

## ¿Qué? Podcast Season 2 Episode 6

### Many thanks to listener Ryan V. for the transcript!

**Verónica:** Wait a second (clears throat)...Thank you.

**Simon:** I thought you were gonna say something. I thought you-

**Melissa:** I know!

**Simon:** I thought you were going to say something amazing there!

**Melissa:** Baited breath.

**Simon:** Let me clear my throat.

Hello Everyone! My name is Simon Hunter. I'm the editor of the English edition of EL PAÍS and this is "Que!?" a podcast from EL PAÍS that tries to break down the ins and outs of the knottiest news stories coming out of Spain. Whether you're frying on the beaches of the Costas, taking refuge in the cool Iberian mountains, or outside of Spain and simply obsessed with all things Hispanic, we are here for you. "Estáis en las mejores manos." So sit back, relax, and let us break down all the Spanish stories that make you say "Tortilla de patata, with or without onions?"

I'm here as always with Melissa Kitson. Hello Melissa.

**Melissa:** Hello Simon!

**Simon:** This is episode 6 of season 2. You have just returned from your first Spanish wedding.

**Melissa:** Yes.

**Simon:** How was the experience?

**Melissa:** It was lovely. I thought it was quite long, but maybe that's just how weddings are like these days, or generally.

**Simon:** We're in the season aren't we? We're in what they call the "BBC" season, the B-B-C season which is Bodas, Bautizos y Comuniones. Indeed, when you were at your wedding, I was at a baptism up in Tordesillas and it certainly was also a very long day but a very, very, very enjoyable day because there was lot of alcohol flowing and a lovely banquet. So yeah, this is the time when the makers of sailor outfits and photographers kind of have their boom time because it's all about the weddings, the baptisms, and the communions. So, as I annoyingly say every week, please rate our podcast and leave a review and share it on social media so that the word gets out. You can email us at [englishedition@elpais.es](mailto:englishedition@elpais.es) or you can tweet me @simoninmadrid using the hashtag #quepodcast.

As usual, we'll run through a few of the missives that we've had from our devoted listeners. Ryan V reappeared last week. We were a bit concerned because we hadn't heard from Ryan V. He's our friend

of the show and hero who does transcripts of the show. The last two transcripts just went up earlier this week.

And also I heard from another friend of the show, Chris Thompson. He says "Nobody ever speaks to me at the urinal."

Perhaps we should be fair to Chris and give a bit of context as to what that was about, because last week I was saying Spanish men are always- say hello to you at the urinal, even if you don't know them which can be a bit disturbing for British people who are very used to, you know, "eyes left" and no, no conversation, no contact when in the toilet. So Chris was responding to that. He says "Do you smile? In fact, my experience is that Spanish men avoid the urinals and use the stalls whenever they can." I would suggest Chris that maybe that's because you are offering them one of your "abrazos varoniles" your manly hugs. So, thanks for that Chris.

And then we heard from @mrallanjones on Twitter. He said "No, sorry guys, that won't do. MP's are MP's, so M-E-P's, are M-E-P's, not MEPS."

I mean, honestly, that's word for word what he wrote so Mr Allan Jones, Melissa, was not keen on your MEP. Have you done any research since last week about this?

**Melissa:** Yes! I think it's because I live with Spanish- like, my roommates are Spanish they - some of them work for the European Union and they say MEP. I think it's a Spanish thing and I'm, I'm...I apologize.

**Simon:** No! You don't have to apologize. You don't have to apologize. We'll stick with the two variations of the pronunciation. I really like MEP.

And then we also heard from our long-probably longest running friend of the show, Señora Wright. Señora Wright has been in Spain and she tagged me in a post while she was in Spain, and I was most indignant that she didn't come to see us or advise us that she was gonna be around until after she left. So she texted me back. She says "Hola Simon. I took 27 year 8-10 kids to Salamanca for the week, and the last day included a 1 ½ hour whistle-stop tour from Madrid. Sadly, there was no time to pop into EL PAÍS HQ, but hopefully la proxima vez."

So, just be aware listeners, we are monitoring your movements, and if you come to Madrid without saying hello, like Liam Nieson in Taken, I will look for you, I will find you, and I will invite you to a relaxing cup of café con leche.

So, we are keeping an eye on you if you're around, so do come and knock on our door if you ever come and visit Madrid. Alright, we're going to try and squeeze in two stories this week. The first one: On Tuesday, we saw the sort of the beginning of the end of the Supreme Court trial of the Catalan pro-independence leaders, and we saw the public prosecutors giving their closing arguments. So, Melissa, why don't you tell us what happened in court on Tuesday.

**Melissa:** Yeah, on Tuesday the Spanish Supreme Court heard the closing arguments of the public prosecutor in the trial of 12 Catalan Separatist leaders for their role in the 2017 secessionist drive, which is known in Catalan as "the procés." While some legal experts believe the public prosecutor would soften their accusations against the defendants in their closing arguments, the opposite actually happened.

**Sound Bite (translated):** What happened in Catalonia from March 2015 and October of 2017-

The public prosecution argued that the events of 2017 – which saw an illegal referendum on independence, followed by the unilateral declaration of independence

in the regional parliament – constituted a “coup”

Public prosecutor Javier Zaragoza argued the defendants “tried to liquidate the Constitution of 1978” and maintained that what happened was “an attack against the constitutional order”

In other words, maintaining the rebellion charge and the seriousness of the tones.

The 12 defendants on trial, nine of whom are being held in custody while the legal process takes place, are facing charges including rebellion, misuse of public funds and disobedience for their role in the 2017 separatist drive.

To prove the charge of rebellion, which is the most serious offense, public prosecutors need to show that violence was involved in the fall events.

To do this, they pointed to the use of the Catalan regional police, the “management of the masses” and the fact that nearly 100 police officers were injured in the clashes.

So, this could mean, you know, that if found guilty Oriol Junqueras, the leader of the Catalan Republican Left, could be sent to prison for 25 years

The public prosecution has now made their closing arguments and next week, the Supreme Court will hear from the defense lawyers of the defendants in what has become one the most important trials to be heard before Spain’s top court.

**Simon:** Now, we’re going to do something a bit different this week – we’ve got a guest! I think this is our first guest on the show apart from that time I had a lovely chat with Verónica our producer about her home country, Venezuela. We’re going to talk now to Matthew Bennett who is a British journalist based down in Murcia in Southeast Spain, and he has been covering every single day of the trial the *procés* so far. He’s been live blogging in Spanish and English. He’s doing an absolutely sterling job. He’s in his car so you might hear a little bit of noise in the background. Welcome Matthew to our podcast. We have been – we’ve mentioned you in the past. We’ve been talking about the sterling work that you’ve been doing, in particular covering the trial. So just um, just to start with just tell us quickly what exactly is it that you do and probably very interestingly, how you’re funding it these days?

**Matthew:** Right, well, that’s very kind of you. I hope you’ve been saying nice things, I’m sure you have been saying nice things.

**Simon:** Of course.

**Matthew:** Well, I've just been covering every day of the trial since it began on February 12th in English and in Spanish, a kind of live blog chronicle, if you like, As it happens every day. It's funded completely by readers.

**Simon:** We've had 50 days of this trial. It's seen more than 400 witnesses in 3 ½ months of court proceedings. Would you like to sum it up in a word?

**Matthew:** In a word? Well, look at the, look at the newspaper front pages today. What the prosecutor said, and that sums up the prosecution's case: It was a coup. So it was shocking-well it was more shocking yesterday when he said it because that's the first time that the prosecutor has described the- what happened in 2017 as a coup, but that's how they described it yesterday and that's what's on the front pages this morning.

**Simon:** I mean, what's been your general impression of the trial?

**Matthew:** Well, in terms of the trial it certainly seems to have been a very fair trial. They've had lots of time to talk to lots of witnesses and present lots of videos and documents, to present all sorts of witnesses and ask lots of questions. And next week, for example, the defense teams will get an hour each per defendant to present their final concluding statements which is more than they would get at even the European Courts, Judge Marchena was saying yesterday. So in terms of the way the trial has been conducted, at least from the outside as a non-lawyer, or a non-judge it seems to have been very fair indeed. In terms of the content, if we sort of tried to compare it to logic and compare it to the law and to the facts and to what we know about reality and what we saw happening two years ago, certainly the prosecution's case seems to be more logical, more rational, more fact based, more argued against the reality of the law, whereas the defense cases, or strategy- I'm still at a loss to be honest. I don't know if I could describe to you in a few words a particular defense strategy based on the facts and based on reason. They all try to argue about fundamental rights, and perhaps the right to protest or the right to freedom of speech and all of this business but it's not about the facts from their point of view. So, it'll be interesting to see next week what they do use as their final arguments.

**Simon:** And having sat through the whole trial, what do you think the ruling is going to be? What can we expect?

**Matthew:** Well, it depends on the judges. Obviously I don't have a crystal ball but again, if the judges base it on the law and fact and reason as they should do, the prosecution would appear to have a stronger case than any of the defense teams at this point.

**Simon:** So, we're talking potential jail terms for these pro-independence leaders.

**Matthew:** Well, um, yeah. I would say that's likely at this point, if they convict them. I mean, there's a chance of course that they don't convict them. If they do, they're also constrained by the prosecutors in their petitions or the sentences they seek, and the judges when they rule, they're restricted by limits of the criminal code. So, if they decide that it is rebellion and if they decide that the prosecutor is right in his description of the specific type of rebellion -there are a few of them in criminal code - then they don't have much leeway in the sentences. So if they agree-if the judges agree that there is room for conviction here and it was rebellion and it was the kind of rebellion that the prosecutors describe, then the 25-year jail sentence that the prosecutor is seeking for Junqueras for example, that's the minimum

sentence for that specific type of crime. So, the judge- even the judges wouldn't have much leeway for that- or any leeway to bring it lower.

**Simon:** And just speaking more generally; This is something that you and I have discussed on your podcast about reporting on the Catalan issue that it is incredibly challenging because people are so polarized in their opinions I mean- And you seem to – I know that a lot of the pro-independence figures on Twitter have had you blocked for a very, very long time and you do seem to have an incredibly thick skin when it comes to wading into debates on this kind of stuff. I mean, have you found it challenging reporting on this Catalan issue over the last couple of years?

**Matthew:** It has been a challenge. It's kind of fun, isn't it, to have that thick skin and get stuck in? But I like reality and facts and logic and reason, so that's the bit that they don't like I think. So, yeah it has been a challenge but I think that just comes with job doesn't it? It's part of the turf.

**Simon:** Yeah, definitely. Well thank you so much for your time Matthew. It was great to talk to you and hopefully you can come back on at some point and hopefully you can come into the office at some point. So yeah, we'll keep in touch and good luck covering the rest of the trial.

**Matthew:** Thank you very much. I'll bring you up some strong, red Murcian wine.

**Simon:** That would be lovely, definitely. We're fans of wine around here, definitely.

**Matthew:** Alright.

**Simon:** Thanks so much Matthew.

**Matthew:** Bye Simon.

**Simon:** Cheers.

Alright so, we will no doubt be coming back to that story. We've got more- we'll have more court action next week in the Supreme Court as the procès trial draws to a close. Now let's turn to a really sad story which emerged last week which is about the suicide of a young woman in Madrid after a video of a sexual nature of her was passed around among her workmates. Melissa, tell us about this story.

**Melissa:** Yes, it's very, very sad. A Spanish mother tragically took her life after sexually explicit videos of her began circulating among her work colleagues. Veronica was a 32-year-old employee at the Madrid factory of Iveco, an Italian commercial vehicle manufacturer. She had been under pressure for more than a month after colleagues began sharing five files containing the intimate videos of her on WhatsApp groups and private messaging. At first, the group was around 20 people, and this later ballooned to more than 200. The videos were made five years ago with a former partner. Veronica had since married and had a four-year-old child and months-old baby. According to her co-workers, the images had apparently made the rounds a few years ago but in that instance, Verónica was able to put a stop to it. But this time, she couldn't. For 10 days, the factory corridors echoed with laughter and people came up to Verónica to check for themselves that she was the woman in the videos. For Verónica, it was a period of unrelenting humiliation and anguish. One employee remembers hearing her saying out loud: "I can't take it anymore." Her sister-in-law found out, then her own husband, with whom she reportedly had an argument the day before her death. Verónica met with the heads of human resources at Iveco on May 23 but they decided it was a personal matter, not a workplace one, and took no action. She was

instead offered a transfer to a different section or a period of sick leave. The labor union Comisiones Obreras said this was not enough and went to see her on Friday with a formal complaint to file against the company. But Verónica had already gone home. The next day she killed herself. Police and prosecutors are now investigating the case, and a court in Alcalá de Henares has launched its own probe after the victim's father took legal action.

The Spanish Data Protection Agency is also investigating whether there was a breach of privacy laws. And the labor union Comisiones Obreras is looking at whether Iveco violated gender equality legislation and occupational prevention laws.

Police have spoken to an ex-boyfriend of Verónica who was the main suspect to see if he was the one who had sent the videos but he was let go after making a statement. Now, the investigations continue and the real, I guess issue is about what action can be taken against these new crimes of sexual violence.

**Simon:** Definitely, yeah. I mean, this kind of links into this whole sort of new wave of feminist activism in Spain and this is the kind of thing that people who-you know, women who are behind this new feminism that we're seeing in Spain, this is the kind of thing that they say they are-you know this is why they're campaigning. When people question – you know, parties like the far-right Vox, when they question feminists and they call them feminazis and things like that and they trivialize issues like this. Well, it's cases like this that they're trying to deal with. I think that, you know, the most worrying thing here is that it's how a lot of the people involved in passing around the video were treating it as some kind of joke when obviously this is incredibly serious. It's an incredible invasion of someone's privacy. For it to happen in the workplace is just horrendous. The person in question – this kind of reminds me, there was another case in 2012. There was a Socialist counselor named Olvido Hormigos. She was a Socialist councilor in a small town in Toledo and a video of her-a sexual video of her- was somehow passed around. She said at the time "In two hours, the whole town had seen it" and in 2015 this- the law in Spain was actually changed as a result and you can now get 3-5 years in jail for either sharing or you know leaking or sharing a video of this kind. So, in the Iveco case there's lots of investigations that are gonna happen now, not least whether the company could have been at fault because as you mentioned Melissa she actually took the case to the company and the company said no, this is a private matter and then of course, there's the whole issue of data protection and whether the people who, whoever it was should have shared the video in the first place whether they'll be prosecuted or even perhaps the people who shared it within the company. But now, really the question is who is it that's really the culprit? The former partner of Veronica went to the police voluntarily because, having been a former partner of hers he was under suspicion, but he handed over his phone to police and police decided not to take any more action so uh, they will be looking for someone else as the originator of this really sad case.

Alright so, let's wrap that up there. This was episode – what did I say? I always forget by the end –

**Melissa:** Six!

**Simon:** It's episode six. Episode six of "¿Qué?" A podcast that tries to explain what happens in Spain to those of us who sometimes get a little bit lost in translation. My name is Simon Hunter-

**Melissa:** My name is Melissa Kitson.

**Simon:** This is an EL PAÍS production, it was recorded right here in the EL PAÍS newsroom under the expert guidance of our producer Verónica Figueroa, and you can listen to it on your favorite podcast app.

You can also request it via Alexa, Siri or your Google Assistant. We'll be back next week with a brand new host of issues. Thank you for listening, adios!