

GOOD COP, BAD COP

By Jerry Rabushka

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CAST: OFFICER RAMIREZ and OFFICER MARTINEZ

(OFFICER RAMIREZ and OFFICER MARTINEZ, both of them also play several members of the Hernandez family. This duet demands some rapid character changes into people of all ages. Performers should play as one character until directed in the script to play the next. The rapid character changes can add to the humor by suddenly changing the “pecking order” during a struggle or an emotional outburst.)

RAMIREZ: *(talking to an invisible Mrs. Hernandez, very deadpan to start)* Good afternoon, Mrs. Hernandez, I'm officer Ramirez.

MARTINEZ: I'm officer Martinez.

RAMIREZ: We're here on the report that your TVs have been stolen.

MARTINEZ: Do you have any idea when this happened?

RAMIREZ: Or who could have done this— *(comforts Mrs. Hernandez, who will be played by MARTINEZ, and bursts into tears right about now)* Mrs. Hernandez? Mrs. Hernandez, please stop crying. Please?

MARTINEZ: *(as Mrs. Hernandez, weepy, and usually close to hysterical)* Were we on the news? I've always wanted to be on the news, and now, we can't even see it!

RAMIREZ: You weren't on the news.

MARTINEZ: *(outraged)* What? We get broken into and it wasn't even newsworthy? With the garbage they put on the news these days! It's so explicit. I can't be that explicit! Not with a family to take care of.

RAMIREZ: Mrs. Hernandez...

MARTINEZ: *(as himself)* Mrs. Hernandez, please stop sobbing and tell us what happened.

RAMIREZ: *(as Raúl, Mrs. Hernandez's teenage son, trying to be a bigger “man” than HE actually is, and talking tough)* Man, I'll tell you what happened, Officer Martinez!

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MARTINEZ: Who are you?

RAMIREZ: **(shares a cool handshake)** Raúl Hernandez, man. That there's my mom. We just call her "old lady." But, sorry, I can't tell you what happened.

MARTINEZ: You just said you could!

RAMIREZ: I can't, man, because I'm missing my favorite shows. I can't think when it's so quiet.

MARTINEZ: **(as Mrs. Hernandez, like SHE's lost a child)** Please, officer, get our TVs back.

RAMIREZ: **(still as Raúl, comforting his mother)** We're forced... forced... to read! Seventeen years old, and forced to open a book. I wanted to graduate as an illiterate.

MARTINEZ: **(horrified)** Forced to talk at dinner! The filth that comes out of my childrens' mouths.

RAMIREZ: **(proud)** We learned it off the TV.

MARTINEZ: It's the first time I've talked to my husband in months! Do you know what he said, Officer?

RAMIREZ: **(as himself, sympathetic, but only for her benefit)** What did he say, Mrs. Hernandez?

MARTINEZ: **(sniffing)** He wanted to watch the football game at Best Buy. **(angry and bossy)** I told him he would stay here and suffer like the rest of us.

RAMIREZ: When was the last time you saw the TV?

MARTINEZ: **(as Grandpa Hernandez)** When it was on! Who watches a TV that's turned off?

RAMIREZ: **(confused)** Now who are you?

MARTINEZ: I'm Grandpa Hernandez. *Abuelito* Rodrigo Antonio Hernandez! **(stern)** In my day we didn't have TV.

RAMIREZ: **(as teenage son again)** Yes you did, Grandpa. You're not that old.

MARTINEZ: **(on a roll)** We were poor. We didn't read. We didn't talk to each other at dinner. We didn't have dinner! And we didn't work out our personal issues with a licensed psychologist! We worked! We toiled! We did without!

RAMIREZ: Do you have any idea who took the TVs?

MARTINEZ: Idea! **(approaches RAMIREZ, aggressively)** When I was young we didn't have ideas. **(RAMIREZ stares him down, and MARTINEZ turns into Mrs. Hernandez)** Grandpa, calm down. These men are here to find out who took our TVs.

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RAMIREZ: **(now playing Grandpa)** Whoever took our TVs isn't here, so maybe they need to go find them where they are, instead of looking here where they're not. **(announcing to the audience)** The role of Grandpa Rodrigo is now being played by Officer Ramirez.

MARTINEZ: **(as himself)** Good. Grandpa's a stretch for me. **(to everyone)** Now, we need to dust for fingerprints.

RAMIREZ: **(still as Grandpa)** When I was young they didn't have fingerprints.

MARTINEZ: **(as Mrs. Hernandez)** Dust? Good! I spend so much time watching TV, I don't get to the dusting. Can you fix a pot of coffee while you're up, Officer Ramirez?

RAMIREZ: **(as himself)** Well... Señora ...

MARTINEZ: Cream and sugar. I would do it myself, but I have to save my seat.

RAMIREZ: How come?

MARTINEZ: **(as Juan, a younger brother)** Because when Conchita gets home, she'll take it.

RAMIREZ: **(can't deal with any more people)** Who's Conchita? And who are you, young man? Is there no end to this family?

MARTINEZ: **(as Juan)** I'm Juan Hernandez, Raúl's brother. And I'm seven. We're not sure who Conchita is. I think she's my sister or my cousin or something. She just showed up here once and started watching TV with us. But since it's gone, she won't come back.

(starts to cry)

RAMIREZ: There, there, young man. We'll find out who did this.

(comforting Juan)

MARTINEZ: Hurry. Mom might make me crack a book.

RAMIREZ: **(now as Grandpa, talking down to Juan, who runs away from him in fear)** When I was young they didn't have books. We had to crack eggs.

MARTINEZ: **(as himself, tired of Grandpa's antics, so HE whirls around to confront Grandpa)** How old are you, Abuelito Rodrigo?

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RAMIREZ: How should I know? We didn't have birth certificates either. I'm not even sure we had birth. That's why we cracked eggs! I pecked my way out!

MARTINEZ: Does anybody know what channel you were watching when the TVs were last in the home?

RAMIREZ: **(as Juan)** All of them.

MARTINEZ: Are you doing Juan too now? You're stealing all my characters.

RAMIREZ: **(as himself)** Sorry. I admire your work and I want to emulate.

MARTINEZ: Ok. As long as it's good.

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