

OBSOLETE

This shop dates from 1900.
 So it's 108 years old.
 We've been here for 32 years.
 But in this trade, in another store near here, we've been in it for 50 or 60 years.
 That's what I can say about my time in this neighbourhood.
 I was born here.
 I started when I was 13
 and I'm about to retire, but I'll carry on for a few more years.
 My parents started this in 1929.
 Then we three brothers followed suit.
 In this last stage, it's just been me.
 -Since I was born, approximately.
 -Yes, 1961.
 We've been here since then, working away.
 I'm retired.
 He runs it now.
 When this area was established, Madrid ended in the Bilbao section and craftsmen began coming here.
 There were plumbers, carpenters,
 all the trades of those times,
 and it was full of them, but that's all disappearing.
 I was born in this house.
 This is more or less the poor section of Chamberi.

But if you go to...
 Eduardo Dato,
 you see that it's all perfect.
 I knew this place
 when trams went by here.
 They went to Sol or somewhere.
 That was in the thirties,
 I don't remember.
 My father asked me if I wanted to work
 or to carry on studying.
 I didn't hesitate,
 I went straight into it.
 The shop is around 54 years old.
 They say God protects the innocent.
 I cut my first suit when I was 17
 and it turned out very well.
 The second one not so well, so...
 My grandfather was the first to start this up.
 I'm the third generation in this,
 and maybe the last...
 because the consumer trade is tough.
 We've held on
 because we have customers
 that aren't one-off.
 If we'd had only one-off customers,
 we'd have had to close.
 The typical customer,
 I'd wager 80% of them
 would be lawyers
 because they sell an image.
 Some of the older customers
 I deal with in my business
 still don't understand CDs,

nor do they want to.
 They say they're too old to handle CD equipment.
 They just...
 buy cassettes.
 Time passes
 and you watch
 the neighbourhood disappear,
 all the craftsmen.
 I stayed,
 and business hasn't been bad.
 There's no one else around,
 so people call you
 to come and fix this
 or that in their home,
 and off you go.
 So it's been good for me,
 knowing the trade
 and being the only one left.
 It's not the user's fault.
 If I could download a shirt
 on the Internet, I'd do it.
 I can't, but I understand that
 people download music or films.
 Prices being what they are,
 you can't fight the Net.
 The big companies, especially
 multinational record companies,
 have never understood that.
 This is steel.
 It's fire-resistant.
 More or less.
 But if the frames are plastic,
 like the ones from Carrefour,
 to mention names,

or from the Chinese stores,
 -or...
 -I don't know, nowadays...
 ...of from Ikea, they're modern,
 but they're made of plastic,
 so they can't take as much.
 New techniques have come out.
 Not better ones,
 but they make inroads in the market.
 My equipment is very good,
 but...
 you can't make a living,
 you can't subsist.
 This isn't like a café, where you know
 you'll sell four coffees one day
 or three the next,
 but never no coffee at all.
 In a tailor's, one day you might
 not sell anything at all.
 Another day you might
 recover from the previous day.
 That's just the way it is.
 When my father was alive,
 up to 18 people
 worked in this store.
 There were just
 a few shoddy off-the-rack places.
 Everyone took it for granted
 that they'd get a suit made
 when they started work,
 their first tailored suit.
 They were between five
 and seven girls working.
 A lot of shops dealt with one man
 who distributed the work.

We made perhaps 100 shades
 of one kind, 100 of another...
 I remember one Christmas
 "Alaska and Dinarama"
 released an album
 which was a huge hit.
 Then the compilation
 "Monstruo Total" was on sale,
 a double album,
 and I think we sold it
 for 800 pesetas.
 Two vinyl discs. Those were the days.
 LIQUIDATION,
 CLOSING DOWN, LAST DAY
 LIQUIDATION, CLOSING DOWN
 LAST DAYS
 There'd be just
 six or eight shops like this
 in the whole of Madrid
 and the surrounding towns.
 The wicker and reed-woven chairs
 are the ones you mend.
 They're old, they have some value,
 and you can mend them.
 With baskets,
 it costs more to mend one
 than to buy a new one.
 Everyone used to use lampshades.
 Then came the "design" period,
 with various types of lamps,
 lampshades were out.
 You'd have wall lights
 that didn't need lampshades.
 The use of computers
 has decrease the demand.

We've all got printers
 attached to our computers,
 and that's meant a drop in trade.
 You'd go to the big stores,
 food stores, and they'd have music,
 everything.
 You couldn't compete with
 their prices
 because they were lower than yours,
 their transport costs were lower...
 It was better to buy your product
 from the large store
 than from your usual supplier.
 It was unbelievable.
 Now people's first dream
 is to buy a new car
 or a sound system.
 Before, it was a good suit.
 Everything's changed.
 Today's off-the-rack stores,
 the ones that sell prêt a porter,
 were once custom-made tailors.
 A GOOD CUSTOM-MADE
 SUIT COSTS LESS...
 THAN AN EXPENSIVE
 OFF-THE-RACK SUIT
 [I'm not tired.]
 [I like it a lot but I recognize]
 [that I'm very old.]
 I'm not going to give it up.
 I'll stop if
 I start losing my marbles.
 I don't know.
 I still climb the ladder.

To get a slipper,
 if they ask and it's up there.

They get a bit cross,
 but I go up anyway.

I'm in good shape
 because I move about.

My legs and...

But a lady might ask:
 "Why do you want the money?
 It's so much work",
 and I tell her it is a lot of work,
 but I don't make...
 that much.

My children are into other things.
 The oldest is an industrial engineer,
 the second is a lawyer
 and the youngest one
 does cancer research.

She's at Berkeley University,
 in the United States.

Naturally, with those careers,
 they're not going to do this job.
 It's a worthy and honourable trade
 and we've made a living
 from this business,
 but what they're doing is better.

It seems a shame to me
 that my working life is coming...
 to an end.

Sometimes I think about
 when I'll leave the workshop
 and I feel a certain nostalgia.

This has been the backbone
 of the family,
 and like it or not,

the workshop's going to close.
 The moment I decide
 that it's over, that's it.

Subsidies are a maze because...
 non-recoverable funds
 are only for the big companies.

-Because small firms...
 -They even give the big firms land
 so that they can set up.

But for small firms?
 There's nothing.

While there are still people with...
 some taste...
 who like things custom-made,
 with materials...
 of a certain texture,
 and everything here is like that,
 there'll be a future, otherwise...

I'm going to hang on
 the best I can here.

While I've still got my strength and
 I'm able, I'd rather be in the shop
 than at home or out strolling.

The day I retire and give it all up,
 they'll put an office here
 or a Chinese store, whatever.

No one after me
 is going to carry this on.

And it gets harder every day.

It's more and more
 an uphill battle, more competition...

You think you've got
 an incredible price for something

and two minutes later you realize
 that a competitor has beaten you.

You say, "I didn't buy
 the product I imagined".

There's no continuity.

When I stop, it's all over.

And there are many like me,
 a lot of tailors in Madrid
 and all over Spain.

My case isn't unique.

When you can't do it anymore,
 be it in...
 10 years, 8, 5 years,
 one year or maybe tomorrow...
 It's not up to us.

We're just passing through here.