

PAO

By

Theresa Chaze

Theresa Chaze
4366 North Curry Drive
Traverse City MI 49685
231-943-3298

INT. MODERN OFFICE: DAY

Tidy office of a small business. BILL (good natured 50+ successful business man) puts the postage on the last of the priority envelopes.

BILL

Pao, could you please come in.

Pao (nervous 20-something Hispanic ma, who is desperate to fit in) walks in.

BILL

Are you still going to Liz's diner for lunch.

PAO (OS)

(heavy Mexican accent)

Si--I mean yes.

BILL

(picking up a stack of Priority envelopes)

Would you take these to the post office?

PAO

Of course.

BILL

Good job on catching the coding mistake.

PAO

Thank you. You maked easy.

BILL

(gently)

Made. Made it easy.

PAO

I'm learning.

BILL

(agreeing)

Would you bring me back a chicken club with Swiss and a slice of Liz's amazing lemon meringue pie.

PAO

Coffee?

(CONTINUED)

BILL
Of course!
(giving him cash)
Lunch is on me.

PAO
You are very gen-erous.

Bill nods his approval. Pao leaves.

EXT. STREET: DAY

Pao happily walks the sidewalk. Struggling to open her car door, a MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN drops a couple of her packages. Pao picks them up and gives them to her after she opens her door.

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN
(smiling)
Thank you.

PAO
(walking away)
No hay problema--I mean--you are welcome.

Pao walks into a luncheonette.

INT. LUNCHEONETTE: DAY

Moderately busy luncheonette. Nick (20-something jock, who talks big but lacks the discipline to follow through) takes money for an order at the cash register. Elizabeth (40+ Queen of her realm with a kind heart but doesn't gently suffer fools) puts the order slip on the counter.

ELIZABETH
Order up.

COOK (OS)
Got it.

Pao walks in. Elizabeth happily waves at him.

ELIZABETH
(seeing Pao)
Hola, Pao.

Other patrons also greet him both in English and Spanish.

(CONTINUED)

PAO
Hola. Cómo estás?

ELIZABETH
Bueno.

Pao sits at the counter.

ELIZABETH (CONT.)
You're late. I was beginning to
think you were going to stand me
up.

PAO
(embarrassed)
I had to run an errand for Mr.
Bill.

ELIZABETH
Just Bill. Remember?

PAO
Si-I mean yes. Mr--ah, Bill wants
Chicken club with Swiss and a slice
of Liz's amazing lemon meringue
pie.

JOHN (self-entitled 30-something man, who wears his "white
privilege" as a badge of honor) and JANE (dressed for
success 20-something woman with a will and mind of her own)
sit at a table, quietly arguing until Pao walks past. John
angrily stares at him.

ELIZABETH (CONT.)
(motions to Nick)
Pao this is Nick. He's learning the
ropes. He'll take your order.
Nick, Pao is one my favorite
regulars. I'll write up Bill's
order.

NICK
What'll have?

PAO
Hamburger, fries, and Pepsi.

NICK
You want what?

Closely listening to the Nick and Pao, Elizabeth writes the
order slip.

(CONTINUED)

PAO
Hamburger, fries, and Pepsi.

NICK
(rudely)
Speak English!

The coffee shop becomes quiet. Elizabeth writes up the order and puts it on the counter.

ELIZABETH
Order up. It's for Bill. Make it his way.

COOK (OS)
Got it. Pao's medium?

ELIZABETH
You got it.

Small group (20-somethings jocks and cheerleaders who are reliving their glory days when they were the cool kids) heckle Pao from the corner.

ELIZABETH
Nick, you are being rude. He asked for hamburger, fries, and Pepsi.

Elizabeth puts a large glass on Pepsi on the counter for Pao.

NICK
That'll be--

ELIZABETH
(cutting him off)
On the house. Nick, we treat all our customers with respect. Apologize.

Nick walks toward his friend's table.

ELIZABETH
Nick, do you want to work for me?

Nick nods. Becoming louder. the jocks and cheerleaders support their friend Nick.

ELIZABETH (CONT.)
Apologize.

JOHN
(loudly)
Why should he apologize?

(CONTINUED)

Using their cells, several people start recording.

JANE
I'm sorry.

JOHN
Don't you dare apologize to that-

JANE
(cutting him off)
We're leaving! May I have our
check?

PAO
No es necesario. My English is not
too good.

NICK
(insincerely)
Sorry.

JOHN
(pointing at Pao)
He's the only one that should be
sorry.

John stands up, knocking off Jane's purse. Pao picks it up
and offers it to Jane.

JOHN
Give me that! Thief!

John grabs for the purse, shoving Pao against the counter,
knocking over the Pepsi. Pao desperately tries to clean it
up.

ELIZABETH
Pao, it's okay.

JOHN
Look what you did!

PAO
I did not mean--I'll clean it.

ELIZABETH
(stopping Pao)
Nick will do it.

(CONTINUED)

NICK
(pointing at Pao)
Why me? It's his fault.

Elizabeth points to the back room. John blocks Nick's path.

ELIZABETH
Nick, get the mop and clean it up.

Nick hesitates.

ELIZABETH (CONT.)
Or leave.

JOCK 1
That's not fair! Nick didn't do
anything!

CHEERLEADER 1
Why are you blaming Nick? He
didn't do anything!

Nick reluctantly nods and walks to the back.

ELIZABETH (CONT.)
(to John)
Get out!

JOHN
No! I have every right to be here.
This is a public place.

ELIZABETH
This is my private business.

John tries to intimate her. Elizabeth refuses to back down.
Pao steps between them.

PAO
No, please. I'll clean it up. I no
mind.

JOHN
He knows his place.

Gordon (Casually, confident 60+ man, who nothing to
prove) closes his laptop.

GORDON
(pointing at John)
The lady said leave.

Other patrons agree.

(CONTINUED)

JOHN
(threatening)
Mind your own business!

GORDON
Bullies are everyone's business.

JOCK 1
Bet he's not even legal.

CHEERLEADER 1
Search him. They are all drug dealers.

JOCK 2
I'll do it.

JOCK 1
Don't be gentle.

Gordon intercepts Jock 2.

JOCK 2
Think you can take me, old man.

GORDON
(snickering)
Try me.

CHEERLEADER 2
(grabbing Jock 2's fist)
Mickey! Remember what the judge said.

JOCK 2
(sitting back down)
You're not worth it.

Sharon (confident 20-something woman) stands.

SHARON
Just leave.

CHEERLEADER 1
Shut up nerd!

SHARON
I may be a nerd. I'm a nerd with a good paying job with a future.
(pointing at the four of them)
Unlike you.

(CONTINUED)

CHEERLEADER 2
Because of people like him!

SHARON
While you were shaking you
pom-poms, he was designing computer
programs. I'm proud to call him my
friend.

CHEERLEADER 1
You're a-a race traitor!

ELIZABETH
I belong to the human race. We
come in all sizes, shapes, and
colors. You four prove that not
all the Neanderthals died off.

CHEERLEADER 1
Bitch!

SHARON
Clever. Not!

CHEERLEADER 2
We're going tell all our friends.
And the ICE. You hire illegals!

The foursome make a mess on their way out. Horrified, Pao
keeps apologizing as he tries to clean up. Others help.

GORDON
(to Elizabeth)
You need to press charges.

JOHN
(pointing at Pao)
He should have just cleaned his
mess. That's all they are good for.

JANE
(horrified)
It was your mess!

ELIZABETH
Get out!

JANE
(to Elizabeth)
I'm so sorry.
(taking a card from her purse)
I'll cover any damages.

John grabs the card and Jane's arm.

(CONTINUED)

JOHN

Let's go.

JANE

(freeing herself)

No!

JOHN

What'ya mean no? You wanted to leave.

JANE

I'm not going any where with you.

John pulls Jane toward the door.

PAO

Stop hurting her!

GORDON

The lady doesn't want to go with you.

JOHN

I told you to mind your business. She's my fiancee.

(to Jane)

We'll talk about it at home.

Jane frees herself and pulls the ring off her finger. She throws it at him.

JANE

(to John)

We're done.

JOHN

(shocked)

Because of that--

JANE

(cutting him off)

Because of you.

(to Elizabeth)

I'll clean it up. All of it.

ELIZABETH

Nick, will take care of it.

(to John)

Come back and I'll call the cops.

John angrily picks up the ring and holds it in front of Jane's face.

(CONTINUED)

JOHN
We're not done!

JANE
(frightened/angry)
Yes. We are.

John slams out.

ELIZABETH
Thank you everyone.
(to Jane)
Do you want me to call someone to
come get you.

JANE
I have my car.

Jane starts to leave. Elizabeth leads her to a chair.

ELIZABETH (CONT.)
Not just yet.

SHARON
(bringing Jane a glass of
water)
Do you have a safe place?

JANE
My parents.

GORDON
When you're ready, I'll walk you to
your car.

JANE
You don't have to.

GORDON
Better to be safe.

PAO
I caused this. If I spoke better
English.

ELIZABETH
It's not your fault. You're a fast
learner. You just need someone to
help.

PAO
Who?

(CONTINUED)

ELIZABETH
(nodding)
I'll help you. Come back after
work.

Pao gratefully starts to leave.

ELIZABETH (CONT.)
Wait! You forget something?

PAO
I'm not hungry anymore.

ELIZABETH
But you will still eat.

COOK (OS)
Order up! Medium hamburger and
fries.

ELIZABETH
Oliver gets cranky when people
don't eat what he cooks. And you
don't want to make him
cranky. Besides, Bill needs his
lunch.

Pao agrees and sits back at the counter. Nick returns with
the mop and bucket of water. He shocked by the mess.

ELIZABETH
Clean it up. If your friends come
back, you're fired.

EXT. LUNCHEONETTE: NIGHT

The luncheonette is closed. Elizabeth and Pao sit at a
table with a computer. They chat.