

True Stories about Migrant Women and Their Employers

Episode 3 – Attention! Motor! Action!

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Just a little while and I'll be on my way. Oh, dear God, I can hardly wait! It is as if the more the big day approaches, the harder it is for me to believe that I got here. I finally did managed to do this as well. And to think about all the things I have gone through. Go to the agency, leave the agency, go to the authorities, leave from the authorities, go here and go there. An endless trail of trips which almost dried me of all my power...and money, because, you know, the bus back and forth from my house on a daily basis costs. And not to tell you about the day with the medical and the psychological. A true ordeal.

Wake up in the early morning, before the rooster has sung, dress up in a presentable manner because you're going to the capital, don't eat, don't drink, take your tooth brush in the bag and some wet wipes to clean yourself afterwards! I hate doctors! The body doctors as much as the head ones! All at once. I don't really understand what's the big deal with the medical! I told them from the very beginning that I am healthy as a horse and can work like one. It is mandatory I check my eyes, ears, nose and throat for viruses. I have to check my heart, liver, kidneys, lungs. I even have to be checked down there, so they make sure I'm not pregnant. If I were pregnant, I wouldn't even have made the efforts to come all the way here, just to make a trip, or what? I know very clearly that I must not have any diseases, but these doctors are way too thorough.

And after half of day of getting dressed and undressed in different medical rooms, I get to the psychological clinic. Another trouble there as well. I was so hungry I could barely see where I was going. Lucky for me I took with me a sandwich and a bottle of water which I rapidly shoved down my throat just to have some food in my stomach. Someone told me that if you don't eat, your head begins playing tricks on you. And now I wasn't gonna fail the psychological because of hunger, was I? Because my brain does really work. People say that some kababayans went cuckoo after they arrived in Romania and they want to make sure that I'm right in the head.

I have never ever done such a check-up in my entire life, so I hope it's not gonna hurt and I hope they don't make me take God knows what pill and test me with an electroshock just to see if I make it. Go figure that a very nice lady doctor invited into her office. White everywhere and full of desks with papers and crayons. And I didn't even get off my jacket that she started explaining that I have to fill-in two tests, that is to answer to several questions. Some with images, some with words. But, that it is very important for me to answer with sincerity so that the results come out right. What does a good result mean? That I'm smart and I don't have any loose screws in my head? Yeas, something like that, the doctor answered with a smile on her face. And how long would it take? More than the medical? Apparently so. And I stood, and stood and stood some more that all their psychology came out my nose and my ears.

At one point I really said to myself that I'm gonna quit and leave it uncompleted, but the doctor in white came again and told me that I have to finish it. Numbers, characters, circles, squares, triangles, lines. What kind of smart test is this? And afterwards I had to answer questions about the way I am? Well, I'm hardworking, honest, kind-hearted and open-minded. And how else? Well, what do you mean, how else? I have just said it. And you don't expect me to start writing whole pages about myself, because you know I didn't come all the way to the capital to brag about myself so that everyone see what's in my soul. Let's get something straight: I'm going to work, not get married!

But, God all mighty helped me and I finished that test as well. Now I have to wait one more week for the results to come out. It really irritates me that you, the one who went overboard to answer all the questions and tests possible, get no information whatsoever. They don't ever ask you: Hey, but how come you want to go to work abroad? Do you really think you can stay 2-3 years without your man and kids? Without your home and your meals? Without your church from the corner of your street where every Sunday you can pray in peace and finish with the usual "Bahala Na!"?

You're just another one from the hundreds and thousands of Asians who go to work abroad, like lambs to the slaughter. You're good as long as you give money to the state and provide for your family. In reality, nobody cares about you. I would have wanted that doctor in white who gave me so quickly the instructions about how those God damned psycho tests should be filled-in had asked about my health...mental health. But as in really ask me! Instead she said: Don't worry because the tests say everything. Yes, they are filled-in by me, but that doesn't mean that if you graded me, you know how I am. What are my ideas, dreams and plans. Maybe I wanted to ask her one thing or another. Maybe I felt like receiving a piece of advice or a good word before my great departure. Maybe... Now there's just no point for me to make a big fuss about it, as these things will continue to happen just as they did up until now.

And so, after a couple of weeks of burdening wait, I receive a phone call from the agency that I should go right away to the capital. I jumped out of my bed, I put something on, I got myself ready and left in a hurry as if it had been the last train I would have had to catch in this life. I ran high and low and finally I got to the agency out of a breath. I waited as usual for over an hour to be noticed by someone and in the end I was called up in the big interviewing office. The light seemed blinding to me, and all of the sudden I barely heard anything as if my ears had been plugged. I told myself: You're not gonna faint now, from Christ's sake, are you?

I sat down in a fluffy chair and waited for them to start the discussion. It was like I was scared of asking why I had been called over. But I knew. It was for them to tell me the verdict. They had already received the medical and psychological results, I had submitted all my papers and the only thing left to be released was my visa. But until the visa issue, I had to know whether I had passed the tests or not. The time stood still for a while. My eyes were focused on the clock above the desk as I was counting the seconds. 34 seconds of silence. That's doesn't seem to be good

sign. Nobody keeps quiet unless the news is bad. It's clear to me. I didn't pass. God damn it! I'm good for nothing! What am I gonna do now? How am I gonna support myself? What am I gonna tell my folks? And the money I practically threw out the window! And all of the sudden the trail of my thoughts was interrupted by a voice who said: Congratulations! In less than two weeks you'll be deployed in Romania!