big families and this will of «everything that happens here, that doesn't come out of here». Journalism makes sense when you find someone who won't let you do your job. It's true that I've been able to talk to a lot of people from a variety of backgrounds, but a lot of people haven't wanted to and I don't understand that fear of showing up, maybe because they're hiding something.

–You can also explain why being a small country where everyone knows each other costs more.

–That must be it.

–There has always been talk of Spanish sewers, but in the book we talk about the sewers of the Andorran

system. Which are?

–Compensation transactions, which are very present in the trial that is being held in the case of BPA, show all the indications of being reprehensible from an ethical point of view. But they were legal because the legal system allowed it and the bank controller endorsed it. Sewers would be, metaphorically, all those practices that only in a structure very marked by shielding and opacity such as the Andorran could be done. Another example is tobacco that is not used to make tobacco. This does not happen in any country, although I do not want to make any judgments in Andorra, an extraordinary country where I hope to return for skiing. Some of the discussions that took place in Madrid or Barcelona were actually taking place in Andorra. The Pujols' money was in Andorra, BPA blackmail took place in the country, and clearing operations with much of the Catalan bourgeoisie took place in Andorra. The relationship between large financial families and the country's politics is striking.

–Has the role of Andorra favored any part of the independence process?

–Andorra has been the protector of the Catalan bourgeoisie, which at the last minute and for convenience has aligned itself with independence. The paradigmatic case is the Pujols, apart from other families, who were not initially pro-independence, some even Spanish, and who have changed their position in recent years.

–The book states that the problem in Andorra is not BPA, but all the banks

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«The Andorran economic and political power does not like to be talked about too much, perhaps because they are hiding something»

«There are still many opaque funds left in the country's banks, undeclared money that can come from crime»

and drug trafficking. Is that still the case?

–Andorra is no longer a tax haven, but it has been and tax evasion was not legalized. Now I can no longer get here with a briefcase full of coives and deposit them in a bank. But it is true that there are still many funds of opaque origin in all financial institutions, money that is not declared, so that some may come from criminal activities, and this money is still in Andorra.

–According to you, the Americans wanted to overthrow the government and as they could not, they did it with BPA. Do you think that all banks should have collapsed?

–I don't know if BPA is a victim, but it has carry the can. BPA's allegedly irregular operations were common in all banks. This fixation with BPA is striking, of course. I do not know if they are guilty or not and I am very much waiting for the decision of the Court of Cortes.

–How would you describe the role of the Government in this whole matter?

–The action of the Government at that time was marked by personal and political cowardice, which conditions all events. The political leaders of the country were the main stakeholders who did not know certain practices, historically it has been so, but in this case in a special way. In no country in the world that has been a tax haven, which is in charge of the Finance portfolio, is it safe if certain unclear practices were proven. It's amazing that this has happened. So, I come up with ideas, and to see them flush it out,

it's really fun.

–Spanish sewers?

–They have all the numbers to be behind the creation and dissemination of the FinCEN note with the aim of punishing those who did not provide information about the pro-independence and kneeling the bourgeoisie that had aligned itself with this movement, and that was necessary discredit before public opinion.

–How would you describe it all?

–I think it was played dirty by both sides, but the one who played the dirtiest was the one who had the most trade and the most means to play dirty, which was the Spanish state. On both sides of the process, it acted in a brutal way, but on the pro-independence side, all its irregular capacity was put on the table. Spain, on the other hand, put in place legal and illegal actions of dirt, but some jokes were kept, while independence did not have any. For example, the armed forces or the use of multinational agreements.

–The book describes it as a thriller. So who's the bad guy in the movie?

–It's a book of books. A character comes out around him who revolves around a lot of the dirt, which is Mr. Villarejo, and from whom an encyclopedia could be written. But each chapter has its things, for example when I explain that the Spanish sewers wanted to charge President Puigdemont, although in the end they did not succeed, but they tried. That is, each chapter has its good and its bad, because each chapter is

a small novel.

–Details the case of a Dutch launderer based in Andorra, a rather 'curious' individual ...

–Indeed, he is a very curious individual, especially because of his relations with the top of the judiciary at the time. It's amazing how someone in charge of a judicial structure does business with a man involved in smuggling or drug trafficking. And besides, by chance, this gentleman is acquitted and has obtained nationality. These are the strange things those Andorran sewers do not want to be known.

–In the book you make serious accusations. Could anyone demand you?

–We always have this risk as journalists. With more than thirty years in the black chronicle, I've only had to go to court two or three times, and I've always won. But if anyone thinks I've overreacted or said something wrong, we'll see you in court. At the moment I have no news in this regard. I must say that before it was published, the text has been revised up to five times by the publishing house's legal department, which has a prestigious reputation, and has concluded that it was immaculate from that point of view.

–Will he return to Andorra soon without fear of retaliation?

–We always have this risk as journalists, it is part of the salary. In fact, I will come very soon because I intend to present the book in Andorra, because I know there is interest, but we will have to wait until the effects of the pandemic and this new variant improve. ≡

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