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MAS 170

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*Challenging stereotypes in Stand And Deliver*

Latino characters in American films are very limited by the roles constructed by Anglo-dominated Hollywood. *Stand and Deliver*, directed by Ramon Menendez, offers slightly stereotypical yet complex characters that demonstrates a realistic Latino community. While the lead role arguably completely escapes stereotypes, supporting actors and actresses play stereotypical roles but reveal that they are only superficial and are more complex than the typical Latino roles. *Stand and Deliver* successfully challenges stereotypical roles for Latinos by ignoring them completely with some characters and using them, in other characters, in a satirical way to expose the ridiculous way in which Latino are portrayed.

Edward James Olmos, played the lead role as Jaime Escalante, is a unique character for Latinos in Hollywood. Olmos' role is a refreshing change from the stereotypical roles many Latinos play. His balding hair, large glasses, and older age disqualify him from the Latino lover stereotype (Berg 21). His education level, occupation as a teacher, and dedication to helping his community disqualify him as a Bandido. His serious, confident, and unapologetic attitude disqualify him from the humble and male buffoon stereotype. Despite the reality of many Chicanos in the middle class, his middle class status was rare for Latinos in Hollywood. Using Charles Ramirez Berg's stereotype communication test (Berg 19), Olmos could have been replaced by a white actor. More specifically he could have been switched with his white

counterpart who played more of the male buffoon role. Olmos Successfully escapes Latino stereotypes in Hollywood.

At first glance, Angel looks like the typical cholo from east L.A. However we quickly learn that he doesn't resemble the characteristics of "the modern Bandido" who is violent and illiterate (Ramirez 17). Audiences may have been surprised to see that under his tough exterior he is eager to learn when challenged by Escalante. Though he was occasionally late he didn't disturb the class with violent outbursts or skip class to rob a gas station and sell drugs in his spare time. Like the other students we see another side to him that makes us root for his success. The audience is shown his sick grandmother and how hard it is for her to get healthcare. Instead of trying to make quick cash we see him fight even harder to make progress in math class. He is also self-aware of the stereotypes associated with the Cholo identity and uses that to subvert Latino stereotypes. In the scene where the students are being interrogated, Angel confesses and when asked how he did it he says he got the test from the mailman. His voice changes to a Cholo accent and says "I strangled him. His body is decomposing in my locker". This is accompanied by hysterical laughing by his peer and an embarrassed and defeated look by the investigators. In Another scene he arrives to class shortly after it's over in an accent says "aye kimo aren't you proud of me? I'm the first one in class!" then asks "what's cal-coo-lus". This exaggerated performance ridicules the stereotypical Cholo. Contrary to the exaggerated performance the reality is that Angel is actually very dedicated to succeeding and his high score on the test proves he's very smart. Although Angel looks like the stereotypical east L.A. Gang banger he is a complex character and uses satire to expose the ridiculous and limited image of Latino men in Hollywood.